

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 27th February 2013, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland, Andrew Hoppit, Stewart Snape, Mark Townsend, Dave Lofthouse, Greg Vickers, Mike Robinson, Barry Walsh, Alison Field, Craig Harrison, Richard Trippett, Adam Wallace, Nigel Straw, Ralph Parks, Colin Buttery

Apologies: David Allister, Tony Leach, Jane Carlsen, Dougal Driver

1 Summary of actions from this meeting

New & outstanding actions from this meeting

<i>Action Point</i>	<i>Details</i>
1	Stewart to inform group of EU meeting outcome re protected zone status
2	Mark to try and get a copy of the Dutch communications and other OPM material to help develop our 'toolkit' of information
3	Mark to share further information of his Holland visit with the group
4	Mark to provide Barry with Dutch public health authority contact details to enable HPA visit to Holland
5	Barry to provide contact details for HPA rep to Andrew Hoppit
6	HPA to keep the group abreast of progress on HPA activity and outcomes of research work
7	Ralph to provide information on who hasn't been providing data so we can chase them
8	FC to review the OPM control contractor list before 2013 season begins
9	Andrew to change map in operational plan, removing nest locations which could be misleading
10	Andrew H to liaise with Imperial College re OPM management research to inform the plan
11	Andrew H to liaise with Adam/NE on OPM distribution against sensitive sites
12	Andrew H to define optimal format to collate survey coverage
13	AG members to provide details to FC of proposed survey coverage for 2013
14	Andrew H to arrange OPM survey/awareness training for Pangbourne
15	Andrew H to adjust the plan re pheromone traps
16	FC, Advisory Group chair and AG members to use a range of approaches to encourage compliance including involvement of London Council, letter from the AG and personal networks
17	FC and other AG members to help LTOA update their OPM guidance for use in 2013 season
18	Barry to provide input to plan re HPA comms and research activity
19	AG to provide resource input estimates for the plan
20	AG member feedback on the plan to Andrew by 15th March, using track changes
21	Andrew Hoppit to send Barry photographs of rashes to emphasise HPA awareness raising
22	Mike to try and get German HPA equivalent awareness literature

2 Introductions and welcome

Sue Ireland welcomed Nigel & Ralph to the meeting

3 Review of Actions from last meeting

<i>Details</i>	<i>Progress</i>
1. Andrew Hoppit to draft a template letter for members to use as appropriate to push for Protected Zone Status	Done
2. Andrew Hoppit to ensure the group strategy is reflected in the Terms of Reference	Done
3. Barry to liaise with Henry to set up an England health sector visit to Holland to understand and learn from the Dutch experience	Ongoing ~ update item 3
4. Advisory Group chairman to write to Barry's boss to request HPA input to public health information monitoring	Done
5. Andrew Hoppit to liaise with individual members of the group to develop the detail of the plan, including apportioning shared responsibilities amongst stakeholders	Ongoing ~ item 7 on agenda
6. Andrew to ensure the operational plan focuses on prophylactic spraying as a key factor in effective control and maximum efficiency	Done
7. Alison to raise the financial incentive issue and need for contingency funding issues with FC senior colleagues - to address sudden, difficult or unforeseen issues that threaten the overall implementation of OPM control measures in any given season	Ongoing ~ Alison to update group
8. Andrew to share Julia's presentation with the group	Done
9. Julia and Andrew to continue work on system development for implementation in 2013 season, liaising with individual group members for their input	Ongoing ~ using new data collection system and will review with Julia 13 th March

The group agreed the notes of the last meeting with no changes.

AP 1 The EU Standing Committee is being held tomorrow which will consider our Protected Zone status application. Stewart is hopeful it will be approved but there may be conditions attached

Action **1 Stewart to inform group of EU meeting outcome re protected zone status**

4 G&T feedback on recent Holland OPM visit

Mark met a number of different people on varied subjects:

Silvia Hemmingay is doing novel control research including nematode control. Met Roland Jolsman who oversees OPM control for Amsterdam, to see how they are tackle the problem.

Since 2009 a concerted control programme has resulted in only infested 600 trees in 2012? and the total number of nests has plateaued.

Key lessons from Dutch colleagues suggest it won't be possible to eradicate OPM in West London; containment probably the best aim, with focussed effort in priority areas.

Since 1991 OPM has been dealt with in Amsterdam as a human health issue, not a plant health one. Need to create thorough toolbox of options and communications (would be good to get a copy). Message – not alarm people, it can be controlled

Action **2 Mark to try and get a copy of the Dutch communications and other OPM material to help develop our 'toolkit' of information**

Amsterdam is using the Digitree/Digidisk OPM tree database, as there was a recognised need for a bespoke system to manage OPM. Mark felt it would be easy to transfer to GB, with 2 way exportable capabilities between existing Local Authority tree databases

The group discussed the expansion of tree and pest/disease recording systems and risks re duplication/incompatibility – work is being done to ensure this is avoided, but there needs to be recognition that there will be different systems for different needs and we can't dictate which system is used.

Henry showed Mark what they're going to treat this year in Amsterdam, ongoing research including BDRC funding

Sue has been considering whether to ask if City of London could support funding for OPM control e.g. via City Bridge Trust. This was welcomed by the group, with a discussion about potential scale of funding needed.

Given Dutch approach of OPM funding via public health resources, the group highlighted need to pursue health sector input to OPM control in GB

It was clarified that the €8M quoted by Henry for OPM control at the last meeting was for the whole of Holland.

Only BT is used, Deltamethrin not licensed, could use Dimilin but don't. Dutch have found that 1 well timed dose of BT is effective and further applications in the same season have not been required.

The group discussed whether infested tree felling is effective control in situations where coupe felling is an option – obviously more appropriate in rural and wooded situations. The key issue is that OPM detection often not for 1-2 seasons later, so spread will be beyond the detected tree already.

Speed of response – in Holland, part of the Digitree approach is agreed protocols amongst stakeholders, including how quickly information is updated and shared. According to the level of priority e.g. High means must be dealt with within 3 days. Some of the protocol demands daily updates to information.

Action **3 Mark to share further information of his Holland visit with the group**

5 HPA Update on OPM progress

Mark summarised human health lessons from Holland trip based on the above. The Dutch HPA equivalent has extended on offer to HPA to visit them, which was welcomed.

Action **4 Mark to provide Barry with Dutch public health authority contact details to enable HPA visit to Holland**

Barry summarised recent and planned HPA work:

An internal working group chaired by Barry has been set up

They have commissioned research involving toxicologist and epidemiologist expertise. Work includes:

- a systematic literature review of OPM paper, including translation of foreign articles; Barry hopes to have a report on this work within 3 months
- a study of effects on arboricultural workers due to occupational exposure. This is planned after the 2013 OPM season, to get retrospective views and assess experience in 2013 and before. Therefore survey will take place around September and report produced by the end of the year

Hopefully the above work will inform our assessment of risk here

Yvonne Doyle is new Public Health England London lead from April. Brian McCloskey will endeavour to reply to Sue's letter soon

HPA felt best to do the literature review before visiting Holland. Mark felt end of June would be an ideal time to visit Holland

HPA following up other foreign contacts to gather evidence, and keen to get a public health physician which has been difficult so far

There will an OPM presentation to London Forum this week involving Barry & Andrew H; attendees are varied officials in health / environmental health sector in London

Usual HPA reminders to GPs etc will be sent out this spring, though the group wondered to what extent those messages were actually received and understood

Barry is on leave for 3 months during the summer so his colleague Margaret Meltzer has agreed to fill in with regard to the OPM Advisory Group

Action 5 Barry to provide contact details for HPA rep to Andrew Hoppit

Action 6 HPA to keep the group abreast of progress on HPA activity and outcomes of research work

6 Summary of 2012 OPM situation

Since the interim report in November 2012, a further 12 infested tree 40 nests in Hounslow have been found, another larger than normal jump from existing known infestations

Ralph highlighted key OPM areas of concern in last year including Ealing, West Brompton cemetery, Wimbledon Park & Common (9% of FC survey resource went just into this site); Raynes Park. Ralph highlighted the issue re OPM spread via green corridors and the access challenges that they generate e.g. TfL land. Also concern that some nests are old i.e. previously unidentified spread

Another 200 nests have been found via other sources, but there is still missing survey/control data from some contractors and stakeholders which creates inevitable gaps in intelligence. The group discussed how to encourage thorough feedback and whether there needs to 'naming and shaming', or at least extra pressure

Action 7 Ralph to provide information on who hasn't been providing data so we can follow up

The group discussed the need to ensure contractors help deliver the operational plan, including effective control methods, compliance with regulations and sharing of information

Action **8** **FC to review the OPM control contractor list before 2013 season begins**

7 OPM Action Plan & Zone Boundaries

Nigel summarised his paper, including how 2011 and 2012 zoning was done to focus OPM survey and control efforts. FC resource has focussed on buffer area to deal with spread, with some work in core where greatest threat to the buffer was apparent.

2012 clearly showed further spread with greater establishment in some areas e.g. Wimbledon Common, hence appropriate time to redraw the zone boundaries.

Methodology for drawing boundaries adjusted in light of experience e.g. rate of spread and host tree distribution/risk of wider scale infestation. 2km deemed the appropriate distance, further than before. A key change is defining an outer limit to show clearly where FC survey effort is focussed. Beyond the new outer boundary, OPM detection would primarily be via survey/vigilance efforts by stakeholders/public.

The group agreed the boundaries would need to be reviewed regularly during the season and adjusted depending on what infestations are found; this will require good coordination and information exchange.

The group understood that the principles of the boundaries are largely defined by resource availability.

The group agreed that the map is a little misleading re nest distribution in the operational plan, as it is only based on collated survey information e.g. Richmond Park appears a hotspot mainly because of the survey effort there, and we should probably presume infestation is similar elsewhere in the core

Action **9** **Andrew to change map in operational plan, removing nest locations which could be misleading**

Bromley/Croydon – experience in 2012 highlighted that coordinated survey is a crucial success factor

8 OPM Operational Plan for 2013

Plan objectives and ownership

Group have already demonstrated effective influencing of FC / central government, and Colin highlighted the group's role in influencing other key stakeholders including Local Authorities. The group gave support for a shared plan

In the background and appendices, reference to the research on OPM management was highlighted, which could inform the plan. Alan Inman at Defra is leading this, plus Imperial College

Action **10** **Andrew Hoppit to liaise with Imperial College re OPM management research to inform the plan**

Survey and data management, coverage

Mark offered his help in developing efficient control contractor feedback, LTOA also keen to be involved & Bartletts re info sharing

Adam asked what analysis there has been of OPM distribution against sensitive sites

Action **11 Andrew Hoppit to liaise with Adam/NE on OPM distribution against sensitive sites**

The group agreed it is crucial that we collate what all of the stakeholders will be surveying in 2013, in a bid to 'fill in the jigsaw'. The group agreed they would provide FC with this info in whatever format was appropriate

Action **12 FC to define optimal format to collate survey coverage**

Action **13 AG members to provide details to FC of proposed survey coverage for 2013**

The group agreed survey commitments go beyond just group members and we need others input. The group agreed to use its network to spread the word for collated survey response e.g. Tony Leach, LTOA, Tree Council.

The group discussed the need for host tree data; this is being collected via the new OPM survey system i.e. bottom up approach, and via collection of historic host tree distribution data.

FC OPM survey training was welcomed as a means to widen knowledge and get more information back; Greg asked for a course relating to the Pangbourne event

Action **14 Andrew Hoppit to arrange OPM survey/awareness training for Pangbourne**

Pheromone trap guidance FC practice note being produced, but it was suggested the plan refers to a pilot with key landowners rather than blanket encouragement

Action **15 Andrew H to adjust the plan re pheromone traps**

Control compliance and reporting

The group discussed how to ensure the OPM control strategy is comprehensively implemented, and how to engage some stakeholders who appear less inclined to engage in collaborative action. Influence via senior Local Authority liaison and/or London Councils? Sue felt Chief Exec level is needed; Colin suggested a 2 pronged approach to influence senior officials and local politicians. A key message is that it's not just about committing money but collaboration and PR for maximum effectiveness

Action **16 FC, Advisory Group chair and AG members to use a range of approaches to encourage compliance including involvement of London Council, letter from the AG and personal networks**

Adam asked that NE advisors are made aware of OPM general issues so they can communicate key messages in their dealings with landowners

Control cost resources – there was group agreement that some form of grant would help deliver more effective strategy and control compliance. Private landowners are hardest to get compliance, so focus on these. The group discussed the potential grant budget required. Group members highlighted the challenge associated with late forming nests and staggered development, as seen clearly in 2012, which is in the risk log

Knowledge transfer and training including toolkit

Adam asked that any landowner checklist include designations and consideration of sensitive sites

LTOA guidance is being updated and the group agreed a single source of information would be helpful. FC will need to link whatever good practice is needed with notices, so will need to fit with regulatory needs

Action **17 FC and other AG members to help LTOA update their OPM guidance for use in 2013 season**

Awareness / communications

The group agreed single, common messages are needed and that it is integrated with HPA communications activity – so need Barry's input to the plan re HPA comms

Action **18 Barry to provide input to plan re HPA comms and research activity**

Resources

The group agreed the plan needed to set out the level of resource commitment by stakeholders, albeit not with absolute precision

Action **19 AG to provide resource input estimates for the plan**

Sue thanked the FC on behalf of the group for the draft plan, and the group were happy to endorse the plan subject to the changes discussed

Action **20 AG member feedback on the plan to Andrew by 15th March, using track changes**

9 AOB & Date of next meeting

AOB

Adam confirmed that for Pangbourne, aerial spray will be consented today, but need to ensure there is monitoring and evaluation; also repeated such work is considered on a site by site basis

Greg highlighted Barry's comment about HPA focus on public health, not nests – we need to emphasise that message when dealing with public health stakeholders.

Action **21 Andrew Hoppit to send Barry photographs of rashes to emphasise HPA awareness raising**

Action **22 Mike to try and get German HPA equivalent awareness literature**

Alison gave an outline of recent discussions regarding more concerted effort to control OPM, emphasising it is only a consideration at this stage and we have to provide a plan with evidence/costings for senior officials to consider. The FC would need the expertise of the Advisory Group on those proposals, including potential cost for a more effective OPM control programme. AG members agreed to assist FC

Date of Next Meeting Friday 19th April 2pm