

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 17th July 2013, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland, Andrew Hoppit, Mark Townsend, Dave Lofthouse, Craig Harrison, Richard Trippett, Adam Wallace, David Allister, Emer O'Connell (Public Health England), Greg Vickers, Colin Buttery, Jane Carlsen, Julia Branson

Apologies: Mike Robinson, Tony Leach, Stewart Snape, Alison Field, Dougal Driver

1 Summary of actions from this meeting

New & outstanding actions from this meeting

<i>Action Point</i>	<i>Details</i>
Outstanding actions from previous meetings	
1	Mark Townsend to provide further information on the knowledge centre that has been developed on the continent
2	Emer to arrange PHE input to control plan
3	FC to liaise with Defra animal health leaders to find appropriate vet body for cascading information
New Actions	
4	AH to check with Ian Willoughby re chemical dosage
5	AH to liaise with Dave re LTOA involvement with pheromone traps and send guidance to AG
6	AH to draft a response to Dealga on behalf of Sue
7	Craig to find out indicative timetable for report/funding bid to Defra for future years
8	Sue to seek a CoL venue for the lessons learned meeting, other group members to consider possible venues for 50, if needed
9	Communicating AG work beyond members to all stakeholders to be future agenda item

2 Introductions and welcome

Sue introduced Emer and Julia to the meeting

3 Review of Actions from last meeting

<i>Details</i>	<i>Progress</i>
1. Prepare a landowner toolkit in autumn/winter for 2014 season ~ AH	Not started but programmed in
2. Investigate the setting up of an OPM knowledge centre ~ AH with Charlton Clark	Mark will provide further info on Dutch knowledge centre
3. Implement a pheromone trapping programme ~ AH	In progress
4. Send OPM advisory group Terms of Reference to Ben Clutterbuck to help with the LTOA guidance on OPM ~ AH	Done
5. Invite Dr Alan Inman to present to the advisory group ~ SI	Superseded by Workshop

	on 27/6/13
6. Mark to provide Barry with Dutch public health authority contact details to enable HPA visit to Holland	Done, contact made
7. FC to review the OPM control contractor list before 2013 season begins	Superseded by events this year
8. FC and other AG members to help LTOA update their OPM guidance for use in 2013 season	AG input provided, guidance nearly finalised
9. Barry to provide input to plan re HPA comms and research activity	Nothing received. Emer / Barry to provide info
10. Charlton to liaise with vet body ~ AH to discuss with Charlton	Progress being made

Matters arising

There was a little uncertainty over what the knowledge centre was exactly, and Mark T provided further explanation – that it is an online forum to exchange OPM knowledge on the continent including Holland & Germany.

Charlton Clark has investigated and it appears one body deals with Government vets but not private vets, so unclear how information would be cascaded at present.

Sue has a translated copy of the Dutch OPM article and will distribute via email.

4 Spraying programme review

Andrew Hoppit provided an overview of the spraying programme.

The FC has funded the treatment of 200 sites in London, with 14,000 or more trees treated. All previously known infested sites have been treated with Bt (occasionally Dimilin) by us where we are unaware a stakeholder is enacting their own control. FC funded spraying has been carried out in accordance with manufacturers instructions, applying the spray twice to each tree, approximately 10-14 days between each application. Weather during the spraying period was OK but not ideal.

There has been close liaison with Natural England, Royal Parks, Historic Royal Palaces, London Boroughs, TfL. In general the level of support from these organisations has been very good, there have been some issues with boroughs but this appear to have been worked through. Natural England have been particularly helpful in processing assents for designated sites very quickly and this process has not hindered the timing of the spraying programme.

Private landowner liaison to get their agreement for control has been carried out through the pre-spray survey work. There has been very little concern raised by private landowners; where concerns were raised, we have been able to assure them of the action we're taking.

Plant Health Notices have been re-issued to 200 known sites, both in the core and buffer zone of the SW London outbreak area and Bromley/Croydon.

The group wanted to particularly note the collaboration of the control contractors and the efforts of other stakeholders including Natural England to implement a coordinated and exhaustive spraying programme within a short timescale.

5 Survey programme review

Survey work is in progress and Andrew Hoppit / Julia Branson shared a map showing progress, noting it only contained data from the FC database (so not including e.g. Richmond park survey data). FC survey work is focussed on the sites that were sprayed, the Bromley/Croydon and Pangbourne outbreaks and the buffer zone of West London. The priority order for survey has been agreed with Forest Research based on factors such as potential risk of spread, infestation in previous years and impact of spread to tree and human health. It is being carried out in the following order:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Elmbridge | 6. Ealing | 10. Kensington & Chelsea |
| 2. Hounslow | 7. Brent | 11. Wandsworth |
| 3. Richmond | 8. Westminster | |
| 4. Kingston | 9. Hammersmith & Fulham | |
| 5. Merton | | |

FC database information indicates:

- 1146 sites inspected, >14,000 trees (Site – individual tree, group of trees or woodland, often delineated by ownership)
- 139 sites sprayed
- Nests found at 87 sites, 26 which had been sprayed
- 345 trees infested
- 30 users of the field based app
- 500 sites, 3,000 trees recorded using the app

Where nests are being found, the FC is funding urgent nest removal during the critical period pre moth emergence. Peak emergence is expected in early August though AG members suggested emergence will already have started.

Other organisations are supplementing our effort by surveying for OPM e.g. TfL, Boroughs, Royal Parks. The FC are liaising with Boroughs before starting survey work in their area to ensure coordination with local efforts and avoid duplication / gaps.

There have been three survey training events - Richmond Park, Club Langley in Bromley and Pangbourne in West Berkshire. Over 90 people have attended these events, from local authority tree officers and landowners/managers, to moth enthusiasts and biological surveyors. This surveying has raised awareness of the threat of OPM, how to spot OPM, how to report OPM and how to record OPM.

The group discussed the effectiveness of the spraying programme. Anecdotal evidence suggests larger trees that were sprayed were more likely to be reinfested. Control contractors agreed getting chemical to the upper canopy was challenging. The group discussed dosage rate restrictions.

Action 4 AH to check with Ian Willoughby re chemical dosage

The group expressed some concern about survey timing and control, pushing till late in the season. The FC are looking to speed up the process between infestation identification and nest removal before the critical peak emergence period.

There was general agreement that evening/night spraying was more effective, with less public awareness / disturbance and lower wind speeds

Biodiversity monitoring is planned in the coming weeks; some has already been done in Pangbourne re bats and butterflies. The group agreed this monitoring was important to inform next years programme decisions and support partners needs e.g. Natural England..

Royal Parks OPM activity update (Colin)

Richmond Park - 60 volunteer surveyors in place and spraying has taken place over a longer period than normal. Caterpillars now in L6 stage and they started removing nests in first week of July (wider window than usual). Spraying has been effective based on previous data, but still some hotspots. General feeling that total nests will be lower but different distribution i.e. some new infestation areas while previous sites may no longer have OPM.

Bushy Park – no. of nests removed expected to be comparable to previous years

Hyde Park/Kensington sprayed – only 1 infested tree found

Brompton cemetery sprayed – only 2 nests found this year

New guidance on pheromone traps published

Pheromone Traps

200 pheromone traps have been purchased and placed in Pangbourne and Bromley/Croydon, the plan is to check them 3 times over the season. Capacity is an issue for west London but agreed FC could provide traps if other stakeholders could manage their installation, monitoring and reporting. It was suggested the focus should be on private grounds where they can be tied off and pulled up/down as required. Mark T gave clear advice on most effective trap implementation, which the programme plans to follow - >13m high in the canopy, funnel traps and specific lures

Action **5** **AH to liaise with Dave re LTOA involvement with pheromone traps and send guidance to AG**

6 Other OPM activities

Research is being commissioned using some of the pilot funding on a range of projects that will complement control plan efforts and other OPM research taking place:

- Population dynamics of oak processionary moth in semi natural woodland habitats, to identify key factors in determining abundance and rates of population increase (PhD studentship)
- Monitoring the efficacy of the OPM control programme - the OPM Control Plan has established a much more rigorous system for documenting the location and number of oak trees treated, the control measures applied and details of the contractors carrying out the work. This work area will link the data recorded on the job sheets completed at the time of treatment with the results of follow-up surveys, to determine (1) the efficacy of the different control treatments applied and (2) the overall success of the control programme
- Biological control by natural enemies - Parasite wasps and invertebrate predators appear to play an important role in limiting OPM populations in parts of Europe, although there is very little information on the range of parasite and predator species involved and their relative impact. Some of the generalist parasite and predator species are probably attacking OPM in the UK, but other key specialist species are probably absent as they will not have been introduced at the same time as their host. The absence of these key species may be allowing OPM populations in the UK to build up to unnaturally high levels, whereas their introduction might help in long-term control. It is difficult to investigate parasitism and predation in OPM, because of the health risks associated with the larval hairs. However, these problems can be circumvented to a large extent by using new molecular techniques to identify parasitoid larvae inside their hosts and prey DNA inside the gut of predators. This avoids the need to maintain OPM

larvae in the laboratory and provides a much more rapid and extensive screening mechanism for estimating rates of parasitism and predation in the field. This work area will be carried out through the appointment of a 2-year post-doctoral position at the University of Hull (Jan 2014 – Dec 2015). The research group at Hull (Darren Evans) has been using novel DNA sequencing techniques to analyse parasitoid relationships amongst leaf mining insects, and this technology will be applied to the parasite and predator complex attacking OPM. The project will also link and work with entomologists at the British Museum for Natural History and in Belgium, France and Germany.

Sue and Andrew summarised the DEFRA/ Imperial College workshop (27/6/13) on OPM research, noting the lessons learned have been embedded in the OPM Control Plan.

The group agreed the Syngenta correspondence was something the group were not in a position to promote, but if in due course is found to be an approved control method, would then support it.

Action 6 AH to draft a response to Dealga on behalf of Sue

Colin summarised some new research at the Royal Parks: (1) assessing the distribution of actual toxic hairs in the environment, which will help risk assessment; PHE are contributing to this work (2) a fly been found that parasitizes OPM, first finding in the UK at Richmond Park. Data and evidence available on the continent.

Sue summarised the 8 recommendations of the Plant Health Task Force Report including the requirement to develop a risk register to plan against future threats. She noted they were all sensible and issues that the OPM AG had considered where appropriate.

Sue highlighted the All Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture group, where she took the opportunity to note good OPM progress with Owen Patterson and the need for continued resources.

Craig summarised media & PR activity (leaflets, banners, magnetic signs, website, news releases at key points such as nest formation), noting general positive support and awareness of the OPM control programme. The group commended FC staff for their media work to raise OPM awareness and present facts, which helped the control programme. The group agreed further work is needed in due course to promote our outputs and outcomes, whilst managing expectations.

7 Securing future resources

A crucial stage coming up is the need to secure further funding for the coming years, to build on the good work done this year. A report will be produced that sets out work done this year, lessons learned, and then a recommended programme for next year with resource implications. The group agreed the earlier future funding is known, the better we can plan for next year. Work will need to start shortly after the end of this OPM season, collating data and outputs/outcomes, to feed into the report

Action 7 Craig to find out indicative timetable for report/funding bid to Defra for future years

The group noted some concern about inequity of funding where, for example, some Boroughs who have not committed some of their own funding towards OPM control are having it fully funded via FC, whereas 'responsible' ones didn't. This is a recognised issue, but the additional Defra funding would have been unlikely without the evidence of other stakeholder commitment, and future funding would probably be

reliant on this too. The group understood this and discussed options such as a match funding mix of central government and local authority/other key landowners. The group agreed private individual landowners would probably need full financial support, and that high level influence will be needed to gain pan London organisation commitment to the match funding approach.

The group agreed a lessons learned meeting is needed that pulled in a wider range of stakeholder (up to 50) to discuss this years work and how we could improve control efforts next year. A provisional date of 17th September was agreed and a venue is needed

Action **8 Sue to seek a CoL venue for the lessons learned meeting, other group members to consider possible venue offers if needed**

The group agreed a target date of mid October for a draft report on this years control programme, lessons learned and future plan proposals. A date of Tuesday 15th October was agreed for an OPM AG meeting to review the draft report.

8 AOB & date of next meeting

AOB

A suggestion was made of having Arboricultural Association representation; the group felt that the meeting representation was considerable and as there were several AA members on the group, specific AA membership was probably not needed at present although discussions with AA had already started re cascading of OPM information via AA.

A query was raised regarding public nature of the OPM AG meeting notes. The group felt there were no sensitivities and they could be deemed public information. The group recognised the membership was a cross section of stakeholder interests and further thoughts were needed re keeping all OPM stakeholders informed of AG work.

Action **9 Communicating AG work beyond members to all stakeholders to be future agenda item**

Greg highlighted ConFor interest in worker protection issues relating to OPM.

Date of next meetings:

Lessons Learned event 17th September, venue tbc

OPM AG 15th October at Guildhall