

# OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014, Guildhall, London

**Present:** Sue Ireland, Adam Wallace, Barry Walsh, Emer O'Connell, Craig Ruddick, Julia Branson, Mark Townsend, Andrew Hoppit, Craig Harrison

**Apologies:** Richard Trippett, Tony Leach, Dougal Driver, Greg Vickers, Andrew Jones, Jane Carlson, Dave Lofthouse, Colin Buttery, Mike Robinson

## 1 Summary of actions from this meeting

### New & outstanding actions from this meeting

<i>Action Point</i>	<i>Details</i>
<b>Outstanding actions from previous meetings - none</b>	
<b>New Actions</b>	
1	Emer / Andrew to share the PHE presentation with the Advisory Group
2	Andrew to provide winter survey summary once survey complete
3	Andrew to provide web link to report
4	Sue/Adam to liaise re Wimbledon SSSI consent
5	Adam/Andrew to liaise re SSSI buffer
6	Alison to investigate how release of OPM research information can be improved
7	Andrew to share Arb. Association Magazine article
8	Craig to keep the group informed of governance development and role of Advisory Group
9	Andrew to check availability for next meeting 11th Sep with group members

## 2 Review of Actions from last meeting

AP	Details	Progress
1	Andrew Hoppit to share Nigel's email re number of permissible chemical applications permitted	Done
2	Andrew Hoppit to share revised OPM good tree practice document with AG before end of November for sign off	Has now been signed off and will be issued shortly. Article in Arb. Magazine planned including leaflet
3	Andrew Hoppit to resend Barry the link to Holland OPM 2012 report	Done
4	Advisory Group members to pass comments & suggestions on the report to Craig by 29 <sup>th</sup> November	Done
5	OPM 2013 report to be endorsed by the Advisory Group early December (date to be confirmed when FC send final version)	Not formally done but no major queries/concerns raised by AG members

### Matters arising

None raised

## 3 PHE research findings

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Emer & Barry gave a presentation. The findings will be published in due course after peer review etc

The group discussed whether further survey of residents in London would be useful; Barry felt not critical and should focus on occupational health issues. Emer noted difficulty re OPM health impact in London given we remove nests asap so exposure is minimised. Passive surveillance proposed. Barry noted that they will do their normal awareness raising amongst GPs etc at appropriate times in the OPM season and more work could be done to raise awareness with pharmacists though may be next year. A link to OPM information via NHS choices planned. Good working relationships have been established between PHE and Dutch / other public health contacts that will be maintained to ensure good information exchange.

Andrew – liaison with major leisure sites who are considering OPM risk/impact and developing their own site plans for example Chessington World of Adventure.

The group noted the rigour of the review exercise and thanked Emer/Barry for the presentation

**Action**                      **1**    **Emer / Andrew to share the PHE presentation with the Advisory Group**

## 4 2013 Report

The 2013 Report was published on the FC website yesterday after discussion / agreement with Defra. The report has been well received by lots of stakeholders, notably Defra, seeing it as honest and clearly founded on partnership working; the fact the outcomes were so good certainly helped. Pleased about the success of Bt application.

Andrew noted it doesn't include winter survey information and gave an update. Pangbourne – winter survey half done and no nests found, difficult survey conditions given proximity to Thames and access to low lying sites like Herridge Copse.

5575 oak trees over 2 metres were surveyed at Bethlem – only 28 nests found during winter survey (over 4000 were present in the summer of 2012) and the relatively small number of other nests found during Winter survey in London have not increased the extent of infestation.

The 2013 report, given it is on the FC website, can be signposted to key stakeholders to raise awareness, but major promotion via e.g. news releases are discouraged given funding has not been secured yet and there are sensitivities prior to any Ministerial announcement next month

**Action**                      **2**    **Andrew to provide winter survey summary once survey complete**

**Action**                      **3**    **Andrew to provide web link to report**

## 5 2014 proposals

Craig summarised the 2014 proposals/options paper, emphasising that this information cannot go outside the Advisory Group. The recommended strategy has been agreed with Defra Plant Health Policy Team and also gone through the Defra plant health stakeholder group (which includes NT, WT, Tree Council) with their support. A submission has been put to the Minister regarding OPM and funding for other tree health issues and we are awaiting ministerial approval and announcement in March. Given the wait and reasonable certainty of securing funding, we are

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developing 2014 control plans based on funding approval so we are ready to begin control work when emergence starts.

Mark noted Dutch studies on emergence / modelling and hopes to match their model with Met Office data to better determine emergence. The group noted the mild winter and potential early emergence in 2014, so possible need to start control work in early April?

Pangbourne control plans are still under discussion, notably what to spray given last years OPM findings were only in pheromone traps with no nests observed, control in the SSSI (likely not to be sprayed this year), and possibility of aerial spraying in inaccessible woodland. There is a public meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb so proposals will be firmed up for that meeting.

Adam noted Wimbledon consenting not received yet and need to get this in place asap. Julia queried buffer distance to SSSI for consent/assent so they can be added to the GIS information to inform control programmes

**Action 4 Sue/Adam to liaise re Wimbledon SSSI consent**

**Action 5 Adam/Andrew to liaise re SSSI buffer**

## 6 OPM research & Monitoring Summary

Craig summarised the work to collate the range of research and other evidence work on OPM to give an overall picture of what areas are being studied and results to date. The group agreed a common issue surrounded slow/little release of research information by some organisations which was felt to be unhelpful.

Application methods research has provided some useful early information on what methods are more effective. This will not result in massive changes in application approach or withdrawal of certain methods, but will inform and hone what is most appropriate for certain sites e.g. sensitive sites where dosage / runoff may be minimised, and where there are large oak trees. The helicopter application report highlighted the very low dosage/volumes required and that very little chemical reached the woodland floor.

The group discussed biodiversity impact – the reduction in Tortrix larvae is likely to have some effect on e.g. Blue tits who rely on them in early spring for food, but the group noted the scale of spraying and blue tit populations in the wider context. Bat monitoring has not raised any conclusive findings.

**Action 6 Alison to investigate how release of OPM research information can be improved**

## 7 2014 Communications Plan

Andrew talked members through the draft plan which was supported. There will be a 4-5 page OPM feature in the Arboricultural Association magazine, including importance of vigilance and wearing PPE in infested areas

**Action 7 Andrew to share Arb Association Magazine article**

The group discussed other communications opportunities/channels. Mark being approached by Pitchcare (Golf Course sector) and will pass the enquiry to Andrew. Other suggestions from the group included Horticulture Week, Institute of Groundsman, Institute of Chartered Foresters and British Wildlife.

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## 8 Governance

Craig highlighted that a FC project board is being set up, given the scale of the OPM programme and need to ensure internal processes/information exchange were effective between the London/SE team, National Team in Bristol and the GB Plant Health team in Edinburgh. Precise membership to be confirmed but recognised that the Advisory Group remains crucial and need to ensure there is clarity of interaction between the various groups.

**Action**                      **8    Craig to keep the group informed of governance development and role of Advisory Group**

## 9 AOB

The group noted attendance was lower than normal but largely down to the meeting being held in half term holiday. The group's commitment remains and is a key factor in Defra's funding support.

The Lord Mayor is going to Chelsea Flower Show on 20<sup>th</sup> May and CoL apprentices attending. FC will have a representative each day to support the stand too. Sue noted a useful meeting with FERA regarding their stand at Chelsea and ensuring the 2 stands complemented each other re messages

### **Date of next meeting**

The group agreed that in the coming months work could be done by email exchange e.g. comments on the 2014 control plan.

The 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at Irish Chamber, Guildhall was suggested for the next meeting

**Action**                      **9    Andrew to check availability for next meeting 11<sup>th</sup> Sep with group members**