

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 11th September 2014, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland, Greg Vickers, Craig Ruddick, Mark Townsend, Dave Lofthouse, Julia Branson (Geodata), Adam Wallace, Andrew Jones, Mike Robinson, Simon Anning (Defra PH), Miranda Minton (PHE), Andrew Hoppit, Craig Harrison, Stewart Snape, Charlton Clark, Gill Brown (FC)

Apologies: Richard Trippett, Dougal Driver, Colin Buttery, Barry Walsh

1 Introduction & Welcome

Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting, notably new members.

2 Summary of actions from this meeting

New & outstanding actions from this meeting

<i>Action Point</i>	<i>Details</i>
Outstanding actions from previous meetings - none	
New Actions	
1	OPM AG members to pass 2014 OPM survey and control information to Andrew Hoppit - and encourage other stakeholders to do so – by the end of October
2	FC will inform Advisory Group members when the preliminary report has been published
3	FC to draft common messages / lines to take for AG members to complement publication of the 2014 interim results
4	FC to share summary of OPM research; AG members to inform Craig of other work that should be included
5	FC to invite conservation NGO rep to join the Advisory Group
6	PHE to share report on human health impact 2014 once finalised

3 Review of Actions from last meeting

AP	Details	Progress
1	Emer / Andrew to share the PHE presentation with the Advisory Group	Done
2	Andrew to provide winter survey summary once survey complete	Done
3	Andrew to provide web link to report	Done
4	Sue/Adam to liaise re Wimbledon SSSI consent	Done
5	Adam/Andrew to liaise re SSSI buffer	Closed
6	Alison to investigate how release of OPM research information can be improved	OPM research updates and annual seminar planned
7	Andrew to share Arb. Association Magazine article	Done
8	Craig to keep the group informed of governance development and role of Advisory Group	Explained at the meeting
9	Andrew to check availability for next meeting 11th Sep with group members	Done

Matters arising

None raised

4 Preliminary results from 2014

Andrew summarised the report findings. Key points to note:

- That the report mustn't be distributed more widely at this stage, the FC hopes to publish it shortly on their website and will inform AG members
- That they are provisional results as we're still collecting data
- We particularly need other owner/manager data to collate a full picture
- Wider findings are partly due to more extensive survey effort
- AG agreement that the programme has had an impact on OPM spread this year and likely to have been a lot worse had the enhanced programme not happened in 2013 and 2014
- Winter survey will be important to inform next year's programme

Sue noted CoL have caught male moths as part of their pheromone trap programme – data not included in AG report / maps as location data only received very recently.

Mark Townsend highlighted the guidance re trapping interpretation applied in Holland, based on Henry Kuppen advice. Important information is how fresh they are (the tattier they are, the further they are likely to have flown) and numbers caught to determine where spraying happens the following year. Henry's advice is that if more than 5 males are caught in a trap then spraying in the vicinity should be carried out in the following year.

Colin noted that nest numbers remain a key factor, as it affects the potential/scale of infestation next year.

The group discussed what the results mean and implications for next year, suggesting more resources are needed from Defra and greater commitment of partners.

Adam - noted that traps in Cobham & Oxshot are finding male moths; Sue noted male moth trapping in south Epping Forest

The group agreed the need for extensive trapping next year, and that weather is a key factor that affects survey/control strategy.

Communicating the 2014 results and future control proposals

The FC highlighted the sensitivity of the information and central government concern that national media could misinterpret the results to criticise the control programme. The Advisory Group were keen to know what opportunities there are for non-govt members to give messages instead.

The FC emphasised that any communication of OPM results needs to be based on solid evidence, and the need for consistent messaging amongst AG members. The group noted this but also made clear the group isn't bound by government restrictions; that said, it wants to work collaboratively with all group members.

Group members felt public awareness of OPM isn't apparent and won't be resolved if we don't/can't raise awareness. The issue isn't about just tree health but public health. Some members felt public awareness was reasonable - particularly in the core area where it has now been an issue for 8 years – but is variable.

Miranda noted that OPM is not a major human health risk in relative medical terms, but the group highlighted the wider implications e.g. commercial recreation could be massive. As a matter of routine, GPs, pharmacists and A&E departments have been briefed on OPM symptoms and some surgeries did request leaflets and posters.

Charlton summarised the 2014 communications effort and evaluation process that is underway. A lot of effort has been put into identifying target audience e.g. organisations, institutions, pharmacists, vets, golf courses, sports centres etc. Use of twitter to disseminate plant health messages @treepestnews

Giving feedback on public awareness (as an indicator of communications impact), the group noted that were public reports this year, unlike last year. Richmond Borough have been forwarding reports to FC, and approximately ~20% of OPM reports to the FC reports have come from far and wide (Glasgow, Cornwall). There are several OPM notification routes – Treealert, online form, OPM mailbox, PH number in Bristol.

Site based comms suggestions included use of signage away from contractor vehicles in future as vehicle stickers encourage people walking right up to the operational area. Survey & Control contractors issued a lot of leaflets, and they were distributed by other AG members.

In the Royal Parks, public notification of OPM nests where they're already known was a problem; the use of orange disks on trees to show an OPM nest is present is employed to reduce this problem.

The Group agreed an FC briefing on common messages and lines to take to complement the publication of the preliminary results would be helpful.

5 East London finding

Andrew gave a summary of the particular case, work to eliminate the infestation and the trace back mechanism. The group discussed the challenges of inspecting imported trees for OPM egg plaque presence even if they have been declared OPM free.

Protected Zone

Stewart summarised the forthcoming EU legislation which comes into force on 1st October 2014. It obliges exporters to declare each shipment is free from OPM and implies individual tree inspection by exporter. Member states have to investigate further if OPM is found on exported trees and may revoke the suppliers licence.

The group discussed the need to inform and influence key stakeholders such as landscape architects and developers, who still regularly specify oak standards/semi-mature trees. The FC is looking to provide guidance and advice to LI and other organisations on the new legislation, but also extra measures to minimise Biosecurity risks.

6 2015 thoughts

The group discussed at length their thoughts regarding what should be done next year and beyond:

- the need to establish extent by survey and trapping significantly further out
- a fundamental debate is still needed regarding strategy and that perhaps we are at a tipping point?
- nest removal tackles public health issue but not the control strategy

-
- without OPM control we face risk of recreation site closure and potential commercial damage
 - whether there should be an aerial spraying pilot somewhere other than Pangbourne; scope to review similar exercises in e.g. Auckland NZ
 - whether the strategy needs to move towards a risk based approach
 - Pangbourne still held up as what can be achieved and we should still consider what it would cost to do similar elsewhere; noting that success in Pangbourne was largely down to ground based spraying, including use of deltamethrin
 - The need to balance the reality of risk and living with it, versus non target impacts
 - Continental approaches. In Holland they spend €7M p.a. using risk based approach, based on public health risk
 - Long range weather forecasting could inform the control programme
 - Whether public concerns are greater re perception of OPM human health risk versus pesticide application? Group members suggested public reaction to ground based spraying has been virtually nil, aerial spraying has attracted the most interest/concern
 - Note that the cost of aerial application is cheaper in heavily wooded areas, and experience suggests OPM control costs are highest on sites such as golf courses (discussion about who should pay for the control?)
 - Trapping is most cost effective method of determining extent
 - Need to trap on basis of 2 years ahead expectation, to find what the outer extent is

7 OPM lessons learned workshop

The workshop will be held on 23rd October 1400-1700 at Friends House, Euston. AG members will be invited by 19th September. The meeting seeks to gain stakeholder feedback on how the season went this year and how it could be enhanced in future. The group agreed discussions are likely to follow a similar path to this meeting

The group agreed it is important to recognise positive elements of what we've achieved.

8 OPM Research update

Colin highlighted a draft independent report on non-target impact in Richmond Park. The results indicate some impact on non-target species (though some aspects were inconclusive) and the need to consider how it is communicated.

The FC have collated a summary table of the range of research and monitoring work taking place, and there are plans to hold an OPM research seminar in Winter 2015

9 AOB

The AG agreed a representative from conservation bodies to join the group

Miranda highlighted that a report has been drafted on the affected school children this summer

Date of next meeting

Pre Xmas meeting suggested if AG is to influence strategy for 2015

Next meeting 11th December 2014 1400-1600 at Irish Chamber, Guildhall