

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes

25 June 2015, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland (Chair), Craig Harrison, Andrew Hoppit, Stewart Snape, Julia Branson (Geodata), Chris Williams, Mark Parsons, Colin Buttery, Emily Dresner (NE), Gill Brown (FC)

Apologies: Barry Walsh, Emer O'Connell, Craig Ruddick, Adam Wallace, Andrew Jones, Charlton Clark, Nigel Straw, Jane Carlsen, Amanda Mitchell, Jake Morris, Mike Robinson, Mark Townsend, John Deakin

1. Introduction & Welcome

Sue welcomed everyone including Emily Dresner (NE)

2. Summary of actions from this meeting

Action Point	<i>Details</i>
1	Stewart Snape to circulate ' <i>Comparing and Valuing the Impacts of OPM in the Netherlands to England</i> ' report when available.
2	Andrew Hoppit will check and confirm with London Zoo on control action taken to date. Andrew will also check findings with survey team.
3	Andrew Hoppit to look at improving wording of SPHN for 2016
4	All to review ' <i>OPM review of challenges, progress and options</i> ' report and send comments to Andrew Hoppit by 17 July 2015.

3. Review of Actions from last meeting

AP	Details	Progress
1	Andrew Hoppit to chase Stewart re latest results at Pangbourne	Completed – report circulated.
2	Adam/NE are invited to comment on Mark's report	Completed.
3	Craig to look at sharing the OPM research summary more widely	Ongoing.
4	Mark Parsons to publish his report subject to NE and any further AG comments by end of February	Completed.
5	Julia to share final winter survey results with the group once it is completed and results collated	Completed.
6	Craig to feed back AG thoughts on 2015 programme and stakeholder engagement to the Defra OPM project board	Completed.
7	FC to liaise with AG members who have not regularly attended	Agenda Item
8	AG comments on contingency plan to Andrew Hoppit	Completed.

The group reviewed actions from the last meeting:

Action Point 3 – Craig Harrison advised that the OPM research summary, including conclusions from Defra, Forest Research and Scientist workshops, is being updated and will be shared with the group shortly. The AG noted the value of the OPM research seminar in 2013 and that another should be considered in the coming year. Stewart Snape referred to the OPM project '*Comparing and Valuing the Impacts of OPM in the Netherlands to England*'. Draft report is due end of June 2015 and final report due end July 2015. Stewart noted the key difference that Dutch OPM control is funded by public health budget rather than tree health budget here.

Action 1: Stewart Snape to circulate '*Comparing and Valuing the Impacts of OPM in the Netherlands to England*' report when available.

Matters arising:

Mark Parsons referred to the minutes of the last meeting regarding Item 4 – Impact of OPM control.

1. *'Inherent problem that differences could be down to other factors due to sampling design'*.

Mark feels that the use of the word 'inherent' played down results of Richmond Park research;

Colin Buttery advised there is not enough data but possibly a 'trend' so no explanation. Noted changes have taken place but cannot prescribe.

2. *'BT breaks down quickly, so hard to explain why there is an impact in later feeders and following years'*.

Impact noted but no explanation. The group agreed to remove '*BT breaks down quickly*' and replace '*and following years*' with '*in subsequent years*'

3. *'Bycatch interesting – Bt isn't supposed to have an impact on beetles and further work would be valuable'*.

Amend to '*indirect impact*'.

4. *'Opm defoliates a little versus overall spray of many infested trees'*

Discussion that spraying is artificial defoliation. OPM is localised in defoliation. Amend to '*OPM defoliates relatively few trees*'

5. *'Noted that we don't know the impact of chemical on ground layer'*.

Mark advised there are nationally scarce species present in national parks under trees.

6. *'Noted that Tortrix was sprayed in mid 90's especially winter moth when they had a significant impact in southern England, hasn't been a problem since and unlikely we'd do similar again'*.

Agreed to delete '*noted that Tortrix was*'. Insert (*Suffolk*) after Southern England.

4. Update to Terms of Reference

The changes to group membership were noted and agreed a review of the terms of reference would be appropriate later in the year.

5. Operational Updates on OPM Control Programme

Andrew Hoppit referred to Paper 2 – 'OPM Treated Sites Spring 2015' -circulated prior to the meeting:

Control:

Spraying programme completed 22 May 2015. Nearly all sites received 2 applications.

Discussions followed on how do we know what control work has taken place:

- Some feedback from communications sent to landowners in core area;
- Feedback received from main stakeholders, Network Rail, Transport for London, Royal Parks;
- Agreed that we need to encourage people to respond to Statutory Plant Health Notices (SPHN). Sue Ireland suggested a 'tear off' declaration signed by owner that action required by SPHN had been completed. Pre-paid envelopes to be included in issue of SPHN. If no response, follow up letter should be sent by recorded delivery.
- Consideration should also be given to the timing of SPHN issue. It was agreed that ideally SPHNs should be issued in December as landowners need to know what to do this season and next. Timing of control plan approval has made this difficult in recent years

Andrew referred to a recent face-to face meeting with London Zoo and implications that control action has not taken place.

Action 2: Andrew Hoppit will check and confirm with London Zoo on control action taken to date. Andrew will also check findings with survey team.

Action 3: Andrew Hoppit to look at improving wording of SPHN.

Concerns were raised within the group that there is not enough feedback from some key boroughs –

Ealing - Notifying us of findings.

Hammersmith & Fulham - Notifying us of findings.

Hounslow – Informative webpage on OPM and who to contact but advised by one owner that response has been slow when contacting them.

Wandsworth – Good communication but little information on action taken.

Richmond – Very good on both communication and action taken.

Kingston – Good communication and borough have undertaken some surveying.

Merton – Limited on sightings or control.

Kensington and Chelsea – Reports of sightings received as a result of Tree Officer attendance at recent OPM Awareness event.

Sue Ireland suggested arranging a meeting with Chief Executives from key boroughs. Colin Buttery advised that Richmond Council leader, Lord True, is currently trying to arrange a meeting of council leaders.

Survey:

Andrew Hoppit advised that the survey programme started last Monday 15 June 2015.

Kingston Borough Council have undertaken their own survey work and as a result it has identified further spread to the south.

Sightings also recorded at Dulwich Golf Course which could cause concern for Shooters Hill area.

Other observations noted:

Bethlem Hospital site has been sprayed but appears to show an increase in infestation.

Richmond Park –control programme in place but infestation as bad as last year; probably worst. Notably an increase in ground level nesting.

Reports from Network Rail of increase in low and ground level nesting.

Pheromone Traps:

Andrew Hoppit advised that the pheromone trapping programme of 900 traps encircling London was underway. This will also include the corridor between Heathrow to Pangbourne - 2 traps per 4km.

Andrew confirmed that a visual survey would not take place at Pangbourne this year as nothing significant has been found in the area for the past two years. However, a programme of 100 traps is planned.

6. OPM Communications

Craig Harrison advised that there has been a lot of activity regarding communication for both the core and control zones. Including:

- Correspondence sent from FC Director of England to Local Authorities.
- Letter issued to all owners in core zone outlining control plans and links to 'landowners manual' on FC website.

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- Circulation of Weekly Update Newsletter to owners and stakeholder has improved the sharing of information but encouragement still needed to improve the two way flow.
 - Weekly dial-in updates with key stakeholders but still lack of engagement with some boroughs. No major issues arising so far this year
 - Distribution of leaflets and posters.
 - Twitter Campaign – Craig is tweeting regularly during nesting season. This will include the 'Spot it. Report it. Don't touch it' campaign.
 - Developing Youtube video to raise profile of 'what people should be looking for'.
 - Andrew and Craig interviews for BBC Radio 4 PM programme 15th June.

The group noted their disappointment at Public Health England's (PHE) decision not to lead on notifying schools and early learning centres of the presence of OPM, and the health risks and advice – despite being agreed earlier in the year at an FC/PHE communications liaison meeting. Sue Ireland has been liaising with Defra on the matter and offered to be involved in future discussions.

Andrew Hoppit confirmed that he notifies PHE of all cases where FC have been informed of OPM related health issues.

7. OPM Programme Review and Future Plans

Andrew Hoppit referred to Paper 3 – 'OPM review of challenges, progress and options' report circulated prior to the meeting. The report shows how we have gone forward since 2010. Andrew will be updating the document to include/consider: What more could be done? What should we do? Andrew would welcome comments back from Advisory Group members.

Action 4: All to review 'OPM review of challenges, progress and options' report and send comments to Andrew Hoppit by 17 July 2015.

Discussions followed on the OPM Control Programme Evaluation project – Paper 4 circulated prior to the meeting included:

- Economic Impact analysis – Assessing the impact of options from doing nothing to increased control funding?
- Data and values from the recent i-Tree project may help modelling evaluation in terms of ecosystem service impacts.
- Invitation for OPM Advisory Group interaction including reviewing key project outputs.
- Results of evaluation could determine government decision on OPM programme.

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- Discussion on policy will start in September 2015. Final report due January 2016.

The group raised concerns regarding the timing of pilot evaluation and 2015 review versus any decision on future OPM control in 2016 and beyond. Given the timescale for evaluation, the group felt 2016 plans should be based on a minimum of current funding for control to ensure the investment in past few years is not lost, while a longer term programme is agreed.

The group agreed to spend time discussing options for the future at the next meeting – 14 September 2015. Information from visual surveys and pheromone trap programme should be available then to support discussions on future options.

Emily Dresner, NE advised that Natural England continue to consider and approve appropriate OPM control work on SSSIs and this will include newly designated sites in future.

8. AOB

Mark Parsons referred to the PHE Publication – ‘Health effects of exposure to setae of oak processionary moth larvae:systemic review’ (link circulated prior to the meeting). Mark brought to the attention of the group the ‘Conclusions and London risk assessment’ of the report which concludes: *‘Likely severity of impact on health = low’* and *‘Likely impact on health services = low (localised)’*, *though PHE continue to support the OPM control work taking place under Tree Health legislation/funding as it reduces the public health risk.*

Date of next meeting

Next meeting: 14th September 2015 2pm at Irish Chambers, Guildhall