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# Oak Processionary Moth

## OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 10 March 2016, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland (Chair), Craig Harrison, Andrew Hoppit, Jake Morris, Nigel Straw, Julia Branson (Geodata), Colin Buttery, John Edwards, Miranda Mindlin, Mark Parsons, Craig Ruddick, Richard Trippett, Adam Wallace, Gill Brown (Notes)

Apologies: Charlton Clark, John Deakin, Andrea Deol, Amanda Mitchell, Mike Robinson, Stewart Snape, Mark Townsend.

### 1. Introduction & Welcome

Sue Ireland welcomed everyone to the meeting, including John Edwards from Surrey County Council and Miranda Mindlin from PHE.

### 2. Summary of actions from this meeting

Action Point	Details
1	John Edwards to forward details of Surrey County Council boundaries to Julia Branson.
2	Gill Brown to contact John Morgan to clarify protected zone status for Guildford district.
3	Colin Buttery to forward copy of Royal Parks OPM report to John Edwards.
4	Andrew Hoppit to locate OPM banners previously issued to London boroughs.
5	Miranda Mindlin to clarify who is responsible for OPM work related to occupational health – PHE or HSE?
6	Andrew Hoppit to invite member of Highway England as representative on OPM Advisory Board.

### 3. Review of Actions from last meeting

AP	Details	Progress
1	All to forward any ideas/comments to Charlton Clarke on future comms activity.	Agenda item
2	Craig Harrison to arrange introduction to the Arb Association for Emer O'Connell.	Ongoing
3	Stewart Snape to circulate ' <i>Comparing and Valuing the Impacts of OPM in the Netherlands to England</i> ' report when available.	Completed.

The group reviewed actions from the last meeting:

*Craig Harrison to arrange introduction to the Arb Association for Emer O'Connell, PHE:* Emer is in the process of handing over her work related to OPM. Colleague, Miranda Mindlin, attended the meeting today.

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*Stewart Snape to circulate 'Comparing and Valuing the Impacts of OPM in the Netherlands to England' report when available: Final copy of report was circulated to group members in November 2015.*

#### 4. Surrey Representative for OPM Advisory Group

The group introduced themselves to John Edwards, Countryside Management & Biodiversity Manager, Surrey County Council. John will be joining the group as a representative for Surrey.

#### 5. Operational Update

Andrew Hoppit referred to the maps circulated prior to the meeting:

**Winter Survey Map:**

- Winter survey map shows latest data for visual and pheromone trap surveillance. All oaks surveyed within 250m radius of where 5 or more moths were caught as a result of the pheromone trap programme 2015.
- Survey found new outbreak in Barnet/Enfield borders.
  - Four small nests found on one tree in parkland;
  - Site is 8km from Hampstead Heath outbreak; no trace of any infestation between Hampstead Heath and Barnet site;
  - Survey started on 4 March of heavily oak woodland north of Barnet site.

**Wisley OPM Nest Survey Map:**

- Wisley OPM nest survey map shows latest data on infested/not infested sites in the Guildford district:
  - OPM outbreak in the area initially discovered by in-house team at RHS Gardens, Wisley;
  - Spread mainly in south/south east direction. Small nest also found in east direction by Effingham train station; nothing noted north of site;
  - Wisley site is 12km away from known OPM site in Chessington. Link between sites unknown. It is known that an area by an airfield close to the A3 is used for fly-tipping.

**Wisley OPM treatment area map:**

The intention is to control/treat areas 50m from infested trees.

John Edwards advised that district boundaries and Surrey County Council boundaries are different. He will forward details of Surrey County Council boundaries to Julia Branson.

**Action 1: John Edwards to forward details of Surrey County Council boundaries to Julia Branson.**

#### 6. Plans for 2016

Craig Harrison referred to the summary of proposed operational activity 2016 document circulated prior to the meeting. Document self-explanatory but key points include:

- The pilot OPM Control Programme will continue for a further year;

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- Control plan similar to previous years but modified based on our current understanding of OPM. It is expected that the plan will be adjusted during the year depending on new findings;
  - Core Zone boundary extended;
  - Surveillance and control work will continue in Pangbourne, Olympic Park, Croydon/Bromley, Guildford and buffer zone/outer edge of main London area

Discussions on the 2016 plan followed:

Adam Wallace referred to the emphasis on surveillance work in the proposed budget/resource allocation. What is this based on? Craig Harrison advised the budget has been secured and allocated based on experience and knowledge, noting the trend in recent years towards greater proportion of surveillance work. This may need to be reviewed during the year to comply with contingency plans if new outbreaks occur. Andrew Hoppit confirmed that additional budget was secured this year to meet contingency plans.

Andrew explained:

**Visual Surveillance:**

- We will not survey *every* oak outside of the core area;
- Target is to carry out a visual survey of trees known to be infested in 2014 and 2015 plus any oak within 100m;
- Visual survey of trees within 250m of pheromone traps where 5 or more moths were caught in 2015.

**Pheromone Trapping:**

- Programme planned for 2016 to deploy 1500 pheromone traps;
- Trapping programme mainly geared towards a range of objectives – increased intelligence on outer extent, research; to continue to build on 2014/15 trapping data; to build our understanding between trap findings and likelihood of infestation nearby
- Reasonably cheap method to monitor male presence but it cannot confirm population; at present there is nothing else that can achieve better results.

Discussions continued on plans for 2016, including:

- Should government enforce control in future rather than fund it?
- Higher biodiversity risks in the Guildford district taken on board;
- Increasing evidence that trees are being removed because of OPM;
- Current policy statement unhelpful as geared towards eradication. Fundamental policy review will help with changes in perception;
- Further knowledge and evidence will be gained during transition year. Should we also use this year to think about a risk base approach for the long term?
- Adam Wallace emphasised the importance of getting the message right now. What are we asking landowners to do and the risk that policy/approach changes

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in due course? Craig said the Control Plan would clearly state that the plans are for this year and may change subject to further intelligence and the outcome of the fundamental review, but can't pre-empt what the review will find and subsequent decisions

- Is Guildford district still within protected zone? There was some confusion but thought the PZ status had been removed in light of Ministerial submission /agreement for at least temporary lift in Guildford area

**Action 2: Gill Brown to contact John Morgan to clarify protected zone status for Guildford district.**

John Edwards opened up discussions on evidence of OPM control and the effects on biodiversity:

- Suggestion that lepidoptera at time of larvae will be affected and other non-target species on the ground. But this cannot be quantified;
- If SSSI area, FC will discuss and decide with Natural England best method of control;
- Confirmed that Royal Parks and FC contractors do not use Dimilin.

Colin Buttery gave a brief overview of the control process in Royal Parks:

- Use *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) selectively (lowest risk);
- Nest removal;
- Zone base risk assessment, such as public areas;
- Targeted spraying based on public movement;
- Assessment of ecological risk;
- Work with Forestry Commission and Forest Research – ongoing learning.

**Action 3: Colin Buttery to forward copy of Royal Parks OPM report to John Edwards.**

Craig Harrison expressed how the value of the group is highly recognised by FC and Defra. It is hoped that the group will continue as it provides valuable advice and stakeholder perspectives for dealing with OPM. This will be key for reviewing policy during the transitional year.

Sue Ireland expressed her disappointment that the group has not had an opportunity to speak to the Minister, given the recent cancellation of a planned visit to Richmond.

It was agreed to review the group in the autumn.

## 7. Comms for 2016

Craig Harrison referred to the paper circulated prior to the meeting:

- Comms activity will be similar to previous years.
- Good feedback on comms received from the last stakeholders workshop.

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- Public information leaflets will continue but no further publication of banners. Andrew Hoppit will locate banners previously distributed to boroughs and ask for return if not in use.  
**Action 4: Andrew Hoppit to locate OPM banners previously issued to London boroughs.**
  - John Edwards advised he has access to council webpage that he can use as a template to get a consistent message across all 12 Surrey boroughs.

Discussions continued on comms and the health care system:

Miranda Mindlin advised the group of advice given to GPs. The group felt pharmacists were probably more valuable contacts as they are more likely to deal with the symptoms. If OPM related letters are issued to GPs, Craig suggested PHE engage with Charlton Clark for messaging. Miranda advised that OPM work would be low priority for PHE in light of Ebola etc. Colin Buttery advised that Royal Parks have an array of confirmed OPM rash images that they can share if visual evidence is needed. Jake Morris asked if it possible to get anonymous records from GP's where people have presented OPM symptoms

The group discussed occupational health and arboricultural workers. Miranda thought this would be the responsibility of HSE.

**Action 5: Miranda Mindlin to clarify who is responsible for OPM work related occupational health – PHE or HSE?**

Andrew talked about emergence for this season and advised that Gillian Jonusas, Royal Parks, has recently found egg plaques. Emergence expected probably 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. Andrew will notify London, Surrey, Herts, Sussex and Berks areas of emergence.

## 8. Evaluation of OPM and Fundamental Review

### **Fundamental review:**

Jake Morris referred to the 'outline scoping document' circulated prior to the meeting. Document self-explanatory. The review will look at future Defra/FC policy for OPM .Jake gave a brief overview:

Key drivers include:

- Current OPM control coming to an end;
- New outbreaks in Protected Zone;
- Stretching of current resources;
- Results of evaluation project.

The review will focus on 2 questions:

- a)What risks does OPM pose in the UK?
- b)What is an appropriate and proportionate response and/or approach to the management of OPM in the next 5 -10 years?

The review will be delivered over 2 phases:

Evidence review – will look at the key activities listed and identify what we can do in the 2016/17 control programme to close evidence gaps. Report expected by end of August.

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Policy Design – this will look at how to build evaluation results in; developmental approach; enable negotiating on funding. Submission to Ministers expected by the end of October 2016.

The group discussed timings and responsibilities:

- Need to see proposals on how the Advisory Group will be involved and a detailed time plan for feedback from the group. Will this be by meeting or conference call?
- Is there a list of evidence gaps? Are these mini projects and what are the time constraints?
- Jake advised the intention is to hold workshops. August timing of Phase 1 questioned as data from pheromone trapping programme will not be available until September.

### **Evaluation:**

Jake referred to the OPM control programme evaluation update circulated prior to the meeting. Jake confirmed the completion of the data gathering and reporting phase of the project. Final project sign-off meeting held 26 February 2016. Target date for publication is the end of March 2016.

A formal presentation to the OPM Advisory group is planned for June; to be combined with the OPM review workshop. Jake gave a brief overview of the key findings as listed on the update paper and thanked all members of the Advisory Group who have been involved in the project, including their support, interviews, reports and reviews of drafts.

Discussion continued on the evaluation project:

Colin Buttery said the strongest lesson learnt is the speed of response and government leadership. Colin added the problem should have been dealt with in 2007 by going onto private/public land as a military response rather than civil. This could have subsequently saved Royal Parks several thousands of pounds in control operations.

Miranda Mindlin referred to reducing the risk of exposure to OPM and the effect on open green spaces. This needs to be managed as we do not want the public to stop visiting parks etc.

Jake confirmed that both issues have been addressed in the evaluation project.

## **9. AOB**

- Andrew referred to the recent Guildford District stakeholders which highlighted the issues, expense and planning of shutting off trunk roads when controlling OPM. Henry Penner, Highways England suggested that it would be helpful if Highways England could be represented on the OPM Advisory Group. The group agreed.

**Action 6: Andrew Hoppit to invite member of Highway England as representative on OPM Advisory Board.**

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- It was confirmed that the ministerial visit arranged for the 18<sup>th</sup> March at Richmond Park and Kew has been postponed. The group agreed it was important the visit is re-arranged.

The date of the next OPM Advisory Group meeting, to include fundamental review workshop, agreed as follows:

**Date:** Wednesday 15 June 2016

**Time:** 11:00 to 16:00.

**Venue:** Friends House, 173 Euston Road, Euston, NW1 2BJ

*(The venue has been booked for Friends House, Euston as a room was not available at Nobel House)*

Agenda and venue directions to follow.