



**Lowland Grassland HAP Group Meeting
8th November 2006, Natural England Office, Bakewell.**

Present:

Dan Abrahams (Natural England), **Chair**
Kieron Huston (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)
Nick Smith (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)
Gemma Gregory (Derbyshire County Council)
Beverley Rhodes (Derby City Council)
Debbie Court (LD Biodiversity Partnership) **Note taker**

1. Apologies:

Carl Hawke (National Trust)
Gareth Wilson (Amscott - local agents to HA)
Tina Bardill (FWAG)
Adam Kwolek (DEFRA RDS)

2. Action Points from last meeting.

BARS – Debbie has updated progress on BARS

Action No 5 GIS – Kieron thought that Natural England and the National Forest had a copy of the GIS grassland layer. Derby City also has a copy on their alert map. Due to recent planting applications it is doubtful whether the Forestry Commission have a copy. Kieron to talk to Tristan Galletly about grassland information.

Action: Kieron

The Highways Agency/Amscott may find the layer useful for the M1 and Trunk road corridor. Gareth will find out whether they already have that information as part of their data trawl.

Action: Gareth

Action No 6. Nick has started on the local seed database. New sites to include are part of Calke Abbey, Moss Valley, Poulter CP, Elmton Green, Rowthorne Trail, Poolsbrook Nature Reserve, Carsington. Nick to send current list round to group and ask for more sites as appropriate.

Action: Nick

Action No. 9 Debbie has now added the area of grassland surveyed for 2005

Action No. 11 Debbie still to start the created grassland GIS layer information from the mineral sites and DEFRA and National Forest.

Action: Debbie

Action No. 15 Collation of students projects is now ongoing – send any ideas and project briefs to Debbie

Action: All

Action No.16 Kieron agreed to write something on monitoring for next meeting

Action: Kieron

Action No. 17 Natural England's database system GENESIS should be able to give figures for species-rich grassland in HLS. Dan thought that boundaries of HLS land would be available on MAGIC but he should be able to do more detailed analysis.

Action: Dan

Action No. 23 Debbie to pull figures from Natural England website on SSSI grassland condition and add to BARS

Action: Debbie

3. Progress towards Grassland targets

PROGRESSION TOWARDS GRASSLAND HAP TARGETS

2005/6 2006/7

NEUTRAL GRASSLAND 945ha (200-300 sites)

Phase 2 survey of all sites by end 2010	
Secure positive management on 50% by 2008 (125 sites) & 75% (188 sites) by 2010	2
Secure positive management on 20 species-rich road verges by 2010	0
Create 50ha by 2010	8.56
Restore 200ha by 2010	13.75

CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND 70ha (25-30 sites)

Phase 2 survey of all sites by end 2006	
Secure positive management on 50% (15 sites) by 2007	
Secure positive management on 2 road verges by 2010	0
Create 25ha by 2010	15.3
Restore 50ha by 2010	1.3

ACID GRASSLAND 709ha (180-220 sites)

Phase 2 survey of all sites by 2010	
Secure positive management on 50% (100 sites) by 2010	
Secure positive management on 2 road verges by 2010	0
Create 50ha by 2010	0
Restore 100ha by 2010	0

In addition Derbyshire Wildlife Trust surveyed over 40 grassland sites. The condition of the grasslands were as follows:

Favourable condition	15
Unfavourable recovering	2
Unfavourable maintained	7
Unfavourable declining	7
Unknown/indeterminate	9+

Helen Williams from Natural England had reported there were (in August) only 2 live HLS agreements in lowland Derbyshire that had species-rich grassland on them and between them the following will be carried out:

Maintenance of sp rich grassland	= 3.55ha
Restoration of sp rich grassland	= 9.49ha
Creation of sp rich grassland	= 5.63ha

4. Heathland HAP

Following a consultation round Debbie has produced a final draft of the Heathland HAP and the associated background document 'Heathland habitats in Lowland Derbyshire'. This was discussed and a few amendments were made. The documents will now be uploaded to the Derbyshire Biodiversity website and an e-mail sent round to LBAP partners.

Action: Debbie

5. Value in Meadows Project

Nick Smith gave a quick update on project progress. So far the project has written to 43 grassland site owners, surveyed 21 sites to Phase II level. They are working with owners on Farming Environment Plans (FEPs) for 3 sites and trying to get them into higher Level Scheme (HLS). In addition to that they have written environmental guidance notes for 10 site owners. One new grassland site has become a Wildlife Site.

The local seed side of the project is progressing well with a database started for potential seed donor sites. Machinery has now been trialled and was seed collected and used as part of a grassland restoration project. The grazing scheme side of the project is not progressing so well. A database of site needing grazing has been set up and the project is pursuing a number of options to address the lack of grazing animals available to graze small sites.

The project has now got a page on the DWT website and is currently arranging seminars for landowners for the winter period.

The project is fully funded until the end of March 2007 and is only partially funded for next year. DWT are looking into options for further funding.

6. Wildabout Grassland Project update.

Kieron reported that the project had been a little delaying in starting. It started in July. Over the summer a number of sites have been surveyed for baseline information and are currently writing site management statements.

Practical work has begun at the Chase Road grassland and the condition has already improved. Tim Brooks is currently working on a programme of practical tasks.

7. Grassland Forum

Debbie reported that the grassland seminar on 14th September had been a great success and passed on thanks to all involved. The presentations were now on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website and a write up of the grassland creation workshop. The grassland management workshop has also been written up and Debbie said that this included a number of points of concern from LBAP partners that the grassland group should be able to deal with. Debbie will write this up and pass round. It was requested that both of the outdoor workshops (surveying and restoration) should be written up asap and sent to Debbie for inclusion with all the other information.

Action: Nick and Kieron

8. Grassland SSSI notifications

Dan reported that Natural England were looking into the possibility of designating an archipelago grassland SSSI within the Peak Fringe area of Derbyshire in the next few years. Kieron said that DWT had a list of suitable grassland sites which had already been scored. Kieron to send Dan the list of sites.

Action: Kieron

9. HLS Targetting statements

Kieron and Nick explained that it is currently very difficult to get good species-rich grasslands in the Peak Fringe area into HLS. This is due to the lack of opportunity within the targeting statements. DWT have carried out research throughout the country on the number and content of primary and secondary targets associated with each Joint Character area. This has shown that the East Midlands is below the rest of the country. In 50% of targeting statements, for example, Wildlife Site status scores points. DWT are currently finalising a report detailing their findings and making recommendations and will be circulating this.

10. Monitoring

Debbie showed the group BARS and demonstrated how to add little progress reports. She requested that all group members start to look at this and input little reports when time allows.

11. AOB

Machinery ring – There were several requests for information on the machinery ring at the grassland seminar. Dan said that the machinery ring was now a national project and information about the various bits of kit can be found at <http://www.contak.org.uk>. or contact Ben le Bas (Natural England) ben.le.bas@naturalengland.org.uk Tel: 01629 816647

Date of next meeting – 10 am 22nd March 2007 at DWT Offices, Belper

Debbie Court
9th November 2006.