

Date: 31 May 2018



4th Floor
Foss House, Kings Pool
1-2 Peasholme Green
York
YO1 7PX

By E-mail:
<mailto:ClareBlencowe@sussexwt.org.uk>

Dear Clare,

Results of the Recorder 6 User Consultation – actions needed to maintain the integrity of important UK & Crown Dependency biodiversity datasets

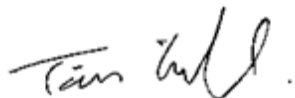
Please accept my sincere apologies for the long delay in responding to your letter of 6th April, which raises some important points, and covers issues that are clearly important to both of us. Natural England recognises the importance of the biodiversity data held within Recorder 6 databases, and we recognise there are difficult challenges for biodiversity data management in many areas of the sector. We remain committed to work to develop the best solutions for biodiversity data capture, management and sharing, to support the biological recording community.

We see the future of biological recording tools such as Recorder 6 being delivered online, linked to the NBN Atlas in order to facilitate efficient data flow from capture to publication. We also recognise the very useful work of the SBIF Review in seeking to identify a sustainable future for biological recording in Scotland, and that there are clear possibilities and implications of that for England and the other UK countries also. Given the extensive consultation and research that has contributed to the SBIF Review, and their interest in looking at a sustainable technical infrastructure, we are keen to discuss future options within that forum, and to look at any recommendations that they may produce relevant to data capture and management tools.

In the meantime, as you are probably aware, Natural England has supported iRecord as a data capture and management system. We have already focussed that investment on elements that we believe are universally desirable - a more robust and automated mechanism for transferring iRecord data to the NBN Atlas, and the development of updated or new taxonomic rule sets which will be openly published and available for anyone to use. However, as you are aware, resources are very scarce, and we have no scope for funding this year to develop those activities further.

For these reasons, I do not think that providing funding support for the two actions you have identified, in the way that you suggest, is sufficiently aligned with our interests, which I hope I have broadly set out above. In our view, whilst data capture and management tools are a high priority, we need those tools to promote improved data flow and open access to data at capture resolution, and serve the interests of the NBN as a whole.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Dr Tim Hill
Chief Scientist