

Clare Blencowe
Chair, Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

27 July 2018

Dear Clare

Results of the Recorder 6 User Consultation

Thank you for your letter regarding Recorder 6, and my apologies that it has taken such a long time to respond. This was due to errors at our end, and does not reflect our views on the importance of the points that you raise.

You recognise that the decision to remove financial support to maintaining Recorder 6 was not a surprising one. This decision reflected the difficult financial situation for all of the Steering Group members as well as increasing difficulties in ensuring that the software could continue to be maintained given its age.

JNCC continues to provide both financial and staff resources towards biological recording throughout the UK. You will be aware of the species survey schemes that JNCC runs in partnership with other organisations, as well as our partnership with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to support the work of the Biological Records Centre. We also have senior staff attending the NBN Atlas Steering Group and the NBN Verification, Data Flows and Online Recording Working Group. This ensures that we can continue to provide expertise to the wider community on biological data management. However, all of our activities in this area have been constrained in recent years, all work areas have been reviewed, and difficult decisions have had to be made about priorities.

You particularly raise the question of whether we could support either dictionary upgrades for Recorder 6 or producing outputs in Darwin Core Format. You will know that the dictionary is based upon the work of the Natural History Museum, and hence this is not something any of our staff are working on. We do continue to provide updates to the NHM on species of conservation concern, although this work area has been very difficult to resource in recent years. Similarly, Darwin Core Format is not something that any JNCC staff are very familiar with, and does seem to have some difficult aspects at this stage in its development.

We appreciate that there are many users of Recorder 6, holding critical biological datasets. We will be continuing to participate in the NBN Verification, Data Flows and Online Recording Working Group to try to help find community-driven solutions to the many issues facing biological recorders today. We are also following with interest the outcomes from the Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum Review of biological recording infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Yeo', is centered on the page.

Marcus Yeo
Chief Executive, JNCC