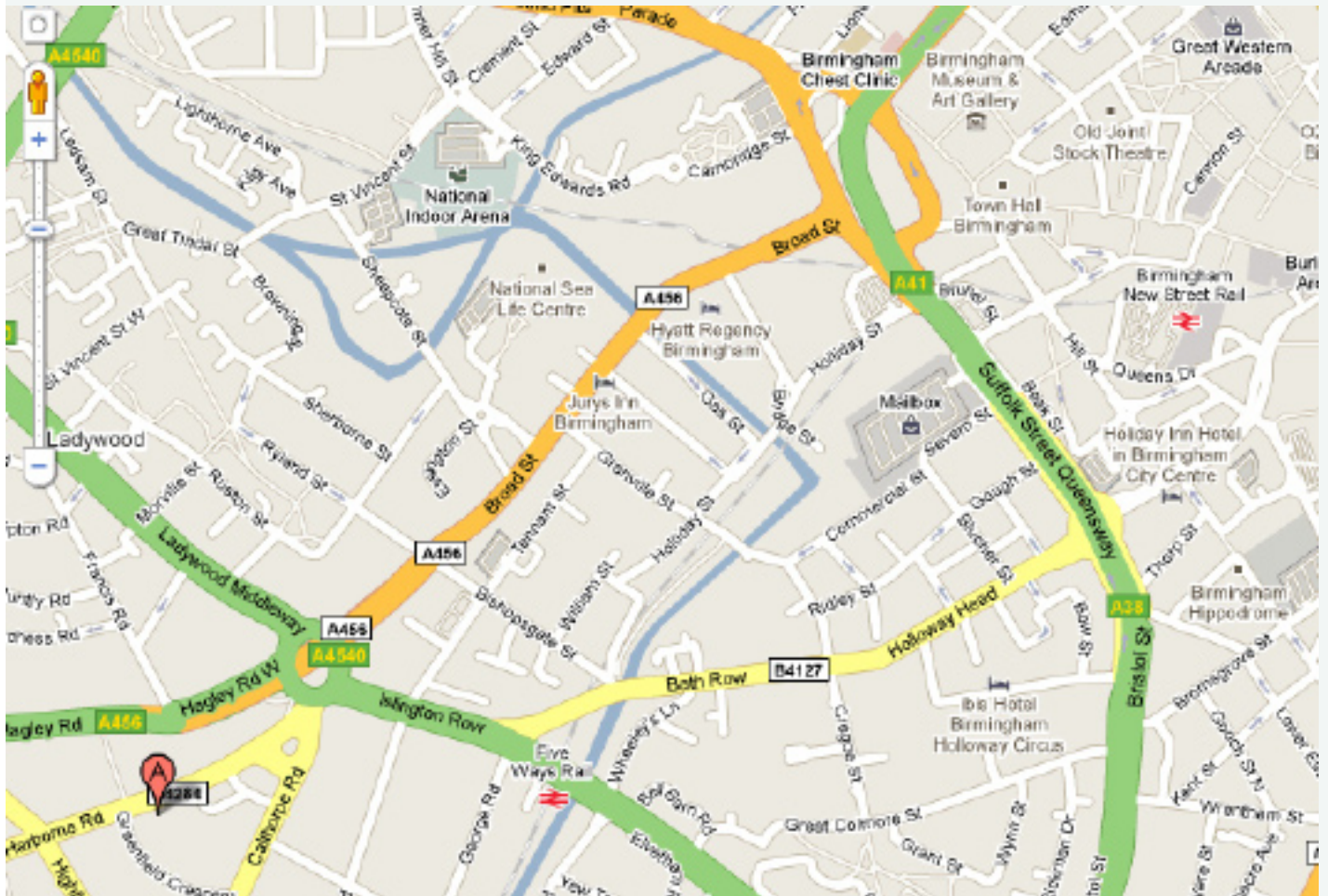


Minutes of the 8th meeting of ALERC Monday 25th October 2010: 10:30a.m. to 4:00p.m. Offices of EcoRecord 28 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. B15 3AA

15 minutes walk from Fiveways Railway Station (trains from New street to Fiveways leave every 10 mins and take 3 minutes)



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Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

Meeting of Directors

10:30a.m. to 4:00p.m. Monday 25th October 2010, Offices of EcoRecord

28 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. B15 3AA

AGENDA

Items in red are prioritised by the Chairman

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of 7th Meeting**
3. **Matters arising – not dealt with on agenda**
4. **Officers Reports**

Where deemed appropriate by Chair e.g. Financial report, Membership update, Banking, accounting and accountants

SHORT LUNCH BREAK (circa 12.30 pm)

5. **Issues for discussion and resolution**

a. **Accreditation**

- (1) Accreditation: Way Forward

b. **ALERC Conference**

- (3) 2011

c. **Establishing priorities and work programme**

- (2) Process for ALERC responses to White papers etc.
- (4) LRC Funding 2011 onwards - NE & EA
- (5) Regional representation Steering Groups
- NFBR (ALERC talk at their conference)
- (6) IEEM liaison
- ALERC Focus

arising from Teresa Frost's email - attached (topic title chosen by Secretary since the original was non-specific)

d. **Working groups**

A. Technical & data management

B. Training & skills

C. Accreditation

D. Communication: Marketing and promotion

- (7) Website

E. Business

e. **NBN**

f. **Company work**

- DPA
- Recruiting Scottish representation on the Board of Directors

6. **Any Other Business**

7. **Date(s) of next meeting(s)**

Minutes of the 8th meeting of ALERC

Present: Darwyn Sumner, Craig Slawson, Gary Lewis, Eric Fletcher, Teresa Frost, Aisling Carrick, Tim Corner (later)

The Chairman (Gary Lewis) declared the meeting open at 11:00

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tim Corner, Mark Wills, Charles Roper & Nicky Court

2. Minutes of 7th Meeting

Minutes from the 7th meeting were distributed (Note: the 6th meeting was the AGM)

Action points discussed.

- . 1. **DS to give an idea of the predicted number of days per year worked for ALERC**
 Due to the highly variable demands placed upon the Company Secretaries time at the moment he indicated that this would be difficult to predict.
- . 2. **Annual Return: in future this will be circulated.**
- . 3. **Year Plan for ALERC: (All, via email)**
- . 4. **Identification of generic tasks for Directors (All, via email)**
 This was further discussed, see ALERC focus item (CR & TF)
- . 5. **Above task list to be added to website and/or to Forum**
 not yet implemented
- . 6. **The ALERC Forum structure to reflect the structure used in these Minutes**
 CR asked to restructure forum topics, his absence on Paternity leave has prevented this
- . 7. **Production of an email list of members to allow Directors to notify them regarding important issues**
 CR has done this
- . 8. **GL happy to be put forward as ALERC rep on NFBR.**
 NFBR Meeting was Oct 19, GL was unable to attend the meeting but he did send them a note and both CS and DS were present and able to provide a summary of the ALERC work.
- . 9. **GL to give a paragraph to Caroline Steele (NFBR Newsletter editor) for ALERC update**
 GL did this
- . 10. **Affiliation with IEEM**
 Roy of Cofnod has sent a letter to their newsletter + we also had their response to Defra consultation circulated via Nicky
- . 11. **Accreditation:**
 Tim Corner had approached NE
- . 12. **Selection of LRCs to participate in Accreditation**
 This had been discussed
- . 13. **Website**
 Some progress made, including experimental CMS by CS
- . 14. **see 13**
- . 15. **NBN:**
 NC + TF to write up ALERC's "statement of intent" (was this done?)
- . 16. **NBN Trustee:**
 GL to contact NBNT (was this done?)
- . 17. **we need a Scottish Director**
 no further progress (NC to approach Patrick - NC not present at meeting)
- . 18. **DPA:**
 NC & others to complete registration process, DPA Registration process still required
- . 19. **AGM draft**

- no comments regarding AGM draft have been received by DS
- . **20. Scottish representation**
see 17. above
- . **21. LRCs not yet signed up**
EF & NC to contact (NC not at meeting)
- . **22. Metadata/Archive report:**
TF offered to do work on executive summary to the Metadata/Archive report by DS and MG, the objective being to produce something that we were comfortable in presenting to LRCs. not done
- . **23. DS to distribute any available reports (including PowerPoint presentations) to Directors**
some of this is outstanding
- . **24. Geodiversity**
TF is currently engaging with Geo interests and will report.
- . **25. DS to initiate a Doodle for October**
done

3. Matters arising – not dealt with on agenda

4. Officers Reports

Correspondence:

Mandy Rudd's letter ("Overview of consultancy use of NBN Gateway and GiGL") was passed to ALERC via NFBR. It begins "It is becoming increasingly apparent that environmental consultants don't always commission data search reports from local records centres when best practice suggests they ought to"

NBN - Gary is to meet with Jim Munford. It was observed that LRCs only merit a single note in their 10yr plan when they should be key to the future of the NBN Gateway.

Theresa Frost: Government is reviewing the Planning Legislation - we need to keep our eye open for this.

Darwyn Sumner: Discussed NFBR's "Strategic Plan" currently under development

Tim Corner: Butterfly Conservation have made a strategic decision not to supply data to LRCs.

Mark Wills: Mark asked for comments on the concept of "Asset lock" - for someone to act as custodian for data for his LRC. Darwyn noted that there is a reference to this in the ALERC paper "Metadata and Archives" (Sumner & Grosse, 2010) i.e. that the disposal of assets following the closure of an LRC should be part of an LRC's "Business Continuity Plans". (enquiries still continue on this topic DS)

1. DS to investigate disposal of LRC data assets

5. Issues for discussion & resolution

a. Accreditation

- (1) Accreditation: Way forward

Gary supplied a summary of the current status:

"Tenders for the Accreditation Implementation Project are with NE who plan to award the work soon. The work will produce a Workbook to help LRCs work towards successful accreditation, trial the process in an LRC and look at barriers across the LRC community that may hinder implementation of the process. The work has to be delivered by 19 Mar 11.

ALERC has requested that NE release the Accreditation Criteria to the whole LRC community to enable full participation in this phase of the work to take place."

Three people were invited to tender, Gary, Mandy & Bill. One of the deliverables is "Barriers" but Directors envisaged problems with this as the Report is still embargoed.

b. ALERC Conference

- (3) 2011

The timing of this was debated, the initial proposal was back-to-back with the NFBR Conference but it was observed that such an arrangement necessitated two overnight stays if ALERC delegates wanted to take advantage of the entire event. Since the "meat" of the NFBR conference was on day 3 it was felt that in today's austere climate, delegates were unlikely to attend the whole event - thus defeating the objective of holding the conference jointly. Accordingly ALERC Directors made the decision to separate entirely from the

NFBR Conference, instead looking at a timing of mid September 2011. The question was raised regarding the suitability of this timing for our AGM but it was agreed that there were no constitutional problems associated with holding the AGM at that time. The dates suggested were 20,21,22,27,28,29 September, the venue to be the Birmingham one we used last year.

2. GL to inform Trevor James about this revised conference plan

Conference topics:

It was proposed that the ALERC Forum be used to invite suggestions from members. Once initiated this should be backed up by a direct emailing to LRC members

3. All to debate conference topics

c. Establishing priorities and work programme

- (2) Process for ALERC responses to White papers etc.

Theresa has developed the formal ALERC response for the Natural Environment White Paper. We seem to be happy to run with it now. GL thanked TF (and Tony) for dealing with it

- (4) LRC Funding 2011 onwards - NE & EA

Natural England weren't sure whether they would be obliged to make budget cuts evenly across all their deliverables. If there are proportional cuts which affect their LRC contributions and the money each LRC loses is a significant portion then this will affect Accreditation - LRCs not having any particular reason to take it up if the funding does not make it worthwhile.

Environment Agency SLAs in the South West are OK until 2014, it was noted that the South West negotiate regionally. Other areas do not have an SLA with the Environment Agency at all. Whatever budget cuts affect EA, the *status quo* will not be affected until the expiration of existing SLAs.

DS asked what can we do to help all LRCs to get an SLA - GL replied that this was the essence of the topics following (items 5 and 6 below, plus the "ALERC Focus" debate), that ALERC must do what it can to help LRCs, adding that it was beyond the capabilities of this group of individuals to solve the ills of the entire LRC community - but we do what we can.

Our work programme is therefore dependent upon ALERC being in a position to provide labour to actually carry out some of the tasks. After a little debate, it was proposed that the work be split between DS and someone else contracted in to perform a specific task. Maximum 50 days per year in total

Proposal 1. Directors to propose ideas for how to spend the money to best assist LRCs - money to be spent on hiring someone to do the work.

4. Action ALL by 12th November

Improving communications between Directors: Aisling suggested Skype as one means of doing this, it just needs a microphone - suggested as a way to debate issues

5. Action - all to look into Skype

- (5) Regional representation Steering Groups
- (6) IEEM liaison
- ALERC Focus

Arising from Teresa Frost's email and the debate with Charles Roper (attached with agenda to this meeting)

The above 3 items are all addressed by Proposal 1

- NFBR
ALERC is to talk at their conference

6. Action GL

d. Working groups

DS circulated the sign-up sheets from the conference, these indicated the people who were particularly interested in specific working groups. DS noted that although we had had some interest expressed in helping out with "Training & skills", this aspect of LRC work had not yet been addressed by ALERC.

A. Technical & data management

B. Training & skills

C. Accreditation

D. Communication: Marketing and promotion

• (7) Website

DS reported on the progress made:

CS had produced an emulation of the ALERC website using MediaWiki in order to demonstrate its possible use as a CMS

DS had investigated Usability Guidelines as a result of which Directors had concluded that the guidelines at <http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/> were most appropriate to our work

DS had begun to produce a report detailing the background to existing site (not distributed - only seen by Craig and Charles so far as it is incomplete and it may not now necessary to complete it)

Directors expressed the wish for progress with the website to be continued at an increased speed

7. DS to speed up with website

8. Provide a link on the first page of the website to the ALERC Forum

E. Business

e. NBN

f. Company work

6. Any Other Business

Arising from a handful of emails in which EIR had been mentioned and concerns that had been expressed by LRCs about this subject, Directors were informed of a site "What do we know" - a website for FOA/EIR requests. It was requested that Directors take a look at it (blowed if I can find it - does anyone have the link?)

Tim suggested that we needed modern write ups of positions that LRCs can take over EIR - e.g. that an LRC performs the functions that fulfils all the legal requirements of EIR for its partners - so we are doing a useful job for an LA - which they need to know about. This should be emphasised to partners and potential partners as a significant function of an LRC.

Drawing this kind of information and guidance together is a useful function that ALERC could perform.

7. Date(s) of next meeting(s)

9. DS to initiate a Doodle for January 2011

Chairman