

Minutes of 29th Directors Meeting - 10.30am Thursday 25th February 2016
Offices of Ecorecord, 16 Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston, B14 7ET, Birmingham

Present: Martin Horlock (MH, Chair), Sara Carvalho (SC, Mins), Nicky Court (NC), Tom Hunt (TH), Adam Rowe (AR), Mandy Rudd (MR), Craig Slawson (CS), Mark Wills (MW)

Actions carried forward from previous meetings

Meeting# / Action#	Action item <i>Full description of carried action</i>	Status <i>This column updated as a result of this meeting</i>	Who
22/3	Associate membership of Wildlife link to be progressed.	Carried forward	NC/MH
22/16	NC to establish DCLG contact re possible new Defra Guidance on LWS and 'introduce' ALERC.	Carried forward (also see 29/1)	NC
22/21 & 24/2	Request information/update from Bill Butcher regarding offsetting project. To be made available through the forum.	Carried forward	MR
24/22 & 25/3	Pursue the Herefordshire issue via email and other means and offer support and help where appropriate. Find out more from the CEO of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust who now sits on AR's Board. Also AR to speak to Phil Burton at HWT.	Completed	
25/1	Draft note to Company Secretary DS with reference to minutes – DS requested retraction of sections noting 5 year strategy incomplete.	Completed	
25/2	Draft paper detailing requirements and costs to allow online card payments for ALERC membership and conference fees.	Completed	
25/4	Accreditation Criteria amend to mention statutory obligations and remove all mention of BAP.	Completed	
25/9	Position Statement on working with DEFRA and BMSS present to DEFRA as a letter response from ALERC - Revise position statement, pending further progress Re: Natural England	Carried forward	IE/MH
25/12	Cost up specific examples of Technical Assistance with Andy Foy.	Completed	
25/21	Add standing Agenda point to all future meetings to monitor work undertaken by ALERC (work plan).	Completed	
	ALERC Scottish representation needed.	Completed (Dealt with under item 2, this meeting)	
26/1	TH to circulate a summary of LA involvement with LERCs.	Completed – Now covered by Action 2 this meeting	TH
26/2	MW&DS to review Company Secretary Role description. MW to finalise the Company secretary's role description and	Carried forward	MW

	remuneration agreement.		
26/3 (part 2)	MW/NC to circulate request for volunteers to take on ANC work plan.	Completed	
26/4	MW/NC to put paper together on time limits for the role of Director.	Completed	
26/6	Draft paper explaining the accreditation process. TH to extract relevant content from accreditation guidance and draft an explanatory note summarising the accreditation process year by year.	Completed	
26/7	NC to draft a section on the NBN Strategy for inclusion into ALERC Strategy	Completed	
28/1	Circulate annual report to membership.	Completed	
28/2	Details of the new board structure/members to be updated on the ALERC website	Completed	
28/3	Update board members details on the Companies House website as part of the submission of the annual returns.	Carried forward	DS
28/4	Contact Eric Fletcher, previous treasurer, to clarify queries raised.	Completed	
28/5	IE to check the ALERC membership payment for DBRC is correct and provide the information to NC so accounts can be updated.	Completed	
28/6	A reminder that payment is overdue is to be sent to those LERCS whose payment is outstanding and consider using the regional networks to increase the membership coverage.	Completed	
28/7	Clarify COFNOD's membership amount.	Completed	
28/8	Complete the accounts and submit them to Companies House.	Completed	
28/9	Update the "find an LERC" map on the website to include the Isle of Man and the Channel islands.	Completed	
28/10	To amend the current LERC map on the website to distinguish ALERC members from Non-ALERC members. TH to also draft a brief narrative which is to be attached to the county of Essex - relating to the fact that coverage in the Essex area currently involves multiple organisations and circulate to the directors for agreement.	Completed	
28/11	Research guidance on the use of colours on websites to ensure website is fully accessible (e.g. make the website accessible to those who are colour blind).	Carried forward	MW
28/12	Circulate the Great British Bioblitz bid documents to the directors with a deadline for receiving comments.	Completed	
28/13	Continue liaising with Andy Webb (Natural England) to find out whether/when the latest BMSS draft can be shared.	Carried forward	TH
28/14	Circulate CIEEM guidance on accessing/using biodiversity data to directors.	Completed	
28/15	Create an email group to coordinate support and initiate the discussions to produce a project brief for an ALERC led project looking at the current use of LERC to inform planning	Completed	

	applications.		
28/16	Report back on the analysis of the pilot work already being carried by GIGL in some areas of London, looking at numbers of planning applications that use/don't use LERC data.	Completed	MR
28/17	Contact those LERCs who haven't yet provided a date for accreditation.	Completed	
28/18	Redraft the terms of reference in light of the decision to create a new working group - Strategy Group.	Completed. Strategy group details and Terms of Ref. have been added to the website.	
28/19	Appoint a Director to take over the ALERC conference work area from MW.	Agenda item 4	
28/20	Appoint a Director to the role of NBN Trust trustee.	Completed - MR appointed	
28/21	Contact prospective Board Members and find out whether they'd be interested in becoming a Director of ALERC. Potential Directors: Camilla Burrows (TVERC); Ben Deed (Merseyside BioBank); Garry Lewis (ERCCIS); Charlie Barnes (Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership); Nik Bruce (Lancashire Environmental Records Network); Lindsay Bamforth (Fife Nature Records Centre); Sara Carvalho (EcoRecord), Claire Blencowe (Sussex BRC).	Carried forward	AR
28/22	Speak to acting CEO Rachel Stroud and write to the NBN trust to enquire about the representation of ALERC on the NBN trust's board.	Completed	
28/23	Existing ALERC funds to be used to cover the income shortfall of the Coordinator post to the end of the current financial year. MW to follow up as NEYEDC hosts the coordinator post.	Completed	
28/24	Suggestions for projects that could potentially fund the ANC post and that fulfil ALERC objectives to be submitted via the Forum.	Carried forward	All
28/25	Initiate an email discussion outlining the terms of a LWS project proposal/methodology following the feedback and discussions with RSWT.	Completed	
28/26	Contact LERCs that expressed concerns about the new fee structure.	Agenda item 6b	
28/27	Circulate the draft ALERC members' code of conduct to the board for agreement.	Carried forward	MW
28/28	Report back on the outcome of the clarification requested by several local authorities on the European Court of Justice ruling on Environmental Information Regulations.	Agenda item 8 Carried forward	NC
28/29	Request suggestions via the forum for ways of changing the website so products and services that might be of use to the LERC community are more prominent.	Carried forward	TH
28/30	Invite Marina Flamank (EA) to the next ALERC Directors meeting.	Completed	TH
28/31	Set up doodle polls with dates for 2016 ALERC Directors meetings (first meeting in 2016 to be organised for the second half of February).	Completed	MW

Actions from 29th meeting

Action #	Action item	Who
1	MR to request permission to the Greater London Authority (GLA) on whether the methodology of the London research study on the use of Biodiversity data in planning can be written up and shared with others.	MR
2	MH/TH to decide how much further work might be necessary in order to produce some meaningful data in relation to LA engagement with their LERC and whether to make it part of the ANC's work plan.	MH/TH
3	MH and TH to draft an ANC work plan proposal.	MH/TH
4	NC to draft and circulate a paragraph describing the time limit rules for the role of ALERC Director so it can be agreed and included in the articles of association.	NC
5	AR to contact potential Directors to gather expressions of interest and to invite interested parties to attend a future directors' meeting.	AR
6	Invite Marina Flamank (EA) to the next ALERC Directors meeting. Schedule agenda item to end of the meeting.	TH
7	MW to provide information to NC on income generated from project work carried out by the ANC so shortfall income figure can be calculated for ANC post during the 2015/6 financial year.	MW/NC
8	TH to contact LERCs that have not yet paid the membership fee for 2015/16 asap.	TH
9	TH to draft a list of the LERCs that are definitely likely to join ALERC during 2016/17 financial year.	TH
10	TH to explore the feasibility of holding the conference at another city/venue and consider requesting that the membership votes on a list of favourite cities at which to hold the ALERC conference (suggested options: London, Birmingham, Manchester, York and Cardiff).	TH
11	TH to confirm ALERC conference date and venue details and circulate these to the membership.	TH
12	TH/Accreditation sub-group to produce a draft describing the accreditation re-assessment process and update the current accreditation documents accordingly.	TH/Accreditation sub-group
13	TH to confirm who might be willing to commit to be an assessor and explore training and other requirements.	TH
14	MH to speak to IE and check whether the strategy group is willing to be responsible for converting the current ALERC work plan into the ALERC 5 year strategy action plan.	MH
15	TH to review ALERC's strategy and action/work plan, note what has been achieved and circulate to members along with a reminder of the new membership prices.	TH
16	MR/Business sub-group to draft a paper on LERC charges.	MR/ Business sub-group
17	MR to check whether contact at the Open Data Institute would be willing to be a speaker at the next ALERC conference.	MR
18	TH to share creative commons links via the forum	TH
19	TH to contact BCT to request they update the link to find an LERC on their guidance document from the current link to the NFBR website to the ALERC website.	TH
20	TH to publish finalised letters to Natural England and the Secretary of State on the forum.	TH
21	MH/TH to send final response letters asap.	MH/TH
22	TH to contact Marina Flamank (EA) to request clarification regarding the license terms and access to OS Mastermap and aerial photography.	TH
23	Initiate Doodle poll for 2 nd half of May – early June	MW

1. Apologies & Introductions

Apologies were received from Ian Egerton (IE), Darwyn Sumner (DS) and Simon Wood (SW) who also tendered his resignation from the ALERC board of directors. **The board thanked Simon for his work and accepted his resignation.**

2. Minutes of previous meeting and outstanding actions

The minutes of the 28th meeting were accepted with a couple of minor amendments ("ALERC board of Directors" replaced "ALERC Committee", reference to action 26/3 and minutes of the AGM).

The minutes of the 27th meeting (the ALERC AGM) were accepted.

The minutes of the 26th meeting were accepted.

The status of all previously outstanding items has been tabled above. Progress made on outstanding actions is summarised below.

- **Progress report on item 22/16:** The new Biodiversity DCLG contacts are Tom Selley and Pamela Roberts. TH suggested they could perhaps be contacted once the outcomes of the research by LERCs (London, SEWBREC and Northamptonshire) on the use of Biodiversity data in planning were available.

Action 1: MR to request permission to the Greater London Authority (GLA) on whether the methodology of the London research study on the use of Biodiversity data in planning can be written up and shared with others.

- **Progress report on item 25/2:** Option found to be too expensive and so not to be explored any further at present.
- **Progress report on item 25/12:** No further action required at present.
- **Progress report on item 25/21:** Standing agenda item included - Item 6a. ALERC 5 year strategy: Action plan.
- **Progress report on item 26/1:** TH reported that the latest analysis shows that the figure is 66% of LAs are engaged with their LERC. It was suggested that the membership form could contain key statistics required. This review/analysis could form part of the ANC work plan.

Action 2: MH/TH to decide how much further work might be necessary in relation to 26/1 and whether to make it part of the ANC's work plan.

- **Progress report on item 26/2:** It was agreed that the Company secretary is exclusively responsible for the timely submission of annual returns to Companies House. Action update: MW to finalise the Company secretary's role description and remuneration agreement.
- **Progress report on item 26/3:** MH agreed to work with TH to put together a work plan proposal.

Action 3: MH and TH to draft an ANC work plan proposal.

- **Progress report on item 26/4:** It was agreed that NC would draft and circulate a paragraph outlining the rules regarding time limits for being an ALERC Director. Once agreed this will be included in the articles of association.

Action 4: NC to draft and circulate a paragraph describing the time limit rules for the role of ALERC Director to be agreed and included in the articles of association.

- **Progress report on item 28/21:** A 'long-list' of potential Directors was proposed: Ben Deed (Mersey Biobank), Charlie Barnes (Lincs), Lyndsay Bamforth (Fife), Camilla Burrows (Thames Valley), Gary Lewis (Cornwall), Nik Bruce (Lancs), Sara Carvalho (Ecorecord) and Claire Blencowe (Sussex). **AR** agreed to contact all of them to offer them the opportunity to become a Director. A suggestion was made, to offer potential new Directors the option to attend an ALERC Director's meeting as observers to help the decision.

Action 5: **AR** to contact potential Directors to gather expressions of interest and to invite interested parties to attend a future directors' meeting.

- **Progress report on item 28/24:** A few possibilities were discussed: (1) potential project in Norfolk, still to be confirmed; (2) potential to develop a project through the National Linear Infrastructure Group which includes Network Rail, National Grid, Highways England/Kier - contact via MR. SEWBRC & WMLRCs also have current agreements with Highways England; (3) HS2 – possible contact via Dave Lowe (Warwickshire BRC); Western Power Distribution – contact via IE and AR.
- **Progress report on item 28/25:** This matter has since been 'interrupted' by NE's recent decision to cease LERC MoAs. We await further communication from RSWT. No further action is required at present.
- **Progress report on item 28/30:** Marina wasn't able to attend the 29th meeting so TH to invite her to the next meeting.

Action 6: TH to invite Marina Flamank (EA) to the next ALERC Directors meeting.

3. Officers reports

3a Chair (MH)

- No specific report tabled.

3b Treasurer (NC)

- The membership income could be short of the target set out in the strategic plan. 7 or 8 membership fees remain outstanding. Income to cover the ANC post shortfall figure is needed.

Action 7: MW to provide information to NC on income generated from project work carried out by the ANC so shortfall income figure can be calculated for ANC post during the 2015/6 financial year.

3c Membership (TH)

- TH suggested that assuming all members renew their membership in the current year the targets in the strategic plan could be met. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire are potential new members. LERC mergers may constitute a risk to the membership income.

Action 8: TH to contact LERCs that have not yet paid the membership fee for 2015/16 asap.

Action 9: TH to draft a list of the LERCs that are definitely likely to join ALERC during 2016/17 financial year.

3d Director's recruitment

- MR, as reported above, was appointed the new NBN Trust Trustee. Her brief update covered: (1) NBN Conference likely to take place in November 2016, probably in Scotland, with the subject likely to be around data flow pathways; (2) The new NBN Trust chief executive, Dr. Joanna Judge, has been appointed; (3) LERC signposting on the NBN website has been improved; (4) Support for the role of LERCs has been re-iterated by the NBN Trust following NE's LERC funding announcement.
- Other recruitment updates already dealt with as part of action 28/21 and progressed has been described in agenda item 2.

3e National Coordinator (TH)

- Report circulated. No further updates to report.

3f Legal duties

- Partially covered in item 2. Progress of actions 26/2 and 28/3. No further actions noted.

4. ALERC Conference – Working group membership & initial planning

- The 12th of October 2016 was agreed as the potential date for the next ALERC conference. Conference working group members are: TH, MH, NC and Elaine W.

Action 10: TH to explore the feasibility of holding the conference at another city/venue and consider requesting that the membership votes on a list of favourite cities at which to hold the ALERC conference (suggested options: London, Birmingham, Manchester, York and Cardiff).

Action 11: TH to confirm ALERC conference date and venue details and circulate these to the membership.

5. ALERC accreditation – programme of assessments and additional assessors

- A report from the accreditation sub-committee was circulated ahead of the meeting. Issues discussed included: (1) The need for reviewing and documenting the accreditation re-assessment process/criteria; (2) ERCCIS accreditation has been delayed. Likely new date, March 2016. The need for more assessors to be trained was raised. Not only to increase capacity but to ensure impartiality. More assessors would also open up the possibility of TH being commissioned by LERCs wanting support in carrying out work involved in the accreditation process. Lizzie Oddy (Norfolk) and Mark Wills (NEYEDC) have expressed an interest in training to be assessors. The potential for using skype to support the assessment process was also mentioned. It was agreed that travel expenses could be covered if the host organisation couldn't cover them

during the training period, but it was anticipated that this could form some valuable CPD for the trainee assessors.

Action 12: TH/Accreditation sub-committee to produce a draft describing the accreditation **re-assessment process** and update the current accreditation documents accordingly.

Action 13: TH to confirm who might be willing to commit to be an assessor and explore training and other requirements.

6. ALERC 5 year strategy

6a Action plan

- The current ALERC work plan (version 1.3) needs to be reviewed, aligned with the ALERC 5 year strategy and turned into an Action Plan. It was suggested that the strategy sub-group could take on this work.

Action 14: MH to speak to IE and check whether the strategy group is willing to be responsible for converting the current ALERC work plan into the ALERC 5 year strategy action plan.

6b Membership fee increase - consultation

- The consultation didn't produce additional feedback.

Action 15: TH to review ALERC's strategy and action/work plan, note what has been achieved and circulate to members along with a reminder of the new membership prices.

7. ALERC proposed paper on LERC charges

Action 16: MR/Business sub group to draft a paper on LERC charges.

Action 17: MR to check whether contact at the Open Data Institute would be willing to be a speaker at the next ALERC conference.

Action 18: TH to share creative commons links via the forum

Action 19: TH to contact BCT to request they update the link to find an LERC on their guidance document from the current link to the NFBR website to the ALERC website.

8. European Court of Justice ruling on Environmental Information Regulations

- Refer to carry over action. Still no further updates.

9. NE MoA & BMSS (England Directors)

- A discussion around NE's recent announcement followed focusing particularly on the work needed to finalise the response letters. A number of comments and contributions from members had been received. There was a high response level to the brief ALERC questionnaire circulated following NE's MoA announcement. Continued support for the role of LERCs was expressed by NBN Trust as well as the EA.

Action 20: TH to publish finalised letters to Natural England and the Secretary of State on the forum.

Action 21: MH/TH to send final letters asap.

Action 22: TH to contact Marina Flamank to request clarification regarding the license terms and access to OS mastermap and aerial photography.

10. AOB – to be notified in advance and paper/note circulated

- A brief discussion took place around the approach of some LERCs to the issue of cross-boundary data enquiries. East Midlands have recently proposed that the LERC where the

majority of the search is located should make the charge, the other LERC should not. This approach still requires enquirers to approach two LERCs.

- **Date of the next meeting – Doodle poll to be initiated for 2nd half of May – early July**

Action 23: MW to initiate doodle poll