

## Minutes of 35th Meeting - 10.30am – 16.00pm Thursday 14th September 2017

**Birmingham & The Black Country Wildlife Trust, 16 Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AU**

Present: Martin Horlock (MH, Chair), Nicky Court (NC), Tom Hunt (TH), Adam Rowe (AR), Mark Wills (MW), Clare Blencowe (CB), Sara Lovell (SL), Ian Egerton (IE), Ben Deed (BD), Gary Lewis (GL), Steve Whitbread (SW)

### 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
22/16	NC to establish DCLG contact re possible new Defra Guidance on LWS and 'introduce' ALERC.	<b>Carried forward</b> NC to draft a proposal describing how best to take this action forward.  Suggested focus: presenting the result of recent research/statistics available on how local authorities are performing with regards to use of LERCs data in planning applications.	<b>NC</b>
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	<b>Carried forward</b> MR: BMSS will be part of Defra's 25 year plan, but we are not yet clear whether the previous draft document will form part of the new document. Position statement will be produced once 25 year plan is released	<b>IE/MH</b>
30/4	Write letter to JNCC asking for information on the future of Recorder 6.	<b>Completed.</b> Action discharged/superseded. To be taken up as part of databases working group work (see agenda item 7)	
31/21	TH to re-circulate ANC skills document via the forum so membership has the chance to consider how the ANC might be able to help with project work/contracts.	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>TH</b>
33/1	Set up a Recorder 6 task and finish group – consider including Mike Weideli, Sally Rankin, Andy Foy.	<b>Completed.</b> Action discharged/superseded. To be taken up as part of databases working group work (see agenda item 7)	
33/7	Publish an ALERC membership fact sheet using LERC headline data collected.	<b>Completed</b>	
33/9	Consider whether an audit of how the membership uses Recorder 6 is required.	<b>Completed.</b> Action discharged/superseded. To be taken up as part of databases working group work (see	

		agenda item 7)	
33/10	Consider consulting membership on whether there is a need for ALERC to lead on Recorder 6 maintenance and development depending on whether JNCC plans to continue to invest in Recorder 6 support.	<b>Completed.</b> Action discharged/superseded. To be taken up as part of databases working group work (see agenda item 7)	
33/16	Draft a letter to members, to be circulated with membership renewal information by end February.	<b>Completed.</b> Action removed/superseded.	
33/17	Send an estimate of time spent on ALERC business to Martin Horlock. MH to send a reminder if necessary.	<b>Completed</b>	
33/20	Ensure ODI report is made available to the membership.  Add some context and detail to the report/the communication when report is made available to the wider membership, so it increases the level of awareness and understanding of the issues raised.	<b>Completed</b>	
33/21	Consider compiling an ALERC data set to be available via the Atlas platform as part of the ANC's work plan 2017/18.	<b>Completed</b> (see action 10 of this meeting for follow up action)	
33/22	Circulate how LERCs expenditure/core costs have been calculated by the SE LERC group and Welsh LERCs respectively. TH to encourage other LERCs to provide this (e.g. through regional networks) so that ALERC has a national figure for the cost of running the LERC network.	<b>Carried forward:</b> TH to encourage other LERCs to provide this (e.g. through regional networks) so that ALERC has a national figure for the cost of running the LERC network.	<b>TH</b>
33/24	Continue to liaise with the NBN trust to clarify the definition of commercial vs non-commercial use with a view to agree a definition.	<b>Carried forward</b>  (a) MR/AR to clarify current definition with the NBN Trust and consider devising explanatory notes to strengthen/support the definition.  (b) MH to send ALERC's position statement on commercial vs non-commercial use of data to the NBNT and NE (providing clarity on the definition of statutory use of data).	<b>MR/AR/MH</b>
33/25	Contact GLNP regarding progress on legal advice received and report back.	<b>Completed.</b> Query submitted.	
33/31	Look into organising a workshop/meeting for ALERC members and NSSs via NFBR.	<b>Completed.</b> Superseded by SW's proposal.	
33/32	Draft an ALERC IT requirements paper for the next directors meeting – liaise with CB at Sussex regarding server changes at Sussex and impact on ALERC forum)	<b>Completed</b>	
34/1	Decide which Director will be the contact for Wildlife Link when a new chair is appointed.	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>All</b>
34/2	Amend ALERC's articles of association and other documents as appropriate to include revised wording regarding the appointment of ALERC Directors and Honorary Officers. Once drafts are produced, they will be submitted for approval/voting by the membership at the next AGM.	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>NC</b>
34/3	Ensure an adequate skype link in future meetings.	<b>Completed</b>	

34/4	Draft and circulate a set of ALERC principles in time for a draft to be agreed and ready to present to the membership at the next AGM	<b>Carried forward</b>	MR
34/5	Organise a meeting with MF (and other parties as relevant) in the context of devising how best to engage with the EA in finding a good means to ensure their data requirements can be fulfilled across the LERC network into the future-post NBN Gateway closure (this action links to the discussions around NBN funding/development options and the CEH EIDC proposal – item 15 on this meeting's agenda).	<b>Completed</b>	
34/6	Feedback comments on the GLNP National LERC data website proposal to MH as soon as possible (before the 9/06/2017), so information can be passed to FS.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/7	Follow up TWIC's membership renewal when TWIC's manager returns to work.		TH
34/8	Liaise regarding the submission of ALERC's annual return to Companies House.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/9	Add the field Date_Accredited to the membership report table.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/10	Send feedback on the draft paper circulated by CB by 7th June.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/11	Chair to sign the NBNT MoA on behalf of ALERC.	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>MH</b>
34/12	Follow up ALERC membership renewals with other Scottish LERCs.	<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>LB</b>
34/13	Consider using a soapbox slot to explain how the Natural Capital agenda is being delivered in Wales.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/14	Send SW a copy of the WENP tender document.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/15	Prepare Annual Report draft.	<b>Completed</b>	
34/16	Update new directors' details on the ALERC website and companies house.	<b>Completed/Superseded</b> (see action 12 of this meeting)	

### Actions from this 35<sup>th</sup> meeting

Action #	Action item	Who
1	Follow up membership discount option with West Yorkshire	<b>MW</b>
2	Chase any outstanding membership payments and contact Rotherham LERC who expressed an interest in joining ALERC.	<b>TH</b>
3	Circulate draft annual report for comment (to be completed before the October 2017 AGM).	<b>TH</b>
4	TH & MH to stress the importance of accreditation in their respective (ANC & Chair) address to the membership at the ALERC conference.	<b>TH/MH</b>
5	Contact Ben Deed and Lindsay Barmforth and confirm whether they would like to become ALERC Directors.	<b>AR</b>
6	Organise the following lunchtime drop-in sessions at the conference: Accreditation and Director recruitment/ALERC support.	<b>TH</b>
7	CB to contact all Directors individually/All Directors to share telephone numbers.	<b>CB/All</b>
8	Ask Marina Flamank whether: (1) The Data hub as previously discussed is the Data dissemination option to allow future transfer of data from LERCs to EA. (2) MF would welcome the trial of ALERC (TH) acting as data transfer broker and pre-check LERCs data submissions.	<b>GL</b>
9	Speak to Paul Dutton (NE) about a possible protocol that supports Single Data List Indicator	<b>MH</b>

	160 (SDL160) reporting.	
10	Encourage the membership to engage/provide the necessary information/data sets asap, namely (1) individual LERC expenditure figures (so collectively we know the cost of the network); (2) National LERC data set (e.g. protected species heat map, using Norfolk's methodology).	TH
11	Do a soapbox on Norfolk's species heat map at the ALERC conference	MH
12	Update Directors details and portfolios on website to reflect new structure/responsibilities	TH/MW
13	Update website to reflect current membership (including removing Barnsley who have merged with Sheffield LERC).	TH/MW
14	Update website to include NBNT affiliate member logo.	TH/MW
15	Suggest wording that ensures that devolved regions are adequately represented in consultations.	AR
16	Amend section 3. As follows: ' <i>...Agreement by the Directors will be assumed if there is no response by deadline given...</i> '	CB
17	All to send any remaining comments to approach to consultations draft document asap/by the end of September.	All
18	Clarify: (1) the difference in the level of service categories of Knowledge Hub; (2) the difference between restricted and private and any other access restrictions.	TH
19	Email a conference booking reminder to the membership.	TH
20	Book venues for 2018 meetings.	SC

## Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting

### 1. Apologies & Introductions

Mandy Rudd (MR)

### 2. Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

### 3. Minutes of previous meeting and outstanding actions

The minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting were accepted.

The status of all previously outstanding action items is detailed in the table above. Updates on actions of the previous meeting are as follows:

1. **(31/21)** TH suggested this could be produced based on recent project work.
2. **(33/9)** TH suggested this will be part of the remit of the newly formed LERC databases working group.
3. **(33/10)** TH reported that this action is to be addressed by the newly formed LERC databases working group.
4. **(33/20)** Draft produced and agreed. TH to make ODI report available to the membership.
5. **(33/21)** TH draft specification submitted to Directors.
6. **(33/32)** Draft submitted.
7. **(34/1)** Wildlife Link rep is to be decided as part of Director Portfolio discussions. Consider sharing Wildlife Link e-bulletin with membership.

8. **(34/5)** Agreed that ALERC liaison with EA through IE/GL in the first instance. TH sent email to LERC membership requesting sample of data sent to EA to inform the best way forward (report submitted with meeting papers).
9. **(34/7)** TH suggested that a letter from the chair of ALERC would be required.

## 4. Officers reports

### 6a. Chair (MH)

- No specific report tabled. Updates provided throughout the meeting under respective agenda item(s).

### 4b. Treasurer (NC)

#### i. ALERC memberships 2016/17 renewals status (NC/TH)

- Update circulated prior to the meeting.

**Action 1: MW to follow up membership discount option with West Yorkshire.**

**Action 2: TH to chase any outstanding membership payments and contact Rotherham LERC who expressed an interest in joining ALERC.**

#### ii. ALERC memberships 2017/18 Renewals – Fees/timings (NC/TH)

- Update circulated prior to the meeting. Outstanding payments to be chased by TH as part of action 3 of previous item-4b i).

### 4c. Legal duties (e.g. Companies house)

#### i. ALERC articles of association (NC)

- Amendments to the articles of association identified in action **34/2** need the input of a solicitor/legal adviser so completion of this work will be subject to legal advice being available.

#### ii. Annual return (NC/MW/SC)

- Annual return (July 2017) submitted. Submission of annual accounts deadline 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

#### iii. Annual report & AGM (MH/TH)

- Drafted. To be circulated and completed before the AGM.

**Action 3: TH to circulate draft for comment (to be completed before the October 2017 AGM).**

## 5. National Coordinator (TH)

### 5a. ANC report

- Report submitted prior to the meeting. The need to chase membership payments was reiterated. It was agreed that if membership payments haven't been made prior to the conference, discounts cannot be offered.

## 5b. Work Plan

- No additional items discussed.

## 5c. Accreditation

- Report submitted prior to the meeting. Discussion included updates of the current accreditation work carried out for Staffordshire Ecological Record (SER). A discussion followed on ways of encouraging LERCs to engage with the accreditation process, including present recent work carried out by TH in regional LERC groups.

**Action 4: TH & MH to stress the importance of accreditation in their respective (ANC & Chair) address to the membership at the ALERC conference.**

## 5d. ANC post funding (MW)

### i. Current financial position/2017/2018 budget

- Report submitted prior to the meeting. 2017/18 budget is £32,000. Agreed allowance from ALERC funds of £20,000 (there is some potential to extend this allowance, due to additional membership fee income).

### ii. External contracts/projects – Including Forest Enterprise England biodiversity audit of the Public Forest Estate

- (1) MH confirmed that funding for digitisation project to be carried out by TH has been approved; (2) MW reported that a tender for the Environmental Data Review of the West of England had been submitted by TH, IE, MH & MW. The tender was shortlisted but the selection process isn't complete. Approximate contract value: £8,000.

### iii. LERC work plan/Director input/ANC capacity

- The importance of securing relevant project work for the 2018/19 financial year was discussed. It was agreed that pursuing additional LERC accreditation work would be desirable. MW reported that UEA data collation project is still very much at early stages and will not happen until 2018/19 financial year.

## 6. Board of Directors – membership, recruitment & Chair appointment (AR/MH)

### 6a. Prospective new Directors

- Director recruitment was discussed, particularly following MR's resignation. The following were mentioned as potential prospective Directors: Charlie Barnes, Camila Burrows and Dan Carpenter. SW confirmed his willingness to remain an ALERC Director despite his new job as an ecologist at Harrow Council. SW's continued membership of the board of Directors was agreed by all.

**Action 5: AR to contact Ben Deed and Lindsay Barmforth to confirm whether they would like to become ALERC Directors.**

**Action 6: TH to organise the following lunchtime drop-in sessions at the conference: Accreditation and Director recruitment/ALERC support**

### 6b. Chair appointment

- CB indicated her willingness to become the next chair and briefly outlined her vision and priorities for ALERC. All welcomed CB's appointment to the position of chair unanimously. CB indicated that she also intended having individual conversations with all Directors to get their views on ALERC. This process will also help inform the definition of priorities, which in turn will help to identify any skill gaps in the board (which will help inform recruitment). CB encouraged Directors to consider other potential members for the board.
- Special thanks were given to MH for all his work as chair of ALERC, and his support for the membership during a particularly challenging time for LERCs.

**Action 7: CB to contact all Directors individually/All Directors to share telephone numbers.**

## **7. Recorder 6 future – progress update including letter to JNCC (TH)**

- TH & CB circulated information papers prior to the meeting. TH explained that JNCC's position remained unclear. After discussion, it was agreed that: any future discussions/developments need to ensure collaboration between all relevant interested parties (e.g LERCs, NSS, NFBR, NBNT, etc.); It was suggested that the database group will in part focus on the future of Recorder 6. Reference should be made to the paper circulated by CB, produced for the London and South East Record Centre (LaSER) group. After discussion, it was agreed that the issue of databases (importantly, but not exclusively, Recorder 6) is critical to LERCs and so it is likely to be a priority for ALERC.

## **8. EA data supply and MoA future**

- After discussion it was recognised that there is an opportunity to find a better solution/process for delivering LERC data to the EA. TH suggested his role could support the process of ensuring the delivery of data sets in the right format across the LERCs network.

**Action 8: GL to ask Marina Flamank whether: (1) The Data hub as previously discussed is the Data dissemination option to allow future transfer of data from LERCs to EA. (2) MF would welcome the trial of ALERC (TH) acting as data transfer broker and pre-check LERCs data submissions.**

## **9. SDL160 Spatial Data Layers 2016**

- Paper circulated prior to the meeting.

**Action 9: MH to speak to Paul Dutton (NE) about a possible protocol that supports Single Data List Indicator 160 (SDL160) reporting, following the termination of NE's LERC MoA.**

## **10. Actions from the ODI Workshop (MR)**

- Papers circulated. Any final comments/information by the end of September 2017.

**Action 10: TH to encourage the membership to engage/provide the necessary information/data sets asap, namely (1) individual LERC expenditure figures (so collectively we know the cost of the network); (2) National LERC data set (e.g. protected species heat map, using Norfolk's methodology).**

**Action 11: MH to do a soapbox on Norfolk's species heat map at the ALERC conference.**

## 11. NBN & NBN Atlas update including NBN - Sensitive Species Policy

- A new Director is needed to support AR with the NBN work following MR's resignation. This will be addressed as part of Director Portfolio's discussions under new chair.

## 12. SBIF review (TH)

- TH circulated relevant papers prior to the meeting. The two priorities for ALERC's engagement with SBIF are: Data flow models (that acknowledges the important role of volunteers but recognises the critical role of LERCs as well) and need to promote ALERC's accreditation across the network of Scottish LERCs.

## 13. Communication – Priorities and opportunities

### 13a. Website updates (IE/MW/TH)

- A few amendments to the website were suggested throughout the meeting. These are:

**Action 12: TH/MW to update Directors details and portfolios on website to reflect new structure/responsibilities.**

**Action 13: TH/MW to update website to reflect current membership (including removing Barnsley who have merged with Sheffield LERC).**

**Action 14: TH/MW to update website to include NBNT affiliate member logo.**

### 13b. Consultation responses (CB/TH)

- A final draft of ALERC's approach to consultations document was circulated. Reference to the representation of the devolved regions in the document needs to be clear. It was agreed that 'agreement by the Directors will be assumed if there is no response by deadline given'.

**Action 15: AR to suggest wording that ensures that devolved regions are adequately represented in consultations.**

**Action 16: CB to amend section 3. As follows: '...Agreement by the Directors will be assumed if there is no response by deadline given...'**

**Action 17: All to send any remaining comments asap/by the end of September.**

### 13c. ALERC Forum (TH/MW)

- Paper circulated prior to the meeting. Knowledge Hub is the suggested platform to replace the ALERC Forum. Suggested way forward include leaving the old Forum as a reference archive for a period of time to allow people to refer to it (as within the existing resources it is not possible to transfer the content across from the Forum to the new platform). This approach was agreed.

**Action 18: TH to clarify: (1) the difference in the level of service categories of Knowledge Hub; (2) the difference between restricted and private and any other access restrictions.**

### 13d. Other



- NBNT are keen to explore whether ALERC and LERCs are willing to be conduits between the recording community and the NBNT for getting feedback from the recording community regarding additional Atlas functionality.

#### **14. ALERC conference update (TH)**

- Brief conference update provided.

**Action 19: TH to email a conference booking reminder to the membership.**

#### **15. New meeting venue options once B&BC WT move offices**

- Birmingham meeting venue options circulated. 2018 ALERC Directors meeting dates agreed as follows: 25<sup>th</sup> January, 24<sup>th</sup> May & 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**Action 20: SC to book venues for 2018 meetings.**

#### **16. AOB - To be notified in advance and paper circulated**

##### **16a. Wildlife Crime – supply of data**

- IE reported being approached to provide wildlife data to Devon police. A brief discussion followed around the approach others may have taken – SLA vs AD Hoc provision. TH suggested GIGL may have experience of this.

##### **16b. Survey request: Record Centres, ecological data and consultants - a better way?**

- It was suggested that there would be merit in sharing information about Aderyn's current functionality and planned future development and explore whether/how this can benefit English LERCs.

##### **16c. House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Call for Evidence submission**

- Evidence submitted and circulated.

##### **16d. Should ALERC explore having a data fitness evaluation protocol?**

- SW suggested that developing a protocol to measure the effectiveness of data use (alongside/as part of the accreditation process) could be useful. This could be one of the priorities of work for ALERC in the near future.

##### **16e. Does ALERC need to review how it engages/collaborate with government agencies?**

- SW suggested that this could also be one of the priorities of work for ALERC in the near future.