

**Draft Minutes of the Zoos Expert Committee Meeting**  
**15 September 2011 London**

Present

**Committee members:** Anna Meredith (acting Chair); Brian Bertram; John Eddison; David Price; Stephen Woollard; Ros Clubb; Sharon Redrobe.

**Officials:** Jane Withey, Margaret Finn and Rebeca Garcia from Defra.

**1. Apologies**

1.1 Apologies had been received from: Jake Veasey; David Field; Tim Nevard, Elaine Kendall (Defra); Nevin Hunter (AH); Andrew Voas (Scottish Government); Declan Looney (Northern Ireland office); Alun Streeter (Welsh Government).

1.2 Secretariat reported that due to her work commitments, Amanda Ewington had regrettably decided to resign her membership of the Committee. The Committee said that it was very sorry to see Amanda go but would like to thank her for the work that she had contributed during her appointment. She was wished well for the future.

**3. Minutes of the Committee meeting 10 May 2011**

The minutes were accepted with one small amendment: to add Ros Clubb's name to the list of attendees.

**4. Matters arising**

**a) BIAZA Elephant Welfare Group (EWG)**

4.1 Secretariat had circulated BIAZA's Elephant Welfare Group's re-draft of the elephant welfare standards ahead of the meeting. The ZEC discussed the paper and it was agreed that the Chair would take back the ZEC's comments. The Group was next meeting on 27 September.

4.2 Some of the main points to come out of the ZEC meeting were:

- shortening the draft to bring it more in line with other sections of Appendix 8 on specialist exhibits;
- ensuring that the draft requires progress in improving welfare; and
- possible inclusion of provision for individual elephant welfare plans.

4.3 The intention was to publish the new guidance as part of the Standards in the early part of next year.

**Action Point - Chair**

**5. Amendments to the Circular and SSSMZP**

## **a) Circular**

5.1 Secretariat had forwarded a redraft of the Circular ahead of the meeting after taking into account comments received from the subgroup. Secretariat said that the Circular was now a more generic document in line with Defra policy, bringing together other advice that had been produced over the years. In line with this the Circular would now be called a 'guidance' document. The intention was to publish the new guidance document at the beginning of 2012. It was proposed that henceforth the document should be reviewed yearly in March. When updated it would be published on the Defra website and become current in September.

5.2 The ZEC agreed with this way forward.

5.3 Secretariat asked if anyone had any more suggestions for inclusion in the guidance document. The following were suggested: inspector fee rates; completing the inspection report; the pre inspection audit; and advising local authorities on the use of the zoo licence template. It was also suggested that guidance should be given on what is meant by "significant" with regard to a significant change in a zoo's collection. It was suggested that this last issue should be considered at a later date and could be included as an annex to the guidance document.

5.4 Secretariat would make the devolved administrations aware that the Circular was being updated and take any action that they saw fit.

5.5 It was agreed that once the Committee was happy with the contents of the new guidance document it could be published without being reviewed by inspectors.

5.6 Secretariat asked that if anyone had further suggestions they should be sent by email.

**Action point – Secretariat**

## **b) SSSMZP**

5.7 Secretariat had circulated revised text for technical amendments to the Standards together with the ideas and suggestions already made by the Zoos Forum and ZEC members, for other, bigger changes.

5.8 At the last meeting it was agreed that the Appendices would not be updated now but it was agreed that this would be kept under review. Secretariat explained that it wished to finalise the text of the updated Standards this year and publish them early next year in tandem with the elephant standards.

5.9 Secretariat asked if the ZEC had any new issues they wished to see incorporated into the technical update of the Standards. The following were suggested:

- wording in the update of Chapter 4 of the Zoos Forum Handbook, regarding the feeding of animals with live prey, needed to be incorporated into the Standards (at section 1.6). John Eddison said that he would send some text to Secretariat for consideration.

**Action point – John Eddison**

- also in Chapter 1 some cross-referencing to cleaning procedures and environmental protection is needed, health and safety issues and access for disabled people;
- with regard to the procedures to be adopted in the event of escapes in section 8.33 insert “and other relevant personnel as considered necessary” after “all members of staff”; and
- references to legislation in the appendices needed to be checked and updated if necessary.

5.10 The ZEC was also to give a view on whether any of the proposed non-technical amendments could be accommodated at this stage.

5.11 It was considered that although most of the suggestions were viable, the ZEC did not have any spare capacity to look into most of these at this time. However, it was agreed that including recommendations that had been made by the Zoos Forum following the ADAS report on zoos evaluating the effectiveness of their contribution to conservation and education, could be considered. Stephen Woollard agreed to circulate a form of words to the ZEC for comment. This would be inserted at the end of Chapter 7, Conservation and Education Measures.

**Action Point – Stephen Woollard**

*Nb text circulated 22 September*

5.12 With regard to public safety in the zoo and the holding of firearms and the frequency of emergency drills (both in Chapter 8) Sharon Redrobe agreed to draft a form of wording.

**Action Point – Sharon Redrobe**

5.13 The ZEC also agreed on a revised form of wording for the walk-through exhibits section of Appendix 6, Animal Contact Areas. Suggested wording, put forward by the Chair, was accepted with minor amendments.

5.14 Secretariat would take all of these amendments into consideration and circulate a redraft of the Standards ahead of the next meeting on 17 January.

**Action Point - Secretariat**

**6. Amendments to Zoos Forum Handbook**

**a) ZEC publications**

6.1 Secretariat reminded everyone that it had previously been suggested that the ZF Handbook should remain and continue to be updated. However, it was agreed that, instead, the Handbook should be renamed as the Zoos Expert Committee Handbook which would contain the existing ZF chapters. Any updated chapters and new ones added would be attributed to the ZEC. This approach would enable all chapters to be kept together in one large document.

In addition it was agreed that the ZEC should begin its own series of publications. Any guidance prepared by the ZEC, would be published with the strapline 'Guidance prepared by the Zoos Expert Committee, independent advisers to UK Ministers'.

6.2 Such guidance would be regarded as 'best practice' and would not be binding upon zoos/local authorities/inspectors. ZEC documents would not generally be an indicator of a Government view or policy, or have specific Government endorsement.

#### **b) Progress with Chapter 4**

6.3 Secretariat had incorporated everyone's comments on Chapter 4 into one document and circulated it ahead of the meeting. The ZEC was asked to make a decision on the way forward.

6.4 Two additional comments were made on the draft. Regarding section 1.4, euthanasia, as this practice can be used as both a welfare and management tool, it was suggested that the section be split to emphasise this. It was also suggested that all chapters needed to take smaller zoos into consideration, e.g. when using examples try to represent zoos of all levels.

6.5 Ros Clubb and John Eddison agreed to work together to finalise the Chapter, contacting Jake Veasey to ask for his input. It was decided that a short Executive Summary should be included at the beginning of the Chapter. It was hoped that a redraft would be available by 14 October.

**Action Point – sub-group**

#### **c) Progress with Chapter 2**

6.7 Stephen Woollard had circulated a redraft of Chapter 2 of the Handbook ahead of the meeting. Everyone was asked to send any comments to Stephen by 14 October. Stephen said that he would write a short Executive Summary and would also work on the appendices.

6.8 John Eddison pointed out that the Animals Scientific Procedures Act 1986 was being revised (for instance with regard to cephalopods) and this needed to be reflected in the new Chapters 2 and 4.

**Action Point – Stephen Woollard**

#### **d) New chapter on licensing and inspection**

6.9 The intention had been that Secretariat would arrange for this chapter to be published as part of the Handbook. However, this was delayed pending agreement on the way forward with ZEC publications, as above. Secretariat would now go ahead and arrange for publication in line with the agreed proposal.

**Action Point – Secretariat**

#### **e) Managing zoonotic risk in zoos and wildlife parks**

6.10 The Chair said that she was waiting for final comments from the subgroup and would then circulate a redraft of the paper.

**Action Point – Anna Meredith**

*Nb circulated on 17 October*

## **7. AHVLA (Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency) Report (Annex A)**

The Report had been circulated ahead of the meeting (see Annex A). No specific comments were made but the ZEC wanted to thank Tom Adams, who would be moving on, for his help and involvement over the years. The ZEC also asked Secretariat to emphasise again to AHVLA its willingness to help out at the proposed inspector training seminar.

## **8. Research**

### **a) Review of LAs' implementation of ZLA**

8.1 Secretariat said that it was in the process of checking ADAS's final report. When this stage had been completed the report would be sent to the Minister for permission to publish. At the same time it would be put to the ZEC for consideration. Anna Meredith, Stephen Woollard and Sharon Redrobe volunteered to be on a subgroup. Rebeca Garcia said that she would also like to have the opportunity to comment on the report.

8.2 Secretariat would forward the report to the sub-group and ask for comments back by the end of December for discussion at the ZEC meeting on 17 January 2012.

### **Action Point – Secretariat and sub-group**

### **b) Other research proposals**

8.3 Secretariat reported that it had not received any recent suggestions from the ZEC for other research projects.

## **9. Parliamentary Questions and Zoos Forum correspondence**

Secretariat reported that there had been no PQs since the ZEC last met and there was no outstanding correspondence.

## **10. Liaison with other bodies**

### **a) Liaison Group of the Animal Welfare Advisory Bodies**

10.1 Secretariat said that the Group last met on 18 May and was next due to meet on 17 November. The Legislation Working Group (a subgroup of the Liaison Group) was in the process of completing a discussion paper on the law relating to animal welfare.

### **b) Defra-Zoo Liaison Committee**

10.2 Rebeca Garcia reported that the Committee last met on 26 August. Main discussions included: the style of the Balai flow charts which had yet to be decided; the expectation of a new working group or teleconference to discuss further the Balai proposal; Rabies harmonisation work with confirmation that the UK will maintain existing controls for *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM) as surveillance has been carried out to prove freedom; zoo screening of contact animals; the Avian Disease

Advisory Group will be looking at specific contingency plans for zoos; confirmation that new procedures have been introduced for post-import testing of certain exotic ruminants, including rhinos and elephants. Post-import checks would not be required as these animals are low risk and the bluetongue situation is favourable at the moment. If the disease situation changes this would be reviewed - new procedures were to be introduced for elephants and rhinos as they were now considered low risk.

10.3 Rebecca informed the meeting that the Animal Welfare team now has a specific team working on the “circus” regulations.

## **11. Appointments and reappointments to the Zoos Expert Committee**

Secretariat pointed out that it was in the process of interviewing for three new members to join the Committee. The Committee would be informed of the result once all necessary stages of the selection process had been completed.

## **12. Dates for future meetings**

It was agreed that the 17 January 2012 meeting would be held in Bristol and the 17 May meeting in London. Secretariat suggested holding the following meeting in October rather than September and would circulate some possible dates for a meeting in late October 2012.

**Action Point - Secretariat**

## **13. AOB**

### **a) Bird of prey Centres as zoos**

13.1 The Chair had received a letter regarding Bird of Prey Centres licensed as zoos whereas birds of prey, and other animals, that are, for instance, transported and shown around the country i.e. not kept in any one place, are not subject to the legislation. The letter had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The ZEC agreed that this was a grey area but it was ultimately the responsibility of the local authority to decide if an establishment was a zoo.

13.2 Rebeca Garcia said that she would flag up this issue with the team that was working on the “circus” legislation. Secretariat would draft a reply.

**Action Point – Secretariat and Rebeca Garcia**

### **b) Guidance on the keeping of cetaceans**

13.3 Secretariat reported that due to other work commitments there had been no progress on this guidance.

### **c) Inspector costs**

13.4 Brian Bertram was concerned about the inconsistency in inspector fees, as ultimately cost is passed on to the zoo. Secretariat pointed out that the inspector can charge what is “reasonable” and it is up to the parties concerned to decide what is

reasonable. It was suggested that this issue could be looked at in the update of the Circular.

Zoos Expert Committee Secretariat  
Defra, October 2011

## **Annex A**

### **AHVLA update for ZEC 15 Sept 2011**

#### **Reorganisation**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> August the final leavers under AHVLA's voluntary redundancy/early retirement scheme left the Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service (WLRS). With the loss of 20% of its staff WLRS has undertaken an office reorganisation which has resulted in all the functions associated with the delivery aspects of the Zoo Licensing Act being moved to a new Finance, Inspectorate and Zoos team.

Tom Adams will continue to carry out the delivery aspects of the Zoo Licensing Act until December 2011 when he will undertake a job swap with a member of WLRS' CITES licensing team. Although the delivery aspects of Zoo Licensing have now moved from the Compliance Team to the Finance, Inspectorate and Zoos Team, Nevin Hunter will continue to manage the final stages of the inspector recruitment process and lead on the arrangements for the inspector only seminar in November.

#### **Zoo Inspector Recruitment**

AHVLA is nearing completion of the sift for new inspectors and hopes to be able to announce the new inspectors in the next couple of months. The aim is to have the new inspectors on board before the planned inspector only training seminar.

#### **Zoo Training Seminar**

A provisional date of 24 November 2011 has been given for a one day Training Seminar for Zoo Inspectors only. AHVLA has notified the current Zoo Inspectors requesting them to keep that date free. The Devolved Administrations have also been notified. The training is planned to take place at Defra/AHVLA offices in Bristol. It is expected that Nevin Hunter will lead the training. There are no plans on the horizon for AHVLA to host a zoo seminar to which LAs would be invited.

#### **Information Commissioners Office**

Recently the ICO overturned a decision by an LA not to release the names of inspectors on an inspection report; apparently 35 other LAs have released inspectors' names on reports prior to this. AHVLA could not prevent this release and we have advised our inspectors that in light of the ICOs decision inspectors' names could now be released as part of FOI requests for inspection reports. Those inspectors who responded to my note so far haven't been unduly concerned.

#### **Inspection of licensed farm parks**

It had been brought to AHVLA's attention that occasionally there were discrepancies between reports made by SoS zoo inspectors and animal health inspectors at licensed farm parks with regard to the keeping of farm animals. Some zoo inspectors felt that there was a conflict in the standards set for zoos and those that are imposed by animal health vets.

However, it was not possible to say which set of regulations/standards takes precedent in such cases. Ultimately it would be for the local authority to decide how to act when receiving conflicting reports.