

UK Plant Genetic Resources Group Meeting
DATE & TIME: Wednesday 13th March 2024, 15:00-17:00
LOCATION: MS Teams

Charlotte Allender, Univ. of Warwick (**Chair**)
Gaynor McKenzie, James Hutton Institute (GM)
Alex Prendergast, Natural England (AP)
Kalani Seymour, Plant Heritage (KS)
Catrina Fenton, Garden Organic (CF)
Caroline Liddell, Defra (CL)
Lydia McKenzie, Defra (LM)

John Dickie, Kew MSB (JD)
Noam Chayut, John Innes Centre (NC)
Lydia Smith, NIAB EMR (LS)
Sean May, Univ. of Nottingham (SM)
Sarah Trinder, Univ. Warwick (ST)
Debbie Kessell, SASA (DB)
Abigail Johnson, NIAB (AJ)

24/01 Apologies

The meeting was chaired by Charlotte Allender (CA).

Apologies received from Matt Ordidge, Univ. of Reading and Nigel Maxted, Univ. of Birmingham.

The group wished Nigel a full recovery and shared well-wishes for Nigel and Shelagh.

Debbie Kessell attended the meeting on behalf of SASA and was welcomed by the group. Debbie works in the policy team covering plant health and will feed back to SASA colleagues what the UKPGR group discusses to determine who would be best placed to attend future meetings.

24/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2023 (CA)

Colleagues discussed the previous minutes and agreed that Liz Edwards attended on behalf of Plant Heritage.

24/03 Actions and Matters arising (CA)

Item 23/25: Action Secretariat: Share minutes of the June meeting for comment by email.

- **Done.** No comments received for the minutes from 23 June 2023.

Item 23/28:

Action Nigel: to contact Joan Cottrell from Forestry Commission.

- NM's action to contact Joan Cottrell and Mike Parker is to be set aside until further notice.

Action Lin: to contact the National Botanic Garden of Wales

- LH contacted National Botanic Garden of Wales (NBGW). NBGW are due to consider UKPGR membership internally and confirm their decision in due course.

Action Elizabeth: to follow up with Sam Brooke's replacement at BSPB

- ES shared that Sam Brooke's replacement at British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB) is Anthony Hopkins who started in his role this week. ES to follow up with him after this UKPGR meeting.

Action Secretariat: include agenda item to review the terms of reference after the above actions are complete to ensure they are still fit for purpose, especially for new members.

- The terms of reference are an agenda item for this meeting.

Action Secretariat: contact Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and DFID in FCO.

- *This action remains outstanding and to be actioned before next meeting*

Item 23/29:

Action Secretariat: to share a copy of the Rapid Evidence Assessment with the group.

- The report was shared by email alongside the agenda for this meeting.

Action Secretariat: to send out further info on the CBD team's DSI business advisory group

- Secretariat sent out further info on the CBD team's DSI business advisory group.

Item 23/32: Action Secretariat: to report back progress on GR Strategy to next UK PGR Group meeting.

- The submission to Secretary of State is being drafted. The plan is to develop a roadmap or programme setting out our targets and commitments for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Item 23/34: Action GM: to provide secretariat with some options of suitable dates for a visit to be shared via doodle poll with the group.

- The summer technical meeting is due to take place on 3 and 4 July 2024.

24/04 Review of Terms of reference and group invite list (CA)

Three people had issues receiving the calendar invite from the mailing list. SM identified issues have been arising from emails sent from Defra accounts.

CL shared the terms of reference (ToR) in the teams chat. Colleagues agreed the only change to be made to the ToR is to change the dates from “2016 – 2019” to “2024 – 2027”. JD noted the current term of reference allow the group’s attendee list and topics of discussion to be broad. ES suggested UKPGR meetings should continue to focus on food and agriculture, without excluding other areas of focus.

ACTION SM: Terms of reference to be updated to refer to 2024 – 2027 instead of 2016 – 2019.

Robin Wood, head of Elsoms Seed and chair of BSPB, asked CA if UKPGR would like organisational membership to BSPB. NC attends the BSPB meetings on behalf of JIC and offered to also represent UKPGR in these meetings. Colleagues discussed UKPGR’s lack of capacity to pay a subscription for organisational membership. ES suggested inviting BSPB to send a representative to attend UKPGR meetings to bridge the informational gap left since Penny Maplestone left the group. KS queried the need for UKPGR to attend BSPB if UKPGR members attend BSPB in other capacities and are able to share information across groups. NC highlighted the focus of UKPGR meetings on strategy and BSPB being a major end user. CA and ES discussed communicating with Robin and Anthony at BSPB and agreed that the first priority is to get a BSPB representative at UKPGR meetings.

ACTION CA and ES: to co-ordinate conversations with Robin and Anthony at BSPB and report back to the group by email.

24/05 Agri-support schemes for PGR (CL)

CL shared a presentation seeking advice from UKPGR on SMART objectives for potential PGR schemes for crop wild relatives and landraces. CL welcomed written feedback by email by Friday 15 March.

24/06 Defra Update (CL)

PGR Indicator

The plant genetic resources indicator has not been updated since 2018. Joe Taylor has taken over from James Williams at JNCC and will attend the next UKPGR meeting to present an update on the indicator to the group.

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

The UK has joined the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System (OWG-EFMLS). The next meeting of this group is in April 2024 and will focus on three negotiation “hotspots” identified by the co-chairs of the working group as (i) payment structure and rates, (ii) expanding the list of material in Annex I, and (iii) digital sequence information/genetic

sequence data. ES expressed interest in the discussions of this group and requested further information.

ACTION CL: To share information on OWG-EFMLS with the group.

ST highlighted that a number of seed companies are reluctant to accept the click wrap SMTA procedure as it contains less information than the paper form.

ACTION ST and CL: to discuss offline the issue with click wrap SMTA.

Plant Varieties and Seed strategy workshop

In 2022, Defra put out a call for ideas for a Plant Varieties and Seeds strategy. In 2023, a summary of responses was published online, with a more detailed summary added in January 2024. PVS Strategy Workshops are now taking place for colleagues who are involved in the internal workings of plant varieties and seeds systems – two have taken place on Variety Listing and Variety Rights, with another workshop on Seed Certification and Marketing due to take place in April. The next phase of this project is determining how the Policy team should engage with the broader stakeholder group.

24/07 Update on summer technical at James Hutton (GM)

GM provided an update on details of the summer technical event:

- A seminar room has been booked.
- The institute will provide for free lunch on both days, dinner on 3 July and a goody bag. Attendees will be asked for their dietary requirements.
- There will be a series of talks including by the barley group, by the potato genetics group, a walking tour around the glass house, and a tour of the genebank and national seed store.
- A meeting invite will be sent, colleagues need to respond to the invite to indicate how many attendees will be present.
- Colleagues were made aware of Arable Scotland taking place on 2 July, from 9am – 4pm which they may wish to attend ahead of the summer technical meeting. More information can be found at: <https://www.arablescotland.org.uk/about-us>.
- GM welcomes advice on the programme. CA agreed to review.
- GM will provide additional information including travel and accommodation information.

ACTION: Colleagues to promptly respond to the meeting invite for the summer technical event.

JD requested that Sharon.Balding@kew.org be added to the UKPGR mailing list. It is currently unconfirmed who will be attending UKPGR on behalf of Kew once JD retires.

24/08 Discussion about meeting format (in person, online, hybrid) (CL)

Due to timing, this item has been moved to the next meeting.

ACTION Secretariat: add item on discussion about meeting format to next meeting agenda

24/09 PGR applications / Project updates (All)

This item was skipped due to lack of time. The group discussed briefly how joint project proposals may be put together and agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting.

ACTION Secretariat: add discussion on group project applications to agenda for next meeting.

23/34 AOB (CA)

John Dickie's last meeting

The group thanked John Dickie for his attendance and contribution to UKPGR over the past decade. This was the last UKPGR meeting that JD will be attending.

Well-wishes for Nigel Maxted

Colleagues passed on their well wishes for Nigel to LS who will share this with Shelagh.

ACTION CA and UKPGR: CA will liaise with LS about Nigel's condition and when appropriate will organise a card from the group and collate messages from colleagues.

Summer technical programme

NC gave a presentation to Grow Wild which could be included in summer technical programme.

23/35 Date of next meeting – October 2024 (CA)

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 16 October 2024.