Minutes of UK Plant Genetic Resources Group Meeting held on 18 October 2007

Mike Ambrose (Chair)	John Innes Centre	Dave Astley	WHRI
		George Campbell	SASA
Nigel Maxted	Birmingham University	Martin Lewis	Defra
Brian Ford-Lloyd	Birmingham University	Martyn Ibbotson	Defra
Simon Linington	Millennium Seed Bank	Laura Pleasants	Defra
Michael Camlin	DARDNI		

07/14 Apologies for absence

1. Apologies received from:

Charlotte Allender	Warwick HRI	Angela Karp	R-Res
Ian Thomas	IGER	Joan Cottrell	Forestry Research
Gavin Ramsay	SCRI	Penny Maplestone	BSPB
Niall Green	SASA		
Bob Sherman	Garden Organic		

2. Mike Ambrose informed members that Ken Tobbutt from East Malling Research (EMR) had stood down from the Group in view of his departure from EMR from April 2008. Mike reported that he had written to Ken to thank him on behalf of the Group for his contributions to the Group and to ECPGR over recent years. It was hoped that Kate Evans might be a possible EMR replacement.

07/15 Minutes of the meeting held 20 April 2007

3. Agreed.

07/16 Matters arising from previous minutes

4. The following points for further action were agreed:

- Defra to identify team responsible for the FP7 within the Department and invite them to the next meeting to answer questions
  Update: Dr David Coates, Defra, will hold a short question and answer session at the next meeting
- Amanda Read agreed to explore the key contacts within BBSRC involved with Biodiversity with respect to FP7.
- Brian Ford-Lloyd agreed to explore the same information within NERC.

- Defra agreed to contact Plant Health colleagues about an update to the Seeds Directive which was giving the Group concerns. Information will be passed to members as and when it is available
  Update: Martin Lewis has identified a Defra colleague who has responsibility for Council Directive 98/95/EC. He will report further to members at the next UKPGR Group meeting.
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- Mike Camlin will try and circulate to members a relevant Defra 24hr Report on the Seeds Directive.

07/17 Review of terms of reference of the UKPGRG

5. Martyn Ibbotson suggested that the wording of paragraph 1 of the TOR should be slightly amended to clarify that the Group consists of curators of *ex-situ* collections and managers of *in situ* resources. The Group accepted this amendment and agreed the TOR as drafted.

6. It was agreed that Martin Lewis would circulate the new TOR in mid November and at the same time issue a call for nominations for the Chair and Technical Secretary positions (as per Section 3 of the TOR). Nominations would be made by 18 January and then a list of nominations circulated to Members by 24 January. This would give 9 weeks notice before the next meeting of the UKPGRG on 27 March when a secret ballot would be taken if necessary.

Update: Nominations were received for Mike Ambrose as Chair and Nigel Maxted as Technical Secretary (other nominees declined to stand). It is suggested that Martyn Ibbotson should take the Chair for the process of electing these two positions. Subject to Members agreement it will not be necessary to hold a vote: the assumption being that there is a consensus for their election. Unless Martyn hears to the contrary he will assume that Members agree to this process

07/18 International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

7. Martyn Ibbotson gave a brief update on ITPGR activities. In particular he reported that the Commission was to extend its remit to forestry/fisheries and microbes. However he did not expect any overlap with PGR activities.

8. Mike Ambrose gave a summary of the 3rd Ad Hoc meeting (sub-group of the UKPGRG) which met to discuss SMTA issues on 8 March. The main action emerging from the meeting was that genebank managers should bring the SMTA process to the attention of their Principal managers to ensure they know what is happening and why. This will allow the institutions/organisations responsible for the collections to assess whether there are any ramifications for them (legal and/or financial) as a result of the SMTA process. The timetable for

this process is flexible but members were urged to approach their Principals as soon as possible to give time to consider and resolve any problems that are identified.

2nd Session of the Governing Body of the ITPGR 29 October – 2 November 2007

9. Martyn Ibbotson drew members attention to Agenda item 10 of the forthcoming GB meeting to be held in Rome. This concerned the implementation of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing. Martyn noted views expressed by members, in particular that no genebank managers had so far issued an SMTA. He would feed this into the debate on this item.

07/18a GRFA Internet Portal

10. Martin Lewis reminded members that a limited amount of funding had been found for some development work to the portal in the 2007/08 financial year. Although a relatively small amount of funds, this was still good news set against a background of cut backs in many areas of Defra's activities.

11. Nigel Maxted was co-coordinating with members a list of amendments they would like to see implemented. It was likely that funding would not cover all the developments suggested, but nevertheless Mike Ambrose did point out that this was a very important priority and it was essential for members to let Nigel have suggestions asap.

Update: Development work has now begun on the portal and is due to be finished by mid March 2008. Martin Lewis will give an update at the next meeting on 27 March.

07/19 Update on the National Fruit Collection tender exercise

12. Laura Pleasants (Defra) updated members on the open tender exercise to let the existing contracts for maintenance and curation of the collections as one contract. The new contract would run from 1 April 2008. Laura was able to assure the Group that the tender exercise was on schedule, but because of commercial confidentiality was unable to go into details of the bids received.

Update: It has now been publicly announced that Reading University won the contract to manage and curate the collections, which will remain at their present site, Brogdale in Kent.

07/20 UK National Inventory of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: current status and future development

13. Ian Thomas (IGER) was due to lead on this agenda item. However as he was unable to attend the meeting it has been postponed until the next meeting on 27 March 2008.

14. Niall Green (SASA) reported that there had been a recent meeting between Dave Astley (WHRI) and Sandra Slack (GO) to discuss a National Vegetable inventory.

07/21 Biodiversity indicators for PGR

15. Mike Ambrose reported that no progress had been made on this matter and would contact Mercy Morris (NCCPG) and James Williams (JNCC) to help plan ahead in developing suitable and meaningful criteria for base line data for future monitoring.

07/22 Summer technical visit

16. Mike Ambrose thanked George Campbell and his colleagues at SASA for all the hard work they had put into making the summer technical visit such an interesting, informative and enjoyable two days.

17. For the 2008 event Mike suggested that perhaps focus could switch to the South East of England and in particular Kent. He was hopeful that a visit to the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Park could be arranged, with the probability of a second day visit to the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale (provided the Collections were kept in Kent – update: they were). At this stage this was just a suggestion, but if members supported it then details could be fleshed out at the next UKPGR Group meeting.

07/23 No item (agenda misnumbered)

07/24 Harvesting Diversity Conference II

18. Mike Ambrose had little progress to report. Although it had not proved possible to hold the event so far he was still keen for it to go ahead since it was timely to take stock of developments since Harvesting Diversity I. The next step would be for him to discuss the next move with David Smith (CABI – mycology) and Mike Roper (Defra – Farm Animal genetics). Mike would report developments to the next meeting of the UKPG Group.

07/25 AOB

19. Nigel Maxted raised the issue of the planned awareness raising meeting on Crop Wild Relatives with JNCC and Natural England. Mike Ambrose promised to take this point up again as a matter of urgency.

07/26 Date of next meeting

20. **27 March 2008 starting at 12:00 rm 406 Eastbury House, London (lunch provided).**