[redacted]

**From:** [redacted] (Defra)
**Sent:** 29 April 2014 12:18
**To:** [redacted]
**Cc:** [redacted] (Defra)
**Subject:** RE: LAG minutes

Hello [redacted]

It'd be our pleasure to host – though Temple Quay isn't quite as picturesque as Slimbridge I'm afraid!

I've booked us a conference room (seats about 20) for the whole day. If [redacted] could liaise with [redacted] about attendees, refreshments etc that'd be helpful.

As you know we are close to the station, but car parking in the area is quite restricted and fills up quickly. If anyone plans to drive, I'm happy to provide suggestions on where they can park. We do have a couple of spaces behind the building which I may be able to book, but there are only 2 or 3.

Best wishes
[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]
**Sent:** 29 April 2014 07:02
**To:** [redacted] (Defra)
**Subject:** Re: LAG minutes

Dear [redacted]

Further to my last, I am looking for a venue for the meeting on 25th June. Would it be possible for you to host us at Bristol? I have suggested to [redacted] that he gives [redacted] a ring.

Kind regards

[redacted]
On 28 Apr 2014, at 11:31, [redacted] > wrote:

Dear [redacted]

Thanks for your thoughts. Apologies for slight delay in reply but other things have had to come first.

Pleased that minsters are relatively relaxed.

Agreed on "proportionality" but the curved ball to watch is the risk to children. All else to one side, the evidence is pointing pretty solidly at at least 5,000 plus under eights in UK being in households where game is regularly served once a week or more, and say 50 gms would be enough for them to hit the BMR of a 1 point IQ decrement. Hence what are the proportionate measures to protect children from that harm? (Others are looking at some 80,000 at EU level but that's not LAG's bag). How would Daily Mail react?

The clay shooting side has been covered but mainly in [redacted] livestock risk assessment. The Swedes have a longstanding ban on lead cartridges for all clay shooting. I am aware of the complications regarding the commonwealth games! This all falls under the clay shooting governing bodies up to olympic level, and that would be a matter for say sports councils and DCMS. I have seen some of the risk management planning for clay shooting, but haven't given it much thought in the LAG context. Thanks for the heads up.

I'm off to see [redacted] at Oxford on Thursday to see if we can put some meat on the idea of a seminar at the EGI. Will let you know how I get on, but [redacted] knows that it is all very 'exploratory'.

You will have picked up that [redacted] has stood down. I know that he and colleagues in [redacted] have given careful thought to a successor from the bird side - and are proposing [redacted]. As you will also have seen I have not hung around and for continuity am regarding him as [redacted] "stand in" pending a nod from Defra and anointment/acceptance at the next meeting. [redacted] is a known anti lead campaigner (which will not be welcome with joy by some perhaps) but I think he will be sensible - and he certainly knows the subject matter inside out.

As things stand we are looking at 16 May for the next mitigation subgroup meeting and I'm delighted [redacted] can make it - and 25 June for the main committee. But final confirmation soonest. So long as at least one from Defra can be there …. appreciated.

In haste - hope makes sense.

Kind regards

[redacted]

On 22 Apr 2014, at 17:10, [redacted] (Defra) [redacted] wrote:

[redacted]

Thank you for this very helpful email and for the minutes. I hope you had a pleasant Easter?

Your personal views on the progress of the group are enlightening and welcome. I am sure you will understand that in order to maintain the integrity of the process I won't respond to each point you've made. What I can say is that the Minister hasn't indicated to me whether he wishes the LAG's work to be wrapped up sooner or later – he has merely asked where in the process you are.

My personal view is that any mitigation measures must of course be proportionate to the perceived risk. Where agreement cannot be reached, then I agree both sides of the debate should be clearly explained, possibly with a brief covering statement from yourself and/or [redacted] explaining why consensus couldn't be reached (in many cases this may be self-evident, but in others it may be rather more subtle so anything to help officials and Ministers understand the context would be appreciated). I seem to recall we have previously agreed such an approach may be necessary if agreement is not forthcoming.

One area I haven't seen much attention given to during the meetings is clay-pigeon shooting. The evidence points towards clay shooting as being probably the most intensive source of lead – albeit concentrated in a relatively small area (though research has shown that high lead levels have been found in soil, foliage etc of land adjacent to shoots). There also seems to me to be a weaker argument for using lead for shooting clays – presumably steel destroys a clay as well as lead? – other than the risk of damaging older guns (though I assume antique guns are used less for shooting clays?). Of course, the risk to human health from this deposited lead is considerably less than lead sourced from game or lead which has entered the food chain through other source-receptor-pathways (e.g. beef from cows that have grazed on pasture which has been shot over). However, in the long-term, this land may well be returned to pasture or left for wildlife, where it will present a greatly increased risk to humans and wildlife. I don't

know to what extent the group have considered this issue, but I would be very interested to hear their views and proposed mitigation measures (e.g. planning restrictions, “polluter pays” requirements etc).

I’ll leave it for you and [redacted] to discuss the idea of a workshop – I like the idea, but I do worry that the strength of feeling I have seen exhibited regarding this issue might cause such an event to devolve in to chaos! I will bear your offer to brief the Minister in mind – I dare say he will take you up on that offer nearer the publication of the group’s report and various assessments.

Best wishes,
[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]
**Sent:** 22 April 2014 15:41
**To:** [redacted] (Defra)
**Subject:** Re: LAG minutes

Dear [redacted]

The draft minutes were circulated on 17 April and a copy is attached. It looks like [redacted] only circulated those who attended - so [redacted] will have a copy.

I spoke to [redacted] this morning and he has so far received no comments. But the specified deadline for comments is 30 April i.e. tomorrow week.

[redacted] The Mitigation subgroup has instead been tasked to keep going and meet in May. All the risks identified in the risk assessments are to be tabulated and all the possible options for mitigation assessed against them. The main committee is to meet again thereafter in June. Dates are being doodle-polled as we speak.

It is clear, to me, that the evidence confirms that there are potential substantive health risks to children in UK - as is the case in other EU countries. The risks to adults are of lesser order, and in any case would be addressed by protecting children effectively. The risks to children are not being properly or adequately addressed so far in UK, though the view from the shooting/landowning representatives does not seem to be envisaging anything additional to what’s in place at the moment. The FSA advice has cut no appreciable ice with vulnerable groups and there is no evidence that high level consumption by children, which we can be sure exists, has reduced.

It is also clear and agreed that lead ammunition affects wildlife population processes where the links between hazard and receptor exist. It is also clear that this almost certainly extends beyond wildfowl, but how far and to what extent is un-researched. It would be pretty straightforward to do blood testing of mist-netted birds and assay their blood lead levels etc. to prove this one way or another. (But the alleged non-compliance evidenced by the sale of wildfowl has taken eyes off the ball - but is in reality a bit of a sideshow.)

I think most people now accept that it is almost impossible ever to know whether effects on population processes regulate any populations or is the cause of reduced population numbers. It is also generally accepted that wildlife will suffer welfare impacts whenever they ingest lead. The lack of research and generality of the risks makes targeted mitigation of wildlife risks (even if complied with) a difficult sell. The lack of compliance for wildfowl-restricted measures make them of limited value - even if it were just a wildfowl problem.

As you know I am aware of what is going on some other EU countries and UK is definitely falling behind the curve - though some other countries are further behind it must be admitted.

I write this simply to alert you to the risk that if the minister were minded to set a time and close the issue down with a political statement to the effect that "there is clearly no significant problem (beyond wildfowl)" he might please some voters but would be running against the grain of the evidence. If the minister were to encourage LAG to publish its risk assessments etc I believe personally that that would be constructive as it would break any logjam.

I have however suggested to [redacted] that one way to do that in a controlled way would be for Defra and FSA to support a LAG seminar in Oxford for an invited wider audience - and I am putting some meat on this idea. This would bring things more into the open in a controlled discussion that could be instructive for all concerned? It would look responsible and help move things forward. It would have certain gravitas!

As to a final report … I have done most of the writing as we go along, but until the mitigation subgroup has done its job then I cannot know what advice the group as a whole might agree. If they can't agree then I shall present both sides and a personal judgement. The challenge remains that of getting the shooting, trade and landowning representatives to accept that there are indeed risks that need to be properly addressed, and that they can do some very useful things in that direction without the world catching fire - but I have not got there yet.

If it would be helpful to brief the minister personally I would be happy to do so - especially about holding a seminar for an invited audience at Oxford in July?

Let me know - hope this makes sense and isn't too provocative.

[redacted]

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

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