



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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STEERING GROUP MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on 18th June 2009

The Board Room, Angus Council, County Buildings, Market Street, Forfar

Present: Martin Price: Chair (MP) CMS, Perth College
Alison Anderson (AA) Dundee City Council
Kate Baird (KB) SEPA
Pam Coutts (PC) Angus Council
Carolyn Deasley (CD) SNH
Carol Littlewood (CLw) Littlewood Land Care
Esther Rogers-Nicoll (ERN) Perth & Kinross Council
Dennis Dick (DD) Scottish Biodiversity Forum
Kelly-Ann Dempsey (KAD) Angus Council
Catherine Lloyd (CL) Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Iain Campbell: Minute Taker (IC) Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Apologies: Bruce Anderson RSPB
Tim Barratt Forestry Commission Scotland
Christine Hall Scottish Agricultural College
Bryan Harris Dundee City Council
Ian Lorimer SEPA
Paul Ramsay SRPBA
Mark Simmons Perth Museum

Circulated to: Jin Park, Perth College; Merrill Smith, Dundee City Council; Kate Scott, NFUS; Alan Hendry, SGRPID; Ben Notley, NTS; Stewart Roberts, Angus Council; Martyn Jamieson, Scottish Field Studies Association; Sabine Dey, SRPBA.

1. **Apologies & Welcome**

As above. MP welcomed Dennis Dick from the Scottish Biodiversity Forum.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting 10th March 2009.**

All attendees were happy to accept the Minutes.

3. **Matters arising**

MP asked if there had been any further information on SRDP. **CL** replied that there had been no update, while **CLw** added that the Farmland Sub-Group are waiting for a meeting and **CD** noted that Stan Whitaker at SNH was unsure of any review of regional priorities, and that no decision had been made. **MP** recommended asking Tim Barratt for an update and appending it to the minutes.

ACTION - TB TO PROVIDE UPDATE

MP requested an update on the 2009 BARS input. **CL** reported that Stephanie Shaw would be available late-summer to update BARS entries and to add some of the key actions published in the LBAP.

MP asked if the results of the Public Awareness of Biodiversity Survey had been released yet. **DD** replied that they are available, but he was not sure why they had not been circulate more widely. **MP** suggested that it could be in the SNH quality assurance system, and that David Rodger should be contacted to find out. **DD** added that he will take it back to the Communication Group - the head of which is David's boss. **MP** further recommended that the ECRR website (www.ecrr.org.uk) could be

checked for a presentation on the survey given at the 13th May conference.

ACTION - DD TO LOOK INTO STATUS OF SURVEY

4. Sub Group Leaders' Project Proforma: Round-up and Future Actions

Sub-group leaders had reported on their Project Proforma via the Progress Report circulated before the meeting. Please see attached updated Progress Report for further details.

5. Tayside Biodiversity Reception and Festival 2009 / Proposals for 2010

CL provided very positive feedback from attendees of the SITA TBAF Reception at Dundee Sensation on 1st May. **DD** suggested inviting the Scottish Government Environment Minister (Roseanna Cunningham MSP) to future such events; **CL** agreed that perhaps thinking bigger next year would be a good idea. **ERN** recommended fixing a date and time early to allow the Minister and other major figures (e.g., John Swinney) to fit it into their schedules. **CL** noted that Roseanna Cunningham had spoken at the Wild Harvests of Scotland event in Birnam and would be visiting the Carse orchards next month, so this was a possibility.

ACTION - CL TO LOOK INTO FUTURE RECEPTION INVITATIONS

CL relayed Iain Ballantyne's TBF report - overall the festival was very successful and raised awareness of biodiversity in Tayside. Criticisms included the lateness of the publication of the programme and the lack of specific press releases. Organisers had been asked to do most of their own publicity, although **CL** had circulated generic press releases and contacted key journalists throughout Tayside. She had been interviewed by BBC Radio Scotland twice and once for STV, as well as being interviewed for Radio Tay. She had also provided Felicity Martin with material for a one page feature in the Perthshire Advertiser. **CL** noted that it would be useful to have a three-month lead in rather than one month, alongside funding for a much larger print run of programmes, posters, etc. The new ZOOM In2 Project was launched during the Festival for maximum publicity, as were the Swift and Perth Bat surveys. It was generally seen as good publicity, but more could have been done.

CD asked if there were figures for the total number of attendees - **CL** replied that they weren't yet available, but that Iain Ballantyne was collating this information. **CLw** asked if there were any links to NTS - **MP** responded that although invited, they were not part of this year's festival - **CL** responded that Historic Scotland, however, were opening their sites especially for Orchard Festival events and were keen to be included in next year's TBF. She would contact the NTS again regarding the 2010 Festival.

2010

The Education sub-group had discussed the Festival and proposed a Tayside Biodiversity Festival month for May 2010. **CL** suggested themed weeks, as there has been lots of interest in photography and books. 'BioBlitz' surveys with volunteers could take place – McManus Collections Unit was keen to undertake this in Dundee, but funding would be required. This would also allow the Festival to acknowledge/publicise projects already running, and encourage new players. **CLw** noted that, if weeks were themed, some people might not be interested in some weeks, and then have clashes in weeks focusing on topics they are interested in, and so suggested having each theme represented each week. **MP** noted that this kind of approach might be best for publicity purposes.

ERN suggested thinking about funding for 2010 now in order to avoid this year's problems. **MP** noted that Sensation left their decision regarding the Reception until very late - **CL** added that Sensation have, however, already offered to take part next year. **MP** noted that Sensation's lecture theatre was quite small - and was full for what was a relatively small Reception. **CLw** suggested working with one of the universities in Dundee. **MP** recommended getting an intern to organise things early. **CL** noted that they should be looking to get things scheduled by later in 2009, and to publish information by January.

MP put forward the idea of the Perthshire Advertiser and/or The Courier having a TBF insert - if they were willing this could take the place of the wider print run for the programme. **CD** also suggested linking into the Perth 800 celebrations, and trying to get information on the date for Scottish Biodiversity Week early in order to tie in with its theme. **MP** noted that Perth 800 is happy to let anything celebrating Perthshire be linked in, but their budget is limited. **CD** noted that despite this

there is still a great potential for publicity through them, and **MP** suggested getting publicity through linking in with them rather than doing so independently. **CL** said that there are two large tree projects being proposed for Perth 800 and this would help provide much-needed publicity.

ACTION - CL TO CONTACT PERTH 800

CLw asked about being listed in What's On? publications, **CL** responded that most charge for listings, but that the Festival was listed in the free ones for 2009. **CD** noted that SNH help with What's On? so she will look into what they do regarding charging for listing. **DD** added that VisitScotland sit on the Biodiversity Committee - **CL** noted that VisitScotland had taken details of the 2009 Festival.

DD noted that there may not be a Scottish Biodiversity Week in the same way as this year, with the focus rather being on the International Year of Biodiversity. Thinking big shouldn't be avoided - there being no reason why the Natural History Museum website for the International Year couldn't be used to publicise Tayside activities, for example. Zeshan Akhter is taking things forward - a co-ordinating officer is being looked for, and progress should be made quickly. **MP** suggested that with the international aspect of biodiversity being central, something could be done linking into the worldwide studies of botanists such as David Douglas and Pitlochry's Scottish Plant Collectors Garden. **CD** further suggested a theme of international biodiversity across the Festival. **DD** noted that the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens is looking for a biodiversity event, and could make links to Perth & Kinross with its proposed new plantings of exotic species across Perth, for example.

CLw suggested looking at approaching trust funds early, as trustees of some only meet every six months. **CL** noted that DCC had recommended an events grant which would cover 25% of funding for the 2010 Festival. **CLw** noted that Blackadders Solicitors have a trust fund, although she was not sure how much money they had available at the moment.

ACTION: ALL TO LOOK INTO FUNDING FOR THE FESTIVAL; KEEP CL UPDATED ON PROGRESS.

6. Prioritising Species and Habitat by LBAP Area - Scottish Biodiversity Committee Report

CL reported that this is taking the place of the SNH Area Profiles - which had good potential but didn't move forward - and will involve research into all species and habitats across Scotland split into LBAP areas. **CD** added that it will feature a traffic lights system, and that the draft report is due in August, with the final version due 2-3 months later. Stan Whitaker will be sending the draft to LBAP Officers. **MP** asked if LBAPs will be able to comment on the draft - **CL** responded that it doesn't look like there will be much room for feedback, **CD** added that she will check with Stan Whitaker. **CL** said that this will be a useful tool, but not the only tool - **CLw** added that it may result in local flagship species falling out of consideration despite their importance. **CD** noted that Stan Whitaker had said that RPAC analysis will be possible, but needs a local start - there's the issue of bringing together local and wider priorities - she will contact Stan on the matter. It is not known when the RPAC review is taking place. **DD** added that a lot of things will fall into place as a result..

ACTION: CD TO CONTACT STAN WHITAKER

MP reported that a member of the Upland Ecosystem Group had noted that LBAPs would be rewritten as a result of this - there hasn't been thought about how separate plans/actions covering the same area/topic will tie together. **DD** noted that, at national level, plans are still coming together due to the difficulty in accommodating both local and national plans. **MP** suggested that for the next meeting a presentation from someone at the Macaulay Institute - such as Robin Pakeman - would be useful. **CD** will make contact over this. **CL** added that many LBAPs are in the process of reviewing anyway - this new information could help Tayside in its own revisions as a task for 2010.

ACTION - CD TO ASK MACAULAY INSTITUTE FOR SPEAKER AT NEXT MEETING

7. Presentation by Dennis Dick of the Scottish Biodiversity Committee - The Structure and Aims of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum

DD discussed the role of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum in bringing together government organizations, NGOs, individuals etc. and explained its structure and that of the Biodiversity Implementation Team. **DD** noted that important integration and co-ordination work is to be done, with **MP** expressing a concern that often the pieces aren't joined up, and that this is worsening in some areas. **MP** also noted a difficulty in the divisions set up, with, for example, rivers and streams often coming under the authority of more than one group. **MP** asked if a copy of this presentation will be available, **DD** agreed to distribute.

ACTION - PC TO HAVE FILE UPLOADED FOR DISTRIBUTION

8. Funding - SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund

MP said that there is a chance that SITA's £100,000 pa grant funding will hopefully extend beyond next year. **MP** noted that, apart from Tayside, only the Cairngorms LBP seem to have much money at their disposal (via the Cairngorms National Park), with **CLw** adding that Clackmannanshire appear to have significant funds too. **CL** said that the Shetland LBP has a one year £30,000 fund recently made available, but that Tayside overall is exceptionally lucky in being able to access the SITA funding.

9. Finance

Bryan Harris' finance report was distributed to the group

CL reported that a meeting was arranged with the DCC Finance Department, but was moved forward a day without notice being given - so **CL** did not attend. Bryan Harris has reported £8,500 available for sub-groups, but this does not take into account figures for website maintenance, BARS updates, the next issue of the newsletter and so on. **MP** noted that there is little to be done with this information, but that things are stable for this year is good news. **CL** added that she will need to have a finance meeting to organise sub-group funds - C&E requires little funding, only covering meetings, but in other areas the Sand Martin project is being moved forward, and ZOOM In2, Bee Wild and so on continue. The Woodland group have some funding but need more to undertake projects, for instance LEADER will not be an option to draw on for a second Orchard Festival. **CLw** noted that the earmarked money in the Farmland and Upland sub-group budget for Martin Robinson is no longer necessary.

CL will try to have a finance meeting before the next Management Team meeting, and also compile information from sub-group leaders as to their needs for 2009-10. **CD** commented on note 3 of the handout, noting that the Legacy Commitment should have been claimed this year, and that DCC should be receiving this money direct from the Scottish Government. **MP** noted that DCC will have to follow up on these issues, prior to the Management Team meeting on the 5th of August. For the Steering Group meeting, only sub-group expenses will be discussed.

ACTION - BRYAN HARRIS TO CHECK "NOTE 3" ON THE BUDGET

10. TBP Five Year Achievement Report draft

MP recommended that the report be aimed towards encouraging the three Councils to continue funding by showing benefits to local economies and people, as well as biodiversity. Comments from council representatives on how to tweak such a report appropriately would be useful. A section on economic benefits, such as on tourism, produce - Cairn o'Mhor, for example - and so on, needs to be added. It is important to highlight how biodiversity underpins the local economy. **CD** noted that the Clackmannanshire biodiversity review has edited highlights on glossy A4 - **CL** is to contact Guy Harewood regarding copies and distribute. **CD** added that linking in to political movements of the moment - healthy living, healthy environment, for example - is also important, as is information on communities worked with. **MP** suggested that more numbers - on miles of hedgerow, acres of fruit trees and so on - would be useful. **CL** will have much of this information available for the annual report to SNH; Partners should be able to provide the rest.

MP suggested that the word to use is 'benefits' - with a title along the lines of "What are the Benefits of Biodiversity to Tayside?" positioned in terms of economy, culture etc. This approach may appeal to councils more than the more fundamental ecological matters. **DD** added that trying to think along the lines of Single Outcome Agreements would be useful. **ERN** suggested tables of information, **CL** bullet points, **CLw** suggested a focus on major figures, **CD** on funding leverage. **MP** noted that the first page of the report currently lists 4,300 people, which when a final figure is reached would be likely to be at least 10,000 - an impressive figure. **ERN** suggested looking into how many people have jobs involving biodiversity. **DD** suggested looking at the SNH Report as a basis, listing SOAs and discussing biodiversity benefits.

MP recommended showing how we are achieving other targets through biodiversity, and asked **CL** to

bring together quantitative and qualitative data for the Management Team in August.

ACTION - CL PRESENT MORE INFORMATION AT THE MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

11. Website / Publications

Copies of the website statistics were distributed

CL reported on the website review, noting that the site designer is happy for a student to review it. There should be a proposal as to redesigning the site within a few weeks, after which a quote will be requested from the site designer and reported to the Management Group.

CLw suggested looking into how Google hits take place. **CL** noted that many things aren't showing up in the figures, although the ZOOM survey appears to have been of interest. **CD** asked if it would be possible to isolate hits from the SRDP link, developers etc. **CLw** noted the difficulty of finding information on the site. **MP** asked for more information on the student reviewing the site - **CL** reported that she was a free placement and a website journalist/designer herself. The review will hopefully be done in the next fortnight, after which the student will meet with the website designer. The plan is to have all of the same material on the website, but to make things easier to find.

ACTION - CL TO REPORT BACK TO GROUP ON WEBSITE PROGRESS

MP asked for information on other publications. **CL** reported that the Summit to Sand newsletter is being circulated widely. Around 70 Planning Manual folders have been distributed, and further Biodiversity Advice Note mailings are to take place. **MP** noted that this is another benefit to record - a direct impact on the planning system. **DD** noted that the Environment Minister will be writing to all councils to remind them of their biodiversity duty - **CD** noting that this could be timely for funding purposes.

ACTION: CL TO CIRCULATE ENVIRONMENT MINISTER'S LETTER WHEN AVAILABLE

12. AOCB

MP reported that a new Planning Biodiversity Officer for Perth and Kinross is about to be appointed, with **ERN** adding it is looking like they will have to bring in someone external. **MP** noted that this person will be likely to be in post before the next Steering Group meeting, and should be invited to it.

ACTION: CL/IC TO SEND INVITATION

CLw reported on the Set Aside Consultation, noting that the Upland and Farmland group were gathering comments for CL to work up into an official Response. Many argued for cross compliance, with farms doing work, while others argued for the non-competitive aspect of SRDP - but this is drawing money away from rural priorities and leaving farmers to spend money on things other than the biodiversity matters for which they are responsible. **CD** added that SNH is putting forward its own response. **CLw** noted that Christine Hall and Richard Lockett have responded individually.

ACTION: CL TO SEND TBP RESPONSE ASAP

PC reported on the Natural Angus Calendar, which has been very well received by the Council's Economic Development department - who are now picking up on biodiversity's uses.

CL noted that the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill consultation ends on the 4th of September and again offered to compile a response on behalf of the Partnership.

ACTION: CH/CLw TO CONSIDER CONSULTATION RESPONSE

13. Dates of Future Meetings

MP noted that the next meeting date would need to change to accommodate the SNH conference on 17th and 18th September. Therefore the next Steering Group meeting will be held in Perth on Wednesday, 16th September, at 10am in the Tay Room at Blackfriars. Directions will be sent with the next Agenda.

ACTION: IC TO PREPARE DIRECTIONS

MP thanked **DD** for attending the meeting and Angus Council for hosting it and providing an excellent lunch.