



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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STEERING GROUP MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on 10th March 2009 Conference Room A, 17 City Square, Dundee

Present:	Martin Price: Chair (MP)	CMS, Perth College
	Pam Coutts (PC)	Angus Council
	Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
	Tim Barratt (TB)	Forestry Commission Scotland
	Esther Rogers-Nicoll (ERN)	Perth & Kinross Council
	Carol Littlewood (CLw)	Ex-Angus FWAG
	Alison Anderson (AA)	Dundee City Council
	Amy Crowther (AC)	RSPB
	Iain Campbell: Minute Taker (IC)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Apologies:	Mark Simmons	Perth Museum
	Colin Castle	SNH
	Christine Hall	Scottish Agricultural College
	Sabine Dey	SRPBA

Circulated to: Jin Park, Perth College; Merrill Smith, Dundee City Council; Bryan Harris, Dundee City Council; Kate Scott, NFUS; Alan Hendry, SGRPID; Paul Ramsay, Scottish Rural Property & Business Association; Ben Notley, NTS; Stewart Roberts, Angus Council; Martyn Jamieson, Scottish Field Studies Association; Ian Lorimer, SEPA; Bruce Anderson, RSPB; Carolyn Deasley, SNH.

1. **Apologies & Welcome**

As above.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting 17th June 2008.**

All attendees were happy to accept the Minutes.

3. **Matters arising**

SRDP - **TB** discussed action to look into the timescale involved, noting that there is currently a major review underway which is due by Easter; there will be time for recommendations prior to the review being sent to Europe mid-year. The review should be in place early next year. There is an application deadline of 16th March. **MP** asked if there was the possibility of adding our thoughts through the SRDP website, but as the website focuses on the process, this appears to be impossible.

2009 BARS Report - **CL** recommended that all project information should be updated every 6-12 months (including the SITA TBAF projects); Stephanie Shaw has confirmed her willingness to be available for a week in the summer (subject to funding being available). **CL** also suggested that key actions published in LBAP should be added to the report as many are under way but not currently being reported on with the rest of the projects.

ACTION: to be discussed at 18th June Steering Group meeting.

Wildlife & Countryside Act consultation - **CL** confirmed that a letter from the Partnership had been sent well before the deadline; she thanked all those who contributed to the draft.

4. **Sub Group Leaders' Project Proforma Reports / Future Actions Updates**

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.

a) Urban:

USG1- Tayside Red Squirrel Project - AA reported on the grey squirrel control boundary line - the Tayside Red Squirrel Forum is looking for coverage across Tayside; SNH is softening in its attitude towards the strictness of the boundaries. TB noted that SRDP funding generally looks to fit national strategy, not taking local strategies into consideration. AA noted that funding problems for Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels make the boundary line an issue again as there is not enough funding to cover the entire area. More funding for Dundee is being sought. It was also noted that a red squirrel had been seen on Balgay Hill for the first time in ten years.

USG3 - Community Gardens / Orchards and Allotments - CL reported that five new schools being built in Perth & Kinross have agreed to plant major orchards (c60 trees each) in their grounds with pupils/staff being encouraged to use the fruit and to be responsible for pruning and maintenance of the trees. CL credited Mike Strachan (FCS) for taking this forward.

USG4 - Urban Grassland Management - CL reported that the Perth & Kinross Council Environment Committee agreed to the 'Biodiversity Improvements to Grasslands' report; CL will be working closely with PKC Environment Services to continue links with the Green Graveyard Initiative and other greenspace projects.

USG5 - Invasive Species Project - AA reported that Voluntary Action Scotland will be providing substantial funding for a new project, with a project officer being recruited at Broughty Ferry Dighty Burn. PC reported that work was being done with surrounding landowners over Giant Hogweed at Baldovan House. AA suggested potential SRDP help.

USG6 - Green / Living Roofs - AA reported that feedback for the workshop in Dundee was good, but CL noted that the turnout had been disappointing which will affect the income sought for the event. Sponsorship had been excellent: Hertalan, Dundee Institute of Architects, and Perth & Kinross Council all contributed, together with Dundee City Council who sponsored the venue at Baxter Park Visitor Centre. All eight attendees had confirmed an interest in providing case studies for the course leader Dusty Gedge's future publications.

USG7 - ZOOM In2 - AA said that efforts are being made to get this project underway. Funding has been promised by the three local authorities and SNH to purchase c800 recyclable cameras. These will be distributed at specific events during May and June.

USG10 - Tayside Town Swift Project - CL noted that a public "Swift Gathering" in Scone will take place during the Tayside Biodiversity Festival, and there is hope for an event in Angus too. Craig Borland, Angus Council Ranger Service, will be publicising the survey in all the Angus coastal towns this year. There is again no news that the Dundee Ranger Service can contribute staff time towards the project this year, although the DCC Housing and Property departments are now engaged and keen to help. CLw suggested working via community and tenants groups, with PC suggesting a piece in housing newsletters. CL is already working with Hillcrest Housing Association, but would like to contact other housing associations. CLw and PC suggested spreading this project to Broughty Ferry.

ACTION: CL to get in touch with Hillcrest re: Swift event.

USG11 - Green Kirk & Graveyard Initiative - CL reported that a student placement is preparing case studies for the HAP. CL had visited the next phase of Green Graveyard proposals in Perth & Kinross and is working with the local authority and Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust. She hoped to involve a few local communities too.

Other - AA reported that there are as yet no conclusions for the Bottlenose Dolphin project, with the next meeting to be held later in the month. The Coast and Estuaries sub-group would include this project on their agenda for their next meeting.

b) Woodland:

WSG2 - Woodland Management Awareness - **TB** reported that progress is being made, with BIFF likely to learn of successful applications through SRDP for two small woodland sites. This will involve the purchase of machinery for work on different types of ground. **CLw** noted that this machinery could also be loaned out.

WSG3 - Management of Non-Timber Forest Products - **TB** noted that there will be a national event in Birnam on the 15th and 16th of April, details of which he will distribute. **CL** added that there is also an orchard producers/owners meeting at the same venue on the evening of the 15th.

WSG4 - Red Squirrel Conservation Project - **TB** reported that Ken Neil is working in Perth & Kinross, from Scone up to Dunkeld. No SRDP applications have been received yet, but there have been three or four serious enquiries. A draft Statement of Intent will soon be drawn up and made available.

WSG5 - Tayside Wildlife Tree Project - **CL** circulated the first draft of the postcards designed by Rachael Higgins, focussed on lifelong learning. **TB** said discussion on the project would take place at 11th March Woodland sub-group meeting regarding putting together a template for all postcards.

WSG6 - Tayside Woodland Grazing Initiative - **TB** suggested using initial study results as a template for the future, although the project has been hampered as a result of the recent demise of FWAG support in Argyll.

WSG7 - Ancient Tree Hunt - **TB** reported that this is nearing completion with some tree reports to be verified. **TB** will report on the possibility of this becoming a web-based project at the next meeting.

ACTION: TB to look into web-based feature for Ancient Tree Hunt project.

WSG8 - Tayside Juniper Project - **TB** confirmed that Alice Broome of Forest Research should be reporting the comprehensive survey results by the end of April.

WSG9 - Carse of Gowrie Orchard Project - **TB** reported that an SRDP application to fund a part-time Carse of Gowrie Project Officer is likely to be successful; this will free time for **CL** who will pass over future Orchard Festival plans to the new officer. Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust are looking to offer a full-time post.

Other - **TB** reported that following funding from the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan the Tayside Aspen Project is up and running, and will be *WSG10*. Root collection has started and an informal steering group formed with Scottish Native Woods, the Forestry Commission and others. There is not currently a logo or any specific references to TBP on the website - **TB** will follow this up. The project vision is for no Scottish river tributary to be more than a mile from an Aspen stand by 2020.

ACTION: TB to ensure SITA TBAF is acknowledged.

c) Coast & Estuaries:

CESG2 - Dune Habitat Restoration - **CL** reported that the beach hut being made by the Broughty Ferry Environmental Project (BFEP) is currently being fitted out as a 'marine interpretation centre'. The hut can be moved on a trailer so will be available for use over a wide area.

CESG4 - Tayside Terns - **CL** reported that the warden who ran the Montrose Beach project in the past three years is working full time so it is not known how the project will be taken forward without funding. The rafts are still in place. **MP** added that TBAP cannot keep giving money to protect a small number of birds in projects that don't seem to have long term consequences.

CESG7 - Firth of Tay Wader and Wildfowl Audit - **CL** confirmed that the Perth & Kinross Ranger Service is looking into getting a student placement to help in a desktop survey.

Other - **CL** reported on the 'Nature on Track' project, which is being taken forward by Perth & Kinross Rangers and Ann Lolley (BFEP). Niall Lobley is taking the project to TACTRAN with

plans involving a FirstScotland railway magazine article, art elements and street (or railway platform) theatre to raise awareness of biodiversity on the journey from Perth to Montrose. There is no funding yet, but arts funding may be possible. This year will be low key, with larger scale events next year. **CLw** suggested that if no funding is available drama students could help out.

d) Water & Wetland:

WWSG1 - Tayside Ponds Initiative - **CL** reported that the SUDS/community aspect of this project, currently under discussion with the sub-group, will have links nationwide through Neil McLean of SEPA.

WWSG2 - Perth Lade Enhancement - **CL** noted that Fairfield Housing Association / PKC (Access) set up separate community questionnaire without first liaising with the Perth Lade Management Group. The latter is now on board. The Perth-fectly Batty Project (Bat Conservation Trust/Perth & Kinross Ranger Service) will be focussing the new bat project on the lade. **CLw** added that the Perth Lade project she had been working on will not be going ahead.

WWSG4 - River Earn Japanese Knotweed Eradication and Habitat Improvement - **CL** reported that this is going ahead, with considerable input from SEPA.

WWSG5 - River Tay Tributary Improvement Initiative - **CL** highlighted the fact that TDSFB are having trouble with staffing, but looking into suitable candidates for enhancement projects.

WWSG6 - Salmon in the Classroom - **CL** confirmed that SNH is currently considering the future funding of the project. There are no copies left of the popular interactive CD-ROM; the sub-group is looking into the potential for it to go online or for further copies to be funded.

WWSG9 - Tayside Lochs Project - **CL** reported that 250 tea towels have been printed for the Fingask/White Lochs aspect of the project; they will be distributed to the local schools (perhaps one per classroom rather than one per pupil), Blairgowrie golf club, angling club and local residents who have septic tanks. SEPA is preparing an information sheet to be handed out with the tea-towels and CL is arranging a photocall with key partners. The Perth FWAG participation in the project is complete, so there will be no problems.

This is hopefully the first of five small-scale projects across Tayside and CL will be assisting SEPA (and other partners) in taking future projects forward with particular emphasis on opportunities for green tourism and community involvement. Overall SEPA has identified twenty lochs outwith its own programme to look at, five of which are in Tayside. All the work being undertaken in Scotland will be reported back to the UKBAP Mesotrophic Lochs Steering Group (SEPA are lead partners). **TB** noted that water chemistry - where there is a risk as a result of nitrates - is often the key feature for SEPA. **ER-N** suggested that Loch Leven could be investigated as a potential project site.

Other - **CLw** reported on a Courier article on the disruption of an otter holt in Forfar by building work, resulting in the death of at least one otter.

e) Farmland and Upland

USPG1 - Tayside Upland Heath Project - **CLw** reported no progress.

USPG2 - Highland Tayside Paths Impacts Project - **CLw** reported no progress.

USPG3 - Tayside Upland Butterfly and Moth Initiative - **CLw** is unsure on status - awaiting feedback from Butterfly Conservation (Scotland).

WWSG7 - Water Voles and Mink Project - **CLw** reported that this is going forward through the Cairngorms Water Vole Officer, Ros Bryce. Five or six FWAG farmers will be using rafts to help with tracking mink in upper catchments. A FWAG training course was planned for May - CLw now looking into how to run the event.

FSG1 - Tayside Barn Owl Projects - **CLw** noted that many sightings have been reported; she will continue to maintain records. As half the Tayside survey postcards have the Angus FWAG

address, CLw is hoping to collect those sent to the office. **CL** confirmed that she will arrange for the Partnership's Freepost address to be added to the remaining postcards.

ACTION: CL/IC to update barn owl postcard addresses.

CLw said some areas are not providing information. The barn owl distribution map has been updated. More access to data from Perth & Kinross would be useful. There have been problems with confidentiality (grid references could give away personal information) - having references cover a 2km² area deals with this. Monitoring continues in Montrose, Glamis and Forfar, with Ben working on ringing.

FSG2 - Calcareous Grassland Project - **CLw** thinks two events are planned in Perthshire, but will have to check with Christine Hall.

FSG3 - Farmland bird project - **CLw** reported that the Yellowhammer Project has finished, with data being analysed. There is little SRDP interest in the Corn Bunting Project - with only one other person involved it cannot be classified as collaboration. A possible other person could make funding more likely this year. On the Linnet Link Project, the initial survey is complete, but little more progress has been made - being a TBAF project and not a FWAG one, this should have no problems in being progressed. Planting should go ahead.

Phase 1 of the Tree Sparrows Project is complete, with monitoring a success. Nestboxes late going up had little use, but one farm had 10-12 used by sparrows, the others by bluetits, etc - i.e. almost 100% take-up of boxes by something. **CL-w** is hoping to continue with the project into Phase 2 (SITA TBAF funding has recently been confirmed) despite the end of FWAG. On the woodland school in Carnoustie, teacher Richard Brammell continues taking his pupils out for surveys. etc. There is a possibility of kit-form boxes for children to put together and classroom talks on other birds by Ben Herschel, Angus Ranger Service. Next year it is hoped that nestboxes can be put up on farms adjoining those in use now.

FSG4 - Angus Glens Treelines Project - **CLw** reported that this project is progressing well.

FSG5 - Farm Building for Biodiversity - **CLw** reported that this project is complete.

FSG6 - Enhancement of Irrigation Ponds - **CLw** reported no progress on this project.

FSG7 - Saving the Small Blue Butterfly in Angus - **CLw** reported that one spot in Angus is being investigated by Paul Kirkland - potential is good.

FSG8 - Wet Grassland for Waders - **CLw** reported no progress on this project.

FSG9 - The Living Field Study Centre - **CLw** reported that nothing has been heard regarding this project.

FSG10 - Perthshire Hedgerow and Tree Project - **CLw** reported that there is no funding for this project.

FSG11 - Operation Bumblebee - **CLw** reported that because of FWAG the two planned training courses will not be going ahead.

CESG1 - Tayside Golf Course Initiative - **CLw** reported that there has been no more interest from SGEG - few golf courses have the money to take the project forward at present, and many of those who do are not interested.

f) Education:

ESG1 - Sheltered Housing & Hospital Biodiversity Project - **CL** reported on SITA TBAF funding for a nursing home biodiversity project in Blairgowrie - the Perth & Kinross Rangers are leading on this.

ESG3 - Mammal Atlas - **CL** noted that Mark Simmons has not had time to take this forward, but there is still interest in compiling such an atlas.

ESG4 - Countryside on Wheels - **CL** reported that there is no funding for this project.

ESG5 - Bee Wild Communities and Schools Project - **CL** noted that this is a follow on from ZOOM with different communities and schools being encouraged to take forward practical projects when funding becomes available. **CLw** suggested looking into LEADER funding – biodiversity may not be a priority, but the project could be emphasised in different ways.

CESG3 - Geodiversity Trails - **CL** reported that funding to reprint the Corsiehill Quarry (Perth) leaflet is being looked into so that it can match up with the existing Seaton Cliffs (Angus) leaflet and the new Dundee leaflet about to be published. **PC** added that the Seaton Cliffs trail is listed as a walk at the Angus Walking Festival.

Other - Tayside Recorders' Day (21st March) - **MP** pointed out that the Cairngorms National Park boundary will be extending into Perth & Kinross, meaning an overlap between areas. **CL** noted that the talk by Glen Robertson of NeSBRC will highlight the possible partnership working being developed. Steve Hewitt will give us ideas on how funding could be used - excellent quality of information available in Cumbria as a model.

MP said that he had been interviewed by the BBC as part of an internal Perth & Kinross Council project on the identity of Perth wherein he pushed the Carse of Gowrie and biodiversity. An exhibition on this is to come in early May - MP will let us know.

5. **SITA TBAF Funding**

CL provided overview of all funding: 74 projects with a total leverage of £885,990 to which £469,200 of SITA TBAF awards have been made. The exact dates for the SITA financial year are not known - **CL** to contact Douglas Calderwood on this matter. **PC** suggested that the information be made available electronically, **MP** asked that a chart showing the geographical area covered be added to the basic information.

ACTION: CL to contact Douglas Calderwood re: SITA schedule.

ACTION: IC to add geographical analysis to information.

AA added that the Grant Charitable Trust is another route for funding, giving grants from hundreds to thousands of pounds for environmental and wildlife enhancement. **ER-N** noted that trusts usually make awards out of their interest, which could be difficult in the current financial climate, but **AA** confirmed that the Trust have funding currently available.

6. **Finance**

CL noted that the financial records for the sub-groups do not show the £200 annual allocation that each group should have - a meeting with finance will be necessary. **CLw** suggested that rather than specific group allocation, there is rather a single pot of money for use by all. **ER-N** noted that if there is such a pot, we have to know where it is. **CL** raised a number of issues, including the fact that £400 of Green Graveyard workshop funding has not been recorded, nor the income for the Planning Manual. She proposed a number of changes on the spreadsheet to highlight projects such as the Orchard Festival and seminars which need better clarification. **MP** asked for a clear picture of all figures by the next Management Team meeting and confirmed his willingness to intervene with DCC Finance if necessary.

ACTION: CL to meet with Finance Department regarding inconsistent records.

ACTION: CL to report back to next Management Team meeting.

7. **Website / Publications**

Website - **CL** reported that the website continues to be well used with nearly 500,000 page hits from January to December 2008. **CL** suggested that a Dundee University student be brought in to review the website and to work with the web designer to plan the proposed improvements.

Publications - **CL** reported that the Tayside Lochs Project tea towels were about to be distributed to Blairgowrie residents, schools, golf club and anglers club. The Orchard Management booklet, which has LEADER funding, will be delivered mid-March. **MP** noted that SNH wanted to check the Biodiversity Advice Notes for the Planning Manual but had not provided feedback. **MP** enquired as to progress with the newsletter; **CL** noted there had been an extremely slow

response, but still had hopes of publishing in time for the Biodiversity Festival.

8. **Tayside Biodiversity Festival / Proposed Launch (Reception: 1st May)**

CL reported that the draft logo has been provided by Rachael Higgins and will be put on the website and programme. Feedback on the logo was received, recommending that it feature a swift rather than a swallow, an apple tree, and be green rather than pink. Iain Ballantyne's list of Festival events will be circulated as soon as possible. DCA has agreed to run a children's biodiversity film festival. Larger bookshops have declined to take part, but it is hoped that smaller shops could still take part. **TB** recommended the Aberfeldy Watermill (**CL** had already been in touch with the owners), while **CLw** suggested Henry Hogg in Montrose and Perth & Kinross Council museums and libraries.

CL reported on the difficulty in using Dundee Sensation for the proposed 1st May Reception owing to an unexpected change in booking fee. Sensation had confirmed it will invite the Lord Provost, trustees and members to the event, but have not offered funding for this. If this is not resolved soon, a Caird Hall committee room has been reserved by Bryan Harris - the room itself is free, but TBP is likely to have to pay for catering. **MP** suggested that, as the launch will feature short TBAF reports, we should ask Douglas Calderwood about funding. **AA** noted that the Dighty Group's reception was paid for by the Lord Provost - something we could look into.

CL noted that wildlife photographer David Boag would have been able to give a talk on wildlife in Scottish quarries, but Aggregate Industries had to withdraw their sponsorship. David is still willing to tour Tayside, but would have to charge. As Sensation hoped to involve him in their Family Photography Day on 3rd May, **MP** suggested they pay his costs - but in terms of scheduling, **MP** said it was a pity that last year's talks were so short and there may be advantages in not having an extra speaker. **MP** also recommended that a business person be brought in to talk - perhaps discussing carbon offsetting and the planting of farmland at Glendoick and Cairn O'Mhor. **TB** recommended a break in the middle of the event to prevent people leaving after talks.

ACTION: CL to plan Reception.

9. **AOCB**

AA reported that SNH's new Public Awareness of Biodiversity survey has been circulated; the first draft of the report is due soon.

CL reported on her involvement in the Angus Single Outcome Agreement and confirmed that she had worked with the Cairngorms LBAP and Tayside Partners to ensure that biodiversity indicators were included. The Dundee SOA was following very restrictive objectives that had sidelined biodiversity per se. There had been no update from Perth & Kinross.

CLw clarified some matters over the end of FWAG Scotland - word of SNH withdrawing funding is untrue; it rather became difficult to draw down funds after FWAG Scotland became independent, resulting in an unworkable business plan. Ninety per cent of FWAG's advisors are going independent, including Richard Lockett as Lockett Agri-Environment and **CLw** as Littlewood Land Care. They are hoping to form an association. The Angus FWAG EGM is going ahead later this month with **CL** as one of the speakers and farm walks planned over the summer; a re-launch is planned for November. No word yet on Perth & Kinross FWAG, which was not as strong a group as Angus FWAG.

PC reported on the Angus Perpetual Calendar, which will be launched during the Biodiversity Festival.

10. **Dates of Future Meetings**

MP noted that the next meeting would take place on the 18th June at Angus House, Forfar, with 18th September agreed for the following meeting, to be held in Perth.