



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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WOODLAND SUB-GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 11th March 2008 at the Forestry Commission Offices, Glenearn Road, Perth - 10.00 am

Present:

Mike Strachan (MS)	(Sub-Group Leader) Forestry Commission Scotland
Tim Barrett (TB)	(New Sub-Group Leader) Forestry Commission Scotland
Iain MacKenzie (IM)	RSPB Scotland
John Burrow (JBU)	Scottish Natural Heritage
Ken O'Lone (KOL)	Perth and Kinross Council, Tree Officer
John Bruce (JBr)	British Deer Society
Fred Conacher (FC)	Angus Council, Tree Officer
Andrew Thomson (AT)	Community Woodlands Association
Paul Ramsay (PR)	SRPBA
Alan Napier (AN)	SGIRPID
Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Rachael Higgins (RH)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Apologies:

Colin Castle	Scottish Natural Heritage
Rob Coope	Forest Enterprise
Louise Garthwaite	Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group
Paddy Garthwaite	Tree Warden. Blairgowrie
Graham Crister	Angus Glens Ranger Service
John Craig	Deer Commission Scotland
Doug Shearer	Dundee City Council, Forestry Section
Ian Whitehead	Dundee TWIG
Ken Neil	Tayside Red Squirrel Forum

1. Introductions and Welcome & Apologies

MS welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies as above.

2. Matters arising from the meeting held on 28th February 2007, including update on SRDP (Mike Strachan)

MS opened the meeting by introducing **TB** as the new subgroup leader. Today's meeting will be the last one **MS** will lead on but he will always be there in the background!

MS - noted the Watching Woodland Wildlife Project.

CL - noted that the LBAP priority species list (2002) needs updated. The UKBAP Review includes new National Species and Habitat Lists which have been officially accepted. (see www.uk.bap.org). Noted that the "Scottish List" (www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk) is a little

too detailed. SNH is looking at specifics. In the meantime, the LBAP list is a useful resource for developers and planners.

Scottish Rural Development Programme - Current applications will start with Statement of Intent (hopefully from 7th April 2008). Beneficiaries should produce an outline of proposals which may go from red - meaning it can be amended, to amber - meaning it can be improved, before hitting the green light. There is no functioning IT system to process, but applications can be done online. The Statement of Intent should be focussed on the appropriateness of a project. **FC** - is it still appropriate for Local Authorities to apply? Are there IACS registrations? **MS** - Local Authorities can apply - it is open to all landowners. **MS** - noted there is nothing to say who the applicants can or cannot be. Firstly make up a Statement of Intent, then work up the full application (April/June) and finalise with a full proposal. **JB** - asked when the thumbs up would be if an application was likely to be considered? **MS** - end of April likely. SRDP website has menus for Access Options, Land Management Options and other details. SAF / IACS information will be available soon and GPS information for Forestry. It will be a single application form - applications to be in by 15th May. **JB** - if it is consolidated will it be on farm basis? **AN** - it is based on 2005 format.

FC - asked about applications for putting a new roof on a church hall? Would an IACS business reference number be needed? **MS** - asked if this would be applying under Leader? **AN** - an example would be applying for various community woodlands and other church halls. **MS** - if there are measures in to improve any vernacular buildings one would need a Business Reference Number; a church hall can apply for a BRN. If applying through Leader, you need a BRN. **AN** - there are special categories for a variety of businesses for SRDP BRNs. Applications can come in from community groups. **MS** - gave the example of the Carse of Gowrie Orchards Project - queried that funding is not necessarily being tied to the land but there is a need for external funding for it to become a trans-national project. **AT** - if there are no assets but the organisation has been formally constituted then getting a BRN should be fine. **TB** - BR numbers can be off-putting for businesses.

MS - the system goes live on 7th April but statutory implementation may cause a slight delay. Leader funding is expected to match 50/50. Bear in mind double funding, for example re-instating a walled garden. Community events should come under SRDP and others under Leader - but may end up having the same BRN. There is some interesting information available on business opportunities such as funding for anaerobic digesters. **AN** - 3 years given for projects to get up to standard e.g. for slurry storage. If there are no trees or there is a LFA (Less Favoured Area) would this affect it? **AN** - they look at land type, quality and situation.

3. Tree Wardens in Tayside: Brief Reports (see page 6)

Action points arising:

(a) Potential for joint events/training

ACTION - KO to talk with TB

(b) PKC Tree Warden Newsletter

ACTION - KO to get list of community councils

4. "Bringing the Tayside Red Squirrel Groups Together" - update by KN, Red Squirrel Officer

CL - gave apologies for **KN** - whose Red Squirrel Meeting clashed with today's sub-group meeting. **FC** on behalf of **KN** - noted that **KNs** post was in jeopardy due to lack of funding but has recently been told his post will remain for another 6 months. 'Meet the Neighbour' Red Squirrel packs are being produced. Noted that DCC has been culling Grey squirrels from Monifieth in the hope that the Reds will return. Angus and Tayside Libraries have been getting the Red Squirrel Road Show promoted. There has been distribution of the Perthshire leaflet throughout Red Squirrel contacts in Tayside. All **KNs** work is finally rolling

out and the website is up and running. Idea of the Dundee Red Squirrel Project becoming the Tayside Red Squirrel Project has evolved.

MS - there has been a lot of debate over the last 2 or 3 years about funding for Project Officers. FCS wants to sort this out (an issue raised nationally). It may be possible that Leader could provide funding for the next 12 months. **JBu** - a proper budget is needed for a decent length of time. **MS** - agreed, they are looking seriously at this - we can't afford to lose **KN**.

5. **Community Woodland Association Presentation (see page 7)**

6. **Woodland Training Events**

CL - highlighted Scottish Biodiversity Week (19th - 25th May) – members with any events planned during that week please let **RH** know as soon as possible so the details can be put on the website.

ACTION - all to send possible ideas to RH ASAP

MS - some training events can tie in with **KOs** Tree ID and silvicultural courses. **KO** to be in touch. **FC** - has got back to TBP with their events on behalf of Angus Ranger Service.

ACTION - KO to be in touch with TB / MS

7. **Woodland Subgroup Project Proforma - Brief Updates**

Green Tourism Initiative - Adrian Davis, Naiad Consultants, Birnam: Wild Outdoors. There is a new study into Red Squirrel Watching in Tayside as a tourist activity. There may also be Otter / Pine marten watching sites tied in with the Watching Woodland Wildlife Project at the end of March, hosted by Big Tree Country (BTC). An example might be a hide built in the Glen Tilt car park to see Red squirrels; Loch of the Lowes - Ospreys and Pine martens, Otters at Atholl Estates; Fallow deer at the Glack.

Sites are now being considered and it is currently at the second round of HLF applications. The Crieff area is going to be a big focus for the next 6-9 months.

Woodland Management Awareness - This will be tied together with the training events proposed.

Management of Non-timber Forest Products - Reforesting Scotland (Alison Dyke): conference end of year perhaps in Pitlochry. Oak inoculated - truffles. Non-timber forest products in Germany - include water extraction, seen to be progressing. **MS** - noted that the soil type and PH will need to be tested and that young trees would be needed (not on existing woodland). **FC & PR** - interested in looking into this.

ACTION – MS/TB to obtain details about the Reforesting Scotland conference

Tayside Red Squirrel Conservation - Ties in with the Green Tourism Initiative.

Tayside Wildlife Tree Project - **CL** - Discussing funding for education packs - hopefully sometime this year to tie in with wildlife education.

Woodland Grazing Initiative - **MS** - there are 18 projects across Scotland and 5 in Tayside. Two of these are Juniper woodland; 1 birch woodland at Rannoch; 1 broadleaved; and 1 at Atholl Estate. . The Juniper site is very interesting; working with SNH, aiming to change the status to SSSI. The juniper woodland at Dunkeld is still in decline and not recovering. There is low viability for sowing seed on site (may be that grafting old root stalks is necessary). It is early days but the grazing regime can be looked at around the old bushes - this may be affecting it.

MS - there is also very old juniper woodland at Balnaguard - all bushes on the leeward side are in decline; this could be sheep causing compaction problems. Others suggested voles,

too much nutrition or the MOD playing a part in the decline. **FC** - suggested a long cycle of seeding is required.

MS noted this project was part of a much bigger Scotland-wide scheme. It is tied in with the Juniper Plantlife Project. SNH are putting research in and also SITA TBAF funding applied for further research. This will produce a lot of information but will still be only a small part of a bigger picture. It is all about looking at woodland management properly.

Ancient Tree Hunt - The project now falls under the Woodland Trust Ancient Trees Survey which includes status and type. Looking at Rural Schools and incorporating short walks e.g. Dunning Ancient Tree Hunt - lots of hits on website.

KO - noted the Woodland Trust asked if they could use the Tree Wardens to help out with leaflets etc. **KO** will pass on the information re. Ancient Tree Hunt. **FC** - training of verifiers commented that the Woodland Trust is trying to build up a network of official verifiers. **KO** - asked for ancient tree verifiers.

ACTION - KO to circulate info re: Ancient Tree Hunt

MS - noted the oaks at Burghmuir that were planted in 1714 and that when they were 7 years old the locals were selling broom for thatching at the time. **KO** - mentioned unfortunately a lot of local residents complain that certain trees are too big.

Tayside Juniper Project - Already covered above.

Carse of Gowrie Orchard Project - **CL** - noted that the project is multi-faceted; a local Orchard Forum has been set up. People are keen to safeguard the orchard trees in the Carse - there has been funding from the FCS and PKCT to carry out surveys. Out of the 51 orchards in the Carse, nine are in desperate need for safeguarding. Noted the seminar organised by the TBP last year at the Inchtute Hotel attracted 85 people (and there were 40 apologies!). There has since been a December 2007 and January 2008 meeting of local orchard owners and residents. The idea is to have the Historic Orchards Forum under the wing of the Carse of Gowrie Group. This will still need help from FCS, TBP and PKCT.

The initiative will also be tying in with the proposed Scottish Children's Orchard idea based on the highly successful Glasgow Children's Orchard. There have been a variety of successful community events held, such as the TBP's School & Community Orchard workshop in Errol (35 attendees) and a winter pruning training course (max 16 attended). There will be pollination and summer pruning/grafting workshops later this year. A Glendoick Garden Centre Apple Day is on the agenda to also bring in local foods. Buglife Scotland will be working with the TBP on a national "orchard invertebrates" poster leaflet. This will link in well with the People's Trust for Endangered Species orchard wildlife booklet that CL has permission to re-write. There is interest in running lichen ID courses and Butterfly Conservation Scotland is also keen to run moth nights in the Carse orchards.

MS - noted the monthly Perth Farmers Market and how the orchards project could be promoted on the back of this; something like Newburgh's Plum and Apple Fairs which have been so successful. The project could also tie in with the Enchanted Forest at the Pitlochry Autumn Festival using local fruits and perhaps Isabella's Preserves (Edzell) who are keen to be commercially involved on a local level.

JBu - noted his interest in lichens and flora associated with orchards. **MS** - noted there was once a huge 37 acre orchard in the Carse. The Clyde Valley is the only other area in Scotland to have a lot of orchards scattered along it. **CL** - mentioned the strong winds in January that have taken many trees down. **MS** - there was mention of setting up a new traditional 'museum orchard' with a landowner. **IM** - noted that RSPB has a strong interest in the Carse. **MS** - mentioned Gleneagles Hotel and their interest in getting involved with Big Tree Country. **JBu** - do we have contacts for the Carse of Gowrie Orchards Forum? **CL**

– the TBP has been administering the various seminars/workshops and will gradually pass over the task to the new Forum; a comprehensive database is being amassed.

8. **Round-the-table Partners' Project Updates (not under project pro-forma)**

MS - gave rundown on the part Gleneagles Hotel will be playing - the hotel began a tourist tax for the orchard project whereby £1 was donated per room per night which would go directly to the project. The Lake District has long done something similar and generates around £1 million per year. There is the idea of getting a Tay Orchard Walk together - from Newport to Perth, and from Perth to Dundee. There are so many opportunities. There is hope that Leader can provide funding to appoint a project officer to take it forward. Ideas about bringing cider production to the Carse - monks at Newburgh made it the first commercial place for whisky making. Peelwalls Cider (Berwick) is keen to discuss a potential "hub" for the collection of Carse apples for use in their Scottish cider. They would also consider special packaging/marketing of the Carse cider.

TB - pointed out that there are unique fruit species found in different areas. Some species for example may have a huge sugar content which is great for cider - others may be better for grafting - most don't breed true to seed. **MS** - agreed. The Glendoick Apple Day will have to consider this. **CL** said that John Butterworth and Willie Duncan, both "Scottish apple gurus" would be at the Apple Day to help identify fruit brought to them. **MS** noted that at Aberfeldy Castle (Archibald Menzies) stock was grown on safely due to the commercial aspect.

CL - mentioned the Core Paths Network and that the first Orchard Trail is being completed at Port Allan. Noted that the Blossom Weeks and Apple Days in Herefordshire (under the "Big Apple" banner) were highly successful. **AT** - noted funding generated at Hereford; they have community shares in orchards which guarantees good business. **MS** - suggested that landowners could open their orchards to the public on specific weeks of the year, and remain private year round. Megginch Castle already does this for their gardens as part of the Scottish Garden Open Scheme. **FC** - noted the access law making things difficult with walled gardens. **MS** - noted Lindores Abbey orchard used to be part of the market garden connected with Falkland Palace. There are also orchards at Scone Palace.

CL - noted there is lots of orchard information on the TBP website under *news*. Also www.centralcoreorchardnetwork.co.uk is currently being set up and will ultimately contain information on school and community orchards, tourism and orchard management advice. **CL** also noted that orchards are a priority in Tayside and now recognised in the UKBAP as a priority habitat.

9. **Any Other Business**

MS - mentioned the Moths and Orchards that are becoming a UK wide priority.

FC - mentioned the National Tree Week Project; funding from SNH has ceased due to SRDP. Asked for ideas to ensure the event's continuation. The Wildlife Trees Project is part of this larger initiative and the aim is to get pilot sites through SITA TBAF funding etc. The 23rd April is the next quarterly deadline for SITA TBAF applications – details via www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk (click on "funding").

CL - noted that it would be good to update the website in time for Scottish Biodiversity Week. Asked all if they would come back with comments before May.

ACTION - ALL

10. **Date and format of next meeting**

TB - suggested a site meeting at the orchards? Date of next meeting to provisionally be Tuesday 30th September 2008 at Living Field Studies Centre, SCRI, Invergowrie.

ACTION - TB to liaise with CL



Tree Wardens in Tayside: Brief Reports by Perth & Kinross, Dundee and Angus

Ken O'Lone PKC - brief outline of work undertaken by the Perth & Kinross Tree Wardens between April 2007 and Mar 2008:

- 45 Tree Wardens across Perth and Kinross
- 7 training sessions funded and held by the Council
- participation in CL's events
- annual trip - to Faskally Woods

Issues and Publications:

- Tree Guardian (from the Tree Council) x 4 publications per year
- produced their own Treelife Newsletter inhouse & published by Council x 2 per year
- one Tree Warden set up a Tree Warden Group on Google for sharing information. This webpage includes information on tree planting etc., and is a big step - login details will be sent out soon.
- various site visits with KO and RB to see projects with Tree Wardens and getting their input.

Training Sessions and Site Visits:

- Kinnoull Hill - Woodland Ecology
- Craigie Hill - Seed Collection, Tree Health Walks and Winter Tree ID
- Bats & Trees (TBP training session) - implications etc.

Brief outline of future work to involve Tree Wardens:

- 8 training sessions planned over the next year
- 6 other events – CL's TBP events
- the coming year will be much the same structure as last year with different topics). Hoping to invite Tree Wardens to lead events and sessions, there are a few with specific skills such as Countryside Rangers.
- hope to get Tree Wardens more involved with the scheme and have more training sessions (include Donald McPhillimy)

In December **KO** got all the Tree Wardens together and introduced new ideas such as learning about silviculture, local access, establishing community woodland and how to survey trees. Managing for biodiversity is also a hot topic. The agenda has changed over the past 10 years - he has seen new ideas arise about tree ID and trees and the law. All agreed about the need to deal with the conflicts relating to trees. **MS** - with regards to training events it would be worthwhile talking to **TB** about things - there is a lot of overlap here such as dealing with farmers and silviculture; there could be a few big events organised though a joint initiative.

ACTION - KO to talk with TB

TB - gave apologies from **IW**. The Dundee Tree Warden Scheme is starting to get off the ground but there have been issues regarding insurance. The Public Space Strategy consultation and Urban Forest Strategy will start this year. There is a new site of 4 hectares of new planting to start this year together with publication on Dundee's heritage varieties.

Fred Conacher - there is no Tree Warden Scheme for Angus as it takes a lot of effort and he is so busy himself. He is the only Tree Officer in Angus - there are two in Perth & Kinross. **KO** - 25% of his time used to be spent on the Tree Warden Scheme, now it is a lot less. It is now more focused and the Wardens take more on themselves. The Newsletter takes up a lot of his time. **AT** - noted that it was a shame that such a high quality newsletter goes to so few people. Does it get sent out to every community council? **KO** - will get a list of each community council and send on to them. Also trying to get it onto the website. **CL** said she could put the publication on the TBP website.

MS - noted the new publication - Policy Statement on Access, Recreation Forestry Estate; will be getting more.

ACTION - KO to get list of community councils and liaise with CL re website



Presentation by Andrew Thompson of Community Woodland Association

AT has been working at CWA since September 2007. The CWA are grateful for the Lottery funding bid and FCS funding which helps boost support for the Association. The CWA is about sustainable forests for sustainable communities. It began in the late 90's; 2000 the first big conference was held. Various community woodlands have taken hold since 2003. They work closely with the FCS and various land management organisations. They also have strong ties with the Dunning Community Woodland Association (which AT was closely involved with) which is 20 hectares in size.

What is a Community Woodland?

- the local community has significant control
- community owns or leases land, or works in partnership with FCS or private owners
- woodland is managed BY communities FOR communities.

What are the Benefits of Community Woodland?

- recreation
- biodiversity
- interest and education

The drive to maintain something often comes from a threat that has been seen. Professionals see the land as a resource to address a variety of community issues such as employment, education and health, community development or sustainability of economy.

Employment opportunities -

- tourism initiatives
- independent operators - potential
- affordable housing
- biofuels
- forest rangers and education staff

There has been full time employment arranged within Dunnet Forest Trust around the Sitka spruce management.

Education opportunities -

- primary and nursery schools
- special needs, adult and excluded groups
- Forest Schools programme - training provision beyond the school curriculum

Community Development -

- confidence - individually and collectively (e.g. Dunning Community Woodland Trust came together with the Council to part-own the woodland and the Council have built a new path for safer access)
- wellbeing, physical and mental health benefits - woodland can offer a great deal
- ambition, ownership, housing, entrepreneurship - sustainable economy.

ATs own job focuses on the urban environment and getting urban communities to shout about getting more physical and recreational facilities readily available. This helps in gaining a sense of ownership.

How are Community Woodlands financed?

- Scottish Government - FCS, SNH, SRDP, Local Authorities (the bulk of funding)
- EU - SRDP & LEADER
- Big Lottery Fund
- Charitable Trusts (bodies in their own right) - good for match funding
- Social Enterprise (for earned income)
- Communities fundraising (positive for community, environment, however a lot of it doesn't come back in). Good example is Chipping Dunning's Xmas Trees Scheme whereby £1200 was raised. 40 nest boxes were also put up through the wood and each were sponsored raising £800. There is a wide spectrum of potential.

What is the responsibility of the Association?

- to act as a direct, democratic, accountable representative body of the community woodland movement
- to promote, represent, co-ordinate and support community-led interests in land and woodland issues throughout Scotland.

Other points -

- 85 member groups throughout Scotland. The Tayside map however is a bit devoid
- ranges from small amenity woods on urban fringes to large commercial forestry in the Highlands (i.e. north west Mull)
- more groups are joining all the time - Land Reform Act; Nature for Land scheme; Development Trusts from small rural to large urban; Big Lottery funding opportunities; GCA; Urban Regeneration Agenda
- the Tayside local community is so well provided for in public access that the demand for ownership is less.

The Future -

- The CWA needs strong support and structure. We need to nurture the growth of member groups; widen opportunities for involvement; unlock the potential - community is the key. The idea is to grow woods and communities together.

End of presentation - **AT** can be reached at - andrew@communitywoods.org.

MS - thanked **AT** for his presentation. Agreed that Laggan was interesting, the community is wanting total ownership from the FCS. The best thing that came of it was that FCS now manages the forest commercially through the community which works well. Noted that FCS purchased the land on Mull - the timber is kept on the island and all outputs such as biofuel and sawmill stay on the island too.

AT - the initial push for community involvement comes from things like this - forest user groups are needed to become part of the community woodland movement. **MS** - good partnerships for involvement include shared ownership i.e. FCS own two thirds and PKC own one third of Kinnoull Hill; all forms of public access are zoned, the FCS manage the land and Local Authority deals with public access and rangering services. **AT** - the difficulty lies in communities not knowing the opportunities. **MS** - FCS manage Craigiehill by targeting expertise and using that where it is needed. **AT** - getting the right governing structure is important to allow for annual elections / new blood / stronger initial constitution etc. **MS** - Pitmedden - very big with mountain biking - trees have been thinned. On that basis we can help manage the land because we know what people want. **PR** - asked about the motorbikes at Blackcraig and the nightmare there. **MS** - maybe due to limited public access. Public access and recreation work well together at Tentsmuir Forest. Zoning is useful for promoting certain areas for specific amenities - allocation of specific uses. **JBr** - asked about the issue of soil erosion. **MS** - noted that this could be managed.