



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

Minutes of Meeting - 2 September 2004

Present:	Catherine Lloyd (CL) Mark Simmons (MS) Ann Lolley (AL) Daniele Muir (DM) Gill Lawrie (GL) Penny Martin (PM) Bill Kirkpatrick (BK) Morag Clooney (MC) Rob Bushby (RB)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Perth & Kinross Museum Service Broughty Ferry Environment Project Perth & Kinross Ranger Service RHET Angus Countryside Initiatives Grounds for Learning Perth & Kinross Education Dept Dundee City Council Education Dept John Muir Award
Apologies:	Lesley Wood Audrey Edgar	Angus Council Ranger Service RSPB Operation Country Watch

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Taken as read.

'Whatever' and Primary Times

These publications are still keen to include us, but it depends on finance. MS mentioned that Perth Museum received two half pages free of charge in 'Primary Times' so it might be worth bearing in mind – many people read museum adverts here. CL agreed to follow up both publishers to see if either would be happy to take free contributions.

ACTION: CL

Projects

DM gave brief feedback on the Schools' Backyard Biodiversity Day event that took place at Battleby this midsummer. She said that another 300 children took place and the event proved as popular as it did last year. There are hopes to repeat the event again in 2005.

Local Patch Project – CL confirmed that receipt for the survey forms is slowing down (but then the mail forwarding service from Buccaneer Way is no longer being maintained). The project is nearing the end of its three year run.

Biodiversity Calendar - CL confirmed that she would ask if SNH would be willing to contribute towards the printing of the calendar. She asked for comments on the format – wallplanner, A5, etc. MC expressed concern for the proposed 18 month format as teachers can change rooms at end of year and like a ‘new’ calendar each year. It was agreed that publication of the calendar would be by August 2005 to give plenty of time to plan ahead. CL asked those members who would like to contribute themes/ideas to the calendar to consider if they would be able to donate £100 per page.

ACTION: ALL

2. School, Colleges and Universities Grounds Action Plan

All comments received have gone back to the author, Stuart Downie. CL confirmed that the biodiversity website would be set up in the next few months and it was hoped that all consultative draft SAPs and HAPs would be featured. She asked therefore for any further comments on the Schools HAP to be sent to her over the next 2 or 3 months.

3. Members’ Projects

Zoom

This project is taking place in Douglas, Whitefield, and Broughty Ferry. AL said that the packs circulated to encourage adults/family groups to record birds, ladybirds, wildflower, light pollution, etc. have proved very popular; 120 packs have been distributed. There has been a 50% return rate – a very good response. Action Research Community Scotland is the funder. AL is now looking to display information and encourage new projects from it, e.g. mapping vegetation along the Dighty Burn. She has also been conducting a ‘cork’ survey in wine bottles – where the wine is from, the type of cork, etc. Most people think that natural cork is not good for wildlife. AL also confirmed that SCARF stands for ‘Save Cash and Reserve Fuel’ which is not the same organisation as the more widely-known SCARF!

Operation Country Watch (RSPB)

In Audrey Edgar’s absence, CL read her short report on progress. The project is still at specification stage; there has been meeting at Breadalbane to gauge interest at the school, and soon another meeting will be held with a second school and gamekeepers. Alastair Lavery (RSPB Education Dept.) has drafted a strategy and targets to progress a project on moorland ecology. The next stage is to develop it, hold meetings and invite feedback. The project is fully based on curriculum guidelines to meet exam requirements; it is also targeted at secondary schools.

Garden for Life / School Wildlife Projects

CL confirmed that it would still be useful to have a brief list of what’s going on in the different local authorities. She confirmed that the Garden for Life leaflets are still available from SNH (contact the Publications Department on 01738 444177).

ACTION: ALL

Green Graveyards Initiative

CL confirmed that two Perth, one Kinross-shire and at least one Angus pilot project are in the process of being set up. AL hopes to get involved through Zoom's Lichens Project. CL confirmed that SNH and the newly-formed Scottish Lichen Interest Group are interested in training people in Lichen ID. CL and AL agreed to liaise to arrange one such event in Dundee with BFEP. If anyone else is interested in this subject, please contact CL as soon as possible.

ACTION: CL/AL

Wee Green Fingers

SNH has run out of these packs and will not be reprinting them. The information is, however, on the SNH website. PM confirmed that management had been handed over to GfL so hopefully there will be more packs in the future. They were distributed through word of mouth rather than a mass mailing to nurseries/schools. They have proved to be extremely popular.

Eco-Schools

BK confirmed that on 29 September there would be an Eco-Schools Day at Dewars, Perth. Fifty per cent of Perth and Kinross schools have registered. George Kavanah, North Lanarkshire, has agreed to talk at the event. Crieff Road Nursery recently obtained its 4th green flag, so things are going well. BK hopes to have the rest registered before October; he is working with Kate Campbell. In Dundee there are 41 primary schools, 29 registered.

Harris Moore Environmental Education Award Scheme

BK said that entries for next year's Award in Perth and Kinross will be taken soon. The criteria has slightly changed as schools now have to register with Eco-schools. BK confirmed that PKC is trying to co-ordinate and link different funding and the way it works by linking in citizenship, etc. The Award has been running consecutively for at least four years. The costs are not high as money is taken from various funds.

CL mentioned that it would be excellent if similar Award schemes could be set up elsewhere in Tayside as there was an opportunity for tremendous media coverage and wide-ranging biodiversity enhancement within school grounds. GL wondered if Angus companies such as Glaxo might be asked to fund a similar Award in Angus. Kate Barlow, PKC, to be asked about costs so that the matter can be discussed at a future meeting. BK mentioned that at next year's Perthshire G8 Summit a slant on biodiversity would be excellent.

ACTION: CL to discuss Award costs with Kate Barlow, PKC

Wild & Wonderful

This Museum-based exhibition is linked to the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. MS confirmed that it opened in mid-May and has had 15,000 visitors since then. Families have especially enjoyed it. A number of Museum events have been loosely linked – art classes, kids' sketching, toddlers in for pre-school events, family fun 'Flower Power', 'Crafty Animals', etc. The exhibition will remain open until Christmas.

AL mentioned that the Big Draw website was useful for funding projects, so would be worth a look. For instance Big Draw events throughout October will include natural history themes as one of the main topics. MS also mentioned that species recording work would soon be resumed.

Red Squirrels

The Dundee project is progressing extremely well. The Red Squirrel Action Plan has reached its consultative draft stage and will be put on the website when available. Other projects are underway in Perthshire (transects) and Angus is considering specific woodland projects that will encourage the return of Red Squirrels into different areas.

Salmon in the Classroom Project

The Angus pilot has gone well, and is still to start up in Perth and Kinross. There is a great deal of interest in the project.

Sand Martin Bank

AL said that 80% of the nesting holes in the new Sand Martin Bank, Broughty Ferry have been used and it appears there have been three broods so far. The project has been very successful and popular in the whole of the local community. PM suggested that such banks would be excellent to get into schools grounds if there is already appropriate habitat. AL said that a bid into SOBGS would allow more nest sites to be provided. The project is based around community action in sand dunes. The 'process' has been funded rather than the actual project. The Urban sub-group enjoyed a visit and thought that the wall blended in extremely well with the landscape – it was obvious that both the local community and visitors were enjoying it.

Crombie Rangers

Lesley Wood had sent a brief report on ongoing projects. These include the Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Projects in the Angus burghs, the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, the Common Plants Census and the Red Squirrel Survey.

4. John Muir Trust Video

RB of the John Muir Award Scheme had brought the Trust's new video to demonstrate the four main strands in the Award Scheme –

- Discover (can be school grounds)
- Explore Wild Places – guided walks, surveys, etc
- Conserve – bird boxes, conservation tasks, etc
- Share – photos, stories, pictures, etc

The video, which members enjoyed watching, highlighted the environment, encouraged responsibility, and showed what can be achieved. The video ended with 'What will you do? What will you put back?'

PM suggested that the Award Scheme would link with Forest Schools. RB said that he referred as many people as possible undertaking the Award in Tayside to CL to ensure any links to the biodiversity process were considered. Further details are available from RB or via the website – www.johnmuiraward.org.

5. Grounds for Learning

PM gave a short presentation on her work. She is based in Stirling; GfL is a national charity for Scotland with many links to what's going on in the wider environment. Its main focus is on school grounds – encouraging schools to use and value their grounds and look at particular needs, and to fit in with learning/teaching.

PM said it was important to look for local support, and help in developing accredited practitioners. GfL is linked to Learning through Landscapes, funded by SNH (which delivers lots of SNH's aims).

GfL is keen that links to the natural environment are made in many ways, not just traditional environmental education, e.g. through art. It offers free advice and support to all schools in Scotland. Membership is £50 per annum – there is a members' page on the website. This leads to invitations to training events, national networking, and an annual conference at Battleby in March. A major research project has been underway recently – a survey of school grounds with Sports and Play Scotland to give a picture of what schools have and how to use it. It will be used as a lever for what can be done in future – the report will be published at the end of the year. PM will circulate it via CL.

She reminded members that there is a School Grounds Resource box – produced by SNH – contact PM to find out where the closest boxes are (c25 in total). GfL also provides a newsletter to all schools in Scotland. Its new website: www.gflscotland.org.uk.

PM alerted people to Scottish School Gardens Week (13 -17 September); register on website to download free advice and activity pack (linked to the curriculum). Projects are also run, e.g. 'Start Growing Upwards' which helps to transform bare school gardens (social inclusion areas); 'Where Schools Meet Streets' – open to schools with uninviting entrances to make them more welcoming through art, growing plants, etc. Good community access and involvement is part of the grant. There are links to biodiversity in these projects and also through research, answering enquiries, advice and information, e.g. new build schools, training programmes for student teachers, nursery and primary teachers (CPD) plus practitioner accreditation course aimed at rangers, artists, etc.

There followed a general discussion regarding PPP schools and how plans for school grounds need to be sorted out at very start.

6. Any Other Business

GL suggested approaching FWAG for wildflower supplies etc. FWAG's Head Office is now in Perth (tel. 01738 450500).

GL confirmed that RHET's ACI will have two new appointments, 1 in Angus, 1 in Perth and Kinross. They already have new 'growing projects' in the pipeline – for

instance potato growing in barrels (many links with maths, diet, etc.). This is a year long project which can be ended by the beginning of the summer holidays. A similar project using strawberries will start in the next few months.

ACI is applying for help through the Media Training Centre in Brechin who are inviting people to make most of their expertise. The Twilight Teachers' Evening did not take place for primary teachers S1 and S2 but will happen later this month. On 29 September there is a Careers Day in Perth aimed at 2nd years – there will be a section on conservation, gamekeeping, etc linked to Breadalbane. RHET is hoping to get funding to undertake a biodiversity project with FWAG. For the website – search for RHET or Royal Highland Education Trust.

RB confirmed that a major John Muir Award networking event with a biodiversity presence would be taking place at Lendrick Muir on Thursday, 9 September. All welcome.

A major conference “Sustaining Wild Land” will take place at Pitlochry Festival Theatre, 21 to 23 October. Fax the Theatre for further details (01796 484616).

Date of next meeting

10am, Thursday 2 December - Dundee Botanic Gardens (new Lecture Room).

It was proposed that the Education sub-group could visit an Eco-School in Perthshire in the spring of 2005.

CL thanked MS for the Museum's hospitality for this meeting and RB and PM for their presentations. She also thanked DM for taking the minutes.