

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



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BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

Minutes of Meeting – 24th July 2006
and Summer Visit (Crombie Country Park Sand Martin Wall)

Present:	Daniele Muir (DM)	Perth & Kinross Ranger Service
	Lesley Wood (LW)	Angus Countryside Ranger Service
	Morag Cooney (MC)	Dundee City Council Education Department
	Gill Lawrie (GL)	Royal Highland Education Trust Angus Countryside Initiative
	Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Biodiversity Co-ordinator
Apologies:	Mark Simmons (MS)	Perth & Kinross Council Museum Service
	Kate Simpson	John Muir Award
	Tom McGrath (TMcG)	Angus Ranger Service
	Penny Martin	Grounds for Learning
	Ann Lolley	Broughty Ferry Environment Project (joined the SCRI visit)
	George Potts	Dundee Ranger Service
	Mike Flinn	Forestry Commission

Circulated to: Ian Mason, Perth & Kinross Council Education Service; Richard Burton, Angus College; Ben Notley, National Trust for Scotland; Bruce Anderson, RSPB; Stuart Downie, Perth College; Alasdair Hood, Dundee Botanic Gardens; D. Stewart, Perthshire Countryside Initiative; Fiona Thackeray, Thrive; Linda Winskill, Loch Lomond & Trossachs Ranger Service; Martyn Jamieson, Kindrogan Study Centre; Ailsa Reid, Murton Trust; Sharon Neilson, SCRI; Carolyn Warwick, SNH.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read.

Harris Moore Environmental Education Award

This is still going strong in Perth and Kinross. The subject is on the agenda so that it can be revisited in the future; Dundee City Council is currently concentrating on Eco-Schools.

Tayside Wildlife Festival

CL continues to liaise closely with Fiona Meikle of VisitPerthshire who is keen for such an event to take place. The Partnership is being left to organise the event, however – and there are no funds available. The Ranger Services have confirmed their interest and as they already organise many events/walks, it might be possible for the Partnership to lead on the Festival with the Ranger Services.

ACTION: CL/Ranger Services

Website

The website is being regularly updated and there are now many new sections, including a link to the Marsh Harrier tracking project funded recently by SITA TBAF. The new "Householder's Guide to Biodiversity" and the "Developer's Guide to Biodiversity" are now available, as are Red Squirrel, Barn Owl and Swift survey information. The "Do a Little, Change a Lot" page (under "What can I do") has been improved, as has the online games and wordsearch section. For professionals, it is now easier to access the "Guide to Incorporating Biodiversity into Local Services" booklet, UKBAP species lists, and the River Engineering Seminar presentations. The average number of hits continues to be between 3,500 and 4,500 per week. DM asked if the recording forms could be made interactive so that they can be filled in online. CL will check with the website designer.

ACTION: CL

Funding

Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme (BAGS) - CL reported that £25,000 had been granted to the

newly-founded Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum for projects throughout Tayside, Clacks, Stirling and Fife. The Forum was set up by the four LBAP Officers in these areas to bring together a number of smaller projects and to pool resources.

Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund (TBAF) – the funding is site-specific with particular relevance to LBAP habitats or species, or relating to these. CL can advise on what will fit the bill, although she warned that education/publicity can only receive 10% of any funding. The funding year is now running September to August so any monies not spent in the first year will be rolled over to the 2nd year. £100,000 a year is available over a total of 3 years. Details of successful applications will be put on the website in due course. The next deadline for applications is 20th October (applications are considered quarterly). Application forms can be downloaded from www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

CL gave an update on the situation regarding additional SNH funds. A Local Biodiversity Project Fund has been decided against; however, project funding can be applied for through the usual SNH routes.

Past issues of the Tayside Biodiversity Funding Newsletters can be viewed on the website. The latest issue is on hold, awaiting a decision from the Scottish Biodiversity Forum Implementation Team who may take over the preparation of the newsletter (but on a national scale).

Scottish Biodiversity Fortnight (20th May to 4th June 2006)

This year the event was stretched to a fortnight. The Scottish Biodiversity Forum supplied postcards and bookmarks to all LBAP partnerships. Events from all over Scotland were listed on the Scottish Biodiversity website. Tayside contributed several events and many press releases were timed to coincide with the increased publicity. The 2007 Scottish Biodiversity Fortnight is already being planned, so ideas for events in Tayside would be welcome as early as possible.

ACTION: ALL

Schools' Backyard Biodiversity Day (9th June 2006)

DM reported that this event had been well attended in the morning, but not in the afternoon. Around 250 children took part. DM to look into why attendance was down this year. LW said that interest in various topics comes in cycles. GL received funding in the past from Tesco for transport and DM said she would investigate this.

ACTION: DM

(subsequently: DM contacted many schools and the general feeling is that the cost of transport is too high and the time of year too busy. If funding could be secured and the date of the event changed to either May or September, good attendance should occur)

ACTION: Comments please (ALL)

2. Round the Table Projects

Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Projects

LW reported that there are 16 sheltered housing groups taking part in biodiversity projects in Angus; 4 new ones joined for 2006/07. Bird projects have been more successful than those concentrating on plants. Funding (£500 per project) was received from SNH. An Open Day was held at Crombie for the participants – c50 people were collected by the Rangers in a minibus to visit the country park, watch a slide presentation of progress, etc. It was a very successful day with a lot of media coverage.

LW and CL ran a lunch time seminar on the subject in Perth earlier in the year. Since then Perth and Kinross Council have confirmed that they will be getting involved in a similar sheltered housing project in Strathearn. CL also mentioned that members of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs Ranger Service attended the lunch time seminar and had shown an interest in rolling out a similar project in their area.

Perthshire Projects

DM reported that there has been various eco school works – pond revamped at Kinnoull Primary School, wildlife garden put in at Our Lady's PS, bog garden completed at Struan PS. Approximately 40 WoodBus visits were made to schools across the Perth and Kinross Council area, plus various bird and bat box building school visits, biodiversity events at libraries and on sites, etc. The biodiversity display banners have been in constant use throughout the year.

Salmon in the Classroom

DM confirmed that the PKC Rangers have run Salmon in the Classroom with two schools (Abernyte and Forteviot); they were very successful.

Perthshire Hospitals Wildlife Garden Projects

No progress.

Dundee City Council

MC reported that all Dundee schools had now registered as eco schools with 11 Bronze, 5-7 Silver and 2 Green Flags applied for. MC has found that there are many links between projects and eco schools, especially citizenship. She is particularly keen to see RHET school visits in Dundee.

ACTION: MC/GL

RHET

GL reported that ACI had not had as many school visits as last year due to problems of paying for transport.

Projects: potato project funded by Clydesdale Bank where the schools grow their own potatoes in the classroom. Thirty farms/farmers have now been risk assessed and had had training for school visits. A pilot berry project (growing strawberries in classes) encompasses many educational targets: eco schools, IT, maths, etc. There is also a nursery project based on the tattie bogle.

GL raised the issue about the problem of transport for children and the possibility of a Farm Bus, similar to Perth and Kinross Council's WoodBus was discussed. The difference would be that the Farm Bus would travel through the countryside covering topics such as crops and biodiversity. Guest speakers (ACI farmers, Rangers, etc.) could travel on the bus and point out things of interest to the children.

Town Swift Survey

CL reported that the Swift Survey response appears to have been slower this year. A second meeting is planned on 18th September at the Dundee Botanical Gardens to put 'dots on maps' from the survey. As for last year, these will be forwarded to the three local authority planning departments to add to their GIS. There is a huge interest in the subject throughout Tayside – a Swift Day was held in Perth in mid-summer and attracted a number of new people. Minutes from the last Tayside Swift Interest Group meeting are available from CL. Much cross-boundary work is taking place – CL has advised the Highland Area NTS in setting up their own survey and a 'Buildings and Biodiversity' conference; there is to be a Central Scotland Networking Seminar in Stirling in November.

Red Squirrels

The Tayside Red Squirrel Newsletter proved very popular and a second one has been suggested later this year. The Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group, together with Perth Museum, published a recording postcard for both species; this has proved to be extremely popular. A Tayside Red Squirrel Forum has now been set up to bring together the three voluntary groups in Perthshire, Angus and Dundee. The Forestry Commission has offered to contribute £10,000 to fund a Tayside Red Squirrel Officer; it is currently in negotiation with SNH to match fund the sum.

Tayside Geodiversity

CL said that the Tayside RIGS Group has now been re-named "Tayside Geodiversity" and meets regularly. There will be opportunities to link geodiversity and biodiversity issues, especially the production of a series of trails leaflets and interpretation.

School Biodiversity Calendar

The sub-group is still keen to go ahead, but lack of time continues to stall progress.

ACTION: ALL

Fruit Tree and Orchard Survey

CL circulated new survey forms from the Central Core Network (of which she is Honorary Chairman). The launch of the forms this autumn will encourage the recording of fruit trees (and orchards of all types) throughout Central Scotland and raise awareness of local heritage varieties. The ultimate aim is to prepare an Apple Map and Fruit Map of Scotland.

Scottish Crop Research Field Study Centre

CL is on the Steering Group for the SCRI Field Study Centre (it received SITA TBAF funding). The Community Wildlife Garden at Invergowrie is open to the public. An Arable Weeds Survey is planned for 2007.

3. Project Proforma 2007-10

The Steering Group has asked each sub-group to focus on up to 10 projects per sub-group for the Business Plan period 2007-10. The updated list of all sub-group proposals is attached. The group discussed the following potential projects:

- Mammal Atlas – Perth Museum/TBP;
- ‘Bee Wild’ Schools and Communities Project – TBP;
- Biodiversity Calendar – TBP;
- Sheltered Housing & Hospitals Biodiversity Project – Local Authorities, TBP, NHS;
- Tayside Wildlife Festival – TBP;
- Environmental Education Awards – TBP;
- Countryside on Wheels Educational Bus – RHET.

The Urban sub-group will take forward the Local Patch Project (in conjunction with the Education sub-group). Other ideas included: Biodiversity Fortnight; Eco House Garden (Whitfield School, Dundee); RNCI Aberdeen CCOW goes into schools with crops and livestock (like an Eco-Farm Bus).

CL will take the finalised proforma to the Steering Group on 25 August, so all input from the sub-group is required by 20 August.

ACTION: ALL

4. **AOCB**

CL reported that the 1st Tranche Review is nearing completion and will coincide with the publication of the national UKBAP Review. The 2nd Tranche consultative draft HAPs and SAPs will be put on the website in the autumn with a view to publishing them during 2007.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

No date was arranged. CL thanked DM for taking the minutes. She also thanked LW and Crombie Country Park for hosting the meeting and for providing an excellent lunch.

Summer Visit - sub-group members had the opportunity to visit, by boat, the Sand Martin Wall being constructed on the other side of the loch. Just over £10,000 was received from the SITA TBAF for the project which is going to offer a unique local opportunity to monitor this important species. Weekly bird counts and ringing of young birds will be undertaken. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Waterways Bird Survey suggests a steep population decrease in the last 9 years and the project will contribute directly to the British Trust for Ornithology’s nest records for the species which have traditionally been extremely low (137 nest records were received in 2004 against a UK population of 200k). The Sand Martin is a European Conservation Category 3 and a UKBAP Species of Conservation Concern. Partnership working will involve the Tay Ringing Group, local and national BTO members and staff, the Young Naturalists’ Club, school and community groups. The sand martin wall can be easily seen from the public hide, and should sit well with the landscape – it will be provided with a green roof!



Education Sub-Group Remit

Aim

To support the implementation of practical biodiversity actions to the wider local community through education – by means of both formal education and informal lifelong learning

