

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



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BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

Minutes of Meeting – 25th August 2005
and Summer Visit (Longforgan School Grounds and Scottish Crop Research Institute Wildlife Garden)

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

Circulated to: Ian Mason, Perth & Kinross Council Education Service; Ian Montgomery, Perth & Kinross Council 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; Kindrogan Study Centre; Ailsa Reid, Murton Trust; Sharon Neilson, SCRI.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read, except for section 1.3 where MS asked for it to be re-worded to “MS had said that it might not be possible to call the festival “Wild and Wonderful”.

Harris Moore Environmental Education Award

MC explained that there had been no progress in setting up a similar scheme to the Harris Moore Environmental Education Award as DCC is at present concentrating on Eco Schools. She asked for the subject to be kept on the agenda so that it can be revisited in the future.

Tayside Wildlife Festival

CL said that VisitPerthshire is still very keen to be involved in a Tayside Wildlife Festival, but we would have to plan it for 2007; CL continues to liaise closely with Fiona Meikle of VisitPerthshire.

ACTION: CL

Website

CL confirmed that the Partnership’s website was officially launched in May and is now being updated on a quarterly basis. Links and items for the education “Fun Zone” would be very welcome.

ACTION: ALL

Funding

Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme (BAGS) - CL reported that Tayside did particularly well in the 2nd round of the Scottish Executive’s Scheme – five local projects out of a Scottish total of 31 successful

applications were awarded funds (there had been 106 applications). These were:

- Project Sandcastle (Murton Trust, Forfar)
- Dundee Red Squirrel Project (Sustain Dundee)
- Community Woodland Biodiversity Training (Community Woodlands Association)
- Small Cow-Wheat Species Recovery (Forest Research)
- Living Field Study Centre - Flora and Fauna of Scotland's Arable Farmland (SCRI)

Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund (TBAF) - owing to previous connections with SITA Environmental Trust (it funded the Biodiversity Officer post for the first 3 years), £300,000 project funding has been secured over three years. The official launch of the Fund will take place on 12th September. The first deadline for applications will be mid-October and applications will be considered on a quarterly basis from then on. There will be a £50,000 maximum limit, and a minimum of £500. Application forms can be downloaded from www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk. From an initial request for project ideas from the wider partnership CL had received nearly 50 suggestions so far, pre-launch.

CL also confirmed that SNH may be able to contribute to a Local Biodiversity Project Fund – this will be discussed at the Partnership's next Steering Group meeting.

All three Tayside Biodiversity Funding Newsletters are now available on the website.

It was agreed that another Funding Workshop would be useful. CL agreed to speak to Carolyn Warwick, SNH to see if this would be possible.

ACTION: CL

Scottish Biodiversity Week (21st to 29th May)

This year's events were very successful. The opportunity had been taken to raise awareness by circulating a variety of general press releases. The Partnership held a photocall to officially launch the website. The 2006 Scottish Biodiversity Week would be held at around the same time, so ideas for events in Tayside would be welcome.

ACTION: ALL

Backyard Biodiversity Day (9th June)

DM reported that this event had once again been very successful. Perth & Kinross Rangers are considering expanding the idea next year.

ACTION: DM

2. Round the Table Projects

Salmon in the Classroom

TMcG updated the group on this project – most salmon eggs were successfully reared in classroom fish tanks (although there were problems because the schools were often too warm). Fish were released into local burns and later the children had the opportunity to watch electro-fishing. CL asked for reports from both Angus and Perth & Kinross so that she can update the Water and Wetland sub-group.

ACTION: LW/ TMcG and DM

Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Projects (Angus)

TMcG reported that the Angus sheltered housing projects had been very successful. There were now plans to take the project into local hospitals.

CL felt the time was right to expand the project to sheltered housing across DCC and PKC. DM suggested that Doug Flint (PKC) could speak to J Evans in the Ranger Service to take the matter forward.

ACTION: DM to contact DF

Perthshire Hospitals Wildlife Garden Projects

CL said that via the Perth and Kinross Community Planning process both Blairgowrie Hospital and Crieff Hospital are planning new wildlife gardens. They are looking on the work as NHS' contribution to the duty on public bodies to "further biodiversity" within the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Dundee City Council

MC reported that the Council is linking its science programme with eco schools and health. By connecting these, eco schools are not seen as an 'add-on' and there will be recognition that a lot of the

work is already being done. Three bronze awards have recently been gained, and 58 schools out of 63 are already registered.

Eco Teams (Angus Council)

No update from LW.

ACTION: LW

Town Swift Survey

DM reported that the Swift Survey response had been very good in Perthshire. CL said that a meeting would be held on 15th September at the Dundee Botanical Gardens to put 'dots on maps' from the survey. These will then be forwarded to the three local authority planning departments. Angus Council is especially interested. The information will hopefully encourage new nest boxes on new builds close to existing nest sites. The Dundee Ranger Service is working with developers to get boxes put up at the time of building. Some nest boxes are external, others internal (internal are better and cheaper). The UK organisation Eco-Congregation is interested in swift nest conservation in churches.

Red Squirrels

CL confirmed that the Partnership had received funding from both SNH and the Forestry Commission to publish a Tayside Red Squirrel Newsletter this autumn. Contributions and photographs had been received from a wide variety of partners.

MS said he was publishing a squirrel survey postcard in conjunction with the Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group. The postcard will record both species.

Perth Museum

MS passed round the new Waterside Mammals survey leaflet. He is currently preparing a geodiversity/fossil exhibition. He also passed an 'Opening up Resources for All' leaflet to CL to show all the topics available for loan.

Tayside RIGS Group (Regionally Important Geological Site)

CL said that the Tayside RIGS Group had been revived and would be looking at linking geodiversity and biodiversity issues. There will be opportunities to help prepare a series of trails leaflets and interpretation, as well as planning on-the-ground projects to raise awareness on both subjects.

Perth and Kinross Council

DM has been working with Comrie in Colour to improve green areas. Scottish Executive staff have also agreed to visit a well-known Red Squirrel 'death zone' in the area with a view to recommending rope bridges and signage.

CL confirmed that the newly-completed Perth Lade survey proves the waterway is in far better condition than it was a decade ago when the last survey was carried out. There is a great deal of potential for new projects along the length of the lade; CL hopes that a "Water of Leith"-type project could be phased in to create one of Perth's best (and most accessible) "green corridors".

Green Graveyard Initiative

CL reported that progress was slow, although the Angus Ranger Service have been carrying out surveys this year. Perth & Kinross Council have been very slow in making management changes in their three pilot graveyards. There is still no interest from Dundee.

Veteran Tree Survey

This is still subject to funding, but the Forestry Commission is keen to link such a survey with local communities and schools in the first instance – with a pilot area in Highland Perthshire.

School Biodiversity Calendar

The sub-group is still keen to go ahead, but lack of time to concentrate on the project has stalled plans. Most of the work has been done – funding needs to be sought and CL needs updated confirmation of who will sponsor each page.

ACTION: ALL

3. AOCB

There was no other business, so the Longforgan Primary School Eco Committee were invited to join

the meeting. They told the sub-group about their school wildlife garden and the new village trail they are involved in planning.

It was very obvious that the school's Eco Committee was a hard-working and committed group of children. They gave the sub-group a very interesting tour of the school grounds.

Sub-group members then had lunch at the Scottish Crop Research Institute and were given a private tour of SCRI's new Community Wildlife Garden. SCRI are setting up a Living Field Studies Centre with BAGS funding and hope to work with the Partnership's Farmland and Education sub-groups in the future.

[after the visits, CL wrote to both the school and SCRI thanking them for their hospitality]

4. **Date of Next Meeting**

t.b.c. – February 2006.

Crombie Country Park was suggested as a venue so that the sub-group could have a presentation about the Angus Sheltered Housing Project – and possibly visit one of the local projects.

ACTION: TMcG

CL thanked DM for taking the minutes.



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