



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

Minutes of Meeting - 28 January 2003

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|----------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Present: | Catherine Lloyd | Tayside Biodiversity Partnership |
| | Uwe Stoneman | Scottish Wildlife Trust |
| | Jane Pritchard | Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) |
| | David Johnson | Dundee City Council Education Dept. |
| | Daniele Muir | Perth & Kinross Ranger Service |
| | Lesley Wood | Angus Council Ranger Service |
| | Ann Lolley | Broughty Ferry Environment Project |

1. Apologies

David Mitchell, SNH; Hilary Thomson, ACI; Coral Bell, Perth & Kinross Council; Jillian Galbraith, Dundee Botanic Gardens; Gill Lawrie, REHT Angus Countryside Initiative; Shona Medford, RHET Perth & Kinross Countryside Initiative; Meg Mearns and Richard Burton, Angus College; Penny Martin, Grounds for Learning.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were accepted as read. CL thanked everyone for comments on the proposed group remit and for ideas for celebrating Backyard Biodiversity Day.

There were two outstanding actions to be considered further once plans for the Backyard Biodiversity Day were in hand:

- Possible simplification of travel grants system for biodiversity visits.
ACTION: SNH/DCC/AC/P&KC to discuss by end May
- Ideas for a compilation of a "schools outpack".
ACTION: SWT/TBP by end May

3. Sub-Group Remit

A wide-ranging discussion was held concerning the proposed remit. DJ asked how the sub-group would communicate with the general population of Dundee. CL replied that it would be primarily through the various sub-groups, especially the Urban sub-group whose leader was a DCC employee, Alison Anderson (AA) in the Environmental & Consumer Protection Department. The new Chairman of the Partnership, Merrill Smith (MS), is also in the Leisure and Arts Dept. of DCC. Both AA and MS also sat on the Dundee Partnership for the Environment so there were now some good links in place to ensure that the biodiversity process was highlighted.

DJ pointed out that good communication between all these interest groups would be essential – to date he had not seen any posters or leaflets about biodiversity in Dundee. CL replied that the Local Patch Survey should be raising awareness and that the leaflets were very widely distributed last year. The survey will be re-launched this spring and she felt confident that by the end of the year public awareness of biodiversity would be very much greater because of the numerous projects being introduced and the ongoing implementation of the now-published

Biodiversity Action Plan. JP said the RSPB's Garden Birdwatch survey involving the public was very popular; it is publicised through a website and on t.v. (Blue Peter).

UW suggested the sub-group's remit was too wide - its objectives cover 'everything to do with education' and that perhaps there should be a specific focus, such as the proposed Backyard Biodiversity Day (BBD). CL agreed to revise the remit to include three focus areas: BBD, the Local Patch Project, and the overseeing of an interactive biodiversity website.

ACTION: CL – circulate amended Remit with Minutes

DJ confirmed that his department would be focusing on eco-schools as part of the national priority for education; this would involve project-based priorities. UW agreed that we could focus on school-related projects through specific actions. AL pointed out that many schools have school committees and biodiversity issues could be highlighted in this way. SNH was keen to consider Dundee schools for its Grounds for Learning grants, but AL warned that individual work would still need to be done with the chosen schools. CL suggested working towards a target of perhaps five Dundee schools a year and reviewing that target at a later date.

ACTION: DCC/AC/P&KC/SNH to consider possible targets for Tayside-wide eco schools – by the next meeting

It was agreed, however, that there is a need to think outwith the school curriculum. JP confirmed that SNH wants to involve the community in more projects based on school activities. CL suggested that such projects as setting up community gardens or orchards could be a move towards this.

A sub-group leader will be required in due course. Anyone willing to help in this, please contact CL direct. In the meantime she will continue to act as temporary leader.

ACTION: nominations to CL by 22 April

4. Raising Awareness of Biodiversity

Although DJ suggested the TBP produce a variety of CDs, photo packs and leaflets, the group agreed there was already a lot of information widely available. The Dundee Ranger Service's recently-published CD covered various topics, including making a garden for birds and mini-beasts. CL confirmed that the Biodiversity Partnership's website would provide a focus for locating such information – and it could be regularly updated.

DJ asked that more Dundee images were used in future LBAP publications and confirmed that the DCC Education Dept. would be able to provide these.

CL told the group that a Red Squirrel Project would be soon launched in Dundee – one of the agreed focus areas chosen by the Dundee Partnership for the Environment. The Dundee Ranger Service is planning a Red Squirrel survey, but the larger project would probably be launched to the public at the Flower & Food Festival in early September; this is quickly followed by the National Red Squirrel Week so full media coverage will be available.

CL reminded the group that there had been a proposal to update the Environment Directory that is now so out-of-date. This could, perhaps, be made available in ringbinder format as it had before, but also be put on the biodiversity website.

ACTION: CL to liaise with Tom McGrath for further information (by 19 March)

JP confirmed that SNH is currently updating its environmental education contacts list and this will be available within 6 months. She also said that the booklet for under 5's on "Places to Visit in Tayside" was still available. AL said that Dundee Voluntary Action had produced a leaflet with local environmental contacts listed; there is also information on the DCC website regarding local groups.

ACTION: ALL to inform CL of any environmental education listings currently available (by 19 March)

Local Patch –

LW confirmed the need to relaunch the Local Patch Project and suggested one way forward within schools which would also promote Backyard Biodiversity Day - the same idea could be rolled out to brownies/guides. Using simple survey techniques in the school grounds, nearby hedgerows, or with rangers on their own sites. Many schools and teachers are nervous of ID, but two or three brief visits would build up confidence to use the Local Patch survey form. If necessary, the school could choose to concentrate on just one section of the form, i.e. trees, butterflies, birds, etc. (insert Lesley's comments).

AL proposed that a short Guidance Note be prepared to circulate to schools suggesting ways in which the survey form could be used; LW said she thought this could be incorporated into a simple poster. UW commented that the Highland Biological Recording Group concentrated on one species per year, i.e. aspen, so this was easy and therefore popular.

DJ agreed and said that a 20-minute slot looking for four kinds of birds in the school grounds would raise awareness of biodiversity, but not in a daunting way. However, UW said that children enjoy taking part in proper surveys - for instance the National Frogspawn Survey – which contributes proper biological data. He suggested that a ranger could suggest the children look for all types of plants in the school grounds which would create an indicator of how species-rich the school's backyard really was.

ACTION: DJ/LW/CL to draw up a proposed Schools Local Patch/BBD Poster (by 19 March)

It was suggested that the Local Patch Project could be re-launched in Dundee at the "Making Friends with your Environment" event on 20 and 21 May. CL asked for offers of help at the event to undertake this.

ACTION: ALL by 19 March

5. Green Schools Day

In Coral Bell's absence, CL confirmed that she would e-mail sub-group members further information of this P&KC event when it became available.

ACTION: CL

6. Forestry Education Initiative (FEI) - Update

CL explained that a new Cluster Group for the FEI had been proposed, either for Perthshire, or possibly the whole of Tayside. The Cluster Group would encourage people of all ages, but especially children, to learn more about woodlands and forestry. It would be a voluntary group, overseen by the Forestry Commission. There have been some very successful Cluster Groups elsewhere in the UK and a particularly successful one in the Lothians which had obtained funding for a 'Wood Travelling Bus'. There may be a possibility for this to tour outwith the Lothian area; CL would get further details for the sub-group.

Although CL had attended a meeting on Minutes of the meeting had yet to be circulated. As there are obvious links between such a new group and the Partnership, however, CL offered to circulate further information on request.

ACTION: Queries regarding the proposed FEI Local Group to CL

6. Celebrating Biodiversity – Backyard Biodiversity Day Friday, 20th June

DJ said there was a problem with official 'days'. Backyard Biodiversity Day is set a month before the English schools break up, but coincides with the last week of the Scottish schools so

there will not be much interest; the Flower Show also takes place soon after the schools are back.

CL said that there were so many “days” being held in June we could look on June as “Biodiversity Month”. Although JP suggested it would not be possible to sustain a month-long event, DJ said that if it was well publicised schools would have the opportunity to opt in to what most interested them. He suggested a “Biodiversity/Environment Week” for schools with a poster circulated featuring “Ten Things to Do” giving ideas for poems, drawing, photos, etc. US reminded the group that the SWT’s Wildlife Week would acknowledge the biodiversity process so he was sceptical of adding a separate week. He felt that networking created strength – it was important to catalogue who is doing what in education and biodiversity and make sure that information is made widely available.

Before handing over to US and AL to give their details for their BBD ideas, CL confirmed that the discussions so far pointed to a Tayside-wide school poster that would re-launch (and use) the Local Patch Project survey and lead to schools partaking in BBD.

“What People See in Nature” – Link Biodiversity and Art

US and AL had prepared a project brief on their ‘art and biodiversity’ theme for BBD. They were keen to encourage people of all ages to get out in their local area and explore their backyard biodiversity with a fun element. By using the biodiversity logos of “footprints” A4-size cut-outs could be taken out and placed in the landscape and then photographed.

From this a poster could be collated of some of best photographs and an exhibition staged of all the entries. DJ said that each school could use the idea to set up a collage on their own wall – and then perhaps forward their entries at a later date to the TBP. JP said the idea hits all the targets in that people of all ages can photograph the logos anywhere in Tayside, be it stunning scenery or their own garden or backyard. US confirmed that the photos would be judged – the only rule being that each photo must feature the cut-out logo.

US confirmed the costs – with an entry form printed on the back of the shape: 2000 of each logo, i.e. 10,000 would cost between £1,500 and £2,500. It would be cheaper having the shape on a square of paper with no perforation. The latter would at least allow the logos to be photocopied in black and white; the shapes could also be included on the new biodiversity website so that people could print off their own logos.

Each entrant would be asked to explain on the back of the logo - which will double as an entry form - why they like the place they have photographed. AL suggested that all the entries could be made into a video as well as being exhibited throughout Tayside at suitable venues. They could also be made into a book. CL said a series of postcards would help raise awareness and reminded everyone that Perth Museum will be running a Biodiversity Exhibition during 2004 with perhaps the possibly of a touring exhibition throughout Tayside.

Concerns were raised about the funds needed to run the project. To make such an outlay more worthwhile it was suggested that a longer term project could be launched around the official date of National Backyard Biodiversity Day (midsummer 2003) with a closing date set for Easter 2004. This would give entrants a variety of seasons to choose from, and would help raise awareness about the project for several months - with natural tie-ins to the Local Patch Project. DJ suggested that in addition to the longer-term project, entrants could be encouraged to take a photograph on one specific day, i.e. Backyard Biodiversity Day with perhaps a prize for the best BBD photo and the return to the same venue in different seasons.

CL asked AL to research costs and see if there would be any arts funding available.

ACTION: AL (by 19 March)

DJ suggested that monies might be available from the National Science Strategy which could help produce publicity for the schools. The project could be publicised at the Making Friends

with the Environment event in May. He suggested that as BBD was held at an inconvenient time in the school year, it could be brought forward a month, i.e. to coincide with the MFWE event. CL said that advance publicity would be necessary to raise awareness of the “Take a Photo of your Local Patch on Backyard Biodiversity Day” project for all ages, so it could be publicised at the MFWE event, along with the launch the school BBD.

ACTION: DJ to cost the schools project by 19 March

It was confirmed that the school project and the art project featuring BBD could be run concurrently and launched a month ahead of the actual BBD event. CL asked for everyone to let her have ideas for the snappy title for the art project.

ACTION: ALL as soon as possible

US said it may be possible to put details on the SWT website; CL hoped it may be possible to add to the Local Authority sites and perhaps SNH. Tayside’s own website may come on line around that time, but is likely to be just a bit later. Timings for our own website would be agreed at the next Steering Group meeting in April.

ACTION: US/ CL (by 19 March)

DJ said that such a project is very likely to appeal to Dundee teachers; AL said that you never know where such projects lead people – they invariably lead to a catalyst of ideas for actual environmental enhance.

ACTION: ALL to contribute ideas regarding dates, launches, length of project(s) to CL by 19 March

8. Any Other Business.

CL thanked the Dundee Botanic Gardens for the continuing use of the meeting room and for the provision of refreshments for the sub-group, and Daniele Muir for taking the minutes.

9. Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 19 March at 9.30am, Dundee Botanic Gardens