



# TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

c/o ENVIRONMENT SERVICES, PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL,  
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## BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

### Minutes of Meeting - 28 May 2004

**Present:**

Catherine Lloyd	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Daniele Muir	Perth & Kinross Ranger Service
Ann Lolley	Broughty Ferry Environment Project
Rob Bushby	John Muir Trust Awards
Audrey Edgar	RSPB Operation Country Watch
Bill Kirkpatrick	Perth & Kinross Education Dept.
Mark Simmons	Perth & Kinross Museum Service

**Apologies** Sue Warbrick, Scottish Natural Heritage; Hilary Thomson, ACI; Shona Medford, RHET Perth & Kinross Countryside Initiative; Penny Martin, Grounds for Learning; Lesley Wood, Angus Council Ranger Service; Gill Lawrie, REHT Angus Countryside Initiative; Alasdair Hood, Dundee Botanic Gardens; Morag Clooney, Dundee City Council Education Dept.

#### 1. **Welcome to New Members**

Three new members have joined the sub-group - Audrey Edgar, RSPB, who works with Tayside police and various country estates; Bill Kirkpatrick who has a learning and teaching remit in Perth & Kinross Council, including environmental education; and Mark Simmons of Perth Museum who is already a member of the Partnership's Steering Group. He has swapped over from the Urban sub-group to the Education sub-group as his specific remit is environmental education.

#### 2. **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

Taken as read.

**Whatever magazine** – following the presentation at the last Education sub-group meeting, every schoolchild in the Tayside region (as well as N.E Scotland and Fife) is now receiving a copy of this magazine. Both the Aberdeen and Fife Biodiversity Groups have contributed articles recently. Concern was raised about not being able to trace the articles back to source as it was clear BP had paid for an article to be included, but no author had been acknowledged.

CL reminded the sub-group that the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership had been invited to contribute a column to "Whatever", but the charge was £600 per page. If it was decided that such a column might be useful, she said she would ask the Steering Group for a decision on funding. The magazine is published 10 times a year i.e. monthly during term time.

MS pointed out that a different publication, "Primary Times" has also been rolled out across Perth and Kinross schools. He said he would give further information to CL so

that the Partnership could contribute to this publication too if required. MS

*[Post-meeting - the cost of advertising in "Primary Times" is £300 (quarter page) and £165 (eighth of a page). There may be a possibility of free editorial – the next issue comes out on 23 August. CL will follow up]* CL

ECS News (contact Sharon Watson) – it may be possible to contribute an article in this internal paper. MS and DM to follow up. Possibility of Councillor Mrs Lenny, Convener of the Lifelong Learning committee being interested in the subject. MS/DM

### 3 **Sub-Group Projects 2004**

#### ***Backyard Biodiversity Day (BBD)***

DM confirmed plans for the Schools BBD on 18 June 2004 at Battleby – similar to last year but larger and involving a wider range of groups, i.e. Perth & Kinross Ranger Service, Atholl Estates, NTS, SWT, Museum staff, etc.

#### ***Local Patch Project***

There was no feedback from the Angus Ranger Service as to how successful the distribution of Local Patch survey forms had been in the past 6 months. CL asked members to let her know if their organisation is holding a box of leaflets as she has almost run out of leaflets. ALL

#### ***Biodiversity Calendar***

SNH has said it will consider contributing funds towards such a calendar. It funded the Clackmannanshire Calendar which cost c£1 per copy (designed in-house). There was excellent feedback on this calendar.

The sub-group agreed overall that an 18 month calendar from the beginning of 2005 would enable sufficient time for as many sub-group members as possible to have input into the project. The Calendar would also have a useful shelf life. RB suggested that the month(s) when schools were not present the picture could be removed and used as a poster at another time of year. AL suggested having a more generic calendar, i.e. not 'year specific' - this could be achieved by having calendar dates but not days on each of the months.

CL said she would circulate responses so far received from subgroup members so that a final format could be drawn up and the matter taken forward this summer. CL

### 4 **Schools, College and University Grounds Action Plan**

Stuart Downie of Perth College kindly prepared the draft Action Plan Draft; the first draft is now available for comment. Please let CL know if you have not received your own copy. All comments need to be received by the end of June to ensure that a second draft is made available as soon as possible. ALL

### 5 **Partner Project Updates**

#### ***Zoom***

AL reported on behalf of the Broughty Ferry Environmental Project on this innovative project which is being funded by Community Scotland (SCARF). The project is enabling local individuals to find out more about the local area in Whitfield, Douglas and Broughty Ferry. Packs are available for locals to take away from events set up outside the library, shops, etc. For instance the Bird Pack includes a free stick-on window bird feeder, bird seed, ID charts, and survey sheet. Those agreeing to take a pack are asked to fill in a registration form to sign up and to send back the record sheets. AL is working on 10 different packs - including birds, ladybirds, bumblebees, 'what the cat brought in', etc. There is a photo pack available as well. It is hoped one of the outcomes will be that local

people will come back with their own small project ideas in future.

Other projects starting up in the area including light pollution surveys and invasive species surveys - the latter will assist the TBP's Water and Wetlands sub-group in their survey of the Dighty Burn.

There are plans to produce 200 kits - Community Scotland is very interested in the project, and it has been well received by the local community. It is hoped to get all the information back by October.

CL asked if there was any opportunity to take these kits into local sheltered housing or nursing homes (which would link in with the draft Hospitals, Sheltered Housing and Nursing Homes Action Plan). AL said she was hoping to do to four-day sessions aimed at older people who can record how surroundings have changed over time, possibly with the packs. This has already started with oral history talks beforehand. AL is hoping that through gained experience and confidence in the surveys people will want to get more involved with various projects in the future.

### ***Operation Country Watch***

This new initiative is involving the RSPB, Tayside Police, Tayside Raptor Study Group and several estates in Northern Perthshire. AE wants to put together a school education pack based on the curriculum and moorland biodiversity under the LBAP by the end of August. The area covered includes Crieff, Comrie, and Aberfeldy (five estates). The emphasis of the initiative is still to be decided – they are not sure if they will be concentrating on LBAP species.

CL suggested that funding might be available via Leader+ and the Cairngorm National Park if the project falls within the North Perthshire area. AE will contact Perth and Kinross Council to learn more of the Leader+ monies; CL will report back the initiative to the Upland sub-group.

AE  
CL

### ***Garden for Life leaflets***

CL pointed out that SNH's excellent series of Garden for Life packs has now been reprinted; the leaflets are available from the Publications Section of SNH, Battleby (tel. 01738 444177).

ALL

### ***School Wildlife Gardens***

There is a lot of work being undertaken across Tayside. CL asked for a list of 'gardening for wildlife' project ideas from everyone.

ALL

### ***Wee Green Fingers Pack***

CL circulated copies of the new SNH pack and confirmed that SNH is hoping to reprint them in due course. No one was sure where packs have been sent too, but CL had noticed one in a Perth school. PK suggested that the Perth & Kinross Eco-schools Group could distribute them in the future.

### ***Eco Schools***

PK talked about badging the Eco-schools Project so that it is easy to recognise it. He is now the Chairman of the Perth & Kinross Eco-schools Group and is trying to make environmental education more co-ordinated. Nationally every school must be an eco-school by 2006. Within the scheme there are eight different topics, all people driven. These include waste management, transport, energy and the environment. There is a web site for the schools [www.pkecoschools.info](http://www.pkecoschools.info) to use and an Information Centre (a one-stop shop) with telephone number for general queries. The operator then contacts the relevant people and adds the information into the database so that there is a record of what stage the schools are at in the region.

Across Tayside there is a great deal of interest at present in enhancing school grounds.

The Perth & Kinross Eco Schools committee is currently considering the possibility of amalgamating dedicated SNH grant monies, local authority Grounds Maintenance funding and a further fund in Perth and Kinross. To ensure a straightforward scheme is set up to access funds and to plan the work systematically, it is also planned to establish a criteria by which each school could link into such funding.

RB wondered why other organisations are not pushed a bit more within the scheme; he felt that the John Muir Awards, for instance, would be an ideal vehicle to encourage the discovery and conservation of school grounds.

Discussion followed on how to involve the whole school. Natural Connections (an award scheme for schools in Fife) may be introduced into Dundee. It was agreed that teachers need structures and badges to work to; it should be possible to fit various biodiversity projects around this structure.

*[Post-meeting – P&KC has agreed to work with the TBP on an article for the Eco Schools newsletter to highlight wildlife gardening and the Harris Moore Award Scheme; next issue will be autumn term]*

### **Harris Moore Award**

CL explained that this was an excellent environmental award scheme set up in memory of two Perth and Kinross employees in 1990. It easily links in with the Eco-schools. CL has, for the third year running, been involved in judging the finalist schools.

She wondered if there would be any opportunity to introduce a similar award scheme to the rest of Tayside. The current Perth and Kinross award scheme is very easy to run and encourages many schools to think environmentally. The first prize is £150 plus a plaque and certificate. Runner-up schools also a small amount of money plus a certificate.

CL asked for any ideas on how to fund such an award scheme that took in Angus and Dundee. AL suggested the “Dynamic Play” award may be appropriate. SNH should have details.

CL

### **Wild and Wonderful**

Simon Pepper of WWF formally opened the Tayside Biodiversity Exhibition at the end of May. The exhibition, at Perth Museum, will now run until Christmas. MS will find out if any environmental education activities are running at the Museum to highlight the exhibition to schools and the Lifelong Learning sector.

MS

### **Red Squirrel Project, Dundee**

The project – which involves the local community in surveys - is up and running and a video is now available from the ranger service on request.

### **Salmon in the Classroom Project (Angus)**

CL confirmed that the pilot project for the Scotland-wide project is now well under way with Angus Education Dept. and the Angus Ranger Service taking the project forward. BK confirmed that Perth and Kinross Council are also getting involved in the wider project and there are hopes - funding permitting - that this initiative can soon be rolled out across Perth & Kinross and Dundee City (as well as other LBAP areas) in due course.

### **Sand Martin Project**

AL said that funding from RIAS has enabled a nesting bank (15m long and 2m high) to be built on Broughty Ferry beach, together with interpretation to explain the project to local people. Astonishingly twelve nesting pairs of sand martins took up residence after just one week.

## 6 Any other business

CL read the note from Penny Martin of Grounds for Learning regarding a two-day School Grounds training course on the 24th and 25th of August. If anyone is interested in attending the workshop please contact [aileen.thomas@stir.ac.uk](mailto:aileen.thomas@stir.ac.uk). ALL

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy - this important document was launched by the Deputy Minister for the Environment and Rural Development in Edinburgh on 25 May. It will underpin the Nature Conservation bill when it is ratified later this year. Copies are available from the Stationery Office Bookshop (71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh); tel. 0870 606 5566, or online via the Scottish Executive web site: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk) ALL

CL thanked Education sub-group members for their help a few months ago. Paul Kirkland of Butterfly Conservation asked the sub-group for their comments on the feasibility of having a Butterfly Education Pack. Such was our positive response the organisation is now taking the idea further with SNH in the hope of publishing a Scotland-wide education pack. CL thanked everyone for their quick replies and said that the strength of the sub-group appeared to be in its networking abilities.

RB circulated the John Muir Trust Award literature, pointing out that it is a very user-friendly scheme with very little paperwork. It is an extremely flexible award scheme. He confirmed he was already working with CL to put a biodiversity bias into some of the projects, especially at the Ardeonaig Field Centre in Perthshire. Further details are available from him direct: [rob@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:rob@johnmuiraward.org) or the website: [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org).

## 7 Next Meeting

10am, 25 August 2004 - Perth Museum.

CL thanked DM for taking the minutes and the Dundee Botanic Gardens for their hospitality.

### Reminder

National Insect Week coincides with Backyard Biodiversity Day. Further information from [info@nationalinsectweek.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalinsectweek.co.uk)

### General Information

- Nature for Schools – a new website feature at [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk) provides lesson plans (not Scottish curriculum) for teachers, together with activities and information to help children understand nature.
- HDRA (Henry Doubleday Research Association) has an extremely good section on school garden projects: [www.hdra.org.uk/schools\\_organic\\_network](http://www.hdra.org.uk/schools_organic_network).
- Ponds in Partnership. National surveys are now underway and Tayside is likely to be one of the most northerly regions to take part. If you would like further information check out [www.pondnetwork.org.uk](http://www.pondnetwork.org.uk).
- The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust has an excellent “Learn for Life” section for teachers. It is also linking with the Ponds in Partnership initiative with its “Pond Safari” project. Check: [www.wwtlearn.org.uk](http://www.wwtlearn.org.uk).