

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



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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



BIODIVERSITY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP

16th July 2007

The Library, Kindrogan Field Centre, Enochdhu, Perthshire

NOTES OF THE MEETING

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|------------|----------------------|---|
| Present: | Catherine Lloyd (CL) | Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator (Chair) |
| | Martyn Jamieson (MJ) | Kindrogan Field Studies Centre |
| | Sandra Penman (SP) | Scottish Natural Heritage |
| | Morag Cooney (MC) | Dundee City Council Education Department |
| | Daniele Muir (DM) | Perth & Kinross Ranger Service |
| | Rachael Higgins (RH) | Biodiversity Clerical Assistant |
| Apologies: | Ann Lolley | Broughty Ferry Environment Project |
| | Gill Lawrie | RHET Angus Countryside Initiative |
| | Lesley Wood | Angus Ranger Service |
| | Mark Simmons | Perth & Kinross Museum Service |
| | David Lampard | Dundee City Council McManus Collections |
| | Julie Bett | Dundee City Council McManus Collections |
| | Alistair Seaman | Grounds for Learning |
| | Fiona Meikle | Visit Scotland (Perthshire) |

Also circulated to: George Potts, Dundee Ranger Service; Mike Flinn, Forest Education Initiative; Erika Luukas, Scottish Origins; Ian Mason and Sheena Devlin, 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, Trellis; Linda Winskill, Loch Lomond & Trossachs Ranger Service; Sharon Neilson, SCRI; Serge Merone, Perth & Kinross Schools in Action (Eco-schools); John Muir Award; Murton Trust.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read. Matters arising:

Priority Projects 2007-10

Last year the sub-groups drew up a number of project proforma to take specific projects through the life of the Business Plan 2007-10. This has worked well as it keeps a focus on agreed projects and permits the discussion and addition of new projects as they arise.

Website

Hits on the website <http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk> are increasing (52,000 in the last quarter); a report itemizing the details is available from CL. Online surveys are now available for Barn owl, Swift, Red Squirrel and Sand Martins. There is also a Partner's Log-in section (Username: Biodiversity;

Password: 2007) where the minutes from the Steering Group, all Sub-groups and Species Interest groups can be read or downloaded by Partnership members (including sub-group members). All agreed this was a useful facility.

CL asked for feedback on the new home page and its ease of use. All the presentations from recent seminars and workshops have now been added to the "professional" section.

ACTION: ALI

Sub-Group membership

David Lampard and Julie Bett of the McManus Collections Unit had confirmed their interest in joining the sub-group. The natural history section of the Dundee McManus Galleries will re-open in September 2009, but in the meantime the collections are being improved. A meeting area is now available at the Collections Unit (Barrack Street, Dundee - opposite the Howff); all Partnership members are welcome to use this. Enquiries to David - david.lampard@dundeecity.gov.uk.

Green Graveyard Initiative

CL confirmed that the new leaflet was now available for distribution. A poster would also be available soon. DM asked for copies to be sent to her.

ACTION: CL

2. Round the Table Projects and Updates

Perth & Kinross - DM mentioned Fergus Cook, the Council's new Greenspace Co-ordinator who deals with community greenspace and gives guided walks and talks. CL wondered if he could help with the Swift Survey in Perth. DM also said that her colleague Mandy Cook is raising the profile of water voles and hoping to obtain sightings; CL asked for her to be put in touch with Christine Hall from SAC (Christine.Hall@sac.co.uk) as she and MJ are currently setting up an Upland Perthshire Water Vole Project (there is a population on Duninearn Estate). The project will be reported via the Upland sub-group. MJ confirmed there is a Water vole population near Kindrogan.

Backyard Biodiversity Day - DM confirmed that the 2007 event will take place on 14th September at Battleby; 8 schools will be involved.

The Salmon / Trout in the Classroom Project is proving a great success. The Angus Ranger Service reported on a very successful project again this year - Strathcaro, Carlogie and Newbigging Primary schools have taken part in the project and all salmon have been released to local rivers. The schools visited the Almond Hatchery in April and carried out electro-fishing in May/June. Ian Montgomery (Perth & Kinross Ranger Service) is involved with the project in Portmoak, Struan of Cally and Longforgan primary schools. SP reported that the Scottish edition of the Brown Trout book (which includes worksheets) will shortly be sent to all schools in Scotland.

Eco Schools Initiative - MC said this is proving to be very successful - all schools in Dundee are now registered. It was suggested that the input Dundee Ranger Service could give fitted well with Eco Schools.

Surveys - The Barn Owl survey postcard is proving popular. The Scottish Crop Research Institute has recently launched its "Rare Arable Plants" survey card. The nationally-circulated Orange-tip butterfly postcard has also generated great interest and is particularly relevant to Tayside as the species is expanding into the region. CL said that at present the Swift survey form is being printed on an ad hoc basis; a properly printed supply would be useful in the future.

Publications - all three Newsletters have been well received: Red Squirrel, Swift and Barn Owl. Please contact RH if you would like supplies of any of them. The Farmland sub-group had recently published its Farmland Priority Species Guide. This has been circulated to all 1500 IACS-registered farmers and landowners throughout Tayside; it can also be downloaded from the website.

The Developer's Guide & Householder's Guide to Biodiversity are being utilised in the three local planning authority offices. They are proving popular with members of the public.

Displays - CL confirmed that the SITA Trust had paid for a second set of banner displays which will now allow Perth & Kinross to retain the original set, and Dundee and Angus to share the new set. They are in regular use, but still need to be used more. If anyone can suggest a venue for either of the sets, please contact RH or CL.

Kindrogan - MJ summarised that the Field Centre had been getting the message out to schools on every level of education from primary and secondary schools to universities, and from adult education to professional training. He confirmed that more upgrading of the accommodation would take place this winter. The sub-group wished him continued success at the Centre.

Tayside Geodiversity - CL pointed out that there was an improved geodiversity section on the biodiversity website <http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/Geodiversity/index.html>. Details of the UKRIGS Scotland meeting last April and the UKRIGS Newsletters are now online. She said good progress had been made on the three proposed leaflets - the Corsiehill (Perth) leaflet was about to be published and the Dundee Law leaflet was in draft format. The third leaflet will focus on the Seaton Cliffs area, Arbroath. The Group would welcome new members, so if you would like further details, please contact Mark Simmons direct - MJSimmons@pkc.gov.uk.

Dundee City Council - no report was available. CL said that the Dundee Red Squirrel Project was going from strength to strength.

3. Project Proforma 2007-10: Progress

ESG1 - Sheltered Housing and Hospitals Biodiversity Project

Lesley Wood (LW) of Crombie Country Park had sent her report to the meeting: 'The Angus Ranger projects were all completed for the period 2006-07 with two complexes in Forfar and Montrose learning about wildlife in their garden. They built bird tables, nest boxes and received binoculars and identification charts to help record the visiting wildlife. Both were project-funded through SNH whilst the rangers' time, skills and enthusiasm continued. The residents from sheltered housing areas will enjoy a trip to Crombie Country Park this summer to observe wildlife in the country parks of Angus.' CL also confirmed that the Angus Ranger Service was looking into the possibility of expanding the project into a local hospital.

DM said progress was slow at the Crieff Hospital Dementia Garden because of funding issues. DM to ask LW for a one-page project summary to pass onto the hospital. DM to home in on this project and take further. She has already advised on funding possibilities and ideas such as ID cards, talks, bird tables and nest boxes. The Hospital received two swift nestboxes from the Tayside Nestbox Trials Project; there was publicity about this in April.

ACTION: DM/LW to liaise

Blairstown Cottage Hospital is also hoping to start a new project and there is a possibility of expanding the project to Aberfeldy and Crieff - DM to look into incorporating the projects into next year's work programme and to contact SNH for similar funding for the Perth & Kinross projects as has been arranged in Angus.

SP suggested involving Duke of Edinburgh / scouts groups or local school groups/volunteers to help make bird boxes, etc. CL confirmed that the Loch Lomond Ranger Service had shown an interest in taking this project to their area. All agreed this project was unique and could be easily expanded, especially within Perth & Kinross. Unfortunately there is no strong interest in Dundee for the project.

ESG2 - Tayside Wildlife Festival

CL reported that the Scottish Biodiversity Forum (SBF) will be considering the idea for a Scottish Biodiversity Festival within the Scottish Biodiversity Implementation Plan. The SBF's Implementation, Communication & Education Plan Working Group is discussing the idea, but it seems unlikely anything will go ahead in 2008. It is likely the Scottish Biodiversity Week will continue, centred again around International Biodiversity Day on 22nd May.

CL suggested that the sub-group's original plans for a Tayside Biodiversity Festival 2008 in was probably too ambitious, but that we could plan for 2009, at the same time as improving our contribution to Scottish Biodiversity Week 2008. CL is keen to secure one or two travelling exhibitions in museums or art galleries in Tayside (something that would tour nationally but could come to Tayside).

It was agreed a dedicated working group should be set up, reporting to the Education Sub-Group. DM sounded a warning that there were continuing budget cuts in most local authorities and it might be difficult to increase targets within work programmes. All agreed, however, we should lay the

foundation for a major festival event in 2009. CL said she would be liaising with VisitScotland (Perthshire) to discuss how best to publicise the events in 2008 and 2009.

ACTION: CL/Fiona Meikle

It was noted that the SWT Week works very well. CL suggested we use the official biodiversity footprint logo in events programmes for both the Scottish Biodiversity Week events in Tayside, and the proposed Tayside Biodiversity Festival to give a more holistic message. As before, the Week would create an opportunity for new events, but would also allow re-tagging of existing events. DM suggested focusing on a special 2009 event that would last 2 weeks. MC pointed out that schools would need as much notice as possible. SP to enquire on any confirmed national dates.

ACTION: SP to check national SBF dates:

The sub-group discussed potential events: MC suggested there was great potential to work with Eco-schools across Tayside. SP mentioned the Perth Arts Festival at the end of May and the possibility of linking with this. CL suggested the potential for a "Green Fair" - more than just walks and talks - we need to look at all audiences and bring in new people. MJ said that his posters helped promote and link groups for the Biodiversity Day - this would be helpful for the Festival. Sharing good practice workshops and pulling in all groups: SP said that SNH could also be used for the Festival / Green Fair - we should be showing off our projects. SP - to ask SNH design section to suggest artists for a Biodiversity Map/Poster (including costings).

ACTION: ALL (proposals for 2008 and 2009 to CL before next meeting)

All Tayside Biodiversity Partners could contribute to a comprehensive programme of events which could be linked in with all events across the UK. MC suggested linking in with PPP schools. CL also suggested we consider a major focus for the Festival, advertised well in advance. She suggested a 'Tayside Traverse' involving a 100 mile route across Tayside from Rannoch Station to Montrose Basin along which sponsored walks, cycle rides, mammal watching, etc. could be programmed. There was major eco-tourism potential here and the potential to involve all ages of the community. All agreed major publicity would be needed to encourage national interest.

ESG3 - Mammal Atlas

Mark Simmons had reported before the meeting that the proposed Perth & Kinross Mammal Atlas would be worked on in the coming months. David Lampard of McManus Galleries had expressed an interest in expanding the proposed Mammal Atlas Tayside-wide. The Mammal Atlas will be web-based in the first instance, but it was agreed that a published version should be considered, funding permitting.

MJ mentioned the use of MapMate - a data recording system; he said he would look into this for TBP. CL confirmed that the Farmland sub-group was considering purchasing the software to record Barn Owl sightings.

ACTION: M.

ESG4 - Countryside on Wheels

The project timescale is still '2009 onwards' although it still might be possible to enter into discussions regarding the Perth & Kinross Wood Bus which will be looking for Phase II funding at about the same time.

ESG5 - Bee Wild Schools and Communities Project

Erika Luukas of Scottish Origins had hoped to act as Lead Partner for the proposed Kinross-shire pilot. However lack of funding and other commitments had precluded her taking matters forward. MC noted that Eco-schools were becoming more focused and have been a major success. She also mentioned that Dundee Botanical Gardens staff are keen to go out to schools; there may be a link for the Bee Wild Project.

ACTION: MC to approach the Botanic Gardens

It was suggested that wildflower meadows (strips or mazes) be considered in some primary and secondary schools; there has been a resurgence of interest in making school gardens recently. Ann Lolley's "Zoom" project is to be expanded across Tayside under the Urban Sub-group and there would be a natural tie-in with the Bee Wild Project. BBC Breathing Spaces lottery funding might also be available for school projects in school grounds; CL had been in touch with the new Development Manager of Grounds for Learning.

CL said that the proposal for a school calendar was still extant, but that we could alter the

generalised focus on biodiversity to highlight the various projects underway. There is also much potential to include bat, bird and butterfly boxes to schools.

MJ mentioned Lottery funding and using local theatre groups. SP said she would look into local theatre companies. SP to find commissioning / costings. MJ showed everyone the Biodiversity Map he commissioned in the Wirral. All agreed it was a great idea - two posters, one printed black on white for children to colour in, and a coloured one for reference/display in the classroom. As Tayside is so large, it may need a 'series' of posters for the different areas. MJ also passed round other calendars and posters.

ACTION: SP

SP also reminded the sub-group that 'promotional funding' was available from SNH for each subgroup (not for leaflets) but this was very much on a first come first serve basis. All monies would need to be spent by the end of the year.

ACTION: ALL to consider biodiversity projects for funding

MC suggested we roll out the Bee Wild project as soon as possible and publicise well in advance. We would need to plan during Autumn 2007 to be in time for summer next year. MC also asked that correspondence regarding this project within Dundee should be directed to MC rather than individual schools. DM mentioned that Perth Ranger Service would need notice by January at the latest for programmes starting in April.

ESG6 - Community and Educational Biodiversity Awards

The Awards would be part of the "Bee Wild" Project and would be discussed further at the next meeting.

ACTION: RH - add to next Agenda

ESG8 - Practitioner Training

CL reported on the "Planning for Biodiversity - Accommodating Wildlife" seminar held in Perth on 13th March. It was very successful, with over 60 people attending from a very wide area, including Tayside, North Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Stirling.

An Urban Grassland Management Workshop had been held last month which attracted 14 people from across Tayside. A Bats and Trees Workshop will be held in Dundee on 10th September, and a Bats & Trees lunch time seminar will be held in Perth on 5th October. A Traditional Orchard Management seminar is also scheduled to take place in the Carse of Gowrie around Apple Day (mid-October).

Green Graveyard Initiative - a project being taken forward by the Urban sub-group. CL is keen to officially launch the new leaflet and poster with a series of "Getting to Know your Churchyard Biodiversity" workshops - presentations by experts, displays by different organisations, and a practical session looking at graveyard management. St Matthews Church, Perth, has offered the use of their hall for a workshop. Unfortunately the new grassland management regime at Perth & Kinross Council's pilot project site at Blackfriars Graveyard was ignored this year and might now prove unsuitable. An Eco-Congregation church in Broughty Ferry is also keen to host one of the workshops, and it has been proposed that an Angus church is also included.

4. Scottish Biodiversity Forum: 2008-2010 Implementation, Communication and Education Working Group

The ICE Plan 2008-10 is coming together and many of the LBAP Officers' Network suggestions have been taken on board. There is one action the LBAPO Network could lead on in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: identifying sites close to schools that could be utilised for outdoor teaching and also slightly more distant sites that offer more habitat diversity or facilities i.e. country parks etc. This would be collated over the next 2 years as a Gazetteer and uploaded to a website that teachers could access.

ICE Objective 3: To promote biodiversity through education

Target 3.2 - Provide support for the provision of first hand experience of biodiversity for schools, youth workers and those involved in community learning programmes.

CL asked the sub-group if the Partnership could get involved in Action 3.2 of the ICE Objective 3, i.e. 'To produce a Gazetteer of sites close to all schools in Scotland that offer opportunities for outdoor education. By December 2009'. All agreed this would be an excellent contribution to the national

strategy.

ACTION: CL to reply to SBF

5. **SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund**

CL reported that the final year of three-year funding (£100,000 per year) was about to commence, so any proposed projects will have to be short-term, or have funding available through other means beyond this year. The SITA Trust will meet with the Partnership soon to discuss whether it will be possible to continue the funding.

CL outlined recent projects that have received funding (further details are available on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk):

- Kindrogan Otter Project (Field Studies Council) - the sub-group later visited the site of the new otter holt (yet to be completed);
- Perthshire Barn Owl Project (Scottish Agricultural College) - the first phase was highly successful; there is hope of funding a second phase;
- Dundee Trottick and Den o' Mains Pond Restoration Project (Dundee Ranger Service);
- Terns at Montrose (Tayside and Angus Conservation Group) - this has been much more successful than last year's project;
- Tayside Tree Sparrow Project (three FWAG projects being undertaken in Kinross-shire, Perthshire and Lowland Angus) - provision of Tree Sparrow Management Plans and nestboxes; the Cairngorms Biodiversity Partnership has just provided additional funding to extend the project into the Angus Glens;
- Highland Perthshire Calcareous Grassland Project (Scottish Agricultural College) - new feasibility study for potential demonstration site (the rare Mason Bee will be one of the species highlighted);
- The Linnet Link (Angus FWAG) - native plantings along the A92 to provide habitat links for linnets. A partnership project with BEAR Scotland and Angus Council;
- Dundee Bat Project (Bat Conservation Trust) - there are 20 volunteers at present. CL suggested it would be an ideal community project to expand to Perth;
- Following the Life of Water (FLOW Project) - the ongoing Broughty Ferry Environmental Project which is looking at urban ponds;
- Dundee Red Squirrel Project (Dundee Red Squirrel Group);
- The Eco House (Sun City) Biodiversity Garden - there are delays in achieving this project;
- Swift & Bat Housing Project (Angus Council) - there has been excellent publicity generated through this.

6. **AOCB**

There was no other business.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 2nd October 2007, 10:30am, Floor 13, Tayside House, Dundee. The main purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the Tayside contribution to Scottish Biodiversity Week (May 2008), the Tayside Biodiversity Festival 2009, and plans for taking forward the Bee Wild Project in 2008.

ACTION: RH (to book meeting room)

CL thanked MJ for hosting the meeting and for providing a mini-bus to ferry members from the station. Everyone thanked MJ for providing lunch and offering to give members a tour of the Centre and grounds afterwards.

CL also thanked DM and RH for taking notes at the meeting and to RH for compiling the minutes of the meeting.