

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

28th January 2008

Floor 13, Tayside House, Dundee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present:	Catherine Lloyd (CL) (Sub-group leader)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
	Martyn Jamieson (MJ)	Kindrogan Field Studies Centre
	Lesley Wood (LW)	Crombie Country Park Ranger Service
	Norman Greig (NG)	Monikie Country Park Ranger Service
	Julie Campbell (JC)	Dundee City Council McManus Collections
	Sandra Penman (SP)	Scottish Natural Heritage
	Ann Lolley (AL)	Broughty Ferry Environment Project
	Angus Nicoll (AN)	Broughty Ferry Environment Project
	George Potts (GP)	Dundee City Council Ranger Service
	Daniele Muir (DM)	Perth & Kinross Ranger Service
	Mark Simmons (MS)	Perth & Kinross Museum Service
	Gill Lawrie (GL)	RHET Angus Countryside Initiative
	Theresa Lynn (TL)	DCC Environmental Arts
	Douglas Paterson (DP)	Freelance Artist
	Rachael Higgins (RH) (Minute Taker)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Apologies:	Morag Cooney	Dundee City Council Education Department
	David Lampard	Dundee City Council McManus Collections
	Alistair Seaman	Grounds for Learning
	Fiona Meikle	Visit Scotland (Perthshire)

Also circulated to: Mike Flinn, Forest Education Initiative; Ian Mason, Perth & Kinross Council Education Service; Richard Burton, Angus College; Ben Notley, National Trust for Scotland; Bruce Anderson, RSPB; 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. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Catherine Lloyd (CL) welcomed everyone and invited all to the lunch-time seminar on the Scottish Children's Orchard in the afternoon. The large turnout of the sub-group was noted - 15 round the table today.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting (2nd Oct 2007) and Matters Arising

Action Points would be covered under Section 5 - Priority Project Updates. The minutes were therefore taken as read.

3. Tayside's Contribution to Scottish Biodiversity Week 2008 - Sandra Penman

Sandra Penman (SP) reported that the SNH monies for the proposed Street Theatre (Friday 23rd to Saturday 24th May) had been cancelled; she is searching for alternative funding in the region of £1500 - £2000. This would cover the costs of costumes and director wages. The Perth Festival of the Arts organisation has offered a free slot in their programme. SP said that anyone outwith Perth can share the street theatre and could contact her if interested. Mark Simmons (MS) mentioned that as far as he knew there was no funding available from his department but there may be other avenues elsewhere within Perth & Kinross Council. SP enquired whether the Perth Events Organiser could help, but MS advised the post was vacant at present. MS said Kirsty Duncan, Arts Director PKC, might be able to help. Ann Lolley (AL) pointed out that the deadline for applications from the Events Scotland Grants Scheme was in February and that SP could try them.

SP noted that the meeting on 8th February was still to go ahead at Perth Theatre - with the theme of 'Birds, Bees and Trees'.

ACTION: All offers of financial assistance for the Week to SP ASAP

Turning to the wider aspects of Scottish Biodiversity Week, CL suggested individual press releases about events could be prepared to go out to the wider public. It was important to feed back information to the Scottish Biodiversity Forum as they will pick up on newsworthy stories to publicise nationally. If anyone has planned an event for the week (19th to 25th May) please let Rachael Higgins (RH) know as soon as possible so that it can be publicised via the website.

ACTION: ALL (by mid-February)

MS - his contribution to the Week will be a series of three free lunchtime seminars he is organising at Perth Museum. These will include Craig Macadam: a lecture on Buglife - 19th May; Anne-Marie Smout: a lecture on Bees - 21st May; and Eric McCabe (local photographer) - a lecture on Madagascan photography.

Gill Lawrie (GL) - last year's RHET Estate Day was very successful last year with 150+ children involved. Another Day is planned but scheduled for 1st May which will unfortunately miss Biodiversity Week. CL suggested the RHET Day could link in with AL's ZOOM project.

ACTION: AL/GL to discuss the potential for including the ZOOM Project

4. Outcome of Biodiversity Calendar Plans - Ann Lolley & Catherine Lloyd

AL reported that although she worked with a designer on a potential biodiversity calendar (poster) for 2008, they couldn't get the theme of bumblebees finalised. However another idea has arisen based around the Acoustic Ecology Project. This generated some interesting images; AL showed examples of pictures drawn by children and suggested there could be a dozen natural sound images - one per month. When scanned, the images are stunning. Julie Campbell (JC) suggested incorporating an image of the species; AL agreed and said that the calendar would be of high quality. GL suggested there could be an accompanying CD with sounds on it; expand a simple calendar into a small-scale "acoustic ecology" project, perhaps?

GL also suggested that an organisation could sponsor a page in the calendar, say £100 for each month? AL confirmed she has got the process rolling already but there may be possible opportunities to incorporate that idea. If AL gets funding she will drive the project on with her Management group and ensure, via the Partnership, that each Tayside classroom receives a free copy.

SP - noted that the calendars would need to be published by October. CL agreed and suggested they could be distributed during November. It was discussed as to whether the calendar should be a flip-over calendar or a one-page poster. Theresa Lynn (TL) advised that a one-pager would lose the impact of individual images but if targeted specifically at schools there would need to be someone in charge to change the months if it was a flip-over. Martyn Jamieson (MJ) noted that most people like to write notes on calendars so a flip-over one might be best. General consensus was to have a flip-over calendar.

CL suggested we would probably focus on all Tayside schools, then distribute the surplus amongst Partners. It was proposed a minimum print run should be c500, although we could look at slightly more. GL proposed other receivers such as sheltered housing complexes, hospitals, churches, schools (to fit in with the various biodiversity projects, perhaps).

5. Priority Project Updates

Sheltered Housing & Hospitals Project - Lesley Wood & Daniele Muir

DM gave the good news that Perth & Kinross Ranger Service had just been given the go-ahead to start this project in Perth & Kinross. LW reported back on the existing Angus project which has been running for five years: the 3 projects - Montrose, Forfar and Brechin - continue with several events a year. Bird boxes, ID badges, binoculars, nest boxes, baths and feeders, seeds and identification packs are handed out to each housing complex. All three projects it costs just £374. SNH has confirmed funding for next year. Although

Strathcathro Hospital had shown initial interest, they already have an ongoing garden project.

Tayside Biodiversity Festival 2009 - Catherine Lloyd

CL mentioned the national 'Year of Homecoming' theme for 2009 and wondered if this should be the theme to focus on in 2009. MS confirmed that Perth Museum will be hosting 'Return of the Natives' and the 'Year of the Homecoming' but said it was essential to seek funding for the Festival as soon as possible. TL agreed we need to create a strand /focus as early as possible.

CL said that at the last meeting it was agreed to hold the Tayside Festival during the month of May which includes International Biodiversity Day and Scottish Biodiversity Week. There will be a lot of pre-organisation required and a need to plan well ahead for exhibitions, display banners, a printed programme, etc. Dumfries and Galloway run a very successful annual Biodiversity Festival with VisitScotland. It was asked if the D&G Festival had specific leaflets; CL said there was a great deal of positive publicity for their Festival, but it was funded by the Local Authority. MS pointed out that it is a very different story with a partnership.

AL asked if we have the capacity to do this. She felt she needed something to hang ideas on: a theme. All generally agreed with this. MS pointed out that co-ordination is likely to fall on CL/RH and that re-assurance was essential, starting with the basic structures of Title / Date / Theme, otherwise it might be wiser to keep to Biodiversity Week and make the most of that. CL agreed that a full colour programme and administration backup would be required as a minimum and that costs would need to be covered.

AL asked if the Scottish Biodiversity Week works overall? CL said there had not been much feedback last year, but SNH's Biodiversity Implementation Team (BIT) had received little support for the Week. They had received promotional funding very late and there had been no liaison with LBAP Officers as there had been in previous years. Furthermore, the plastic banners that had been produced (and received very late) each had "2007" printed on them which was very wasteful. With new BIT administrative help, this year's promotion was being better communicated between the LBAP Officers' Network.

AL - it seems everyone is worried about funding / personal circumstances which could be a major problem. If Scottish Biodiversity Week was organised well everything would be easier. CL said that originally the Scottish Biodiversity Forum was going to hold a national Festival, but this had been indefinitely postponed owing to staff changes, lack of central funds and the ongoing Scottish Biodiversity Implementation Plan consultation.

Lesley Wood (LW) suggested the Partnership just sticks with the Biodiversity Week - otherwise funds could end up being spent half-heartedly. Norman Greig (NG) agreed and said there is a lot of uncertainty at the moment surrounding SNH and Council funding. MS suggested we have a loud and proud Tayside Biodiversity Week. The overall general consensus was that we concentrate on Scottish Biodiversity Week 2008 and then have a Tayside Biodiversity Week in 2009.

George Potts (GP) said the Ranger Service held a Tree Week which was very successful. What about a conference with international speakers (contact them early) highlighting Tayside biodiversity habitats and species? CL said this could be proposed for International Biodiversity Day 2009?

GL said FWAG had shared an event with RHET at Tesco Riverside. The idea was to engage with the public and highlight Angus / Tayside products together. It was a successful day, and there is merit in using a Saturday. AL also said that Farmers Markets are good. GL mentioned that a new Tesco is to be built in both Forfar and Arbroath - they may be happy for publicity if an event was organised there. Sub-group leaders could highlight TBP events at the Overgate with interesting display boards and leaflets? AL outlined some of the BFEP projects' low-key opportunities to engage with the public; they work.

TL - there are opportunities to do a lot of arty stuff - wet-pour into shapes of leaves, acorns etc. in park areas such as Baxter Park. She also suggested we use outdoor space - the Overgate is a natural amphitheatre. GL said the St John's Centre in Perth would also be suitable. We need to highlight what is out there simply - word search, pictures to colour, pavement art etc. JC said people like to take part in activities with the family. MS noted that continental and gardening markets are successful and said that Perth Museum had a stall at St Johns Centre which was easy enough to organise. With regards to the 2009 Festival - he suggested an event hosted by Perth Museum 2nd/3rd May 2009 - i.e. a museum event with guaranteed funding - and the Biodiversity event could link in to this.

CL closed the discussion by confirming the consensus to drop the month-long Festival in 2009 but to run a Tayside Biodiversity Festival from 1st to 10th May which would include the Public Holiday on 4th May. International Biodiversity Day is 22nd May which coincides, at present, with Scottish Biodiversity Week.

ACTION: ALL to propose events for Tayside Biodiversity Festival 2009 (1st to 10th May)

Mammal Atlas - Mark Simmons

MS confirmed that data input is underway, but delays will mean that the Atlas itself will be arranged during 2008-09 now.

Countryside on Wheels - Gill Lawrie

The Countryside on Wheels project has been a major success elsewhere; the bus has been highly successful and has gone round numerous schools. No discussions had been held about undertaking the project in Tayside yet.

Bee Wild and ZOOM Projects - Ann Lolley

AL circulated the impressive part-completed Bumblebee packs for the project. One thousand packs will be prepared with a launch date proposed over Scottish Biodiversity Week. It is hoped to engage one of the local newspapers to help launch the project and feature the project Tayside-wide.

Building Better Biodiversity Programme of Training Events - Catherine Lloyd

CL confirmed that the Perth & Kinross Planning department has agreed to host two events this year. In the past each local authority has sponsored two events a year, but Dundee and Angus have not been forthcoming for 2008. Dundee City Council has, however, given the meeting room at Tayside House free of charge, but there is no funding available for refreshments/lunches. The programme is proving successful and there have been many suggestions for further training.

The first lunch time seminar of the year follows on from the Education sub-group. John Hancox of the Glasgow Children's Orchard has offered to talk on ideas for expanding the project into the rest of Scotland. Forestry Commission seedcorn funding is enabling the seminar to go ahead.

At present there is a focus on the Woodland sub-group's Orchards project so there is a separate programme of events for this - pruning demonstrations, a pollination workshop and the proposed 'Schools & Community Orchards Workshop' (23rd February). If seedcorn funding is made available from the Forestry Commission the event will be free. There will also be a 'Biodiversity in Gardens, Greenspace and Graveyard Workshop' in Perth on 8th March.

MS outlined details for the Tayside Local Recorders meeting, an event organised for Saturday 15th March in Perth Museum starting at 1.15pm. This will be the first of a series of annual events hosted by Perth / Dundee and Angus Museums and the Partnership. The idea is to get a network / database together of local biodiversity recording.

6. Other Biodiversity Awareness-Raising (publicity, publications, websites, events)

CL said that the website is updated quarterly, but that it may be becoming cumbersome in its content. She would welcome any suggestions to improve the site.

ACTION: ALL

CL confirmed that the Water and Wetland Sub-group has designed a promotional 'Links to your Sink' tea towel as part of the Fingask/White Lochs Project. The funding will come from SITA TBAF and SNH.

Community Gardens, Orchards and Allotments Booklet - this 32-page booklet, compiled by CL on behalf of the Urban sub-group, will be published as soon as funding has been secured.

7. Any Other Business

MJ reported on the Breathing Spaces event hosted by the BBC. The website goes live on 31st January and all schools can register online. The package includes surveys of school grounds and information packs on biodiversity. There will be themed projects over two years to include all sorts of educational information, and activities for children from seed planting to mini-beast hunting. Each primary school will receive a postcard advertising the launch of the new website.

8. Date of Next Meeting

10.30am, Tuesday 15th April at Tayside House, Floor 13, Dundee.

9. Close

CL thanked everyone for coming and RH for taking the minutes. She reminded everyone that the "Scottish Children's Orchard" lunch time seminar included lunch and would start at 1.00pm.