



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Steering Group Meeting

Minutes of Meeting

**Thursday 23 February 2006 at 10.00 am
St James House, Angus Council, Forfar**

Present:

Martin Price (Chair)	CMS, Perth College
Alison Anderson	Dundee City Council
Bruce Anderson	RSPB
Pam Coutts	Angus Council
Doug Flint	Perth & Kinross Council
Christine Hall	Scottish Agricultural College
Ruth Harland	Scottish Rural Property & Business Association
Carol Littlewood	Angus FWAG
Catherine Lloyd	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Paul Ramsay	Scottish Rural Property & Business Association
Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission
Carolyn Warwick	SNH
Ross Williams	NFUS

Apologies:

Alan Hendry	SEERAD
Martyn Jamieson	Scottish Field Studies Association
Richard Lockett	Perth FWAG
Jo Long	SEPA
Mark Simmons	Perth Museum
Merrill Smith	Dundee City Council
Uwe Stoneman	SWT

In Attendance: Angela Paterson CMS, Perth College

No	Item	Action
1	Apologies As above. Welcome to two new members of the Steering Group - Paul Ramsay (SRPBA) and Ross Williams (NFUS)	
2	Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 24 November 2005 Amend Page 2, Bracken grant: option being considered for bracken covered ground. Amend Page 5, no Local Record Centre as yet been set up in Dundee. Thanks to Lesley Campbell for taking the minutes.	
3	Matters Arising BARS UK BAP Review to be published hopefully mid-2006; TBP input delayed as we need to do our own review. Draft report completed which can be circulated for comments. CL to circulate draft list of actions for next steering group meeting. The UK Reporting Round 2005 was completed ahead of schedule – CL to send again to the Steering Group, by email if possible. BBC Breathing Space Project (now called Breathing Place) Forestry Commission interested in being involved. To be held during Scottish Biodiversity Fortnight (27 May – 11 June 2006), sub groups to consider how they can contribute to this.	 CL CL Sub Groups

4	Reports from Sub Group Leaders	
4.1	<p>Woodlands – M Strachan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful meeting held recently regarding red squirrels, hope to pull something together on Tayside red squirrel initiative. If Local Authorities prepared to sign up, FC would consider making £10-20k available to help fund project officer. SITA TBAF could possibly be considered as match funding (but problem re making site-specific for red squirrels). • Sub group meeting to be held on 21 or 22 June to look at juniper woods, centred around Dunkeld. • Breadalbane Farm Forestry Initiative interviewing for project officer post March 1st. Hoping to have Project Officer in place during April. • Developing farm woodland energy across Scotland as pilot, 10 applications received across Scotland. • S9 woodlands, (controlled grazing of livestock) 3 applications approved in Tayside. Livestock grazing in woodlands, predominately with cattle, 2 in juniper woods, the 3rd in Birch woodlands at Rannoch. • Current forestry grant scheme closing in August and re-launching in January 2007 • Beauly to Denny power line, should the Woodland sub group raise an objection? Closing date 28 February 2006 with extension applied for April. CL/MS to discuss. • Flood plain management for Tay, MS proposing that short rotation coppice should be considered to allow for management of the flow and reduction in erosion problems rather than containment through hard engineering. Benefits of SRC would be continuity of habitat networks, reduction in erosion, return to landowner through cyclical harvesting of the crop for bio-fuels. CH commented that farmers in Dalguise currently looking at improving their flood banks and this may have an impact on it. • Looking at creating farm forestry links with Sweden, already Leader + Programme. • MS on committee of Farm Forestry Forum, UK wide, Article 44 of the RDR needs to be considered. This would allow for silviopastoral Forestry to be developed along with the associated benefits. 	CL/MS
4.2	<p>Farmlands – C Littlewood/C Hall (report attached)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion took place regarding Barn Owls. Concern expressed that, due to building renovations, barn owl habitats may be lost. Suggested we should focus on a couple of key species and push these with the planning section to raise awareness of biodiversity generally. Previously a seminar/workshop had been held and we should consider another one on this theme. Would be useful to invite an architect along who has already expressed interest in consideration of barn owl habitats in buildings. Action: C Hall/C Lloyd/C Littlewood to take forward • Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum (C Lloyd). An exploratory meeting has been held and this forum has now been set up. The area to be covered by the Forum will be Tayside, Stirling, Clacks and Fife in the first instance. The Fife LBAP Officer is enquiring about getting national funding from BAGS and will pull together a funding proposal, as this project would not be suitable for SITA funding. Minutes of this meeting are available from C Lloyd if requested. C Lloyd to forward details of this Forum to the SBF Rural Land Use Working Group as an example of good practice – LBAP joint projects and liaison). • Land management contracts. This is the last year of RSS, now changing over to Land Management Contracts with 3 tiers. The new Consultation Paper on Tier 2 and Tier 3 is expected out anytime now and should be on SEERAD's website shortly (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Departments/ERAD). Please send any comments direct to SEERAD, but if any LBAP member wants to copy to the farmland group, they could try to incorporate their comments. 	<p>CH/ CLw/ CL</p> <p>CL</p>

4.3	<p>Uplands – apologies received from M Jamieson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP provided update on the group. So far been unsuccessful in arranging Uplands sub group meeting but another date will be sent out shortly. (<i>Subsequently arranged for 22 March 2006 at Perth College</i>) • Tick fence still ongoing - S Roberts dealing with Cairngorms Access Partnership. Glen Esk fence now up. Deer cull already taken place in this area. LBAP needs to promote collaborative deer management in this regard. Once up and running again, the Upland group to look at the deer issue. • Highlands and Islands and Cairngorm National Park – MP now has money for a project on delivery of upland biodiversity policy. Uplands in this case is primarily above the forest. Project going on from now into summer. • As part of what is written in the SBF Rural Implementation Plan, MP will be responsible for organising a conference within next 12 months on what is happening to biodiversity in the uplands. 	
4.4	<p>Water & Wetlands – J Long Report tabled at the meeting (attached)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otter and vole SAPS should have been included in the 2nd tranche action plan list on report • Loch Leven TRACKS Project - CW advised that SNH very involved in this project, also producing proposals document for Loch Leven for external consultation. Would like some input from the LBAP; CW to contact JL through the Water and Wetlands group. 	CW
4.5	<p>Coast & Estuary (report attached) Report previously circulated, CL discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katriona Finan, Tay Estuary Forum Project Officer, has provisionally agreed to be the next sub-group leader. All agreed with this proposal. • Meeting of group to be held in April or May 	
4.6	<p>Urban – A Anderson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting held at the beginning of December 2005 to look how they operated as a group. General opinion was that it was a useful meeting. Visit been arranged to Jamesfield Organic Centre on 8 March. The group discussed who they would like to be involved, the TWIG project in Dundee, and a new representative from SNH is required, which will hopefully be arranged soon. • 2nd tranche HAPS will be discussed at next meeting on 8 March, together with a brief update on projects. • Swifts – rangers group meeting was held and decision taken that swifts will be concentrated on in the next year. Identified responsible rangers in each area. 	
4.7	<p>Education – Catherine Lloyd (report attached) Report previously circulated, CL discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: SITA boundary map to be included. Website stats – include a running total at the bottom of the table • Tayside Wildlife Festival. Suggested CL contact Visitscotland Freedom, Atholl Estates and Ian Reynolds (SET) as they may be able to support this. TBP should provide advice and support for this proposed festival, but not lead it. Visitor Payback scheme, CL should contact the Forestry Commission regarding this. Contact Visitscotland to see if they are willing to be on the education sub group. CL/MS/MP brainstorming meeting should be arranged for this. Also include VisitScotland, SET, DF, RSPB, DF, RSPB, SRPBA, NFUS, SNH. • Schools calendar – suggested Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) and Perth 	<p>CL</p> <p>CL</p> <p>CL/MS/MP</p> <p>CW</p>

	<p>Countryside Trust (PCT) could be involved. Calendar already produced in Clackmannshire with schools involved in contents. CW to get a copy of the Clacks one and circulate to the group. Not a priority project, education group to take forward</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Future Plans for Partnership</p> <p>There is now just over a year of the current SNH grant to run and we need to consider future plans. Tayside is different in that it has 3 Local Authorities within the one area, with one LBAP. Discussions followed on options to be considered: 3 officers (one for each Local Authority) or 2 Tayside Biodiversity Officers.</p> <p>Comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments sent by J Long were read which state that she considers it important to have one Biodiversity Officer for the area and is keen to continue the existing structure. • CW, SNH - particularly relevant for funders, ie SNH and the 3 Local Authorities, to step back and review how effective it has been so far. National interim guidelines have been agreed whereby they can fund 35% of LBAP officer posts. Committed and open minded to alternatives for funding future delivery of biodiversity in Tayside. Two deadlines for next funding round for applications over £10k - 1 September and 15 April. Current grant expires end March 2007, therefore need to look at the September deadline. This needs to be to be discussed with other funding partners and also the partnership. • MS, Forestry Commission – good having one point of contact and only one set of meetings to attend. Consider looking at part-time people in each local authority (eg in ranger service) specifically to look at biodiversity and work for CL. • DF, PKC – there are advantages in the Tayside approach. What he would push for is a Biodiversity Officer (who is not a ranger), believes PKC should focus more on Perth and Kinross. The Biodiversity Officer could, for example, liaise with planning departments, community planning, etc which CL cannot fully address. Should be a full time position. • C Littlewood, FWAG – feels that sub groups predominately have Perthshire-based people at the moment and feel Angus might lose out. • B Anderson, RSPB, the LBAP could become too Local Authority driven. <p>We need to consider the next 3-5 years and think where the partnership should go, what are the key issues and how we achieve this? Had to produce a business plan for last application – this needs to be reviewed to see what we have achieved (attached). Councils need to agree on the options and come up with a strategy for a new business plan. SNH holding concordat meetings; can discuss as a potential issue then.</p> <p>Question raised over whether there was the financial capacity for funding one LBAP officer for Tayside and one for each local authority? SNH, probably not something that they could fund as something that Local Authorities should be funding anyway, especially given the new conservation duty.</p> <p>Consider workshop on the future of the LBAP and streamline this into an effective process for Tayside. Ask Forestry Commission if they would be able to input any funding, or whether any funding is purely project-based. Would community planning be another source of funding?</p> <p>By next meeting need to have some understanding of what the options are, Link the 2 processes together, ie councils' statutory obligations and biodiversity</p> <p>Small working group to be set up – representatives of 3 councils and SNH (led by DF) to come up with an options paper for next meeting – what needs to be delivered, but what is realistic in terms of the resources (funding and staff), what are statutory duties, what are</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>DF, CW, PC, AA/MS</p>

	broader partnership issues, and what are the potentials for linking biodiversity partnership and Community Planning.	
6	<p>Finance Income and Expenditure report circulated Money has been ring-fenced for CL's salary increment Figures on track</p>	
7	<p>Tayside biodiversity action fund & LAGS TBAF Good news from 1st round, 5 projects passed Entrust criteria (out of 7 approved by TBAF). Entrust criteria seem to be tightening. FWAG are still waiting on formal notification regarding their project (FWAG had been told that they had cancelled their registration but C Littlewood indicated that this was not the case). RSPB also still waiting to hear from Entrust.</p> <p>Of 5 projects, reasonable split between, Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross. On 2nd round, currently initially approved 4 projects out of 9 last week.</p> <p>AA – suggest projects get Entrust registration number before applying – we should discuss with S Merone regarding streamlining this.</p> <p>Clear guidance has been sought from S Merone and then we will update our guidelines.</p> <p>Imminently there will be a press release for the 1st 5: £33,843 £68K approx of First year's 95k will be funded if last week's projects approved by Entrust</p> <p>LAGS CW to discuss LAGS with Operations Manager. May be able to contribute small amount, around £10k to help with biodiversity projects. Became apparent from management meeting that certain projects could not be funded and hoped this separate fund could be applied for to cover these survey/monitoring projects. This would be for the next financial year. Unfortunately would not be available for farming projects. Hope we can link this with TBAF so that there will not be a separate process for applicants.</p> <p>DF suggested that when projects are being put together, Community Engagement should be a factor.</p>	CW
8	<p>Website/Publications Website discussed earlier in Education Sub Group report. The Farmland Habitat and Species List still to be put on website (C Lloyd to discuss with C Littlewood)</p> <p>Publications – 2 leaflets for planning gone to printer for design, etc. Few case studies in for planning manual.</p>	CL/ CLw
9	<p>Local record centres Minutes to be amended, no LRC has been set up in Dundee. M Smith has been looking at this issue. Once Barrack St in Dundee has been vacated (items from McManus currently there), a natural heritage information store could be set up there.</p> <p>SNH now have draft findings of local record centre review (Jennifer Davidson now left this position). Broad outcome is that SNH will not promote the establishment of new LRCs but would consider funding if local partners agree there is a local need. This would need to come out of area budgets, alongside all other issues discussed today. Usual grant conditions would apply, tightening up on conditions of grant. Still draft findings at moment, CW to advise when finalised.</p> <p>There is a clear local need for baseline data. Data issues should be considered in working group also.</p>	CW

	<p>North East and Cairngorms and Angus LRC – leave on agenda for next time</p> <p>Orkney LBAP line manages the LRC and set it up.</p> <p>Item to be put on Agenda for next meeting.</p>	
10	<p>AOCB 2nd tranche</p> <p>CL circulated HAPS and SAPS progress report. For next sub group meetings, the relevant list, including lead partners, will be circulated in order to define feasibility and responsibility. We need to learn from Tranche 1, make actions SMART and don't publish them until all are agreed. Problems of not having certain action plans published is now becoming apparent with regard to potential SITA fund applications. Our strategic planning need to take place and then this needs to follow</p> <p>MP expressed thanks to Angus Council for hosting the meeting and to Angela Paterson for taking the minutes.</p>	CL
15	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next Steering Group meeting will now be held at Tayside House, Dundee City Council on Friday 9 June 2006 at 10am, and not 2 June as discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>Following Steering Group meeting to be held on Friday 25 August 2005, to be hosted by PKC.</p>	