



# TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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## STEERING GROUP MEETING

### Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 Canmore Room, Municipal Buildings, Forfar

*Updated version – Feb. 2008*

Present:	Martin Price (Chair)(MP) Alison Anderson (AA) Pam Coutts (PC) Catherine Lloyd (CL) Mark Simmons (MS) Christine Hall (CH) Esther Roger-Nicoll (ER-N) Carol Littlewood (CLT) Bryan Harris (BH) Rachael Higgins (Minute Taker)(RH)	CMS, Perth College Dundee City Council Angus Council Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Perth Museum Scottish Agricultural College Perth & Kinross Council Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Dundee City Council Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Apologies:	Merrill Smith Graham Esson Bruce Campbell Mike Strachan Richard Lockett Kate Scott Phil Gaskell and Carolyn Deasley Bruce Anderson and Suki Fleming Alan Hendry Paul Ramsay Ben Notley Martyn Jamieson Stewart Roberts	Dundee City Council Perth & Kinross Council SEPA Forestry Commission FWAG NFUS SNH RSPB SRPID Scottish Rural Property & Business Assoc. NTS Scottish Field Studies Association Angus Council

No.		Action
1	<b>Apologies</b> As above. It was noted that Andrea Williams of SWT has left and that a replacement representative on the Steering Group had not been proposed.	
2	<b>Minutes of previous meeting - 19 Sept 2007</b> The minutes were accepted without change.	
3	<b>Matters Arising</b> None.	

## 4 Reports from Sub Group Leaders

### 4.1 Urban - Alison Anderson

*USG1 - Urban Red Squirrel Initiative* - The Tayside Red Squirrel Project Officer has been visiting local groups, checking needs and working up priority actions for the next 6 months. There have been awareness campaigns, surveys and a lot of interest, including the Caravan Club and Friends of Woodlands who want to be involved. Ken Neil & Alison Anderson meet regularly to discuss the project. It was noted that 2,000 hectares of forest are required before an area can be regarded as a Priority Site. Grey control is expanding around the Dighty. A general point was made about the rumour that Greys are being released into woodlands. CLT noted that the Fife Red Squirrel Group is keen to keep in touch with the Tayside Red Squirrel Forum. A new Fife Red Squirrel Project Officer is to be in post shortly.

*USG2 - Acoustic Ecology Project* - completed and signed off. Ann Lolley has been taking forward a new meadow area at Dudhope Park.

*USG3 - The Community Gardens & Allotment Booklet* is coming along well with major editorial input from PC and AA.

*USG4 - Urban Grassland Management* - the 'Parks & Larks' event hosted by PKC was very successful. DCC staff later met with CL and Ann Lolley to discuss the project across Dundee. CL has now stepped back and Kevin Gosling, Peter Sandwell, Elizabeth Woodhouse and Ian Whitehead of DCC are taking this forward. Angus will follow hopefully with Craig Borland keen to undertake work.

*USG5 - Invasive Species Project* - Angus Council is still following this up. AA will be sending a letter of thanks. Giant Hogweed at the Dighty - the aim is to get the contractors to deal with this. The Tay Catchment Area - this is going through channels with ADAS. CH has been trying hard for this - even 10 years ago this issue was highlighted. It was thought that the River Basin Management control could be tied in with this project.

*USG6 - Green Living Roofs* - CL has researched funding for a seminar. Dusty Gedge (London Biodiversity Partnership & livingroofs.com) willing to come to Tayside. Living walls are an important consideration. CL mentioned case studies proving that the UK is behind in this.

*USG7 - Local Patch Project* - this has evolved into the ZOOM project (the Bumble Bee project) incorporating a lot of community involvement. Ann Lolley is taking this project forward. Leaflets, badges and identification sheets are currently being designed by SNH; Bumble Bee Conservation Trust images are being used. The Broughty Ferry Environmental Project will be collating information packs at the biodiversity office. Although the timescale has slipped, this will be in hand by the next Urban Subgroup meeting in January.

*USG8 - Sand martins* in Tayside - this project is coming along well.

*USG9 - Urban Watercourse Initiative* - no report.

*USG10 - Tayside Town Swift Project* - Broughty Ferry Environmental Project cannot take over the project in Dundee, but if the Dundee Ranger Service stops their commitment there will be a big gap. Clare Darleston is still closely involved and is preparing a template to use as a marker for nest sites and to show the correct shape of hole for swift nestboxes.

*USG11 - Green Kirk and Graveyard Initiative* - CL said the new date for the Gardens, Greenspace and Graveyards event in Perth is 8<sup>th</sup> March. The October event had to be cancelled due to the postal strike and lack of numbers.

- 4.2 **Woodlands - Catherine Lloyd (no report from Mike Strachan)**  
*WSG9 - Carse of Gowrie Orchards Project* - CL gave a brief overview on the Orchard Seminar held in Inchtute on 16<sup>th</sup> October. It was very well attended - 85 attendees (and 40 apologies). There will be a follow on event on 11<sup>th</sup> December to encourage local residents and orchard owners to set up the Carse of Gowrie Orchard Forum. Practical training courses will be held and there will be a local community event in February involving teachers, local residents and older children. CL also mentioned a Stirling contact that might be willing to undertake a lichen workshop in orchards.
- CH highlighted the value of the old fruit trees and the biodiversity which is increased through lichens, ground leaf litter, insects etc. This should be highlighted in orchard management advice. CL & CH are planning to meet to discuss the essential issues. MP suggested the need for a survey taking into account the entire biodiversity benefits of orchards. We would need someone with a lot of expertise to do this. CL
- CL has been given permission to use the PTES traditional orchards leaflet as a base for a Tayside version highlighting the benefits of orchard biodiversity. Funding for this will be discussed at the next sub-group meeting; the Forestry Commission has already confirmed it will help match fund the leaflet. MSt/CL
- WSG6 - Tayside Woodland Grazing Initiative* - CH mentioned the pilot scheme within a few sites around Perthshire. The idea is to get controlled grazing in important woodlands - a mosaic of woodlands and different habitats as well as farming can work together if well planned. The project itself is progressing quite well, but unfortunately it is not within the new SRDP. It is still a pilot scheme. The Tayside Red Squirrel Forum has been keen to help with this - however there was mention of records of Greys being totally out of sync. There is not enough Priority Woodland.
- WSG4 - Red Squirrel Conservation Project* - it was agreed this project will come under USG1 from now on. RH
- MP hoped Mike Strachan can report back to the next Steering Group meeting following the Woodland sub-group meeting in January. MSt
- 4.3 **Coast & Estuaries - Catherine Lloyd**  
*CEG1 - Tayside Golf Course Initiative* - CL assessed the Environmental Awards statements for two Tayside Golf Courses, namely Auchterarder and Montrose, which led to them receiving a Scottish Award for Environmental Excellence on Golf Courses 2007. Discussions with the Scottish Golf Environment Group are ongoing as regards a potential Bio Blitz and National Dragonfly Project survey for some golf courses i.e. Carnoustie and Blairgowrie, and further training days for green keepers as a follow on to the workshops the Partnership provided in 2004.
- CEG2 - Dune Habitat Restoration* - The Sand Martin booklet is being widely distributed and is being used in English lessons at schools.
- CEG3 - Geodiversity Trails* - Funding has been secured for the Seaton Cliffs interpretation which is expected to be completed this financial year. A new leaflet was produced for Corsiehill (Perth) and two more are planned: Seaton Cliffs and Dundee Law.
- CEG4 - Tayside Terns* - The 24-hour wardening (funded by SITA TBAF) paid off with 16 chicks fledging by the end of the breeding season. An application for funding has been approved for a further year's wardening on Montrose Beach. Crown Estate funding may also be available.
- CEG7 - Firth of Tay Wader & Wildfowl Audit* - no update available
- Other Reporting - The Marine Code of Conduct will be studied by George Potts (Dundee Ranger Service) who is also looking into permits and liaising with Moray Firth with regards to

the dolphins in the Tay.

#### 4.4 **Water & Wetlands - Catherine Lloyd on behalf of Bruce Campbell**

There will be a sub-group meeting in January.

*WWSG1 - Tayside Ponds Initiative* - Project will be set up next year.

*WWSG2 - Perth Lade Enhancement* – members of the sub-group (Bruce Campbell, Nikki McIntyre and Susan Veitch) attended the last Perth & Kinross Council Lade Management Group meeting. The overall message from the meeting was that nothing had progressed because nobody will take responsibility for overseeing any projects. A copy of the Water & Wetland action proforma was circulated to the Group. Also discussed was an area of land near Tulloch Marshalling yard: this is an area of potential redevelopment which could incorporate wetland habitat. CL will attend the next Perth Lade Management Committee meeting.

CL

*WWSG3 - Otter Road Death Survey* - no progress since the last meeting. CH raised the issue of a mortality hotspot on the A90 at Kinfauns (at least 3 in a year). BC, on behalf of the Water & Wetland Sub-group, wrote to Network Rail as they have recently erected a security fence which is thought to have been responsible. It is hoped Network Rail's commitment to biodiversity and the potential for some good PR will be enough to provoke changes at the site. It was decided at the meeting to rename the project as the Mammal Road Death Survey.

RH

*WWSG4 - River Earn Japanese Knotweed Eradication and Habitat Improvement* - No decision as yet on funding for this project - it is hoped £40,000 will be available from LIFE. SEPA and the Tay Salmon Fisheries Board will be working closely. Survey work will be completed on the Rivers Earn and Isla in the coming year. Still waiting for the SNH report.

*WWSG5 - River Tay Tributary Improvement Initiative* - Inchewan Burn near Dunkeld has had improvement works completed by "Willie the Ghillie" aka Jock Menteith. Feedback suggests an excellent job has been done with fish reportedly seen migrating upstream. Other projects are in the pipeline. A River Restoration Centre report on the Kinnaird Burn has been circulated to the Pitlochry Angling Club with a view to taking on board some of the recommendations in the report. PQLT have agreed to provide funding for the project.

*WWSG6 - Salmon in the Classroom* – awaiting an update from SNH.

*WWSG7 - Water vole and Mink Project* - no update available.

*WWSG8 - Freshwater Pearl Mussel Project* – awaiting an update from SNH.

Other Reporting - Tayside Lochs Project - work with this is progressing well with TBAF funding in the region of £21k approved for awareness raising, buffer strips and farm audits. There has been a site visit to assess the catchments in more detail. A problematic sewer overflow was highlighted to SEPA staff and follow up work identified. SEPA staff have gathered information on households which have soakways draining to groundwater and they will liaise with the local golf club to ensure the correct rate of fertilizer application. The sub-group is still intending to produce a tea towel to encourage people to "make the link with your sink" and the water environment. This will be a high profile local project.

#### 4.5 **Upland -**

##### **Martyn Jamieson had sent his apologies, but no report**

MP said it was important to discuss the future of the Upland sub-group with MJ before the spring. CL had brainstormed a potential Upland Discussion Day format and circulated it to MJ and MP.

MJ

CH had followed up the Atholl Estate. They would be very happy to host projects but would be too busy to commit fully. It was thought that Polly Freeman could come onto the sub-group and get more involved. Generating interest with hill farmers will be a priority too.

MJ

CH said there is SITA TBAF funding available for the Highland Water vole pilot project near Kindrogan. MJ is keen to get involved with this in the spring. This may lead to a larger Water vole project by the summer.

MP said that Butterfly Conservation (Scotland) is keen to apply to the SITA TBAF for funding.

MP rounded up by saying that this sub-group is quiet but coming slowly along - this doesn't necessarily mean nothing is happening.

#### 4.6 **Farmland - Christine Hall**

*FSG1 - Tayside Barn Owl Projects* – CH reported that the Perthshire project is going well. There have been exciting reports back from farmers. People are more aware now and there is great interest. The project also links in with the Farm Buildings HAP. CH has had discussions with the local pest control company as many steadings are being treated with 2nd generation rodenticides. It also seems that almost every last stading has been converted into new housing.

*BOOLS (Barn Owls of Lowland Scotland)* - CLT reported that this project is continuing through BAGS funding; it will come to an end soon. There have been 84 visits throughout Clackmannanshire, Stirling, Fife and Tayside. There are 4 nest boxes known to be in use as roosting sites in Angus with 1 winter roost site that is being used for the second year. It has been a good year for Barn Owls. Record cards and feedback reports are being regularly received. The data will be uploaded onto the new MapMate programme. Earlier this year Angus and Fife & Kinross FWAG jointly led a very successful walk with 33 people near Wormit to highlight the issues. CLT is currently editing the second BOOLS newsletter, and has new funding for 10 more visits. The project has been really successful and brought people and ideas together. Two schools in Tayside are involved in the Barn Owls project this year.

*FSG2 - Calcareous Grassland Project* - this project has scope to link in with the Cairngorms Butterfly Project. There are three demo sites agreed as well as subsidiary sites. One site covers remnants of Calcareous Grassland which were improved in the 1950's but then reverted to semi - improved grassland - this has been enhanced by sowing seed into the existing sward. This will be an ongoing 3 year project. Several farmers have invited Christine to look at their land too (whether species rich or calcareous grassland).

*FSG3 - Farmland Bird Project* - CLT - SITA TBAF funding has been available for Supporting Tayside's Tree Sparrows - FWAG to visit 30 farms each receiving 12 nest boxes and a management plan. The farmers are very keen and positive. Cairngorms Biodiversity Grant Scheme is funding 16 similar visits to be delivered by FWAG in Upland Angus through the Targeting Tree Sparrows Project.

*FSG4* - Following on from the successful *Angus Glens Treelines Project* the Perthshire & Angus Treelines Project (PAT) is going to provide 42 farmers with 35 trees and fencing.

*FSG5 - Farm Buildings for Biodiversity* - see Barn Owl report above. CH - There has been a serious lack of integration with regards to planning. Planners have to take more on board when assessing information at sites. There has been a draft checklist written by Suki Fleming (SF). CLT said that the onus is on planners as well as architects and builders. CL- the surveys need to be much more holistic. The sub-group is still waiting for the minutes from their meeting with Perth & Kinross Council Planners.

CH

AA - concerned about Red Squirrel woodlands at Atholl Estate / Blairgowrie - it has all become new housing development. CH - thinks surveys must be clear showing habitat networks.

*FSG6 - Enhancement of Irrigation Ponds Project* - no report.

*FSG7 - Saving the Small Blue Butterfly* - no report.

*FSG8 - Wet Grassland for Waders* - awaiting the outcome of the SRDP. The official LFSC opening has been delayed again.

*FSG9 - The Living Field Studies Centre* - no report. Steering Committee meeting planned for the New Year.

*FSG10 - Perthshire Hedgerow and Tree Project* - focussing purely on hedgerows; there has not been a great deal of progress to date.

*FSG11- Operation Bumblebee* - Richard Lockett of Perth FWAG to take forward later. Introduction of buffer strips with pollen.

4.7

**Education - Catherine Lloyd**

There will be an Education sub-group meeting in January to discuss Scottish Biodiversity Week and the Tayside Biodiversity Festival in 2009. Perth Museum will be linking in with this.

*ESG1 - Sheltered Housing Project* – no report.

*ESG3 - Mammal Atlas* - MS will be inputting data soon. MS - aiming to have a list of recorders on the website and to have an afternoon meeting with recorders in March. CL, MS and David Lampard (Dundee) to hold a meeting to set up a Tayside Recorders' Forum. This could lead to more workshops and practical training. CLT suggested that individual recorders should be able to go onto the website separately and update on their own accord. The major gap in Tayside as regards a recording system was discussed. CL confirmed she fields frequent enquiries which few of the Partners can assist with – it all needs to be pulled together as soon as possible.

CL/MS

*ESG4 and ESG6* – no reports.

*ESG5 (USG 7A) - Bee Wild Project* - encompassing schools and communities: the practical side of the ZOOM project. There is a lot of interest coming from schools.

*ESG 8 - Practitioner Training* – Another "Building Better Biodiversity" programme of events will be drawn up soon. There will be a lunch time seminar held on 28th January after the education sub-group meeting: the speaker will be John Hancox, Manager of the Children's Orchard in Glasgow. There has been a lot of interest in this. CL - there is an opportunity to expand this to small orchard plantings throughout Tayside and be part of a national initiative - communities and schools can be involved with native tree planting. The NHS should also be involved, as could the local authorities with a Children's Orchard in many public parks.

CL

5

**Terms of Reference**

MP thanked CL for preparing an extensive folder of different options and suggested the TBP could be legally constituted. CL has, in the past, been employed by a range of local authorities. Would it be better to have a separate legal entity? Statutes are required; liability of directors, employment aspects all need to be considered. Other local Biodiversity Partnerships have a constitution - there are various models to consider. MP said he thought this might be a good idea. The benefits would be that there would be no need to re-organise every 3 years; there would be far less disruption for CL, as well as job security.

MS - The three museums were constituted as a Forum, a body that can seek funding in its own right. A private account would need to be set up. There could be a compromise. MS to look into Tayside Museums Learning Access Partnership - and the Museums Forum.

MS

CL - Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust took the Partnership's request to their committee last year and it was agreed in principal to host the Co-ordinator's post from 2007; it might be prudent to go back to the Trust to ask if this option could be considered from 2010. MP - the PKCT could be an option as an umbrella body; they would be less bureaucratic. They could deal with liability / employment law etc., and we could give them a management fee. RH - to add this to the next agenda.

CL

RH

BH - we need to find out the long term goals of SNH as regards funding biodiversity posts. It might also be useful to talk to the Fife Biodiversity Partnership as they have been constituted. MP - every local authority in Scotland now has its own Biodiversity Partnership - SNH should still be involved. BH - the situation we are in now is working, with the 3 local authorities being in charge. Who would draw up the constitution? BH - pointed out no continuity -there needs to be a funding cycle of 3-4 years. If TBP became a trust, the councils may not want to fund; we need to be cautious in our approach. There could, however, be funding available from other bodies.

MP - suggested CL enquire into SNH's and Fife's plans for 2007-10 and beyond. He CL suggested finding another model without a separate legal identity. CL asked if a constitution would be considered for a voluntary partnership as the steering and management teams are voluntary.

## 6 **Scottish Rural Development Programme**

Phil Gaskell (PG), SNH, had asked for this item to be added to the Agenda as he wanted to give the Steering Group a presentation on the subject. Unfortunately he was not available. MP confirmed that PG had also called a meeting at the SNH office; he, PC, Carolyn Deasley, CL and ER-N had attended, although PG had not been able to be present owing to sick leave.

Merrill Smith gave an update following the meeting. Scotland is divided into 11 different regions - each given 32 national priorities. A working group was set up to look at the Regional Priorities for Tayside, chaired by Syd House and including Phil Gaskell and Alan Hendry. Syd ensured that there was wide consultation on the priorities and PG had taken CL's comments on board. The Final Draft Tayside Regional Priorities has now been agreed and sent to the Scottish Government.

CH - the launch of the SRDP will take place in March / April 2008. There will be a review at the end of 2008 to plan for 2009/10. Priorities may change only if a priority is fulfilled and a new one needs to be set. There is also an option of having a review in a 2 - 4 year cycle rather than yearly. It should not just be about Tayside Regional Priority Species but also need indicative budgets for packages or projects. We will have to expect change - budgets are not looking too good. MP - noted there are a lot of priority species in Tayside. Agricultural budgets and biodiversity budgets may be affected by climate change and the Tayside Rural Development Plan may have to be altered to reflect climate change impacts.

MP said the next Steering Group meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March would be a good time for review on this.

MP

## 7 **Finance**

- CL - circulated the sub-group micro budget at the last meeting and confirmed that the proposed £200 budgets have now been added where appropriate. There is still some SITA match-funding for the TBAF Newsletter - the Coast and Estuaries sub-group have confirmed they are willing to help match fund this. The Water and Wetland sub-group agreed to cover the additional costs for the design of the tea towel for their Tayside Lochs Project (SNH - 90% funding; SITA TBAF - 10% funding - agreed). Other expenditure will include orchard biodiversity leaflet; the Wildlife Trees Project.
- CL suggested Sub-group leaders put in their requests. There is a roll over of money left from the transfer from Perth & Kinross Council. BH warned everyone not to take too long in claiming back money due. MP suggested that by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 we will have a better picture of what is required. If there is unallocated money still in Sub-group budgets then why not find out overall what is needed? CL mentioned the proposed biodiversity seminar with Dusty Gedge as the main speaker - the event will need funding. Funds will also be required for orchard biodiversity surveys, lunch time seminars and training events/workshops. Sub-Group Leaders
- MP - we need an overall picture of the budget from the Management Team via BH. BH mentioned that a quick scan of the total columns seemed realistic at the moment.
- 8 **Funding: SNH Promotions Budget and SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund**
- 8(a) **SNH Promotions Budget**
- There was no report; Carol Deasley to be asked for an update to confirm that all funding has been allocated and whether there are any monies still available. It had not yet been confirmed if SNH could support the re-launch of the SITA TBAF funding by way of an event on 4th March. CD  
CD
- 8(b) **SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund**
- CL reported that most applications have been approved, with three being deferred; details to be circulated when available. There was general discussion regarding plans for 4th March to celebrate the second phase of 3 year SITA TBAF funding. It was agreed to bring the next Steering Group meeting forward from 11<sup>th</sup> March to coincide with this day in Perth. ER-N to re-arrange. ER-N
- 9 **Website**
- The number of hits on the website is constantly going up; the latest report was circulated at the meeting. CL has updated a great deal of the website. The Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust information on the orchard survey and seminar information is now uploaded. The Partners' log-in section has been updated. There is now survey information on Swifts, Barn Owls and Terns and associated leaflets with useful links. The UKBAP Priorities list problem has been solved and links provided to the new UKBAP and Scottish lists. SRDP - PG needs to add information, although CL has added a link in the meantime.
- CLT raised the issue about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tranche Action Plans having all their actions removed and asked it to be minuted that this had been discussed in the past and it had been agreed that an Action Plan without actions is pointless. All agreed that the original actions should be SMARTened and put back into the Plans.
- Before the spring there will be an update on the SITA TBAF Guidance Notes (CL and Douglas Calderwood to liaise).
- 10 **AOCB**
- MP asked CL and RH to remind Phil Gaskell of the next meeting to ensure he is available to give the presentation planned for today's meeting. CL/RH
- 11 **Dates of Future Meetings**
- 20<sup>th</sup> February - Management Team Meeting and SITA TBAF Assessment Panel Meeting.  
4<sup>th</sup> March - Steering Group meeting, Perth – p.m. (to coincide with SITA TBAF Reception).