



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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STEERING GROUP MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on 9th December 2008

Pullar House, Kinnoull Street, Perth

Present:

Martin Price - Chair (MP)	CMS, Perth College
Pam Coutts (PC)	Angus Council
Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Tim Barratt (TB)	Forestry Commission Scotland
Esther Rogers-Nicoll (ERN)	Perth & Kinross Council
Carol Littlewood (CLD)	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Alison Anderson (AA)	Dundee City Council
Mark Simmons (MS)	Perth Museum
Carolyn Deasley (CD)	SNH
Christine Hall (CH)	Scottish Agricultural College
Ian Lorimer (IL)	SEPA
Shelley McCann (SM)	Perth & Kinross Council
Louise Ross (Minute Taker) (LR)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Apologies:

Bryan Harris	Dundee City Council
Richard Lockett	Perth FWAG

Circulated to: Merrill Smith, Dundee City Council; Kate Scott, NFUS; Alan Hendry, SGRPID; Paul Ramsay, Scottish Rural Property & Business Association; Martyn Jamieson, Kindrogan Field Studies Association; Bruce Anderson, RSPB; Ben Notley, NTS; Stewart Roberts, Angus Council; Jin Park, Perth College.

1. Introductions & Apologies

Round the table introductions were given and apologies as above.

2. Species & Habitat Mapping in Perth & Kinross - Shelly McCann (SM)

SM gave PowerPoint presentation on Species and Habitat Mapping in Perth & Kinross.

TB asked about accessibility to the mapping programme outwith Perth and Kinross Council. **SM** advised that currently it is only accessible within the council as the programme is located on SM's desktop.

SM explained the importance of understanding the 'zero score' and advised that this does not necessarily mean that the area has no biodiversity value. The zero score may be a result of lack of coverage. **SM** highlighted that this is an issue which needs to be recognised by programme users to ensure that the data is not misunderstood.

SM suggested that a future predictive model may be required to identify potential species in an area.

CD asked about the relationship with the policy framework. **CH** advised that there needs to be mitigation options to provide an alternative approach. She anticipated that there will be an increase in problems when the housing market improves and new developments commence.

MP suggested that **SM** could provide an update on the programme's progress next year and thanked her for her contribution to the meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting 15th September 2008.

All attendees agreed that no further adjustments to the previous minutes were required.

4. Matters arising

MP announced that the programme for the event being held on 13th May 2009 has been finalised and will be added to the minutes. SNH is to lead a talk on 'Attitudes to Biodiversity'.

5. Scottish Rural Development Programme: Tayside Rural Priorities 2009-10

CL advised that SNH is working towards an end of year deadline to create a matrix of habitat and species (UKBAP Scottish Lists). Syd House had advised that the review of Rural Priorities is very much on the 'back burner' at present with a review unlikely until the middle of next year. **TB** advised a review of the SRDP is due by Easter. **MP** stated that Sub-Group meetings should be arranged around this.

MP advised that this topic should remain on the agenda and discussed further at the next meeting.

ACTION: CL TO LIAISE WITH IAN STRACHAN, SNH **CL**
ACTION: TB TO FIND OUT TIMESCALES/INVOLVEMENT IN THE REVIEWS **TB**

6. Sub Group Leaders' Project Proforma Reports / Future Actions Updates

REFER TO UPDATED PROGRESS REPORT FOR FULL DETAILS ON EACH PROJECT. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BELOW.

a. *Urban:*

AA advised that the next Urban sub-group meeting is on Friday 12th December 2008.

CD reported that Ann Lolley was successful in obtaining funding for the 'Dighty Project'. It was advised that this project was more process than practical in nature.

CL mentioned that Ann Lolley is also currently researching the potential for a Water Vole Project.

Invasive Species Project - **CL** advised that this project is now beginning to progress with the Broughty Ferry Environmental Group getting involved, their focus being on more practical activities.

Tayside Town Swift Project - **CL** provided an update on the Tayside Swift Survey. Louise Ross has input all received survey forms in the Swift database (bar the small number input by Stephanie Shaw during the summer). The database will be shared with Concern for Swifts Scotland. **CL** hopes that Shelley McCann may be able to use the relevant Perth & Kinross sections in the database on the Species and Habitat Mapping programme. **PC** expressed concern that Angus Council may not have sufficient staff time to input the Angus information into the GIS; **CL** did not know about Dundee City Council.

ACTION: CL TO DISCUSS DATABASE INPUT INTO GIS WITH PC CL
ACTION: CL TO CONTACT DCC CL

b. Woodlands:

Green Tourism Initiative - **TB** advised that things were now progressing well. The initiative will include the Tay Estuary Trails.

Woodland Management Awareness - **TB** advised that the project is using innovative techniques to manage woodland. SRDP stimulated the funding for this project. Good results are being achieved.

c. Coast & Estuaries:

CL gave a brief update on the last Coast & Estuaries sub-group meeting where awareness raising options were fully discussed. Network Rail may become involved in a project planned for the Perth to Montrose line. This will be discussed at a working group meeting on 13th January 2009. The main project is Tayside Terns with its focus on the project at Montrose. A student placement may be requested by Perth & Kinross Council to advance the desk-top survey for the Tay Wildfowl Audit. **CD** provided an update on the bathing hut project (Broughty Ferry Environmental Group) which may be officially opened during the Tayside Biodiversity Festival.

d. Water & Wetland:

Freshwater Pearl Mussel Awareness-Raising and Translocation - **IL** said that Freshwater Pearl Mussels had been found to be a viable species in the area. **CD** advised that SNH will monitor the River Watch Initiatives longer term as the removal of species can set them back a number of years (as they are particularly long-lived).

Tayside Lochs Project - **CL** advised that the tea towel design is now with the printers.

The Riparian seminar "River Management for Biodiversity, Fish and People" will be held at Birnam on 29th January 2009. It will be a free event as sponsorship has been largely secured. There will need to be a small input into catering costs from the Partnership (from the Water and Wetland sub-group budget). Details will be on the website soon. Booking administration will be handled this time by the Partnership; SEPA is providing the delegate packs.

e. Farmland & Upland:

CLD advised that she was awaiting full contact details from Martyn Jamieson regarding the Upland sub-group members.

ACTION: CL TO SEND LIST CL

Tayside Upland Heath Project - **CLD**: no update at present.

Highland Tayside Paths Impacts Project - **CLD**: no update at present.

Water Voles and Mink Project - **CH** said that 4 estates had been surveyed and reports and management plans completed. Staff from Kindrogan helped with the survey. **CH** advised that

the survey did not find evidence of latrines which is needed as evidence that Water Voles exist there. **CH** confirmed that there has been a focus on Mink trapping. The surveys will be repeated next year on the 4 sites.

CH reported that the Cairngorms National Park has funding and are keen to take over the project. There is a need to ensure that they will not be duplicating activities and wasting TBAF funding.

CL advised that Helen Gray, the Cairngorms Water Vole Project Officer, has offered to speak to the Water and Wetland sub-group. **CL** has suggested that it may be appropriate to invite her to give a lunchtime seminar in Perth next year to raise awareness of the project. **CLD** said that 5 FWAG farmers have signed up to a course next spring to undertake trapping and rafting to remove Mink to increase the Water Vole population.

CLD discussed that the Mink are moving up the glen and so they want to encourage lowland farmers to get involved in trapping. A "raft" is utilised to see if Mink are present - the raft is made of plywood and polystyrene and contains a tunnel lined with soft clay to allow for monitoring. This allows trapping to be concentrated only when Mink are present. **CLD** discussed community involvement in monitoring the Mink traps. The community then advise the trap owner to carry out the trapping when required. Such involvement is invariably difficult to maintain over the long term relying on the enthusiasm of the community.

CH discussed a possibly link between an increase in Otters and a decrease in Mink population. Otters are also predators of Water Vole. Beavers are also thought to displace Mink. **TB** advised that Beavers create a habitat which is suitable for Water Voles.

Tayside Barn Owl Projects - **CLD** advised that the Perthshire project has now finished. There are a further 10 visits to do in Angus. There have been regular sightings and the survey is ongoing. Maps are updated and circulated every 6 months detailing extensions to previous recordings. Four chicks, 3 Kestrels and 3 Jackdaws were ringed. **CLD** has submitted a short article to the UK Biodiversity Newsletter.

Calcareous Grassland Project - **CH** advised that the open days held in the summer had a poor turnout despite promotion of the event. It was suggested that the reason for this was the title of the event and the fact that the good weather opened a window of opportunity to farmers to undertake work rather than join a guided walk. Further events are planned in Glen Lyon and near Loch Tummel. Owners of the demonstration sites have been very enthusiastic. Need to raise interest of local community.

Farmland Bird Project - **CLD** discussed the Tree Sparrows project and advised that a Phase 2 SITA TBAF application for Angus may have been successful. The project is focussing on expanding small populations into other areas. There are difficulties regarding the Corn bunting project with regards SRDP funding.

Enhancement of Irrigation Ponds Project - no progress at present.

Saving the Small Blue Butterfly in Angus - **CLD** confirmed there is a small inland population. The local farmer is undertaking positive action measures.

Operation Bumblebee - **CLD** informed the Steering Group that there will be 2 half day courses with the Bumblebee Conservation on the 25th and 26th February 2009. This will cover Bumblebee ecology and habitat.

Tayside Golf Course Initiative - **CLD** advised that promotion will take place next year.

f. Education:

Sheltered Housing & Hospitals Biodiversity Project - **CL** confirmed that this project is now being extended into Perth & Kinross with the Ranger Service taking it forward.

Countryside on Wheels - no progress.

Bee Wild Communities & Schools Project - **CL** advised that this project is the practical

extension to the ZOOM project. Opportunities will be researched to take the project forward in 2009.

Practitioner Training - **CL** said that the Angus Council lunch time seminars were being well attended with an average in excess of 20 people at each seminar. Plans are being finalised for the Partnership's second "Accommodating Wildlife" Biodiversity and Greenspace Management seminar: Dusty Gedge has secured his own £1,200 sponsorship to put towards the official launch of his DIY Guide to Living Roofs. Additional funding is needed to pay towards Edward Mayer and Dusty Gedge's travelling expenses.

CD suggested that Scott Ferguson should be contacted by **CL** for support and materials. **AA** mentioned that Scott Ferguson is going to give a presentation in Dundee on the health side of greenspace.

ACTION: CL TO CONTACT SCOTT FERGUSON CL

Other Reporting - **CL** confirmed that the Festival plans are now well underway. Sponsorship and funding are the current focus. Iain Ballantyne, the student placement for the project, is compiling a list of events that will take place between 1st and 10th May 2009; a draft version will be available in mid-January.

SITA TBAF Funding

CL advised that Bryan Harris' summary would be circulated with the minutes. The Biodiversity Assessment Panel had passed a number of new projects to the SITA Board for consideration; **MP** advised that 1 project was rejected.

7.

MP discussed the lack of recognition of SITA TBAF funding by some projects and said that projects need to be aware that publicity of TBAF is essential otherwise no future funding will be considered. He suggested that TBAF fundees should be involved in the Tayside Biodiversity Festival. **CL** confirmed that a new "From Summit to Sand" newsletter will be compiled in the New Year so that it is published in time for the Festival. Articles will be requested from SITA TBAF applicants.

ACTION: ALL - SEND ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER TO CL. ALL

Finance (Budget 2007-08 and 2008-09 and Sub-Group Budgets)

MP advised that the budget was on track and that sub-groups are spending their budgets. **CL** said that there were still difficulties obtaining individual sub-group budget reports from DCC, but that when it is possible, updated budget information will be passed to each sub-group leader.

8.

It was discussed that SNH will no longer be funding the partnership; from April 2009, the funds previously provided by SNH will be part of the Scottish Government allocation to local authorities. **CD** advised that the details of the new arrangement had not been completely finalised and were contained in the letter sent to **BH** about legacy commitments, which included a proposal that such commitments should be ring-fenced. **MP** noted that it was not clear whether the funding would go to all three involved local authorities, or only to Dundee City Council, as the host. **CD** said that she would look into this.

Website/Publications

CL circulated the website statistics and confirmed that the website had attracted 85,000 sessions and 439,000 hits to date from 1st January 2008. She said that the statistical information given does not cover all the information she would like to obtain. **MP** noted that any suggestions for the website should be sent directly to the website designer (who has a link from the home page).

9.

CL gave the good news that following negotiations, the BBSRC has agreed to display their "What on Earth is Biodiversity" exhibition at Dundee Sensation Science Centre from the end of March to the end of May 2009.

CL advised that the Biodiversity Advice Notes are being finalised. There are currently c20 advice notes at final draft stage which should be ready to be inserted into the Planning

Manuals and circulated early in the New Year. **CD** discussed factual issues regarding the advice notes. **CL** confirmed that the vast majority of the Advice Notes had been penned by the specialist organisations such as Butterfly Conservation (Scotland), Bat Conservation Trust, National Trust, etc. **MP** suggested that SNH could review the Advice Notes if required but that this has to be timely.

Biodiversity Action Recording System (BARS) - 2008 Reporting Round

10. **CL** circulated information to all attendees and confirmed that the deadline had been achieved. **CL** advised that the TBP has now completed 3 rounds of BARS reporting - in 2002, 2005 and 2008; many Partnerships do not report back at all. The 2008 reports will now be analysed and will contribute to UK Reporting. **CL** pointed out that national reporting was very restricted in the details that can be included. As the period for reporting for the last round was 2005-08, aims set for 2009 cannot be reported.

AA questioned how individual input information feeds into the new targets for 2010? **CL** advised that it was difficult to see where this linked. **TB** advised that reporting was not quantifiable.

MS discussed the BRISC e-petition for data sharing and encouraged attendees to sign the petition at http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view_petition.asp?PetitionID=291.

AOCB

CL circulated an update on the Scottish Biodiversity Committee.

11. **CL** also circulated a brief paper on issues raised about the forthcoming Wildlife & Countryside Act Consultation. **CLD** advised that the Barn Owl is the main issue, although the RSPB do not see Barn Owls as a priority species. There will be restrictions placed on developments if Barn Owls are present under the W&C Act. She raised concerns that people will destroy Barn Owl nest sites prior to applying for planning permission to ensure there are no issues with the development going ahead. **CLD** advised that Swifts are also missing from the list and suggested that they should be added as well as Swallows.

It was suggested that Partners may wish to raise concerns about Barn Owls through individual letters as well as preparing its own submission via the Steering Group members. **MP** advised that the more submissions that are made the better.

ALL

MP stated that partners wishing to input into the Partnership letter should aim to have their submission completed by the end of January 2009. This should include circulation to all partners for approval. It should be noted that a nil response will be taken as acceptance by partners.

CL confirmed that Angus Council had invited the Partnership to be present at meetings to discuss the Single Outcome Agreement. Bryan Harris is heavily involved in the Dundee City Council SOA input.

TB discussed that SRDP collaborative projects are needed - perhaps through Leader Plus?

TB

Date and Time of next Meetings

Tuesday, 10th March 2009, Dundee

Thursday, 18th June 2009, Forfar

["Scotland's Changing Rural Biodiversity: Policy and Action Needs" forum details below]

Scotland's changing rural biodiversity: Policy and action needs

A forum organised by the
Edinburgh Consortium for Rural Research
in association with Aberdeen Research Consortium
and the Scottish Biodiversity Forum

13 May 2009, SNH Battleby Centre, near Perth

Many parts of rural Scotland hold important biodiversity, often – but not always – within protected sites. This biodiversity – from the species to the landscape scale – has diverse values for Scotland's economy and people. Both species and habitats are influenced by a wide variety of forces of change at various scales, from the local (land management decisions), to the global (climate change). Within this complex context, the Scottish government is committed to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010. However, while we know that some progress has been made towards this target, knowledge of the current status of biodiversity across rural Scotland – especially outside protected sites – is variable. There is an urgent need to understand the current state of our biodiversity, possible future impacts of these drivers of change, and how we can manage our biodiversity effectively across large spatial scales and in integrated ways across sectors.

The aim of this one-day forum is to present and discuss current knowledge on the status and values of Scotland's rural biodiversity and to explore successes and failures in achieving biodiversity goals, how these goals are and could be integrated into key policies, and how diverse partners can work together at landscape and other scales to achieve biodiversity and other goals. In addition to presentations, there will be adequate time for discussion in the plenary sessions. To complement these sessions, individuals will be asked to present posters which will be available for discussion over a long lunch period and during the concluding reception.

Audience: Researchers, practitioners, policy-makers

Posters will be a key element of the meeting. People will be asked to submit the titles and abstracts of posters by 14 February 2009. Proposals will indicate which of the four main themes they refer to; posters will also be welcome on the theme of measuring biodiversity. Decisions on the acceptance of posters will be made by 14 March 2009. The poster session will take place during the 90-minute lunch break and the concluding reception. There will be an award for the best poster, based on voting by participants.

Registration fee: £50; £25 for students and unwaged. Speakers will be exempt from the registration fee.

Outcomes:

- book of abstracts of posters and presentations, available at conference
- powerpoint presentations on the ECRR website together with the abstracts
- brief (maximum 4 page) summary document of the key points, to be produced by the organisers after the event to go on the website and to be circulated to the partners.

Programme

08:45 Registration	
09:10 Welcome	Martin Price (UHI)
09:15 Context: Scottish Biodiversity Strategy/Forum structures, 2010 biodiversity targets, current state of biodiversity in rural Scotland	Greg Mudge (SNH)
Theme 1: Does biodiversity matter? To whom?	
09:35 Valuing biodiversity: ecosystem functioning, ecosystem services etc. in a European context	Roy Haines-Young and Marion Potschin (Centre for Environmental Management, University of Nottingham)
09:55 Biodiversity awareness and involvement in Scotland	<i>tbc</i>
10:15 Discussion	
10:50 <i>Coffee/tea break</i>	
Theme 2: Successes and failures in achieving biodiversity goals; and why	
11:10 Management for biodiversity by NGOs	Paul Walton (RSPB)
11:30 Designated sites	Ed Mackey (SNH)
11:50 Managing conflicting biodiversity goals in the uplands	Steve Albon (Macaulay Institute) and Steve Redpath (University of Aberdeen)
12:10 Agricultural land management	Davy McCracken (SAC)
12:30 Discussion	
13:00 Lunch and poster session	
Theme 3: Integrating biodiversity in policy goals	
14:30 Integrating biodiversity goals in the SRDP	Jo O'Hara (Scottish Government)
14:50 Integrating biodiversity objectives in planning	Michael Oxford (Association of Local Government Ecologists)
15:10 Discussion	
15:40 <i>Coffee/tea break</i>	
Theme 4: Working together to achieve multiple goals across sectors and scales	
16:00 Habitat networks: linking across scales and land uses	Duncan Ray (Forest Research)
16:20 Collaborative approaches to delivering biodiversity objectives	John Hambrey (Hambrey Consulting)
16:40 Discussion	
Summing up	
17:00: Implications for policy and action: 2010 and beyond	Allan Watt (CEH)
17:30-18:30 <i>Reception</i>	

For further information, or to book a place, please contact Angela Paterson at biodiversity.cms@perth.uhi.ac.uk