



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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SWIFT & HIRUNDINE INTEREST GROUP

Tuesday, 12 April 2005 – Perth & Kinross Council Offices, Pullar House, Perth

NOTE OF MEETING

Attending:	Clare Darlestone (CD)	Concern for Swifts (Scotland)
	David Ferguson (DF)	Dundee Ranger Service
	Ron Youngman (RY)	Bird Recorder, Perth & Kinross
	Doreen Bell (DB)	Scottish Water
	Andrew Rodger (AR)	Private Architect
	Charlie Macpherson (CM)	Scone resident
	Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
1. Apologies:	Daniele Muir	Perth & Kinross Ranger Service
	Ian Ford	Broughty Ferry Environmental Project
	Carol Littlewood	Angus Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group
	Pandora Gill	Perth College

Copied to: Tom McGrath, Angus Ranger Service; Craig Borland, Angus Ranger Service; Pam Coutts, Angus Council (Planning); Alistair Godfrey, P&KC Ranger Service, Mark Simmons, Perth Museum; David Williamson, P&KC (Environment Services); Esther Nicolls-Roger, P&KC (Planning); Lesley Duncan, Dundee City Council (Planning); Alison Anderson, DDC (Urban Sub-Group Leader); John Porter, Dundee Sustainable Construction Working Group; Uwe Stoneman, SWT; Ben Notley, National Trust for Scotland; Bruce Anderson, RSPB

2. Matters Arising from the last Meeting (15.5.03)

2.1 Perth Concert Hall - as the design of the new building did not appear to be suitable for swifts it was agreed that the idea for a "Swift Reservoir" should be considered for the HorseCross area, i.e. a survey carried out in the concert hall's vicinity to highlight buildings that could feature nestboxes. A number of commercial and local authority buildings are in the area, but it was decided to approach Perth & Kinross Council in the first instance.

ACTION: CD and CL to liaise and to approach P&KC's Blackfriars Centre and Perth Museum

2.2 Biodiversity Advice Note - CL said she was preparing a Planning Manual on behalf of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership which would include a Biodiversity Advice Note on Swift Conservation. A draft was circulated and comments invited before it goes to print. The Manual will be made available to planners, developers and land managers. The series of Biodiversity Advice Notes will be included on the new Tayside biodiversity website (currently under construction: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk). Two planning guidance leaflets will be published first - advice to householders, and guidance to developers.

ACTION: ALL to comment on draft Biodiversity Action Note by 2nd May

2.3 Awareness-Raising

2.3.1 *Concern for Swifts (Scotland) leaflets*: CD requires funding to update the CfSS leaflet. The RSPB has offered to help, but CD is keen to match fund monies with sponsorship from a building company already championing the use of swift nestboxes on their sites.

ACTION: ALL - suggestions regarding companies to approach to CD as soon as possible

2.3.2 *CfSS tabletop display*: this is still available for loan, together with swift nestbox examples.

ACTION: ALL - Contact CD to borrow the display or suggest a venue

2.3.3 *The "Swifts and Flight" Education Pack*: copies available on request.

ACTION: ALL - Contact CD if you would like a copy of the Education Pack

2.3.4 *Educational Video*: available on loan from CD (Broughty Ferry Library has a copy).

ACTION: ALL - Contact CD if you would like to borrow this

2.3.5 *Property Management*: approaching a wider audience - AR asked if anyone had contacted estate managers or factors as regards the properties in their care. He suggested CD could write an article for the RICS magazine (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors); CL also suggested it might be appropriate to write an article for the Scottish Rural Properties and Business Association (formerly the Scottish Landowners' Federation). SRPBA are Partners in the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership.

ACTION: CD to follow up RICS; CL to follow up SRPBA

3. Project Updates

3.1 National Trust for Scotland - CL reported that Karl Munday had transferred within the NTS and that reports have not been forthcoming since about the Highland Perthshire Community Partnership's swift survey, nor any updates received on the proposed NTS Dunkeld Swift Project.

ACTION: CL to contact Ben Notley and ask for an update on NTS projects

3.2 Dundee Ranger Service

DF said that since 2001, the Dundee Swift Project has monitored and recorded the Swift nesting population in Dundee and Broughty Ferry. From May onwards volunteers monitor signs of nesting. At the end of the season, the results are sent to the Countryside Ranger Service who coordinates the scheme. To date 19 volunteers are involved in the project.

The next stage is to plot on a map the hot spots of Swift nesting activity in the city. This will allow Dundee City Council to focus on any developments that may interfere with the Swifts or their ecology and will highlight where populations are declining. Areas showing little or no Swift activity will also merit closer scrutiny to ensure there are no Swifts present rather than being areas with no records. Later a more in-depth study will be possible to identify possible causes for any decline, and/or suggest where more nesting sites are needed.

Various nest-box designs are now available and the Countryside Ranger Service is working with the Council's Planning Department to encourage incorporation of nestboxes into the building programme. Installation of nest-boxes can be of nominal cost to the developer, yet it ensures they are at the cutting edge of wildlife conservation, meeting goals set under the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. It also raises awareness of the subject which may help prevent inadvertent obstruction or destruction of existing nest sites.

The Countryside Rangers are working with Discovery Homes to include nest boxes at a new development adjacent to Trottick Ponds Local Nature Reserve. Another project about to get under way is the renovation of the old pavilion in Baxter Park.

3.3 Broughty Ferry Environment Project - no project update available.

4. Swift Issues in Scotland

Swift Nest Site Conservation Guidance - CD confirmed that she plans to publish her case study notes and swift nestbox designs in an A5 format once funding is in place. If this were delayed, she would make available her notes so that CL could improve the original Good Practice Reports currently in circulation.

ACTION: CD and CL to liaise

5. Housing Policy - Proposed Generic Committee Report

Following publication of the Partnership's "Guide to Incorporating Biodiversity into Local Services" greater interest had been shown by the three local authorities in carrying out swift nest site conservation. In response to this and following CD's advice together with examples of reports from other local authorities, CL had drawn up a generic Committee Report. Comments are invited on this draft. A final copy will be sent to the three local authority Housing Departments to ask if they would be willing to submit such a report to their Committee. The template would therefore be adapted to each local authority's needs.

ACTION: ALL - comments on the draft by 2nd May

ACTION: CL to liaise with Local Authority contacts on feasibility of the Committee Reports

6. Consultative Draft Swift Species Action Plan

CD passed CL a few amendments to update the draft Swift SAP. CL asked for everyone's comments on the proposed Actions Schedule, particularly new projects. The updated draft will be put on the biodiversity website later this year for public comment. Case studies were still needed from Tayside: a variety would be appreciated - perhaps from a private householder or architect, a large building company, and a local authority housing department.

ACTION: ALL - comments on the SAP to CL by 2nd May

ACTION: Proposals for Case Studies to CL as soon as possible

7. Survey Opportunities

7.1 CL confirmed that although Tayside's Local Patch Survey had completed its three year run, the information and survey forms would still be included in the website. The forms include swifts, house martins and swallows.

7.2 Tayside Swift, Swallow and House Martin Survey Form - supplies of this form are available from CL. Groups are encouraged to use either these forms or to make up their own (with their own contact details). It was agreed that all completed forms (or an analysis of the overall annual results) would be copied to the local Record Centre (where appropriate), plus the Biodiversity Partnership, Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the British Trust for Ornithology. CD pointed out that in future editions of the survey form a column could be added as to the "style" of building, i.e. modern, traditional, etc.

7.3 Information is urgently needed in Tayside as to where swift colonies are located. Following discussion as to the best plan of action for 2005, it was agreed to focus individual surveys on towns throughout Tayside. The best time for such town surveys would be the last 3 weeks of July and the first week of August (although there may be confusion by early/mid-August with migration 'swarms' of swifts). CD suggested surveys should take place at around 9.30pm, or if this is not feasible, mid-day.

7.3.1 CL reminded everyone that Scottish Biodiversity Week takes place 21st - 29th May and Backyard Biodiversity Day takes place on 9th June (with events also taking place the following

weekend). Although too early to carry out surveys, the two events could be used to raise awareness about forthcoming plans for town surveys.

ACTION: ALL - offers of assistance to carry out surveys in specific towns to CL as soon as possible

7.3.2 RY agreed to approach his two local community newsletter editors to ask if survey information could be included in the July issues (Pitlochry/Aberfeldy area); DF to approach the Broughty Ferry Gazette; CM to approach the Perthshire Advertiser (including the Strathearn Herald, etc.).

ACTION: RY/ DF/ CM to follow up local survey publicity

ACTION: RY/DF/CM to report back to either CD or CL as to publicity achieved

7.4 There is still an urgent need to prepare "Swift Nest Site Priority Area" maps for use within all Tayside Planning Departments. Individual sites do not need to be pinpointed; it is important to identify nesting colonies. Although it would be useful to include such information on the local authority GIS, paper maps should be encouraged in the meantime. It was suggested the Ranger Services might be able to assist in this project, together with NTS or SWT volunteers.

ACTION: CD and CL to take this forward in Tayside

ACTION: ALL - offers of help to CD or CL please

[after the meeting, CL was reminded that the Angus Ranger Service had undertaken a swift survey in Forfar. It had also been mooted that a survey of the Angus Country Parks and Montrose Basin be undertaken.

ACTION: CL to liaise with the Angus Ranger Service]

8. Date of Next Meeting

No date for the next meeting was arranged.