

Minutes of committee meeting held on 27 Feb. 2010

The meeting commenced at 2.pm. at the Perth Museum and Art gallery. Present were: Richard Buckland (Chair); Duncan Davidson (Butterfly Recorder and Local organiser, Fife); Barry Prater (Local organiser, Borders); Lesley McCabe (Local organiser, Perthshire); Helen Rowe (Local organiser, Aberdeenshire). David Lampard (Local organiser, Tayside) had advised the chair that he may be detained at work and in the event did not appear). Apologies had been received from Susan McKenzie (Treasurer) and Simon Pinder (Newsletter Editor).

1. The Chair made the **introductions**, as many of the committee had not met each other before. He then gave a quick history of the branch in an effort to explain why the administration of the branch has been a little haphazard up until now. He explained that the branch had been started in 1995 by David Spooner and that David had taken on many of the committee positions in order to get the branch off the ground. At one time David was Organiser, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. When he took on a teaching assignment in the United States in 1997, Chris Stamp, our first Recorder took on the role of Editor and Richard Buckland took on the role of Organiser. This meant that Chris had two roles and Richard soon took on the Editor's job as well when Chris relinquished that. So in these early days, committee members had numerous positions on the committee. This had the effect of making the administration a bit haphazard as the few committee members lived a considerable distance apart. He then went on to explain that he wanted this situation to change from now on and to draw the proverbial line in the sand.

Introductions over, the committee went on to the main agenda.

2. The **Branch Constitution** was discussed briefly. Richard Buckland explained that this was only drafted when members wanted to apply for an Awards for All grant and is close to the model in the branch handbook.

There were several implications to this constitution. The first of these was the need to hold a regular AGM. A suitable date was discussed and Richard mentioned that our Treasurer has expressed the idea that she would be sending an end of year financial report to BC Head Office in April and that she would like to give a report to the branch mid-way through the year, so the committee looked at the possibility of having an AGM in Sept/October time. It was thought that some members might still be on holiday in September and that October was a bit too close to Member's Day. This is to be held on 30 Oct. this year and as it might be difficult to get members along to two meetings in October, it might be a good idea to hold the **AGM** at the **Member's Day**. It should be possible to hold a quick meeting (over lunch?) if it is only going to be a business meeting.

The Chair also raised the fact that BC HO seem to think we should have separate positions for Organiser and Chairperson. The committee were of the opinion that the same person could do both roles.

3. The committee considered the subject of **membership of the committee**. Duncan Davidson suggested that the Webmaster (Mark Cubitt) should be asked to join the committee, which was met with general approval. Some felt that the Moths Officer should be on the committee. Richard Buckland explained that our Moths Officer, Jeff Waddell had resigned from the committee, as the pressure of work and having a young family made it difficult to do properly. But under normal circumstances, the Moths Officer would be on the committee and we will try to recruit another. In this regard, Duncan Davidson suggested that Mark Cubitt might take this on as he is a very keen moth-er and might be persuaded to do it as well as being Webmaster. A Conservation Officer's position was also raised. Barry Prater wondered whether this should constitute a post at all. In relation to the updating of the RAPs, which appears later in his report, this could be an important position and the question will remain on the table. Any role played by a Health & Safety Officer was thought to be covered in the Volunteers Handbook, which has a section on H & S. Risk Assessments are to be drawn up for events such as moth nights where bright lights are being used and high

voltage electrical equipment is in use in close proximity to members of the public.

This means that the composition of the branch committee is:

Chair (or Organiser), Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Recorder, Moths Officer, Webmaster, Conservation Officer, Local Organisers (currently 5) This will change as some local organisers already have dual roles on the committee, and do not have two positions on the committee.

The Chair indicated that he would approach Pete Kinnear for the Conservation Off. post, as he was an author of the RAPs of East and South West branches with Paul Kirkland, although he has been ill for a long time and still may not be able to accept.

This concluded discussion of the branch Constitution.

4. The **financial position** was examined next. Our Treasurer, Susan McKenzie had submitted a report on request from the Chair, and this showed that the branch has approx. £4,000 in the account, while the Atlas account shows that it is now in credit, to the tune of approx. £400. Richard Buckland explained that Distributors (wholesalers) of the atlas owed the branch an additional ~£200 for books that they have sold, but not yet paid us for.

He also explained that all bills to do with production of the Borders Atlas had now been paid and that sales of the atlas would now result in direct profit for the branch to spend on conservation within the branch area. Some discussion ensued as to how the money could be spent. Richard said that he had thought of spending some of the proceeds from the atlas on financing a survey of **White-letter Hairstreak** by the Goodyears (experts from England running a nationwide survey). This would only cost between £300-£400.

He also suggested that money could be spent on financing **targeted moth trapping** in areas that have not been surveyed well as yet. The idea would be to allow people to go to areas they believe need to be surveyed and book a room in a B&B for the night. The following morning they would record the catch and send in the records to their local moth recorder. The branch would pay the transport costs and the B&B bill. The committee felt that while this scheme had merit, it was too generous and would be open to abuse by people booking expensive hotels and possibly not doing any serious moth trapping. Barry Prater also had reservations about the quality of the people being allowed to take advantage of this scheme. He thought that good, reliable data would only be obtained by experienced trappers. These would have to be organised by the local moth recorders. So such a scheme would have to be carefully monitored but could be helpful in allowing a more comprehensive coverage of the area, which is large and cumbersome. Unfortunately, many of the species of moths on the latest proposals from the Stirling office for renewal of the SNH grant were restricted to areas in the north of the branch and so may not be suitable for this scheme.

Nevertheless, the committee voiced the opinion that they wanted to encourage more moth recording by indicating that they thought the branch should buy 2 more generators and a few more moth traps (Robinsons, Skinners and portable Heaths – the committee would leave it up to the local organisers to deal with these purchases).

5. The Chair went through the **Branch Data Form** to be completed for Head Office and which Mark Young of Council was to have gone through at the Scotland committee meeting. The Chair had provisionally completed it and the full committee made various amendments which the Chair noted and added to the forms.

6. Richard Buckland then started a discussion on the **branch RAP**, by summarising the work that had been carried out on the butterflies. The committee concluded that some species had been surveyed and annual monitoring set up sufficiently to constitute success in carrying out the RAP in part. But it was felt that the final part of the action proposed in the RAP was missing. That is, the advice to landowners as to how to maintain their land holdings so that butterfly populations are conserved. The committee felt that this was the role of the Stirling office and our conservation officer there.

7. Richard Buckland then went on to note that the Report Form for the moths was completely blank. The committee felt that the branch was so spread out that it was difficult to draw up a sensible RAP for the branch, as the different areas within it are so diverse. We felt that as the present RAP is

probably out of date, and a new one should be drawn up to reflect the different areas within the branch. Perhaps separate ones should be drawn up for each sub-group within the branch. This may be where a Conservation Officer would be able to help.

Barry Prater is currently drawing up a list of species he feels that the moth group in the Borders might concentrate on for the next few years. This will be submitted to the Stirling office for comments.

8. Finally, Barry Prater talked about **involving the members** and getting them active. He suggested that if you merely wrote to people most of the time it did not mean very much to them and so the message went straight into the bin. He suggested it may be better to devise simple tasks for them to do and ask them directly to carry them out. A more direct approach like this was going to be tried in the Borders.

9. The meeting broke up when the museum staff wanted to close up for the night. But nevertheless, most of the agenda had been discussed and some conclusions arrived at. We will organise an AGM for October which is when we next plan to meet as a committee.

NB.

Although David Lampard was unable, through work commitments, to attend the meeting, he did send in a progress report of the things he is doing on Tayside. These were:
researching historical moth records for VC90 and preparing a spreadsheet of all moth records in preparation to submitting to the NMRS.

Drawing up some field trips for the 2010 season, which includes a possible trip to Loch Muick with the Dundee Nats., a possible trip to the Sidlaw hills and attending the Open day on Barry Buddon with the possibility of doing some moth trapping.

He is also looking into the possibility of attending Countryside festivals at Glamis Castle and elsewhere in Perthshire to promote the society.