



Butterfly
Conservation

East Scotland Branch

Minutes of a Branch Committee Meeting held on 30 November 2011 in Perth

Present: Barry Prater (Branch Chairman), Richard Buckland (Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Lothians Area Organiser), David Lampard (Tayside Area Organiser), Helen Rowe (Aberdeen Area Organiser), Duncan Davidson (Butterfly Recorder, Fife Area Organiser), Lesley McCabe (Perth Area Organiser).

Apologies: Susan McKenzie (Treasurer)

1. Declaration of Interests

None were declared. The Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy recently issued by BC Head Office was noted.

2. Introduction

Barry outlined his vision for the future of the branch:

- the branch's forward strategy should be aligned with that of BC nationally and support the programme of the BC Scotland team
- conservation of butterflies and moths should be the guiding light for all activities, recognising that conservation can be helped at various levels and in many different ways
- the branch membership needs to be developed in terms of numbers and activities
- more publicity for BC locally and for the branch within BC will have benefits
- a spending plan to support the forward programme needs to be developed.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising

The previous meeting had been held in February 2010 and the minutes from it were noted. The main actions which had been taken following this meeting were:

- A branch AGM had been arranged by Richard and was held during the Members Day in October 2010.
- Additional committee members had been sought through requests in newsletters and the branch website (which included an outline of the roles involved) but no-one had come forward.
- A considerable amount of moth-trapping equipment for use by branch members had been purchased (currently located in the Borders and Aberdeenshire).

4. Branch Strategy 2012 onwards

Prior to the meeting Barry had circulated a paper outlining his thoughts on the overall branch strategy, together with the BC 2020 Vision document, the Regional Action Plan (RAP) and a map showing Prime Areas for Lepidoptera (PALs) in Scotland. He explained that he was hoping for broad agreement on the main elements for the future but not to cover all the details at this time, although decisions were needed on some items.

The 2020 Vision of BC provided a framework for organising all the branch's activities and this was the approach being used by Hampshire and Isle of Wight branch. The current SNH grant to BC Scotland required a strong people-orientated approach to the work of BC, including engaging them in events at NNRs and SSSIs; the branch should aim to give support on this. The PALs map showed several areas within the branch and these could provide another focus for activities.

4.1 Surveys, Monitoring and Conservation

There was much discussion on the now outdated RAP. Some good progress had been made with survey and monitoring for butterflies, but little follow-up action on conservation. For moths the situation was less clear as much of what had happened was not instigated by nor the results collated by the branch.

Richard said that he thought the existing butterfly species in the RAP would be retained. Barry thought that the top priorities should be the Small Blue, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Large Heath (this last especially in lowland areas). For both butterflies and moths the reasons for selecting a species for action were debated - national or local rarity, recent decline, proportion of species held in branch area, etc. David had been through all the moths in the original RAP and assessed their status for VC90. He wondered whether some day-flying species might be targeted by people participating in a walking festival next summer; Paul Brooks, another local moth-er, would be contacted about this. No clear conclusions were reached on which species should be priorities but all would send their views on butterflies and moths to Barry before Christmas. He would then work on the revised RAP so that it is available in time for next year's survey season. It should be publicised via the branch website.

Many other aspects of survey and conservation work were covered with the following results:

- there was little enthusiasm for having species or habitat champions, partly because of the extent and varied habitats in the branch
- targeted survey work for the current BNM period would continue and Duncan agreed to sort out data to guide people; this would be a large task and it was thought best to have the data and guidance available online, probably through the branch website
- Richard agreed to continue to manage the WCBS activity in the branch area
- transects data would continue to be handled as before with some results being transmitted directly to Ian Middlebrook and some via Duncan, who pointed out that it was unsatisfactory for transects records to by-pass the local Butterfly Recorder and hence be unverified
- our many urban members would be encouraged to participate in survey work
- it was agreed that the branch should cover volunteers' fuel costs for travelling to carry out agreed survey work, etc, but this would be done on an 'as needed' basis rather than offering it in every case
- involvement with Local Biodiversity Partnerships should continue or be extended; currently we have inputs as follows:
 - Barry (Borders LBP)
 - David (Tayside LBP, covering Angus, Perth & Kinross and Dundee)
 - Richard (Edinburgh and the Lothians LBPs)
 - Helen (various - NE Scotland, Aberdeen, Cairngorms LBPs)

Duncan agreed to find out the situation in Fife to judge whether he should offer to get involved.

4.2 Outdoor Events

The branch has had a full programme of butterfly trips, moth evenings, etc in recent years and it was agreed that this would continue, taking opportunities to hold these at NNRs & SSSIs and to arrange joint events with groups such as SWT, NTS and local natural history societies to get more

attendees. Richard asked for details of as many as possible to be provided to him by the end of February so that they could be included in next year's branch newsletter which should go out in early April.

Contributions to various events organised by others were discussed with the following conclusions:

- Save Our Butterflies Week (19-27 May) - possible species/sites:
 - Pearl-bordered Fritillary - Aberdeenshire (Helen)
 - Green Hairstreak - Pentlands (Richard), Loch Tay (Lesley)
 - Small Blue - Lambertton coast (Barry)

These would be looked into further; BC HO will want to publicise some events in SOBW and will need full details of these, so decisions needed in due course.

- National Moth Nights (21, 22 and 23 June) - can cover day-flying species and the focus is on brownfield sites - possibilities to be looked into, including perhaps
 - Haddo House Bioblitz on 23 June
- National Insect Week (25 June - 1 July) - no discussion on this but there may be opportunities for events
- Plantlife event at Trinafour between Pitlochry and Dalwhinnie (27 June) - Lesley would contact Ron Youngman to see if he can help with this

Three shows at which BC (Scotland and/or the branch) might have a presence were considered:

- Scottish Bird Fair (19-20 May, Hopetoun House) - BC HO had agreed to fund a small stand provided that volunteers who would push for new members could be there. Richard would look into possible members who might help; Barry would approach the other Scottish branches too.
- Gardening Scotland (1-3 June, Ingliston) - this is led by Shona but she is keen for a volunteer to take on a complete day so that she doesn't have to do all three. Again, possible members would be approached. **Post meeting note - BC not having a stand in 2012**
- Big Tent Festival (28-29 July, Falkland, Fife) - Duncan will check the situation with Paul Kirkland; he has offered to run a moth trap but it is not clear how this would fit into the event.

4.3 Branch Membership and Communications

Implementation of the requirements of the Branch Data Protection Guidelines (which had been circulated previously) was discussed. All committee members agreed to comply with these and Barry would inform HO; this would then allow HO to send through the email addresses held for branch members.

It was agreed that Richard, as Membership Secretary, would be the one person to hold a full set of branch emails and Barry would forward to him the guidance from HO on secure storage and encryption of files. Other committee members requiring access to these email addresses for specific purposes would get them from Richard.

There was general agreement that a move to distributing fewer paper copies of newsletters should be aimed for, but without alienating members who don't have access to the Internet. All such publications are now created digitally, are available through the branch website and are often better viewed on screen than on paper. The next annual branch newsletter would be circulated on paper as usual, but with a clear message within it (reinforced by a loose insert)

that recipients need to request to receive paper copies of subsequent issues. If this approach is adopted it may be necessary to revise it if there is serious adverse feedback from members. Richard asked the local group organisers to let him have an annual report for the branch newsletter.

Publicity using local newspapers was discussed. Some committee members have useful contact with the local press and it was agreed that these could be developed further and new ones could be made in other areas. Committee members will work on this, using BC Press Releases and other news as prompts for talking with press contacts.

4.4 Finances

Susan had suggested that around £2000 should be kept as the branch's financial reserves to cover items of regular expenditure which were straightforward to identify - newsletters, postage, etc. At present the branch had between £5000 and £6000 and so there was a considerable sum which could and should be used for the purposes of BC and the branch. The possibility of using some to assist other wildlife groups with projects of benefit to Lepidoptera was discussed and Duncan suggested contributing to the costs of fencing at Kincaig Point, Fife, which has a Northern Brown Argus colony up to perhaps £500. He would discuss this further with SNH, who would be expected to manage the project.

Suggestions for additional appropriate spend would be put forward.

5. Branch Structure and Organisation

It was agreed that the current organisation based on local groups worked well and would continue.

The need for additional committee members for areas not presently covered was debated:

- Moths Officer - although role this might have been necessary in the past, following the major upsurge in moth recording for the NMRS it was felt that local and national communication and coordination on moths was good and no branch-wide position was now needed.
- Publicity Officer - the establishment of more and stronger links with the press at the local level should obviate the need for a branch publicity officer, but this situation may change.
- Youth Officer - there was strong support for a preferably young person who could spearhead a drive to get more young people involved with BC, either as members or enthusiastic volunteers; Facebook and other social media could have a role to play in this.

6. Future Meetings

The possibility of having the next branch committee meeting in Spring 2012 was discussed but no decision reached, partly because the Recorders' Gathering was happening on 17th March.

The next AGM would be arranged to coincide with the 2012 Members' Day in the autumn and Barry would make plans for this. It would be just a business meeting to cover the essential requirements.

Barry Prater
21 December 2011

Actions Arising from the Meeting

	Action	Who and When
1	Investigate Walking Festival for moth recording opportunities and contact Paul Brooks about this	David Lampard
2	Send Barry suggested priority butterfly and moth species for inclusion in the revised RAP	All - before Christmas
3	Prepare lists of species and sites to guide BNM survey work over the next three years	Duncan Davidson
4	Continue coordination of WCBS activities across the branch area	Richard Buckland
5	Investigate Biodiversity Partnership(s) in Fife and decide whether involvement would be beneficial for the branch	Duncan Davidson
6	Give priority to holding branch events at NNRs and SSSIs	All
7	Details of branch events to be sent to Richard for newsletter	All - by end February
8	Look into and confirm events for Save Our Butterflies Week	All - by end January (although deadline from HO not clear)
9	Suggest suitable sites for National Moth Nights events (focus on brownfield sites)	All
10	Contact Ron Youngman to help at Trinafour Plantlife event	Lesley McCabe
11	Identify potential volunteers to help at Scottish Bird Fair	Richard Buckland
12	Contact other Scottish branches regarding help at Scottish Bird Fair	Barry Prater
13	Contact potential volunteers to help at Gardening Scotland BC not now having a stand in 2012	Richard Buckland
14	Check situation on Big Tent Festival with Paul Kirkland	Duncan Davidson
15	Inform HO that committee will abide by Data Protection Policy	Barry Prater
16	Forward guidance on implementing Data Protection Policy to Richard	Barry Prater
17	Include message to members about receiving future newsletters on paper	Richard Buckland
18	Provide Richard with local group reports for newsletter	All - by end February
19	Develop contacts with local press to publicise BC and branch	All
20	Discuss with SNH possibility of helping fund fencing at Kinncraig Point	Duncan Davidson
21	Put forward suggestions to Barry for spending branch funds to further Lepidoptera conservation	All
22	Take opportunities to seek out a potential Youth Officer for the branch	All
23	Suggest to Barry suitable date and location for a spring 2012 meeting of the committee	All
24	Make plans for branch AGM at 2012 Members Day	Barry

Barry Prater
21 December 2011