

**MINUTES OF EAST SCOTLAND BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETING – 15th FEBRUARY 2017
AT BC OFFICES STIRLING.**

Present: Barry Prater (Borders Area Organiser), , Helen Rowe (Aberdeen Area Organiser), Glyn Edwards (Branch Secretary, Angus and Perthshire Butterfly Recorder), Richard Buckland (Membership and Newsletter Secretary & Lothians Area Organiser), Cathy Caudwell (Perthshire: Area Organiser), Colin Whitehead (Treasurer), Duncan Davidson (Fife and Clacks Butterfly Recorder and Fife Area Organiser), David Lampard-Tayside Area Organiser).

In the absence of a Branch Chair Glyn chaired the meeting.

1.) Apologies

Paul Brooks and Apithanny Bourne

Paul Kirkland had been invited to the meeting but was unable to attend.

2.) Declaration of Interests.

None were declared.

3.) Approval of the minutes of previous meeting (15 September 2016).

These were agreed to be a true record.

4.) Actions from last meeting.

Collation of Butterfly Records.

Iain Cowe had agreed to collate records from the 5 Butterfly Recorders and send them to Duncan who had volunteered to produce distribution maps for each species. To date Duncan has not received these records.

Action: Duncan to check progress with Iain.

5.) Branch Finances

a) Changes to procedure

Colin outlined the changes to the way Branches' finances are administered. From April 1st 2017 HQ at Wareham will take over the administration of all BC Branches' finances. They will be responsible for paying out money to claimants (expenses, projects, etc.) and receipt of money into the Branch accounts. Branch Treasurer will no longer be able to issue cheques. Approval of claims will still be via the treasurer and the current cheque signatories. Colin will send a scanned copy of the claim to an approved signatory who will then forward it to Wareham for payment. Wareham will probably require bank details of claimants so they can transfer the money directly to their account.

This change does not affect how the Branch is allowed to spend its money.

b) Current financial position.

The Branch finances are in a good position. The current balance is around £5800. This includes an anonymous donation of £746 (£585 + gift aid) for Helen's Aberdeenshire leaflet. The Branch has committed approximately £1600 (including gift) to this project which will leave a balance of around £4000.

Expenditure of the Branch Newsletter will decrease next year as most members will be sent electronic copies only (see item 6)

Other possible demands on Branch finances were:

- 1) Helen – Aspen planting for Dark Bordered Beauty

-Fencing to protect Aspen for DBB. 'Trees for Life' may give some money towards this project

- 2) Barry – may require funding for 'Hall hire' for the Scottish Entomologists' Gathering which this year is being based at Eyemouth for activities in Berwickshire.

The Branch has some funds available to support Butterfly/Moth activities.

Cathy suggested more interpretation signs at some sites to increase public awareness of what species could be found in the area.

Interpretation Signs are known to be present at Kincaig (thanks to Hamish), Tentsmuir (SNH), and on an A4 sign at Coldingham for NBA.

The Committee agreed that money could be available for more signs but it is up to the Committee members to identify the sites where they might be beneficial and get agreement with the landowners etc.

Duncan highlighted that getting 'free photos' that can be used for these signs can be a problem. Barry pointed out that within the Branch there were a lot of excellent photographers who would be willing for their photos to be used for this purpose.

Wareham would also like a plan of future spending plans.

PAT Testing

We have received an instruction from Victoria Webb at HQ that all Branch owned portable electrical equipment must be PAT tested and the certificates sent to HQ. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Branch would comply with this request and Branch equipment that has not been PAT tested should not be used.

Action: Colin to send Glyn a copy of the latest asset register showing who has Branch equipment.

Glyn to contact equipment holders advising them to get the tests carried out.

6) Newsletter.

Following discussions at the last Branch Meeting, Richard intends to send electronic copies only to Branch members who have an email address.

Last year approximately 550 copies of the Newsletter were printed at an approximate cost of £1.60 per copy.

This year approximately 400 copies will be sent out electronically. The Newsletter will include a note that recipients of the electronic copy can request a hard copy if they want one. Additional copies will also be printed to cover new members who receive a copy of the last Newsletter as part of their welcome pack.

Richard requested that all articles/events etc. for inclusion in the Newsletter should be with him by the end of February.

7) Events for 2017.

Last year there were some issues where events were not available on the website. This is thought to be because the system now requires that the title of all events is prefixed by the name of the Branch. Events are now automatically deleted once the event date has passed. If anyone has any issues with inputting events, they should raise it with the Committee who will try to resolve it.

Katie Callaghan (HQ Publicity Officer) has requested a copy of Branch events with a view to helping publicise them on local or even national Press. Richard agreed to send Glyn a copy of events due to be published in the next Newsletter.

This year BC Scotland are holding a Scottish Small Blue Butterfly Week from May 27th – June 4th. So far a Training Day at Barry Buddon is planned for June 4th. Some Kidney Vetch planting is planned in Angus (details to follow) and Barry will include a Small Blue activity during the Entomologists' Gathering in Eyemouth on June 10th & 11th. Hopefully more events will be organized.

8) Recorders Gathering

This will take place on March 18th at Battleby.

The agenda has been issued and the Branch is not due to speak at the meeting, although Mark Cubitt will be presenting the findings from his Herald Moth survey. Glyn and Apithanny will sort out the display board for the event.

9) Moths

It seems that all is on schedule for CMRs to have their records sent off by the end of March for inclusion in the updated Moth Atlas which is due in 2018.

As indicated a year ago, Duncan is to step down as CMR for Fife at the end of March. To date no replacement has been found. It was indicated that another 2 CMRs may also be retiring. It was thought that the display board at the Recorders Gathering would be a good place to advertise these posts.

Action; Barry to check if other CMRs are retiring.

Glyn to advertise positions on the display board at Battleby.

10) Butterflies.

Glyn has contacted the other Butterfly Recorders and no issue with 2016 records have been raised.

A new Butterfly Atlas with data up to 2014 has been completed. There are no plans to publish a hard copy of this document but it is available to download at <http://butterfly-conservation.org/files/atlas-uk-butterflies2010-2014.pdf>

The 'First Sightings' page on the Branch Website is the most popular page. Unfortunately, last year the page had very few results. The Butterfly Recorders have agreed to send in more results and all Committee Members are requested to do the

same.

The Northern Brown Argus survey in Perthshire and Angus will continue with visits to sites where the butterfly has not been recorded in recent years. NBA is now a target species in the Tayside BAP and Catherine Lloyd has requested a training day for NBA.

Action; Cathy and Glyn to organize.

Yarrow Valley Project. The Project is waiting for funding from ECAF -it is possible that there will be a requirement to present the grant application in the spring. The aim is to get the landowners working together for the benefit of the butterfly. Small Blue. Survey work will continue in the 3 areas where the butterfly is found.

Large Heath. Richard plans to continue survey work for this species. In 2016 the main issue was the lack of sunny days in July! He did manage to find the butterfly at four sites .

11) Aberdeenshire leaflet.

The finance is now available for the project and most of the preparatory work has been completed. Helen is still waiting for information on some of the sites but hopes to have everything in place by March 7th when the current quotation for printing etc. expires. Helen has done an excellent job to get the project to this stage.

There was general disappointment that BC Scotland had not been able to support the project.

Charging for leaflets. Glyn asked whether it would be possible to charge or ask for a donation for these leaflets to recoup some of the costs.

Duncan thought this was a bad idea-the purpose of the leaflets was to enthuse people and charging would put people off getting a leaflet. The possible financial benefit would be if people consequently joined BC. The Committee supported Duncan's views.

Donation boxes are used at some events which raise a small amount of money for the Branch.

12) Volunteer recognition.

At the last Scottish BC meeting Mark Wynn had raised the issue of volunteer recognition proposing a scheme similar to that used by the RSPB where a certificate and pin badge are awarded to volunteers after 5, 10, 15 etc. years.

It was thought that a) any criteria used to determine who qualifies for the awards would be difficult to implement and b) local volunteers are not seeking this kind of recognition as they already know their efforts are appreciated via Recorders, Branch Organisers and peers.

Thus East Branch is not in favour of the scheme.

13) Future meetings. It was agreed to hold the next meeting in September 2017. Glyn to arrange.

14) AOB

Helen- Helen has been asked to speak at NESBReC Recorders Gathering in March about butterfly and moth surveys. She asked if someone was still needed to take on the Culvie Wood transect. Barry thought it had been decided not to continue the transect due to changes on the site, but that Kariin de Rijck who was considering it plans to start a new one nearer her home.

Action: Barry to check.

Helen asked if the WCBS square near Turriff was still available. **Action;** Richard to check.

Helen pointed out that the Action Plans page of the website are still not functioning. **Action:** Glyn to check with MC.

-Margaret Carlaw and Derek Ogston have produced an excellent book on Butterflies and Moths in the Scottish Borders Parish of Stichill and Helen wondered if this could be publicised on the Publications page of the Branch website. In principle, the proposal was accepted. Glyn to progress.

Circulation of Minutes: All Committee Members, Mark Cubitt, Iain Cowe, Simon Metcalfe, Glenn Roberts, Trefor Woodford, Malcolm Lindsay, Paul Kirkland, Diane Garland (BC HQ), Mark Young, Michael Johnston