



# TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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## STEERING GROUP MEETING

### Minutes of Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008 Board Room, County Buildings, Forfar

Present:	Martin Price: Chair (MP) Pam Coutts (PC) Catherine Lloyd (CL) Tim Barratt (TB) Esther Rogers-Nicoll (ERN) Carol Littlewood (CLT) Alison Anderson (AA) Britta Peters: Minute Taker (BP)	CMS, Perth College Angus Council Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Forestry Commission Scotland Perth & Kinross Council Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Dundee City Council Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Apologies:	Mark Simmons (MS) Martyn Jamieson Bruce Campbell (BC) Bruce Anderson Carolyn Deasley (CD) Christine Hall Bryan Harris Richard Lockett	Perth Museum Scottish Field Studies Association SEPA RSPB SNH Scottish Agricultural College Dundee City Council Perth FWAG
Circulated to:	Jin Park Merrill Smith Kate Scott Alan Hendry Paul Ramsay Ben Notley Stewart Roberts	Perth College Dundee City Council; NFUS SGRPID Scottish Rural Property & Business Assoc NTS Angus Council

**1. Apologies & Welcome**

As above. MP welcomed Britta Peters as minute taker. She is working on a temporary basis with the Partnership.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting 17th June 2008.**

All attendees were happy to accept these

**3. Matters arising**

Still as per minutes 17/06/08.

Planning Manual – CD had asked for a number of inaccuracies to be corrected before distribution and for the current version to be removed from the website in the meantime. This had been done.

**4. Sub Group Leaders' Project Proforma Reports / Future Actions Updates*****Urban:***

CL reported that the People's Millions funding which Dundee City Council had bid for (£50,000) for the Dundee Orchard Trail had been rejected; £10,000 funding applied for instead. Also advised that an SNH/SEPA Seminar on Invasive Species is to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> November. CL also confirmed that she had arranged for The Living Roof DIY Guide to be officially launched in Scotland at a public workshop to be held (hopefully in Dundee) on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009; Dusty Gedge had confirmed his willingness to give a presentation to the "Biodiversity & Greenspace" Seminar planned for 20<sup>th</sup> February. Angus Council has agreed to host this in Forfar. Funding will be needed to bring two key speakers from London (Dusty Gedge and Edward Mayer); CL would welcome advice on this.

**ACTION: ALL to advise re. seminar/workshop funding**

CL reported on the success of the ZOOM project – c950 packs have been sent and completed survey forms are being returned; a reminder will be sent to all participants soon. AL agreed that a reprint of the survey form would be undertaken (funded by the sub-group budget) and hoped the survey could continue next year. The ZOOM project is beginning to lead to the practical 'Bee Wild' Project which will hopefully get under way in 2009. CL gave update of the Tayside Swift Project and acknowledged the help of Stephanie Shaw, a Dundee University student placement, who input much of the existing data into a new database.

***Woodlands:***

TB reported that Mike Strachan is keen to become involved in Green Tourism project. Woodland Management Project - Scottish Coordinator to survey woods to see what is potentially there (breeding grounds etc). Woodland Management Awareness: BIFF project to be implemented soon; Management of Non-Timber Forestry Products: event planned this autumn with links to BIFF; Red Squirrel Conservation on track; Tayside Wildlife Tree Project – Rachael Higgins has offered to help design the education pack; Tayside Woodland Grazing Initiative - Oak & Juniper Woodland Project up and running; Ancient Tree Hunt - being pushed by Woodlands Trust - involving children actively; new pro-active contractor (Harriet) just taken on by National Trust to record trees; Tayside Juniper Project - long term project, another 3 years' funding achieved via the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund; TB reported on the proposed Aspen Project and advised that a conference on the subject is to be held in Cairngorms in early October; he will give subsequent feedback.

Carse of Gowrie Orchard Project – excellent training courses held recently (set up and administered by the Partnership). Suggestion made for further tree grafting and pruning courses; funds now available to go ahead with other key projects in the Carse; lots of interest shown from the orchard owners, local organisations and individuals (including producers). CL had applied to LEADER to ensure the Orchard Festival runs smoothly; John Hancox to run with specific projects over 5 days of the Festival. The grant has been match-funded by Forestry Commission Scotland/Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust. This will enable fruit tree planting to go ahead in some Carse communities. CL circulated the draft Apple Day posters/programme and reported on upcoming events. Suggestion made to place posters in farmshops, garden centres (Dobbies etc). CL reported back on the international orchard conference she had attended recently in Sheffield (funded by the FCS): Dr Crispin Hayes had

given a paper on the Carse Orchards. First draft of HAP received; focussing mainly on the Carse, the Plan now needs to be widened to include the rest of Tayside. Suggestion made to copy a similar German apple project where local varieties of apples are dried; this also happens in the Czech Republic with smoked apple slices.

#### ***Coast & Estuaries:***

CL advised that a Coast & Estuaries Sub Group Meeting is to be held in late October or early November; it has been difficult to get key members to agree on a suitable date. Reported that no update had been received on the Dune Habitat Restoration. In respect of the Tayside Terns Project CL reported that the Tern raft is in place and was used immediately by birds. A second raft might be put in place as project was successful; no SNH update on this as yet. CL advised that a progress report in respect of the proposed Firth of Tay Wader and Wildfowl Audit is due at the next meeting.

#### ***Water & Wetland:***

CL had received an e-mail from Bruce Campbell saying that owing to promotion he was handing over to colleague Ian Lorimer as Sub-Group Leader. Short report will be incorporated into the next Priorities update following a sub-group meeting (end September).

#### ***Farmland & Upland:***

No report possible on upland projects as Martyn Jamieson had not been in touch; Christine Hall is working on a watervole project at Kindrogan. Butterfly Conservation is keen to start a butterfly project, subject to funding.

#### **ACTION: MJ to update on Upland projects**

Farmland – CLT reported on the Barn Owl Project: 10 further visits have been funded. 4 barn owl, 3 kestrel and 3 jackdaw chicks have been found in the boxes currently in place. Most boxes will be used as winter roosts before they are used for nesting but they have proved to be very successful already. CLT circulated map showing barn owl range (information collected over a 4-year survey period). This shows a 1½ to 2 km diameter around sightings to ensure sites cannot be immediately identified. This will go on the TBP website in due course. Mitigation should be requested before new development goes ahead.

Calcareous Grassland event (Blair Atholl): the afternoon attendance was not as good as hoped for, but all those who attended found the walk very interesting (and the networking excellent). The public attendance was not great at the evening event; in future perhaps the title of the walk could be changed to reflect “butterflies and bees” rather than “calcareous grassland”.

The Tree Sparrow Project is coming to an end and loose ends need to be tied up; Angus Schools currently involved, Monikie School possibly involved in future.

Saving the small blue butterfly – likelihood of this project being started properly in 2009.

Other projects are currently on hold due to lack of funding.

At the last sub-group meeting (which MP attended), it was agreed to ask Martin Robinson, a well-known consultant to undertake the preparation of an up-to-date species and habitat matrix for Tayside. CL and MS had already discussed the possibility of a student placement undertaking some of this work in early 2009 as an updated species list, in particular, is urgent to achieve for Tayside. The new matrix would highlight species and habitats suitable for inclusion in a revised Tayside Regional Priorities list, taking into consideration the project proforma habitats and species chosen for 2007-10. Originally the sub-group had been led to believe that the list had to be passed to the RPAC in October. After the meeting SNH reported that a similar piece of work was being undertaken on a Scotland-wide basis by their policy / advice officers. In the interests of resource efficiency, SNH therefore suggested that it would be prudent to wait until this was completed before working on a list for Tayside.

CL reported on the Scottish Biodiversity Officers' Network meeting where SNH had given a presentation on the compilation of the Scottish Species and Habitats List. Brigid Primrose,

SNH, had subsequently sent the Partnership a lot of information (attached with the minutes). The various lists were discussed at length and various suggestions were made. It was agreed that Martin Robinson would be asked to update the Excel lists once the information has been received for Tayside (from the SNH Scotland-wide list). As this will be a much shorter task, funding could come from the amalgamated Farmland/Upland sub-group budgets.

MP suggested that direct correspondence was to be made with Syd House, as chair of the RPAC, about what is needed and an agreeable time agenda set. It was pointed out that the Management Team does not need to be involved in this as funding is to come directly from the Sub-group budget. CL to speak to Martin Robinson re costing after all relevant information has been received from Syd. CL also to write to MR with precise instructions (overseen by MP for clarity). Management Group to be contacted to see if they have any objections. All sub-groups (bar the Education sub-group) will be involved in deciding the final proposed Tayside RPAC list.

**ACTION: CL to speak to Syd House and contact Martin Robinson again**

**ACTION: Management Team to discuss**

5 **Education:**

CL said that the ongoing Angus Sheltered Housing and Hospital Project is successful, but the Perth & Kinross Rangers were still having difficulty in setting up a similar project. She has liaised with the BBRSC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council UK) to bring the national exhibition "Biodiversity – What On Earth is It" to Dundee for 3 months next year. The Partnership had been asked if it would like to take the two slots for the Café Science book review/author debate at Sensations in April/May 2009. This would coincide with both the Biodiversity Festival and Scottish Biodiversity Week. One author would go to Borders (Dundee) to be available for signing. CL asked Steering Group for as many ideas for the Tayside Biodiversity Festival as possible (1st to 10th May 2009), bearing in mind that most Ranger Services will be publishing their "What's On" guides soon. MP informed re Rural Biodiversity Policy and Action Needs event which is to take place 13th May.

**ACTION: ALL to send Festival ideas/proposals to CL**

**ACTION: MP to circulate details regarding 13<sup>th</sup> May event**

CL further reported that the Scottish Biodiversity Week date (to coincide with International Biodiversity Day on 22nd May) has still not been confirmed and that there was an unpopular suggestion that the national event be re-named "Scottish Nature Week". The Dundee Law Geodiversity trail still has no funding. The Mammal Atlas has been delayed - McManus Gallery still keen to make links. As there is no funding for the 'Countryside on Wheels' project this is unlikely to go ahead, but the Bee Wise project is likely to begin in 2009.

6 **Further Actions:**

The continuing lack of a Tayside Biodiversity Records Centre was discussed. TB to supply Borders Council Plan on how the recording of species is done there (mapping) and Shelley McCann will be invited to give a presentation/short talk on what she is achieving in Perth & Kinross Council and how she is carrying out species and habitats recording.

**ACTION: ERN to contact Shelley McCann**

7 **BARS:**

CL reported that Stephanie Shaw had spent two weeks in the office at the beginning of September and successfully input all the project proforma targets/actions. It was agreed that she would be asked to return for one week during the Christmas holidays to input the SITA TBAF actions. The next Management Team meeting to agree budget for SS work during Christmas holidays.

**ACTION: Management Team to discuss**

8 **SITA TBAF Funding**

Money for this year has almost been spent – only small projects can apply for 2008-09 funding, but project funding for 2009 can be considered now. Funds are to keep flowing for the foreseeable future (as per information from Andrew Saunders of SITA). Investment in Scotland is to continue. This is on a much smaller scale in Scotland (in the hundred thousands) compared to investment in England (millions of pounds). There may be a

possibility for further funding from SITA – MP/CL to contact before year end. Specific ideas for project-based funding needed.

**ACTION: MP/CL to contact SITA**

**9 Finance**

No update on this; BH to be asked to provide as soon as possible.

**ACTION: BH**

Sub Group budgets were discussed – it was agreed that insufficient money is available to fund the various projects the sub-groups wish to take forward. It is important to retain individual budgets for each of the sub-groups.

**10 Website Publication**

There have been about 293,000 hits on the TBP website since the beginning of the year. A new facility has been set up on the home page whereby the webmaster (Clare Bailey) can be contacted direct with suggestions, queries or complaints about the website (the site is fairly difficult to navigate at present).

**11 AOCB**

TB - Woodland In & Around Towns Scheme (new) open now to applicants; administered by Forestry Commission Scotland. Monies are available.

Because of the importance of the Invasive Species Seminar on 11th November it was agreed that the Management Team meeting would be changed to 12 November (Wednesday).

**ACTION: CL to warn Management Team of the change of date**

CLT confirmed that she was on the Angus Rural Environment Partnership (CL had attended the first meeting).

***Date and Time of next Meeting***

9th December 2009 – Perth

**ACTION: ERN to book room and lunch**