

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION - DORSET BRANCH

Minutes of Committee Meeting Held on 3rd June 2013 At 2, Hardy's Yard, East Street, Blandford

Present: Jane Smith (chair), Bill Shreeves, Allan Higgin, Keith Howland, Nigel Spring, Adrian Neil, Brian Dicker, Lyn Pullen, Bob Steedman, Bridget DeWhalley, Richard Belding.

Apologies: Robin George.

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Amendments proposed by Nigel in an email dated 27.03.13 have been incorporated into the minutes.

3. Matters Arising

Species Champions. Richard had got in touch with Jim Asher, but nothing further had been heard.

Village Days. It was agreed that we would not be able to hold a Village Day this year.

Kingcombe Course. Five people attended of whom 4 were from Dorset. No payment had been discussed for this year's course and, although a sum of money had been suggested for last year's, no contract had been signed and no money was received. It was agreed that this should not be pursued. It was also agreed that it was probably not worth participating in future courses as it was a lot of work for a low attendance.

4. The Website and Twitter

Lyn went through her paper that had been circulated before the meeting.

The Events Page. At present events have to be entered twice, once on the Branch website and once on the HQ one. If they just go into the HQ website there can be a link to ours, but only the headlines come up and clicking on the title takes you back to the HQ site. Nigel thought that we need to have control over our own page and asked if there could be a hyperlink, but Lyn said this would again just go back to the HQ site. Adrian asked if Dom's suggestion of an automated events diary would mean that information would go into both sites. Lyn said that this would not be the case; it would only feed our own website, but it would involve less work for her, giving her more time to do the more creative stuff (and it's tedious!). Jane asked what were the implications if we go with Dom's idea; the answer was that Arthur would have to type the events into a template. Arthur said he would be happy to do this so Jane suggested that it was the best option.

The question of cost was raised. Jane said we needed to be clear about the specification, in

particular what the output would look like. We should adopt the recently-agreed procedure for Project Control and Definition that includes provision for a contingency. Alan said there was a budget of £600 for the website. Lyn added that a few other things on the website need some work. It was agreed that Lyn will draw up a prioritised list that will be circulated to the committee for agreement and then passed to Dom for costings (Dom charges for work on the sightings form, but not generally for alterations on the rest of the website).

Action: Lyn

Lyn said that she would like some help with typing events into the HQ site and Arthur said he was quite happy to do some if he was shown how to do it.

On the subject of Events, should a postcode and grid reference be given for all events? It was agreed that event organisers should be encouraged to include them in the information sent to Arthur.

The Blog. Where should a link to it go, in a box on the home page or at the foot of all pages which is a lot of work for Dom. Richard suggested putting it on the home page or keeping it in the News section where it is at present. After discussion it was agreed it should go in the News section as it is about the latest happenings in gardens.

First Sightings. It was agreed that just the first sightings reported to the website should go on, not those that might be recorded elsewhere.

The HQ Website. It contains a page for each branch and we have control of ours. Up to 6 modules can be included. Lyn asked how we want to use the page, a constraint being the amount of work involved. Jane suggested highlighting in the News module first sightings of our flagship species plus the locations where they can be seen. This led to a discussion about identifying private sites and it was agreed that any sighting at such locations listed on our own website or on our page of the HQ website should be referred to as a 'Restricted Site'. Those identified were Rooksmoor, Batcombe, Langford Valley, Higher Sydling and Coombe Bottom. If anyone thinks of others, they should let Lyn know. It was agreed that development of the Dorset page on the website should be deferred until the autumn.

Action:

Lyn & All

Twitter. Our Twitter site should include some 'real' news, to balance our announcements of events - Twitterers who just use the site for their own ends are discourteous. Lyn is handicapped by lack of news coming in to her to feed into the website and Twitter; it was agreed that it was OK for her to prompt the committee for news as needed. Committee members are generally reluctant to use Twitter themselves though Lyn pointed out that she has had to learn how to do it and that it isn't difficult. She is, however, willing to put items up that are sent to her - she can take anything supplied and decide whether to put it on the website or tweet it. It needs to be noted that Twitter is a very immediate media and news needs to be fresh.

Action: Lyn

There was agreement, at Bob's suggestion, that some news about Moths could go in the news section. Lyn is very keen for this to happen so that we are not seen as being just about butterflies, but care needs to be taken not to tread on the Dorset Moths Group's toes.

5. Finance

Allan reported that about £6,000 had been spent since the last meeting and £1,300 had been received. No money from the HLS has been received since March and there seem to be delays in the system. Jane asked if we should rein back expenditure and Allan said that he didn't know what Nigel's plans were for the next 6 months, to which Nigel replied that nothing major was likely and some things can wait. Allan's view was that we just keep an eye on the situation.

Nigel said there would be some money coming in from the photography courses. Allan will check the position regarding VAT.

Action: Allan

6. Health & Safety

Keith had circulated a paper that he said was based on the risk assessment for Alner's Gorse and on the Health & Safety Executive Good Practice. He was asked if guided walks should be included and replied that the relevant sections of the risk assessment could be covered, for instance in this case the use of power tools would not be relevant. The forms could be returned to Keith when completed in order to gain an overview of the situation.

Nigel said that for school visits the principle was that if the score for Risk Severity was more than 8 the event should not take place unless the risk could be reduced. Arthur asked if transect walks should be included. Richard suggested that the transect co-ordinator should do one for the site and circulate it to the people who walk the transect. Bill commented that in the past the North Dorset walkers had not been keen on the idea. A further suggestion was that the risk assessment could be included in the transect walk descriptions that were being drawn up. Keith asked for any further comments to be sent to him.

Action: All

7. Events

Arthur said that Bob had circulated a list of Moth Nights and this will be put on the website. Bridget said that the display stall at Moors Valley Country Park had been very successful with 1,200 people attending the event. They had shown caterpillars and plants. Arthur said that he would need items for the next Events list by early September. We need to think of a speaker for the next AGM. Phil Sterling, Bob Gibbons and Hugh Miles were mentioned. Arthur will contact Phil first. Dates of 22nd or 29th March were proposed, Adrian will check the availability of Puddletown Village Hall.

Action: Arthur & Adrian

Lyn said she would be happy to have a social event in her garden again this year for people who had done work for the branch. Jane will ask her for a date.

Action: Jane

Arthur asked if we want to hold a general social event for members during the winter. We would need to find people to give short presentations. Brian commented that in Dorset such events don't seem to go as well as in other branches and it was pointed out that it was risky having it at that time of year. Jane suggested that an alternative was to have a big-name event like the one we held with Matthew Oates speaking. The names of Chris Packham, Simon King and Nick Baker were suggested. Nigel will ask Nick and Jane will contact

Martin Warren about Chris.

Action: Nigel & Jane

Arthur will contact individuals about other events. Adrian said that some other branches have a New Members' Day every year or two. It was thought this might not attract many people. The possibility of organising an outing to somewhere outside Dorset, such as had been done in the past, was also mentioned.

8. Education Activities

Nigel has arranged 5 Education Access visits to Alner's Gorse and about 10 different schools' activities. The cost to the branch for such events will be £1,500, but £500 will come from the HLS Educational access grant.

9. Newsletter Mailing

Jane has spoken to Peggy who said that she hasn't got many stamps left and would be happy with any arrangement that saves the branch money. It was agreed that we should take up the offer from HQ to mail out the newsletters centrally and Jane will let them know.

Action: Jane

10. Co-option of Bob Steedman

This was proposed by Jane, seconded by Allan and agreed unanimously. Bob was thanked for accepting the invitation join the committee.

11. Membership

Robin had reported that membership stood at 675. This number was relatively static as new members were matched by those leaving.

12. Any Other Business

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Bill said that one has been seen at Lydlinch.

Purple Emperor. Roger Smith had spoken to the gardener at Minterne who said that he had seen some there. Roger is investigating further. Brian said that he had met Lord Digby a while ago, he had been very friendly and Brian had gone to an open evening there. He thought it would be a good idea to have a meeting in the Minterne gardens.

Newsletter. Keith said that his email address on the back cover was incorrect. Brian's is also wrong. Adrian will let Guy know.

Action: Adrian

Work Party Activity. Richard will email Jane about the sites we control directly.

Action: Richard

Langford Valley. Brian said that he and Adrian visited recently and had seen some Dukes of Burgundy. The cowslips on one bank are poor because of grazing and the cancellation of work parties in the winter meant that there was some scrub regrowth. The possible project for the Dukes in the Cerne and Sydling Valleys had been cancelled because there was

insufficient funding for HQ staff management. Also, the owner of the main site at Batcombe had not wished to be involved.

Calendar. Jane said she is waiting to hear from the person who is producing a specification. Who can we ask for photos? One suggestion was to ask people who have attended the photographic courses.

Plant Sales. Lyn had to leave the meeting early, but wished to say that sales were currently £184.

Minutes of Committee Meetings. Martin Raper had asked Lyn about their availability. She suggested three options: put them on the website, restrict them to a ‘members only’ area or not publish them at all. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

13. Date & Place of Next Meeting

The date of Thursday 5th September was agreed. Adrian will find out if the Community Room in Blandford is available.

Action: Adrian

A.N.
11.06.13

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