



## Biodiversity Action Group Awareness Sub-Group Meeting Minutes

2pm Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009  
Trent Bridge House, West Bridgford

### Present:

Karen Bailey	Rufford County Park (RCP)
Adrienne Bennett	Forestry Commission (FC)
Chris Comerie (Minutes)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Linda Davey (Vice Chair)	Women's Institute (WI)
Louise Fleetwood	Sherwood Forest Community Rangers (SFCR)
Edmund Hopkins	Royal Forestry Society (RFS)
Chris Jackson	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG)
Paul Phillips	Rushcliffe Borough Council

### 1. Apologies

Erin McDaid (NWT); Kathy Wimble (N&SDC); Phil Keynes (NCC, Sustainability); Mark Waller (Centre Parcs); Gill Grievson (GCF); Janet Valenti (GCF), Jackie Adams (NCC, Env Education).

### 2. Previous Minutes

LD sought clarification about the role of the Opal project.

CJ explained that over the next 3 years Opal would be conducting a number of themed projects under the banner Open Air Laboratories with the first project concerned with soils, in particular with the role played within them of earth worms, and that a future theme for the project would be biodiversity. The general area of research in the East Midlands would be heathland. Opal's main interest was engaging with local community organisations in order to nurture an interest in science within the general public.

LD enquired as to whether the terms of reference had been circulated.

CJ confirmed that they had.

### 3. Japanese Knotweed Survey (Promotion)

CJ spoke of the Japanese Knotweed Survey which is now underway, having been launched un-officially at the Friends Of Greenwood meeting, he informed all that the Environment Agency's Codes Of Practice are shown on the BAG website and that so far BAG have received over 100 records. In addition to these records British Waterways have supplied 16 records and Mansfield District Council 27 records. CJ is still hoping to receive records from the local records centre and Nottingham City Council.

CJ explained that he is checking records to ensure that they are accurate but if a large number of records come in at once from around the county he may need assistance with this process.

CJ has been talking with Gill Grievson from Greenwood as being the lead agency within BAG to take this project forward. The main aim will be to raise awareness of the JK survey and the problem caused by Japanese Knotweed (including facts and figures, management and treatment prescriptions).

LD sought clarification of which of the 3 types of Japanese Knotweed would be needed to identify for the survey.

CJ responded that there are three types of knotweed related species (all 3 varieties were alien non native species and required recording in the survey). Only one variety of Knotweed is commonly seen in Nottinghamshire and that is the Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) although it was likely that Giant Knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*) and the hybrid knotweed, a cross between Japanese and Giant (*Fallopia x bohemica*) may also be encountered in Nottinghamshire.

***Action 1: CJ to meet with Greenwood to discuss what role they can take in raising awareness of Japanese Knotweed and helping to promote the survey for this species***

***Action 2: KB to check if Japanese Knotweed is recorded on the current species list for Rufford and report to CJ. KB also to inform Rufford Rangers and request them to report any patches of Japanese Knotweed that they may be aware of or encounter to BAG.***

***Action 3: AB and LF to ask rangers and other Forestry Commission staff to report any Japanese Knotweed they encounter in the course of their work.***

***Action 4: LD to circulate Japanese Knotweed survey recording sheets to WI members.***

#### **4. Priority Species and Habitats 2009**

CJ briefed all that last years priority SAP and HAP didn't really get promoted as had been hoped, and that this year the focus would once again be on Hedgerows and Hedgerow Moth species. Erin McDaid was currently working on efforts to promote the priorities in 2009.

The hedgerow moth species to be promoted the Scarce Vapourer moth (*Orgyia antique*), which was last seen in the Midlands at Clumber in 2000, and the Small Eggar moth (*Eriogaster Lanestris*) which has been spotted 4 times since 2000. The Small Eggar has distinctive nests that have been seen and photographed in Sutton On Trent by Carl Cornish back in 2007. They have also been seen around Besthorpe and Sutton On Trent, and their distribution is centered on the East Midlands and South Yorkshire. CJ circulated information sheets and photographs about both species.

LD highlighted the necessity for promoting Hedgerow management for the species around allotments and the possible setbacks caused by the pressure of local authorities cutting back hedges over-hanging by footpaths and highways.

***Action 5: CJ to circulate information on priority moth species and EM to produce press articles by the end of April.***

5. **BigBAG, suggestions for 2009 (venues & topics)**

CJ asked for any ideas from partners for a venue and theme for the Big BAG event to be held in 2009. Previous BigBAG events have been hosted in venues in Broxtowe, Mansfield, Rushcliffe and Bassetlaw and at Attenborough Nature Centre, Newstead Abbey and Rufford County Park. It was suggested that this years meeting could be held at either Newark & Sherwood District Council, Ashfield District Council or Gedling Borough Council as these LA had until now not hosted a Big BAG event.

Those present thought that all the three LA's should be approached as potential BAG hosts. Gedling could be good as it was located in a more central area. The benefits of using Gedling Village Hall for the venue were discussed with the Old Gedling Pit site also being suggested as a possible field trip if the BigBAG was to be staged there.

LD pointed out that parking may be an issue at Gedling Village Hall.

PP then suggested the BCTV offices in Burton Joyce as a possible venue as BCTV is a partner of the BAG.

EH mentioned the Stoke Bardolph estate was in Gedling and may host the event or field trip visit. Severn Trent's facilities possible could be used as the venue the adjacent Stoke Bardolph site and Netherfield lagoons could form part of the event.

LF indicated that the woods near the prison at Lowdham could be used as a field trip venue.

CJ suggested the Bestwood Lodge Hotel as the site is located by Bestwood Country Park which is a joint run project between Gedling Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.

LD stated that funding for the event would be the priority in picking the venue.

CJ informed that Broxtowe Borough Council paid for the event last year and that last years cost amounted to approximately £650.

Could the theme of 10 years of BAG include recent successes such as the Trent Vale project and the Sherwood Forest Park plan.

CJ advocated having the BigBAG between September to November time with possible themes as water, large scale biodiversity projects and an update on the Wildlife Trust's Lound project or looking back on ten years of the BAG and forward to what is to come. Other aspects discussed included how to raise awareness of BAG to voluntary groups, how to involve the local community groups in the event.

Possible speakers for the event could include representatives from the Sherwood Forest Trust (heathlands), Butterfly Conservation (skippers) and the Barn Owl Group (barn owl project).

EH noted that in previous Big BAG's local groups have been elusive, the issue was raised of how to get local groups to attend and how to attract and involve them.

CJ responded that in last years event there were speakers from local Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire groups invited and targeted for a Saturday event. At the event a local group from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire had spoken.

In 2009 did the partnership feel that a day focused at local groups would be useful. It could look at various issues facing local groups and look at BAG related subjects (training on BAG species and habitats etc.). By focussing a day on local groups it could help to engage with local groups and bring them into the partnership (possible leading to them signing up as BAG partners).

***Action 6: CJ to contact Gedling Borough Council and Newark & Sherwood Council regarding funding and possible venues for the BigBAG.***

***Action 7: CJ to speak with Jackie Adams to see if she had a contact at Stoke Bardolph (Severn Trent) to talk about possibility of using their facilities for the Big BAG event.***

***Action 8: CJ to send out messages to partners with local groups to see if there was any interest in putting on a training day targeted at local groups as has been done in 2008.***

## **6. Communications Strategy**

As part of the MoA signed with Natural England the Partnership is requested to produce a communications strategy. CJ and EM (NWT) will be meeting to move this forward in the near future and the subgroup are welcome to attend or feed ideas into the drafting of this document. A draft document will then be circulated for BAG partner input. The BAG Awareness subgroup will be the lead on this document.

LD enquired as to how we currently communicate within the partnership and to the local community.

CJ responded through meetings, groups, newsletters and the BAG website, and that an annual report could be created depending on the response of groups to record species population sizes and biodiversity data.

***Action 9: CJ to circulate draft of Communications Strategy around BAG Awareness subgroup when prepared.***

## **7. Feedback from BAG Steering Group & from BAG I & M subgroup**

CJ recounted that the Steering Group and I & M subgroup meetings covered a number of issues with regards to the Biodiversity Duty (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006). Mansfield District Council had included the Biodiversity Duty in their employee newsletter.

BAG is currently producing a leaflet on the legislation for Parish Councils and that a workshop on the biodiversity duty had been held at Broxtowe Borough

Council. The aim of this was to look into current practices and see where simple changes to work practices could be implemented to enhance the biodiversity of the Borough.

A draft has been created of a new orchard action plan and plans are underway to for the creation of a species pending list for the LBAP document (Species of Conservation Concern section). The list is due for update in 2010.

Management advice has been written for improving the biodiversity potential at Whatton Prison.

PP requested a copy of the information relating Biodiversity Duty.

***Action 10: CJ to pass information of the Broxtowe Biodiversity Duty Event to Paul Phillips.***

EH asked if Higher Education Colleges are covered by the Biodiversity Duty. CJ confirmed that they are, the definitions of those covered by the duty and guidelines of the Biodiversity Duty can be found on the Defra website ([www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)).

***Action 11: CJ to circulate Biodiversity Duty leaflet to Parish Councils, and pass information to other LA's about Biodiversity Duty that can be put in staff newsletters.***

**8. Partner Updates**

Adrienne Bennett - Forestry Commission

An Adder (*Vipera berus*) survey is to be undertaken in Sherwood Pines and contact will be made with Sheila Wright to obtain previous Adder records to help with this process.

The Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) survey in Rainworth continues and results will be circulated when complete. FC will also be working in conjuncture with Butterfly Conservation for a butterfly survey on their sites. Work is being undertaken with Opel for worm surveys on community and education sites with 150 survey packs being sent to schools for this. FC is looking into obtaining new forest ponies to improve heathland grazing on their sites.

LF has created some new heather scapes at Sherwood Heath and on the Ollerton Pit Tip, 1000 trees will be planted at Cockglode Wood land coppicing is continuing at Shirebrook.

Karen Bailey - Rufford Country Park

KB revealed that the Rufford Woodland Management Plan has been resurrected, with a five year felling plan, for woodland improvement to enhance the bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) woods. Further works for improving biodiversity include habitat improvement for Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) management, grassland improvement for biodiversity, gaping up the hedges at Rufford and introducing coppice rotation for Willow (*Salix sp.*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

Edmund Hopkins - Royal Forestry Society

EH explained that he has been mainly raising awareness and has been in contact with the RFS head office to obtain information for their national newsletter and is working on articles for the regional newsletter which is mailed

biannually. The most recent newsletter has just been issued with details of summer visits and talks. Field meetings occur 2-3 times per year.

Paul Phillips - Rushcliffe Borough Council

PP related that he has been involved with grants for schools for the creation of ponds and that the council is developing new nature reserves at Sharp Hill Wood and Meadow Covert and a semi-improved grassland site at The Hook. which the Lady Bay group will be surveying and further groups are being set up for each site.

Linda Davey - Notts Federation of Women's Institutes

LD stated that several talks have been given since Christmas with further talks due on environmental and biodiversity related issues.

**9. 10 years of LBAP**

CJ informed all that with the original LBAP document was produced in 1998. As 10 years of BAP implementation has taken place since this date undertaken since this date. CJ requested ideas for the annual forum event and perhaps for a leaflet to celebrate this anniversary. CJ suggested details of the successes under the LBAP, such as the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) and heathland projects could be highlighted. This required researched facts and figures obtained through the LBAP partnership and both leaflet and Big Bag could include future plans for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan..

LD advocated contacting partners for their stories relating to the LBAP.

PP suggested producing a leaflet on LBAP and its achievements possible for the BigBAG launch with a coinciding press release and a birthday cake.

LF added that the leaflet could include details of key species to record for land owners and local groups and that the leaflet could be distributed to groups and libraries.

EH pointed out that 10 years of the LBAP represented a good opportunity for PR and communications for the general public.

**10. AOB**

CJ reminded the group that early in the financial year in 2008/9, the Environment Agency had been offering grants for works involving a water theme, such as projects involving Water Voles (*Arvicola terrestris*), Crayfish, Otters (*Lutra lutra*), reedbeds or wet grassland. In order to be prepared for possible grant money in 2009 partners should be thinking of projects that could fit this funding soon.

LF mentioned the pond creation grants available from the Pond Conservation Trust.

CJ replied that DEFRA have just appointed a consultancy to measure progress of local authorities against the Biodiversity Duty and a report on this will be out at the years end.

***Action 12: CJ to circulate details on the Pond Conservation Trust's pond creation grant.***

**Date of the next meeting.**

**2pm Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May, The Old Ragged School, NWT Offices**

**2pm Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, Sherwood Pines, FC Offices**

**2pm Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November, The Classroom, Bestwood CP**

**2pm Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February (2010) - TBA**