



**Biodiversity Action Group
Steering Group Meeting
Minutes**

**2pm Thursday 4th December 2008
Sherwood Forest Trust Offices, Edwinstowe.**

Present:

Caroline Harrison	Natural England (NE)
Chris Jackson	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG)
Erin McDaid	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)
Katie Mulcahy (Minutes)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Paul Phillips	Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)
Norma Saunders (Chair)	Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT)

1. Apologies

Nick Crouch (NCC), Andy Wickham (NCC).

2. Previous Minutes

The previous minutes were checked and accepted as a true record.

3. Biodiversity Officer update and work plan prioritisation

The update was discussed and the following issues raised.

CJ indicated that the 'Annual Forum Event' had been a great success and has received very positive feedback. Over the two days there were over 140 people who attended the event, so a great turnout overall. The day aimed at local groups was very successful and something similar could be planned in the future and could focus on explaining the Local Biodiversity Action Plan process and habitats and species of importance locally. This would help to make the document more relevant to local groups and encourage input into the document.

CJ had visited Whatton prison after they had contacted him and he was in the process of producing a report on the biodiversity potential of the site. Depending on how things developed CJ may be able to invite HMP Whatton to become a partner of the BAG and hopefully encourage management sympathetic to wildlife to be incorporated into the grounds maintenance team at the Whatton Prison. This may also offer opportunities to get a relationship with other prisons in Notts (Lowdham Grange etc). SFT are already working with Ranby prison.

Action 1: CJ to send comments back to Whatton Prison.

CJ has also spoken to E-On with regards to bringing them into the BAG partnership this is something that needs to be followed up.

Action 2: CJ to send the details of his E-On contact to NS

The BAG has not had much input in recent years from Severn Trent with the BAP process. EM had a contact at STW and would approach them to see if the BAG could re-engage with this partner. Possibly use the Biodiversity Duty as a lever?

Action 3: EM to get in touch with Severn Trent's Conservation Manager.

PP asked at what stage the 6C GI strategy was currently at. The last PP had known was that NE and the Wildlife Trusts were consulting on the biodiversity data that they were using for the biodiversity mapping element of the project (back in May 2008). CJ indicated that there was a meeting in January to consult on the next stages of the 6C project.

Action 4: CH to check the current status of the 6C GI work and feed back to the Steering group.

Jenni French has left the city council in her role as Nature Conservation Officer. Earlier in 2008 the Assistant Nature Conservation Officer (Paul Owen) also left the city authority and has not been replaced. CJ is unsure as to the position of Ntt'm City with regards to its representation on the BAG. Jenni French left her line manager contact details, CJ will chase these to find out about Ntt'm City latest position.

Action 5: CJ to contact Nottingham City to find out how they intend to interact with the BAG.

The BAG e-newsletter is almost ready to go out.

Action 6: EM to get information on Idle Valley Centre to CJ for the BAG newsletter.

With regards to the BAG budget all BAG event costs have been covered by funding levered from BAG partner organisations. CJ to give more details at the next meeting.

CJ's first aid qualification has recently run out and as such this needed to be renewed if future BAG events were to be held. NS recommended St John's Ambulance for this

4. Biodiversity Officer Contract/ MOA Update/ TOR, Communications and Funding Strategy

The Biodiversity Officer Contract has been signed by Natural England and Nottinghamshire County Council so CJ's Contract has been extended until the end of March 2011.

As part of the MOA the partnership needs to finalise the terms of reference for the group, and produce a Communications Strategy and a Funding Strategy for the partnership.

The latest draft terms of reference have been circulated around the full partnership and there has only been one response that suggested minor grammatical changes. When these changes have been incorporated, the final document will be circulated around the partnership.

Guidance for the Funding and Communications Strategy has been arranged through a workshop by the EMBP LBAP Coordinator Subgroup. A date is being arranged for late 2008/early 2009. It is hoped this will shed some light on what is expected from these documents and provide some methodology for producing the two strategies.

5. LBAP Document Update

Currently there are 19 HAPS, with the most recently produced being the Ditches HAP that was completed in 2007. There are also 11 SAPS, with the most recent being the Deptford Pink, produced earlier in 2008.

A HAP for Orchards is currently being drafted by NS and work is currently stalled on drafting a Black Poplar SAP (NC and CJ).

Action 7: NS to continue work to draft a HAP for Orchards.

There are a number of issues with the Notts HAPS and SAPS which need to be clarified. CJ felt that HAP titles should be looked at and that changes should be made where there may be a need (changes could include moving habitat titles more in line with the national HAPS?). It would also be beneficial to write clearer definitions of HAP habitat types and to state clear aims and objectives of each HAP and SAP.

In addition to this a number of HAPS and SAPS contain information that is currently out of date. Many of the original plans are now ten years old and contain information that needs updating - this is especially the case with respect to the current initiatives section.

It is also important to engage with lead partners to ensure that they are aware of the HAPS and SAPS that they are the lead partners for. It may also be worth reviewing the lead partners so that they are happy to continue in that role and so that they are the most relevant partner for that HAP or SAP.

Action 8: CJ to write to lead partners to clarify their roles and to request that they bring their HAPS and SAPS up to date.

Sheila Wright had raised the point that she is having trouble getting funding for rare species because they are not named in the LBAP and therefore there needed to be a solution of how to get rare species to become part of the LBAP.

It was noted that there needs to be a review of the LBAP species list on a regular basis.

Furthermore, the Welsh Clearwing Moth needs to be added to the list and details for the Hazel Pot Beetle need updated. A recommendation needs to be made at the I and M meeting that the BAP list of SoCC should be a standing agenda item and that an effort should be made to set a date to review the species of concern list as it is becoming more and more out of date. NS suggested that there should be a species pending review page for those species that should be included in the LBAP but presently are not.

Action 9: CJ to put LBAP species as agenda item on the I and M and to report the suggestion of a creating a pending list at the next meeting.

Action 10: ALL - members of the group should look through the LBAP document and check for sections that are out of date and need updating.

6. BARS/ Annual reporting round

CJ has reported back to the UK BAP through the National Reporting Round with regards to a questionnaire that could be filled in through the BARS database.

On BARS itself CJ has not been entering data onto the database for two main reasons. Firstly the information required from the partnership is not being passed to CJ. This is partly because partners do not know what information is required and mainly because partners do not hold the information required. The new LBAP targets created in 2006 require that the partners know the amount of LBAP habitat managed within the partnership and also on land that the partnership provides advice to landowners for. For this reason CJ has started working with partners trying to persuade them to map their estates by LBAP habitat type (CJ is currently working with NWT and NCC).

The second reason is because BARS is proving far too complicated a system to record data on in its current state. CJ has spoken with other regional LBAP coordinators and they are not happy with BARS as a recording system. In addition at a national level the advice given is that it is up to LABP partnerships to enter their data as they see fit and that for this reason no training is provided other than a tour of the website.

CJ has had problems trying to enter data onto BARS due to its complicated nature. One problem is that CJ has found it hard to enter data so that it can be identified as belonging to one individual BAG partner.

CJ recognises that a system like BARS is essential to LBAPs and the UKBAP but currently feels that more help is required from National level. The regional LBAP coordinators are preparing a paper about the problems of BARS to be sent to the region and to be used to inform the UKBAP.

Action 11: CJ to work with partners to help the LBAP reporting process. CJ should create a reporting form for all BAG partners.

It was also noted that EM and PP should fill out a trial form before CJ sends them out.

7. Biodiversity Duty - How We Are Progressing Locally

CJ is working on a leaflet to be circulated to parish and town councils. Based on a template provided by the EMBP. When completed CJ will circulate a draft for comment. It was pointed out that Keyworth Parish Council has a Nature Reserve, CJ is to follow this up.

On the 7th of February CJ will be giving a presentation about the Biodiversity Duty at an informal meeting with staff at Broxtowe Borough Council. It is hoped that this will help to encourage better working from the LA with regards to biodiversity within the authority.

8. Update from the Implementation and Monitoring Subgroup

SFT will take on the cost for the production of the BAG partnership Ivy Leaflet. CJ is to pass all the details compiled by the Ivy Leaflet

It was reported back that HLS Phase 2 - target areas and themed areas are complete and have been put on to the Natural England's website.

The priority species have been recorded as Hedgerows and Hedgerow Moths. EM and Sheila Wright will be working together to get some promotional material ready for 2009.

The Forestry Commission is currently work with RSPB to get a new WGS together so that birds are included in the grant scheme.

9. Update from the Awareness Subgroup

It was announced that Erin Mcdaid will continue as Chair and Linda Davey will be Vice Chair.

Amy Rogers from Opal Project, Nottingham University, is willing to support any BAG events. She will also be doing a worm survey as part of OPAL and this will be launched at Oak Tree Heath in 2009.

A Japanese Knotweed survey was discussed in the previous meeting; CJ handed round a draft copy to group members.

As part of a way of promoting the first 10 years of BAG, CJ hoped to contact partners to gather some good data on success stories.

Action 12: PP to get together his information on the annual Barn Owl data from Rushcliffe and pass on to CJ.

10. AOB Subgroup

CH stated that the Environmental Liability Directive will be British Law in the next few months. The law will have a big impact on Biodiversity. It will involve water, SSSI's and species under habitat regulations. Natural England will only act on this if there is going to be significant environmental impact.

The group were reminded of the next 6C workshop to be held at the end of January 2009.

Action 13: CJ to forward information to group members about the meeting on the 30th of January.

Next Meetings

2pm Thursday 12th March (2009), NCC, Trent Bridge House

2pm Thursday 18th June (2009), The Old Ragged School, NWT Offices

2pm Thursday 17th September (2009), Chalfont Drive