

**2pm, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March  
Trent Bridge House, Nottinghamshire County Council**

**Present:**

Rebecca Brunt	Environment Agency (EA)
Chris Comerie (Minutes)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Nick Crouch	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Chris Jackson	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG)
Erin McDaid	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)
Paul Phillips	Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)
Norma Saunders (Chair)	Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT)

**1. Apologies**

Caroline Harrison (NE), Andy Wickham (NCC), Janice Bradley (NWT)

**2. Previous Minutes**

The previous minutes were checked and accepted as a true record. Actions not dealt with elsewhere in the minutes were discussed as part of this item.

Action 1: CJ has submitted recommendations to Whatton Prison for land management advice to enhance biodiversity. The prison grounds team are currently undergoing a department restructure so CJ will liaise with the new group manager of the team in the near future. The prison includes a 1.5 ha site with the potential for habitat creation work though there is competition to use this land for allotments. EM added that Blue Butterfly money may be available for habitat creation at the site.

Action 2: CJ has sent details of his contact at Eon to NS as requested. The Environment Officer at Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station has asked that CJ get back in contact with her later in 2009 as she believes that this will be a good time for Eon at Ratcliffe to reinvigorate their Biodiversity Action Plan. EM informed all that Eon has supplied funding to NWT for their Besthorpe project.

Action 3: No action has been taken as EM has not had the opportunity to approach Severn Trent.

Action 4: CJ had e-mailed partners with the details of the regional 6C green infrastructure mapping project meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> January. Initial mapping data had been produced by a consultancy using methodology created by Natural England and NWT. The quality of the data was variable, with many areas being mapped incorrectly. Feedback during the event had been given to the consultants and will be used to take the mapping project forward.

Action 5: CJ is due to have a meeting with James Diamond from Nottingham City Council to discuss the city's involvement with the BAG.

Action 10: BAG Steering members have not yet looked at the various sections of the LBAP document to update the individual sections.

Action 11: CJ still needs to create a new reporting form for LBAP partners.

Action 12: PP hasn't received the information to pass to CJ. This will be done when Gordon Ellis has obtained and compiled the County data for Brown Owl.

### **3. Biodiversity Officer update and work plan prioritisation**

CJ gave out copies of the biodiversity officer update report and highlighted issues not covered later in the meeting.

BAG may be losing the admin support it receives from NCC at the end of the financial year. NCC is currently looking into a solution for this issue. The ToR for Bag state that NCC will provide admin support the BAG partnership.

NS kindly offered BAG the services of SFT to design spreadsheets to be used for budget management purposes.

The Japanese Knotweed survey was going well, with records being received from Mansfield District Council, British Waterways and NBGRC (Nottingham City Council). Greenwood has taken over coordinating the publicity of this survey. The data obtained from the survey will be posted by NBGRC onto NBN (a resolution for the data will need to be decided upon when the survey is complete). NBGRC have recently placed information onto the NBN gateway regarding the BAG surveys of Primrose and Cowslips, and data from the BAG survey of Brown Hare.

CJ then went onto relate budgetary information, detailing the funding & donations given to BAG this year. £16,000 from Natural England, £10,000 from Nottinghamshire County Council, £1,000 from Rushcliffe Borough Council and new donations of £1,000 from both the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

CJ has discovered that BAG publicity can be paid for out of Nottinghamshire County Council's press budget.

In Leicestershire the LRC are suggesting that in order to get a hold of SINC information local authorities should be making a contribution to the LBAP of £1000.

The costs for the Bioblitz 2008 event came to £1,000, paid by Natural England, Nottinghamshire County Council and a small contribution from the NWT. Last year's BigBAG event cost £540 which was paid for by Broxtowe Borough Council, and there are costs of £165 for the BAG website which haven't been covered.

**Action 1: EM to ensure Charles Langtry to pass records of Japanese Knotweed eradication from NWT sites passed onto CJ.**

**Action 2: CJ to meet with Nottinghamshire County Council's finance department to discuss the 08/09 budget in the week commencing the 16<sup>th</sup> of March and to feedback to the BAG Steering Group.**

### **4. Biodiversity Officer Contract / MOA Update / ToR, communications and funding strategy.**

CJ explained that the terms of reference have been completed and had been circulated around the partnership (this is one of the terms of the MOA signed with Natural England).

CJ then went onto talk about the training session that he had received along with the LBAP officers from East Midlands and West Midlands with respect to the

Communications and Funding strategies (these documents are expected as part of the terms of the MoA with Natural England).

The Communications Strategy was now under production and this work was being taken on under the guidance of the BAG Awareness subgroup.

As part of the communications strategy a strap line to go with the BAG logo is being considered for future publications to highlight that organisations are working to achieve the aims of the BAG rather than working for the BAG.

The funding strategy was proving more troublesome as CJ felt there were a lot of unknowns in Nottinghamshire which hindered the production of a detailed document such as the one produced in Bedfordshire. Bedfordshire had produced their funding strategy after a green infrastructure mapping exercise had been completed for the county so biodiversity opportunity had been mapped/targeted and thus could be costed. The Bedfordshire LBAP had known locations where they wanted to make their biodiversity gain and as a result costing this was much easier. CJ felt that a funding strategy for Notts should incorporate this need for more information.

NS voiced her discontent with using the Bedfordshire model for the funding strategy as it is too complex and is based on cost recovery, she went onto suggest CJ contacts John O'Brian at Community Counting Plus who can provide free advice and has the best template to use in preparing the strategy based on full cost recovery.

**Action 3: CJ to produce Communications Strategy draft with BAG awareness group.**

**Action 4: CJ to think of a way forward for a Funding Strategy that makes sense for the Notts LBAP.**

**5. LBAP document update.**

NS has completed the first draft of an orchard HAP document, consisting of the HAP itself and a second document consisting of a supporting booklet.

NC explained that they have been waiting for the Black Poplar SAP for nearly a year and that as a result Katherine Garton the Nature Conservation Officer at Nottinghamshire County Council had taken on the challenge of producing this.

CJ reported that it is just over 1 year since the list of UK BAP species present in Nottinghamshire was produced and the information passed onto the East Midlands partnership. The EMBP is intending to run a workshop in the new financial year to decide on the priority species for the East Midlands and also to clarify which UKBAP species are present in the region. CJ is keen for Notts BAG partnership to be represented at this meeting.

**Action 5: CJ to pass on date for the workshop to the BAG partnership once it is known.**

The discussion then moved onto to farmland as the LBAP is currently without farmland baseline data.

PP briefed that HLS land is covered in Magic but there is not a specific breakdown of which areas are covered by which HLS options (therefore no direct habitat data).

**Action 6: CJ to speak with Dan Abrahams, the Peak District Officer regarding information on HLS/ ELS data for Derbyshire.**

NS questioned if the Land Owner's Liaison Group was worth attending in order to obtain information.

NC replied that it's difficult to say as it's not the amount of farmland in the County but the quality of the land with regard to HAPs.

NS pointed that one problem is getting large land owners into schemes.

NC recommended Brian Dunning be consulted to clarify what levels of farmland can be entered into which schemes and what the regional targets for land under schemes is.

CJ informed that the hedgerow data from the phase 1 survey has not been digitalised and there is no baseline data available on hedgerows in the County either.

PP asked if funding is available for digitalising.

NC suggested that it may be worthwhile getting a quote for digitising the phase 1 data.

EM pointed out that it depends where the funding is allocated.

NC questioned what benefits would be gained by knowing how much hedgerow there is in the County.

PP responded that it would help with categorisation and knowing who to target for hedgerow management.

NS stated that the data could be updated from phase 1 but it wouldn't be worth doing if the data got much further out of date.

NC questioned whether targets could be set without the data.

CJ replied that better information is required to set "smart" targets with figures attached to them and that without the data, baselines and meaningful targets are incredibly hard to set.

PP informed that their LBAP habitat maps are due back from the BRC soon but these don't cover hedgerow information on them as there is just too much hedgerow in the district to cover.

EM enquired into the cost of producing the maps.

PP answered that they cost £16,000 but that he suspects that the BRC have underestimated the time and cost of the project.

As with hedges, there is limited data available on ditches in the County, which also have a recently produced HAP in the LBAP. It could be that the HAP for ditches could be amalgamated with the HAP for rivers and streams to combine targets for the 2 HAPS. NC voiced his opposition to the combination and there will be further discussion on this within the partnership.

CJ has been working with a volunteer to create a GIS layer for Rivers and Streams (the layer currently includes ditches). The data was derived from the Ordnance Survey master map water layer that covers all linear water bodies in the county. In addition the volunteer is creating a GIS layer for all other water bodies in the county covering ponds, reservoirs and lakes. This should help to improve data on these habitats and using this data alongside SSSI and SINC data should help with target setting.

**Action 7: Once data has been obtained on Rivers and Streams in the County, CJ to approach the Environment Agency to look into setting targets.**

Plans are underway to split the urban and post-industrial HAP into separate LBAP habitats. Katherine Garton from NCC has been mapping open mosaic habitat from aerial photographs to try to create a GIS mapping layer for this resource. EM raised the issue of the difficulty in setting targets for post-industrial sites. The issues with collating meaningful data for urban areas was discussed along with the problems of setting targets for it and the difficulties of managing it due to definition changes from which double recording of sites can arise. NS suggested a workshop is needed to discuss the issues raised regarding urban and post-industrial sites as this can't really be dealt with in a single meeting.

CJ has discovered that Mark Speck (NWT) had undertaken some work for Natural England in 2006 to start to refine the parklands and wood pasture East Midlands Inventory data that Natural England hold. The East Midlands Parkland and Wood Pasture layer indicates that 14,000 ha of parkland and wood pasture exist in Nottinghamshire. This data needs more work on it however because looking at the data alongside aerial photography it is clear that some of the sites are destroyed and consist of arable fields and should no longer be categorised as parkland.

Julia Gallagher from the RSPB has expressed her misgivings with the HAP for coniferous woodland. At a UK level this habitat does not feature as a priority and is not part of any other LBAP local priorities. As such CJ has suggested that the future of this Hap should be debated at a future BAG I&M meeting. CJ had called Gareth Broome (the author of this HAP) to discover more about the history of the Planted Coniferous HAP. The HAP was created to assist the Forestry Commission to incorporate sensitive management for biodiversity into its estates work. It was discussed that a guidance note may be more appropriate in this role rather than a full blown Hap. A discussion item for the agenda of the next I & M meeting would be the coniferous woodland HAP.

There is currently no information available on orchards for Nottinghamshire but there is data is being collated nationally over the next 3 years on a county by county basis.

CJ was looking to arrange a workshop in the future where LBAP HAP titles and habitat definitions would be discussed along with the role of lead partners. The workshop would look to tighten up current problems with HAP's and where possible tie them in more closely with the UKBAP. Further discussion on this will take place at the workshop.

**6. LBAP reporting.**

LBAP co-ordinators have generally been unhappy with using the BARS system as it is considered too complex to use and insufficient training has been given by NE. In addition the system does not yet tie in with GIS. CJ understands that LBAP officers in the South West region are not reporting through BARS and nationally the picture is

mixed but the majority of LBAP's are not using the system and are certainly not putting on the important data (quantifiable data).

The Notts LBAP is on BARS but reporting against the LBAP has not been undertaken and CJ believes that to do this the LBAP may need rewriting to make it BARS friendly. The management for each individual site may require actions to enable reporting on BARS either this or someone would need to collate habitat data outside of BARS and then add this data onto BARS at a later date. CJ is working with partners to create mapping data that will enable partners to report against the LBAP. CJ intends to continue to collate mapping data for the partnership.

**Action 8: CJ to acquire mapping information from RB and PP.**

**7. Biodiversity Duty – how we are progressing locally.**

CJ and Gaynor Jones-Jenkins (NWT) visited Broxtowe Borough Council in February to give an introduction to the authority about the duty. The aim is that CJ, GJJ and the authority will meet again in approximately 6 months to create a plan for Broxtowe that will seek to improve the work of the authority with respect to its biodiversity duty. CJ has been talking to PP about running a similar event for Rushcliffe BC. The organisation of such an event is dependent upon the decision of the Rushcliffe's Deputy Chief Executive.

Mansfield District Council's staff magazine has included an article on Biodiversity Duty. CJ has not found time to complete a leaflet on the Biodiversity Duty for parish councils. CJ would like information from partners about biodiversity work that they have undertaken with parish councils that he can then use as examples in the leaflet. Once this is done CJ will distribute this around the parishes.

CJ has contacted DEFRA regarding Biodiversity Duty assessments and has discovered that they have recruited consultants to monitor local authorities and how they are measured regarding Biodiversity Duty.

AmScott (a consultancy managing the highways agency land in Notts) have recently approached BAG with regards to becoming a member of the LBAP. CJ has invited a representative from AmScott to attend the next I & M meeting. CJ is hoping to get data about the areas of soft estate that they manage.

**Action 9: CJ to circulate Biodiversity Duty article which appeared in Mansfield District Council's staff magazine (with relevant alterations) to other LA's.**

**8. Update from the Implementation and Monitoring subgroup.**

It was decided at the I & M subgroup meeting that the action plan for urban and post-industrial habitat should be split into two action plans one for urban habitats and another for post-industrial habitats. NCC will be the author of the post-industrial HAP. An author for the Urban HAP has yet to be found.

The species of conservation concern list in the appendices of the LBAP document is to be updated in 2010 but until this time it has been suggested that a pending list and revised once guidance notes on them have been received by BAG along with a pending list of species and the criteria specifying what Qualifies a species for the list is to be set. Nottingham Trent University have approached BAG to ask if they can create a hedgehog SAP.

**Action 10: CJ to liaise with Nottingham Trent University regarding the hedgehog SAP.**

**9. Update from the Awareness subgroup.**

EM will be producing press releases and publicity with regards to this years LBAP priority habitat and species (Hedgerows and two moth species associated with Hedgerows - Small Eggar and Scarce Vapourer). He will be promoting the Hedgerow leaflet produced by BAG and will be encouraging the public to look for the two species of moth. Both are dependent on hedgerow management that is sympathetic to wildlife. EM will be working with Sheila Wright to gather suitable information to publicise these two moth species.

CJ gave an update on the Japanese Knotweed survey. In addition initial discussions were held on possible themes and venues for the BigBAG, for which 10 years of the LBAP was a possibility as were landscape scale schemes. It was also suggested that local groups should be contacted to see if there was demand for an event to be held to support local groups. This could be arranged separately of the BigBAG and would focus on training for local groups.

**10. AOB**

EM reported that NWT have produced a wildlife gardening leaflet in conjunction with Rushcliffe Borough Council and that they were currently adapting the same leaflet for production with Bassetlaw and Broxtowe Borough Councils.

NWT could host and finance training for local groups towards the end of the year.

NS has submitted two WREN applications recently and these have included an element of proposed funding for BAG. The element would involve the BAG officer providing training for two afternoon sessions which would provide £500 each for BAG. Funding has just been confirmed for a project on the hazel pot beetle which was put in by SFT and Steve Clifton.

CJ requested newsletter articles from the BAG partners.

EM informed that NWT is making a "know your voles" card for County wide distribution along with organising water vole day events and putting water voles on the Idle Valley agenda.

CJ added that it would be good to undertake a resurvey of water voles as a possible BAG venture in 2010. It is approximately 10 years since the last County wide survey and results would be very important in determining areas for action and the rate of decline.

CJ asked RB to give the BAG partnership clearer advice if there is to be EA funding available again in 2009. Could she let CJ have information of the outline information that projects would be required to submit in order to get EA money if it becomes available?

**Action 11: RB to email CJ with details for the minimum requirements for project funding if EA funding becomes available in the new financial year. CJ to circulate this information throughout the partnership.**

**Dates of Next Meetings.**

**2pm Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June, The Old Ragged School, Nottingham.**

**2pm Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September, NE Offices, Chalfont Drive.**

**2pm Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, SFT Offices, Edwinstowe.**

**2pm Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March (2010), The Environment Agency offices, Trentside.**