

BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on Saturday, 24 SEPTEMBER 2005, Blairgowrie,
c/o Lynne Farrell

1. **Apologies:** Dr Mark Watson.
2. **Present:** Dr Stephen Bungard, Ms Lynne Farrell, Mr Alastair Godfrey, Mr Ian Green, Ms Jeanette Hall, Ms Heather McHaffie, Dr Chris Miles (minutes), Dr Richard Pankhurst (Chair). In attendance, Mr Jim McIntosh (BSBI Scottish Officer), Ms Deborah Long (Plantlife Scottish Officer).
3. **Minutes of the meeting of 23rd April 2005**
The minutes of the meeting were circulated with the agenda. These were approved with an amendment to the cost of accommodation at the hotel in Perth to £35 per person in a double room and £50 for a single room (both include £10 reduction) and were duly signed as a true record of the meeting.
4. **Matters Arising**
A number of actions were carried forward.
ACTION: JM to raise issue at records committee (relates to rejected Atlas records)
ACTION: JM to explore events listing for web page.
ACTION: JM to explore bulletin board idea.
ACTION: JM to check if records committee offer guidance on historical data handling.

All other action points discharged.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported his attendance at the recorders conference. He was pleased to report that the Local Change project appeared to have generated quite a lot of interesting information. The project does seem to have shown which plants have become rarer and which are more common. It appears that a species like *Campanula rotundifolium* is losing ground around the edges of its distribution. Also some indication has been given of losses in habitat like acid and calcareous grassland in the SE with gains of "urban horticulture". The project had the useful spin-off of trialling Mapmate.

The other half of the meeting looked at Hybrids and VCRs will be asked to check listings in preparation for a new version of Clive Staces hybrid book. This will include maps showing the hybrid and the parent's distribution.

The Atlas update project is underway with details on the BSBI website. Alex Lockton is seeking 2000 plus records via Mapmate.

On the NBN it is possible to get to see the details of individual records provided you have a password which is obtainable from Alex Lockton.

It was noted that there was now a new red data book which considers the threat to a species and not just its rarity. This can be downloaded from the JNCC website. Jim Macintosh also holds an excel spreadsheet if anyone has a query about the listings.

6. Secretary/Treasurer's Report

After preparing and circulating the minutes of the last meeting there had been no other administrative tasks. It was noted that there had been no notification of new members to

the secretary and so no letters of welcome had been sent. It was agreed the secretary should contact Gwynn Ellis to get a listing and write to encourage attendance at the annual meeting.

Payments had been made for the subscription to Scottish Environment LINK and to the Newsletter editor.

ACTION; CM to contact the membership secretary for a listing of new Scottish members.

7. Scottish Officer's Report

JM tabled a report (attached).

The main work of the past few months had been organising the site condition monitoring (SCM) surveys under contract for SNH. He had covered six sites and 14 had been taken on with volunteers. One of the benefits of engaging in the project is that SNH will give BSBI the SCM survey reports for c150 sites with vascular plant features.

For next year a number of ideas are being considered in discussions with SNH and RBGE. One possible focus was on red data listings and species that have shown a particular decline between the Atlases's. The might also be work on reasons for change as in *Carex maritima*. There may be opportunities from the Plantlife common plant survey. It was agreed that whatever projects are supported that they require an appropriate geographic and ecological spread.

He has a provisional date in April 2006 for a Scottish meeting which might include the local change presentation and an update on the hybrids project. This was intended as a meeting where Scottish VCRs could talk over issues of mutual interest.

Jim reported on the meeting of BSBI staff. This focussed on reaching out to new audiences including new members through courses that are less intensive. After discussion it was agreed that these should ideally be separate from standard field meetings so that people are not overwhelmed. It was agreed to think about advertising one long weekend next year in the year book. Committee members were asked to consider how and where this might best be done.

ACTION: All to send ideas to JM before the next meeting.

8. Annual Meeting

AG confirmed that most arrangements were now in place. A few points were clarified. The speaker and his partner were to be offered a complimentary meal ticket along with the Museum curator (although the latter was agreed as exceptional). Any costs of travel from the speaker were to be forwarded to the secretary. Expenses for the hire of the museum should be split with BSS. In the afternoon JM agreed to introduce the speaker and AG agreed to propose the vote of thanks.

The write up about the annual meeting would fall to AG who would need to gather abstracts from the exhibitions and pass these to Peter Macpherson in good time for the newsletter. CM would write up an account of the recorders meeting. A register of members attending would be collated by LF assisted by Ro Scott. JM agreed to organise the slide show.

ACTION: All above to note tasks allocated at annual meeting.

A brief outline of potential speakers and timings at the VCR meeting was as follows.

Richard Pankhurst 10 minutes
Gabriel Hemery 15mins
Jim McIntosh 10 mins
David Pearman 10 Mins
Lynne Farrell 10 minutes (Red data book)
Stephen Bungard 5 minutes (field meetings)
Deborah Long 5 minutes (volunteer co-ordination)

At the Scottish AGM Chris Miles and Mark Watson retire and are not eligible for re-election. Ian Green retires but is eligible for re-election.

IG agreed to stand for re-election. Jeanette Hall agreed to take on the secretary/treasurers job noting the likelihood that this would include taking and drafting the minutes. For the two vacancies that remained HM agreed to approach Jane Squirrell and IG agreed to approach Jeff Waddell to see if they were willing to stand. (both subsequently confirmed their willingness to allow their names to go forward).

9. Liaison with Other Groups

a) Scottish Environmental Link. The newsletter had been circulated with the minutes. No matters were raised.

b) Scottish Plantlife Link. A strategy for the conservation of lower plants in Scotland is to be published this month. Negotiations are underway for a lower plant post with a training remit to replicate the Lichen Society initiative.

c) Plantlife. DL provided a written report which is attached.

d) BSS Council. Those who had attended reported that the Atlantic Oakwood symposium had been very successful. The papers would be published next year. The journal is short of contributions however at present.

e) SNH. LF reported on the good progress with Site Condition Monitoring. She had input to the lower plant strategy and the recruitment of a lower plant officer for SNH. The UK BAP working group for vascular plants would be consulting external groups and societies on a new process based approach to progress individual Species Action Plans. She also emphasised the need for BSBI to feed into the Scottish biodiversity process.

A report had recently been circulated on Important Plant Areas. This will have been received by the BSBI. There was a need to check whether we were going to be asked to comment. DL agreed to ensure a letter is sent to JM and RP. It may be possible for BSBI to identify IPAs out with the protected sites.

Action. DL to send letter inviting comments to JM and RP.

LF reported on the good PR achieved with the launch of the new red data book. This takes a different approach to previous listings and considers threat and not just rarity. Its publication will have an affect on red data listings and SSSI guidelines.

10. Reports to and from BSBI Council and Committees

Council It was noted that Richard Gornall was now the President. There were no other meetings reported.

11. Field meetings for 2005 and 2006

SB reported that he had received 3 out of the 5 reports due from this years field meetings.

Most had been well attended. He had indications already of 5 meetings next year including the possibility of the beginners meeting. A meeting on Shetland was among those planned. A possible joint meeting with BPS may not be agreed in time for the BSBI News and may be advertised in the Scottish Newsletter.

12. Vice-County Recorders

JM had been working with David Lang who is taking over vc 75 (Ayrshire) and who we expect to be ratified at the next meeting of the Records Committee.

Jeff Waddell has declined at this time to take on the VCR role for vc 96 (Easternness). Jeanette Hall expressed an interest in helping if the task can be shared. She would check with SNH staff at Inverness and Dingwall to see if anyone was interested. There may also be interest generated by the article in BSBI News.

Action JH to explore interest in sharing VCR role in Easternness.

It was noted that James Fenton has now taken over vc 105 (Wester Ross) from Douglas Henderson.

Alison Rutherford would like to retire from VCR in vc 99 (Dumbarton). Some interest from Keith Futter was noted but it was thought best to leave Alison to pursue this.

13. The Scottish Newsletter

There was nothing to report from the newsletter editor.

14. Date of next meeting

5 November immediately following the Scottish AGM.

15. A.O.C.B.

IG reported on work he had been doing in Aberdeen. This was contributing to an integrated habitat system survey. Each polygon has to have a species list. On good sites this is a complete list. This looks likely to be a uniquely detailed account of a Local Authority Area in Scotland.

Thanks to LF who provided tea for the committee.

Scottish Officer Report to the BSBI Committee for Scotland 24 September 2005

SCM

- main activity over summer months
- encouraging and supporting volunteers to undertake some 14 or so sites and doing 6 myself – rather higher than the 4 originally planned as some volunteers fell by the wayside!
- Fieldwork virtually complete – I might do one last day.
- Have begun to write up all 6 reports
- Have already received two reports from the volunteers
- Will get in touch with the others shortly to prompt them
- Next task to check reports, seek clarification on any points, and give to SNH
- I applied and received offer from SNH of some £6.7k to cover volunteers' costs in terms of travel and write up time.
- Will seek these details from surveyors shortly

SUPPORTING VCRS

- Attended Orkney and Skye Field meetings
- Begun program of in depth meeting with VCRs to find out what their aims and objectives are for their respective patches – and how I can help.
- So far met Elaine Bullard, Morven Murray, Andy Amphlett & Stephen Bungard. Aiming to meet 10 this year and all the other 30 next. Write up short note of the meeting with APs for myself.
- Three weeks ago I submitted a grant application for 15k to SNH to help 3 or 4 VCRs computerise their records, using BSBI in house expertise to do so. SNH have verbally said they would support this project but as yet, I haven't received their formal offer. So far some 12 VCRs have expressed interest in having their records computerised and 7 BSBI members have expressed interest in the contracting work.
- VC75 & VC96 – best covered under Agenda point 11.

OTHER

- Recently Attended BSS Atlantic Oakwoods Conference in Oban
- Then shortly after the BSBI Hybrids Conference in Shrewsbury and
- Yesterday had a BSBI Staff Meeting in London (our first ever!)

Report from Plantlife Scotland for BSBI meeting on 24 September 2005.

May - September 2005

Policy

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: BTF has a draft report outlining our first evaluation of the implementation plans and how effective they will be in meeting the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity. We are aiming to have it finished by 29 November, one year after the new biodiversity duty came into force.

Non native invasive species: No obvious progress.

Climate change: Plantlife has published a report on climate change and its impacts on plants in the summer.

Species recovery through Back from the Brink

Plantlife Scotland is supporting a number of projects through our BfB programmes. These include:

Detailed e –dossiers to be published as part of the series on our website: *Cicerbita alpina* is now on line. *Epipactis youngiana* will be shortly.

Research on vegetative propagation of *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*, is ongoing.

Management trials for *Juniperus communis* and *Linnaea borealis* ongoing.

Management advice: we have published a management leaflet on upland juniper. We have drafts for pillwort and *Ascophyllum nodosum ecad mackaii*.

Scientific papers: we are drafting a paper that summarises all our work on pillwort over the last 10 years so it is publicly available in one place.

Plantlife surveys & campaigns

Juniper survey:

The deadline for Plantlife's juniper survey is on 1 October. Over 1000 records received so far by post & online.

The Harebell Hunt:

Launched in June. Forms are available as hard copy and on line. This is part of the joint BSBI / Plantlife Making it count project.

Operational updates:

New staff:

Plantlife international: new post: arable plants officer, recruited in September and due to start working Salisbury in October. Taking forward the arable plant project and the Important Arable Plant Areas report.

Plantlife Scotland: interviews for new Volunteer Coordinator in Scotland are next week.

Plantlife Scotland funding:

Funding for another 3 years of Back from the Brink Scotland has been secured from SNH.

PLINKS:

PLINKS has produced a Strategy for the conservation of lower plants & fungi in Scotland.

Discussions and negotiations are now underway on a joint lower plant and fungi officer post to implement the strategy, particularly target 9 on awareness and education.