

BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2006, at 2pm
c/o Richard Pankhurst, Edinburgh

1a. Present

Richard Pankhurst (chair), Stephen Bungard, Alistair Godfrey, Ian Green, Jeff Waddell, Jim McIntosh, Heather McHaffie, Lynne Farrell, Jeanette Hall, Jane Squirrell

1b. Apologies

Deborah Long

2. Minutes of previous meeting (5th Nov 2005)

Action Point: LF to type up minutes from the last meeting and send to JS

Action points from last meeting:

- RP had raised the problem of edited and missing records from the Atlas; RP reported that these records will appear in the Atlas update.
- JM reported that the Scottish web pages of the BSBI were now live on the web and that the PLINKS website may be an ideal site where a page listing all events/meetings regarding botany in Scotland could be hosted. JM is still interested in an electronic bulletin board. As an alternative the yahoo botany group is very popular.

Action point: JM to send link to yahoo botany to Committee members

- JM reported he is continuing his investigation on the need to computerise historical records (pre 1950), these will provide valuable information on species distribution trends. These represent a small percentage of records and should be easy to computerise.
- Welcoming new Scottish members with letter, Scottish Newsletter and field programme to continue.

Action point: JH to obtain current Scottish membership list from Gwynn Ellis

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Chairman's report (Richard Pankhurst)

- RP reported that the BSBI development officer, Gabriel Hemery(GH), had resigned and that his development report had been circulated. RP will attend the next Council meeting.
- LF attended the Executive meeting where the options suggested by the development officer were discussed. The JNCC has asked the BSBI to compile, by the end of May, a report on where the society is now (membership, projects, achievements etc) and where it sees itself in the future (new posts, databases, society liaisons, plant unit etc).
- LF reported it was suggested that options for replacing GH should be put on hold until after report is submitted and the outcome delivered, and then advertise as appropriate, as some re-evaluation needs to take place about the post.
- JM suggested that there needs to be better support for whoever is chosen.

- RP explained that the BSBI plant unit would be the office of the BSBI where potentially the BSBI records database would be housed, especially with the disruption at the BRC. The BSBI would then be able to maintain and regularly update records themselves.
- LF noted that the JNCC already gives money to the BRC to look after BSBI records, therefore some money may potentially be re-allocated to the BSBI if we managed the records ourselves.

5. Secretary/Treasurer's report (Jeanette Hall)

- JH has received the remains of the account (£128.97)

Action point: JH to set up new account and ask M. Braithwaite to top up account to £200 to allow the account to be set up. JH to obtain remaining files/documents from Chris Miles.

- JH is contactable via her Clydebank SNH work address until further notice.
- JH has received documents from Rural Development Plan. This falls outside the remit of the BSBI, although responses are welcomed from individuals, further details available from their web site.

6. Scottish Officer's report (Jim McIntosh)

- JM submitted a written report (see attached).
- JM reported that 50% of VCRs don't require computerisation of records, largely because their records are already computerised, but a few VCRs had failed to respond.
- JM to produce a report on how records are stored by each VCR.
- JM is applying to SNH for funding for a further project to computerise VCR paper records.
- JM provided an example of a site conditioning monitoring report that was completed this year, for SSSI designated site, Ben Lui. SNH had covered volunteers' field and report writing expenses. The local knowledge and experience of the BSBI members involved in this project added great value to the whole process.
- Additional, although not initially planned, some SCM work will be carried out this year.

7a. Scottish Environmental Link report (Deborah Long?)

Action point: verify that DL is the representative of SEL

- JH has current SEL newsletters (BSBI are current members).
- RP informed that SEL is a lobby group providing a voice for environmental/conservation groups with the Scottish Executive, and is funded by membership.

7b. Scottish Plantlife Link (Deborah Long)

- DL submitted a written report (see attached)

7c. Plantlife (Deborah Long)

- DL submitted a written report (see attached)

7d. BSS Council (Heather McHaffie)

- HM requests that more papers be submitted to Botanical Journal of Scotland. Next issue of the journal will contain papers from the Atlantic Woodlands Conference.
- HM reported that BSS currently has a £1,000 annual fund to encourage students to participate on field identification courses, but asked how are more people to be made aware of the BSBI and BSS etc?
- JM proposed that a funding application be made to SNH to employ a seasonal person to lead educational meetings and encourage ID skills, perhaps touring around various university/college societies e.g. Edinburgh Ecological Society, putting up posters, influencing lecturers and generally advertising the work of the BSBI (and BBS). Kindrogan has applied for further educational funding from SNH.
- JW raised the issue of student membership promotional offers.
- JM suggested a free gift with new membership e.g. Francis Rose WF Key.
- JH noted that conditions for receiving discounted membership for senior citizens is bizarre, similarly that institutional rates seem low.

Action point: JW to draft ideas regarding promotional membership drives, then to liaise with JM and JH to approach BSBI treasurer, Richard Gornall and Sarah Whild about ideas.

7e. SNH report (Lynne Farrell)

- LF submitted a written report (see attached).

7f. FCS (Jeff Waddell)

- JW has of Feb 2005 become biodiversity officer for Forest Enterprise Scotland. Currently trialling of survey methods on UKBAP habitats in FE estates. Initially surveying open ground and native woodland habitats.
- JW reports that FES is interested in exchanging records with BSBI, which will be made easy as FES also use MapMate currently for storing records. Often areas within these FE estates are unimproved and are floristically rich, but little actual botanical inventory surveying has been done.
- RP and IG responded that it would be good to form links with FES, but there needs to be some way of indicating to recorders which areas should be targeted.
- JW informed that habitats maps could be provided to BSBI recorders once they are available and advice would be given on targeted recording projects.
- JH suggested contacting Claire Seymour (SNH) who may be able to help with obtaining funding to mobilise other organisation's records.
- RP/JM reported that sharing records should not be a problem and that once more records are available online via the NBN, all agencies should have full access to them.

Action point: JW and JM to liaise about the practicalities of exchanging records.

- JW asked whether BSBI are currently involved with forest design plans, apparently this is not the case, although IG and SB had been asked in the past, but very infrequently, but supported the idea of improving links with FC.
- JW reported that FE staff were keen to learn further botanical identification skills.
- JM suggested that it may be possible to contract out tutors from FSC courses.

Action point: JW and JM to liaise about FE and BSBI collaboration on one of FE conservation days.

8. Reports to and from BSBI Council, BSBI Executive and Committee

- LF reported from Executive meeting of the resignation of GH.
- LF reported the sale of the Hammerschlag estate which generated £1.25m for investment. £50,000 has been allocated for training and education.
- LF reported that current BSBI publications are under review. VCR recorder's newsletter, although meant for VCRs only is very popular and may be circulated more widely. The future of Watsonia has been questioned. Many of the articles could easily go in other more suitable publications .
- LF reported a press release will be issued 24th April on the Local Change Project. It will be published with Plantlife's common plant survey but results will be reported separately.
- LF reported that new council members were discussed. Andy Amphlett has been nominated.
- RP reported that the Pullan Report is available from him. It details the data processing needs of the society (software, programming etc), especially if the BSBI takes over control of the records database.
- JM noted that the Pullan Report proposed the amalgamation of several BSBI databases.
- JM attended Records Committee, GH development plans were discussed.

9a. Field Meetings 2006

- SB reported that the Shetland meeting was full and spaces were still available on other field meetings.

9b. AGM – Glasgow 2006

- Edna Stewart (ES) (in absence) reported that Glasgow university had requested a fee of £700 to host the 2006 AGM.
- ES currently investigating alternative venues in Glasgow
- RP invited suggestions for a speaker at the AGM, several names suggested, and the possibility of having two half hour sessions instead of one was discussed.

Action point: RP to invite Richard Bateman and Lynne Farrell to speak at AGM

- JM reported feedback from last year's AGM. Some members felt that the VCR meeting was only meant for VCRs (when in fact it is open to all), and that there was not enough time for group discussions.

Action point: AG to draft a new programme for the AGM to allow more discussion slots, to rename VCRs meeting, to ensure all BSBI member's can contribute to all parts of the meeting and also to consider an earlier start. Draft to be presented at next Committee meeting.

10. VCRs

- JM asked for suggestions for people to talk at the forthcoming VCRs Kindrogan meeting. Already booked are Bob Ellis and Michael Braithwaite (Local Change), HM (herbarium specimen production), Mike Porter (Watsonia submissions) and Mapmate workshops.

- RP volunteered to give a talk on Taraxacum.

Action point: JM to approach David Tennant (Salix Hybrids), Keith Watson or Douglas McKean (Role of Herbaria), Martin Robinson (guided walk) for meeting.

- JM reported Alison Rutherford (VC 99) would like to resign but that no replacement has been found as yet.
- SB reported that Catriona Murray (VC 104) retires in April and SB will be sole VCR for that VC.

11. Scottish Newsletter

- JM reported he has sent reports and advertisements for volunteers to replace retiring VCRs to Peter MacPherson.

12. Date of next meeting

- Sunday May 7th at Ian Green's (changed from Saturday May 6th).

13. A.O.C.B

- IPA consultation response – see SNH's report

Jane Squirrell
13 March 2006

Report from SNH to BSBI Scottish Committee 11 March 2006-03-12 (Lynne Farrell)

1. Site Condition Monitoring

All reports now received via Jim McIntosh, the final ones on Friday 10 March. Thank-you. These are being checked by LF and copied to SNH Area staff. Ro Scott signed the grant form on Friday 10 March.

2. IPA Consultation

SNH response sent by Director Jeff Watson in Dec 2005 to Plantlife. The next stages will be discussed at a conference being held at Kew 26th April 2006.

3. Development of the new Red List and SSSI guidelines.

Discussions are taking place. Action likely to be later this year.

4. UKBAP

Stage 1 now completed for all the species groups, excluding fish, which are lagging behind. This has produced a list of 221 Vascular plants that qualify under the 4 criteria. Stages 2 and 3 now come into operation. These will consider delivery of the BAP targets through group plans, linkages with habitats, practicalities of mechanisms and appropriate policies.

5. Ministerial announcement 20 March on species management and Scottish list. Several people on the BSBI Committee had been invited to the launch.

November 2005 – February 2006

Policy

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: Link's Biodiversity Task Force has published a report to measure how the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy implementation plans will meet the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity and the 5 objectives of the strategy itself. It is available from www.scotlink.org

Non native invasive species: No obvious progress.

Climate change: Scottish Biodiversity Forum conference at RBGE on 3 March 2006. Papers will be available on line I believe.

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* and *Epipactis youngiana* are online. We are still working on 4 more species.

Research on vegetative propagation of *Spiranthes romanoffiana*, has found evidence that *S. cernua*, as an analogue species, reproduces by root fragments. Results are to be published by Dr Richard Gulliver.

Management trials for *Juniperus communis* and *Linnaea borealis* ongoing. These are long term trials so results will not be available for 3 years.

Management advice: we are to publish management leaflets for pillwort and *Ascophyllum nodosum* *ecad mackaii* later this year.

Scientific papers: still working on a pillwort paper.

Plantlife surveys & campaigns

Juniper survey:

We are cleaning up the dataset for the juniper survey and will be analysing the result and producing a report in due course.

The Harebell Hunt:

Currently analysing data. An article will be published in Plantlife's summer magazine and on the Plantlife web site.

Common Plant survey: to be launched again on 20 March 2006. We are looking for more volunteers to complete the survey for Scotland as part of our new volunteer programme (see below).

Important Plant Areas: Jim was very helpful in helping us get Scottish VCRs involved in the first consultation on IPAs in Scotland. All those who responded have now been thanked and their responses are with Jenny Duckworth. She is collating all responses and we are expecting to be able to issue a second consultation later this year.

Operational updates:

New staff:

Plantlife international: The new CEO for Plantlife International is Victoria Chester. Press release is attached. She starts in late March.

Plantlife Scotland: Su Cooper has been appointed as the new Volunteer Coordinator in Scotland. She is based in Stirling and is running our volunteer programme, which incorporates Flora Guardians, species surveys, including the Common Plant Survey and Pond Alert, a new awareness raising programme about ponds and pond plants. She can be contacted on 01786 479382 and Suzanne.cooper@plantlife.org.uk

PLINKS:

The PLINKS Strategy for the conservation of lower plants & fungi in Scotland was launched by Roy Watling at the RBGE on 9 February. It is available as pdf from the Plantlife website and copies are also available from Plantlife Scotland in Stirling. We are now looking for funding for a joint lower plant and fungi officer post to implement the strategy, particularly target 9 on awareness and education.

Deborah Long
Plantlife Scotland
7 March 2006

BSBI Scottish Officer Report to the BSBI Scottish Committee on 11 March 2006.

BSBI Site Condition Monitoring Survey Work

A total of 20 SSSI SCM reports have been completed by BSBI volunteers and myself (14 by volunteers). All have now been checked by the Scottish Officer and were delivered to SNH on 8 March. The standard is generally very high, and members' expert knowledge of botany and many of the sites involved has added great value.

Total time spent doing SCM work (days)

	Preparation	Fieldwork	Reporting	Total
14 Lead Volunteers (14 reports)	7	45	47	99
Scottish Officer (6 reports)	3	18	24	45
Other Volunteers		46	2	48
Additional time spent by Scottish Officer checking volunteers' reports				42
Total Time spent on Project by BSBI (BSBI Surveyor days)				234

A bid for funding to recompense volunteers' travel costs and report writing time (only) was successful and £6,600 has now been paid and claimed.

Current BSBI Computerisation Project

Currently some 100,000 BSBI records from 4 Scottish VCRs are being computerised by 4 contractors (selected from BSBI ranks). The project is approximately 85% complete, the main outstanding items are now completing checking of computerised records by the VCR, and handover of the checked and corrected dataset to the VCR, and NBN Gateway. The first completed dataset, for vc80, will be handed over to Rod Corner, this week. £15k of SNH funding has been used to pay for the contractors.

Proposed BSBI Computerisation Project

A project is currently being planned by the Scottish Officer which would aim to computerise all remaining paper BSBI records in Scotland over a 3 year period, using a similar approach as the current project. To help to prepare the proposal and SNH Grant-aid application a questionnaire about VCR record holdings has been sent to all Scottish VCRs. So far 34 out of the 40 Scottish VCRs have responded: 50% saying that they would like help. The Scottish Officer is 'pitching' for SNH project funding on 14 March.

Scottish BSBI Webpages

Launched [BSBI Scottish webpages](http://www.bsbi.org.uk) on 25 January. Also accessible from link from the BSBI home page www.bsbi.org.uk Check them out! They feature Scottish BSBI news, details of Scottish field and indoor meetings, abstracts from the Scottish Exhibition meeting and a *whole* page about the Scottish Officer, including his 2005 Annual Report (in pdf format). If you drill down deeply you will even find Scottish Committee and Scottish Officer Steering Group papers!

Scottish BSBI VCR Workshop, Kindrogan 31 March – 2 April

Rather belatedly a programme of speakers and workshops is currently being put together by the Scottish Officer for the Scottish BSBI VCR Workshop.

Jim McIntosh
March 2006