

Present:

Paul Phillips (PP)(Chair)	Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)
Dan Widdowson (DW)(Vice-chair)	Environment Agency (EA)
Nick Crouch (NC)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Chris Jackson (CJ)	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG)
Janice Bradley (JB)	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)
Bill Bacon (BB)	Butterfly Conservation (BC)
Janet Valenti (JV)(Minutes)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)

1. Apologies

Heather Stokes (HS) Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)

2. Welcome and introductions

PP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Previous Minutes

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

In response to the previous actions:

Action 1: completed - The BigBAG event was held on the 5th March 2014 which was supported by members Sue McDonald and Linda Davey.

Action 2: ongoing - NC and members of this group will establish work priorities for CJ at today's meeting (Item 4 on the Agenda).

Action 3: Ongoing. CJ has talked to JV about managing the NottsBAG website updates. CJ will need to contact the website host company requesting they update some details which are out of date. Currently, there is only one computer in NCC offices with the 'Contribute' website software. CJ will discuss with Karen Taylor (NCC GIS Development Officer) regarding the possibility of getting this package added to another computer. PP suggested the need to find an alternative way to progress this as the website is not achieving its purpose. It would be useful if partners could have access to the website to provide regular updates. JB will speak to Karen Bennett at NWT to see if they have this particular package.

Action 4: completed - CJ has provided a breakdown of all the services currently provided by NottsBAG to the LA's currently.

Action 5: it was agreed to come back to this point – CJ to forward a copy of the previous letter requesting funding from LA's to PP.

Action 6: carry forward - CJ to send DW a list of the BAG activities that supported EA work stream (wetland work). DW to discuss funding with James.

Action 7: completed - JB has included the change of name of the subgroup in the ToR for this group.

Action 8: completed – CJ has included the comments of the Steering Group members and updated the ToR accordingly for approval at the next meeting. CJ has sent this to DW and agreed to circulate again.

Action 9: completed. CJ has included a Mission Statement as part of the updated terms of reference.

7. Natural Environment White Paper – LNP's, NIA's, Biodiversity Offsetting

Nature Improvement Areas

JB requested deletion of the sentence: "JB reported that the area covered by the small grant scheme had been reduced and would no longer include the Idle Valley and was now restricted to Nottinghamshire north of Bawtry".

Action 1: CJ to delete sentence referring to the area covered by the small grant scheme....

4. Officer Workload

PP expressed concern over CJ's unsustainable workload. Work done by CJ, particularly the BOM project, is essential to the BAG and we should do everything we can to somehow divide up his workload. CJ agreed his workload is stressful and unsustainable, but he is rather reluctant to hand projects over, such as the Crayfish surveys. He took this work on out of necessity and as a result, has gained a great deal of knowledge, it is a key piece of work.

The Grizzled Skipper project is now pretty much finished but it is important to keep work going on these sites. CJ suggested Grizzled Skipper recordings could be given back to Richard and pinpoint where butterflies have been seen. BB would like to keep this project going, information should be put on the website as it comes in. We need someone who has experience to see food plant and ground conditions, including the 3 digit reference numbers. CJ confirmed the main concern is all records received are put on maps and sent out. NC suggested Richard Rogers (recorder) could help with the Grizzled Skipper project. PP asked if the Butterfly Conservation could take on the Grizzled Skipper work. BB confirmed interest has grown in branch, there are sub groups in geographical locations, BB and Richard could ensure weekly visits are carried out. BB can push for funds to be allocated for this purpose, although he cannot promise anything.

CJ went on to say INNS work does not pay. Ashfield District Council have funded Himalayan Balsam pulling on their site which covers their membership. We need to get more money out of the districts.

The main problem for CJ is dealing with a vast amount of emails, of which 20-30% require responses. One example is an email from Kira Besh (MDC) asking for comments on a flood risk assessment. Kira was disappointed that CJ was unable to make any comment, this type of query does not fall within CJ's remit. NC suggested CJ's response in cases such as this should be that as this type of query does not fall within his remit, he will pass the query on to a partner. In this case, if DW had responded to Kira, it would be seen as a BAG response. JB agreed CJ should re-direct email enquiries to other BAG partners rather than answer them himself which would save time, allowing him to focus on more strategic things ie BOM, LNP and projects. DW and PP concurred.

NC is concerned about the maintenance of the BAP document for which there is no funding attached and day-to-day routine work is falling by the wayside.

CJ referred to the LNP who are looking to him for baseline data re Natural Capital for their area. PP asked if the Records Office can do this, is there data available from the public website? CJ confirmed the LNP use a suite of indicators.

CJ mentioned he has not been able to spend much time on the Leen catchment crayfish project, however, Dave Holditch is keen to take this forward. DW confirmed he will contact Steve and Rebecca with a view to EA carrying out crayfish surveys. CJ admitted to feeling

a little insecure when discussing 'divvying up' specialist work. DW suggested he carry on with the Crayfish group work with assistance from EA.

Action 2: DW to talk to Steve and Rebecca about crayfish surveys.

PP suggested CJ carry on with INNS, Grizzled Skipper, BOM, Crayfish and BAP maintenance. BOM is a strategic priority, although at a cost of £1,000, this is under-budgeting and perhaps Rushcliffe could have been charged a higher rate.. CJ confirmed the Sherwood BOM still needs to be finished but there is no money coming in for this.

5. Funding

NC feels we need another funding bid project to bring in money. JB reiterated funded projects need priority whilst PP feels BOM and BAP are priorities. JB suggested we might be able to extract money from the LPS development fund, perhaps it would be useful to talk to Malcolm Hackett. JB is happy to take this forward and talk to Malcolm.

Action 3: JB to contact Malcolm Hackett, Senior Practitioner, Greenwood Community Forest re potential funding from LPS for BOM.

PP asked about the source of funding for routine BAP maintenance ie re-writing the BAP, which is an out of date document. NC suggested contacting consultants for corporate sponsorship. PP is happy to write to a number of consultants and requested NC provide him with a list of contacts. As an incentive to consultants, we could offer to place company logos on our publicity material, banners etc.

Action 4: NC provide PP with a list of potential consultants.

Action 5: PP to approach consultants re corporate sponsorship for BAP maintenance.

NC feels we need to determine how much funding we should be asking for. Do we use the funding for someone to do updates on CJ's behalf, this would give CJ more security. PP suggested this could take 6 months of CJ's time, we should look for contributions towards the cost incurred. NC & HS to discuss this and come up with a figure for 6 months' salary costs and any overheads incurred. NC to provide PP with the final figure.

Action 6: NC & HS to determine an amount for 6 months salary for CJ and any overheads incurred in that period.

Action 7: NC to pass this information on to PP.

NC and CJ to discuss what needs to be done with the BAP, decide on what is required and how long it will take. This should be done before PP approaches the consultants. NC to provide PP with this information.

Action 8: NC and CJ meet to discuss what work needs to be done with the BAP and pass the relevant information to PP.

NC confirmed £8,500 external funding was pulled in this year, however, this amount does not cover CJ's half post but offsets it. NC is unsure of the amount still remaining but will ask HS to confirm.

Action 9: NC to ask HS to confirm funds still remaining in NottsBAG budget.

Action 10: CJ to circulate to all?

PP also offered to write to LAs again to see if they can provide any funding

Action 11: PP to write to LAs re potential funding.

DW wondered if there could be funding available from SITA for the Crayfish project. JB is happy to pursue this avenue.

Action 12: JB to approach SITA re potential funding for the Crayfish project.

6. LNP work/relationship

PP raised concern as to where we fit in with the LNP. It seems to be a 1-way relationship at the moment, we need to strengthen this relationship. JB confirmed she will be attending the next LNP Board meeting which will provide her with the opportunity to see how we can get our message across. JB offered to feed back on the LNP meeting to the Steering Group.

Action 13: JB to feedback on the next LNP meeting to this Steering Group.

CJ advised those present that HS represents NCC on the Board, but unfortunately his role seems to have disintegrated. The LNP is still asking the 2 BAPS for information on Natural Capital, the 2 BAGs act in an advisory capacity to the LNP. JB feels the LNP is struggling to determine its role. PP stressed it is important we are showing our relevance to the LNP, we can have opportunities for input.

NC confirmed we have not heard anything more on the NIA process, to which CJ has provided input. JB confirmed this is out of the hands of the LNP, this has gone to the LEP re ESIF investment opportunities. Unfortunately, nothing has been fed down to us.

NC feels we need a good channel of communication, perhaps through Rosy? It would be useful for Rosy to attend future BAG meetings which would enable her to get a better understanding of BAG issues. JB offered to speak to John Everitt for his thoughts on the matter. JB will speak to CJ in the New Year to get a handle on how to frame something.

Action 14: JB to discuss with John Everitt how Notts BAG can engage with the LNP.

CJ invited DW to a Crayfish meeting on 21 January 2015 10.00am at Notts Golf Course.

7. BOM next steps

CJ gave an update on the next steps.

Rushcliffe West:

CJ is currently rejigging focal areas. The final report will be available after Christmas.

Rushcliffe East:

A date will be set for the workshop (looking at the second week in February 2015) and venue booked. PP to get back to CJ. BB's input has been much appreciated.

Action 15: PP to advise CJ of date for workshop.

Broxtowe Borough Council

This is going through the same process. We need to get everyone to agree comments. There is a colour clash between the core area and network mapping which needs changing around. Once this piece of work has been completed, a final report will be produced.

Idle Valley

Funding is available from EA to digitise Phase 1. Geo-rectifying needs to be finished. DW requested that before the end of each stage, and before sending an invoice, he should be provided with a signed collaboration agreement. Funds cannot be raised until this agreement is received. Once this agreement is received, DW can raise a purchase order on the system. On receipt of the purchase order from DW, CJ to invoice EA Peterborough.

Action 16: CJ to provide DW with the signed Collaboration Agreement.

Action 17: On receipt of the signed Collaboration Agreement, DW to raise Purchase Order.

Action 18: On receipt of EA Purchase Order, CJ to raise an invoice to EA Peterborough office.

Sherwood

CJ plans to work 2 days next week on Sherwood BOM. It is hoped to get maps produced for the next Sherwood meeting and a report produced. At Thursday's meeting it is proposed to discuss 2 end products; focal areas and connectivity maps to show obvious areas. This has much value and is scientifically based.

Trent Valley

NC agreed to take on and finish the update on Trent Valley, assisted by CJ.

Action 19: NC and CJ to finish the update on Trent Valley.

JB suggested this time could be covered through LPS funds and broken down in 2 parts.

Mercia Mud Woods, Ashfield and Mansfield are yet to be done. Unfortunately, data provided by Kira Besh (MDC) is not in the same format. Costs for ADC and MDC to be given to DW who will put them forward next year.

Action 20: CJ to provide DW with costs for ADC and MDC.

As far as Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood are concerned, we need to say the work done was funded by external partners supporting the local BAP. PP suggested this should be put in a letter and discussed in a meeting with them. PP is happy to go along to such a meeting, this is a good example as an RBC representative.

PP thanked CJ for this update which he found to be a good, useful product. The next stage is, how do we use it? PP has seen the latest Mineral Extract for Shelford West with that information in it.

DW will take Rushcliffe and Trent Valley details to other teams showing strategic themes to work from.

CJ confirmed the working group is meeting on Tuesday, DW will be attending.

8. SAP list

An update was provided.

PP confirmed new ones will be coming out of the BigBAG, old ones have been reviewed and updated. The Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper have been split as Action Plans and updated separately. CJ to pass to BB for any amendments or changes.

Action 21: CJ to provide BB with Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper Action Plans for his information and possible amendments/changes.

CJ has spoken to Andy Lowe about updating the Nightjar SAP. As numbers are dwindling, he needs to think about targets. JB agreed to remind him of this.

Action 22: JB to remind Andy Lowe about updating the Nightjar SAP.

David is keen to get involved with the Crayfish SAP.

CJ suggested Michael could do the Bats SAP.

Action 23: CJ to contact David and Michael to discuss Crayfish and Bat SAPs.

The Deptford Pink SAP is fairly recent.

The Black Poplar SAP is now ready.

CJ will contact other authorities to review SAPs.

Action 24: CJ to contact other authorities to review SAPs.

It was agreed CJ produce guidance notes, showing data and explaining smart targets, to ensure a consistent format. DW suggested this information is required before the next BigBAG event, he will let Rebecca know it is coming.

Action 25: CJ to produce guidance notes to ensure a consistent format for SAPs.

JB is of the opinion an update of the BAP should be done before July 2015 as mentioned in the Work Plan.

CJ suggested Michael provide EA with Water Vole data.

Action 26: CJ to contact Michael requesting he provide EA with Water Vole data.

9. Any Other Business

Election of Chair/Vice Chair

CJ reminded everyone the positions of Chair and Vice Chair are coming up for review. This process is carried out every 2 years, but this is something CJ will need to check out.

Action 27: CJ to check out the review process for Chair and Vice Chair positions.

Any nominations should be sent via email, followed by the voting process. JB asked if PP would be agreeable to carrying on in his role as Chair. PP confirmed he is happy to continue as Chair. JB feels it is important to have a local authority representative take on the role of Chair/Vice Chair. CJ agreed to email this information to those people who were unable to attend today's meeting ie:

Patrick Candler and Ian Major (SFT)

Felicity Atkin (Nottingham CC) is on maternity leave.

Richard Bennett has now left C & R T but a replacement has been appointed.

Carl Cornish (RSPB)

Steve Fisher (BBC)

Action 28: CJ to email everyone who was unable to attend today's meeting with information on the election of Chair/Vice Chair. He will ask if they are still keen to be involved in this group and feed back to HS.

DW advised those present there has been a 'shake up' within EA. DW will be operating in the Leicestershire area, Katy Swindley will be taking up the Nottinghamshire patch. He will still attend BAG meetings but will ensure Katy is given dates of meetings in advance. DW confirmed he will still work on the BOM project and south of the county. PP thanked DW for his input.

NottsBAG Annual Forum 2015

CJ has sent an email to Julia Davies, Nottingham Trent University, to enquire if she would be happy for Brackenhurst College to host the 2015. As of today's date, CJ has not received a response and will send a reminder. The theme for next year's Forum will focus on habitats.

Action 29: CJ to send a reminder to Julia Davies, Nottingham Trent University, to enquire if she would be happy to host 2015 BigBAG event at Brackenhurst College campus.

It would be useful to convene a meeting to discuss this matter, preferably early January. Friday 9th January 2015 was put forward as a possible date. JB to provide PP with

possible dates for this meeting. PP will set up a doodle poll enabling everyone to select preferred dates.

Action 30: JB to provide PP with possible dates for a meeting to discuss the next annual forum.

Action 31: PP to invite BB, Sue McDonald and Linda Davey to the meeting.

Action 32: PP to set up a doodle poll and confirm agreed date.

10. Dates of next meeting

10:00am Wednesday 10th June 2015 EA offices.

Action 32: PP to confirm date and venue of next meeting.