

## **TEES VALLEY BIODIVERSITY STEERING GROUP**

### **Minutes of meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at Billingham Beck Valley Visitor Centre**

#### **Present:**

Sue Antrobus	Tees Valley Biodiversity Coordinator
Jeremy Garside	Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Vic Fairbrother	Teesmouth Bird Club
Richard Buckley	Middlesbrough BC
David Spencer	Redcar & Cleveland BC
Katherine Pinnock	EYE project
Helen Herring	Wildflower Ark
Fiona Morris	Environment Agency
Ruth Jackson	Natural England
Rob Lunan	Redcar & Cleveland BC
Rob George	Darlington BC
Robert Woods	INCA
Philip Roxby	Darlington BC
Julia Quinonez	Darlington BC
Ben Ralston	Northumbrian Water
Ian Bond	Hartlepool BC
David Askey	Stockton-on-Tees BC
Malcolm Steele	Tees Valley JSU

#### **1. Apologies**

David Braithwaite – RSPB; Anne Gladwin – Middlesbrough BC; Graham Megson – Teesmouth Bird Club; Graham Clingan – Stockton-on-Tees BC

#### **2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

Minutes of last meeting held on 6 May 2009 accepted as an accurate record.

i) Funding Strategy – a report on future funding commitment was considered by the local authority Directors of Environment on 28 July 2009. Directors were very supportive of the role and work undertaken by the TV Biodiversity Partnership, and agreed a future funding package to support the Biodiversity Coordinator. Service Level Agreements will be drawn up by Jeremy Garside for each authority.

ii) Guidelines for Local Sites – actions identified for Jeremy Garside and Ian Bond have been carried out.

#### **3. TV Partnership Annual Event and Partnership Website**

The annual Partnership event held at Teesmouth Field Centre on 9 September had been very successful, and several positive and complementary comments had been received from participants. The steering group expressed its appreciation to Sue Antrobus for the all the hard work and effort in organising the event and making it a success.

Similar appreciative comments have been made regarding the Partnership website and the steering group also expressed its thanks to Sue Antrobus for her work on making the website attractive and informative. Sue also requested news items from steering group members for the website.

#### **4. Habitat and Species Action Plans**

Four plans were considered at the meeting:

##### Brownfield Butterflies SAP

Noted that INCA has offered to provide training for undertaking butterfly transects.

Funding has been agreed for action point BB A4.

With regard to action point BB A5: Brownfield industrial sites can be very important for butterflies but use can be transient, depending on the level of vegetation succession. There should be potential to manage some land on industrial sites for butterflies and the opportunity should be taken to encourage landowners and industrialists to incorporate appropriate 'landscaping' to support butterflies. Good examples of such landscaping will be a useful persuasive tool. This will be the focus of a possible SITA funding bid and INCA agreed to move this forward. **Action – INCA.**

##### Gardens and Allotments HAP

Accepted that it would be difficult to identify targets, particularly for gardens. However there may be some scope in local authority run allotments, particularly in relation to food production targets – need to understand how to measure biodiversity as part of a food strategy. Biodiversity should also be incorporated into Allotment Strategies.

##### Maritime Cliffs and Slopes HAP

There was some discussion about where coastal grassland ends and cliffs and slopes begin. Agreed there should be clear cross reference to both the Coastal Grassland HAP and the Sand Dunes HAP

##### Water Vole SAP

Some discussion on the link between the presence of mink and the absence of Water Vole, and the need to consider the process for a captive breeding programme. However the full implications of this need to be considered beforehand.

Further comments on all 4 plans should be submitted within 3 weeks, after which they will be loaded on to the website. **Action: all**

#### **5. Hartlepool Local Wildlife Site Review**

The list had been circulated well in advance of the meeting. Points to note:

- Several woodlands have now been dropped e.g. Salthouse Wood at Wynyard which has only 8 of 10 criteria species
- 2 sites require further work, including Hartlepool Power Station Field, although common lizard has now been found there

- Parts of the Wynyard Wood complex have some ornithological interest
- All sites meet at least one of the LWS criteria
- Brierton Quarry included on the basis of 'precautionary principle' but there are access issues to the site

It was proposed that a summary of the LWS Review be noted in the Cleveland Naturalists Proceedings.

**The Steering Group, as Local Sites Partnership, agreed to endorse the list of proposed Local Sites for Hartlepool.**

**6. Additions to LWS Criteria**

i) a paper prepared by Ian Bond had been circulated before the meeting. The rationale was to capture some sites in Hartlepool (and elsewhere) as LWS. The paper considered reptiles, wet woodland, sand dunes, and water bodies.

Reptiles – proposal is to expand criterion A5 to include all lowland populations of reptile. There was discussion on the situation with the North York Moors National Park, and in particular the Park's decision not to identify local sites. It was agreed that clarification should be sought – **action: Rob Lunan**

The proposed wording for the reptile criterion was agreed, subject to specifically excluding private gardens. **Action: M. Steele to investigate definitions of gardens in planning legislation.**

Wet Woodland – proposal is to include a category (W3) for Wet Woodland and specify criteria. The proposal was agreed in principle, but it was considered that a list of species associated with wet woodland should be produced and the wording of the criterion should be tightened up for consideration at the next meeting. **Action: Ian Bond/Wildflower Ark.**

Sand Dunes – the proposal is to include a criterion for mobile sand dunes. The proposed wording was agreed.

Water bodies – the proposal is to include a criterion for water bodies classified as lakes or reservoirs in the LBAP, i.e. those >2ha. There was broad agreement that water bodies need to be captured somehow, but there are issues over the correct size, how to identify the biodiversity interest etc. It was agreed that water bodies need further thought and should be considered at a subsequent meeting. **Action: Ian Bond.**

ii) Use of moths as an additional LWS criterion – a paper had been prepared by Robert Woods. A number of issues were raised during discussion:

- Whether it would be better to use the moth food plants as criteria
- Whether it would be more appropriate to produce a Moths SAP
- Need to be clear about the advantages of this approach and how it would 'add value'

It was agreed that the proposed moths criteria should be tested on a number of potential/marginal sites and the results be reported back to the steering group. **Action: INCA**

iii) Other LWS issues:

- Hedgerows – the criteria as currently worded could suggest that hedgerows could be designated on their own as LWS – it was noted that the criteria will be amended so that a hedgerow can be included as part of a wider site but not on its own
- Adding/removing lists once selected – issue concerned how new potential sites are added once existing LWS lists are agreed – how do we make sure everyone is using the latest list? The Local Sites partnership will review sites and criteria on a regular basis and it is still a bit of a learning curve at the moment. However some thought may need to be given on how statements for LWS in LDFs are best worded. This issue also links with ERIC as a repository for the most up to date information.

#### **6A. Darlington Local Wildlife Sites**

A list of LWS in Darlington had been circulated prior to the meeting. This was provided for the group, as local sites partnership, to endorse the list of sites, and also to verify the management work as part of NI 197.

It was agreed in principle that Darlington should be more integrated into the Tees Valley BAP process. As a first step the steering group in its role as local sites partnership, would consider reviews of local wildlife sites and NI 197 management. The list of sites provided by Darlington will be re-circulated to provide more detail/data to justify the selection criteria. This would be re-considered at the next meeting. **Action: Darlington BC**

Further discussions will be held between Darlington, Tees Valley and Durham to determine the most appropriate way forward for species and habitat planning.

#### **7. International Year of Biodiversity**

Some details on next years International Year of Biodiversity were circulated prior to the meeting. Sue Antrobus reported that the TV Partnership has been registered as an IYB partner. The main aims of IYB are:

- To increase the awareness of the importance of biodiversity for our well-being
- To halt the loss of biodiversity
- To celebrate success stories

Sue Antrobus put forward an idea that would increase recording activity and eventually feed into ERIC. Working with the local authority Countryside Centres the idea would be to hold 1 day recording events with participants recording/noting what they see. The information would then be put onto the Partnership website. It would raise the profile of the Partnership and could be branded under the IYB 2010 logo.

It was agreed that the idea should be developed through the appropriate Action Groups.

**8. Consultations**

Climate Change Strategy- Sue Antrobus agreed to coordinate comments – Robert Woods (INCA) and Ben Ralston (NWA) also agreed to provide input.

Minerals & Waste DPD – comments may be provided by Teesmouth Bird Club, although not on behalf of the Partnership.

It was noted that comments on reports/strategies etc on behalf of the Partnership should be circulated and agreed by steering group members prior to submission.

**9. Any other business**

Conference on future and role of LBAP Partnerships – Sue Antrobus is attending a conference in York on 6<sup>th</sup> October and will report back anything relevant.

ERIC – a key meeting is being held today – 29<sup>th</sup> September. A further report will be provided to the next steering group meeting.

**10. Next meeting**

10.00 a.m. on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010, at Billingham Beck Valley Visitor Centre.