

Butterfly Conservation
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch - 2014 Annual General Meeting
Saturday 25 October 2014
Littleton Memorial Hall

Clive Wood, Vice Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ivan Arnold, Peter Eeles, Lynn Fomison, Arthur Greenwood, Tim Norriss, Matthew Oates, Nick Radford and Jenny Mallett. Apologies had also been received from Mike Wall, who would have chaired the meeting save for a serious leg injury sustained the previous weekend.

2. Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting were unanimously confirmed as an accurate record.

Proposed: Andy Barker. **Seconded:** Sue Lambert.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of Accounts

Penny Jeffries presented the accounts for 2013/2014. Summary sheets were available at the meeting. The accounts had been independently audited and approved by BC Head Office.

Total income was £57,713, which was £2,395 higher than in 2012/2013. A one-off grant of £3,000 was received from SDNP. Total income exceeded expenditure by £11,768, of which £7,369 was on account of the timing of VAT receipts and payments. Income from subscriptions, grants and dividends was consistent with 2012/13. Interest income was lower because of disposals in previous years and current lower interest rates.

Total expenditure was £45,945 (excluding Restricted Funds). This is £15,101 less than in 2012/13. The cost to the Restricted Funds of managing the reserves was £9,234 less than in the previous year, mainly due to lower fencing and contractor costs. VAT cost was £7,369 lower, due to timing differences on VAT receipts and payments. Other costs were consistent year on year.

Restricted Fund balances are: Major Projects £26,981; Reserves Management £26,008; June Bailey Education Fund £11,110. Expenditure against the Major Projects Fund was £319 for the final legal costs for the allotment fields. Expenditure against the Reserves Mgt. Fund was £5,992 for MHD fencing replacement and repairs.

Investments were valued at £147,036 on 31 March 2014, representing an unrealised gain of £20,630. Note that if these investments were sold they would be re-valued on the date of their sale. None of the Branch investments was sold in the year.

Ongoing income and expenditure levels are expected to be similar in 2014/15, except that the Reserves Officer is now employed full time, and further expenditure of the Reserves Designated Fund is planned for the replacement of fencing at MHD. The June Bailey Education Fund will be used to pay for the Branch Education Officer.

It was proposed that the accounts be formally accepted, and this was carried unanimously.

Proposed: Paul Brock. **Seconded:** Ken Bailey.

5. Reports for Conservation, Information and Reserves Subcommittees

a) Conservation Subcommittee

Andy Barker, Chairman of the Conservation Subcommittee, reported on the key activities of the Subcommittee during 2014.

BC's 6th International Symposium took place at Southampton University in April. The Branch hosted a well-received field trip to Magdalen Hill Down (MHD), which attracted about 40 delegates.

A sub-group of the Committee has made good progress in developing a joint project with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to reintroduce the rare Marsh Fritillary butterfly back to a landscape of damp meadows in north-east Hampshire. The plans for the project have been finalised, and we are now working together to apply for the necessary funds to see the project initiated.

Duke of Burgundy: this three-year project led by Dr Dan Hoare has involved survey and management work. BC staff and volunteers have been involved in a comprehensive programme of survey and monitoring. They have also provided site-specific management advice at many places where the species either occurs, or has the potential to occur. The species was found at 30 sites, and improved habitat has been noted at more than half of the sites where management advice was given.

A £23,737 grant has been obtained from the Veolia Environmental Trust for conservation management work to improve road verge habitat for the threatened Striped Lychnis moth. This species already breeds on MHD, but the grant will allow habitat enhancement of nearby road verges where the species has declined over recent years.

Prioritising work for rare species is increasingly being done on a landscape-scale, since this is more likely to bring long-term conservation benefits. The Subcommittee has started to review the Hampshire and Isle of Wight priority landscape areas for lepidoptera. This will allow us to focus our efforts and identify key landscapes for future major projects.

b) Information Subcommittee

Clive Wood, Chairman of the Information Subcommittee, presented the report.

Branch Membership (meaning active households) stood at 1,314, up from 1,146 in 2013, and 1,095 in 2012. This represents a 20% rise over the past two years. Major reasons have been HO marketing campaigns on the back of Big Butterfly Count entries, and half price or first-year-free offers, which have delivered good retention rates. The current Branch membership represents about 1,700 individuals.

A Display Working Group has produced a new Reserves Leaflet, a new BC-branded marquee and new display kit, which has greatly improved our presentation at shows and events. Particular thanks are due to Dan Powell and Mike Creighton for their work on these initiatives.

The Branch website has been refreshed by Peter Eeles and now has a "Latest News" page featuring interesting sightings. There is a new approach to entering records, detailed on p.5 of the most recent Newsletter (No. 97).

The Newsletter has a new editor, Kevin Freeborn, and is now in full colour as well as being 25% cheaper to print. It is available on line to the 10% of members who have opted out of a paper copy. Thanks to all those who have worked on it and to Dan and Rosie Powell for their artwork.

Thanks to Ken Bailey for the generous provision of the June Bailey Education Fund which has made possible the appointment of our new Education Officer, Abby Sullivan. Abby is developing a butterfly and moth programme aimed at younger age groups (e.g. schools and youth groups). An award of £450 has also recently been made to Hampshire Country Learning, based at Sparsholt College.

A new Events Organiser is needed. This year 15 events were attended and raised about £1,000, so it is important to continue this outreach effort.

Clive Wood also outline planned developments for the coming year: an educational and family tab on the website; a refreshed and updated photographic display; the development of a new-member contact programme; advertising in the Newsletter; and a display of live moths at all events and shows, as this encourages a great deal of interest.

Clive Wood thanked all the members of the Subcommittee for their hard work during the year.

c) Reserves Subcommittee

Penny Jeffreys (member of the Reserves Subcommittee) presented the report.

UK-wide butterfly numbers in 2014 were down generally, especially for Large and Small Whites and most notably for Chalkhill Blue (72% down on last year's UKBMS figures). At Magdalen Hill Down (MHD) numbers were 9% down; they were stable on the Original and the Extension but down on North (where there was the first appearance of an Adonis Blue in May, with a second brood later on), and up by 20% on the newly acquired Allotments, where Brown Argus and Common Blue were particularly good.

At Yew Hill, Chalkhill Blues were down. At Bentley Station Meadow numbers were also down, but still twice as high as in 2012. Meadow species did well, although total numbers were down on 2013, largely because of a reduction in Chalkhill Blues and Large and Small Whites.

Grazing was accomplished by British Whites on both MHD and Yew Hill. We now have about 33 sheep and 19 cows on MHD and can target-graze areas as needed. Thanks to the "lookerers" who keep an eye on the stock.

In 2014 there were 20 work parties, dealing with scrub encroachment, ragwort pulling and some fencing repair. 25 work parties are planned for 2015.

In 2014 there were many pre-booked walks and lots of repeat bookings. They were generally well attended and positive feedback was received from all age groups. In a SDNPA survey to gauge awareness of chalk downland conservation MHD was the second most named site.

The subcommittee reports were accepted by members en bloc unanimously.

Proposed: Ashley Whitlock. **Seconded:** Glynne Evans.

6. Chairman's Report

Clive Wood reported that the Branch had hosted a successful Moth Conference earlier in the year, and a New Members' Day at the end of August. He was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to attend the hugely impressive International Symposium at Southampton University in April. Closer to home, it was noted that the Annual Report had been issued later than usual this year. A review would be undertaken to identify opportunities to issue the Report earlier in the year and at a lower cost.

On behalf of Mike Wall, Clive Wood wished to take the opportunity to thank everyone who helped to run the Branch. In particular he wanted to thank all the roughly 300 transect walkers, moth recorders and transect organisers (such as Linda Barker), whose work underpinned our understanding of butterfly and moth trends in the county. Also thanked were Arthur Greenwood and Nick Radford for helping to keep the Branch finances in good order; Jayne Chapman for her excellent work managing our three reserves; all conservation work party volunteers; and the many volunteers who helped at displays, sat on Committees, or helped in other ways.

Clive Wood also encouraged members to attend the BC National AGM in Warwickshire in November, the Moth Conference on the 21 February next year, and conservation work parties (details in the October 2014 Newsletter).

7. Election of Main Committee members

Clive Wood stated that

Tim Norriss had recently resigned from the Main Committee for personal reasons.

Juliet Bloss is standing down and not seeking re-election. Clive Wood thanked her for her many years service on the Committee.

The following members were standing down from the Main Committee, but were seeking re-election in accordance with BC's rules: **Peter Eeles, Arthur Greenwood, Jenny Mallett, Mike Wall.**

It was agreed to vote on the re-election of these four members en-bloc. This was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Janet Jones. **Seconded:** Anne McCue.

8. Health and Safety Matters

An elderly lady fell on a walk at MHD. An ambulance was called but she was well enough to go home with the rest of her group. Head Office was notified of the incident.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 1.59pm.