

Butterfly Conservation
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch - 2016 Annual General Meeting
Sunday 16 October 2016
Littleton Memorial Hall

Mike Wall, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Peter Eeles, Arthur Greenwood, Bridget Grande, Jenny Mallet, Bob Annell, Juliet Bloss, Bob Whitmarsh, Tony Rackham and Betty Rackham.

2. Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting were unanimously confirmed as an accurate record.

Proposed: Clive Wood. **Seconded:** Andy Brown.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of Accounts

Clive Wood presented the accounts for 2015/16 on behalf of Arthur Greenwood, Branch Financial Adviser, who was unable to attend the meeting. Summary sheets were available at the meeting. The accounts had been independently audited and approved by BC Head Office.

Total income was £68,438 which was £18,795 higher than in 2014/2015. This was because the branch realised investments which brought a one-off gain of £30,490. The £120,000 held in the Clydesdale Bank Deposit Account represents the net proceeds from the sale of investments. Excluding investments, total income was lower than last year by £8,530. £4,000 of this was due to a legacy received in the previous year and transferred to a Head Office project in the current year. Dividend & Interest income was down by £4,043.

Total expenditure was £50,445 (excluding Restricted Funds). This is £8,032 less than in 2014/15. This is mainly due to excellent cost control by Jayne Chapman, the Reserves Officer. Producing the Butterfly Report was £2,993 lower than 2014/15 due to lower printing and postage costs (achieved by sending the report out with the newsletter). Other costs were consistent year on year.

Designated Fund balances were: Reserves Management £33,981; June Bailey Education Fund £5,547. The Branch is indebted to Ken Bailey who made a further donation of £5,000 to the June Bailey Education Fund. Expenditure against the Reserves Management Fund was £9,485 for Magdalen Hill Down (MHD) fencing replacement and repairs. Expenditure against the Education Fund was £4,453 to fund the part-time Education Officer role. The Branch does not currently employ an Education Officer but is in discussion with Winchester Science Centre about funding a new post. Further expenditure against that fund will be expected when a new officer is appointed.

Branch investments were transferred to Head Office in the year. These assets could rise or fall in value yet the liabilities represented by the cost of managing the Reserves are broadly fixed. It was therefore considered more appropriate for the investments to be managed by Head Office. Longer term, the cost of running the reserves exceeds the income received, so the Branch needs to look at its financial liabilities and risks with Head Office. There is unlikely to be any change before 2020, but the management of the Branch Reserves income and expenditure is likely to be transferred to Head Office at some point in the future.

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

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

5. Reports for Conservation, Information and Reserves Subcommittees

a) Conservation Subcommittee

Penny Jeffreys, the Chairman of the Conservation Subcommittee, reported on the key activities of the Subcommittee during 2015. The Subcommittee of nine members brings together a breadth and depth of knowledge and experience from across the Branch.

The role of the Subcommittee is to reflect and implement BC's conservation objectives and policies and guide the Branch's conservation work, working with Jayne Chapman (Branch Reserves Officer) to determine and implement conservation initiatives on the Reserves. They are guided by the Regional Action Plan, working with Steve Wheatley (SE Senior Regional Officer) and in partnership with other organisations. The Subcommittee is allocated 40% of Branch subscription income.

The Regional Action Plan has been a key focus this year. It has been led by Head Office, with all regions reviewing and the Conservation Subcommittee inputting to it. It provides an overarching plan for the region, with branch specific actions. Key outputs have been the identification of top priority butterfly and moth species, and improved data analysis. Penny presented a handout which can be given to landowners to show the priority species in their area and advise how best to manage them. The South Downs National Park has welcomed this, with particular praise from Elaina Whittaker-Slark.

Top priorities are:

- Marsh Fritillary. This is the top priority species, based on trends and data analysis carried out. The project to reintroduce the species to sites in north-east Hampshire is progressing.
- Fritillaries in the Forest – a project based in the New Forest which Steve Wheatley has been leading, working closely with Bob Ansell and many other volunteers to carry out surveys of the area. They have identified several Pearl-Bordered Fritillary sites but very few Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. The project is looking at how habitats can be improved to increase numbers.
- Duke of Burgundy. This is still a top priority and the Subcommittee have agreed in principle to introduce this butterfly to the Tree and Shrub area of Magdalen Hill Down, as it appears to have ideal Duke of Burgundy habitat. This will mean Butterfly Conservation can lead others in showing how to create the right habitat for Duke of Burgundy.
- Glanville Fritillary. The Isle of Wight have a management plan for this butterfly. Butterfly Conservation are providing them with support on this.
- Wall. There is no major plan for this butterfly.
- Working with partner organisations (Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Winchester City Council) to establish a cluster group with local landowners to facilitate landscape-scale conservation projects.

b) Information Subcommittee

Clive Wood, Chairman of the Information Subcommittee, presented the report. The key role of the Information Subcommittee is to communicate and engage with members and non-members of Butterfly Conservation. The Subcommittee consists of eight members, who Clive thanked for their great work this year.

Following a plea for more volunteers at the last AGM, three people came forward. Mary Macmillan is now doing a great job organising events and planning the AGM. Sharron Broadway manages memberships very efficiently and Bob Whitmarsh has been doing an excellent job as webmaster. There are lots of plans for the website next year.

Branch Membership (meaning active households) stood at just over 1500. The current Branch membership represents almost 2000 individuals. This brings challenges as well as benefits, as costs increase. The Branch is using electronic communication where possible to reduce costs.

Other highlights:

- The Education programme was completed this year by Abby Sullivan, funded by the June Bailey Education Fund. The programme engaged with over 1000 children. The Branch is keen to continue this work and appoint a new Education Officer.
- The Field Meetings programme organised by Ashley Whitlock has been very successful. Many thanks to Ashley for adding reports to the Facebook and sightings pages.
- The Family Fun day at MHD in July was very well received. Thanks to Jayne Chapman and Abby Sullivan for running this.
- Clive thanked all the volunteers who helped at events throughout the year. More volunteers are always welcome.
- Many thanks to Kevin Freeborn for continuing to run the newsletter, and to Sue Lambert with Tony and Betty Rackham for refreshing the photograph display.

Only two members attended the recent Members Day. Numbers have been declining recently, so the Branch may choose not to run this again next year.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly Walks book (written by Kevin Freeborn and Ashley Whitlock) has been a great success. Clive presented Ashley and Kevin with a gift on behalf of the branch in recognition of their skills, effort and dedication. Around £15,000 profit is expected from the sale of the books over time.

The Branch relies on volunteer effort. Volunteers are required to help run events, to assist data input and moth recording, and with reserve work parties.

c) Reserves Subcommittee

Penny Jeffreys (member of the Reserves Subcommittee) presented the report on behalf of Jenny Mallett (Chair).

Penny began by thanking the Hampshire Conservation Volunteers, Wednesday Conservation Volunteers, the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service, Butterfly Conservation volunteers and The Conservation Volunteers for their time on the reserves.

A new Countryside Stewardship agreement has been reached for Magdalen Hill Down – the first of its type in the country. The criteria for payment from the Educational Access fund has changed. It is now only possible to claim for activity relating to Key Stages 1-4. The branch is keen to get an Education Officer appointed, as this will bring an additional £7,000 income to the branch through this funding.

The reserves are looking fantastic florally. The excessive grass growth this year hasn't hindered the wildflowers and winter grazing will deal with any excess. Yew Hill has been grazed by sheep this year. There has been very little Ragwort as a result, and the grazing, plus distribution of green hay, has resulted in a fantastic floral display.

It has been a good year for the Small Blue on the reserves. The new transect on Tree and Shrub East on Magdalen Hill Down has recorded good numbers and is also the best place to see Green Hairstreak. It has been a poor year for the Chalkhill Blue, though this has been the case nationally and is weather related. Both Dingy and Grizzled Skipper have been seen on the Extension and good numbers of Grizzled on the Original. Brown Argus has also done well.

Five Exmoor ponies have arrived on Magdalen Hill Down. They have an advantage over other livestock by being cheaper to manage than cattle (no TB testing) and less problematic than sheep where dogs have access to the land they graze. Jilly Carter provided the ponies and has also donated £2000 for our reserves.

A large area of Bentley Station Meadow has been cleared – many thanks to all volunteers who helped.

The Subcommittee is delighted with the work carried out by Jayne Chapman. She has fostered good relationships with many other organisations and is very skilled at getting things done with minimal cost. Penny thanked Jayne on behalf of the Subcommittee.

Penny paid tribute to George Yorke and his enthusiasm and vision for the Branch. A large butterfly chalk scrape may be created on Magdalen Hill Down and a sign placed nearby in his memory.

d) Records Subcommittee

Mike Wall presented the report on behalf of Bob Annell (Chair). Mike began by thanking Bob and Andy Barker for producing the 2015 butterfly report in good time. The moth report has not been produced this year due to work pressures on Mike's time. It's likely that a two year report will be released next year.

Mike made a plea for anyone with database knowledge to help with records submissions and/or data validation. Over 100,000 records are received every year and it takes a lot of effort to process them.

There will be no moth conference this year. Mary Macmillan is helping to plan one for February 25th 2017.

Jacky Adams is the new Hants & Isle of Wight Champion for the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey. She co-ordinates surveys of 1km squares selected randomly across the region. There are currently some vacant squares - Jacky asked for volunteers to help survey them. Only two surveys need to be carried out a year (in July and August).

The subcommittee reports were accepted by members en bloc unanimously.

Proposed: Ashley Whitlock. **Seconded:** Anne McEwan.

6. Chairman's Report

Mike Wall formally handed over to Clive Wood at this meeting after three years as Chairman. He has enjoyed his tenure and is happy with what the Branch has achieved in this time, but has struggled to balance it with the demands of a full-time job and Clive has more time to dedicate to the role. Mike said that Clive's fantastic work on the Marsh Fritillary project was a sign of his enthusiasm for Lepidoptera in Hampshire.

The Branch has taken important steps financially this year and is in a good position to go forward. In terms of the bigger picture, the result of the EU referendum in June has fundamentally changed the financial and legislative environment that Butterfly Conservation operates within. The charity's job is already difficult, and now faces even greater challenges. It is unclear what subsidies will be available to the charity and to landowners for agri-environment schemes and it is this lack of clarity which is the most challenging of all. The organisation will need to be even more innovative, look for new financial sources and will depend on volunteers to an even greater extent. However, as the largest Branch we are well positioned to make real strides for the conservation of butterflies in Hampshire.

Mike also thanked Andy Barker for his efforts on Main Committee. Andy is standing down after over 30 years excellent service. Andy remains hugely active, with Clive Wood, on the Marsh Fritillary project, on the Butterfly Conservation Council and through chairing the National Conservation Strategy Committee. Mike presented Andy with a gift of thanks on behalf of the branch.

7. Election of Main Committee members

Mike Wall reported that:

Penny Jeffreys is standing down from Main Committee and seeks re-election in accordance with Butterfly Conservation's rules.

Andy Barker has resigned and will not be standing for re-election.

Bob Annell was co-opted onto Main Committee as Records Chair and seeks election.

Kate Barrett was co-opted onto Main Committee as Branch Secretary and seeks election.

It was agreed to vote on the above election and re-election en-bloc. This was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Paul Brock. **Seconded:** Clive Wood.

8. Health and Safety Matters

None.

9. Any Other Business

A question was raised regarding Butterfly Conservation's policy on managing for other insects and wildlife on their reserves, as well as for butterflies and moths. A concern was raised that some activities such as removing windblown trees may be detrimental to bees and wasps. Penny Jeffreys (Conservation Subcommittee Chair) confirmed that the reserves are regularly surveyed for other wildlife and managed accordingly. One of the aims in managing the reserves is to provide a variety of habitats, including leaving some fallen and standing dead wood. Penny invited anyone with an interest in particular species to input to the Conservation Subcommittee.

The meeting closed at 1.00pm.