

Butterfly Conservation Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch

Addendum to the Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

held on Wednesday 11th November 2020

Questions raised during the Q&A session

1. Has Head Office given any indication that they would be more collaborative with Branches in the future when it comes to key decisions? (Pete Eeles)

Clive Wood replied that the BC Senior Leadership Team had acknowledged they might have handled the 24th July announcement differently but had stopped a long way short of undertaking to consult with Branches about key decisions in the future. Branches did not have, nor did they seek to have, a mandate on staffing decisions but did expect to be consulted on important matters that directly affected their day-to-day work. This certainly extended to important changes to the management of nature reserves that Branches had acquired and nurtured over many years.

The Hampshire & IoW Branch felt very strongly that BC's failure to consult over the introduction of the new reserves operating and funding model was unacceptable. The treatment of Jayne Chapman as Senior Reserves Officer was an aggravating factor. Several other Branch Chairs were equally unhappy. However, Clive stressed that not all branches felt this way. Some were much more understanding of the pressures behind the decisions taken by the Senior Leadership Team, particularly those without reserves.

The whole question of Branch consultation would undoubtedly be raised at the Branch Chairs meeting on the 10th December 2020.

2. Could you explain how the three reserves will be managed now that Jayne Chapman has left? Is there a risk they will deteriorate? (Jenny Griffiths)

Penny Jeffreys replied that the Branch was not clear how the three Hampshire reserves will be managed going forward. A South Downs Landscape Officer ("SDLO") was being recruited with responsibility for Magdalen Hill Down which is a large and complex site. There was a risk that habitat quality could deteriorate in the short term without grazing, but only time would tell. Grazing would undoubtedly be re-introduced but not necessarily with the same combination of cattle, ponies and sheep. Nor was it entirely clear whether both Yew Hill and Bentley Station Meadow fell within the scope of the SDLO role.

Much less time could be devoted to the management of the three Hampshire reserves by the SDLO given his or her wider responsibilities to lead funded

conservation work within the South Downs National Park landscape. This was a major unanswered area of concern for the Branch.

3. How have other Branches reacted to the changes made by Head Office? (James)

Clive explained that he had been in touch with around eight other Branch Chairs. This was about a quarter of the Branch network and he could not therefore comment on the national consensus. Around half of the Chairs with whom he had been in contact shared Hampshire's view that the decision to implement radical changes to the management of BC's reserves without consultation with Branches was unacceptable. Others were equally disappointed they had not been given a fuller understanding of the financial challenges facing the charity. Several had raised their concerns with the Senior Leadership Team. There was a range of views on what had taken place and Branches without reserves within their county boundaries tended to be more understanding of BC's position.

4. Have we any idea of Head Office's plans for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight reserves? For example are they planning the same grazing regimes that Jayne Chapman set up? (Tim Graham)

Clive commented that grazing with sheep and cattle would undoubtedly return as it was a key management tool on chalk downland sites. He was less certain that ponies would be re-introduced following Jayne Chapman's departure. He was aware that grazing experience was a requirement within the new SDLO job description but it would be necessary to allow the successful candidate to settle into the role and develop their management plans over time.

Clive added that the SDLO and Steve Wheatley, Regional Conservation Officer, would doubtless be discussing their management plans in future Hampshire & loW Branch newsletters and Members' Days.

5. Is there a South Downs Landscape Officer for BC Sussex? (Barbara Holyome)

No. Clive explained that the SDLO post was part-funded by a legacy and was unique to Hampshire & loW Branch.

Jayne Chapman gave her enthusiastic thanks to all members for their wonderful support in her time as Senior Reserves Officer.

Finally, Pete Eeles gave his thanks to Clive Wood and the retiring members of the Main Committee for all their work over the past few years. He also thanked Andy Barker and the new committee and sub-committee members for stepping up at such a difficult time. Seconded by Tim Graham.