



Butterfly Conservation Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Sunday 5th November 2023

Held at Littleton Memorial Hall, Littleton, Winchester

The AGM commenced at 12:05 with Branch Chair, Pete Eeles, welcoming everyone to the meeting. Attendance: Approx. 60. Pete informed the meeting that the 2022-23 Branch Accounts and 2022 AGM Minutes had been made available to members in advance, via the Branch website.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Bob Annell, Jim Baldwin, Matthew Oates and Bob Whitmarsh.

2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2022 AGM were unanimously confirmed as an accurate record.

Proposed: Pete Eeles

Seconded: Andy Barker

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of Accounts

- a. The Chair presented the accounts for 2022/23 informing the meeting that they were also located on the Branch website. Moreover, he reiterated that there was no longer a legal requirement for branches to gain members' endorsement since BC were the sole managers of accounts for all branches.
- b. Opening and closing balances respectively were: £60,928 and £58,331.
- c. Responding to a question as to whether the money in the bank could be better used if it were to be spent on conservation work, Andy Barker responded that as the branch had three branch reserves, it also historically funded a Reserves Officer. The branch kept a reserve fund to help support this role. As the newer Landscape Officer role(s) are now managed centrally by Head Office, the branch has started to fund various conservation projects, with more to follow.
- d. £2000 has been allocated for habitat management at West Wood to benefit Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary; £500 for habitat management for Reddish Buff on the Isle of Wight, and £1,500 for coppicing work Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Stockbridge Down.
- e. Subscriptions remained the prime source of income at £9,678, followed by grants totalling £3,160 with donations and sales respectively £660 and £631. There was also an interest payment of £990 added. The cost of producing and despatching newsletters and annual reports was substantially higher than last year, at £12,494, as two reports fell into one financial year. Increased postage costs remain a significant factor.

5. Chairman's Report

- a. **Branch Membership.** Compared to last year, the branch has seen an 11% increase in membership. Numbers break down as follows:

2022 AGM: Branch Membership of 1646 households (2238 individuals)

2023 AGM: Branch Membership of 1817 households (2458 individuals)

- b. **Organisation & Roles.** The branch organisation diagram (from the website) was shown indicating some vacancies requiring filling by volunteers, as well as upcoming vacancies for roles where members are standing down soon. Current/future vacancies are Chair of Conservation & Records Sub-committee, Minutes Secretary for Main Committee, Membership Secretary for Main Committee and Publicity Officer for Engagement Sub-committee.

Pete thanked all Committee members, non-committee members and all volunteers for their contribution to the branch during the year, highlighting the work carried out by Kevin Freeborn for editing the branch newsletters; Bob Annell for editing the Annual Branch Report; Bob Whitmarsh for maintaining and updating the branch website; Freya Brown for editing the branch social media presence; Ashley Whitlock (Hampshire), Kay Shaw and Jim Baldwin (Isle of Wight) for organising a full programme of well attended field meetings, along with Fiona Scully, who also led walks at our reserves; Bob Annell (County Butterfly Recorder), Andy & Linda Barker (Butterfly Transect Co-ordinators), and Jacky Adams (WCBS); Mike Wall (County Moth Recorder - Hampshire) and Jim Baldwin (County Moth Recorder - IoW).

c. **e-Newsletters.** Pete highlighted that if branch members do not currently receive the Branch e-Newsletters, but would like to, they need to contact BC Head Office to change their personal mailing preferences: email membership@butterfly-conservation.org.

d. **Social Media.** Pete reminded the membership that they can play a part in the branch's online presence, helping to keep our social media channels fresh and dynamic.

e. **Records, Surveys and Monitoring.**

(1) **Butterflies.** 2022 Records = 106,717; Recorders = 2,908. Bob Annell (County Butterfly Recorder – Hants & IoW); Andy & Linda Barker (Butterfly Transect Coordinators – Hants & IoW); Jacky Adams (WCBS – Hants & IoW).

Pete highlighted that in its 40th anniversary year, the following increase in recording effort had taken place since the branch's inception:

	1982	2022
Records	4,590	106,717
Individuals	26,602	404,669
Tetrad Coverage	83	995
Recorders	43	2,908
Recording days	85	303

(2) **Moths.** 2022 Records = 150,656; Mike Wall (County Moth Recorder – Hants) & Jim Baldwin (County Moth Recorder – IoW). This represented a 13% increase in records on last year.

Pete also highlighted that the 2022 Hantsmoths report is now available via https://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/Report2022_0.php

The Chair expressed his gratitude to all the County Recorders, and survey scheme co-ordinators for the exceptional contributions they each make regarding data verification and database management. He also thanked all those who submitted records either as part of formal monitoring schemes, Big Butterfly Count, or simply ad-hoc records. All data really helps us understand the status, distribution and trends of Hampshire & loW butterflies and moths.

f. **BC Nature Reserves in Hampshire.**

Particular thanks were expressed to Fiona Scully for her excellent work at Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill, and additionally this year, Bentley Station Meadow. This work is supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, from branch members, non-members, partner organisations (e.g. SDNP Youth Rangers) and companies (e.g. MACE).

g. **Butterfly Conservation Strategy 2021-2026.** Supported by a graphic, Pete outlined the current BC vision and strategy, and how the branch will work towards this, namely:

Vision: A world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

Goal 1: Halve the number of UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths. (The society will aim for 50% reduction of its threatened species).

Goal 2: Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths.

(Hampshire and loW Branch contains two landscapes wholly within and three partly within its boundaries: The New Forest, The Isle of Wight, The South Downs, South East Wiltshire & West Hampshire Woods and Downs, and Thames Basin Heaths.

Goal 3: Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths.

(The branch will aim for 2,000 wild spaces in Hants & IoW for people, butterflies and moths - this could be one's garden, local park, churchyard, field edge, road verge, woodland etc).

More detail of BC's overall strategy may be found at:

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/our-strategy>

- h. **Landscape projects.** Pete provided an update on the Heart of Hampshire Fritillaries initiative, which is focused on habitat enhancement and connectivity for Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Liaising with National Trust, Forestry England and Hampshire County Council, the branch has contributed funds for managing West Wood, Crab Wood and an area adjacent to Stockbridge Down. Work has been carried out in the winter of 2022/2023, with more works planned for winter of 2023/2024. Initial reports seem positive for Duke of Burgundy, with sightings of adults made in newly cleared areas in the 2023 flight season.

In addition, BC has initiated a Duke of Burgundy project within the Magdalen Hill Down and Chilcomb Valley area, where scattered populations exist. The branch has funded a habitat feasibility study, producing a subsequent report, which will help plan any future (re)introductions.

- i. **Priority species Conservation Work.** The Chair updated the meeting on the successful Marsh Fritillary Project in NE Hampshire with good numbers again being recorded this year, five years after the initial release of larvae. Andy Barker recorded 58 in 30 minutes on one visit on 26th May this year.

The Reddish Buff Moth conservation project focuses on one specific area of the Isle of Wight, where an annual Branch contribution of £500 contributes towards securing the recovery of this increasingly scarce insect. The moth was successfully recorded again this year, enabled by much-appreciated flexibility and commitment from the landowner regarding timing and locations of surveys.

j. **Volunteer Development & Education.**

School Visits. With BC Hants & IoW Branch support, the BC education kit has been refreshed, with school visits to MHD continuing in 2023, delivered by Winchester Science Centre, along with BC support.

Youth Rangers. Organised by Megan Lowe (and thanks to all that supported), this is a 3-day programme for young people interested in learning more about our wildlife and countryside and who are considering an environmental career. The first trial sessions took place during August. Eleven young people aged 13-17 attended. Activities included butterfly surveys, livestock checks, moth trapping, putting out a butterfly trail for visitors, pulling clematis, bird ringing and footpath clearance.

k. **Shows & Events.** Thanks to the following for their involvement in 2023: Suzie Brown, Jim Baldwin & Kay Shaw for Isle of Wight activities, New Forest Transect Group and all those who supported events, including Rupert Broadway, Richard Lemon and Fiona Scully. The branch held events at:

- Whitchurch Wild and Wonderful Day
- Sholing Valley Study Centre and Nature Reserve Spring Fayre
- Preston Candover Community Engagement Day

- New Forest Bee Fayre
- Winchester Downs Farm Cluster Group
- New Members' Day
- Old Winchester Hill Bioblitz

The New Members' Day was a particular success, with thanks to Fiona Scully, Jacky Adams, Suzie Brown and Rupert Broadway for taking part.

- i. **Volunteer Awards.** Pete highlighted that several members had been nominated for Butterfly Conservation / Marsh Volunteer Awards during the year, with the following worthy of mention:

Special Recognition Award: Bob and Jean Annell – Highly Commended, Andy Barker – Highly Commended, Anna Stewart – Highly Commended

Volunteer Newcomer Award 2023: Suzie Brown – Winner!

Volunteer Community Engagement Award: Suzie Brown – Highly Commended

- m. **Committee members standing down.** Pete ended his Chair's report noting those committee members who were standing down:

Andy Barker (Chair, Conservation & Records Subcommittee)

Suzie Brown (Membership Secretary)

Jacky Adams (Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey champion)

Graham Nicol (Branch Treasurer)

6. Committee Changes. Pete commended to the meeting two volunteers to fill the role of Chair of Conservation & Records Sub-committee and Branch Treasurer. The meeting was able to read the brief resumé of both prospective candidates: Neil Goodall (Treasurer) and Lee Hurrell (Chair of Conservation & Records Sub-committee).

Election of Neil Goodall

Proposed: Pete Eeles **Seconded:** Rupert Broadaway. Approved unanimously.

Election of Lee Hurrell

Proposed: Pete Eeles **Seconded:** Ashley Whitlock. Approved unanimously.

7. Health and Safety Matters. None

8. Any Other Business.

Branch Condolences. Francis Plowman proposed that the branch recorded its condolences to Bob Annell on the sad loss of his wife, Jean, earlier this year. This was unanimously agreed.

9. Close of AGM. The meeting closed at 1.00 pm.