

## **Minutes of BC Lancashire Branch AGM: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

### **Leighton Moss RSPB Visitor centre**

#### **Present:**

Committee: Chris Winnick (CW), Chris Atherton (CA), Jane Jones (JJ), Gemma McMullan (GM), Dave Wrigley (DW), Zoe Foster (ZF)

30 members

#### **Apologies:**

Laura Sivell (LS)

#### **Minutes of Last AGM (7<sup>th</sup> October 2018):**

Read and accepted. Minutes proposed for approval by Dave Wrigley and seconded by Chris Winnick

#### **Chair's Report:**

The last 9 months have been a steep learning curve for me in my new role as Chair of Lancashire Branch, taking over from Chris Winnick – a hard act to follow! Chris resigned as Chair last year at our AGM after 4 years in the role; as no-one else came forward to take up the position, I felt it important that the branch continued to be led from the front and so stepped up to do my best for Lancashire branch. Chris continues to be a much-appreciated source of support, encouragement and advice to me as I grow into the role. Chris continues in the role of Branch Organiser for which we are all delighted.

The Committee has seen some other changes too since our last AGM, Tom Dunbar has resigned from the committee and from his role as Field-trip Co-ordinator, having organized our best-ever programme of events across the branch, which so far have all gone ahead without any weather disruption. Dave Coleman, our Greater Manchester co-ordinator, has also sadly retired for personal reasons. Our Newsletter Editor, Laura Sivell (also our County Butterfly Recorder) has now stepped down from the Newsletter editing role after many, many years so I will produce the next edition and am hopeful that someone will come forward to help us with what is now a lovely, full-colour production. This is a role that would enable someone to help with the Branch without necessarily committing to a committee role – could that be you? Laura, as County Recorder, has produced yet another fantastic Butterfly & Moth Report (with contributions from our County Moth Recorders) highlighting the state of our county's butterflies, which you will all have received in May along with the Spring Newsletter.

The Committee now comprises of 8 of us, and we would benefit from and welcome new people onto the committee. If you think that you may be interested, we meet 3-4 times a year at a venue 5 minutes from J31 on the M6 on a Monday evening. There are several roles 'available', some could be carried out as an Associate Committee Member without the commitment of having to attend regular committee meetings or you may wish to attend our next meeting to see if this is right for you. Either way, if you think you could help to support and develop the branch, please do get in touch!

The habitat at our Myers Allotment Reserve in Silverdale continues to improve year on year, thanks to the tireless work of our Reserve Officer Dave Wrigley and our dedicated team of volunteers. Dave spends many a long hour both at the reserve managing the weekly winter work-parties, carrying out summer maintenance when needed and the seemingly endless paperwork required for the

Countryside Stewardship Scheme. We are all indebted to Dave for his hard-work, time and dedication! More about the reserve from Dave Wrigley in his report

Recognition must also be made to our merry band of volunteers who turn out week after week from October through to March to carry out the necessary conservation work required to develop and maintain the site. Thank you one and all!!

I hope that you all take the time now and again to check out the Lancashire branch area of the BC website to follow what is happening. Gemma McMullan has made a big difference to our pages, updating the information and making it all as accessible as possible. Gemma is also responsible for our Twitter feed with almost daily updates and shares of relevant things of interest, events and sightings.

We have had a full programme of field trips this year, starting in early May with a trip in the beautiful Forest of Bowland to see Emperor moths and Green Hairstreaks, several in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB to see our many species of Fritillary including Pearl-bordered, Small Pearl-bordered, Duke of Burgundy, High Brown and Dark Green. Other trips include visits to Rossendale, Accrington, Ainsdale Sand Dunes, Lytham Sand Dunes and in October a fantastic opportunity to visit behind the scenes to see the collections and hear about the work being done in the Entomology Department at the Liverpool World Museum. I have been out-and-about over the last few weeks investigating new possible sites for some visits next year. What is most fabulous is that, so far, all visits have gone ahead as planned without any "rain-stopped-play" issues! Long may that last! Thank you to all our Field-trip leaders and first aiders as without you giving up your free time, our programme wouldn't be what it is.

In March we jointly held another hugely successful conference with the University of Lancaster and Cumbria Branch. A big thank-you to Chris Winnick, Dr Rosa Menendez, Dr Andrew Wilby, Martin Wain and all the speakers and students involved in organizing and presenting this event, and to the University of Lancaster for hosting us.

We have attended a few events with a stand, display and leaflets promoting BC and the branch, with more still to come including the opening of Balderstones Primary School's "Forest School", some events with the Pendle Hill Partnership Trust and with Forestry England's Big Forest Find at Drinkwater Park. I am delighted to be able to get us out and about at events like these across Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Northern Merseyside, and it would be wonderful to have some branch volunteers who could help us "man the stand" at these events. If you would like to help with this, please do get in touch!

Finally, I would like to thank all our committee for their hard-work and support over the last 9 months as we look forward to another year full of opportunities, and lastly, but by no means least, a heartfelt thank-you to you, our members, without whose support none of this would be possible.

Jane Jones

12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### **Financial Report:**

#### **BC Head Office fulfill the role of Treasurer for the branch.**

Branch Account is looking very healthy with an overall balance of £7900+

With our ever-increasing membership the branch subs that we receive have increased again from £4500 last year to £5028 this year! We returned £4000 to Manor Yard (BC Head Office) for their

Double Your Impact Appeal in April of this year, and we will be investing in some new equipment for the volunteer work that takes place at our Myers Allotment Reserve through the winter months.

In March, the branch bought 100 copies of the newly published Butterflies and Day-flying Moths book published by Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society and are selling these through at £12.00 each along with Brian Hancock's Pug Moths of NW England (also £12.00). We have now sold 34 copies of the Butterfly book and 72 copies of the Pug Moth books.

### **Moth Report: (Jane Jones)**

The Branch has again supported the Lancashire Moth Group (LMG), renewing Mapmate subscriptions for those members submitting their records in this way.

The Branch will be supporting the LMG with 4 events for National Moth Nights (26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> September) along the Sefton coastline and in North Lancashire (details are on our Branch events page).

The group has an active Lancashire Lepidoptera Facebook page and publishes a twice-yearly newsletter (kindly put together by Dave Bickerton).

Our thanks go to all the active moth recorders in Lancashire but in particular to the County Recorders: John Girdley, Pete Marsh and Richard Walker, together with the Mapmate co-ordinator, Graham Dixon. Members may wish to get involved, the Lancashire Moths website has lots of information and advice.

### **Membership Report: (Zoe Foster)**

As of the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, the branch had a total of 880 Member households with a total of 1,240 individual Branch Members, a small rise on last year's numbers (863/1224 on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2018), although new member notifications are always higher through the summer months and during BCs Big Butterfly Count which attracts a lot of publicity. We have an on-going half-price offer on membership, there are leaflets available to pick up if you are not already a member.

### **Butterfly Report: (Laura Sivell)**

It is too soon to have any solid data on this year's butterfly numbers, but we now have the Butterfly and Moth Report covering the past 2 seasons.

### **Reserves Report: (Dave Wrigley)**

#### **Myers Allotment Work Parties**

The final work party of the season was held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019. A total of 25 work parties were held last winter, with over 800 hours worked.

It is expected that work parties will recommence in October 2019 and will be held once a week, on a Tuesday. All major scrub clearance work has now been completed and future work will mainly consist of bramble and other minor scrub control.

We are badly in need of extra (particularly younger!!) volunteers, so if you can help do please get in touch.

#### **Indicators of Success**

All the hard work carried out by the volunteers over the last 8 years would appear to be paying off.

Carter Jonas, Land Agents for the Leighton Hall Estate, paid us a visit on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and were favourably impressed by what has been achieved so far.

Wildflowers put on a fantastic display this year, with violets in abundance and cowslips continuing to spread throughout the site. Yellow rattle is also becoming well established and spreading throughout the site, following seeding carried out in 2017.

Nest box monitoring revealed that nesting birds had yet another reasonably successful breeding season, with 138 young successfully fledged (75% of the total). Birds fledged comprised 77 Blue Tits, 27 Great Tits, 20 Nuthatches and 1 Tawny Owl. Woodcock were once again seen roding and it would appear that they are now actually breeding on site, with 2 adults and 3 young seen on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

As far as the butterflies are concerned, Northern Brown Argus continue to thrive, with 17 seen on transect by Joy Sharp on one day a couple of weeks ago. Small numbers of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary have once again been seen and good numbers of large fritillaries are flying at the moment. Only a couple have so far been identified and these were both Dark Green. The likelihood is that they were all Dark Green, as there have been no confirmed sightings of High Brown for the last 4 years.

A moth trapping session was held by Lancaster University, as part of their Moth Challenge, on the night of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019, with just over 70 species of moths recorded.

### **Countryside Stewardship Agreement**

I am pleased to report that on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 a payment of £1475.50 was received, representing the full revenue payment due for 2017. The dispute with the RPA regarding the claimable areas and suitability of the GS6 (maintenance of species-rich grassland) prescription option is still ongoing. However, John Davis (Head of Reserves) has confirmed that, as the penalty was a consequence of his claiming and he hasn't made any progress with the appeal (and has ever decreasing expectations of doing so), HO decided to allocate the full payment that was expected for the reserve and absorb centrally whatever the eventual income deficit might be. It remains to be seen what will happen regarding the payments for 2018 onwards.

John has confirmed that claims for the capital items (£3375 for stone wall restoration and £1680 for 1ha of scrub clearance work) have been submitted and acknowledged by the RPA, but we are still awaiting approval and payment. The mapping exercise carried out by Lucy Morton (Reserves Officer from HO) has confirmed that we could safely claim the 1ha of scrub clearance required under the terms of the agreement.

As a result of a site meeting held with Lucy Morton and Bill Grayson and Sally Ward, the graziers, on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019, it was agreed that grazing would be extended from August through till December this year.

### **Possible Duke of Burgundy Introduction**

Myers Allotment has been identified as a potential DofB introduction site, as part of a Cumbria University HLF bid, aimed at restoring 10 species across various taxa throughout Cumbria and the Morecambe Bay area, known as the BOOM (Back On Our Map) project.

A site meeting was held with Chris Winnick and Matthew Oates (former National Trust wildlife adviser, now retired, and world-renowned expert on the DofB butterfly) on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Matthew stated that the site has good potential but is probably 3/4 years off being suitable. He felt that the autumn grazing pressure is currently just a little too hard for winter pupal survival and, in his opinion, the cattle would need to come off 3/4 weeks earlier than they do at present, i.e. early/mid-November. Also, the bramble problem would need to be resolved and Matthew stated that winter cutting and raking does nothing to control it and that we would need to try summer cutting, which I foresee as a potential problem as regards nesting birds and other flora. Also, as we are already aware, more primulas (especially cowslip) are needed. Enquiries are ongoing with regard to obtaining a quantity of cowslip plug plants for planting out this year.

I received a phone call from Mick Mayhew of the University of Cumbria on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019, informing me that the HLF bid had been successful, having come through at the end of March. The project is to

be launched in August or September and staff put in place, with a view to making a start in 2020. As regards the DofB element of the project, Mick stated that funding would be available for the habitat assessment part of the project. Also for collection of cowslip seed in August/September this year, with a view to having these grown on commercially for planting out next year.

David Wrigley

Reserves Officer, BC Lancashire

12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### **Website Report: (Gemma McMullan)**

The Lancashire branch section of the Butterfly Conservation website is used for sharing branch news, details of events, newsletters and other information. You can visit our webpage at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/lancashire-branch>

People can also submit butterfly and moth sightings via the website, as well as viewing other people's sightings. So far in 2019, 1477 sightings have been submitted, thanks to all those who have contributed.

### **Twitter**

The Lancashire branch Twitter account now has 1031 followers, an increase of 126 since September 2018. The account is very active with many people sharing their butterfly and moth sightings. Sightings submitted via the branch website with a photo and the 'social media' box ticked automatically get posted onto Twitter. You don't need to be a member of Twitter to view our account, just go to [https://twitter.com/BC\\_Lancs](https://twitter.com/BC_Lancs) or click the link on the branch homepage.

### **Members email updates**

**Do you receive our members email updates?** In between our twice-yearly newsletters we send out members news updates via email. This is a way for us to let you know about events and news in-between the 2 newsletters in spring and autumn. If you're a Lancashire branch member and do not receive these emails but would like to please check your spam folder first and add [Butterfly.Conservation@cmp.dotmailer.co.uk](mailto:Butterfly.Conservation@cmp.dotmailer.co.uk) to your safe-sender list. If you're still not receiving the members email updates please email Jane Jones ([jcjmail@aol.com](mailto:jcjmail@aol.com)) with 'Dotmailer Subscription' as the subject title and include your name and membership number and we will add you to the mailing list.

### **Election of Officers:**

All officers were re-elected (Proposed Joy Sharp, seconded Archie Simpson)

### **AOB:**

There wasn't any other business. There being no other business, the meeting was closed.