

**Butterfly Conservation East Scotland Branch
Committee Meeting 23 March 2021 (via Zoom)**

1.Attendees

Apithanny Bourne, Glyn Edwards, Suzanne Smith, Colin Whitehead, Richard Buckland, Elspeth Christie, Gillian Fyfe, Helen Rowe, Nigel Voaden, Katty Baird, Paul Brooks, Michael Scott, Mark Cubitt

Apologies

Cathy Caudwell, David Lampard

2.Approval of last minutes

Minutes of last meeting approved.

3.Outstanding actions from last meeting

Apithanny still needs to contact the grant recipients. She will do this in the spring/summer

4.General update on BC

National Chair meeting

Apithanny passed on our comments from the last meeting. The meeting was an attempt to get all the branches back on side. The English branches still have issues about the butterfly reserves they have some of which are no longer viable. They also have about half a million pounds between them-money sitting in the bank is not helping butterflies and moths and is also an obstacle when applying for external funding.

HO paid for a new membership database, but the company did not deliver what they promised. They are now left with a half-finished database. They are working hard to fix it, but progress is slow.

HO feel that communication between staff and branches could be improved. They also want a new engagement programme to include all branches and upskill current volunteers.

The treasurer role has always been a difficult role for branches to fill which is why they have changed it so that little financial experience is required to do the job.

Scottish Chair meeting

HO are pleased with the work being done in Scotland. Shona's job was saved but is on a one year contract. Her time will be built into funding bids and everything will be done to try and keep her.

We questioned now that Dai is head of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, how will his time be divided up and how/when we can contact him. Apithanny will investigate this.

5.Branch Finances

We have £4800 in the bank and can expect to receive around £5000 in membership fees next year. Therefore, we have nearly £10,000 available in 2021 but need to keep a reserve of about £3000.

Katty has been in contact with Historic Environment Scotland who have several sites in the Borders. They may need help with funding for seeds and bulbs and we would have signs with our name on the sites.

At the Aberlady coastal site there is a ranger who wants to set up a moth monitoring scheme. There is an active volunteer group there and they would like funding for moth traps, pots, books etc.

Helen thought that there may be a site near Banchory that need interpretation boards.

Taking into account the above we agreed the following:

£1500 put aside for new equipment

£1000 put aside for training needs

£3000 to give to BC Scotland for projects

Apithanny would like £100 to spend on the AGM.

6.Moth trap scheme update

15 traps were made. 6 have been sold. Leaving 9 to loan out. Money is needed for batteries. These will be paid for with money we have set aside for equipment.

7.Distribution maps update

Nigel has put a lot of work into designing the maps. There are still a couple of things to finalise e.g., whether to use dots or squares. Mark has mocked up a page layout that could be used for posting the maps on the website.

We still need the data from Richard Fox. Apithanny will chase Richard for the records.

Glyn raised concerns about how quickly we are getting the data from NESBREC for Aberdeenshire. Their 2019 records were only submitted in February this year. Records should ideally be sent in by the end of March for the previous years, but Helen thought 2020 data at least was unlikely to be submitted by the end of this month as NESBReC had been busy with other work. She said the process could be speeded up by volunteer(s) that could help with verification of the records submitted via iRecord. It is hoped to get a request for volunteer(s) via email to BC members in Aberdeenshire/city which Helen can forward to other local contacts and perhaps also in a branch newsletter.

8.Media team update

It was felt that the newsletter is better and is more representative of the branch.

We have 5 new volunteers dealing with communication and social media.

2 are working on the newsletter. One is working on the Facebook page (engagement was up 15% in the last month). Another volunteer is looking after the Instagram page (we now have 221 followers) and the other volunteer is looking after the twitter feed

The website news page is not really used. There could be more links to it in the newsletter.

Apithanny has a table of when newsletters will be issued. She will share this for anyone wanting to submit articles.

9.Regional updates

Aberdeenshire

Helen would like more moth leaflets. Apithanny will email Shona re stock and what's happening with them.

NTS rangers are restarting butterfly transects at Drum castle and Leith Hall.

Angus

There is a volunteer counting Kidney Vetch and Small Blues on the Angus coast as part of the SOTE project.

Perthshire

Cathy and David Hill are going to be doing an NBA survey similar to the one done in the Borders.

Paul has moth events planned but is just waiting to see if access will be granted to the areas and what rules will be in place.

10.AOB

AGM Apithanny would like to move the AGM forward to the end of May as the Holyrood Park option is no longer possible. The meeting will be on Zoom. This was agreed.

Sharing information. Gillian asked if there is some way that more information could be available for sharing. Fife are hoping to do an NBA survey this season and would like to learn from surveys that have already been completed e.g. the Borders. Reports etc are available from various surveys but can take a bit of looking for. It should be possible to set up a Yammer group.

Moth Records.

Mark expressed concerns about getting moth data from HO to be able to update the Branch distribution maps. Katie Cruickshank who was dealing with this has left BC and a replacement has still to be appointed.

Circulation of Minutes

All Committee members, Diane Garland, Sarah Foden, CMRs, CBRs.