



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
Natural Sciences Committee
Charity 224018

Minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Natural Sciences Committee held at St Chad's Parish Hall Leeds, at 10.15am on Saturday, September 17th 2011.

Present: Adrian Norris (Chairman), Paula Lightfoot (minutes), John Wint, Mick Carroll, Jean Kendrew, Phyl Abbot, Roger Key, Chris Young, Albert Henderson, Dr J.R. Mather, Mark Seaward, Joyce Simmonds, Paul Simmonds, Terry Crawford, Hannah Droop, Andrew Godfrey.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Geoffrey Wilmore, Dave Chesmore, Geoffrey Fryer, Mike Denton, John Newbould, Janetta Lambert, John Bowers, Sarah West and Andrew Grayson

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held at St Chad's on the 7th May 2011 are available on the YNU website http://www.ynu.org.uk/Natural_Sciences_Committee and were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Vacant Posts

The post of General Secretary needs to be filled as a matter of urgency. It is a legal requirement to have a General Secretary. John Newbould is stepping down and will no longer be involved in the YNU except as a member. Many of the duties of the General Secretary have now been taken on by other members. John is still handling book sales, but it would be preferable if this could be handled in Yorkshire. Any member willing to take on this responsibility should contact John Newbould to arrange transfer of stock.

Adrian Norris is considering standing down as Chairman of the Natural Sciences Committee after 10 years in the post. Applications and nominations are invited.

4. Nominations for President Elect 2013

Geoffrey Willmore has proposed and Adrian Norris has seconded the nomination of John Newbould as President Elect 2013. The committee approved this *nem. con.*

5. Membership Card v Handbook

A YNU membership card is occasionally needed for entry into restricted areas, but the main purpose of the membership card is as a source of information. It has been suggested that the YNU replace the membership card in its present format with a simple wallet-sized card accompanied by a handbook that includes more information, such as Health and Safety guidance. This could be produced for around the same cost as the current membership card (£300-400).

The current membership card is printed annually because it incorporates meeting dates and because officers' roles and contact details change. This information is also available on the website, but there are objections from some members to using the website as the sole source of information.

Most members of the Committee agreed that they use the membership card regularly to find contact details and dates. They find it a convenient size and do not feel that it would be beneficial to add Health and Safety information.

Hannah Droop agreed at the last Executive meeting to take responsibility for putting the membership card together. The 2012 membership card will be produced in the current format, but it was agreed that different formats could be considered in future to reduce printing costs and to avoid duplicating information. It might be possible to fit all the necessary information on a single folded sheet of A4 card.

There are benefits to increasing use of the website for communication to reduce the amount of paper documents that need to be posted to members.

Mark Seaward enquired whether the Union needs to produce a glossy colour Annual Report as a printed document. It is a legal requirement to produce an Annual Report. It does not need to be a printed document, but a well designed document can showcase the achievements of the YNU to members and non-members. It was agreed that the new General Secretary should review the content and format of the Annual Report.

The following information on the statutory requirement for an Annual Report was taken from the Charities Commission website.

*The Charities Act 1993 requires all registered charities to prepare a Trustees' Annual Report. Charities with gross income over £25,000 in the accounting year must file their trustees' report with us. We will scan that report onto our website where it will be available to everyone who wants to know more about your charity. If you want to include other information about your charity's activities over and above the legal requirements then please do. The report may be viewed on our website by funders, donors, potential beneficiaries and other regulators so **we would encourage all charities to use their report as an educational tool.***

A Trustees' Annual Report which covers any period starting on or after 1 April 2008 must include :

- *a report of those activities undertaken by a charity to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit;*
- *a statement by the charity trustees as to whether they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission.*

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Accounting_and_reporting/Preparing_annual_reports/default.aspx accessed 17th September 2011

Note from the Minutes Secretary: the NBN Trust produces an attractively designed Annual Report which is not provided as a printed document but as a pdf and as a download for smart phones. Download it [here](#) and see if you can find all 6 photographs of YNU members!

6. Records Officer – Hannah Droop

Hannah has created a central database for YNU records. The original intention was to collate all records on this database, but this could duplicate work and data. The database could serve a useful purpose as a back-up for the Section databases. The records in this database can be shared with NEYEDC and the NBN Gateway according to the wishes of each Section. John Wint pointed out that data used in the Bird Report is held independently in separate databases managed by a number of local bird groups.

An audit is needed to document what each Section is doing with their records. The benefits of such an audit include identifying and reducing duplication of effort and data, ensuring that all records are made available for conservation purposes, and consolidating the YNU's position as a serious biological recording organisation. Roger Key carried out a similar task for Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union, it was a very lengthy and complicated process.

Most YNU records currently go via the County Recorder to the relevant national recording scheme. Some national societies do not accept records from the NBN Gateway as they do not trust records which have not passed through their verification systems. Roger Key stated that he would prefer to pass all his records to a single point with confidence that they will be passed on to the correct organisations for verification and use. The capacity to retain records which are known to be wrong within a database is important, provided they are clearly labelled as such.

Terry Crawford stated that the Union has a large backlog of paper records awaiting digitisation. It would be beneficial to set up a system whereby YNU members can volunteer to digitise some of these records using the facilities at NEYEDC.

Action: Convene a meeting with various Sections to discuss the requirement for a data flow audit and how this could be conducted. (Hannah Droop)

A draft data policy for the YNU was circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that any record passed to the YNU should be made available for conservation, research and education and placed in the public domain with appropriate access restrictions to sensitive data. The draft policy will be discussed further at the Executive meeting on the 8th October, with a view to producing a final version for publication on the website.

Action: The data policy needs to be amended to state that records might not be passed on to the general public at full resolution, but full access will be granted to key users with a legitimate interest in the data. (Hannah Droop)

7. Reports – Scarborough BioBlitz – Malham Weekend

The Scarborough BioBlitz was highly successful and generated a lot of publicity. Wearing the high visibility jackets at subsequent meetings has attracted interest in the Union and has even resulted in gaining new members. Records of spiders, flies and Hymenoptera have not yet been sent to NEYEDC. When all records are in we should have reached our target of 1000 species. Most bioblitzes are only 24 hours and cover a single site, so this was an ambitious project.

The 150th anniversary event at Malham Tarn Field Centre was attended by over 50 people. It was a very enjoyable social weekend.

Terry Crawford attended both events and said that they were both very successful and extended his thanks and congratulations to the organisers. Sarah West in particular did an excellent job working with the public at the Scarborough BioBlitz.

8. The *Naturalist* – Request for papers, notes, etc.

Hannah Droop reported that the YNU has recruited 60 new members this year, thanks largely to the new style *Naturalist*. The Bird Report and publicity and events related to the 150th anniversary have also helped to attract new members.

The editorial board would like to build up a stock of articles and field notes for future publication. Colour photographs are printed only in the centre pages, but black and white photographs can be printed with the article. Contributing authors receive a pdf file of their article. If their article includes a photograph which was included in the centre spread, this is not included in the pdf. Colour photographs need to be limited to the centre pages for reasons of economy, but it is acknowledged that this is not an ideal solution.

An obituary for Eric Thompson should be included in the next issue.

It has already been agreed not to include calendar information in the *Naturalist* except for the first edition of the year.

The annual bill for the *Naturalist* is around £2,000 less than the cost of producing the *Naturalist* and Bulletin in previous years.

Adrian Norris intended to produce a report on the BioBlitz for the *Naturalist* but this will not be possible until all the records have been processed. It was proposed to produce an interim report with some colour photographs.

9. Field Meetings – Reports 2011 Feedback

Adrian Norris is collating field meeting reports, but is awaiting content from some Sections. This content is needed by Monday 19th September. Introductions should not duplicate information which has already been sent out in the circulars, such as descriptions of habitats.

10. AGM Ripon 19th November 2011

The next meeting of this Committee will be held during the AGM on the 19th November. The Lord Mayor of Ripon is attending to welcome everyone.

Action: If you have not yet booked lunch for the AGM, please complete the booking form that was posted with the Annual Report and send it to Hannah Droop with your payment. (All)

Action: Make the booking form available to download from the website (Hannah Droop and Paul Simmonds)

11. Annual Conference 2012 York University

The YNU Conference is being organised by Sarah West and will be held at York University on the 24th March 2012. The theme is "Brownfield sites and their importance for biodiversity". The conference has been moved to York because the venues at Harrogate and Garforth were deemed unsatisfactory. Parking at the University is free at the weekend. There are regular buses from York railway station.

Action: If you have not yet booked to attend the Conference, please complete the booking form that was posted with the Annual Report and send it to Hannah Droop with your payment. (All)

Action: Make the booking form available to download from the website (Hannah Droop and Paul Simmonds)

12. Education programme and training

Terry Crawford has been working with Leeds University to coordinate training days for students in 2012. They are making progress and Leeds University are taking on more of the administrative duties. Leeds Museum Discovery Centre has been booked for the afternoon of Tuesday 1st May and St Chad's has been booked for the whole day on Wednesday the 2nd May. This will be discussed further at the Education Committee meeting on the 7th October. It is not yet known how many students will participate but it could be around 60, so support from a greater number of YNU members would be appreciated.

Action: If you are willing to tutor a small group, please contact Terry Crawford

A training session on Excel was run on the 10th September. Participants found it very useful. Future sessions can be arranged if there is sufficient demand. A brief presentation at the AGM would be useful to show people what is covered in the course so they can ascertain whether it will be of value to them. MapMate licenses have been supplied to ten members. These members have not yet mobilised any records but are likely to do so when the survey season is over. Adrian Norris can provide MapMate training and support to users at their home or over the telephone.

13. Communication

Due to increased postal costs, meeting minutes and agendas will no longer be sent by post but will be sent via e-mail and will also be available to download from the YNU website.

Action Please could members who have not yet done so supply their e-mail addresses to Hannah Droop at membership@ynu.org.uk

14. Correspondence

Roy Crossley forwarded issues 11 and 12 of *Ebb and Flow*, the newsletter of the Humber Management Scheme, to the Committee and asked if another member of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union would like to receive this instead of him.

Action: Contact Humber Management Scheme and arrange for this newsletter to be sent to the Marine and Coastal Section. Offer an article on the YNU's marine and coastal activities and information on how to join. (Paula Lightfoot)

