



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union

Natural Sciences Forum

Charity 224018

Minutes of the thirty-sixth meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum held at St Chad's Parish Centre, Leeds on Saturday 3rd February 2018.

Present: Peter Flint (Chair), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes Secretary), Terry Crawford, Sharon Flint, Andy Godfrey, Andy Millard, Chris Young

Apologies: Jane Pottas, Barry Warrington, Jill Warwick, Terry Whitaker

1. Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at RHS Harlow Carr 18th November 2017 were circulated by e-mail on the 27th November and are available to download from the YNU website. They were accepted as a true record. The following matters arising were discussed.

1.1 YNU organisation and accountability

The document presented by Terry Whitaker at the last meeting was circulated with the minutes on the 27th November with an addendum by John Bowers. It was sent via e-mail to all affiliated societies on the 12th December, with an invitation to send any comments or suggestions to TW. TW will collate and present responses and recommendations at the next NSF meeting in November.

1.2 Annual report and Section reports

Barry Warrington would like to receive brief reports from each Section summarising their activities in the 2017-2018 financial year by the end of May, or June at the very latest. TC stated that it has become unclear what is expected from Sections in terms of reports for *The Naturalist* and the Annual Report. The confusion has arisen because Section reports were omitted from the Annual Report for a few years because they are not required by the Charity Commission guidelines, but it was agreed in 2015 that reports should be included if possible, to demonstrate that the YNU is meeting its charitable objects. Reports for the Annual Report should be one paragraph summarising the indoor and outdoor meetings held and any other activities, e.g. attendance at public natural history events, publication of species checklists etc. Reports for *The Naturalist* should be a brief summary of highlights of the previous year, e.g. interesting records. The deadline for including reports in the December issue of *The Naturalist* is October 14th.

Action PL, AM, BW: send an e-mail to all Section Chairs to let them know the copy deadlines for the Annual Report and *The Naturalist* and provide some guidance on report length and content.

1.3 YNU Presidents on website

Roy Crossley and Margaret Hartley sent PL lists of past presidents copied from back issues of *The Naturalist*. PL has entered these into a spreadsheet and added links to

obituaries via the Biodiversity Heritage Library where these have been provided on the [Natstand](#) website. In time, PL hopes to add links to all obituaries and presidential addresses that have been published in *The Naturalist*. Mark Seaward has kindly agreed to help locate the articles. The information collated so far has been added to the YNU website: [www.ynu.org.uk/YNU Presidents](http://www.ynu.org.uk/YNU_Presidents)

2. YNU Conference 2018

The YNU conference will take place on the 7th April 2018 in the Ron Cooke Hub, University of York, on the theme of non-native species. An announcement was published in the January issue of *The Naturalist* and there is a page on the YNU website.

Keynote talks will be given by Helen Roy (CEH) and Chris Thomas (University of York). Other speakers are Olaf Booy (GB Non Native Species Secretariat), Ben Rowson (National Museum Wales), Roger Morris (Hoverfly Recording Scheme), John Cave (Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum), Alison Dunn (University of Leeds), Jane Pottas (YNU) and Roger Key (YNU).

The following have booked display space: Spurn Bird Observatory Trust, VC61 Excursion Organisers, Second Nature Books, Yorkshire Coast Nature, Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum and a PhD researcher at Paris Natural History Museum. There is space for 20-30 displays. An e-mail was sent to all affiliated societies on the 12th December inviting them to book display space, and a notice was included in the February News Brief inviting quickfire talks, displays and posters.

Booking is open and has just been announced in the February News Brief; bookings are starting to come in online and by post. The deadline for booking is Friday 30th March.

PL will seek Chairs for the morning and afternoon sessions.

PL has produced a poster and can send this to anyone who would like to promote the event.

3. Future YNU Conference themes

Many national recording schemes and local natural history societies run an annual Recorders' Forum rather than a conference, often organised in partnership with the local environmental records centre. These events do not have a specific theme; members give talks and present exhibits on any aspect of natural history in the society's taxonomic or geographic area. The atmosphere is informal and friendly and the budget is kept low, e.g. delegates may be asked to bring their own lunch. Such events can be very successful, for example the Sussex forum attracts over 200 delegates. The Dipterists' Forum meeting is a two day event with talks and the AGM on the first day and networking and looking at collections on the second day. Other notable examples include BWARS, BENHS, Northumbria Natural History Society, BSBI and Sorby Natural History Society.

It was agreed that the YNU could trial holding a Recorders' Forum instead of a scientific conference next year if someone volunteers to coordinate this. If successful, the YNU could consider holding a Recorders' Forum and a scientific conference on alternate years in future. The Entomological Section has experience of organising and running such events, i.e. their annual Recorders' Reports and Conversazione.

[Note: it was agreed at the subsequent Executive Meeting to request an article for *The Naturalist* reviewing the Sorby South Yorkshire Natural History Day, suggesting that the YNU

could organise a similar Yorkshire-wide event in 2018 and asking for volunteers to coordinate this.]

TC noted that the traditional conference does draw in a wide audience. It was suggested that a Recorders' Forum could include a keynote speaker to act as an attraction.

Two themes were suggested for future conferences:

- Rewilding. This is a hot topic which has received considerable media coverage and can be controversial. It is of interest to farmers and other land managers as well as conservationists. There are implications for many forms of environmental management, for example the Environment Agency are investing heavily in natural flood management rather than hard defences.
- Implications of Brexit for conservation e.g. changes to conservation legislation and to incentives for sensitive land management.

There followed some discussion about the recent Natural England proposal to charge for wildlife licenses. The consultation on this opened on 11th December and closes on 5th February: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/wildlife-licence-charges/>

4. NEYEDC Data Providers' Forum 2018

Following the success of the meeting in April 2017, NEYEDC are organising another data providers' forum on Thursday 12th April 2018 2pm-4pm at the Quaker Meeting House in Friargate, York. It will be an open forum to discuss issues and seek to improve the way biological data is recorded and shared. Possible discussion topics include:

- How NEYEDC intend to publish data to the NBN Atlas.
- Demonstration of QGIS for displaying biological records. Discussion of whether YNU members would be interested in QGIS training.
- Recorder 6 - what does the future hold?
- Streamlining data flows - national vs local data flows and how to avoid duplication of effort.

TC asked if a document had been produced from the 2017 meeting, as it had been a very useful event. Mark Wills from NEYEDC provided an article for the YNU website covering the transfer of data to the NBN Atlas (www.ynu.org.uk/news/NEYEDC) and a brief paragraph was published in *The Naturalist* with a link to this article. The meeting note and presentation slides can be downloaded from the NEYEDC website: <http://www.neyedc.org.uk/transfer-of-species-data-to-nbn-atlas/>

5. Leeds University field skills day

The field skills day for students on the MSc Biodiversity and Conservation course will take place at St Chad's Parish Centre, Headingley, on Thursday 27th September. The venue has been booked and PL will liaise with the University and with YNU tutors to allocate students to groups and to ensure the necessary equipment and ID guides are available.

TC confirmed that the previous year's event had been a success, although it is challenging running it in September as it is the beginning of the academic year and the University cannot give much advance notice of student numbers and interests. The event usually generates a few new student members although they may not renew membership if they leave Yorkshire when the course ends. All communications about the event must make it

very clear that it is a private event for students on the MSc Biodiversity and Conservation course only, not for the wider YNU membership or general public. TC reminded the meeting that the event is organised in partnership with NEYEDC and makes an important contribution to meeting the charitable objects of both organisations.

6. Any other business

6.1 Vice County Excursions

SF asked how the locations for VC excursions are decided. The VC excursion sites are chosen by the divisional secretaries, taking account of accessibility, car parking, diversity of habitats and species, availability of a venue for the end-of-day meeting, and the potential to generate new and useful records. Some locations are chosen in collaboration with affiliated societies. VC excursions aim to bring together a range of members, for example last year's VC61 excursion to Eastington Ponds was very successful and attracted some new faces, but attendance can sometimes be low particularly if the weather is bad. TC said that the best thing about VC excursions is the opportunity to learn from others who have different taxonomic interests; this could be maximised by asking everyone to introduce themselves and their interests at the start of the meeting.

6.2 General Data Protection Regulation

PL reported that the GDPR comes into force on the 25th May 2018. This new legislation aims to give individuals greater protection and rights over how their personal data are collected, stored and used by organisations. It will affect the YNU and many, if not all, affiliated societies. The YNU holds members' contact details in an Access database and uses them to post publications to members, to send monthly updates about news and events by e-mail, to process Gift Aid claims and to contact members about overdue subscriptions. The Access database is stored on a password-protected laptop belonging to the YNU and kept by Membership Secretary, Clare Langrick. Contact details are not passed to third parties and the YNU does not undertake fundraising or campaigning activities. YNU Officers' contact details are made available to members via the membership card. The card is sent by e-mail at least twice prior to printing to everyone whose contact details appear in it, so they have control over what is published. Contact details for some officers also appear on the website, reflecting their preference for how much information they wish to make available.

TC stated that he found the list of members and their interests that was circulated in March 2017 very useful, it is important to be able to communicate with other members and feel part of a community. It is desirable to update this list and circulate it every year, but consent may need to be sought again under the new legislation. It is not possible with the current website infrastructure to put the list in a 'members-only' area of the website accessible via a log-in.

PL stated that the NBN Secretariat have formed a working group, whose members include JNCC and the Biological Records Centre, to produce guidance on GDPR for natural history societies.

Action: PL to write a note about the YNU and GDPR compliance in *The Naturalist*.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Saturday 3rd November 2018 before the AGM.