



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
Natural Sciences Forum
Charity 224018

The thirty-seventh meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum, St Chad's Parish Centre, Leeds, Saturday 3rd November 2018.

MINUTES

Present: Peter Flint (Chair), Paula Lightfoot (minutes), Phyl Abbott, Judith Allinson, Michael Archer, John Bowers, Gavin Boyd, Catherine Burton, Terry Crawford, Sharon Flint, Andy Godfrey, Andrew Grayson, Colin Howes, Andy Millard, Susie Millard, Jane Pottas, Mark Seaward, Peter Tannett, Chris Young.

Apologies: Jill Warwick, Terry Whitaker, Sarah White, Ken White, Barry Warrington, Roy Crossley, John Armitage

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at St Chad's Parish Centre on 3rd February 2018 are available on the website and were accepted as a true record.

2. YNU organisation and accountability

TW received little response to the paper he circulated last year and was unable to attend the present meeting. PF had raised the matter at the Entomological Section Meeting but there was little feedback to report. JB sent a paper in response last year, which pointed out several inaccuracies in the original paper. These corrections by JB and TW's paper are both appended to the minutes of the November 2017 NSF meeting, which are available to download from the YNU website. Any further discussion must take place when TW is present. This will be included on the agenda for the February meeting if TW is able to attend.

3. Vacancies – YNU executive and *The Naturalist* editorial board

A vacancy has arisen on the YNU Executive. Becky Bailey, who also holds the position of Birds Section Secretary, has agreed to be nominated for one position and this has been approved by the YNU Executive. SF announced that she would be prepared to stand for re-election to the Board of Trustees, having previously been co-opted. All present were in favour of nominating both BB and SF at the AGM.

AM raised a request on behalf of the Editorial Board of *The Naturalist*. Albert Henderson had been a key member of the Editorial Board and is sorely missed. AM said that the Board would be pleased to hear from anyone who might be interested in getting involved or knows anyone who might be suitable. AM stated that it is not a particularly onerous task, the Board meets three times a year, normally in Leeds, but a lot of communication and discussion takes place by e-mail, and they use Dropbox to circulate articles for comment. AM is the receiving editor and Paul Simmons in charge of layout. Other members contribute by proof reading, finding appropriate reviewers and helping authors to redraft their papers if necessary.

[Post-meeting note] PF has joined the Editorial Board and his details have been added to the Membership Card and website.

If anyone else would like to get involved or knows anyone who might be interested, please contact Andy Millard on editor@ynu.org.uk. AM will write an editorial for a future issue of *The Naturalist* to make the membership aware of this opportunity and to outline the skills required.

4. YNU Conference 2019 and future conference themes

PL announced that next year's YNU conference will be joint event in collaboration with the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre. It will be held at the Ron Cooke Hub, University of York, on the 6th April 2019. The venue has been booked. The theme is new tools and technology for biological recording and conservation. This is linked to NEYEDC's Heritage Lottery-funded NatureHack project (June 2018-December 2019) which aims to help local field naturalists adopt new technology for applications that are relevant and useful to them. Several YNU members have already participated in this project, for example attending free training in the mapping software QGIS. As in recent years, the conference will include an exhibition and plenty of time for networking, and affiliated societies will be invited to bring a display. PL will write an announcement about the conference for the next issue of *The Naturalist*.

TC said he would like to know what the future holds for MapMate software which is used by numerous moth recorders for collating and sharing records. PL suggested contacting Butterfly Conservation and the Biological Records Centre for their thoughts on this.

Future conference topics were discussed. MS suggested climate change and species distribution changes. JB suggested the implications of intense agriculture, AGr suggested including forestry and fisheries in this topic. SF suggested having talks about how data are actually used for conservation, i.e. case studies - this was the theme of the 2013 conference but it could be revisited in future years. JB raised the issue of the gap between data provided by naturalists and the requirements of data users, stating that naturalists do not collect data "for" other people. If the data can be used for other purposes that is good but it is not necessarily the naturalists' motivation in recording, they do this for their own interest. AM added that if naturalists make data available in a suitable format it can then be re-used if required. TC stressed the importance of being able to see the big picture over time, we need an early warning if common species start declining. PL stated that a form to suggest future conference themes and to offer to help with organisation will be added to the website shortly.

5. Any other business

5.1 *Membership Card 2019 and recorder vacancies*

PL has send a request to all YNU Officers and Recorders to ask them to notify her of any events or change of contact details for the 2019 Membership Card. The deadline for sending information is the 16th November. The draft card will be circulated at the end of November and the final draft circulated in early December.

Vacancies have arisen for a botanical recorder in VC64 and Symphyta/Orthoptera recorder. The meeting expressed thanks to PA for carrying out the role of botanical recorder for so many years.

[Post-meeting note] David Broughton, who also holds the role of BSBI County Recorder, has agreed to take on the role of VC64 botanical recorder for the YNU. Ian Andrews has agreed to take on the role of Symphyta recorder and Phillip Whelpdale to take on the role of Orthoptera recorder. Their details have all been added to the Membership Card and website.

5.2 *Birds Section – extension to seaward boundary of recording area*

PL has received notification that the Birds Section have agreed to expand their recording area from 12nm to 200nm. The NSF approved this decision.

5.3 *Membership demographics*

JP asked about the average age of the YNU membership. PL stated that the YNU does not store this information on all members, it was captured for those who responded to the 2017 membership survey but this is only a sample. Younger people do join the YNU but don't tend to be as actively involved, perhaps due to commitments of studies, work and family. JB reminded the meeting that the YNU has always had a high proportion of active members of retirement age and that a 'snapshot' gives no insight into population trends.

5.4 *YNU communications*

JA suggested using #ynuorg in tweets. Of those present, five currently use Twitter and agreed to use #ynuorg in tweets in future.

JA enquired about the YNU News Brief. PL stated that she and Kate Wright had produced 17 monthly issues from January 2017 to May 2018 but no longer had time to do this. This had been announced when the last News Brief was sent out, along with a call for volunteers, but none had come forward. JA stated that she might be interested in producing a newsletter in future.

5.5 *Albert Henderson*

CH advised the meeting that he and MS and other YNU members had spent a week at Albert Henderson's flat, going through his extensive natural history library and specimens to ensure that nothing is lost. The collection includes materials on the ecology and biology of rabbits and hares, which CH has catalogued and is looking for an individual or organisation to take it over. Albert had a particular interest in charophytes, Don Grant has taken on this material. There are also files on orchards and records of Royal Fern in Yorkshire. Three works on leaf miners have been given to Harry Beaumont. The meeting expressed thanks to CH and MS for saving this material.

5.6 *YNU AGM costs*

The subject of payment for the AGM was discussed. The cost to the YNU of running the AGM varies from year to year depending on the choice of venue. In recent years, attendees have been asked to pay a contribution of £10-£12 each towards the total cost, the remainder being met by the YNU. It was felt that this might deter some from attending. The cost could be reduced in future by asking attendees to bring or buy their own lunch.

6. Dates of next meetings

Meetings of the Natural Sciences Forum will take place in February and November 2019. Dates will be confirmed in the 2019 Membership Card and on the YNU website in due course.