

MINUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – 23 November 2013
NFU Mutual, Tiddington, Stratford upon Avon

Mike Slater opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. He also thanked the NFU for the use of their facilities.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Richard Lamb, Margaret Vickery, Pam Reason and Chris Foulkes.

2. Minutes

The Minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated and were available on the website. Proposal for acceptance was made by Richard Dinsdale and seconded by Val Roberts and the Minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Re-election of Officers

Keith Warmington, Heather Warmington, John Liggins and Richard Lamb stood down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and willing to offer themselves for re-election. Lyn Chapman proposed and Richard Dinsdale seconded and the re-elections which were carried unanimously. Mike invited anyone interested in joining the Committee to make contact with him during the meeting.

4. Chairman's Review

Mike Slater reported that Warwickshire now has over 300 members for the first time. He noted that 9 guided walks and 5 moth nights were held during the summer. An Open Day at Ryton Wood Meadows was also held and Mike emphasised that all are welcome at the Branch Open Days and we would particularly welcome new members. He asked the meeting if they had any suggestions for 2014 field trip venues to let him know.

The Branch produced a magazine and Annual Report in 2013 and Mike thanked Steve Cheshire for his work as editor. Steve's outside commitments means that he cannot continue as editor. Unless someone comes forward to take on the magazine, the Branch is proposing to produce an Annual Report only for 2013 which will incorporate members' contributions. This will also help us reduce costs by having only one major printing during the year.

Early next year there will be an update to the landscape report and Mike encouraged everyone to submit sightings, online if possible and not just from field visits but also from gardens. This helps us to keep everyone informed of current sightings. The website also gives details of work parties to which anyone is welcome to work in the 'green gym'. Mike reported that he also uses Twitter to keep everyone up-to-date.

5. Treasurer's Report

The financial report had been circulated. Keith Warmington reported that although income for the period shows a deficit we actually carried over £15,000 from the previous 12 months. The Annual Report was moved from Branch Sundries to the Newsletter/Annual Report category. Of the Branch funds of £7,554.16, £3,410 is restricted HLS funding for the Reserve. It was interesting to note that 87.5% of the Branch's total income was spent on conservation this year.

Keith reported that there is a possibility that the amount per member received from Head Office will be reduced from £6.50 to £5.00 next year but we are not sure yet how this will affect the Branch.

It was confirmed that we would be getting the Barclays 'Pound for Pound' donation again in respect of monies raised by Val Weston during the AGM.

The proposal to accept the accounts was made by Steve Batt and seconded by Richard Dinsdale and the meeting voted to confirm acceptance.

6. Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for sending in their records whether online or on paper. The deadline for transect data is the end of November and for general records, 31 December and he asked for any outstanding records to be submitted as soon as possible.

We had 60 transects at the start of the year but unfortunately, this figure is now reduced to 52 because some transect walkers have been unable to participate as normal. Keith asked if anyone could help with this work to see him after the meeting. The UK BMS data can now be inputted online and the consensus of those who have used the system is that it is a quick and easy process. The aim is for all data to be inputted online within two years but Keith said that paper records could be submitted to him if transect walkers were unable to do this.

There were three new transects in 2013; Fenny Compton Tunnels, Leam Valley and Swift Valley.

With regard to general records, the Branch had 705 2km squares at the time of the Millennium Atlas but is now reduced to 620 following negotiation with West Midlands Branch. Keith noted that there are only 3 squares in the whole of our area which have had no records since 2010. Next year is the last of a 5 year Atlas block and the Branch will be targeting squares with less than 10 species since 2009. Target squares will be discussed at the Spring Meeting.

Finally, Keith gave his butterfly highlights for 2013 which were the congregating Small and Green-veined Whites, the large number of Large Whites and the best year since 1996 for Clouded Yellows.

7. Web Records – Statistics

Steve Cheshire reported that this year we have had 13,208 visits to the Branch website, of which 45% were first visits. The number of visits has increased by 206% since 2008. He then showed a chart giving the number of records submitted per month. Unfortunately, the website was down for a while in June which accounts for the low number of submissions.

Steve reported that the website has had to be moved to a new web host and there is more work to be done to sort out ongoing web hosting problems. However, he did emphasise the benefits of online submissions including the fact that everyone can immediately see which species are currently on the wing.

8. Conservation Officer's Report

Mike Slater reported a busy and successful year with many conservation visits made to landowners giving detailed advice; much of which is being put into action. The importance of fields margins was stressed together with the usefulness of the HLS scheme. With regard to practical conservation, 6,144 hours of work has been carried out during the year which equates to 1,128 days. This work is proving extremely beneficial with sites like Stockton doing really well.

With regard to the Reserve at Ryton, English Long Horn cattle have grazed part of the site and this has been beneficial helping to increase biodiversity and landscaping work has also paid off. Brimstones have had their best ever year as has Brown Argus. Silver Y and Hummingbird Hawkmoths have also had good years.

In 2000 there was only one colony of Silver-washed Fritillaries. This year 80 woods have been surveyed and we now have 23-26 colonies. This is good evidence to put to landowners. Mike also mentioned Ryton Pools Country Park where enthusiastic work from Ben Coleman has meant an increase in the Grizzled Skipper colony.

9. Moth Recorder's Report

David Brown gave a summary of the larger moths' year in Warwickshire.

March, April and May were cold and moth trap catches were low but with the fine weather in June and July there was a complete transformation. Two new species were recorded in the County; Olive Crescent at Middleton Hall and a Four-spot Footman. Scarlet Tiger had its best year ever and the first Small Ranunculus was seen in 70 years. Emperor Moth has been recorded at Edgehill and Oversley Wood, the latter is the first record for 40 years.

10. Visiting Speaker Presentation

Following a tea break we were entertained by the moth expert, Paul Waring whose excellent talk was entitled 'Extreme Mothing'.