

**MI NUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**2.00 p.m. – 21 November 2014**  
**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, Val Weston, Alan Prior, 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 Steve Cheshire and seconded by Richard Dinsdale and the Minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Re-election of Officers

Steve & Debbie Cheshire, Geoff & Gill Thompson, Terry Southgate and David Brown all stood down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and willing to offer themselves for re-election. Phil Parr proposed and John Liggins seconded 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 330 members and nationally, Butterfly Conservation has over 25,000 which has resulted in core funding being increased. He noted that 7 guided walks and 6 moth nights were held during the summer. He asked the meeting for any suggestions for 2015 field trip venues. 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 who might need assistance with identification. A new members' moth night was held at Ryton Country Park and was very successful. He emphasised that this was run for a couple of hours to give an introduction to mothing for anyone not experiencing it before.

The Branch attended a Bird Fair at Focus Optics, Corley and managed to recruit a couple of new recorders. Bio-blitz sessions were held in an attempt to record the flora and fauna on four sites. An introduction to recording butterflies was held in association with Warwickshire Wildlife. This is to encourage members to monitor their local areas a few times a year. Other events attended by the Branch included the Butterfly Recorders' Meeting, the International Symposium, the National Moth Recorders' Meeting and the National AGM. Branch members are entitled to attend these meetings.

The Branch was also involved in updating the Butterfly Landscape booklet and gave advice to landowners/farmers to help improve habitat for butterflies.

Mike made reference to the passing of Phil Pain, a great contributor to both the Branch and to Warwickshire Wildlife and noted that an information sign for Hampton Wood has been made in Phil's name.

Mike also referred to the Branch's President, Margaret Vickery, who was given a lifetime achievement award at the National AGM in respect of the Garden Butterfly Survey which she has run since its inception and also for her contribution to both West Midlands and latterly, Warwickshire Branches.

5. Treasurer's Report

The financial report had been circulated. Keith Warmington reported that no payments due to the Reserve at Ryton by the Rural Payments Agency were received in the last two years. This account is currently owed about £9000 and we have been informed that £7000 will be paid shortly. The Branch has supported Reserve expenses to approximately £1500 and this will be repaid once funding is received. The Branch's major expenses are the Annual Report and other ad hoc publications and we have also contributed to some projects in order to purchase wildflower seeds.

The proposal to accept the accounts was made by Mike Slater and seconded by Rob Adams and the meeting voted to confirm acceptance.

6. Web Records – Social Media

Steve Cheshire reported that the number of visits to the Branch website this year had dropped slightly although the number of first time visits had increased. The recording effort was excellent although butterfly numbers were slightly down.

Steve reported that the Twitter account is doing well and the Branch is third in country for the amount of Tweets generated which helps to pass on current information on Branch activities and records. The Branch is not yet on Facebook but one of the Committee Members, Gillian Thompson, has undertaken to set this up.

Steve showed a champion's league for records submitted with near 5000 records from one recorder. Mike Slater, however, got the top slot with over 9500 submissions. Steve reiterated that all records were verified before going live on the website. Analysis of the data received on the website means that at any one time, empty tetrads can be targeted while the butterfly species is still on the wing.

Matthew Shepherd is currently redesigning and updating the website which will hopefully be ready early in 2015.

#### 7. Conservation Officer's Report

Mike Slater reported a busy and successful year with many visits made to landowners giving detailed advice such as the use of field margins and the national pollination strategy; much of which is being put into action. Mike has worked with the owner of Nelson's Wharf and was invited to the opening by HRH Princess Anne of a training centre on the site. Over 6000 hours were worked by volunteers this year on grassland management, scrub clearance and many other tasks and work continues on the Reserve at Ryton.

#### 8. Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for sending in their records whether online or on paper. He noted that at the Spring Meeting he asked for an extra effort this year to try and get all tetrads recorded with 10 or more common species and he was pleased to announce that this had now been achieved. Four species, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown have also now been recorded in every tetrad in Warwickshire. At the Spring Meeting Keith also reported that he picked four tetrads around the county with a prize for the recorder who achieved the 10<sup>th</sup> species. Mike Slater and Keith Warmington achieved this in three of the squares (they are exempt from receiving a prize!) but Mark and Mary Preston achieved the fourth square and would soon be receiving their prize.

There were 45 transects walked during the year which is 9 down on the previous year. Keith appealed for help in recording, particularly of Green Hairstreak at Sutton Park. There were six timed counts and there were three new transects at Cawston, Tasker's Meadow, Binswood Allotments.

Keith highlighted the top four butterflies which performed well during the year based on the number of tetrads that they were recorded in; Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Green-veined White and Speckled Wood. His butterfly of the year was Red Admiral which was first recorded in February and was still being recorded up until very recently. He mentioned butterfly releases and odd records which included Chalkhill Blue and European Map. It was felt that the one or two records received this year were probably home bred butterflies and then released nearby. BC policy on releases was reiterated.

On a final note, Keith mentioned recording targets for 2015 being the under-recorded Purple and White Letter Hairstreaks and Small Heath. With regard to the White Letter Hairstreak, it is best to identify elms in the spring when they are in flower. Small Heath has undergone a 52% decline since 1999 so it is important to try and ascertain its strength in the county.

#### 9. Moth Recorder's Report

David Brown gave a summary of the larger moths' year in Warwickshire. The star was a Lempkes Gold Spot which was a first for Warwickshire. Among the other highlights included Four Spotted Footman (a nationally local species) with two records last year and two in July this year; a Mocha found by Liz Dinsdale is only the fourth county record; Ruddy Carpet found by Martin Kennard which could be from a previously unknown colony in Weethley Wood; Pauper Pug (Red Data Book species) – three were found at one site; Lobster Moth which appears to be doing well in Brandon Wood; Angle Striped Sallow was trapped on Grendon Common; Scarlet Tiger is still spreading throughout the county and a colony of Emperor Moths were found in Charlecote.

#### 10. Jenny Joy – Senior Regional Officer

Following a tea break Jenny Joy explained her role and that of Rhona Goddard, the new West Midlands Regional Officer. She gave details of the main conservation priorities in West Midlands including Cannock Chase where the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary which has declined by 76%. Cattle grazing has now been established on part of the Chase and this is helping to keep scrub under control.

#### 11. Projects & Updates

Keith Warmington gave an overview of projects being undertaken in North Warwickshire. These include a landscape project in the Anker Valley to encourage landowners to improve their land for wildlife and conservation particularly with Dingy Skipper, Brown Argus, Small Heath and Common Blue in mind. Another project is the restoration of the heather on Grendon Common for the benefit of moths and reptiles. This is the

largest area of heathland left in Warwickshire and is fast disappearing under Silver Birch scrub. Sixteen volunteers recently spent a day clearing a section but there is a lot more work to do.

## 12 Conservation Species Review

Mike Slater then gave an update on the conservation of key species in Warwickshire and how observation and research of requirements has meant that many species have improved by manipulating habitat e.g. placing stones in strategic areas near larvae foodplant. Colonies of both Dingy and Grizzled Skippers have increased in Warwickshire as a result. Ryton Wood is the only breeding site in Warwickshire for Wood White and following observation that the butterfly frequents ditches, these will be sown with the larvae foodplant, meadow vetchling.

Small Blue has been part of a national project and has grown from 3 threatened sites in 1999 to 10 sites. Purple Emperor was unofficially introduced in 2000 but has spread to at least six woodlands and Silver-washed Fritillary has spread into 26 woods in the County. Dark Green Fritillary now has 6 colonies from a single small one in 1999.

The future could include a partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to reintroduce Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary to the Princethorpe Woodlands and perhaps planting horse-shoe vetch to encourage Chalkhill Blue into the County.

After an open discussion regarding social media and other methods of keeping members informed of Branch activities, the meeting closed at 5.00 p.m.