



Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Steering Group 19th June 2008

Present:

Claire Collison (Derbyshire Dales District Council) CC
Carl Hawke (National Trust) CH
Warren Priest (EMBP) WP
Dan Abrahams Chair (Natural England) DA
Jo Brown (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust) JB
Steve Wright (BTCV) SW

Kevin Exley (South Derbyshire District Council) KE
Adele Rhodes (Bolsover District Council) AR
Rachael Coates (Amber Valley Borough Council) RC
Beverley Rhodes (Derby City) BR
Tom French (Derbyshire County Council) TF
Debbie Court (Project Officer) DC

Apologies were received from:

Yvonne Wright (Erewash Borough Council), Sam Ulliyat (North East Derbyshire District Council)
Nichola Baker (Chesterfield Borough Council), Rebecca Brunt (Environment Agency)
Mike Hase (Derbyshire Dales District Council), Helen Fairfax (North East Derbyshire District Council)

1. Matters Arising – all action points from last meeting were completed.

DA welcomed all to the meeting, especially Tom French who had recently replaced Annie Cooper as Derbyshire County Council's Ecologist.

2. Project Officer's Report

DC gave a verbal update on her work since the last meeting in January

- Two issues of Derbyshire Biodiversity News
- Widened LBAP Partnership – 51 partners including 19 local groups
- Engaging partners – visiting EA, BW, FWAG, Highways Agency and providing BARS training
- Starting to gather information for Annual Report – from LBAP partners and Local groups
- Attending meetings and representing the LBAP partnership
- Working with community groups and LBAP partners on BAP projects and writing letters of support for funding bids.
- Attending regional meetings
- Organising the Annual Forum

3. NERC Duty Promotion

DC reported that a number of activities had taken place promoting the NERC Duty since the meeting in January:

- The East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership ran a number of seminars on the NERC Duty. Attendance from Derbyshire Local Authorities had been good and DC had given a case study presentation at one.
- DC had carried out NERC Audits for Derbyshire Constabulary, BDC, and had initial meetings with DDDC, AVBC and SDDC to start information gathering
- DC had given presentations at LSPs and will be doing one for CHART in July
- DC and JB are assisting Derbyshire Constabulary hosting a national conference for police and emergency services on sustainability and biodiversity conference in Oct
- DC has given a number of presentations/workshops for Local Authorities on NERC eg NEDDC – senior managers, BDC – Members, CBC - Senior managers and members
- DC has responded to enquiries from Town & Parish Council prior to sending out the regional parish leaflet.

In addition DC had arranged a number of activities for the next six months:

- Presentations on NERC Duty to Members in EBC and possibly SDDC
- Presentation to Senior Managers at DDDC
- Carry out and complete NERC Audits for SDDC, AVBC, DDDC and Derby City and possibly EBC.
- Distribution of a regionally produced leaflet on NERC aimed at third tier councils to all parish councils in the LBAP area with accompanying letter and other useful local information.
- DC had been asked to give a presentation on the NERC Audits on the national biodiversity course at Plas Tan Y Bwlch in October

DC asked if there were any other activities that LBAP partners could think of that will promote the NERC Duty. CH commented following a recent meeting he attended that Highways Agency staff needed to be reminded of their NERC Duty. DC commented that the Highways Agency has their own BAP and locally AMSCOTT, HA's local contractor, is a part of the Grassland HAP group.

4. 2008 Annual Forum

DC explained that she was working on a joint Forum event with the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Partnership and this year the event will be a two day event on 10th and 11th October 2008. The event on the 10th (Friday) will be in Nottinghamshire and will be aimed at LBAP partners, themed around Green Infrastructure and urban issues. The 11th (Saturday) is booked at the Pleasley Landmark Centre, Derbyshire and will be aimed at local community groups and volunteers. The theme will be urban conservation and running local groups. Both days will be open to both Notts and Derbyshire BAP partnerships. Programmes and booking forms will be issued in the next month.

5. Feedback from East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership

WP reported that the EMBP is currently finalising its annual work programme to make the most of its resources and target the limited funds.

The Partnership had recently held two successful workshops.

1. Climate Change National Indicator NI188 and biodiversity – as some of the LAAs in the region had opted for NI188 rather than NI197 (biodiversity), this workshop looked at the generic links between biodiversity and the LBAP process and the requirements under the NI188 indicator.
2. Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping – this highlighted the work that had been going on in the region looking at mapping biodiversity opportunities to provide evidence for such documents as Green Infrastructure Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, as well as forming a basis for LBAP delivery projects. A methodology was being piloted through the 6C's process which would be provided to local authorities to use at a local level. The workshop looked for feedback on this pilot so that it would be as useful as possible.

The Regional Spatial Strategy requires each local authority to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy. DC asked how each of the local authorities were progressing with this.

Derbyshire Dales DC – Howard Crowe (DDDC Landscape Architect) was involved in the sub-regional GI peak project

Bolsover – A draft GI study had been produced by consultants and would come out for formal consultation soon.

Amber Valley and South Derbyshire – Starting to gather evidence.

WP said that if anyone wanted any advice on GI they should talk to Alison Hepworth at EMRA (alison.hepworth@emra.gov.uk). Other good examples included the Mansfield DC GI study (contact Kbesh@mansfield.gov.uk for further information) and the GI study for the Nene River Regional Park.

6. Feedback from Habitat and Species Sub-groups

Woodland – The group had recently had a meeting to take forward a landscape scale project within the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, focussing on woodlands and grasslands. A Woodland Birds project is currently being worked up for the Peak District, but it may also come into the Lowland Derbyshire area. National Forest Company recently launched their Changing Landscapes grant scheme, to replace their

Tender Scheme. DA is working on the Melbourne Parklands project to provide a treed landscape extending the parkland habitat centred around Calke NNR. This will look at habitat creation using HLS, ELS, Changing Landscapes and Woodland Grant Scheme. Already, 93ha of parkland/woodpasture will be created through HLS on the Calke estate. Phase I of the Great Trees of Derbyshire project finished in March 2008. It recorded over 4,150 trees and involved over 250 volunteers. DWT are currently working on a funding bid to continue the project with an emphasis on management and veterans for the future. A GIS layer of the veteran trees is available, subject to a data exchange agreement, contact Jo Brown at DWT for more details.

Wetland - DWT has recently received funding for the continuation of the Water for Wildlife Project. The work over the next few years will be concentrated within the Dove and Derwent catchments. The project has some ambitious habitat creation targets and will use water voles as a flagship species. The strategic mink control is showing excellent results and so far the project has managed to engage anglers along the Dove catchment, an important and new audience.

Riparian Species - JB reported that water voles now have full legal protection. DC had sent round information to LBAP partners asking this to be cascaded to all staff. This information was also put on the front page of the April Derbyshire Biodiversity newsletter.

CH reported that the Calke Abbey weirs crayfish project was going very well. Six stone refuges had now been put in and a fourth attempt has been made to remove the fish from one of the lakes. The buffer wetland to the top pond had been delayed but was due to be done this year.

DC reported that she had acquired some funding from the Environment Agency to survey Wingerworth Lido and a section of the River Moss for Crayfish. This would be carried out this summer and should confirm whether the crayfish are still present.

Grassland – There are two major delivery projects within the grassland group; the Value in Meadows project and the Wild About Nature project. Both are currently looking for additional funding to continue work. A list of the best grasslands in the LBAP has been produced and is being used to target HLS. DA reported that there is currently lots of money for HLS agreements and any organisation thinking of applying should speak to him.

8. Greenprints

WildDerby –BR said that Derby has declared two Local Nature Reserves in the last six months (Darley and Nutwood in January and Sinfin Moor in June). They were also hoping to add Elm Wood to the list of 10 LNRs later in the year. They had a successful Sinfin Wildweek in April which preceded the LNR designation. BR had also set up a Friends of Mickleover Meadows Group to look at the Derby section of the Greenway (with glow worms), ponds and other nearby Derby owned Local Wildlife Sites. Two Friends of Groups had been successful in gaining Breathing Places grants (Chaddesden Park and Markeaton Brook). Environment Agency money had been secured to fund white-clawed crayfish work in the Markeaton Brook and to write a management plan. The Go Wild event had taken place on Derby Market Place and had received 2,500 visitors.

Bolsover – AR reported that BDC had decided to use an internal monitoring system for the Greenprint rather than BARS. The Bolsover Countryside Partnership had continued to work with local community groups and on biodiversity work on both BDC and DCC land.

Chesterfield – DC reported that Nichola Baker was due to go on maternity cover at the end of the week but co-ordination and work would continue in her absence. CBC had gained a SITA landfill tax grant to fund habitat work on Norbriggs Flash and would look to designate a LNR later this year.

North-East Derbyshire – The Greenprint is finished. DC and JB held a workshop for NEDDC Senior Officers on the NERC Duty and the Greenprint to widen internal participation in delivering actions.

Erewash – EBC had received a first draft of the document.

9. Local Wildlife Sites

DWT has finished a report on the condition assessment of Local Wildlife Sites from data in the last 10 years. There will be a long report and a public version which will come out in the autumn and will be publicised. The

report breaks down sites into Local Authority areas and BAP habitats. Unfortunately the report has shown that only 20% of the Local Wildlife Sites are in favourable condition. The report will refocus the work of the Local Wildlife Sites team and other DWT projects, for example the Value In Meadows project will target sites for HLS.

10. Local Record Centre Update

JB commented that the chances of getting a self-contained LRC in Derbyshire are slim due to funding. A contractor has been engaged to improve data management and consistency and develop a partnership as well as setting out principles to sharing data by drafting data exchange agreements. JB had negotiated with Natural England to receive some money from a Memorandum of Agreement for LRC work. Under the same agreement PDNPA, and Derby City will also receive some funding.

There will be a 3 years update to the Protected Species (European Protected Species and water voles) database soon. If any Local Authority would like a copy of this they should contact DA for more information. Similarly if any LBAP Partner would like copies of the BAP habitat layers they should contact Jo Brown for more information but DWT need a contribution towards costs.

11. Local Area Agreement

The Derbyshire LAA had chosen NI188 and NI186 (climate change) indicators and not the NI197 (biodiversity) DC and TF were due to meet with the LAA Climate Change rep soon to discuss how biodiversity can feed into the monitoring process.

The Draft Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy had been out for consultation. JB said that it had included biodiversity but it was a not a cross-cutting theme through out the document.

Despite NI197 not having been chosen by the LAA, each Local Authority will have to report on it anyway. The provision of information on NI197 had been included within all SLAs with DWT.

KE reported that the biodiversity element of the LDF Annual Monitoring Report might change in the future.

12. Funding

CH reported that FWAG had submitted a funding bid, on behalf of the MMB project, for river work in the catchment. Also that SITA Landfill tax money will have 1 more years worth of funding.

DA reported that he had responded to an internal Natural England request for project funding bids. He was the only person to submit something from the East Midlands and had included Value in Meadows and the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site project for consideration.

DC reported that there had been three successful Breathing Places projects in the LBAP area (Chaddesden Park, Markeaton Brook and Draycott Parish Council). DC keeps a spreadsheet for recording external funding and for 2007/8 LBAP partners had received more than £500,000 and this was likely to go up with information gathered for the annual report. The figure for 2008/9 is currently £315,000 which is also likely to go up once projects submitted had been approved.

TF reported that funding for DC's post was looking healthy with contributions this year. All but one Local Authority had confirmed funding for 2008/9 and we were still working to persuade the last to contribute. He thanked the Local Authorities for their continued support, especially AVBC and DDDC who had been able to support for the first time this year. Natural England had recently announced that funding had been secured for the Memorandum of Agreements for 2009/10 and 2010/11 at £16k per annum.

13. Planning

KE reported that SDDC were having pre-application discussions with Eon regarding development surrounding Drakelow nature reserve. This might include some wetland creation to compliment the DWT nature reserve.

14. AoB

DC reported that due to circumstances beyond her control she will lose her direct dial number over the summer. DCC will be upgrading it's phone service and all direct dial numbers will be changed. DC will keep LBAP partners informed of changes but this might have to include calling through the DCC Call Centre. This

would be regretful as the direct dial number provided some independence from DCC as DC's post was only hosted by DCC.

DA asked the group about the possibility of including geology (and Geology Action Plans) within the LBAP partnership. After a short discussion it was agreed that the geology sector could act like a HAP group reporting to the Steering Group and DC would maintain an overview of the geology sector. This would raise the profile of the RIGS group.

Date of Next meeting

22nd January 2009 2pm Committee Room 3, County Hall, Matlock.