

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION DORSET BRANCH

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at Puddletown Village Hall

### 1. Welcome by the Chairman and Apologies

Nigel Spring, Chairman, welcomed everyone and thanked them for braving the weather to come. A few people had been unable to make it. He reminded us of how different it was from the warm, sunny day of the AGM last year. Bill Shreeves was unable to be present, but his Records Officer's report had been circulated. It appeared that some people were not receiving the Branch Newsletters, Annual Report or other documents in electronic form when they had asked to do so. In order for it to happen, members have to inform Head Office that they are willing for their email addresses to be used for the purpose. Robin George has been trying to sort matters out and anyone who still has a problem should see her about it.

Nigel said that the branch had lost some very loyal members in the past year. Gordon Hopkins had died after a long illness we will miss him a great deal. We had been informed of the death of John Tubb who had been a member from the early days of the Branch and who devised the routes of a number of the Dorset transect walks. He was particularly involved with those at Hod Hill and Fontmell. Tony Copper had also died, he had worked on the transects at Lydlinch, Duncliffe and Fifehead.

Apologies had been received from Bill Shreeves, Tony Long, Joan Durran, Tansie Russell, Lyn Fornison, Tim Norris, Frank Crosier and Peggy Taylor (who had kindly sent a generous donation). Approximately 71 members and friends were present.

### 2. Minutes of Last AGM (23.02.19)

The minutes had been circulated by email prior to the meeting and paper copies were available. It was proposed by John East, seconded by John Winterbottom, that they be accepted as a correct record. **Passed unanimously.**

### 3. Matters Arising

**Asian Hornets (under A.O.B.)** It was asked if any had been seen in Dorset. Myra Sealy said that she had gone in to her garden one night last year and found a swarm of hornets. At the time she thought that they might be the Asian ones, but afterwards she had decided that they probably were not.

### 4. Chairman's Report

Nigel started by thanking the committee and everyone else for all the things they do on behalf of the Branch. We are trying to keep a record of events, work parties, walks etc to estimate the number of volunteer hours the committee and other members put in, it must be an enormous amount. For example, about 900 person days are contributed to conservation work and walks alone. In addition to work done by the committee, Arthur Bryant and Richard Belding have also done a great deal. Nigel thanked both of them as well as Adrian Neil for organizing this AGM.

One theme over the past year has been the amount of contact and work with other organisations in Dorset involved in conservation that the Branch has been involved in. These initiatives do not

always get the publicity they deserve, but they show how useful it is for us to be the local contact between different groups, for instance with developments on Portland. We have permission to work on Perryfields although it is no longer a reserve and we continue at Broadcroft too despite no longer having a lease there. Recently, the county ecologist, Annabel King with some use the money allocated for management other people have set up a Portland Nature Community Interest Company that will be responsible for managing 'set aside' land as Section 101 grants by developers. So far not much has happened, but there is now an organisation to use the money allocated for management linked to the Portland Quarries Nature Group. A great deal of this initiative is due to Annabel. Nigel, Georgie Laing and Richard Belding are on the Portland Forum.

We had another request recently, to be involved in Operation Future Hope, a scheme for schools in the Sherborne area to use their open spaces for re-wilding projects. We have been asked to set up monitoring systems. Efforts to encourage White-letter Hairstreak populations have brought together Frank Cromer, who took elm cuttings from Alner's Gorse, Rebecca Porter and Brian Arnold. There have been a number of activities linked to the Back From The Brink Project, Di Hall and John Winterbottom have taken part in some events and linked up with Bioblitzes. We have been asked to become involved at the Moors Valley Country Park. Possible butterfly walks at Castle Cove and the Rodwell Trail in Weymouth have been discussed. We have had requests for student placements, but the nature of our work makes them rather difficult to accommodate. There will be a meeting at Kingston Maurwood to see if it would be possible to share placements between different organisations. We have been peripherally involved with the Winfrith nuclear power site. An environmental assessment has been carried out and it has been suggested that we could undertake a transect walk inside the fence, Richard Belding is in negotiations about what would be possible. Some conservation work has been completed on private sites at Cashmoor, Lydlinch and Compton Down and we were asked by Mike Parsons to do some work at Maiden Newton water meadows.

From time to time we are asked to give talks to other groups. If anyone feels confident about doing this and would be interested, it would be good to hear from them. Lyn Pullen has a set of PowerPoint slides that can be used. The amount of work done with schools has declined a little, it had been hoped that Amber Rosenthal would be able to help with it, but this did not prove possible. There is always a need for help with ?? and it would be good to hear from anyone who can offer to do this.

We have a lot of contacts around Dorset and can make connections between B.C. H.O. and what is going on in our own area, but it would help if more people were involved. Nigel thanked everyone who had made an input and hoped that the coming year would be as good as the past one.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

Georgie Laing presented her financial report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. She pointed out that they were now 11 months old because of the date when we hold the AGM. It has been decided that Head Office will take over the bookkeeping from the 1<sup>st</sup> March this year. This has caused some problems as our branch accounts will be closed and consolidated, but Georgie has been assured that each branch's accounts can be tracked. Anything paid in after 1<sup>st</sup> April needs to be marked 'DO' to ensure that it comes to Dorset and it would be helpful if Georgie could be told if something is going to be paid in. A suggestion from the floor was that all cheques could be sent to Georgie, but this would not cover sums of money paid by BACS and Georgie is waiting to be given an address. She confirmed that all branches will still be in charge of their own budgets.

Turning to the accounts, Georgie said that an RPA grant had been overpaid due to a mistake at H.O. and we had to pay back #5,000 of our income. The old system has now finished and there will

be a new 10-year agreement. Income from membership is growing as we have now passed the 1,000 mark. We had received bequests from Timothy Field and John Ruppertsbery.

We had budgeted to spend £13,200 on work on the reserves, but the delays in approving contracts and receiving grants led to an underspend. The 10-year grant comes to an end this year and we do not yet know what will happen after that when a new system of Countryside Grants comes in. The committee has therefore decided to designate £10,000 to be held in a separate fund for expenditure on the reserves in case this is needed. A balance of just over £13,500 has been carried forward in general funds to the present financial year.

Branch membership is still increasing, but the branch precept from H.O. has remained at £6 and only just covers our costs. We are only a few short of having a membership of 1,000 and should reach this figure soon.

Georgie was delighted to inform the meeting that, since the end of the last accounting period, we had received a large legacy of £10,000 from Timothy Field. No decision has yet been made on how to spend it, but Timothy used to visit some of our reserves so it might be appropriate to put it towards work on the Portland reserves.

A motion to adopt the accounts was proposed by John Winterbottom and seconded by Sylvia Dicker. It was carried unanimously.

## **6. Record Officer's Report**

Bill Shreeves said that he would not talk about the state of butterflies in Dorset last year as that information was contained in his written report and was being presented at the regional recorders' meetings. Instead he wished to highlight the importance of recording butterflies this year as it is the last in the 2015-9 cycle for which an atlas of Dorset records will be compiled. We need to record as many butterflies as possible to boost both the number of butterflies recorded and the km. squares covered in the report. Between 2015 and 2018, an excellent total of 2,313 squares have been covered already and, even with one year to go, this total is the third best since the old atlas of 1970-94. There are about 600 squares in the county still left and, if butterflies were recorded on only another 73 of them, that would equal what was achieved in the last 2010-14 cycle. If 152 could be done, that would equal the best ever period of 1995-9.

Bill outlined six suggestions for how to help with the recording effort: if you have not done any before, pick up a leaflet about types of recording; sign up to attend the ID training day at Cerne Abbas in May; join the band of recorders who search 'white holes' (squares where no butterflies have been recorded so far); help on a transect walk - recorders are particularly needed for Kingcombe, Powerstock and Durlston East; get involved in the large amount of work that is needed to check old sites where Chalkhill Blues have not been recorded recently; assist in sorting and verifying the large amount of data now being submitted to the website, Nick Urch will continue with this task for the time being but would like more help. Leaflets, forms and signing sheets were all available at the back of the hall.

Bill finished by thanking Robin George and Arthur Bryant for preparing the PowerPoint presentations for the regional meetings, Steven Brown for organizing the one at Toller Porcorum and for stepping in at a late stage to ensure that the Wimborne one would go ahead and Jon Bellamy for continuing to arrange the meeting at Wareham. Bill hoped for a really good set of records this year and wished everyone well for the butterfly season.

## 7. Election of Officers

**Secretary:** Adrian Neil, proposed by Pauline Pires, seconded by Colin Burningham.

**Newsletter Editor:** Jane Smith, proposed by Robin George, seconded by Richard Belding.

Both were elected unanimously. It was observed that Jane has done very good work with the Newsletter, but needs more articles for future issues.

## 8 Any Other Business.

**Waitrose Community Matters Fund.** Richard Belding said that it was the last full week of the collection of tokens at Waitrose in Dorchester for Butterfly Conservation. So far, we seem to be doing quite well and we hope that £400 will be raised. We could also apply to be nominated for the collection in Wimborne

**Asian (or Yellow-legged) Hornets.** Nigel said that Myra Sealy had asked him to mention that bee keepers are worried about the Asian hornets appearing in this country as they have decimated bee colonies in other parts of Europe. They should not be killed, but information should be passed to the address on a leaflet that is available at the back of the hall and on this link: [http://www.brc.ac.uk/risc/alert.php?species=Asian\\_hornet](http://www.brc.ac.uk/risc/alert.php?species=Asian_hornet).

The meeting closed at 2.48 p.m.

A.N.  
17.03.19