

BEDFORDSHIRE MAMMAL GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BBRC, CARDINGTON ON WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2017

Those Present: Richard Lawrence (Chair) Ann de Winter (Secretary) Graham Bellamy, Ken Winder, Helen Gebler, Pam Rumfitt, Sue Raven, Bob Cornes, Sally Gray, Liz Anderson, Amanda Proud

1. **Apologies:** Fiona McDougall, Wilf Powell, Gwen Hitchcock, Julia Massey, David Anderson, David Sedgley

2. **Previous Minutes and Matters Arising:**
 - Item 1: It was confirmed that £100.00 is held by BNHS on behalf of the Group
 - **Badgers:** Helen G, Graham B and Ken W are to look at areas where there are gaps in the presence of badgers. The plan would then be to go out as a group to check for badger activity. Ken W asked if it would be a good idea to have separate teams for the north and south of the county. **Action: HG, KW, GB**

Liz A stated that she does not check every site, as most planning applications come with an ecological survey attached.

Pam R asked what would happen if someone found a suspected badger sett, but was unsure – the Chairman told her that it would always be possible for someone to investigate.
 - Item 2: Correct name is Richard (not Ricard) Lawson
 - Item 3: Bob C pointed out that minutes of meetings should be approved by the Group before appearing on the website. The procedure is that the Secretary passes the minutes to the Chairman and then forwards to all attendees. A deadline will be set for comments.

Amanda had asked Dominique to set up a members' only site on the webpage. This has not been done, but may not be needed.
 - Ann deW now has compiled a full membership list.
 - Ann deW pointed out that she volunteered for the Secretary's post after the meeting so this should not have been minuted.
 - Other: BNHS are always looking for articles for 'Wild About Beds' and members were encouraged to think submitting one.

The Group agreed that it was still a good idea to have a talk about mammals
Steve Halton was asked to produce a logo for the Group by the end of March, but has not yet done so. Steve to be contacted. **Action: AdeW**

3. **Who is in What Post for the Coming Year?**
 - Chairman: Richard Lawrence
 - Secretary: Ann de Winter
 - Treasurer: Julia Massey
 - Webmaster: Dominique Rhoades
 - Mammal Recorder: David Anderson

4. **Constitution**
 - The draft constitution had been emailed to all members of the Group prior to the meeting. There being no further comments, Bob C proposed the document be accepted. This was agreed, and the Chairman will send the final document to the Secretary for distribution and inclusion on the website. **Action: Chairman**

5. Accounts

- The Group still has to open an account
- Julia M sent a message outlining issues with opening the account. Because it took several months to compile the terms and conditions for the group, the existing account application had been removed from the HSBC system. This means the whole process will have to be re-started. Julia will not be able to complete the process until the end of April, but will inform the group of how things are progressing.
Action: Julia M

6. Website

- Dominique is keen to have articles/photographs/information for the website. The Chairman encouraged the Group to submit these.
- The Chairman voiced his appreciation of Dominique's work on the website, and all attendees agreed.
- It was reported that there is some confusion between the web page and the Facebook page for the Group. The blog on the website does 'feed' into Facebook, but not vice-versa.
- Julia M has offered to fund the website and the Group registered its gratitude for this generous gesture.

7. Insurance

- Despite previous information, BNHS stated that we need insurance which is separate from theirs. It was unclear why this should be, but could be because not everyone in the Mammal Group is a member of the BNHS. It was suggested that we investigate the possibility of paying a small amount to be added onto the main BNHS insurance policy. Graham B offered to investigate this through his membership of the BNHS Council.
Action: GB
- Bob C reported that the Bat Group is covered by insurance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust

8. Reports on Projects and Surveys

- Otters: Amanda P reported that the otter surveys are going very well. The count survey is done every five years. This is a 1 year survey Oct to Oct in the middle of those 5 years just to give a look at what is happening and check all is well with the Bedfordshire otters.
Sue R reported that otters have been captured on a trail camera at Sandy Smith NR. This information could be shared via Wild about Beds and the BNHS journal.
- Water Voles: Amanda reported that sites where water voles have been recorded in the past will be checked. This information will be published as an update to the survey results published two years ago.
- Dormice: Pam's report is the one submitted last year. It would appear that the Studham dormouse population is disappearing. Glis have been evident in Studham but not Studham Common.
Ann reported that she has replaced 16 dormouse nest boxes in Maulden Woods. There are another 5 to be replaced that she knows of, although more may be needed to be replaced after the first check in May.
Ken W pointed out that the dates for the Maulden Wood dormouse box checks are not on the website. Ann will ask Dominique to put the dates into the calendar.

Action: AdeW

- Water Shrews: Ken has been undertaking some water shrew monitoring
- Small Mammal Trapping: Richard undertook a small mammal trapping session for the Wildlife Trust.

9. Projects and Surveys for Next Year

- Ken and Graham have been discussing running a survey on brown hares. They plan to visit sites where hares have been seen previously, possibly from May onwards. People will be asked to send in any sightings of hares, and report them on Adnoto. The Chairman suggested that distribution map be made available in order that everyone can see where hares have been recorded previously.

Action: GB

- Sally G asked about polecat recording and if there are any details where they are found. The Chairman said that they are found in the county, but are very difficult to see (one had been seen in a Barton-Le-Clay garden but with a trail camera at night). Evidence of polecats is equally difficult as their droppings and pawprints are very similar to other species.
- Pam reported that in Studham they are trying to extend potential dormouse habitat and will be putting up more boxes. She also reported that Paul Tearle had recently obtained his dormouse licence.

10. What do we need to do to Do Things Better?

- Bob stated that he felt we are functioning as individuals but not as a group. He suggested getting people together and getting them out in the field and involved with surveys.
- Some training through site visits would be very useful and helpful.
- Ken reported that some other counties produce an atlas of mammals – it would be a good idea if we could do the same.
- Bob would like information on bats to be included in the communication process

11. Any Other Business

- The Chairman re-iterated the importance of reporting all mammal sightings (alive or dead) via the BNHS adnoto recording system.

12. Date of Next Meeting/AGM

- The next meeting, which will also incorporate the Group AGM will be held on 18 October 2017. The venue to be advised.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2150.