

Biodiversity Working Group St Briavels, Hewelsfield and Brockweir

Note of meeting on Wednesday 4th December, Assembly Rooms, St Briavels

Present

Chris McFarling (CM)
Nick (NW) and Penny Woodman (PW)
Edith Slee (ES)
Brian (BB) and Sheila Bocking (SB)
Mike Topp (MT)
Andy Stott (AS)

Apologies

Mitch Crossingham (MC)

Notes

1. Nick and Penny were introduced to the group

2. Light pollution

The light pollution and dark skies presentation and discussion on 29 Nov at Mackenzie Hall was well attended. CM reported that eleven people had expressed an interest in taking forward this topic and a number of actions to raise awareness and reduce light pollution were proposed. CM had followed-up with Gloucestershire CC Highways Department to understand their current policies. A number of possible actions were discussed by the group and it was agreed that a first step would be to gather some further information about impacts on biodiversity and concerns regarding road safety and security and to undertake a baseline light pollution survey (**action NW and PW**).

3. Villagescapes

ES said she had done some further research on villagescapes and identified a number of resources available from Common Ground. She emphasised the need for a focus on local character and distinctiveness and suggested working to produce parish maps highlighting local features of interest. A number of digital information sources were discussed and an example of a 'tree trail' in Bath was provided. The garden wildlife checklist had been distributed to around half of households. It was noted that the Garden Society regularly organised talks on

wildlife gardening and had a talk on the Severn Treescapes project scheduled for their March meeting.

Actions:

- **ES, SB and PW to arrange for printing and further distribution of the garden wildlife checklist.**
- **CM to arrange for the shortened action plan and wildlife checklist to be posted on the PCs websites.**
- **BB to contact MC to ask what information she had gathered on Garden Society meetings and interests of other local groups.**
- **ES, SB to arrange a talk with WI.**
- **ES to explore additional information and resources on local character, including contacts with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Brockweir History Group.**
- **MT to contact George Peterken to seek his advice on a possible tree trail.**
- **AS to consider a possible workshop on digital information resources such as magic.gov.uk and know your place.**
- **ALL to consider further articles to raise awareness and promote actions for biodiversity to be submitted to the Village News.**

4. Parish Grasslands Project

MT provided an update on the PGP programme. PGP were keen to encourage interest in the community orchard in the St Briavels playing field and were organising a wassail there at the end of January. PGP would report on the 'homes for wildlife' project at their AGM meeting in March. They were doing some further research on glowworms to consider whether these could be included in this project (with barn owls, swifts, reptiles and pondlife). They have a talk on wild boar scheduled for the March meeting. Members of PGP were gathering experience of the new agri-environment schemes (Sustainable Farming Incentive, higher level Countryside Stewardship) and PGP would share information when there was some further clarification on the schedule for roll out of these schemes. PGP would continue the 'signs of spring' wildflower walks with Gemma Bode and MT reminded the group that PGP can offer a free management advice service to local landowners. There followed a discussion about further training on

identification of different species groups and experiences of involving local people and experts.

Actions:

- **MT to publish information on PGP events in the Village News and to update at the next meeting.**
- **SB offered to contact an expert on lichens and bryophytes to arrange a local walk.**

5. River Wye pollution

CM and NW provided updates on the status of salmon populations in the River Wye and ongoing efforts to monitor and control pollution.

6. Date of next meeting 5th February, Assembly Rooms.

AS 5/12/24