

**Biodiversity Working Group St Briavels, Hewelsfield and Brockweir**  
**Note of meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Assembly Rooms, St Briavels**

**Present**

Chris McFarling (CM)  
Brian (BB) and Sheila Bocking (SB)  
Edith Sleas (SL)  
Clare (CF) and Matt Fletcher (MF)  
Andy Stott (AS)  
Mike Topp (MT)  
Phillipa Lovemore (PL)  
Rebecca Weissbort (RW)  
Hugo Whately – for items 1-3 only  
Piers Cardiff -for items 1-3 only

**Apologies**

None reported

**Notes**

- 1 Round of introductions. CM briefly explained the background to the Biodiversity Working Group.
- 2 Hugo Whately and Piers Cardiff introduced proposals for purchase of a wood at Lindors. The asking price is £950k for 104 acres. Extensive felling has been undertaken in recent years. There is an opportunity for a community purchase with the aim to restore biodiversity. Contact has been made with Woodland Savers who offer support for purchase of community woods. The proposal is to crowd source funding for purchase and to generate income to pay for management and pay back loans. Possible income sources include timber sales, Countryside Stewardship, Biodiversity Net Gain and other commercial uses. CM noted importance for a wide range of ecosystem services: carbon, water, recreation and visual amenity. Community buy-in is key to gaining support from Woodland Savers. A vision, a story and local benefits will be needed. Many issues regarding legal status, decision-making, business plan and management arrangements still need to be worked out. A meeting will be held on 10th April to gauge public interest. Members of BWG voiced general support for the initiative.

Next steps: distribute leaflets, volunteers invited to join committee to work up proposals: technical and business skills needed. CM suggested that an application for small grant to support preparatory work could be made to St Briavels PC.

- 3 Piers Cardiff mentioned that a thermal imaging camera was available on loan from FoDDC. He offered to provide further information.
- 4 Matters arising from meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February

<b>Light pollution</b>		
Action 25-1	NW and PW to co-ordinate Dark Skies survey at end of Feb.	Done
<b>Action 25-2</b>	<b>BB, NW, PW to prepare an evidence review and draft motion for GCC on measures needed to reduce light pollution.</b>	<b>Carried forward</b>
Action 25-3	CM to contact WVNL to ask about their dark skies initiative.	Done
Discussion	<p>Andrew Blake provided information to CM. A position statement has been submitted to all councillors in the WVNL. The WVNL planning officer uses this as guidance to respond to planning application. WVNL are collaborating with other NLs across Wales (not England). They can undertake small surveys and provide funding for retro-fitting of lights.</p> <p>There was some discussions about the need to continue to raise awareness about control of light pollution. There could be an annual meeting to review progress. A good place to start would be with community facilities.</p>	<p><b>New actions:</b>  <b>25-12 MT to write to CM (as FoDDC councillor) to express concerns about enforcement of conditions on lighting</b>  <b>25-13 CM to ask Assembly Rooms management about repair to blinds</b></p>
<b>Hedgehogs</b>		
<b>Action 25-4</b>	<b>ES to contact Garden Society to ask if a news item would be written for Village News with a link to further information and to suggest that any sightings hedgehog should be reported SB.</b>	<b>Carried forward</b>
<b>Action 25-5</b>	<b>CM to provide a link to further information on St Briavels PC website</b>	<b>Carried forward</b>
Discussion	CM provided information on the hedgehog first response unit operated by Wye Valley NL. The unit supported a school education project and provided hedgehog tracking tools	
<b>Woodland management</b>		

Action 25-6	CM to ask Piers and Hugo to keep the working group informed of any developments regarding Lindors Wood	Done – see item 2 above  <b>New action: 25-14 – all invited to attend public meeting on 10 April</b>
Action 25-7	<b>CM to follow-up on Joe Weaver’s offer to provide information about woodland grant opportunities more generally</b>	Carried forward
<b>PGP Update</b>		
Action 25-8	<b>MT to inform the working group of PGP committee decisions and report back on these items at future meetings</b>	Carried forward
Discussion	The PGP AGM meeting to be held on 27 <sup>th</sup> March would have an update on ‘homes for wildlife’ initiative and presentations on wild boar and glow worms. Further plans include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a calendar for 2026 illustrating the parish biodiversity action plan. A number of photos had already been submitted.</li> <li>• a guide to distinctive trees in the parishes.</li> <li>• a drop-in session on use of on-line information resources and wildlife recording applications.</li> </ul>	
<b>Other actions from meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February</b>		
Action 25-9	<b>AS to consider scope for biodiversity enhancement on the playing fields</b>	Carried forward
Action 25-10	SB to report back on initiative with WI	Done
Action 25-11	<b>AS and CM to review the long list of actions in the Action Plan for publication</b>	Carried forward
<b>Actions from meeting on 4 Dec (carried over)</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ES, SB and PW to arrange for printing and further distribution of the garden wildlife checklist. - done</li> <li>• CM to arrange for the shortened action plan and wildlife checklist to be posted on the PCs websites. – see action 25-11</li> </ul>	<b>New actions: 25-15 BB, NW, PW to prepare article on Dark Skies for Village News.</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BB to contact MC to ask what information she had gathered on Garden Society meetings and interests of other local groups. -done</li> <li>• ES to explore additional information and resources on local character, including contacts with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Brockweir History Group. -</li> <li>• ALL to consider further articles to raise awareness and promote actions for biodiversity to be submitted to the Village News. - co-ordinate with Chris, proposed Dark Skies article</li> <li>• SB offered to contact an expert on lichens and bryophytes to arrange a local walk – done but not available.</li> </ul>	<p><b>25-16 CM to recommend a lichen expert used in FoD</b></p>
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5 Date of next meeting Weds 7<sup>th</sup> May, Assembly Rooms.

AS 07/04/2025