

MINUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – Saturday 30 November 2018
Bourton on Dunsmore, Warwickshire

Mike Slater opened the meeting and welcomed c 70 attendees.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Phil Parr, Keith Deane, Emma Restall Orr, Margaret Vickery, Jenny Joy, Sarah Wager, Dave Parker and Bob & Jane Pryce.

2. Minutes

Copies of the Minutes from the previous meeting had been available on the website. There were no matters arising.

3. Re-election of Officers

Mike Slater, Richard Lamb, Phil Parr and Brian Sherwin stood down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and, with the exception of Brian Sherwin, were willing to offer themselves for re-election. Debbie Cheshire proposed and Richard Dinsdale seconded, and the elections were carried unanimously. Mike invited anyone interested in joining the Committee to make contact with him during the meeting.

4. Chairman's Review

Mike Slater reported that Warwickshire has 493 members which is up by 17 on last year.

He noted that there were six guided walks both in the County and outside which were well attended. There were also six moth nights and an informal weekend in the Heddon Valley, Devon. The Open Day was held at Nelson's Wharf, a site created recently and already supporting Small Blue, Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak. A fieldcraft workshop was held on the Ryton Wood Meadows later in the year. He thanked Ben Coleman of Ryton Country Park for again running a beginners' moth night. A list of proposed walks for 2019 is available with a final confirmed listing available with the Spring newsletter. Lincolnshire is the proposed venue for the informal weekend. Mike reminded the members that as well as the Branch events, they are also eligible to attend national meetings such as the Recorders' Meeting in Birmingham. He

5. Treasurer's Report

Keith Warmington reminded the meeting that Head Office has taken over the running of all Branch finances. Accounts produced by Head Office to 31 March 2018 (year end) show a closing balance at £11,728.73. The balance at 30 November 2018 is £8,340.26.

Keith then described the various major incomes and expenditures through the year and noted that 62% of income raised during the year was as a result of the generosity of our members. He also noted that 82% of expenditure during the year was spent on conservation. The remaining amount was used to produce newsletters etc. The Ryton Reserve is under a Stewardship scheme but payments due since September 2017 are outstanding so at present, the Reserve fund is empty. The Branch also has the legacy from Phil Pain and interest this year has brought that amount to £18,384.96. It is hoped that this will be used to produce a new book, 'The Conservation of butterflies in Warwickshire' which will be a combination of an atlas and conservation methods used to boost butterflies in the County.

Keith then gave details of budgeted expenditure items for the next year and beyond which include the website upgrade completion, an update to David Brown's 'The Larger Moths of Warwickshire', a new mower for the Reserve, publication of the Micro Moths of Warwickshire Atlas and work towards the new Warwickshire book.

6. Web Statistics

Steve Cheshire reported work is carrying on with the new website which will hopefully be complete before the new butterfly recording year.

The Twitter and Facebook sites are under-used with just under 2000 followers. He asked for a Twitter volunteer to re-tweet stories from related feeds. He reported that Mike Slater had 1,112 followers on his twitter site and sent out over 13,000 during the year. He also asked whether there was a Facebook user who would volunteer to post stories and photos and generally promote the Branch.

7 Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for an amazing year for butterfly records and particularly, Transect Recorders for getting their records in on time. He asked that anyone still with records outstanding to send them in by the end of the year.

There were 72 transects walked this year with over 56,000 individual butterflies recorded. For 2019 there are a possible 10 further Transects in the Heart of England Forest.

The top four butterflies recorded from transect records received so far are Meadow Brown, Common Blue, Speckled Wood and Small White. Although there were more Transects walked this year, some species declined; most notably White Admiral and Silver-washed Fritillary. On the plus side, some key species did well including Small Heath, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Speckled Wood and Small Blue. All the final data will be published in the Annual Report.

Records of individual butterflies on the Branch website total 55,000 which is 7% down on last year. Four species accounted for almost half of the website records; Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Small White and Large White. Red Admiral and Orange Tip were among species which did poorly. One item of note was the good number of Purple Hairstreak records (265% increase on last year).

8. Conservation Officer's Report

Mike Slater reported a busy and successful year with many visits made to sites and advice given on butterfly conservation with many owners acting on the advice given. A lot of work has been done with the Heart of England Forest and the Ragley Hall Estate has also agreed to put their hedgerows into a 3-year cutting rotation to help the Brown Hairstreak.

Mike said the BC Management Task Force has worked 197 work parties on 21 sites through the year. The practical conservation effort totalled nearly 6000 hours or the equivalent of 1030 day. Other work includes updating the landscape area and site registration lists working with the Warwick Records Office.

9. Moth Records

David Brown gave an interesting update on the larger moth trapped in Warwickshire this year. The Clifden Nonpareil, Dewick's Plusia and Toadflax Brocade were among the highlights.

Following a tea break, Jim Asher (Chairman of BC) updated the meeting on the work Butterfly Conservation Head Office, currently in its 50th year. This was followed by two very interesting and entertaining talks on RSPB Middleton Lakes and RSPB Otmoor (by Katie Thorpe and Fergus Mosey respectively) and their efforts to conserve butterflies on these sites.