

MINUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – Saturday 30 November 2019
Bourton on Dunsmore, Warwickshire

Mike Slater opened the meeting and welcomed c 70 attendees.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Richard Lamb, Brian Sherwin and Ben Coleman

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

Keith & Heather Warmington, Tony Penycate, Michelle Tyrtania and Nigel Stone stood down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and, with the exception of Nigel Stone, were willing to offer themselves for re-election. Debbie Cheshire proposed and Helen Suslowicz 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 now has 540 members which is up by 47 on last year.

He noted that there were seven guided walks both in the County and outside which were well attended. There were also six moth nights. He advocated the beginners' Moth Nights held at Ryton Country Park for new members interested in getting involved. The Open Day was held at Ryton Wood Meadows and an early one is planned for next Spring. A list of proposed walks for 2019 is available with a final confirmed listing available with the Spring newsletter. It was noted that a visit to the Butterfly Farm in January has been arranged at a reduced entry fee. Booking for this is required as space is limited. Mike thanked Katie Thorpe for efforts on our behalf on social media.

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 £10,453.81, half of which is restricted Stewardship funds. It was noted that 25% of the Branch funds comes from donations and subscriptions and 63% of the income is spent on conservation. The Phil Pain legacy stands at £18,644. Budgets for next year include the new Warwickshire book, an update to the Larger Moth of Warwickshire Atlas and possibly a new mower.

6. Digital Communications

Steve Cheshire reported that teething problems with the new website have now been sorted other than the timing out issues when inputting records. This will hopefully be sorted out soon. He is also hoping to add a drop-down box of locations previously recorded to speed up input time. He also confirmed that in order to save postage and envelope costs, the Spring and Autumn newsletters will be sent by email where possible. Those without computer access will still receive a copy by post.

7. Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for their butterfly records. In 2019 115,000 butterflies were counted. Unfortunately, there were 8000 fewer records received online. He asked that anyone still with records outstanding to send them in by the end of the year and if necessary, let him have paper records for inputting.

Records of 66 transects have been received so far and 67,000 butterflies counted. The top four butterflies from transect records received so far are the grassland species, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Marbled White and Ringlet. This is probably due to the drought experienced in 2018, the timing of which dessicated the foodplants of many of the early summer species such as Common Blue. Keith also mentioned that Small Heath did badly in North Warwickshire but did very well in the Heart of England Forest. There was a Painted Lady invasion although not as large as that in 2009. Butterfly of the year is Meadow Brown with 11,000 more records on the transects than last year. All the final data will be published in the Annual Report.

8. Conservation Officer's Report

Mike Slater reported a busy and successful year with many visits made to sites including other BC Branches and advice given on butterfly conservation. Warwickshire Branch has taken on a lot of contact with farmers who would previously have got conservation advice from Natural England. We also have a longstanding relationship with Cemex and they have 60 acres of scrub on Southam Quarry which now holds the biggest Dark Green Fritillary colony in the county. In 1999 there was only one site where this butterfly occurred but now there are 11.

Various talks were also given to promote the butterfly message. Training has also been given to various landowners.

Mike said the BC Management Task Force has worked 107 work parties on 27 sites through the year. The practical conservation effort totalled over 6000 hours or the equivalent of 1024 days.

9. Moth Records

David Brown gave an interesting update on the larger moth trapped in Warwickshire this year. He said that it was one of the most exciting years ever with Clifden Nonpareil (Blue Underwing) being caught in good numbers at many sites. Among the other highlights was the Beautiful Marbled, a rare migrant from Scandinavia and the micro Semi-rubella which is usually found in southern England. It was also noted that the Chalk Carpet on Bishops Hill seemed to have escaped being affected by the 2018 drought. All in all it was a very interesting and productive moth year.

Following a tea break, David again entertained the meeting with his mothing adventures out of county and this was followed by a very interesting talk by Adam McVie on the way temperature fluctuations affect Mountain Ringlet in the Lake District.