

MINUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – Saturday 4 December 2021
via ZOOM

Mike Slater opened the meeting and welcomed c 35 attendees.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Katie Thorpe, Hugh Woodland and David Brown.

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

David Brown, Steve & Debbie Cheshire and Steve Wright were up for re-election in 2020. Phil Parr, Richard Lamb, Mike Slater and Sue Walker are up for re-election in 2021. In addition, Katie Thorpe and Caz Bailey were co-opted on to the Committee in February 2020 and March 2021 respectively. All have indicated their willingness to stand again.

Hugh Woodland was proposed to be elected to committee.

No objections have been received so all are re-elected/elected.

4. Chairman's Review

Mike Slater reported that Warwickshire now has 568 members. On 16th August 2020, membership was 589. Overall membership has decreased due to members not renewing or transferring to other branches.

Just 65 members now receive hard copy communications with 88% getting their communications online, providing additional funding for conservation work.

Guided walks restarted in 2021 with 3 held this year in addition to the reserve Open Day at Ryton Wood Meadows. A list of proposed walks for 2022 is available on the website, including an out of county walk in conjunction with Beds and Northants branch for Black Hairstreak.

5. Treasurer's Report

Keith Warmington reported that from 1 April 2020, all individual branch accounts were closed and consolidated in the main NatWest account. Total Branch funds at 31 March 2021 stood at £12,878.75, £9,454.68 of which is Ryton Wood Restricted Fund. General Fund income was £5418 and expenditure was £4711. The Restricted Fund saw income of £2,625 with expenditure of £6,464. Total branch funds as at 31 October 2021 are £12886. The Phil Pain legacy stands at £19,037. Future budget aspirations include production of 'Butterfly Conservation - The Warwickshire Approach' book in 2022, an update to the Larger Moth of Warwickshire Atlas and a new mower and fencing at Ryton Wood Meadows.

6. Digital Communications

Steve Cheshire reported on behalf of Katie Thorpe who looks after Social Media, that the branch has 2,334 followers on Twitter and 246 followers on Facebook. He then reported that the website had shown marked increase in usage in 2020 and 2021, possibly due to lockdown. He is in the process of updating the website providing compact navigation and extra security. A Gatekeeper login will be required to submit records in an effort to reduce spam records. Also, an integrated grid reference generator when recording. All existing content will be reviewed and updated including basing species flight charts on real data submitted.

7 Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for their butterfly records and asked that anyone still with records outstanding to send them in by the end of the year.

Records of 77 transects have been received so far and 46,993 butterflies counted including a new transect at Luddington NR. The top four butterflies from transect records received so far are the grassland species, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Marbled White. The top four species from Web records are Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Small Tortoiseshell. Keith also mentioned that the most widespread species in 2020 was Peacock and Orange Tip in 2021, probably because of the end of lockdown and recorders not being tied to their gardens and local walks. Butterfly of the year is Brown Hairstreak with 9 recorded on Transect Walks and a maximum of 20 individuals counted on 7 September 2021. The total count was 73 with 25 adult records.

8. Conservation Officer's Report

Mike Slater reported a busy and successful year with lots of people wanting advice on how to help butterflies and moths. He carried out 36 site visits with particular emphasis on farms and areas looking to increase biodiversity for butterflies. He also attended conservation meetings and gave talks, with particular interest being shown by HS2 Ecologists in the creation and management of butterfly habitats.

Guided walks were provided on five occasions.

Mike said work parties had continued throughout lockdown, with smaller groups working over several areas. There have been 207 work parties on 24 sites through the year. The practical conservation effort totalled over 5,291 hours or the equivalent of 1006 days.

9. Moth Records

David Brown gave an interesting update via video on moths trapped in Warwickshire this year. Four new moth species have been reported in the county - Bilberry Pug, Marsh Oblique-barred, Flame Shoulder and Tunbridge Wells Pug. Clifden Nonpareil (Blue Underwing) are going from strength to strength, being caught in good numbers at many sites. Two more Gypsy Moths were recorded in 2021, up from 1 in 2020. Bedstraw Hawkmoth was a new migrant.

During a comfort break, a slide show of some of this year's notable moth sightings was provided by Alan Prior.

Following this, Jamie Wildman, Postgraduate Researcher in Environmental Science at the University of Northampton gave an interesting presentation on the decline to extinction and re-introduction of the Chequered Skipper butterfly to the woodlands of the Rockingham Forest in Northamptonshire.

This was followed by a photographic presentation of the birds and butterflies to be found near Lake Kerkini in Northern Greece by Steve Cheshire and Keith Warmington.