



**Minutes of BRISC 2006 Annual General Meeting
held on Saturday 8 April 2006
at The Tweed Horizons Centre, Newtown St Boswells, Scottish Borders
12.40 13.20**

Apologies for absence

Andy Wakelin, Jonathan Willet, Gill Calder, Elizabeth Roberts.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 9 April 2005 at the Bute Building, St Andrews

The minutes had been circulated earlier via BRISC Recorder News (July 2005 issue). Copies were also included in the delegates pack. The minutes were approved without any changes.

Chairman's Report for 2005

Patrick Milne Home (PMH) indicated that the report had been circulated prior to the meeting and also that a further copy was included in the delegates' pack. He hoped people had read it and did not propose to go into it in here, in any great detail. The main items were that the Development Officer's project had ended and that a new project had commenced with the Wildlife Counts project. Claire McSorley had been appointed as project officer. PMH asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Wildlife Counts Project Officer's Report

Claire McSorley said she had started with the project, which was about recruiting new recorders, in mid-October 2005. The project focussed on three local authority areas; Falkirk, North Lanarkshire and Stirling. It offered free workshops and field outings, aimed primarily at beginners, although existing recorders could be involved as 'mentors'. The workshops were starting this month (April) and leaflets had been circulated with the full programme for people to sign up to. Copies of this were available by the display she had brought with her.

From the floor Thomas Huxley (TH) queried the involvement of existing experts, indicating that there was a need to call upon their expertise, especially with difficult taxa, though any expert involvement also brought with it some difficulties, such as having critical reference collections to hand. These constraints were readily acknowledged by others present. Alan Cameron, who had developed the project while Development Officer for BRISC, welcomed TH's comments and explained that only certain objectives would obtain grants, in particular from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), whose remit had long been to favour involvement of new audiences. Helping existing recorders to extend their expertise had only recently been achieved through a new Natural Talent HLF Bursary. BTCV were taking up this opportunity and were planning a project to cover Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Another comment from the floor raised the need for ongoing periodic monitoring of the progress of the new recorders, so as to make sure their enthusiasm was not lost. Paul Kirkland responded that Butterfly Conservation had run a number of introductory courses, involving lots of new inexperienced people, some of whom had certainly dropped out, but others had become real enthusiasts. It was important to note that these events offered an opportunity to get involved and even if only a few of those attending actually went on to become real recorders, this was only to be expected. Without such events they might never have had the opportunity or realised what fun recording could be.

Anne-Marie Smout (AMS) pointed out that, in the budget for the project, BRISC was down to provide a substantial sum 'in kind'. Volunteer help counted as 'in kind' and any assistance from Thomas Huxley and anyone else at the programmed events would be very much welcomed.

Jim Munford welcomed the Natural Talent Bursary funding and congratulated HLF on a real change of direction. It was so much easier for HLF to fund the acquisition of a building or a plot;

but assisting people to acquire skills was much less measurable. However, this new direction would have substantial support from DEFRA, following a report – soon to be published - on the lack of success of the BAP process. The findings of the report were that the monitoring required for the UK BAP fell far short of expectations, especially as regards species. The report laid the blame on government for not having enacted what was required for the success of the BAP process.

Annual Accounts

Duncan Davidson presented the accounts. The figures were included in the annual report and were hopefully self explanatory. The financial situation was in a fairly healthy state: this was due to the increase in the annual subscription agreed at last year's AGM and also to the fact that a full year's grant money had been received from HLF for the Wildlife Counts project, whereas BRISC was only paying BTCV monthly for managing the project. The accounts had been duly examined and approved by Douglas Turner, solicitor, of Drummond Cook and Macintosh, Anstruther. There were no questions and the accounts were approved.

Membership

Duncan Davidson told the meeting that membership was fairly static:

Individual membership stood at 92 (lost 5 and gained 4)

Corporate membership stood at 27 (lost 1 and gained 1)

AMS suggested that Douglas Turner should be made an honorary member of BRISC as this was the third year he examined our accounts for free. The meeting agreed this.

Constitution

PMH said there were no reasons to make any changes to the constitution at the present moment. This was agreed.

Annual subscriptions

PMH said that these had been raised last year and there would be no change this year.

Forward planning: BRISC Business Plan

PMH said that a lot of the committee's time and effort had gone into drafting this. Copies of the plan had already been circulated to members and another copy was included in the delegates' packs. He hoped that members had taken the opportunity to study the document in detail. It was very ambitious, but the committee felt that if BRISC were to make a real impact it was essential to establish an influential post and for someone who could spend a lot of time on high level inputs. PMH, as chair, did not have the time to devote time to this amount of representation, but of course money to fund such a post would have to be found. All comments on the plan would be very much welcomed, even if just to say that it had been read. Unless there were substantial comments to the contrary, BRISC committee would now go ahead and take the plan forward. No decision had been made on what to call the officer.

From the floor, Thomas Huxley congratulated BRISC on the plan, agreeing that it was very ambitious but that this was the right approach and hoped that the plan would gain the support it deserved.

The Meeting was happy to endorse the plan

Election of Honorary Officers and Council for 2006/7

PMH told the meeting of the committee changes which had taken place during the year: Allan Brown had stood down as treasurer, due to a change of job and new commitments, but happily Duncan Davidson had joined the committee, taking on the post of treasurer as well as that of membership secretary.

Jennifer Davidson had moved job within SNH so was no longer involved, but he hoped that her replacement within SNH would join the committee. From the floor, Claire Seymore introduced herself and said she would be pleased to join the committee. This was warmly welcomed. PMH asked for more members to volunteer to serve on the committee and share the responsibilities of running BRISC. No one from the floor offered. All existing officers were re-elected on mass.

There was no other business and the Meeting closed at 13.20.