

**Wales Biodiversity Partnership Lowland Grassland and Heathland Ecosystem Group
Meeting**

Ladywell House, Newtown

19th November 2014

Attendees

Helen Buckingham (Chair)	HB	NT
Sarah Mellor	SM	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
Amy Vanstone	AV	RSPB Cymru
Dave Rogerson	DR	WG
Colin Cheesman	CC	Plantlife
Caroline Wilson	CW	Snowdonia
Jan Sherry	JS	NRW
Stuart Smith	SS	NRW
Beth Hopkins	BH	WTSWW
Andy Karran	AK	Gwent Wildlife Trust
Holly York	HY	WBP

Apologies

Arwel Williams	WG
Bryn Jones	National Trust
Nathan Walton	Wildlife Trust (WTSWW)
Gareth Griffiths	Aberystwyth University
Sion Brackenbury	Commons Vision
Sinead Lynch	Bumblebee Conservation
John Warren	Aberystwyth University
Liz Jones	NRW

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

HB extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be published on the WBP website. The majority of actions from June's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items (Actions 2, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14 & 15) or on-going. See below:

Action 4. Address issues with heather and burning in Wales: JS to contact Davey Martyn/Caryn Le Roux to arrange meeting	Carry forward. HY to find out who to contact at WG.
Action 5. Land management demonstration days for pollinators – potential to link with Glastir Management days. JS to contact Arfon Griffiths to discuss	JS in contact with AG, who is keen for more Glastir training days including pollinators. JS to discuss with Sinead Lynch, Claire re arable.
Action 9. Continue research into hay meadow management & restoration at Elan Valley. SS to contact Elan Valley to discuss potential follow up. Propose a case for long-term meadow survey, perhaps to NRW/WBP	Ongoing

Action 1. WBP (HY) to upload the agreed minutes from the previous meeting to the WBP website

3. LWS for SE Wales REF Project presentation (Andy Karran, Gwent Wildlife Trust)

Presentation provided by Andy Karran, Wildlife Sites Officer for the 'Local Wildlife Sites – South East Wales' project.

Highlights of the pilot project include:

- 60 LWS (5 in each LA area) created
- Survey work of pilot study sites
- Assessment of management needed for 64 pilot study sites with costings.
- A suite of habitat management tool-kits created – bespoke sets sent to landowner
- Lots of publicity & engagement – landowner days, leaflets, presentations, articles, attendance at events
- Practical conservation on 4 'showcase' sites

A REF funded project, with small contributions from some Local Authorities. Project will be extended (Jan-March 2015) with small grant via Nature Fund uplands project. This will include producing new tool-kits e.g. Ffridd. AV – RSPB have information leaflet on Ffridd. Project is looking into further funding, particularly Esmee Fairburn.

Dave – an EIA leaflet is available that could be sent with information to landowners.

Group noted the excellent work of the LWS project and need for a LWS Wales-Wide project.

Action 2. HY/AV to circulate RSBP NRW Ffridd guidance

Action 3. HY circulate end of project report to LBAPs and group when available

Action 4. HB to mention project at Chairs meeting and give Tool-kits to Matthew Quinn.

4. Nature Recovery Plan Consultation

LGHEG group to provide a response on the Nature Recovery Plan consultation. Group responses to specific consultation questions worked through by group directly onto response paper.

Action 5. HY- tidy response paper, send to JS for updating and circulate to group for any further comments. HY send LGHEG response to WG

5. WBP Evidence Gaps

Comments on Evidence Gaps have been provided by CEH & WBP Academic (Prof Mike Bruford). JS will provide feedback on comments including those provided on Research Project Proposal 2 (implications of long-term rotational burning of lowland heathland).

Potential new EG's 'Independent Review of Habitat Recreation' – a review of habitat recreation e.g. PhD level Desk-study looking at case studies – successes, failures? Systematic review? Focus on specific habitat/ Cross-cutting?

Action 6. JS to progress EG 'Independent Review of Habitat Recreation'

6. Priority habitat mapping

No map amendments received. Group agreed it would be useful to review project action (habitats & species) taking place in the priority areas. BARS provides a useful starting point.

Action 7. HY to assess activity taking place within Lowland Grassland and Heathland priority areas on BARS as a starting point.

7. WG EIA work

Update on WG EIA work provided by Dave Rogerson:

- Busy year for screening, with over 100 screenings taken place.
- Promoting EIA Internal & External. Two EIA workshops for NRW in North & South Wales to be held. JS/SS to provide information on workshops to all relevant NRW team.
- Three Ecologists cover all of Wales – Dave (Mid Wales), Arwel (North Wales) working in pairs on visits.
- May in future decrease screening visits and use satellite photography/desk studies to cope with increasing workloads.
- Screenings are in the public domain. They will be entered on BARS. Tip-offs are not in the public domain as an enforcement issue, but may be possible to enter at a country level.
- Waxcap Fungi Workshop attended. Use of DNA barcoding to show significance of a ploughed field being investigated with Gareth following workshop.
- Inputting into CAP reform, particularly arable & horticulture.
- Tip-off's: currently 8 active tip offs. Would like to feedback outcomes of tip-offs more. It is very important for grassland species lists include abundances (% cover) for the information to be used.

Action 8. EIA: **ALL** Training sessions - get in touch with Dave Rogerson for more info, Tip-offs – get in touch with Dave when relevant & ensure abundances are recorded with species lists. Highlight EIAs when possible.

8. Nature Fund

Group assessed list of Nature Fund Collaborative Projects - a few potential Lowland Grassland & Heathland relevant projects e.g. Llyn Landscape Partnership, Castlemartin Peninsula, Black Mountain Heathland Restoration, pollinators? A full list of Nature Fund projects is available here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/?lang=en>

Action 9. All to feedback on any relevant Nature Fund activities of benefit to lowland grassland and heathland.

9. Waxcap Fungi Workshop feedback

Waxcap Fungi Workshop was held at Llanerchaeron National Trust site on Thursday 30th October. The workshop was led by Dr Gareth Griffiths, Aberystwyth University and Dave Lamacraft, Plantlife. The workshop was well attended by members of the group, LBAPs and wider partnerships (e.g. Powys LBAP, Carmarthenshire LBAP, Snowdonia NPA, National Trust, Coity Wallia Commons, Plantlife, RSPB Cymru, National Botanical Gardens Wales, and Welsh Government). The indoor session included identification, importance, management

and DNA barcoding (including Dr Gareth Griffiths' REF funded project – 'Application of DNA barcoding for the conservation of Waxcap grasslands'). An outdoor session took place on the lawns and grounds of Llanerchaeron House where a high assemblage of Waxcaps were found and identified. The workshop was well received with good feedback provided.

Waxcap Fungi Workshop Notes were made and circulated to attendees and group members.

Action 10. HY to circulate PowerPoint presentations by Gareth & Dave at workshop to attendees & groups.

10. 2015 workshop and training ideas

Workshop Subject	Location	Date	Lead organisers
Workshop: Limestone Grassland in NW Wales	NW Wales	Mid-late June (3 rd week of June)	JS/SS/HY
All Wales Chough Meeting	Pembrokeshire	Sept/Oct	AV/SM/HY
Next LGHEG Group Meeting with field visit	Berthlwyd Meadows (Brecon Beacons NT coronation meadow site) outdoor session* - Indoor session location tbd	Early July	HB/HY

* <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wra-1356313008035/view-page/item424605/>

Action 11. Limestone Grassland Workshop - HY to arrange date and arrangements for workshop with JS/SS. Workshop details to be arranged early in year and avoid school holidays.

Action 12. All Wales Chough meeting – HY to arrange date and arrangements for meeting with AV/SM.

Action 13. Summer LGHEG meeting – HY to arrange date of next meeting & HB to investigate LGHEG group visit – indoor session location & book Berthlwyd Meadows visit. **HY** to invite local BAP (Carmarthenshire, etc.) and local NRW staff to attend summer group meeting.

11. AOB, Date & Location of next meeting

Richard Wistow: Group addressed Richard's email regarding the use of non-native seed mixes. Plantlife are working on a policy to address this matter.

Action 14. CC to discuss with Trevor Dines, Plantlife for an update on the progress and circulate policy when available.

Date of next meeting: See item 10.