



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Natural Sciences Forum

Charity 224018

The twenty fifth meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum was held at St Chad's Parish Hall, Leeds, at 10.00 am Saturday 12th October 2013.

Minutes

Present: Peter Flint (Chair), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes Secretary), John Bowers, Sharon Flint, Adrian Norris, Albert Henderson, Terry Whitaker, Andy Godfrey, Chris Young, Colin Howes, Mark Seaward

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Sarah West, Jill Warwick, John Wint, Dave Chesmore, Terry Crawford and Andy Millard.

2. Minutes

Minutes and actions of the meetings held at St Chad's on the 9th February have been distributed via e-mail and can also be downloaded from the [YNU website](#). These were agreed as a true record of the meeting with the following correction: it is Albert Henderson, rather than Don Grant, who is liaising with Vince Jones on the *Hieracia* book.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that are not already covered by the agenda.

4. Key to Yorkshire Hieracia/Vince Jones/progress report (Albert Henderson)

Albert Henderson is liaising with Vince Jones on behalf of the YNU regarding the production of VJ's guide to Yorkshire *Hieracia*. The main body of the text is fairly complete and is currently being checked by David McCosh, the expert on British *Hieracia*. The visual element of the keys will largely be photographs from herbarium collections. This is a very difficult group, but the photographs will be very high quality and will show the diagnostic features. There should be a photograph for each species, interspersed in the text. The proposed format of the book is A4 size and around 150 pages. VJ has rejected the idea of a smaller 'field guide' format. The guide will cover the 130 species of Yorkshire Hawkweeds. The keys will be dichotomous and simple. VJ's co-recorder for VC62 will produce the distribution dot maps for the book. The resolution of the dot maps has not yet been decided. As yet there are no estimates of costs and it is not known whether VJ also intends to approach BSBI regarding part-financing of publication. BSBI have already published two volumes on *Hieracia* focussing on Scotland and Northern England. VJ will present a proposal to the YNU Executive when he has sample pages and an estimate of costs.

Action (JB): Add to the agenda for the next Executive meeting on 26th October

5. St Aidan's Nature Reserve

This agenda item has been postponed to a future meeting. RSPB originally contacted the YNU in June 2013 about the possibility of running a bioblitz at St Aidan's reserve, but this was cancelled when the land owners of the site, UK Coal, went into administration on the 9th July. The RSPB had to close their visitor centre and car park and cancel all events. The site is still open to the public as it contains a network of public footpaths and bridleways and is therefore still fully accessible. RSPB are doing some habitat management on the site. They are still keen

to form working links with the YNU and think that St Aidan's would be a good place to work together once they know the timescale for taking over site management. The reserve is in VC64 about 5 miles NW of Castleford:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/s/staidans/about.aspx>.

6. YNU online recording – progress and plans (Paula Lightfoot)

The YNU online recording site was launched in July and now contains over 4,000 records of over 1,600 taxa from over 40 different recorders.

A training day on how to use the system to access and verify records was attended by ten YNU recorders earlier this year. We hope to run another training session this winter and can also arrange one-to-one training for anyone who would like to verify records online. Please contact p.lightfoot@btinternet.com

In response to feedback from users, the following improvements have been suggested for the site:

- The ability to import records from a spreadsheet
- 'Freeze panes' at the top of the data entry form so you can always see the field headers
- Enable users to choose multiple options from the dropdown lists in the fields for life stage, sex, behaviour etc
- Enable recorders to flag records as sensitive
- Improve the 'Explore-All Records' page by adding the ability for users to query the results through any combination of filters, and by removing the default that shows only recent records.

This would cost £200 plus VAT. The Executive will be asked to approve this cost.

It was clarified that this is not a regional database. The data are stored in a national database at the Biological Records Centre at CEH in Wallingford, where they are made available for verification by experts via www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord

Verifiers are appointed for particular taxonomic groups and vice counties by the Biological Records Centre in consultation with the relevant national recording scheme.

Action (PL): Seek approval from the Executive on 26th October to pay for the improvements to the website

7. YNU Conference 2014 (John Bowers)

The Education Committee are organising the 2014 Conference. The theme of the conference will be: **Museums and Nature: the Modern Perspective**

We hope to hold it at the Yorkshire Museum and are awaiting confirmation of available dates. Speakers are still to be decided, but the theme will cover topics such as:

- Modern acquisition policy, what materials do they want?
- Curation
- DNA, some of the modern uses of museum materials
- Education - both outreach and display materials.

York University was a good venue but was expensive. Concerns were raised about the potential impact of the closure of Lendal Bridge on access to the conference, but this would not have any impact as the bridge is only closed to traffic between 10.30am and 5.00pm.

http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200174/planning_and_building_control/686/reinvigorate_york/2

This Forum supports the theme but recognises that an organiser needs to be appointed as a matter of urgency to ensure it is successful. The date, venue and theme needs to be finalised and announced at the AGM.

Action (PL/SW)- Approach a potential organiser for the conference.

Action (All)–if you have suggestions for speakers or topics please contact Sarah West, Chair of the Education Committee sarah.west@york.ac.uk

Action (JB) – add to the agenda for the Executive meeting on 26th October

8. Freshwater Ecology Section Update (Peter Flint)

The Freshwater Ecology Section have held two very successful field meetings this year, one jointly with the Conchological Section. PF proposed that he should now take over the position of Section Secretary from Les Magee, with Sharon Flint remaining as Section Chair. PF has attempted to contact LM by e-mail and telephone to discuss this proposal. The Forum approved this suggestion. LM is also the YNU Recorder for two insect groups, which PF said would be a matter for the Entomological Section rather than the Forum and he would liaise with the section secretary.

Action (PF) – compose a letter on behalf of the YNU to LM regarding the role of Secretary of the Freshwater Section and thanking him for his contribution to the YNU over the years

Action (SF) – draft an e-mail to be sent by the YNU Administrative Officer to all YNU members to ask if they would like to be added to an e-mail list to receive information about future Freshwater Section events.

Action (PF) – let the YNU Administrative Officer know of the changes for the 2014 Membership Card

9. 2014 VC Excursions (Adrian Norris)

May 17th VC62 – tbc

June 14th VC63 Thorpe Marsh

July 12th VC64 Austwick and Lawkland Moss. The aim is to ascertain the condition of the SSSI. Debrief in Clapham 3-4 miles from the site. Use Malaise trap – with appropriate permissions.

July 26th VC65 Juniper Wood, Grinton

August 9th VC61 - tbc

September 6th to the 13th – Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland marine meeting at Scarborough.

John Newbould intends to coordinate a trip to North Yorkshire on the 21st - 25th June.

Reports on the 2013 meetings will go in the next *Naturalist*, the copy deadline is 14th October.

10. Other 2014 meeting dates and avoiding clashes (Paula Lightfoot)

The YNU Admin Officer, Claire Neill, is currently putting together the 2014 Membership Card. She will e-mail all Section Heads, Officers and Recorders week commencing 14th October and ask them to send her details of 2014 meetings as well as any changes to their contact details by the **8th November**.

She will then circulate the draft Membership Card to all Section Heads, Officers and Recorders by the **13th November** for checking. She will bring any date clashes to the attention of the relevant parties, in case they wish to change the dates. Any amendments need to be notified to Claire by the **19th November** so that she can complete the final draft and send it to the printers.

11. Nominations for YNU President 2015 (John Bowers)

Geoff Oxford will be nominated by John Bowers at the Executive Committee meeting in October 26th. The Forum supports this suggestion.

Action (All) – Please send suggestions for future presidents to John Bowers.

Action (TW) – TW (President 2014) to send his biography to Editorial Board of the Naturalist

12. Correspondence / Announcements

- Malham Tarn FSC Research Seminar

The eighth Malham Tarn Research Seminar will take place from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th November 2013. It will include presentations, displays, discussion groups and walks. Speakers include Terry Whitaker and Sharon and Peter Flint. For more information or to book, visit the FSC website or e-mail enquiries.mt@field-studies-council.org

- Record card digitisation

The YNU Ornithological Section has been contacted by a recent widow about passing on old bird records. Her husband was recorder for a local group in the Aire Valley and she has a large chest of drawers that are full of bird records all on individual cards. If anyone might be able to volunteer to digitise some of these records we can make arrangements to collect them from the widow. Please contact Jill Warwick on jill@swland.co.uk

- YNU Annual Report

Following a decision of the Executive, the YNU has not produced a printed annual report this year as it has done in previous years. The Treasurer will prepare a very brief annual report containing only the essential information required by the Charity Commission. This report, which will include the accounts, a brief financial statement and the independent examiner's report, will be submitted online to the Charity Commission within 12 months of financial year end. This can then be accessed via the Charity Commission website and the YNU website.

- NE Yorkshire Geology Trust Event

NE Yorkshire Geology Trust are running a public event in Robin Hood's Bay on the 9th November, celebrating 10 years in their community. YNU ran a stall at this event last year and it was very enjoyable and well attended. PL can't run the stall this year due to being in Scotland, but if anyone else would like to volunteer to run a stall please contact p.lightfoot@btinternet.com for more information. The event will be promoted to YNU members via the website and Facebook group.

- Scarborough Rotunda

On the 5th December the President of Geological Society of London is giving a talk at the Scarborough Rotunda Museum.

- Whitby Naturalists' Club Centenary Symposium

The Whitby Naturalists' Club Centenary Symposium will take place at Whitby Museum in Pannett Park on Saturday 23rd November. This will be promoted to YNU members via the website, an e-mail shot and the Facebook group. Further information and the full programme can be found here:

http://www.whitbynaturalists.co.uk/files/symposium_programme.pdf

13. Any other business

Papers are needed for the *Naturalist*. The Editorial Board are especially interested in articles from Affiliated Societies about their history and activities. Please contact the Editorial Board if you would be willing to write an article. TW offered to contact Craven Conservation Group regarding an article about their activities.

Sharon Flint has a collection of alcohol preserved insects collected in the YNU Malaise trap at Malham over the summer. These will be passed to Bill Ely and other entomological recorders willing to assist with identification and recording. Andy Godfrey offered to take the Diptera.

Concerns were raised as some members had not received the agenda prior to the meeting. The agenda was circulated by via e-mail on the 8th October to everyone in the YNU membership database and was also available to download from the YNU website during the week before the meeting.

Action (All): if you did not receive the agenda, please contact the YNU Administrative Officer on membership@ynu.org.uk to ensure that she has your correct email address in the database

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum will take place before the AGM on Saturday the 16th November 2013. Details and booking for the AGM can be found [here](#) and in the latest issue of *The Naturalist*.

Action (All): Please book your place for the AGM and either pay for lunch online via the YNU website or by cheque to YNU Administrator