

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union

Charity No 224018

Minutes of the seventeenth meeting of the Natural Sciences Committee held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Bingley 10.30am – 12.30pm Saturday, November 20th 2010

Present: Adrian Norris (Chairman), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes), John Newbould (General Secretary), Geoffrey Wilmore (President), John Wint (President-elect), Dr J.R. Mather, Douglas Richardson, Albert Henderson, Christopher Young, Colin Howes, Phyl Abbott, Andy Godfrey, Mrs D. Godfrey, Craig Thomas, Jill Warwick, Terry Whitaker, Michael Archer, Bill Ely, Andy Millard, Hannah Droop (Membership Secretary), Mike Denton, John Bowers, Graeme Coles, Prof. Mark Seaward, Andrew Grayson, Vicky Kindemba, Sarah West, Terry Crawford, Kevin Rich, Geoffrey Fryer, Louise Hill and Judith Allinson.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Dr and Mrs Paul Simmonds, Jon Watkinson (Cranedale Trust), Miss J. Lambert, Dr Roger Key, Heather Walker, Margaret and Paul Bradbury and Simon Warwick.

2. Minutes of previous meeting 25th September 2010

Minutes of the meeting held at St Chad's on the 25th September had been circulated and were accepted as a true record, with the following corrections:

Meeting minutes are not stored only in digital format. Hard copies are held by JN as part of the official YNU records and accounts.

A VC64 meeting was held in Ripley in 2001. A report of the field meeting was published in the *Naturalist* in 2002, and the landowners received a detailed report on the veteran trees, which is in the Union library.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election of officers to the Natural Sciences Committee

Officers were appointed as per the 2011 Membership Card. These were accepted *nem. con.*

5. Scarborough BioBlitz and Malham Tarn Field Meeting

AN reported that the Scarborough BioBlitz will take place on the 2nd-4th June and is part of the YNU's 150th anniversary celebration activities. Several planning meetings have been held and many organisations have agreed to participate, including the Scarborough Museums Trust. The programme is still in development but will be e-mailed to interested parties soon.

The proposed format is:

Thursday 2nd June – survey of North Bay, meeting in the Sea Life Centre car park. This is not a public event but will be an opportunity to train activity leaders and volunteers, while also collecting data.

Friday 3rd June – survey of South Bay seashore and other habitats in the surrounding area. The outside area at the Spa has been hired as a base. OPAL and other organisations will provide

children's activities which will need to be booked in advance. The YNU has been offered use of the Rotunda free of charge for a social event on Friday evening. The BioBlitz will continue into the evening with bat surveys, moth traps and mammal traps.

Saturday 4th June – continuation of survey of South Bay and surrounding area, and exhibition of BioBlitz results in the Spa. The main bar and the outside area of the Spa have been hired and it is hoped that most YNU societies will bring a display.

Records will be collated and the results announced, either at the end of the BioBlitz or on World Oceans Day on June 8th.

There is still time for members to provide input into the programme and to offer to lead activities. The aim is to identify as many species as possible *in situ* to avoid disturbing wildlife and habitats. We therefore need a good number of experts in the field to reduce the need to bring back specimens for identification. YNU members will take the role of specialist advisers, they are not responsible for supervising children's activities.

Information about travel and accommodation will be sent to interested parties and published on the website. There is a free car park on South Cliff and pay and display car parks at the Sea Life Centre and the Spa. There are also park and ride facilities.

A specialised risk assessment has been produced for the BioBlitz and for the Spurn field meeting, these have been circulated to the Executive.

Enquiries and offers to lead activities/bring a display should be sent to Adrian Norris.

TW reported that the Malham Tarn Field Meeting will take place from Friday 29th July to Monday 1st August. It is a partly residential weekend incorporating a formal meal to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the YNU. It is intended to be a combination of a social event and a field meeting, and members are encouraged to bring partners.

The itinerary is as follows:

Friday 29th July – cheese and wine reception at 4pm, informal evening meal for residents at 7pm. The bar at High Stables will be open in the evening.

Saturday 30th July – residents and non-residents will meet at Lower Trenhouse where there is plenty of parking and the field meeting will start from there. In the afternoon there will be afternoon tea followed by a debrief and post-excursion meeting. In the evening there will be a formal meal and possibly an after-dinner speaker.

Sunday 31st July – there will be *ad hoc* field excursions. It is likely that this day will attract fewer day visitors and the participants will mainly be residents.

The Lepidoptera group have been invited to do moth trapping on all three nights. Peter and Sharon Flint have offered to run a free freshwater biology course. The YNU has use of the labs at Malham so residents can bring microscopes, projectors etc and there are opportunities for indoor activities if the weather is bad.

The opportunity should be taken to survey Thoragill Plantation which is situated a few miles to the north of Malham Tarn. It is a small site but has a rich mix of habitats. A survey was started but not completed. If the YNU could complete the survey, the results would be published by the Field Studies Council. Preliminary investigations revealed an interesting collection of insects, botany, lichens and molluscs – the raw data are available on CD and pamphlet at Malham Tarn. TW confirmed this site can be surveyed during the weekend and there are plans to run at least one moth trap there.

Accommodation is available only from Friday to Monday. Anyone who wants to stay longer will need to find alternative accommodation (TW can provide suggestions). There is accommodation for up to 70 residents, depending on arrangements for sharing rooms. There is

disabled access (contact the FSC for details). There is parking at High Stables for day visitors and residents.

The maximum capacity for the formal dinner is 40 and residents will have priority if this is overbooked. However, the main formal dinner to celebrate the YNU's 150th anniversary will be at the AGM, so everybody will have the opportunity to celebrate together.

The formal meal will cost around £25 for 4 courses and the estimated cost for whole weekend £170 including dinner.

Enquiries and bookings should be sent to Terry Whitaker.

6. Development of a joint project with the Yorkshire and Humber Environmental Data Network to appoint a joint volunteers records officer (part time)

The YNU and the Yorkshire and Humber Environmental Data Network (YHEDN) are co-funding the post of Volunteers' Records Officer to be hosted at the NEYEDC offices in York. The post is part-time for a trial period of 6 months. The postholder, Hannah Droop, will work with YNU members to establish who will provide data for each taxonomic group and geographic area and will create a meta-database of volunteer recorders. HD will also determine in which format volunteers prefer to share data and establish any training requirements, as well as working with recorders to gather information on rural and urban sites in Yorkshire whose importance for biodiversity is not currently recognised through any statutory or non-statutory designations.

The YHEDN are organising a recording software demonstration day with funding from the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Trust. This will take place at the White Hart Hotel in Harrogate on Sunday 13th February. It will be a day-long workshop where recorders can demonstrate the software they use to other recorders, e.g. MapMate, ADIT, DMap, Cobra, Recorder, Excel.

Three people present said they use MapMate already, five more said they would like to. The benefit of MapMate is that you can synch your records with those of other recorders in the region. A disadvantage is that the species dictionaries are out of date for some groups. It was agreed that MapMate training and licenses would be discussed at a future meeting. The YNU could take out a bulk MapMate license and give free copies to recorders in return for records.

7. Any other business

A draft 2011 membership card was circulated. JN reminded members that there is still time to make changes to the card before it goes to the printers next week.

8. Date of next meeting

7th May 2011 at St Chad's Parish Hall