



Stowupland Village Hall
IP14 4BG

30th November, 2019

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair Peter Maddison welcomed all 68 people attending. A special welcome was given to Pete Eeles our guest speaker. Pete created the very successful UK Butterflies website in 2002 and also the Hants and IOW website. Later, he became Chair of that Branch. He is also a recipient of Butterfly Conservation's prestigious Marsh Award and has recently published the book *The Life Cycles of British Butterflies*. A warm welcome was also given to Guy Padfield who is a member of the UKB team with a special role in the identification of European Butterflies. Guy now resides in Suffolk.

Apologies were received from Mervyn Crawford, Jillian Macready, Liz Cutting, Roger Wolfe and Adrian Richards.

2. Minutes of the AGM 17 November 2018 were accepted.

3. Matters arising. None.

4 Chairman's review.

Peter mentioned the importance of volunteers and thanked them for the crucial role they play in the success of Butterfly Conservation both nationally in here in Suffolk. In 2018/19 an estimated 18,000 volunteers provided 170,000 days of volunteering, worth around £14,000,000! This work is often 'hands on' conservation with tools, but can also be walking transects such as WCBS and hosting events, recording or giving talks. Some events were new ones and some recording was carried out at sites where no recording had been done before. It is hoped that in 2020 an effort would be made to host new events and in different parts of Suffolk. Peter appealed to the membership to come forward with their own ideas to help in this regard. Peter also thanked the individuals who worked on the branch committee this year and Emma Ling who is in charge of the raffle at this AGM and Kev who was running the photo competition. He also appealed to members to keep submitting articles and photos for the Argus newsletter.

One of the main conservation efforts has been on heathlands habitat for Silver-studded Blue. Unfortunately, at Purdis, nearly 2 years' worth of winter work parties have been stalled since the site has been up for sale, and although the branch is trying to persuade the owners to arrange meetings to discuss things, nothing has happened. The site is scrubbing up fast and the risk to its lepidoptera and other wildlife will be significant if work doesn't begin soon. On a positive note, other work has seen an extension to areas of new heathland at Pipers Vale. Martlesham Heath however has suffered a massive fire this year. Tragically, about 25% of the entire heath has been burnt. This represents about 50% of the SSB area.

Trudie Willis' Open Garden event. Hosted in July, covering 10 acres of both wild and cultivated garden and heathland for butterflies, this annual event again raised significant funds for the branch and Peter recorded a note of thanks for both Trudie and Mike Swindells, who opens the moth trap there. Moths are an important concern and the branch hopes to do more for these.

A14 Project. Spearheaded by Twm Wade working with Highways England, this is a 5-year project on the Exning cutting where Horseshoe Vetch and Birdsfoot Trefoil have been planted in the hope of attracting Chalkhill Blue and Dingy Skipper among others to bolster the populations in Suffolk and highlight the importance of the role that roadside verges can have for butterflies and moths. This year when monitoring, Twm saw a female CHB ovipositing there, presumably it had flown in from Devil's Dyke.

Peter also mentioned Neil Sherman the new Moth Recorder. The branch gave £1,000 to Suffolk Moth Group to develop a website and Neil has been working hard with others to get this up and running very soon.

Obituaries. Steve Goddard passed away this year. Steve was one of the founder members of the branch in 1993 and also the first Argus editor, covering 13 editions. Steve was a keen naturalist with a passion for moths, butterflies and dragonflies. He was also well known in the birding community.

Beryl Johnson was also a founder member who passed away this year. She, together with her husband Allan developed the events programme. She was also our Membership Secretary and an artist who contributed drawings to every edition of the Argus. The cover of the next Argus will feature some of her work.

Sizewell C and D nuclear reactors. These could potentially cause enormous damage to our butterflies and moths should they go ahead. We are extremely concerned about this and our Conservation Officers, Rob Parker and Tony Prichard, with help from Bill Stone, have submitted a presentation to the consultation in order to highlight this. Many BAP moth and butterfly species were included in the presentation. Many of these records came from our volunteer recorders which again highlights the value of our recorders.

Northern Bypass. Peter himself submitted a representation to highlight the potential destruction of habitat and loss of lepidoptera should the proposed bypass go ahead. Again, none of the records included in the submission would be available, were it not for effort of volunteer recorders, particularly those in this case around Finn Valley.

Elms. Mention was made of the importance of Elms for our lepidoptera, including White-letter Hairstreak and some rare moths. Some new varieties have been shown to be resistant to Dutch Elm Disease and as such, are being grown in the countryside to try and bolster populations of these species. One such variety is the Elm, New Horizon. On the subject of Elms, Rob Parker and Trevor Goodfellow noticed a WLH on a hedge at a Hopkins Homes development. Although much of the hedgerow had been destroyed, Hopkins are now going to mitigate with the planting of 11 new Elms.

Special thanks were given to Tony Prichard who is standing down as our Conservation Officer for moths. He's held the post for about 22 years. Likewise, Bill Stone is standing down from the committee although he will be continuing as Butterfly Recorder for the foreseeable future.

5. Reports by Officers

Treasurer. Kev Ling produced a spreadsheet of our accounts for the membership to view. It shows the breakdown of our finances for the year and above all, that we are solvent. The branch carried forward around £10,000 from March 2019, and so we are in a good position to do things around the county to support conservation work.

Income. Donations have been good, particularly from talks and members and membership subs are roughly the same as last year.

Expenditure. Our main expenditure is on the Argus and we get a good rate for printing and its costs are similar to last year's. Overall branch expenditure has been much lower than last year though, since we have not bought as much equipment.

Our Legacy (which is held in a separate fund) has been paying for projects such as the third round of Brimstones and Buckthorn. We are also looking at the suitability of other projects and would welcome ideas from the membership. One such idea is getting involved with railways (Greater Anglia) planting wildflowers, and another is planting in parks.

Membership. Jillian, our Membership Secretary provided figures of 588 household members, slightly up on the 565 of 2018. Thus, we are just 12 shy of 600 members. Please think about getting others to join so that we can continue to raise awareness of our butterflies and moths.

Moth Recorder. Neil Sherman who has taken on the role of Suffolk Moth Recorder provided a preview of the soon to be launched new Suffolk moth website which is being modelled on the Norfolk one and put together by Jim Wheeler. The site includes lots of helpful photos of different species on each page, and the ability to 'live feed' new records with a new online recording facility, allowing anyone to submit records directly to the site. The lower half of the page shows the events calendar and a range of recently uploaded photos. It offers a useful method of obtaining more data and therefore the site will grow as more information is obtained. Each species' page has a photo and a distribution map from the county database, along with other basic info on flight period and foodplants, historic data and, with a grading system according to species. There are also phenology charts and lists of records per year so that years can be compared. It also links with the national website.

Neil mentioned the new Atlas of Larger Moths, described as a tremendous piece of work using records that recorders have submitted. Whilst there is much doom and gloom, there are also some positive responses to climate change. The colourful larva of Toadflax Brocade was shown on the OHP. It's a species which utilizes both purple and yellow varieties of the plant. This once rare species has now expanded throughout Suffolk. It is double brooded and comes to light but can be seen at dusk feeding on flowers. Another species doing well is the Tree Lichen Beauty. It used to be a very rare migrant to the UK but is now widespread in Suffolk. Similarly, the Scarlet Tiger and Clifden Nonpareil, seem to be establishing here.

Neil finished his presentation with a note of thanks to Tony Prichard, for all the work he'd done over 22 years, and handed Tony an Outstanding Volunteer Award that had been made at the National AGM.

Butterfly Recorder.

Bill Stone again thanked Tony for his help when Bill began his Butterfly Recorder role. Currently about 13,000 records are in but more will arrive, so this presentation is only an outline to date. 40 species have been recorded through the county including some oddities. The priority is to cover areas where no or very few records have been submitted over the past few years. 2019 was the last year in the 5-year period of the Butterflies for the New Millennium. The data are used to inform the next document from BC. Areas around Haverhill and High Suffolk are difficult to get records from. Currently we have 99.8% coverage for Suffolk which is very good. Over 5 years we have amassed 150,000 records, in 104 tetrads with an average of 14.8 species per Tetrad. Bill thanked all those who submit records.

Of note, 2019 seemed set up to be a Painted Lady year, starting in May on the coast. However, although the species penetrated into the county, we didn't see the same numbers as in 2009.

Dark Green Fritillary, Small Blue and Marbled White were recorded in Landseer Park and given that there were 2 records of Tupperware boxes being tipped out in the park, this is a problem.

The Big Butterfly Count provides a mass of data across the country. It is good for BC and the county but involves a lot of time sorting through the records. Concerns nationally so far are that Holly and Common Blue are down, whereas Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Gatekeeper and Red Admiral are up. Marbled White colonies are probably present in the Long Melford and Haverhill areas. There were reports of this species also arriving with whites at coastal sites.

In the county, Silver washed Fritillary was slightly down whereas Brown Argus was up, probably as a result of a good year last year. Small Tortoiseshell, although up nationally, doesn't appear to have fared so well in the county. Small Heath had a good year too but Grayling was down and the picture is one of a slow decline across Suffolk and is very concerning to the point where it seems to be following a similar pattern to the Wall, as it's now disappearing from the west and becoming restricted to the east and coastal sites. The Wall itself seems to be restricted almost exclusively to the Waveney Valley. The former sites at East Lane, Shingle Street and Hollesley appear to have gone. Its demise appears to be related to the fact that it is producing 3rd broods. Bill thanked Robert Quadling for his work on Wall Browns at Carlton Marshes, and mentioned how useful it has been in trying to understand what is going on.

Southern Small White though expected soon in Suffolk as it occupies habitat just across the North Sea and English Channel, has still not been recorded here.

Bill finished his presentation with a plea for members to find new areas to record in 2020 and to get 2019 records submitted as soon as possible.

6. Election of Committee

Bill is continuing as County Recorder but standing down from the committee. Peter thanked Bill for the work he has done and also announced that Steve Woolnough will be the liaison person for Suffolk Moth Group and the Branch. Trevor Goodfellow is standing for election. Adrian Richards is standing down too.

Those standing for reelection were PRM, KL, RPa, RPe, JD, DD, HS, TG, JM, SW, MB; proposed by Nick Mason, seconded by Derek Poole and carried unanimously.

Following the election and tea and refreshments, voting took place for the photo competition. Winners: *Early stages*, Neil Sherman, Coxcomb Prominent larva. *European*, David Pitt Large Chequered Skipper. *UK*, David Pitt, mating Lulworth Skippers.

Short talks by Sharon Hearle and David Dowding were followed by our guest speaker, Peter Eeles on the Life Cycle of British Butterflies.