

# **LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS BIODIVERSITY AUDIT ACTION GROUP**

## **NOTES OF INAUGURAL MEETING HELD IN LITTLEHAM VILLAGE HALL ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**Present:** *Cllrs Doug Hamilton (Chairman L&LPC), Cllr Ian Atkinson, Cllr Mrs Mari Galvin, Cllr Chris Hassall, Cllr Greg Smith, Cllr Mike Smith, Mr John Bromhead, Mrs Pat Haddrell, Mr David Hogan and Mrs Janice Whittington.*

**Apologies:** *Miss Anne Davies, Mrs Jackie Poole, Cllr Ian Hopkins, Cllr Tina Lamb and Cllr Mike Stevens*

1. **Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Hamilton opened the meeting** at 7.30pm and summarised events relating to the DCC Littleham and Landcross Biodiversity Audits of January 2009. Draft Reports for each civil parish have been considered by the Parish Council and circulated to interested persons and voluntary bodies. **The Parish Council has approved Cllr Mrs Galvin's proposal that an Action Group is formed to progress the Biodiversity Audits.**
2. **Cllr Hamilton then invited Cllr Mrs Galvin to chair the meeting of the LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS BIODIVERSITY AUDIT ACTION GROUP**
3. Cllr Mrs Galvin (Group Chairman) confirmed that the Audit Report is still in draft form and open to further addition or amendment. **The Group agreed to advise Mr Craig Dixon (DCC) that Biodiversity Audit work in Littleham & Landcross is still on-going.**
4. The Group noted that the Upadown Lane track in Littleham is not being used by horse riders or walkers. The route has become overgrown and impassable again. The Devon CC Footpaths Officer has confirmed that the track is not an official Public Footpath.
5. The Group Chairman referred to Page 17 of the Littleham Biodiversity Audit Draft Report (**Roadside Verges**) and recommended a DCC leaflet outlining policy in relation to rural roadside verges. Leaflets were available from TDC at Riverbank House, Bideford.
6. The Group Chairman also referred to Page 26 of the Littleham Biodiversity Audit Draft Report (**Trees**) and recommended **further voluntary surveying of the girth and age of trees, to identify veteran trees and ancient woodlands.** Cllr Hassall read from guidance notes relating to measuring ancient trees. **It was agreed that the TDC Trees Officer (Martin Beagley) is kept informed of the Group's activities and that further guidance on measuring veteran trees is obtained on-line from: [www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk](http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk).** It was also agreed that, **at the next Group meeting, the Group should appoint a Survey Co-ordinator to organise survey work, receive reports from volunteers and report back to the LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS BIODIVERSITY AUDIT ACTION GROUP**
7. Mr Hogan warned of the risk of conflict if voluntary survey-work is carried out undiplomatically, or without the consent of landowners. **It was agreed the Group must always be sensitive to the risk of conflict and ensure that landowners are consulted before surveys are carried out on private land.**
8. Miss Anne Davies has carried out a **Flower Survey of Littleham** and a copy of her research document was circulated. Cllr M Smith recommended and it was agreed, that **the Group should obtain a copy Miss Davies' Flower Survey to add to the draft DCC Biodiversity Audit Report and that Miss Davies is thanked for her work and congratulated on the quality of her survey.**
9. Cllr Hamilton thought that **the Village Hall & Rifle Field Charity might consider creating wildlife habitats in small areas or corners, of Littleham Playing Field.**
10. **Cllr Hamilton agreed to provide electronic copies of the Littleham Draft Biodiversity Audit Report for the Group, because more copies of the Littleham Draft Report are required. Mr Hogan and Cllr Hamilton will consider placing both Draft Biodiversity Audit reports on the Littleham & Landcross Community Website.**

11. RESOLVED, that **the Biodiversity Audit Group Working Party shall be Cllr Mrs Galvin (Group Chairman), Miss Anne Davies, Cllr Chris Hassall, Cllr Greg Smith, Mrs Janice Whittington and a representative from each of St Swithuns Littleham PCC and Holy Trinity Landcross PCC and that the Working Group shall work jointly for both civil parishes and meet occasionally in Landcross, as well as in Littleham.**
12. **The first Working Group Meeting will be held in Littleham Village Hall, on Wednesday 21st October 2009, commencing at 7.30pm.** The Agenda will include Code of Conduct & Constitution, Additional Working Group Membership, Veteran Trees, the Littleham Flower Survey and other feasible projects.
13. **The Working Group will consider consulting Tom Hynes (DCC Coast & Countryside Officer, Bideford) and Chris Pedlar (Landcross) about steps to be taken to identify and eradicate Japanese Knotweed in both civil parishes.**
14. Cllr Mrs Galvin thought that **the Group should use the Community Website and Crosslet to provide biodiversity information for gardeners.** Mrs Haddrell requested **more research on pond-life (frogs, toads, newts)** and Cllr M Smith recommended **survey work on dragon-flies and may-flies.** The Group also noted the presence of **glow-worms** on the roadside verges near Littleham Mill. Mrs Whittington spoke on **the merits of recording the sighting of moles.**
15. Cllr Hassall pointed out that **woods upstream of Kingdon's Bridge are probably ancient woodland and merit preservation and annexing to the designated wildlife site downstream of the bridge.**
16. Mr Bromhead advised the **Mr Smith does not want Littleham Rectory land surveyed.**
17. Cllr Atkinson thought that **the project could become unachievable** and that **the Working Group should concentrate on protected species only,** but Cllr G Smith pointed out that **surveying everything enables researchers to monitor trends over several years.**
18. The Group Chairman recommended that **anyone willing to give information about veteran trees in Littleham and Landcross should contact a member of the Working Group.**
19. Mr Hogan recommended that **the Group should first identify what it needs to achieve and what will happen to the information arising from any survey work.**
20. The Group noted that Mrs Sara Percy's Littleham Nature Group no longer meets.

*The meeting closed at 8.45pm.*