

## **LITTLEHAM & LANDCROSS BIODIVERSITY GROUP:**

### **NOTES OF A MEETING HELD AT JENNETTS, AT 10.30 a.m. ON MONDAY, 7th JUNE 2010**

**Present:** Anne Davies, Mari Galvin (Chairman), Anna Philpott(Host), Morris Poole, Rob. Reed and Jill Turner.

**Apologies:** Chris Hassall; David Hogan; Greg Smith; Janice Whittington; Prue Phillips; Jacqui Poole; Cathy Reed.

#### **Pre-Meeting Discussions:**

**List of Group Members:** The Minute Secretary (Neville Jackson) will compile a Members Directory.

**Oxeye Daisies:** The Group discussed difficulties encountered when preventing Oxeye Daisies from spreading.

**Church Lane, Littleham and Littleham Churchyard:** Anne Davies advised that wild orchids have yet to bloom in parts of the verges of Church Lane. The Group appreciates that whilst wild flowers need time to seed, churchyard grass-cutting also has to meet the expectations of mourners. Churchwarden Andrew Tregoning had recently stopped verge trimming work after representations from Group Members.

**Moorhead Cross to Littleham Court:** Jill Turner (Robin Hill) is concerned because uncut verges and overgrown hedges are a hazard. Anna Philpott advised that Mr Michael Oke, 61 Bowden Green, Bideford owns the field at Moorhead Cross junction. The Parish Council has previously asked DCC to arrange for the owner cut back hedges and verges here, but they could not identify the land-owner. There is also concern that Himalayan Balsam is spreading in this area.

**National Biodiversity Network (NBN)** has a vast amount of biodiversity data on British wildlife, including the distribution of native and non-native species across the UK. This information is available to the public through [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk).

**Spanish Bluebells:** Mari Galvin deplored the corruption of native bluebell species by Spanish Bluebells. She called for Spanish Bluebells to be eradicated, except in isolated controlled areas. She advised that it was only possible to identify non-native species when pollen is visible. Mari Galvin and Anne Davies had contacted The National Trust to urge them to take steps to protect native bluebells. N.T. owned Coombe Cottage, Peppercoombe is rampant with Spanish Bluebells and most churchyard bluebells are now mainly hybrid varieties.

**Managing Grass:** Anna Philpott circulated an extract from [www.rsbbp.org.uk](http://www.rsbbp.org.uk) titled Managing Grass. This article refers to wild grass areas.

#### **Group Meeting of 7th June 2010:**

**Members:** The Chairman thanked Anna Philpott for hosting the meeting and welcomed new member Jill Turner. Anna Philpott had arranged for a walk through her land and adjacent Robin Hill land after lunch. Mike Glover would also join the meeting after lunch to take Group members onto his land. Mike Glover was the previous owner of Jennetts. He owns and manages a nature reserve between the Jennetts and Jennett's Reservoir.

**Minutes Secretary:** It was agreed that the Neville Jackson would prepare formal notes and e-mail them to on-line members of the Group. Members who are not on-line will receive hard copy notes from the Chairman. Mr Jackson advised that his remit was only to prepare formal notes for the Group. He would not be able to deal with correspondence on behalf of the Group.

#### **Littleham Village Pond Site:**

The pond area is now overgrown with brambles, nettles and cow parsley. This growth will now smother any wild flower planting. Some of the distributed seeds have grown and are now in pots for planting.

**Common Land:** It was suggested that ARK? Community Volunteers should be recruited to clear the pond area, but the first step must be to identify who owns the land. Morris Poole believes that the site is Common Land. He recalled Mike Stevens advising that he thought that the pond area had never belonged to anyone. Neville Jackson advised that the official DCC Register of Common Land had been revised about three years ago and at present, there is no Common Land in Littleham or Landcross. Mari Galvin confirmed that the Parish Council accepted that there is no Common Land in the two civil parishes. The Parish Council had, in the past, been concerned about public liability risk if the pond is re-established.

The Group agreed that DCC Coast & Countryside Officers should be consulted (i.e. Andy Bell or Tom Hynes).

**Littleham Playing Field:** Anne Davies advised that the Littleham Village Hall and Rifle Field Charity (i.e. Village Hall Committee) had given permission for a one metre strip along the field boundary east of the gate to be planted / sown and maintained as a wild flower area. The Group agreed to encourage local children to help with the planting, so that they identify with the project. Morris Poole offered Anne Davies use of a dibber. It was agreed that planting would be arranged for the Weekend of 10-11 July 2010, after the Village Fete. Anne Davies will publish an article in Crosslet. Tom Hynes was to be asked to advise on a planting strategy (Tom Hynes recommends planting as nature

intended, whereas at his Jennett's Nature Reserve Mike Glover plants to a strategy to encourage specific rare butterflies etc.)

**Wild Flower and Plant Lists:** Rob Reed and Anne Davies have both carried out further research and added several pages to their lists of flora etc. Mari Galvin is preparing a Biodiversity Audit Database for Littleham & Landcross. It was agreed that Mari Galvin would collate this welcome additional information and input the work into the Group's database. Anna Philpott advised that there is a 1988 List for Jennett's in Family Order. The DCC database lists plants in alphabetical order. Rob & Cathy Reed have a database for their Riverside and Lower Wood land. It was agreed that David Hogan should be consulted about placing a Littleham & Landcross Flora Database on the Community Website.

**Suitable Sites for Biodiversity Research:** Anna Philpott has arranged access with several local farmers and other landowners, including Adjavin Farm, where part of the land extends into Littleham Parish, as does Jennett's Cottage land. Discussions with other land owners are on-going. Neville Jackson asked whether the Biodiversity Audit is to extend beyond the Littleham & Landcross parish boundaries. Mari Galvin advised that the audit would only apply to land within Littleham and Landcross.

**Trees Audit:** In the absence of Chris Hassall no up-date was available. The Parishes need to encourage land- owners to clear Himalayan Balsam and also any Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

**Next Meeting: Monday, 13 September 2010 at South Heale Cottage,** by kind permission of Rob & Cathy Reed. Anne Davies will present her Biodiversity Research Summary to the meeting.

**The Business Meeting closed at Noon,** but the Group planned to walk up towards Robin Hill before lunch and down over the fields adjoining the parish boundary. After lunch Mike Glover would escort the group down through the Jennett's Reserve and explain his plans for the area when he had owned the land before selling to Anna.