

Kirkcudbright Botany Group Meeting 25th March 2023

The first meeting of the spring took place at Torr Farm Auchencairn by kind permission of Lee Paton. We were indeed very fortunate to be able to use her barn for our meeting as it turned out to be a very wet day!

The meeting was held to discuss a repeat of David's Coastal Survey which he carried out in 1984-6. The original survey extended from Creetown in the west to Mersehead in the east, recording the plants in each monad (1km x 1km square). The repeat survey is proposed over a longer coastal strip from Newton Stewart below the A75 road bridge (NX4164) to the suspension bridge in Dumfries (NX9775). It will involve recording approximately 100 monads, probably spread over about 5 years. It is hoped that it will provide a comparison of species distribution and abundance between the two survey periods.

In an effort to avoid the worst of the rain, we reversed the planned order of the meeting and made a brief visit outside to the merse at Old Torr. Here we were able to identify some typical saltmarsh plants and discuss how the boundaries of the survey might be defined. In this case a wall at the landward edge of the merse formed a useful recording boundary and it was agreed that for each monad a similar clear boundary would need to be chosen and defined as part of the survey.

Then back in the barn, and warmed with a mug of coffee, we looked at David's maps of the distribution of plants from his earlier survey and discussed how best to organize a repeat of his work. It was agreed that as well as recording the plant species present in each monad, it would also be desirable to record approximate abundance and to produce a sketch map of the monad.

The best time to record saltmarsh plants is later in the summer, between June and August, which gives time to work up and circulate a survey methodology including maps and recording cards. Volunteers will be able to choose monads to record and there will be opportunities for help with plant identification both at KBG meetings and individually. The methodology will allow recording to be done at a basic level without the need to identify grass, rush and sedge species, plus the option to include the more challenging groups of species for those who wish.

Sarah White

28th March 2023

