



**BSBI Scottish Annual General Meeting Minutes
1205 Saturday 4 November 2023 at Scottish Botanists' Conference, RBGE
Chaired by David Elston, Chair BSBI Committee for Scotland**

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present.

2. Minutes of the BSBI Scottish AGM 2022

These had been made available in the 2023 Scottish Newsletter and through emails in advance of the 2023 SBC.

No substantive issues were noted. They were approved as record of the 2022 AGM, proposed by Ian Strachan, seconded by Stephen Bungard and with general consent of those present.

3. Chair's report

3.1. Matt Harding was congratulated on his appointment and first year as Scotland Officer.

3.2. The following changes to the panel of Recorders for Scottish Vice Counties was noted.

- Alistair Godfrey (Mid Perthshire) and David Welch (North Aberdeenshire & Kincardineshire) had both died during the year, representing substantial losses to the Scottish botanical community. The meeting expressed deep regret for these losses but also gratitude for the many achievements of Alistair and David.
- Paul Harvey (Shetland) had retired as VCR, replaced by Jon Dunn.
- Sue Jury (Midlothian) had been through the formalities of appointment as VCR.
- Sarah White (Kirkcudbrightshire) and Neale Taylor (Mid Perthshire) have respectively joined David Hawker and Jim McIntosh as co-recorders.
- Lyn Jones has offered his services but has yet to go through the formalities for Argyll, where Gordon Rothero has long been seeking assistance.
- Dave & Pat Batty (Kintyre) continue to remain in post to provide cover but would like to step down: offers of assistance, perhaps on a panel basis, are sought.

The Chair thanked all the above, and indeed all VCRs, for their work.

3.3. The Plant Atlas 2020 launch in Scotland took place at RBGE on 9 March 2023. The event was chaired by Pete Hollingsworth in his joint capacity as BSBI Trustee and RBGE Director of Science. The opening address by Lorna Slater MSP in her capacity as Minister for Green Skills, the Circular Economy & Biodiversity was particularly

welcome and the event as whole was a great success. The Chair thanked all involved in preparation and on the day.

- 3.4. The 2023 programme of outreach and field meetings was very successful, with 15 events. The workshop on fern identification was welcomed as an additional offering for inexperienced botanists, whilst the boat-based tour of Barra Islands was noted as being particularly intrepid. The Chair thanked all involved in the successful organisation and delivery of all 15 events.
- 3.5. Faith Anstey was thanked for editing the Scottish Newsletter 2023, in particular for creating both a bumper edition available online and a slimmed-down edition which could be printed and posted to the membership within budget.

John Crossley was thanked for agreeing to take over as editor.

- 3.6. CfS had continued to respond to consultations and make representations on nationally important matters as follows:
- Royal Society of Edinburgh: Inquiry into Public Support for Tree Planting and Forestry;
 - Scottish Government:
 - Future Grant Support for Forestry;
 - Proposals for a New Agriculture Bill;
 - Highland Council: Objection to Planning Application for a Golf Course at Coul Links.
- 3.7. Grateful thanks were extended to all contributors to the work of BSBI in Scotland not thanked yet, including but not limited to:
- Committee for Scotland;
 - Outreach Group;
 - Local Group / Network organisers;
 - Participants and promoters;
 - Plant recorders; - BSBI staff;
 - RBGE (hosting Scotland Officer & Events);
 - NatureScot & anonymous donor for funding Scotland Officer.

4. Committee for Scotland 2023-24 – composition and elections

The committee elected at the 2022 AGM had co-opted Ellie Mayhew and Beccy Middleton. The Chair welcomed the co-optees and thanked all the members who had formed part of the committee during the year.

Of the current committee Lindsay Mackinlay, Michael Philip & Andrew Rowley were retiring and Ellie Mayhew was not seeking election at the end of her period as co-optee. All were thanked for their contributions, and all other members wished to remain in post.

Looking ahead, the Committee for Scotland proposed Polly Spencer-Vellacott continue as Secretary and the following recruits be elected as member: Beccy Middleton (also to act as Field Meetings Secretary), Ian Francis & Georgia Hancock. The CfS proposals were proposed by Peter Gordon, seconded by Duncan Donald and received the consent of the meeting as a whole.

The potential for 2 further recruits for co-opting was noted, and suggestions or volunteers sought.

The elected and co-opted membership of CfS was augmented during the year by many more people fulfilling a variety of roles.

From BSBI: Matt Harding (Scotland Officer); Julia Hanmer (Chief Executive); James Harding-Morris (Countries Support Officer); Chris Miles (Chair, Board of Trustees); Steve Gater (Hon Secretary); Pete Hollingsworth (link to Board of Trustees); Jonathan Shanklin (Chair, Committee for England); Faith Anstey (Outreach & Newsletter Editor).

External to BSBI: Iain Macdonald (NatureScot); Brian Ballinger (BSS); Alistair Whyte (Plantlife); Dan Watson (NTS).

All were thanked for the outside knowledge and additional context brought.

5. Some plans for 2023-24

The Chair spoke to slides outlining a list of areas of activity for the year ahead, as follows:

Consultations & Representations, including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy;

Data availability, to rectify the lack of uptake of BSBI records by commercial consultants;

Plant Atlas 2020 follow-ups, including an evening event at Holyrood sponsored by Mark Ruskell MSP;

Outreach & Field Meetings, highlighting a week on Tiree for which Lyne Farrell sought assurances there would be sufficient participation to justify her booking accommodation;

"Wild Plants on the Tourist Trail", an initiative to enable visitors to learn about plants they encounter which will require participation from BSBI members to achieve good coverage;

Identiplant, for which administrative arrangements have changed with tutors as well as students were sought;

BSBI Awards, with nominations sought by 31st December;

National Plant Monitoring Scheme, for which more participants are sought;

Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project (SHARPP) for which data entry was now a priority.

6. Date of next 2024 AGM

2024 Scottish Botanists' Conference, date TBA.

7. AOB

The chair asked for questions and comments from the audience.

Jim McIntosh asked about what projects were proposed for 2024 – whether there was a national project from BSBI, and suggested that if not, it might be good to continue with SHARPP.

Ian Strachan gave a strong yes to the question of whether BSBI data should be freely available to all including commercial users/ consultants. He also suggested that it should be on the NBN with less delay than the current 5 years.

Duncan Donald raised a question seeking guidance for non-plant records (e.g. butterflies/ birds). In some areas a Biological Records Centre is available, but otherwise if people wish to record they would need to contact the relevant group/ recorder for the species concerned.