

FARG
Fife Amphibian & Reptile Group
Draft Minutes of Fife AGM Thursday 14th March 2013 at 1930 hours
at the Albert Tavern, Freuchie

1. Welcome

David Bell welcomed everyone to the 5th AGM of FARG. Appended to these minutes is a list of the eight attendees.

2. Apologies

There were apologies from Jodie Cranmer, Sophie Eastwood, Angela Forrester, George Guthrie, Lynn Jopling, Simon Mitchell, David Reid, Nicola Stubbs and Tim Jones.

3. Consideration of the minutes of the 4th AGM held on 21st February 2012

The minutes of the 4th AGM had been distributed with the notice of the 5th AGM and copies were available. No matters arose from the minutes and they were accepted as a correct record of the meeting. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Bob Weston and seconded by Kate Morison.

4. Chairperson's Report

Bob Weston presented his report (a copy of which is appended) and it was approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

Kate Morison presented the accounts to the meeting, making copies of the accounts available.

6. Resolution to approve the accounts for period 1st April 2012 to 14th March 2013

David Bell proposed approval of the accounts, seconded by Bob Weston and the accounts were approved by the meeting.

7. Resignations from and appointments to the committee

No nominations had been received for any of the office bearing roles in FARG so each of these roles was dealt with during the meeting as follows:

- a) Chairperson – Bob Weston was proposed by David Bell, seconded by Debbie Cranmer and approved by the meeting.
- b) Treasurer – Kate Morison was proposed by David Bell, seconded by Bob Weston and approved by the meeting.
- c) Secretary – David Bell was proposed by Debbie Cranmer, seconded by Alexa Tweddle and approved by the meeting.
- d) Recording Officer – Alexa Tweddle was proposed by Karen Sneddon, seconded by David Bell and approved by the meeting.
- e) Membership Secretary – Alexa Tweddle was proposed by Kate Morison, seconded by Debbie Cranmer and approved by the meeting.

- f) West Fife Representative – Sophie Eastwood was proposed by David Bell, seconded by Kate Morison and approved by the meeting.
- g) East Fife Representative – Ian Lewis was proposed by Bob Weston, seconded by Debbie Cranmer and approved by the meeting.

8. AOCB

Survey Opportunities

David Bell informed the meeting that the John Smith Business Park, Kirkcaldy is soon to be subject to further development. Great crested newts have been recorded within the vicinity previously and David Bell would like some assistance to undertake a survey of the GCN meta-population in the wider Dunnikier area. The surveys will start in approximately two weeks time (dependent on the weather) and are likely to consist of four visits (end March, mid- and late-April and mid-May). If GCNs are found, there is an opportunity to include mitigation work as part of the development.

David Bell asked if there are any others near Kirkcaldy which could also be surveyed. Bob Weston mentioned the ponds that Jennifer Davidson previously surveyed as part of an ARG project – Bob Weston to find out more details.

Bob Weston mentioned that he had recently been contacted by a South Yorkshire based company who were looking for someone to undertake pitfall trapping for great crested newts at Comrie. The work would involve 60 visits and would be paid. There was some debate as to whether Comrie referred to Comrie, Fife (GCNs have been recorded nearby) or Comrie, Perth & Kinross – Bob Weston to clarify. This could provide a training opportunity for FARG members (under the supervision of Bob Weston and Kate Morison who both hold GCN licences).

Website

Bob Weston highlighted the importance of keeping the website up-to-date. Karen Sneddon requested that FARG members submit photographs of the group undertaking practical work for inclusion on the website. Also, for each practical event undertaken, a short article and accompanying photographs could appear on the website.

David Bell suggested that any amphibian and reptile related article could go on the website.

Bob Weston also mentioned that the calendar of events for the coming year needs to be completed.

Practical Events

Bob Weston had recently received an e-mail from Patrick Bowden-Smith who had offered FARG the opportunity to become involved in the design and creation of amphibian and reptile habitats at his farm. David Bell asked if the wet ditch Patrick refers to in his e-mail is free from sticklebacks as this would be an important factor in the creation of habitat suitable for amphibians. Bob Weston is to liaise with Patrick to arrange a suitable date (David Bell will be available after mid-June).

Debbie Cranmer suggested that FARG could survey the ponds at the Deer Centre, Cupar as a group of Air Cadets had found newts (species unknown) there previously.

Johanna Willi mentioned that there are a number of actions proposed in the revised Local Biodiversity Action Plan that have FARG as the lead. To ensure that these actions are completed, Johanna Willi is to list all of FARG's LBAP actions and pass to the group.

Marketing & Promotion/Events

The following were proposed for inclusion in the 2013/14 events and activities calendar:

- 'Meet a Newt Night' – Friday 3rd May, Pitmedden Forrest
- Fife Show – Saturday 18th May
- Deer Centre Open Date (date tbc)
- Balgonie Castle – pond restoration (date tbc)
- Drumdreel Pond – pond assessment (date tbc)
- Leuchatsbeath Pond – pond-dipping event (date tbc)
- Birnie & Gaddon Lochs Family Days (part of the Fife Coast & Countryside Trust Events Programme 2013)
- Pittarthisie – amphibian and reptile habitat creation (date tbc)
- Winter talk from a keynote speaker

It was agreed that a presence at the Fife Show would be a good way to raise awareness of FARG and there was some discussions about who would go to represent FARG - Ian Lewis put himself forward.

There was widespread agreement that FARG needed to create some promotional material for use at events like the Fife Show, that people could take away with them e.g. leaflets, bookmarks, mugs, pond creation leaflets. However, it was noted that design and printing costs should be kept to a minimum. Ian Lewis offered to assist with the production of promotional material as he has a qualification in Communication, an A3 printer and the relevant software.

Bob Weston and Alexa Tweddle mentioned that work had stopped on updating the publication "Amphibians and Reptiles of Fife: A Guide" due to other work commitments. Karen Sneddon asked if it would be helpful to have a journalism student assist with the production over the summer break and it was felt that this would be very useful. Alexa Tweddle asked if it would be better to organise a public survey of amphibians and reptiles before publishing the revised guide and Johanna Willi suggested producing a postcard for surveying frogs and toads which would also tie-in with LBAP actions.

Excursions

David Bell mentioned that there may be another opportunity for FARG to do natterjack toad conservation work in Dumfries & Galloway. Rather than partake in survey work though, David Bell suggested that FARG could carry out natterjack larvae rescue or habitat restoration work. However, the larvae rescue work is weather dependent i.e. if we have a wet summer, ponds aren't likely to dry out so the tadpoles won't need to be rescued.

There was discussions about when the visit to Dumfries & Galloway would take place with a weekend in June being suggested. To assist with selecting a suitable weekend, Alexa Tweddle offered to create a Doodle Poll where Committee Members could mark their availability. Once a suitable weekend has been chosen, an invite can be sent to FARG Members.

Other

Kate Morison suggested that at the next AGM, there could be a 'records round-up' where details of unusual amphibians or reptiles, or when the first frogspawn of the year was seen, are shared.

9. DONM

To be confirmed.

10. Vote of thanks

David Bell thanked everyone for attending the AGM and wished FARG another successful year.

List of attendees at AGM on 14th March 2013

David Bell
Debbie Cranmer
Ian Lewis
Kate Morison
Karen Sneddon
Alexa Tweddle
Bob Weston
Johanna Willi