

CCF COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

24th January 2013, 1230–1430

Judge Business School, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1AG

1. Introductions and apologies

Present

Pamela Abbot – Natural England (Chair)

Roger Mitchell – ARC (Deputy Chair)

Toby Gardner – Zoology (Treasurer)

Thomasina Oldfield – TRAFFIC

Samir Whitaker – BirdLife (Membership Secretary)

Lucy Goodman – WCMC (Social Secretary)

Consuelo Sartori – BirdLife (Web Manager)

Emily Chenery – Geography

Lauren Evans - Geography (Student Representative)

Pete Johnstone - Friend

Martin Kaonga – A Rocha

Sam Kanyamibwa - ARCOS

Rebecca Lodge – Natural England

Pete Carey – Plant Sciences

Apologies

Riam Knapp - Geography (Council Secretary)

Louise Bacon - Cambs Bird Club

Peter Herkenrath - WCMC/Cambs Bird Club

Rachel Austin - FFI

Rosie Trevelyan - TBA

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

There were no amendments or matters arising that were not covered by the agenda.

3. Reports on recent CCF events and activities

3.1. Annual Symposium (10 Jan 2013)

Roger Mitchell reported that about half those attending filled in evaluation form. The symposium was generally rated very highly with all aspects ranking between Good and Very Good. JBS and CCI were thanked for hosting the event and helping to keep costs substantially down. It was reiterated that the Annual Symposium is traditionally a showcase for what CCF Members are doing, whilst the Summer Symposium is a themed event. A Symposium summary, prepared by Roz Almond, will be included in the next CCF newsletter. This will also include a call for ideas and help with the Summer Symposium (27th June). Themes for the Summer Symposium suggested so far included wetland conservation, capacity building and local action; there could be split morning and afternoon themes. The next annual symposium will be the fifteenth and the Judge Business School has been booked for Thursday 9th January 2014.

Council thanked Roger Mitchell for leading on the organisation of the symposium.

3.2. Doha Briefing (21 Jan 2013)

WCMC hosted the Doha debrief which had 52 people attend

Council thanked Peter Herkenrath, for organising the event, and the speakers for contributing their time (Rob Munroe, Melanie Heath, Val Kapos, John Lanchberry)

3.3. Carbon Task Force

Jason Cleeton is finalising the 'Document of Best Working Practice' to be circulated for the next Task Force meeting. Other carbon/sustainability initiatives in which CCF is or could be involved were discussed, including-

Roger Mitchell had been involved in the Cambridge based initiative 'Carbon Conversations' which is largely about individual choice in managing energy in the home, travel and transport, food and water etc. He could arrange a taster session for CCF if there was enough interest.

Pamela Abbott reported that RSPB and Natural England had shared progress on carbon reduction with each other and realized that they have worked on the same things in parallel - hence identifying considerable potential for the Carbon Task Force to realise cost reduction and ideas sharing in this area.

CCF, represented by Roger Mitchell, is represented in the Sustainability Focus Group for the Arup building

3.4. CCF Development Project

Toby Gardner reported on the now completed CCF Development Project that was focussed on understanding how the CCF vision can be implemented. The work of the CCF Development Project has contributed directly to the development of the CCF strategy and redesign of the website and newsletter. The Council thanked Ariadna Alvarez for her excellent work in leading this initiative. The Development Report will be available on the website very soon.

4. Constitution, funding and CCF governance

4.1. Report on funding administrative position and potential for extension

Seven CCF members who are also CCI partners have given £500 each, with an additional £1000 from CCF to cover Lisa Harris' time 1 day a week to support critical CCF administration support until the end of 2012. Council approved the payment of an additional £1500 by CCF to cover Lisa until the end of March 2013.

4.2. CCF Committee

Council voted unanimously in favour of making new positions full members of the Committee, namely: Social Secretary, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Web Manager. It was agreed that the constitution should be revised to reflect this. The following members were voted onto these positions; Social Secretary - Lucy Goodman, Membership Secretary - Samir Whittaker, and Wed Manager - Consuelo Satori. Riamsara Knapp's position as Council Secretary was also approved.

It was noted that we urgently need to advertise and fill the position of Newsletter Editor to replace Rebecca Lodge who is standing down. Council thanked Rebecca for carrying out this critical CCF role for the last 2 years. It was agreed that the Membership Secretary should also have responsibility for communications with CCI (a job currently being done by Roger Mitchell)

It was noted that Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer positions will all become available at next Council meeting which is also the CCF AGM. These positions will be advertised in the next Newsletter. Roger Mitchell has already expressed an interest in standing for the position of Chair.

4.3. CCF Membership

Following discussion at 3 previous Council meetings Pamela Abbott tabled a motion for opening CCF membership to for-profit organisations whose principal work is in biodiversity conservation. It was also emphasised that both for-profit and non-profit organisations have obligations to contribute towards the running of CCF, e.g. through membership in the Committee, attendance at Council meetings, and organisation of events. It was emphasised that membership of CCF cannot be used to support any profit making activity. All new membership applications would still be decided by majority vote at Council following a presentation by the applicant.

A second motion was also tabled to revise membership categories to have Organisational Member and Individual Member.

Both motions were approved unanimously by Council and permission was given to revise the CCF constitution accordingly.

Council discussed the importance of re-emphasising obligations and responsibilities of all CCF members, existing and new, in contributing to the running of CCF.

4.4. Report from Membership Secretary

Samir Whittaker provided an overview of the consultation exercise with CCF representatives. A summary of this report will be published but key aspects were that many representatives are unclear as to their responsibilities. Work is needed to clarify roles and responsibilities.

4.5 Submission of CIO to Charity Commission

Roger reported that whether we go for CIO status will depend on how we want to emerge and develop from the Strategic Consultation. We have to do something because, as constituted, we are liable for Corporation Tax. If we keep annual income below £5k (which we are above with Symposia fees alone) then we can just register for tax relief with HMRC. Above that, we'll be required to register as a CIO or apply for full Charity plus Companies House Registration to limit financial liability of Trustees. If we don't do anything, then we are liable for Corporation Tax.

The Charity Commission have now opened application path for CIO status, and this seems the best way for us. Committee is already delegated to do this when ready and appropriate from a decision at an earlier Council meeting. It is a relatively simple process; we adopt a model constitution which is much tighter than the one we have. Will need Trustees, some/all of whom can be Committee Members. But suggest others who are not Committee Members for continuity and arm's length governance. Trustees can delegate powers to a Committee. We'll also need a principal office and will probably need to ask one of CCF Member Organisations or CCI if we can use them as an 'accommodation address'.

4.6. CCF Strategy consultation and development

Pamela summarised the Strategy consultation process, including feedback from the 2013 Annual Symposium, and proposed adoption of the direction set out in Scenario 2 of the strategy document - whereby CCF applies for relatively modest funds to support its administration and coordination to achieve further incremental development of its activities and communication. This was approved by Council. It was also discussed that the potential and attractiveness of Scenario 3, which would represent a step-change in our way of operating through the appointment of a more senior, can naturally be assessed during the implementation of Scenario 2.

Recognising the intimate tight connections between CCF and CCI and potential for significant mutual benefits a proposal was made by Rebecca to develop an MOU with CCI to help secure and enhance future of our relationship.

4.7. Feedback from symposium interactive session

Toby reported that the interactive session was a great success and generated an impressive number of suggestions for activities and ideas to enhance CCF. Lowest cost options related to changes in CCF governance and communication tools. More costly options are in establishing new processes and events and online technology support.

The summary of the interactive session will be circulated to membership.

4.8. CCF fundraising

Roger Mitchell, Lauren Evans, Pamela Abbott, Pete Johnstone and Toby Gardner all volunteered to form part of a fundraising committee to put together the first draft proposal to funders.

Pamela emphasised that a lot of the preparatory work necessary to apply for funding has already been achieved through the CCF development project, strategy consultation process and website redevelopment.

Support was given for re-approaching CCI and investigating the potential for a joint request from CCI membership to the University's strategic initiative, recognising that CCF provides the critical link between CCI and the City of Cambridge going forwards. Pamela agreed to take this matter up at the next CCI steering committee meeting.

A suggestion was made to approach the private sector in Cambridge to help support the implementation of Scenario 2, and costs of Lisa Harris in the short term.

There was a suggestion that the Symposium could, in future years, be partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund for Sharing Heritage.

Pete Johnstone suggested the idea of crowd-funding to support a CCF nominated project every year. This was met with strong approval by Council and recommendation to include a request for project ideas in the next CCF newsletter.

5. Communication

5.1. Website and Newsletter work update

Consu reported on the website and newsletter re-development which is designed to "democratise" the exchange of news across the CCF members, where more people can upload content and individuals can choose the frequency with which they want to receive the newsletter. Content will need to be reviewed by moderators. Expectation is for the website to be ready by end February and the 1st April newsletter to be the first automated newsletter (populated during March).

Thanks were given to Anthony Albertyn for his work on the website. Proposal to have a CCF Reps evening to (a) train individuals to upload content onto the site and newsletter and (b) clarify roles and responsibilities to help re-energise the membership.

Agreement that CCF news a communications plan and that it can use social media much more effectively than is currently the case.

Agreed that as part of the website update Organisational Members should be asked to review their membership details on the website.

Consu, Pamela, Toby and Rebecca agreed to meet to discuss communications plan and timeline for website launch.

6. Update on CCF activities

Already covered by previous

7. New CCF initiatives

Lauren Evans reported on ideas for a CCF Student Group and Representative on the Committee. This group would be focussed on graduates (perhaps with an undergraduate representative) and include; development of "Conversations on Conservation" series, collation and better publication of University based conservation lectures and activities, profile of student research projects, and mentoring options.

Council was very supportive of Lauren's ideas and proposal was made for her to explore ideas further and make a formal proposal at the next Council meeting for voting.

8. CCF upcoming events

8.1. CCF Ceilidh

Lucy reported that plans are well developed for 1st March and main remaining task is in deciding on a venue.

8.2. Hayley Woods walk

Hayley wood trip to be planned and Oliver Rackham has offered to give a guided tour in the spring so people can see how the coppicing work done in the CCF working party contributes to the conservation of the woodland flora. Lucy to liaise with Louise Bacon (this trip would be delegated to Louise if Lucy isn't here).

8.3. Summer 2013 & Annual 2014 Symposia

Summer Symposium will be on 27th June and 2014 Symposium on 9th January.

9. Treasurers Report

Balance on 21.01 £7447.46

£1896 profit was made on 2013 Annual Symposium

Outgoings expected

£3500 for website and newsletter (designer to cover all the additional features)

£1500 for Lisa to end March (£500/month)

Leaving cushion of c. £2500

It was agreed that CCF will continue to use the Co-Op for all our banking needs. Council also approved a revision of account signatories, namely:

Removal of: Valerie Kapos, Pete Carey, Guy Norton

Addition of: Samir Whittaker, Roger Mitchell

10. Date and venue of next meeting

AGM will be in May or June; to be confirmed.

11. Any other business

Urgent need for themes and help for next summer symposium

Need event/forum for people who are working locally to exchange ideas. Samir is interested.

Pamela - 2nd April, CCI is launching the new building.

Next CCI steering committee is on 5th Feb.