

Minutes of the AGM of the Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group

February 5th 2015, 19:30-21:30.

1 Present

Brian Beck (BB), John Sweeney (JJS), Kirsty Mooney (KM), Jasmine Caulfield (JCa), Lynsey Harper (LH), Roger Downie (RD), Rennie Mason (RM), Chris Waltho (CW), Richard Weddle (RW), Erik Paterson (EP), James Stead (JS), Chris McInerny (CM), Pete Minting (PM), John Fowbert (JF), & Susie Coyle (SC).

2 Apologies

Chris Cathrine (CC), Paul Hoskisson (PH), Jackie Clarke (JCI), Maggie Fergusson (MF), Eilidh Malcolm (EM), Ruth Shepherd (RS), Carolyn Goldie (CG), Dave Garner (DG), & Ewan Kane (EK).

3 Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

JJS noted that in the last meeting he was to send details to EP of Amphibians in Drains project for updating the website, EP has received but has not yet updated the website. JJS also noted that he had sent EP an email to forward to the group concerning potential projects to fund, EP has not yet forwarded the email.

4 Treasurer's Report

JJS reported on behalf of MF.

Group funds have not been spent but have grown since the last AGM.

Funds as of last AGM (20 th Feb 2014)	£469.89
Withdrawals	-£nil
Receipts	
Donations & Membership Fees (26 th Feb 2014)	+£61.00
Balance on 18 th January 2015	£530.89

5 Membership Report

EP reported on behalf of EK. Since the last AGM, there have been no new members of Clyde ARG.

6 Election of Office Bearers

Chairman – JJS to remain

Secretary – EP to remain

Membership Secretary – EK to remain

Treasurer – MF to remain

Minutes Secretary – EM stands down, position vacant.

7 Projects

7.1 North Lanarkshire Great Crested Newt Monitoring

KM noted that North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) had worked with Scottish Enterprise to undertake a ten year monitoring project at Gartcosh Nature Reserve. Scottish Enterprise have had to take a step back however monitoring is to be continued. During 2015, LH, a master's student at the University of Glasgow will be undertaking monitoring of the site however during 2016 onwards NLC are seeking volunteers to monitor the great crested newt population. KM & JCa requested assistance from CARG for this means. Requested that the group could undertake two visits per season for three consecutive years in seven. KM & JCa noted that there was a budget and available venue for training events however this budget would not stretch to consultants to survey. EP will email group regarding this project in search of volunteers, however visits will be restricted to individuals who have survey licenses. Interested parties should contact EP.

7.2 Amphibians in Drains

JJS reported on his amphibians in drains project, during 2014 five sites were noted of which two were visited, both of which were found to be problematic. The sites, Baggie Minnie Pond and Kilmardinny Loch both were found to contain amphibians stuck in drains. During the 2015 season, JJS is looking for volunteers to assist with this project. The aims during 2014 include the survey of all five sites, with potential to trial escape and prevention methods at the sites with a known issue. EP will update the website and Facebook page with details and interested parties should contact JJS directly to get involved.

7.3 *East Kilbride Amphibian Survey*

EP reported on his amphibian survey efforts in East Kilbride, the formal monitoring of between 20-30 ponds in the town now enters its fourth year. Night time surveys are undertaken between March and May at the sites, with amphibian species found. EP noted that due to volunteer availability, no ponds had received a full presence/absence survey for newts but that useful snap shots had been gathered for all ponds. During 2015 EP hopes to undertake full methodology (Netting, torching & potentially trapping) at one site in which a neotenus palmate newt was found during 2014, to determine the extent of neoteny in the population. Volunteers are sought for the 2015 season, to commit to weekend evenings and potentially mornings during March-May to undertake these surveys. EP will advertise this opportunity via the website, facebook page and email. Interested parties should contact EP.

7.4 *Glasgow Big Frog Spawn Count*

EP reported on behalf of DG & JCI. During 2014 CARG volunteers worked with Glasgow City Council (GCC) to collect data on a number of ponds throughout the Glasgow City Council area as part of their biodiversity monitoring scheme. Throughout 2015, GCC are hoping to repeat this project and are once again looking for volunteers from Clyde ARG to get out and visit the sites. Methods will involve measuring spawn mat area and counting individual clumps, the data being used to monitor population trends at sites and generate management ideas for the council. Training is offered for this event and EP will forward details to the group via email. EP will advertise via the various channels and interested volunteers should contact DG.

7.5 *Mitigation Tunnels*

RD noted that Froglife were involved with a project to, using new hi-tech cameras monitor usage of several tunnels under the road linking the main road to a housing estate in North Lanarkshire, around the Frankfield Loch near Stepps. A similar project has been undertaken by Silviu Petrovan (SP; Froglife) in England and the organisation are keen to see how well this works in Scotland. There are many amphibian tunnels around the estate and potentially not enough cameras to cover this project. Tunnels have not been monitored to date and it is unknown what amphibian species there are using the loch and surrounding habitat so the results of this project should be of interest.

7.6 *Whitelee Reptile Survey Training*

EP noted that there was potential to offer reptile survey training at Whitelee Wind Farm in Renfrewshire, RM agreed and noted that there were good numbers of viviparous lizard at the site and reports of adders who had remained elusive during their surveys to date. EP will contact RM to determine dates which may be suitable from the ranger service & venue's perspective and then forward these around the group to gauge interest.

8 **Use of Group Funds.**

8.1 *Amphibians and Reptiles of Scotland (Book)*

JJS spoke to the group briefly on a new book being written by CM & PM entitled "The Amphibians and Reptiles of Scotland". The book will deal with Scottish herpetofauna in great depth and much work is being put in to its production. The finished product will be made available as a free downloadable e-book to any interested party and hardbacks will be available upon request at the cost of the materials and printing. The publishing process is expensive and the authors have received grants from other interested parties to cover the costs of design of the publication however more money is required to see the project to the end. JJS posited that the group should make a donation to this project. As group funds have remained relatively stable through time, the sum of £200 was proposed to be donated to this cause. By show of hands, this sum was agreed and JJS will liaise with MF to ensure that a cheque will be sent to the authors.

8.2 *New Butyl Pond Liner*

JJS then raised an additional point requested by MF concerning a garden pond in Dunbartonshire. MF had requested the sum of £200 to replace a damaged butyl pond liner in a private garden. The current pond is a breeding site for palmate newt and common frog and one of few ponds in this area. The owners of the private residence have suggested they would fill in the pond rather than replace the liner if the group cannot assist. There were three suggestions placed on the table for a vote by show of hands: To fully fund the purchase of a new liner for the pond; to match-fund the purchase of a new liner for the pond; and not to provide any financial assistance. By majority show of hands, the group decided that financial assistance for the digging of a pond on private land was not a reasonable use of group funds however if the owners of the property so wished, CARG would provide practical assistance with the replacement of the liner and other conservation works at the residence.

9 **Any Other Business**

PM noted that ARC would be running a GCN survey training event at Gartcosh Nature Reserve on Friday 27th March, EP to forward details of training to group and interested parties should contact PM directly.

EP noted on behalf of CC that Caledonian Conservation Ltd would be running GCN survey training on the evening of 25th April & the morning of the 26th April at NTS Culross & the Pineapple. The event will cost £45 to attend. EP will forward details around the group and volunteers should contact CC directly if interested.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be on Thursday 12th November 2015 at the Network Rail Offices, 151-155 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow. EP to contact group closer to the time.

11 Talks

11.1 Adders at Cashel: An Update

Chris McInerny presented on his work with the adder population at Cashel Forest, Loch Lomond.

11.2 Sea Turtles in Scotland

Chris McInerny presented a teaser for the sea-turtle section of "*Amphibians and Reptiles of Scotland*" with details on the incidence of sea turtles in Scotland.

12 Thanks for Use of Venue

The group thanked BB for organising the venue & providing refreshments.