

CUSOP PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES of a meeting of the Biodiversity Working Group held on Friday 6th June 2025 at Cusop village Hall, Cusop, Herefordshire, at 7 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Joe Emmett (Chair), Councillor John Ievers, Mr David Jones, Bethan Walton, Janet Lance-Hughes, Sallie Henderson, John Theaker, H Theaker, Steve Heavens, June Emmerson, Paul Smith, Naomi Darling.

In Attendance: David Thame (Clerk)

1. Terms of Reference

At the invitation of the Chair, the Clerk circulated a note indicating the terms of reference of the working group, and a copy of the Council's biodiversity policy. Councillor Ievers added that this was a targeted one-year exercise focused on results.

2. Protections Available

The Clerk circulated a map showing current designations and protections. The group considered the types of statutory protection available with a focus on:

- Tree preservation orders
- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Sites of special scientific interest
- Special protection areas

The meeting heard that to proceed would require a clear evidence base, a management plan and means of enforcement.

The Clerk would enquire whether any management plans existed for the Dulas Brook, approaching Brecon Beacons National Park, Herefordshire Council, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Lower Wye Drainage Board, and the Wye & Usk Foundation.

3. Issues of Concern or interest: Dulas Brook

A number of issues were raised including:

- (a) revival of the “quiet lanes” initiative, dating from the first decade of the century, the idea being to introduce meanders to slow traffic and persons, shared use of the highway by pedestrians, horses and vehicles, attention to hedging, removing unnecessary clutter.
- (b) fish passes and fish steps. A long awaited replacement fish ladder at Hardwicke bridge.
- (c) prevention of ground poaching around the margins – fencing
- (d) soil run off into the brook
- (e) testing – it is understood the gas national grid still tell for their pipe under the brook, are those results published?

(f) biodiversity indexing of rare/diverse species

(g) the importance of working with landowners – a map of cadastral parcels was requested

The meeting discussed how to make a persuasive case to the regulatory authorities. Three members volunteered to contact consultants/specialists familiar with this problem with the aim of inviting them to the next meeting, which would be in early July.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.