

## 2011 Tsars' bids

### Notes

We believe we are likely to have £7k of unrestricted funds and may at a later date get £10k from Natural England with a possible stipulation that it has to be spent on habitat work.

It might be possible to justify funding for Sarah, Alex and Dan as habitat related, hence these bids are listed at the bottom and might have to be considered separately.

Pete Boardman	£3,000	500 records of hoverflies in Meres & Mosses & upland flushes (with Nigel Jones) 500 records of hymenoptera at Hawkstone Park & under-recorded areas (Ian Cheeseborough)
John Morgan	£1,550	300 bat records from ongoing surveys + 500 extra bat records from Earl's Hill and drive-bys.
Fran Lancaster	£1,000	1690 checked and input, incl. 417 from 2010.
Roy Mantle	£1,000	Incidental records + review of BAP species
John Mackintosh	£2,000	600 new mammal records focusing on BAP species
Sarah Whild	£4,000	26,000 botanical records
Alex Lockton	£2,000	coordination of SEDN
Dan Wrench/SC	£2,000	coordination of SEDN
	£16,550.00	

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## Rationale for this year's bids

The way we organise the Tsars' contracts is to try to be as transparent and fair as possible, given that it is a highly specialist business where the only people who can make informed decisions on the value of a contract are also the people who are likely to be delivering it. The role of SEDN is to (a) determine the strategy of data collection and (b) to satisfy itself that the process is fair. The bids are competitive and we do sometimes reject them or ask a Tsar to modify theirs. We specifically do not attempt to share out the money equally – this is not about promoting public involvement or working with the community. It is about collecting scientific data of the highest value at the best price.

The following notes give you my rationale in collecting the bids. These are only my opinions - you don't have to agree with me - but this is why I've encouraged these bids, and why I think they will benefit SEDN.

We must evaluate the bids purely on their value and we do not have to spend all the money available to us. If it causes tension between the Tsars, they all know how to improve their bids to improve their chances of winning – simply collect more and better data.

A Local Records Centre database has two functions: protected species and ecological data. 'Protected species' is a purely geographical function which has almost no ecological purpose at all. For that reason it is very different to the other function of collecting ecological data such as site lists, sociological data, species interactions, etc.

Protected species surveys are not 'fun' in the same way as collecting ecological data (with a few exceptions). For that reason we tend to pay for the Tsar's time to collect the data. It is, however, potentially lucrative work, and a Tsar who is a consultant can benefit from being involved in data collection and management. This year's bids for protected species work amount to £4,500 if we accept them all. It would be very good value indeed to be able to run an LRC by spending this tiny amount on protected species data.

Ecological surveys are more fun, and we find that we can get away without paying for the Tsars' time. Yes, this is exploitative, and it does mean that only certain sorts of people can become ecological Tsars – typically retired folk or professional ecologists. But what choice do we have? Most ecological work is not commercially valuable and the recorders find it difficult to find other sources of funding, so SEDN's input of cash has resulted in a spectacular increase in the level of work from a sector that has previously received no useful funding at all.

The only comprehensive ecological data set that we have for far is the vascular plant data. It is key to the more sophisticated functions of the LRC, such as axiophyte analyses, habitat mapping and site monitoring. We have invested heavily in it, but nowhere near the full cost of doing the work. Our bid this year is for £4,000 to supply data that cost £3,800 in cash to collect, and SEDN is not contributing anything to what is effectively a full-time job doing the survey work and computerising the data. However, this is the last year that we will be making such a huge effort on botanical work, because the Flora is coming to a finish. If Shropshire wants to continue to have a botanical capability like we do at the moment, we have to think carefully about who will do the work in future.

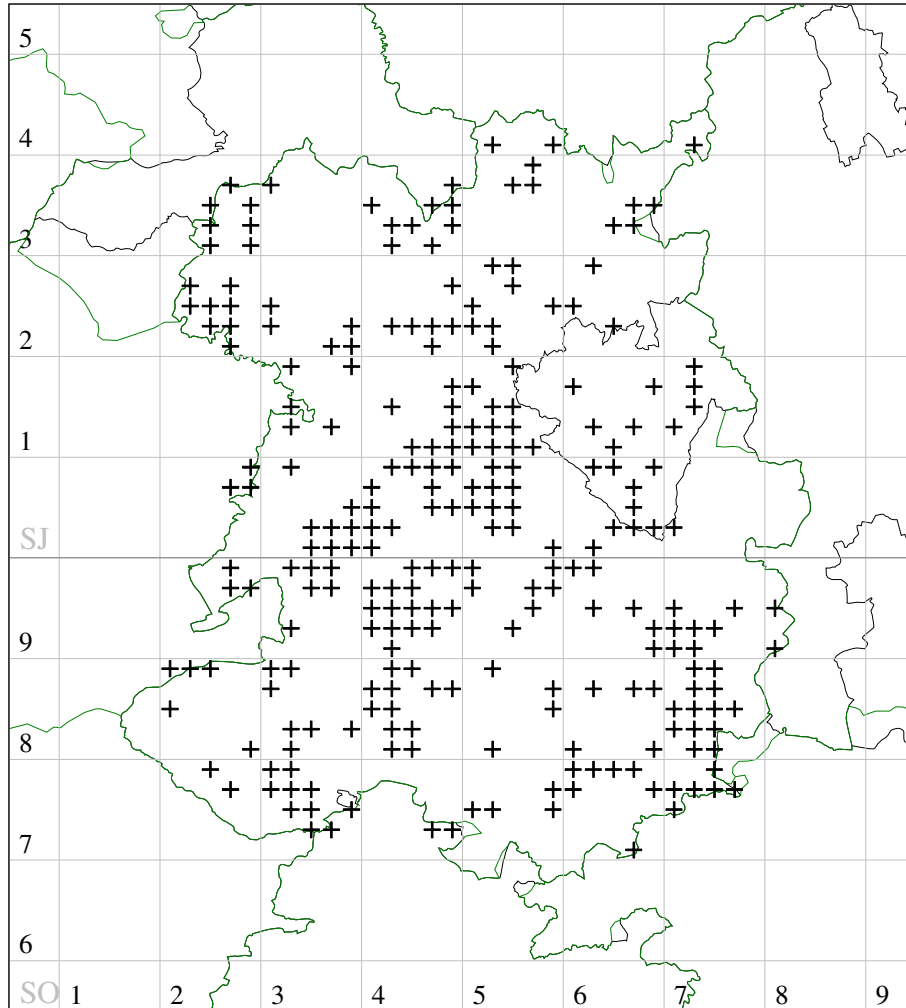
A similar situation exists for entomological recording (and, to a lesser extent, with fungi). We are lucky that Pete is giving us £30,000 worth of work at the expense of the National Lottery & the FSC. The entomological records are still a long way from being comprehensive, but ultimately it could become a fully functioning ecological data set like the botanical one. The entomological bid this year is £3,000 only because of this massive subsidy we are receiving, and that situation will continue for a few years. I suggest that we should exploit it as much as possible, because we need a lot more entomological data before we can ever start doing meaningful statistics on it. However, we have to think about the future and realise that £3k a year will not always buy us ten times as much work.

Our original plan was to have something like £25k pa to spend on data collection. That is much less than for any equivalent LRC in Britain – most of which would have at least 2 or 3 full-time staff to deliver this level of fieldwork. This much money is easily available in Shropshire even after budget cuts. Dan has shown that over £100k is allocated to biodiversity each year. What we need to do is make sure that all the organisations spending money on biodiversity do so efficiently.

## Invertebrates

1 - £1000 for Ian Cheeseborough (aculeate hymenoptera) to carry out work at Hawkstone Park, and one of Bridgwalton or Conover Quarries, then tetrad-bash parts of the county with few or no records (see map). Minimum 500 records. Plus review UK BAP hymenoptera that occur in Shropshire.

VC40 Aculeata Recorded Sites 2km



2 - £1000 for Nigel Jones and Pete Boardman to target a minimum of 6 sites in the Meres and Mosses (excluding the Whixall and Wem complex) and calcareous upland flushes – both BAP Priority habitats – for flies. Minimum 500 records. Plus PB review UK BAP flies in Shropshire.

(I couldn't work out whether this was £1k each or £1k between them, so I've assumed the former. Six site surveys plus x flushes for £500 each does not seem realistic. Alex.)

Pete Boardman

## **SEDN Bat Recorder Bid.**

### **General bid for managing Bat Data Records.**

The maintenance and inputting of data will take the minimum 2hrs per week; this will include responding to emails and attending periodic meetings as required. I propose to keep my fee the same as 2010 which was £10 per hour. For this element I bid for £1040

I expect around 300 new records from recorders and self during the contract period.

I anticipate difficulty in obtaining more records from consultants and Bat workers within Shropshire based on past efforts. There are records out there, but individuals for what ever reason are not forthcoming with their records.

### **Bid for mileage allowance for volunteers carrying out survey work.**

To act as an incentive for volunteers to carry out transect work and spot surveys I request funding to cover 1700 miles at £0.30 per mile = £510.

An element of this will be used to fund mileage for Mr Douglas Williams who will be carrying out transect and fixed point surveys using Shropshire Bat Group equipment at Earls Hill as part of his MSC. For which I anticipate 420 miles plus around 140 mile for myself for the setting up the recording equipment and checking Bat Boxes with him. It is hoped that Barbastelle will be recorded during Douglas's surveys. Barbastelle have been recorded on the hill once during the late 1980's, they are a National and Local BAP Species.

For a proposed road transect project I anticipate around 500 miles of road covered from which I am expecting to average at least 1 species record per mile which has the potential of 500 additional records. Hopefully the data will be interpreted by the volunteers. I intend to give suitable training to enable volunteers to carry out this task.

The Bat Group will also be monitoring recording equipment at Huglith, this is a continuation of last years work but with the current fuel prices, visits are becoming prohibitive. I anticipate around 10 visits this coming season so expect around 600 to 700 miles for this project.

Records generated at Huglith will be from a single site but will be throughout the season giving an overall picture of the woodland bat activity. The site is used as a maternity roost by Lesser Horseshoe bats a National and local BAP species. A Barbastelle has been recorded hibernating within one of the local mines (within 750m) during two successive winters, so it is hoped that it can be shown the species is active within the area during the summer season. Last years efforts were a little disappointing because of the positioning of the microphone. The bat noise from the roost obscured many passing calls by other species. This year the microphone has been repositioned away from the roost entrance to hopefully gain better results.

The analysing of the Huglith data is outside the scope of the above bids and will be done on a voluntary basis by anybody that I can get to assist me.

To cover the above elements my total bid is for £1550.

## Amphibia Group Bid for funds from Shropshire EDN – 8 April 2011

In 2010 /2011 an initial batch of 700 amphibian and reptile records for Shropshire were validated and submitted to the Shropshire Ecological Data Network. These 700 records included Great Crested Newts, Adder, Slow Worm, Smooth Newt, Common Toad and Common Frog. The status, trends and losses section of the BARS website was also updated for all BAP amphibian and reptile species.

There are currently an additional 1690 amphibian and reptile records for Shropshire which have not been validated. The non-validated records include a range of protected and BAP species and a number of records extracted from protected species surveys carried out for planning applications submitted to Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council.

Members of the Shropshire Amphibian and Reptile Group generated in excess of 350 new records in 2010 (these records are included in those requiring validation above).

### Proposed actions for 2011/2012 and costs:

#### 1. Validation of existing records

Validate the existing 1690 amphibian and reptile records and to complete the validation of the existing historical data set and get the whole of the data submitted to the Shropshire Ecological Data Network.

I propose to validate these 1690 records, to get them into mapmate format and submit them to the SEDN.

### Breakdown of un-validated records:

205 Great Crested Newt records

123 Smooth Newt records

128 Palmate Newt records

169 Common Lizard records

176 Common Toad records

260 Common Frog records

98 Grass snake records

8 Slow worm records

5 Adder records

4 Alpine newt records

96 records from planning applications (this will increase through the year)

417 records from ARG members for 2010

### Cost:

9 days verification @ £100 per day £900

1 day to get data into mapmate @ £100 per day £100

Total cost of works to be carried out in 2011/212: £1000

## **Bid for work on fungus records 2011 - 2012**

1. Review BAP species.
2. Convert latest records into Mapmate format.
3. Produce Checklist of Shropshire fungi.
4. Report on rare species.
5. Continue Tsar work.

Cost of work £1000

## Botanical Tsar's bid for 2011

Supply all records from 2010 – some 26,112 records, all at 1 km resolution or better.

Price: £4,000

During 2010 we spent £2,000 on contractors to survey under-recorded areas and we surveyed 74 1 km squares to bring the scores for all tetrads over 100 species. That's roughly 3,000 miles of travel. £300 was spent updating the web database and £200 on referees and postage. Thus we spent £3,800 on recording, excluding time and equipment.

Records were compiled from other sources, as follows:

Tsar's surveys	17923
Eco Tech	3
Montgomeryshire Field Society	128
Natural England	100
Shropshire Botanical Society	4738
Shropshire Council	11
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	188
The National Trust	9
Thorne, A.K. (consultancy)	409
University of Birmingham	1055
Upper Onny Wildlife Group	94
Whild Associates/Shropshire Council	1454

All under-recorded areas have now been surveyed adequately (although a few low scoring will be resurveyed this year) so the emphasis is changing to rare species and, in particular, habitat work – producing maps of ecologically important areas and vegetation quadrats for NVC analysis. This will form the basis of future bids and will enable BAP information to be updated.

## Shropshire Mammal Group SEDN Contract 2011 - 12

Actions taken with the Shropshire Mammal Group during the SEDN contract period 2010-11 have:

- Increased the rate of acquisition and quality of mammal records.
- Established a software system that speeds the conversion and correction of raw records into a format suitable for bulk input into MapMate.
- Supplied 2000 mammal records to SEDN.

To build on this I wish to submit a bid for SEDN work for the period 2011-12. This work would:

- Submit at least 600 mammal records.
- Ensure that MapMate mammal coverage is up to date on 31/01/2012.
- Survey for direct evidence that harvest mice are present in Shropshire. Recently recovered nests suggest this is the case, but confirmation is needed.  
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- To prioritise recording of other BAP species, brown hare, hedgehog, polecat, water vole, otter and dormouse.
- To contribute to the survey of Brown Moss. This site is known to support a water vole population, which would be documented and the area surveyed for other mammals including harvest mice.
- Continue to introduce measures to increase the record flow and ensure their quality.

Costs will be incurred in supporting these activities under the following headings;

Software maintenance and update.  
Cost of DNA analysis of bait tubes and nests  
Site visits for validating records.  
Training in mammal identification.  
Survey work especially in relation to harvest mice and at Brown Moss.  
Travel for necessary meetings.

Price quoted for this work: £2000

John Mackintosh, Shropshire County Mammal Recorder, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011

\* This investigation is partially supported by an OPAL grant.