



Summing Up – Some closing thoughts from Martin Warren Chief Executive – Butterfly Conservation

- The Brownfields for Butterflies and Moths conference has shown lots of good examples of win-win situation for butterflies and business. Conservationists are used to preserving sites from change – but with brownfield sites the emphasis is as much on habitat creation and grasping opportunities as on protecting key sites. This may however provide a dilemma for conservationists as we may have to accept some turnover of sites.
- There appears a strong need for a brownfields inventory- showing where all the really good sites for nature are – so that the best can be protected. Perhaps another site designation is needed?
- There is now a huge amount of information on brownfields and wildlife. A central register of resources about invertebrates and nature conservation on brownfield sites and sign-posting to other relevant sources would be very useful.
- There is a growing need for guidelines for green infrastructure. Perhaps we need a statutory duty to include biodiversity as a requirement in all new developments? For example, why doesn't every new road have its verges sown with a wildflower mix instead of vigorous rye-grass? The costs would be minimal but the benefits huge, both for people as well as wildlife.
- Climate change – could be a big issue for some of these brownfield species. Railways and road verges could provide the connecting corridors for migration.
- There is a big selling job to be done. The general perception of Brownfield's is that they are scruffy – this attitude needs to change. Perhaps we need to find a different name to brownfield, which in itself sounds unattractive. Perhaps "urban wildlands" or "Phoenix sites". They are a great educational resource and provide access to nature in urban areas.
- Business – there is a good business case to present to developers.
- Education of our children about the wildlife value of brownfield sites is important, as the children of today will be the town planners, architects and developers of the future. Education could help change perceptions of brownfields.
- Finally, an optimistic thought. We have only recently started on the road to conserving brownfield sites, but I have already sensed a shift in attitude. We need another shift to a higher level to embed the win/win possibilities and show that biodiversity can be incorporated within our built environment.