

CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Friday, 23 June 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Hugh Jones (Chair WCBC), Carolyn Thomas (FCC), Huw Hilditch-Roberts (DCC), and David Kelly (WCBC)

ALSO PRESENT

Gary Williams (Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services, DCC), Gareth O Williams (Principal Finance Officer, DCC), Paula O'Hanlon (Senior Finance and Assurance Officer, DCC), Andy Worthington (Chair AONB Partnership), Paul Mitchel (Natural Resources Wales), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer), Tom Woodall (Access and Natural Environment Manager, FCC), Michael Skuse (AONB Partnership and Friends of AONB), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer), Rachel Louise Jones (Project Officer, AONB), Karen Holthofer (AONB Communications Officer, AONB), and Sharon Walker (Committee Administrator, DCC)

1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hugh Jones (DCC).

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

No items were raised which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services (DCC) clarified that as it was an Annual Meeting, the appointment of Chair rotated amongst the Local Authorities. For the next 12 months, the Chair should be from the DCC membership. It was confirmed to continue with the existing Chair until the next meeting of the AONB whereupon a Chair from DCC would be nominated. However, the Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services (DCC) did say that the committee's agreement did not specify the need to rotate Chair/Vice Chair.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Councillor Hugh Jones (WCBC) be appointed Chair for the current meeting*
- (ii) Councillor Carolyn Thomas (FCC) be appointed Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee.*

3 MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 25 November 2016 were submitted.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Committee held on 25 November 2016 be received and approved as a correct record.*

4 DRAFT MINUTES OF AONB PARTNERSHIP HELD 10TH MARCH 2017

As Chair of the Partnership, Andy Worthington informed the Joint Committee a meeting had taken place on Friday of the previous week. No minutes were yet available.

A seminar had been held in March 2017 at which, time had been spent with volunteers and the indications had been positive that the Dark Skies initiative status could be achieved.

Agreement had been reached on key elements of the future landscapes report.

The Chair confirmed it was evident that the achievement over the previous 12 months could not have been delivered without the work of the Partnership and Friends. He expressed his gratitude to both the Partnerships and Friends. The Membership of the Friends of the Clwydian Range totalled over 190 in number.

Scottish Power had a scheme which they intended to undertake throughout North Wales which included 5 potential schemes to be underground.

The Annual Forum of Local Members & Community Councils within the AONB had taken place at Froncysyllte Community Centre.

It had been proposed that there should be a “Champion” for the AONB on each of the Town and Community Councils in order to raise any AONB related matters.

The AONB Officer confirmed letters had been sent out to all Town & Community Councils whose area, whether wholly or partly, was in the AONB requesting they propose an AONB “Champion”.

It had been confirmed that arrangements would be made for the Champions to attend a future Forum and AONB Officers were to attend Town & Community Council meetings.

North East Wales Grazing Scheme (NEWGS) – the challenge had been to address sites which had no grazing. The project would be focused on landscapes that were not currently being grazed and would include Prestatyn Hillside and Coed Moel Famau as well as sites within the Dee Valley.

One of North Wales Police’s biggest issues had been sheep worrying. Work had been taking place with rural Police Officers. New signage produced, notices set up

on social media and there had also been a strong presence on Moel Famau handing out leaflets to ensure dogs were kept on their leads. There would also be attendance at dog shows distributing leaflets and dog leads. A great deal of work was taking place to get the information out to the public to keep dogs on leads.

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the AONB Partnership meeting held on 10 March 2017 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 JOINT COMMITTEE BUDGET

Gareth Williams presented the report on the Joint Committee Budget 2017/18 and Outturn and Accounts for 2016/17.

At this juncture, Gareth Williams expressed his thanks to Paula O'Hanlon for all her hard work on the budget.

He advised that it had been another successful year with an underspend of £15,000.00.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The financial outturn for 2016/17 be noted*
- (ii) The budget 2017/18 be approved*
- (iii) Members received the Annual Governance Statement and noted the Reserve Balances as at 31 March 2017.*

6 FUTURE LANDSCAPES WALES AND ADOPTION OF VISION

The AONB Officer presented a report on the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales – the Review of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks in Wales.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee scrutinised and endorsed the Review and adopted the shared vision from the Review.

Each of the Protected Areas has been requested to look at adopting this joint vision that follows by the Welsh Government:

Wales, as a nation, values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to enhance their social, economic, environmental and cultural resources; delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.

7 AONB ANNUAL REPORT

The AONB Officer presented the AONB Annual report which highlighted the activity undertaken by the AONB Team and its Partners.

The AONB Officer referred to the main points for consideration.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley currently had over 190 members.
- Five Working Groups had been established:
 - Landscape Character and Built Environment
 - Land Management and Natural Environment
 - Historic Environment
 - Rereation Access and Tourism, and
 - Sustainable Development Fund.
- The land owner of Tomen Y Rhodwedd had agreed to grant public access to the site and new gates and waymarkers had been installed. Officers had carried out a detailed study particularly on parking which had been a major issue.

The Chair thanked the AONB Officer and all the staff who were carrying out work on a daily basis.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee receive and endorse the AONB Annual Report.

8 VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

The Community Partnership Officer presented the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Volunteer Strategy.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Volunteer Strategy linked the AONB Management Plan Actions to the development of how the service worked with and engaged with volunteers. The plan covered a period of five years and would be reviewed annually. It identified current working relationships with volunteer groups, the barriers and benefits to volunteering and how the service could improve and develop volunteering opportunities within the Service.

The Chair requested that the designations throughout the report be consistent and be referred to as the AONB.

It was confirmed that collaborative work would take place with other organisations.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee endorse the Volunteer Strategy for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, delegating its delivery to the AONB Officer.

9 UPDATE OUR PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE

The Assistance AONB Officer presented a verbal report with an update of the Picturesque Landscape.

A draft agreement had been drawn up with Denbighshire, Wrexham and the Shropshire World Heritage Site to bring together the AONB and the World Heritage Site. Work was still taking place on the canal and river trust.

£ ¾ million external funding had been received during the previous 12 months.

The AONB Officers were also giving consideration to the possibility of an application for a grant to hold an annual World Heritage Site Walking Festival.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

10 SUMMARY OF AONB PLANNING CONSULTATIONS OCTOBER 2016 TO MARCH 2017

The AONB Officer presented the report for information only.

Thanks were expressed to Tony Hughes for his work in collating the report.

Planning Officers at Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham were looking to employ a Consultant to cover all 3 Authorities.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

11 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The AONB Officer presented the report.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be noted.

12 FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting was to be held on 24 November 2017.

The AONB Officer was to obtain WLGA meeting dates to avoid any clash of meetings.

RESOLVED that the future dates are noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 a.m.