

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 Video Conference on Friday, 19 March 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Bobby Feeley and Tony Thomas (Chair) (Denbighshire County Council)
Councillors Carolyn Thomas and Derek Butler (Flintshire County Council) and
Councillor David Kelly (Wrexham County Borough Council).

ALSO PRESENT

Steve Gadd (Head of Finance and Property DCC), Gary Williams (Monitoring Officer DCC), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer DCC), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer DCC), Karen Weaver (AONB Co-ordinator DCC), Paula O'Hanlan (Senior Finance Officer DCC), Huw Rees (Countryside & Heritage Services Manager DCC), Beth Dann (Bangor University), Ceri Lloyd (AONB SDF Officer), Steve Price (Democratic Services Manager), Rachel Jones (AONB Team Leader North), Rhodri Tomos-Jones (Host) and Sharon Walker (Committee Administrator)

Mike Skuse, Rachel Jones, Andrew Worthington OBE, Helen Mrowiec, Allan Forrest, and Chris Smith

Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies (DCC) attended as an Observer

1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Apologies were received from Councillor Hugh Jones, Wrexham County Borough Council and
Alan Price, Partnership Officer North East, NRW.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held on 11 September 2021 were submitted. They were agreed as accurate and there were no matters arising.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held on 11 September 2020 be approved.

3 DRAFT MINUTES OF AONB PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2021

The draft notes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership on 19 February 2021 were provided for information.

***RESOLVED** that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership draft notes be noted.*

4 JOINT COMMITTEE FINANCES UPDATE

The Head of Finance and Property, Steve Gadd, introduced the report (previously circulated).

The report provided a summary of the AONB's projected revenue outturn for 2020/21 detailed in Appendix 1. The projected outturn position showed a contribution from the reserve in total of £11,705, of which £2,614 was to support the revenue budget, the remaining £9,091 was to fund a part time temporary member of staff through a WG grant (funds received).

The Head of Finance and Property was asked if there had been any success in applying for covid grants to remain compliant regarding covid guidance for visitors to popular tourist attractions. Issues were raised as to when lockdown was eased, car parks would not have capacity for the number of visitors. This was a countywide problem and work was required with both the Highways Department and North Wales Police.

The Head of Finance and Property confirmed there would be covid funding for the next six months and a monthly expenditure claim was required to be completed. Each Local Authority recognised this would be a pressure going forward.

***RESOLVED** that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee notes the latest forecast financial outturn for 2020/21 (Appendix 1) and the progress against the agreed budget strategy*

5 FIELD UPDATE:

(a) Wenffrwd Pocket Park and Moel Famau Project.

The AONB Senior Countryside Officer, David Shiel, introduced a verbal report regarding the Wenffrwd Pocket Park and Moel Famau Project.

During lockdown, the decision was made to close Loggerheads, Moel Famau and Llantysilio Green. Signage was placed on the A494 to inform visitors the parks were closed. Due to snow over Christmas a further decision was taken to close the approach roads to stop visitors. For this, work took place with DCC, NRW and North Wales Police. Work also took place with the Communications Team to ensure the message of the closure of the Parks was publicised but people still attempted to visit the Parks during this period of time.

Funding had been secured from the Welsh Government and part of the funding had been utilised to carry out a traffic flow report of Forestry Road leading to the main Moel Famau car parks. A key recommendation had been to introduce parking restrictions. Discussions were currently underway as to whether implement double yellow lines or clear way.

There was also a proposal to provide on-street parking leading up to the gates which were locked at night so visitors could still visit in the evenings.

Work was also being undertaken with Highways Department to re-design a layby outside the car park.

Funding had been secured to increase the capacity of the car parks to create an additional 50-60 spaces. Also the pay and display machines were to be replaced with machines that accept cards and work would take place to improve the footpaths.

(b) SMS and Visitor Pressure during Covid.

Rachel Jones (AONB Team Leader North), guided members through a presentation.

The Team Leader explained to members that care was taken as to which animal would be introduced on sites. Animals were also moved around sites but before moving them to a site they were given a few days on the site so they could adapt. Community involvement was also extremely important.

(c) Picturesque Landscape to be deferred to the next meeting.

(d) Moorland Project.

The Moorland Officer, Graham Berry, was unable to attend the meeting and the AONB Senior Countryside Officer, David Shiel, introduced the verbal report in his absence.

The Moorland Officer, had been appointed in November 2020 and working on a three-year project.

The Senior Countryside Officer gave a Project overview.

Concern was raised regarding car racing at the back of Llandegla Mountain as some vehicles had potential to cause fire. It was confirmed that the Moorland Officer would be looking into this issue.

RESOLVED that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee notes the updates received.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The AONB Officer presented the AONB JC forward work programme (previously circulated).

It was confirmed funding was awaited from NRW plus there would be a grant of £100k from Welsh Government.

AONB Management Plan to go to the June Committee.

It was stated that the Forum was currently suspended until September 2021.

Next years allocation of £225k from the Welsh Government had been earmarked for a number of projects.

Revenue funds for climate change had been allocated and a Climate Change and Catchment Officer would be appointed.

It was requested that presentations be circulated to members prior to the meeting and it was agreed presentations would be included with the publication of the Agenda pack.

RESOLVED that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee notes the forward work programme.

7 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Friday 25th June	2021
Friday 5th November	2021
Friday 18th March	2022
Friday 24th June	2022
Friday 4th November	2022