



**Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley**

Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**CLWYDIAN RANGE & DEE VALLEY AONB
INTERIM JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE CONSULTATION SUB COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 10:00 am on Friday 5th December 2014 at
Loggerheads Country Park**

**Representing Clwydian Range & Dee Valley
AONB**

Mr H Sutcliffe (AONB Officer)
Mr D Shiel (Senior AONB Officer)
Mr T Hughes (AONB Planning Officer)
Ms K Holthofer (AONB Communications Officer)
Mrs H Mrowiec (Senior Recreation Officer)

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillor M Holland

Representing Flintshire Local Access Forum

Mr D Hÿtch

**Representing Denbighshire Local Access
Forum**

Mrs K Culhane

Representing North Wales Wildlife Trust

Mr T King

Representing Ramblers Association

Mr J Roberts

Representing One Voice Wales (Flintshire)

Mr J Emyr Davies

Representing One Voice Wales (Denbighshire)

Mrs M Davies

Representing Flintshire County Council

Councillor C Thomas (Chair)
Councillor Colin Legg
Councillor N Steele Mortimer
Councillor N Matthews
Mr T Woodall

**Representing Wrexham County Borough
Council**

Councillor Hugh Jones

Representing Natural Resources Wales

Mr P Mitchell

**Representing Country Land and Business
Association**

Mrs S Archdale

**Representing the Campaign for the Protection of
Rural Wales**

Mr M Skuse

Representing Civic Trust Wales

Mrs H Williams

Representing Tourism

Mrs J Clough

Representing National Farmers Union

Mr RH Jones

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE SUBMITTED FROM

Councillor Huw L Jones, Councillor M Pritchard, Councillor M Parry, Mr N Williams

WELCOME/AONB NEWS

The AONB Officer welcomed members to the last IJAC Meeting to be held ahead of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Partnership being convened. The AONB Officer thanked members for all the enthusiasm and dedication they had given to the AONB over the years. The AONB Officer advised members that if they would like to apply to join the Partnership application forms would be circulated before Christmas.

1. URGENT CONSULTATIONS

The Planning Officer advised that there were no urgent consultations to be considered.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

IJAC Sub Committee Meeting held on 12th September 2014

2.1 Item u

Details of restoration scheme submitted in accordance with condition number 34 of planning permission 21/1999/0783/PF at Aberduna Quarry, Maeshafn, Mold, CH7 5EN – 21/2013/1388

The Planning Officer reported that the minerals planning authority had agreed to convene a future site visit for the IJAC to view the restoration works at Aberduna in Spring 2015 when the planting works would be complete. The first AONB Partnership meeting was due to be held on Friday 27th March 2015 and it was suggested that a site visit could be undertaken after the meeting.

A member queried who would be responsible for the long term maintenance of the safety fencing around the quarry void when Hanson's liabilities end. The AONB Planning Officer agreed to refer this query to the minerals planning authority and would report back.

RESOLVED

To seek to arrange a site visit after the Partnership Meeting due to be held on March 27th 2015 if possible, and the AONB Planning Officer to contact the Minerals Planning Authority to seek clarification of long term responsibility for fencing around the quarry void.

2.3 Item 1,3,4,5

Developments at Big Covert

Councillor Holland provided a brief verbal update regarding the selling off of woodland plots at Big Covert, highlighting further activity and development outside that permitted. Enforcement Officers had been informed to discuss the matter together with Darren Millar AM, who was also taking an active interest in the matter. Denbighshire County Council had convened an Enforcement Team which would be examining the issue in more depth.

Invitation to Welsh Minister to Attend IJAC Meeting

The Chair advised that a letter had been sent to the Welsh Minister Carl Sergeant inviting him to attend an IJAC Meeting but he had responded that currently he had too many commitments to attend.

2.5 Item 12

Rebuild 11kv overhead line using additional conductors and erect 11kv overhead lines supported by wood poles at Marian Mawr, Cwm, Rhyl

The AONB Officer reported that a successful meeting had been held with the landowner and a compromise had been agreed. There would now be hedgerow restoration, improvement to Rights of Way and an additional viewing point would be provided.

8. **Clwydian Range Lamb**

The Senior AONB Officer reported that a successful launch of the project had been held at the Tweed Mill, St Asaph and a number of graziers and IJAC Members had attended.

8.1 **Heritage Lottery Fund Bid - Picturesque Project**

The Senior AONB Officer advised that none of the bids that had been submitted from Wales had been successful this time. However, the AONB would be submitting another application in May 2015.

10. **PLANNING CONSULTATION**

Installation of a Wind Turbine 30.5m hub height and 45.07m to blade tip, control box and associated works at Maes Truan, Llanelidan, Ruthin, LL15 2RN – 19/2014/0702

The AONB Planning Officer reported that planning permission had been granted for this development against officer recommendation.

11. **PLANNING CONSULTATION**

Single Wind Turbine of maximum tip height 86.5m and ancillary development, including a crane hard-standing pad, substation equipment housing cabinet and access road at Lygan Uchaf Farm, Wern Road, Rhosesmor, Mold CH7 6PY – 052344

Mrs Archdale referred to the application and queried whether the residents of Penbedw had been contacted prior to reference being made to the 'Historic Park and Garden' in the response. The AONB Planning Officer advised that the recommended response had been discussed at the previous meeting and had been approved by the IJAC. The reference to the impact on Penbedw 'Historic Park and Garden' was a response to information presented by the applicant which had been submitted with the planning application.

The AONB Officer commented that the Planning Officer only worked two days per week. He had limited time to communicate with applicants or other interested parties within the timescale available to respond to consultations. However, applicants or interested parties could contact the AONB Team if they required advice on applications.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

3. **DELEGATED CONSULTATIONS**

3.1 **ITEM 35**

Change of use of hotel (Class C1) to private dwelling (Class C3) incorporating alterations and partial demolition together with associated works at Bodidris Hall, Llandegla, Wrexham, LL11 3AL – 17/2014/1114

Mrs Clough expressed some concerns about the loss of a quality hotel accommodation which was within the AONB. The Planning Officer agreed this was regrettable but the hotel had been closed for some time and had not been proved to be viable. Significant investment was required to secure the future of this important listed building (which was in a state of disrepair), and an application for the conversion of the outbuildings for up to eight holiday lets had been submitted and would provide some compensation for the loss of the hotel.

It was also noted that the site adjoined a public footpath which was a promoted recreational route, and members emphasised the need to ensure a practical and safe route for footpath users was maintained during construction operations.

3.2 **ITEM 56**
Erection of wooden tool store and shelter for managing the woodland (retrospective application) – amended plans at Big Covert, Clwyd Forest, Maeshafn, Mold – 21/2014/0032

Members expressed concern regarding the application and queried whether the National Trust (who have covenants on the woodland) had been consulted on the application. The AONB Officer agreed to contact the National Trust.

Mr P Mitchell reported that he had raised the issue internally with NRW. Members agreed that a response was required by Welsh Government in order for policy to be changed and resolved to approach Darren Millar AM.

RESOLVED

Darren Millar AM to be contacted and invited to meet with members
The AONB Officer to contact the National Trust

3.3 **PLANNING CONSULTATION**
Installation of 6kw wind turbine (hub height 9m, tip height 11.8m) at Y Lletty, Pen Line Road, Cilcain, Mold, CH7 5NZ

Mrs Archdale referred to the above application and queried why the application had not been published along with the IJAC supporting documents. The AONB Planning Officer responded that the response had been sent after the papers for the meeting had been published. The Communications Officer agreed to circulate the response to members, which is as follows:

“The JAC notes that this application is substantially the same as that which was refused planning permission earlier this year (Code No: 051227). The site is in an open and exposed hillside location in the AONB which is visible over a wide area, including the adjacent and surrounding footpath network. The JAC accepts the applicant’s argument in support of wind over the further use of solar PV and also notes that the proposed turbine is modest in scale (11.8m to blade tip). It is also understood that, whilst recognising that there would be some adverse visual impact, Natural Resources Wales do not consider the harm to be so serious as to warrant an objection to the application.

The JAC is still of the opinion that this is a sensitive site and would favour an alternative less conspicuous location for the turbine, preferably in the vicinity of the existing farm complex or in the enclosed pastoral area to the south-east of the farm which is less open and exposed and is characterised by hedgerows, individual trees and small woodlands which would draw the eye away from the turbine. It is noted that a wind speed of 5m per second is required to make the turbine viable, but no details of wind speeds across the farm holding have been submitted with the application which would greatly assist with selection of the most appropriate site for the turbine.

If the planning authority is satisfied that there is no better location on the holding which has the necessary wind speeds, the JAC would suggest resiting the turbine approximately 30-40m south/south-east of the currently proposed location which would reduce the skyline impact of views from the surrounding footpath network and wider area. The mast and turbine colour should be selected to blend in with the hillside as far as possible, and a naturalistically shaped area of locally indigenous gorse planted around the turbine to help reduce the open character of the landscape and assist with integrating the turbine into its rural setting. The JAC would also recommend that the grid connection must be undergrounded.”(AONB Management Plan Policies PCP1, PCP2, PSQ1 and PSQ2)

4. **AONB JOINT COMMITTEE (JC) Meeting 14/11/2014**

The AONB Officer provided a verbal update on the first Joint Committee meeting to be held. The meeting was attended by:-

Councillor Hugh Jones
Councillor Huw L Jones
Councillor Hugh Evans
Councillor Ian Roberts
Councillor Derek Butler

Apologies were received from Councillor Bernie Attridge.

Councillor Hugh Jones had been appointed as the Chair of the Committee and Councillor Huw L Jones as the vice Chair.

Councillor Hugh Jones said that the Joint Committee was a strategic Committee and the key in going forward was partnership working.

4.1 **Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Partnership**

At the meeting the Joint Committee approved the formation of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Partnership; therefore today's meeting was the final IJAC Committee meeting. The new governance arrangements for the Partnership form part of the new legal agreement. Application forms, Accord and role of the Partnership were now being finalised. An advertisement for applicants to join the Partnership would be placed in the local newspapers prior to Christmas. All existing IJAC members would be invited to apply to the Partnership along with organisations and individuals who had expressed an interest. The AONB Officer reiterated that the Partnership did not have the capacity to have representation from all organisations as it was now covering a much larger area.

5. **AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

The Senior AONB Officer introduced the AONB Management Plan (previously circulated) and explained that some of the feedback from the workshops which were held last year would be incorporated within the policies and objectives of the Plan.

The Action Plan

The objectives of the Plan would be met by partnership working.

- 5.1 A member queried why there was extended reference to 'Access and Recreation' within the Plan. The Senior AONB Officer explained Access and Recreation had always been a key component of the Management Plan. However, reference had been expanded in the current plan to accommodate the extension area. He explained that one of the foremost pressures on protected landscapes was recreation. Everyone should be able to access and enjoy the AONB but with due consideration for the people who lived and worked in it. An Outreach Strategy was also being produced to help target underrepresented groups and Community First Groups and improve their access to the AONB.

- 5.2 Page 16

IVCO1. – To ensure that visitors and the tourism industry understand the need for, and support the conservation and enhancement of, the special qualities of the AONB as key assets upon which tourism is based

Mrs Clough referred to the above objective and advised that the Clwydian Range Tourism Group could assist with meeting this.

- 5.3 Discussion ensued on whether there was too much pressure on the iconic areas of the AONB because of access and parking issues and whether there should be more emphasis to other/more remote areas of the AONB to assist in the dispersal of visitors. The Senior AONB

Officer explained that visitor numbers were increasing which could cause some issues but it was equally important that the tranquillity and remoteness of the AONB was retained. The AONB Team strove to create a balance with visitors and communities to both enjoy the AONB and its array of forms.

6. AONB AWARD for 2014

The Senior AONB Officer provided a verbal update on the AONB Award for 2014 explaining this year there had been seven nominations (previously circulated) and the winner for 2014 was Richard Jones – Countryside Skills

The AONB Officer said that when the AONB required something extra special it looked to Richard Jones. Richard had completed a great deal of work for the AONB including the much praised car park at Bwlch Pen Barras. Richard also provided good employment opportunities for individuals who want a career within the countryside. The award would be presented to Richard and his Team in March 2015.

6.1 SDF Funding

Councillor Holland extended his thanks to the SDF Officer Nick Critchely for the work completed on the Llanarmon y Ial walls. The work had been completed with funding from: SDF, Cadwyn Clwyd and local contributions.

7. WELSH GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES

The AONB Officer introduced the report (previously circulated) regarding the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and explained that the review had started to examine the first two aspects of the review:-

- 1. What were the purposes of AONB's and National Parks**
- 2. If there could be a single landscape designation**

The AONB Officer went on to explain that the review was also about governance. National Parks had their own Local Authority and budget. The AONB Officer said in his view the AONB had appropriate governance: the Joint Committee and the AONB Partnership. Discussion ensued and most members agreed that the National Park brand did have a higher profile than the AONB. Some concerns were raised regarding the implications that could come with any brand change e.g. planning restrictions. Members also queried whether funding would be more secure for the AONB if it achieved National Park status. It was noted that the NAAONB had responded on behalf of all of the AONB's.

8. AONB MEMBERS SEMINAR – Plas Tan y Bwlch

The AONB Officer enquired if any members would like to attend a seminar at **Plas Tan y Bwlch on 26th & 27th January 2015** two places were available.

9. WELSH GOVERNMENT PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

The AONB Planning Officer introduced the report (previously circulated) relating to seven current planning related consultations from Welsh Government and advised members to consider their response from an AONB perspective. Discussion ensued and most members agreed that it would be a great loss for the AONB if the Design and Access Statement (DAS) was removed. Members agreed with the pre-application notification to the AONB Partnership. It was queried whether there would be an increase in fees for retrospective applications. Members agreed for the recommended responses to be submitted in respect of three of the consultation documents.

RESOLVED

Consultation on Design in the Planning Process

“Good design is vital to successfully accommodate development in protected landscapes or within their setting without undermining or harming the qualities and features that make them special places. Good design can also enhance the character and appearance of such areas. In this context, the JAC welcomes an emphasis on good design in national and local policy and supports the objective to raise design standards through the planning process and other measures.

However, the JAC is very concerned about the proposal to remove the need for developers to submit a Design and Access Statement (DAS) for all applications. In sensitive areas such as AONB’s the need to consider design and the context of the proposal in relation to its landscape setting is a vital consideration which is often overlooked, and the formal requirement to have regard to such matters through a DAS is an important step to secure good design. In this context the JAC also notes that many applications are not submitted by professional designers. Whilst there is scope to modify the categories and thresholds associated with the requirement to submit such a design statement, the JAC firmly believes that the need for a formal statement should be retained for sensitive areas, including AONB’s. The commonly used exception in planning legislation relating to Article 1(5) land and World Heritage Sites should be applied in this regard.”(Questions 13 and 14)

Frontloading the development management system

“The JAC supports the principle of developers undertaking pre-application consultation with the community for major developments, and agrees that this should allow significant planning issues to emerge in advance which developers can respond to before submitting their application. The JAC notes that the proposed minimum publicity requirements comprise site notices and letters to neighbours, local ward members and town and community councils. However, the JAC considers itself a part of the local community and can raise substantive planning issues for developers to consider. The JAC would therefore suggest that pre-application notification of AONB JAC’s/Partnerships as part of this process would be beneficial.”

Planning committees, delegation and joint planning boards

“The JAC supports that part of the proposed National Planning Committee Protocol (which it is noted will not form part of the legislative proposals) relating to mandatory member training. Avoiding unnecessary effort and duplication by preparing a national set of training materials is a sensible approach. Although details of such materials and topics to be covered have not yet been specified, the JAC would strongly recommend that local planning authorities which include nationally protected landscapes (AONB’s and National Parks) should receive specific training in planning for the conservation and enhancement of such designated landscape.”

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Dobson & Crowther Factory, Cilmedw, Llangollen

The AONB Planning Officer reported that a letter (previously circulated) had been sent to the Chair and IJAC from Mr Simon Collinge. Mr Collinge had expressed concern that the colour of the wall cladding of the recently erected factory was too light in colour and that the building was visually intrusive within the AONB. Mr Collinge was also concerned about the felling of trees which helped to screen the site.

Members had some sympathy with the views expressed but agreed that realistically the developer would not change the approved colour of the cladding at this late stage of the development. Members agreed that it was very disappointing that the IJAC had raised these concerns and the Planning Authority had chosen not to act on the Committee's suggestion of sample panels in the first instance. The Chair reported that she had been very concerned about the tree felling and had contacted the planning authority to seek the highest levels of mitigation to compensate for their loss.

The following letter was sent by the Chair to Mr Collinge after the meeting:

Dear Mr Collinge

As requested, I reported your letter to the meeting of the Interim Joint Advisory Committee (IJAC) for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB held on 5 December, 2014. Copies of your letter and the photographs you sent were circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

The IJAC are very disappointed that the planning authority chose not to act on the committee's suggestion that sample panels be erected on site to help select the colour of the cladding, and agree with you that a darker, more recessive colour would help better integrate the new factory into its rural setting. However, members accepted that the planning authority had issued an approval for the cladding as constructed and regretted that there was little that can be done at this stage to overturn a legitimately made decision. The committee did however ask for their concerns to be brought to the attention of the planning authority, hence me copying in Ian Weaver.

Members also share your deep concern about the loss of mature trees along the A5 which were to be protected and retained as part of the development. These helped screen the site and reduce its impact in the landscape, and their felling has resulted in the development appearing starker than it would otherwise. When they were felled I personally approached the planning authority to express my concerns and to seek as much mitigation as possible from the developers to compensate for their loss. The committee appreciates that it is difficult to fully compensate for the loss of such mature trees in the short term, but understands that the planning authority has reached agreement with the developers to secure additional planting in mitigation which, in time, will help break up views of the building.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Carolyn Thomas

Chair of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Interim Joint Advisory Committee

- 10.2 **Mynydd Mynyllod Wind Farm**
The Planning Officer reported that Scottish Power Renewables proposal for up to 25 turbines with a height of 110-160m at Mynydd Mynyllod near Llandrillo had been withdrawn, citing landscape and visual impacts of the necessary grid connection as one of the main reasons.
- 10.3 **Rhiannon off-Shore Wind Farm**
The Planning Officer reported that Celtic Array's proposal for 250+ turbines up to 265m in height in the Irish Sea had also been withdrawn. Challenging undersea ground conditions and associated costs were cited as the main reasons for deciding not to proceed.
- 10.4 **AONB Planning Officer**

Councillor Hugh Jones thanked and commended the AONB Planning Officer on his efficiency; he noted that the Planning Officer who works part time (two days per week) had responded to 62 applications since the last meeting.

10.5 **Message from the Chair**

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution to the IJAC and said she had enjoyed chairing the meetings and extending her knowledge about the AONB. She had tried to promote and raise awareness of the area at every opportunity possible.

10.6 **AONB Officer**

Councillor Nancy Matthews thanked the AONB Officer for briefing members to extend their knowledge of the AONB and making members feel welcome on the committee.

11. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The first Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Partnership Meeting

Will be held on:-

Friday 27th March 2015