



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

Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

**Minutes of the Welcome Meeting
held on
Friday 15th May 2015
at
Loggerheads Country Park Meeting Room
at 12:30 pm**

AONB Partnership Members

Representing Land Management

Sandy Archdale
Gareth Wyn Jones
Sharron Jones

Representing Urban Interest

Peter Scarll
Philip Thane

Individual Interest

Helen Walker
David Davies
John I Roberts

Representing Rural Interest

Christine Evans
Roger Cragg

Representing Landscape Interest

Michael Skuse

Representing Historical Interest

Tony King

Representing the Natural Environment

Les Starling

Representing the Built Environment

Philip Durrell

Representing Business Interest

Dewi Davies

Representing Access and Recreation

Andrew Worthington

Representing Clwydian Range & Dee Valley

AONB

Howard Sutcliffe	(AONB Officer)
David Shiel	(AONB Senior Officer)
Tony Hughes	(AONB Planning Officer)
Helen Mrowiec	(Senior Recreation Officer)
Karen Holthofer	(AONB Communications Officer)

Representing Wrexham County Borough Council

Councillor Hugh Jones
(Chair of the AONB Joint Committee)
Councillor RJ Dutton OBE

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Councillor Stuart Davies (Chair)
Councillor Merfyn Parry
Councillor Martyn Holland
together with
Huw Rees (Head of DCC Countryside & Heritage
Service)

Representing Flintshire County Council

Councillor Carolyn Thomas
Councillor Paul Cunningham
Councillor Colin Legg
together with
Tom Woodall (Head of FCC Countryside Service)

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Observer

Paul Mitchell

Meeting Observer

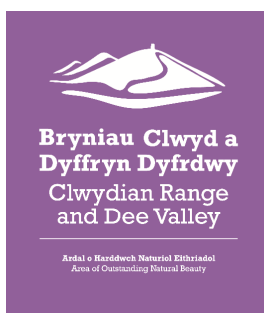
Councillor Rhys Hughes

**Tirweddau
i fyw**
.org.uk

**BRYNIAU CLWYD A
DYFFRYN DYFRDWY**
Un o'r
Teulu AHNE

**CLWYDIAN RANGE
AND DEE VALLEY**
One of the
AONB Family

**Landscapes
for life**
.org.uk



Apologies for Absence were submitted from: - Councillor Lloyd Kenyon, Martin Howarth (WCBC)

1. Lunch & Networking

2. AONB Award for 2014

2.1 Background to the Award

Every year the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) select an individual or group whose contribution to the landscape and communities of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB have been outstanding. The award which is held annually, invites nominations from businesses/individuals that operate within the AONB and provide a good quality service sustainably, along with enhancing the AONB.

This year's nominations were considered by the Interim Joint Advisory Committee prior to the Partnership being convened.

2.2 Presentation of the AONB Award for 2014

The Chair of the AONB Joint Committee, Councillor Hugh Jones, presented Mr Richard Jones (Countryside Skills) with the AONB Award for 2014, and went on to explain that Richard Jones had been synonymous with much of the work of the AONB for over 15 years. He was an exceptional craftsman in traditional building and construction techniques particularly drystone walling, stone pitching and lime mortaring. Although Richard was one of many contractors used by the AONB he had been responsible for much of the outstanding work that the AONB had come to be known for example:

- The car park at Pen Barras
- The stone ramps at Moel Arthur, Penycloddiau, Moel Fenlli
- The view point at Pen y Pigyn
- The Shepherds cottage
- Meadow at Coed Nercwys

Richard's work was innovative in finding traditional ways to tackle modern problems within the landscape and ensuring that it not only blended in, but enhanced the natural quality of the landscape also. Often Richard's work set a standard that was adopted by other agencies, for example the stone ramps technique for protecting the ramparts of the Iron Age hillforts of the Clwydian Range that have subsequently been adopted by English Heritage and Cadw on other sites. Richard regularly completed work with volunteers and was committed to developing skills within this field. Richard was a key member of the Drystone Walling Association and holds regular training courses in traditional skills and was well known for his commitment and attention to detail. Over the years Richard had been instrumental in bringing outstanding quality, thoughtfulness and innovation to the work of the AONB for which the AONB had become renowned. Richard also provided good employment for local people who enjoyed working within the countryside.

3. Welcome to the AONB Partnership

3.1 Welcome from the Chair of the AONB Joint Committee

The Chair of the AONB Joint Committee, Councillor Hugh Jones, opened the first AONB Partnership Meeting to be held, and said that he was honoured to be welcoming the new members on to the Partnership, and sincerely thanked them for applying to the Partnership and attending the meeting. He went on to explain that the AONB had been 'overwhelmed' with the amount of applications that it had received for the Partnership, and it had been endeavoured to have good representation for all areas of the AONB. He emphasised the independent nature of the Partnership which was separate from the Local Authorities.

Councillor Hugh Jones reiterated the importance of 'Partnership Working' and that the expertise and contribution of the new members would be 'key' to everything the AONB completed, and without this it would be impossible for the AONB to succeed.

The Chair sincerely thanked the former Chair of the Interim Joint Advisory Committee, Councillor Carolyn Thomas, for all her commitment and enthusiasm for the AONB during her term as Chair.

3.2 Welcome from the AONB Officer

The AONB Officer, Howard Sutcliffe, welcomed the new members to the Partnership and said that he was delighted with their level of expertise and knowledge of the new members and that he would like the AONB to capitalise on that.

The AONB Officer advised new members that if they were uncertain about any aspect of the Partnership they were welcome to call into the office at Loggerheads or call the office 01352 810614.

3.3 AONB Joint Committee

The AONB Officer explained the role of the Joint Committee was to manage the strategic work of the AONB (i.e. the overall responsibility of the budget of the AONB and to ensure that the policies of the AONB were adhered to).

The AONB Partnership would 'sit beneath' the Joint Committee and provide a forum for discussion on the AONB.

The AONB Officer explained that the AONB Joint Committee was made up of six Local Authority cabinet members:-

Councillor Hugh Jones (Chair)	- WCBC
Councillor Ian Roberts	- WCBC
Councillor Hugh Evans	- Leader DCC
Councillor Huw L Jones	- DCC
Councillor Bernie Attridge	- FCC
Councillor Derek Butler	- FCC

3.4 **AONB Partnership**

The AONB Officer explained that all members had individual roles within the Partnership and that small working groups would shortly be convened. Members would be placed where their expertise could be most capitalised on e.g. Historical Environment, Built Environment etc.

4. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Partnership**

4.1 **Background**

The AONB Officer explained that the Chair of the Interim Joint Advisory Committee (IJAC) had always been a member of a Local Authority and that selection of the Chair rotated between the three Local Authorities covering the AONB. The former Chair of the IJAC was Councillor Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council) and the Chair of the AONB Joint Committee was Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council). The Chair of the Partnership should therefore be a Councillor from Denbighshire County Council.

4.2 **Nominations for Chair of the Partnership**

Councillor Martyn Holland proposed Councillor Stuart Davies to be Chair of the AONB Partnership and this was seconded by Councillor Merfyn Parry.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Stuart Davies (DCC) be elected as the Chair of the AONB Partnership.

Cllr Davies said that historically he had been a critic of the AONB but he recognised that the Partnership was a new beginning for the AONB and that it was an excellent way for the AONB to go forward. He urged more people to get involved with the AONB.

4.3 **Nomination of Vice Chair x2**

Councillor Paul Cunningham proposed Councillor Carolyn Thomas and this was seconded by Councillor Hugh Jones

Councillor Hugh Jones proposed Councillor Bob Dutton; this was seconded by Councillor Stuart Davies

RESOLVED

Councillor Carolyn Thomas and Councillor Bob Dutton were elected as Vice Chairs of the AONB Partnership

Around the table introductions were then completed by all meeting attendees. Councillor Stuart Davies proceeded to Chair the meeting.

5. **AONB Management Plan**

The Senior AONB Officer provided a concise verbal presentation on the AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019. He explained that the Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW) stated that there must be a review of the Management Plan every five years; section 85 stated that all public bodies must have regard for the Plan. Previous Management Plans for the AONB had been published in 2004 and 2009. In 2011 the AONB was extended to include the Dee Valley, almost doubling the AONB in size. An Interim Statement was published for the new

area of the AONB. Therefore the Management Plan Review was a review of the 2009 Plan and 2011 Interim Statement.

Special Qualities and Features

The Special Quality and Features of the AONB were split into four sections:-
Natural Features, Historic Landscape, Access and Recreation, Culture and People,
The Plan then examined:

- what condition the qualities and features are in (The State of the AONB Report)
- What issues are affecting them
- How are we going to respond (the Vision, objectives and Actions)
- How can we ensure we maximise the benefits the landscape delivers?

The Senior AONB Officer explained that the draft Management Plan had been endorsed by the IJAC and was now out for consultation until 29th June 2015. All members were invited to call into one of the public consultations which would be held on:

8th June 2015	Prestatyn Library	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
9th June 2015	Corwen Sports Pavilion	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
15th June 2015	Loggerheads Country Park	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
18th June 2015	Plas Newydd, Llangollen	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
24th June 2015	Ty mawr Country Park	2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

The final Plan would be taken to the Joint Committee to be endorsed and then published in the summer of 2015.

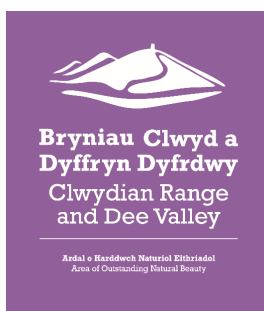
- 5.1 Discussion ensued. The AONB Officer explained that the Management Plan had previously been taken to the Interim Joint Advisory Committee (IJAC) and the Joint Committee to confirm that the 'Special Qualities and Features were correct.

One member raised concerns that education, historical environment, and agriculture were all foremost in what the AONB achieved and this should be emphasised within the Plan. The AONB Officer responded that individual members had been appointed to the partnership to focus on specific areas, and sub groups would shortly be convened.

The Senior AONB Officer explained that all the comments received for the Plan would be taken to the Joint Committee and the Joint Committee would make the final decision on whether they would be endorsed. An Interim Report would be completed by the AONB Officer and the Senior AONB Officer and this would be circulated to members.

The Senior AONB Officer advised members that if they had any comments regarding the Plan they should bring them to his attention as soon as possible.

One member queried why there was not more Denbighshire County Council representation on the Partnership with 75% of the AONB being within Denbighshire. Mrs S Archdale responded that if Denbighshire County Council attained increased representation that extra representation for landowners would also be requested. The AONB Officer responded that all partners of the AONB were equally represented on the Partnership and that the framework of the Partnership was well-defined. It was included in the Legal Agreement for the Joint Committee that had been circulated to all prospective partnership members and endorsed by the three Local Authorities.



Action

- **Section 20**
 - No reference had been made to Caer Drewyn hilfort
- Individual comments and feedback on the AONB Management Plan to be brought to David Shiel's attention as soon as possible

6. Planning and Development within the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB

The AONB Planning Officer with the aid of a power point presentation summarised planning and development within the AONB. He explained the Partnership's role in planning and development and drew out planning and built environment themes and policies contained in the draft Management Plan.

The work of the former IJAC in responding to planning applications and other consultations was also described and national and local planning policies concerning the AONB's were highlighted. In addition, the Planning Officer outlined how we assessed development proposals in and around the AONB. Finally, current and future planning and development issues which may impact on the AONB were summarised.

In the discussion following the presentation the issue of affordable housing for local people was raised, along with Denbighshire's policy of conversion of rural buildings to residential use, which a member explained was currently under review. The need for Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the AONB was recognised and mention made of the value of such guidance for Llangollen. Members also raised some queries in respect of the proposed introduction of new tiers of national and sub-regional plans as part of the Welsh Government's Planning (Wales) Bill. The Planning Officer explained that the Bill was due to be enacted later this summer and that the scope of the new National Development Framework would likely reflect the current Wales Spatial Plan. Sub regional plan areas were yet to be decided, but reference had been made to the A55 corridor as a possible candidate.

7. Welsh Government Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

The Senior Recreation Officer, Helen Mrowiec provided the background to the review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and explained that, for the first stage of the review comments had been received from the Interim Joint Advisory Committee. The Review was now at the second stage. The Joint Committee would be submitting the response on behalf of the AONB.

The questions put forward from Welsh Government for the Review were examined in depth by the Partnership members and discussion ensued.

Comments on the Response

7.1 Question 1

The term 'Effective Governance' was debated by members.

A member raised concerns that 'governance' was a robust word and in her view it interpreted bureaucracy for the land owner, when considering that a large amount of land was privately owned within the AONB, another member responded that the term was merely an administrative 'management speak term' and was not intended as a threat to the landowner. It was proposed that a sentence be added in the response to clarify that governance does not refer to privately owned land; but refers to the way that the designation was managed.

Action

It was agreed that the question had been already been formulated by the Welsh Government therefore it could not be changed. A sentence would be added in the response to clarify that governance does not refer to privately owned land.

Amendments

Page 5	Structure of AONB Chart Action Boxes to be simplified and re-drafted
Page 7	VAT exempt and not accept
Page 4	AONB spelt wrongly at bottom of page

7.2 Page 7

The vision for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB

*'An AONB that is managed through sound and effective partnerships which ensure that communities and visitors are fully engaged in decision making and are **empowered** to have a stake in their local landscape and invest in its future'*

Mrs S Archdale challenged why the term 'empowered' was used in the vision and shared her view that the term would be a suitable for Country Parks but not privately owned land. Debate ensued. One member responded that everyone could be 'empowered' to have a stake in the landscape and that the landscape was made up of several communities.

It was proposed that term 'empowered' to be replaced with 'encouraged'

Members voted on the proposed change. Eleven members voted for the term 'empowered' to stay, with six members voting for the term 'encouraged' to replace 'empowered'

RESOLVED

The word 'empowered' would remain in the submission to the review

- 7.3 Mr Dewi Davies said that the Planning Officer dealt with a considerable amount of planning applications in a very timely manner and suggested **Timely decisions** should be added to the vision.

Action

It was agreed that the comments would be added under section 3 or 4, rather than within the vision

- 7.4 Mr Paul Mitchell commented that the vision did not answer the question 2 that was asked.

Action

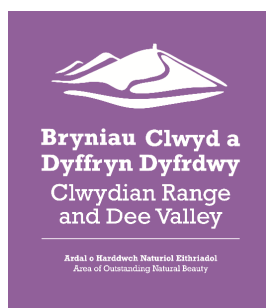
Paragraph to be added

7.5 **Question 3**

The Chair commented that he was not in agreement with the last sentence 'National Representation on AONB Partnership would be beneficial'.

Action

The last sentence to be removed



The Chair raised concerns that the proposed change of the name of AONB to National Landscapes had not been considered by the Partnership, and in his view this was something that should be opposed. Councillor Hugh Jones explained that the Partnership had been asked to comment on the second part of the Review only. However, when all parts of the Review had been completed that would be the time for the proposed name change to be considered.

Action

Copies of the amended response to be circulated to members

8. Joint Committee Forward work programme

The AONB Officer completed a brief verbal presentation on the Joint Committee Forward Work Programme (previously circulated). The programme currently scheduled work until spring 2016.

8.1 Rural Development Plan

The Chair advised that he was currently preparing projects ahead of the Rural Development Plan (RDP) and advised members to forward think about projects.

9. Sustainable Development Fund Panel Nominations 2015-16

The Senior AONB Officer completed a brief and concise verbal presentation on the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) explaining that the AONB obtained £65,000 SDF Funding last year.

Action

Last year's Annual Report to be circulated to members

9.1 SDF Panel Nominations

The Senior AONB Officer proposed that the SDF Panel to be convened of a combination of the Joint Committee and the Partnership. There would be ten seats on the Committee:-

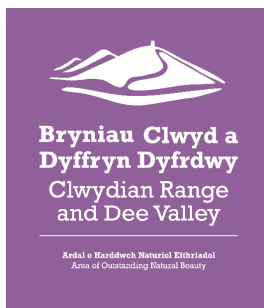
Joint Committee Chair	Partnership Chair
Joint Committee Vice Chair	Partnership Vice Chair x2
	Partnership Members x 5

RESOLVED

SDF Partnership Panel Members 2015 -16 were agreed as:

1	Councillor Hugh Jones	Chair of	Joint Committee
2	Councillor Huw L Jones	Vice Chair	Joint Committee
	Councillor Stuart Davies	Chair of	AONB Partnership
3	Councillor Bob Dutton OBE	Vice Chair	AONB Partnership
4	Councillor Carolyn Thomas	Vice Chair	AONB Partnership
5	Roger Cragg	Rural Interest	AONB Partnership
6	Mike Skuse	Landscape Interest	AONB Partnership
7	John Roberts	Individual Interest	AONB Partnership
8	Andrew Worthington	Access & Recreation	AONB Partnership
9	Christine Evans	Rural Interest	AONB Partnership

- An SDF meeting would be convened end of May/beginning of June.



10. **Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley**

Mr Mike Skuse gave a brief verbal presentation on the emerging 'Friends of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley' explaining that the purpose of the group was to

- promote and raise awareness of the AONB
- provide presentations promoting the AONB
- provide regular updates on the AONB

The 'Friends' would be a socially based organisation with its own committee, and the group now had its own logo and leaflet.

Mr Skuse thanked the AONB Officer, Senior Officer and Recreation Officer for their assistance and support in establishing the group

The Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley would be launched on:

15th July 2015 at Plas Newydd, Llangollen. All Partnership Members were invited to the launch and encouragement for the group would be very welcomed.

The AONB Officer thanked Mr Skuse for his commitment and hard work.

10.1 **Light Pollution and Dark Skies within the AONB**

Mr Mike Skuse completed a verbal presentation on Light Pollution and Dark Skies within the AONB explaining that he recently had attended a meeting at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Snowdonia to consider light pollution and dark skies. Some of the benefits of dark skies were opportunities to support the local economy and astronomy elements. Snowdonia National Park was now seeking to attain dark sky status. The two core areas for dark skies suggested for the AONB are: - Pen y Cloddiau Llantysilo, Moel Morfydd. The Senior AONB Officer said that there were some dark skies in the AONB already, and one of the most popular events the AONB held was a walk up to Caer Drewyn hilfort.

Discussion ensued, and members recognised that there would be some financial gain not to have street lighting. However, safety concerns were raised regarding the potential danger of people walking in remote areas at night.

The Chair said he was supportive of the dark skies initiative. However, he had taken note of the safety concerns raised and caution should be taken especially on privately owned land.

11. **Any other business**

AONB Partnership Travel Expenses

The AONB Officer explained that the x16 voluntary AONB Partnership members were eligible for travel expenses and expenses forms were available from Karen

Provisional AONB Partnership Dates

Provisional meeting dates to be circulated

AONB Partnership Documents

All AONB Partnership documents to be emailed to members

Additional hard copies would be provided at meetings

Action

No AONB Partnership documents to be posted out with some hard copies to be provided at the meetings