

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD ON
FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2016**

Councillors: Hugh Jones - Chair (WCBC), Derek Butler (FCC) and Barbara Smith (DCC)

Also Present - Andy Worthington (Chair AONB Partnership), Paul Mitchell (Natural Resources Wales), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer), Gary Williams (Head of Legal and Democratic Services, DCC), Tom Woodall (Access and Natural Environment Manager, FCC), Huw Rees (Countryside and Heritage Services Manager, DCC), Martin Howarth (Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager, WCBC), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer), Helen Mrowiec (AONB Senior Recreation Officer), Paula O'Hanlon (Senior Finance and Assurance Officer, DCC), Karen Holthofer (AONB Communications Officer, DCC), Gareth O Williams (Principal Finance Officer, DCC), John Roberts and Michael Skuse (AONB Partnership and Friends of AONB) and Sharon Thomas (Committee Officer, FCC)

1. **INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bernie Attridge (FCC), Hugh Evans (DCC) and Huw Jones (DCC).

The Chair welcomed Barbara Smith to her first Joint Committee Meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2016**

Accuracy

Minute number 6: Gareth Williams advised that it was he who had presented the report on the Joint Committee Outturn and Accounts 2015/16 and Budget 2016/17. He would also need to be added to the attendance list for the meeting.

Matters Arising

Minute number 3: The Joint Committee was now represented by Huw Jones at meetings of the World Heritage Board. The AONB Officer had investigated the lack of representation at the Cadwyn Clwyd Board. He has been advised that the Chair of the Board felt the AONB was sufficiently represented by the Local Authority Members who sit on the Board. The AONB Officer felt it was now up to these members (Cllrs Huw Jones and Hugh Jones) to make further representation if they felt that the matter should be pursued.

Minute number 6: The suggestion for the presentation by Friends of the AONB to relevant Scrutiny Committee of each of the three Local Authorities would be followed up, to help raise awareness of the important work of the AONB.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **Subject to the two amendments, the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting held on 24 June 2016 be received and approved as a correct record.**
- (ii) **That AONB Officer progress the presentation by Friends of the AONB to the relevant Scrutiny Committees at each of the three Local Authorities.**

3. **DRAFT MINUTES OF AONB PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2016**

As Chair of the Partnership, Andy Worthington, highlighted some of the key points, namely the presentation on 'Our Picturesque Landscape Project' and positive involvement by the working groups on addressing general congestion and parking issues within the AONB.

During an update on the National Grid initiatives, the importance of improving access in Bryneglwyns was acknowledged as part of the tourism strategy for the AONB. On the National Grid Improvement initiative, an expression of interest had been submitted in October. The single bid had been successful and work was underway on the approach to be taken, involving discussions with local landowners.

The valued contributions from the five different working groups to the work of the Partnership was recognised.

The Chair thanked the Chair and Members of the AONB Partnership for their work.

AGREED - The minutes of the AONB Partnership meeting held on 21 October 2016 be received and approved as a correct record.

4. **LOGGERHEADS CAR PARK**

The Assistant AONB Officer reported on the success of extended parking provision at Loggerheads, in the form of an overflow car park. Work on the realignment of the entrance was due for completion by the end of the year.

5. **AONB BUSINESS PLAN**

The AONB Senior Recreation Officer presented the draft Business Plan which set out the background to the AONB as well as its financial and management arrangements. A section on the core budget indicated low admin and office costs linked to AONB work, and the work of core staff in attracting funding and sponsorship was highlighted. An overview was given of the project budgets and progress with the work programme. The final version of the Business

Plan would be updated to reflect the current work programme content and would be circulated to the Joint Committee following the meeting.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Prioritising resources by setting priorities based on feedback of working groups and involving expertise from partner organisations and Local Authorities.
- The need to maximise opportunities for time limited grants.
- Potential funding opportunities arising from the proposed development centre for North Wales.
- The importance of submitting quality applications for funding to Cadwyn Clwyd, within the limited criteria.

RESOLVED - That the draft Business Plan be endorsed, delegating its delivery to the AONB Officer.

6. **JOINT COMMITTEE BUDGET**

Gareth Williams presented the report on the Joint Committee Budget and Outturn for 2016/17, advising that progress was on track. He gave unofficial notification of a £7.5K uplift in the contribution from Wrexham County Borough Council for 2016/17 to match the amount from Flintshire County Council. The Chair agreed to follow this up.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That the financial outturn for 2016/17 and progress against the agreed budget strategy be noted.**
- (ii) **That the Chair forward a confirmation email to Gareth O Williams of Denbighshire Finance confirming the increased contribution.**

7. **SUMMARY OF ACCESS AND RECREATION GRANT**

The AONB Officer presented a report on the Access and Recreation grant, for information only.

The AONB Senior Recreation Officer gave an overview of the four projects which had been successful in securing a total of over £33K of additional funding from Welsh Government. She welcomed the prompt responses to requests for information which had helped to support the bid for this time limited grant. The aim was to identify further projects which could be pursued in the event of this grant becoming available for future years.

8. **OUR PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE**

In providing an update, the AONB Senior Recreation Officer reported that consultants had been appointed to look at five different elements of the project. Following the completion of community engagement events, work was underway in relation to the Plas Newydd area and Wernffrwd site in

Llangollen which were important in gaining access to the World Heritage Site. Additional funding had been secured from Cadwyn Clwyd for the interpretation of the schemes.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Recognition of the work undertaken by Sarah Jeffery.
- The need to engage with local town/community councils to identify sites for improvement and to pursue opportunities for funding accessible by voluntary sector groups.
- The importance of continued close working with communities to achieve beneficial outcomes for all.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

9. **WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

As Chair of the World Heritage Site Board, the Chair advised of plans to adopt a structure similar to that of the Joint AONB Committee, involving Cabinet Members of the three Local Authorities in Wrexham, Denbighshire and Shropshire being on an Executive Board with a Partnership supporting the Board. The strategic plan of the Board would focus on a more 'bottom up' approach. Details were also shared on the establishment of a new managerial post to work closely with the AONB team, to be funded by the three Authorities and the Canal & River Trust.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

10. **FRIENDS OF THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY**

The AONB Senior Recreation Officer reported that the membership of the Friends of the AONB had increased to over 170 which had far exceeded expectations. She thanked the Friends for their work and gave an overview of their recent excellent events and contributions to projects. New events were being planned and a high-quality newsletter was published quarterly.

Comments were made in recognition of the positive working between the Friends and the AONB team, and this was valued by the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

11. **SUMMARY OF AONB PLANNING CONSULTATIONS MARCH 2016 TO SEPTEMBER 2016**

The AONB Officer presented the report for information only, indicating that there were only ten developments where the Local Planning Authority had not accepted the AONB comments. Thanks were expressed to Tony Hughes for his work in collating the report.

12. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The AONB Manager presented the report and confirmed that a bid to Cadwyn Clwyd was being considered for traffic congestion and car parking.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Progress on the Dark Skies project was expected to move from Amber to Green.
- On the suggestion to re-introduce a bus from Loggerheads, it was noted that there had been insufficient demand and that resources were being diverted to cover services following the collapse of GHA Coaches. There was potential to explore bus services across the AONB using existing services or smaller shuttle buses.

RESOLVED - That the updated Forward Work Programme be noted.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair gave feedback on a recent NAAONB meeting for AONB Chairs that he had attended in London regarding the future of AONBs following Brexit. Amongst the various topics was that on agricultural policy and funding which was not replicated in other areas of commerce. The meeting had highlighted opportunities for national AONBs to take the initiative on agricultural funding and determine desired outcomes from Brexit.

14. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

It was agreed that the AONB Officer would liaise with Members of the Joint Committee to determine which of the suggested meeting dates on the agenda would proceed. Members with any preferences on the dates were asked to contact Karen Holthofer who would inform Steve Price.

RESOLVED - That the AONB Communication Officer liaise with Members of the Joint Committee and agree suitable dates for the future meetings.

Councillor Hugh Jones (WCBC)
Chair