

CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT COMMITTEE
2 FEBRUARY 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held at County Hall, Mold on Friday, 2 February 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Hugh Jones (Chairman) (WCBC)
Councillors: Derek Butler (FCC), David Kelly (WCBC), Carolyn Thomas (FCC), Tony Thomas (DCC)

- 1 **APOLOGIES:** Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (DCC)

ALSO PRESENT:

Andrew Farrow (Chief Officer Planning & Environment, FCC), Rob Dingle, (Offa's Dyke National Trail Officer), Martin Howarth (WCBC), Karen Holthofer (AONB Communications Officer), Councillor Colin Legg (AONB Partnership and FCC), Ceri Lloyd (AONB SDF Officer), Paul Mitchell (Natural Resources Wales), Helen Mrowiec (Senior Recreation Officer), Paula O'Hanlon (Senior Finance and Assurance Officer, DCC), Martyn L Holland (AONB Partnership and DCC), Huw Rees (DCC), John Roberts (AONB Partnership and Friends of AONB), Paul Rowlinson (Cyfieithydd), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Manager), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer), Michael Skuse (AONB Partnership and Friends of AONB), Councillor Owen Thomas (AONB Partnership and FCC), Gary Williams (Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services, DCC), Gareth O Williams (Finance Manager, DCC), Tom Woodall (Access and Natural Environment Manager, FCC), and Andy Worthington (Chair of AONB Partnership)

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Services Officer (FCC)

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **URGENT MATTERS**

There were no urgent matters raised.

4. **MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 17 November 2017, were submitted.

Accuracy

Item 13, page 5, the first sentence should read as 'mark of respect'.

Matters arising

Item 18, page 6, the Chair confirmed that he had written to the Minister to outline the concerns raised on behalf of the AONB Joint Committee and was waiting a response.

Howard Sutcliffe advised that Tom Woodall, Access and Natural Environment Manager, FCC) would work with the AONB to submit a presentation of the Friends of the Clwydian Range to a scrutiny meeting in Flintshire.

Howard Sutcliffe reported that a very constructive meeting had been held with Christine Marsden a new Member to the AONB Partnership and the AONB Planning Officer Tony Hughes to improve understanding between Planning and AONB.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5. PRESENTATION OF TWO AONB SHORT FILMS

Helen Mroweic, Senior Recreation Officer, provided two presentations:

: In response to comments from Councillor Carolyn Thomas, concerning raising public awareness of Loggerheads Country Park, the Senior Recreation Officer advised that information about Loggerheads and a link was to be made available online. It was suggested that social media could also be used to raise awareness, and Facebook was cited as an example, and this was agreed.

Councillor Tony Thomas said that thanks should be extended to Katrina Day, Walking for Health Officer, and asked for consideration to be given to the continuity of funding for an officer post.

The Chair thanked Helen Mroweic for her presentation and wished her well in her new post with Flintshire County Council.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. JOINT COMMITTEE BUDGET AND OUTTURN 2017/18

The Finance Manager, DCC, introduced a report to provide a summary of the AONB's revenue budget for 2017/18 as detailed in appendix 1 of the report. He advised that the current forecast outturn showed a net overspend of £7200 and explained that if the overspend position remained at the end of the financial year then it would be funded from the AONB revenue reserve.

Howard Sutcliffe reported on the expenditure for employees in the core and area revenue income and expenditure account as detailed in the appendices to the report

A query was raised on the cost for printing. David Shiel explained that this was for the reprint of the AONB leaflet.

Councillors Carolyn Thomas and Hugh Jones, advised that there was no change in the budget contributions to AONB from Flintshire County Council or Wrexham County Borough Council for 2018-19.

7. DARK SKY STATUS

David Shiel, Assistant AONB Officer, introduced a report to outline the process and benefits of pursuing a Dark Sky Designation with the International Dark Skies Association. He advised that the preservation of natural darkness had a wide range of benefits for health and well being, biodiversity and the tourism business sector. Mr. Shiel explained that a decision was required on whether to pursue the designation of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley as a Dark Sky Community as defined by the International Dark Sky Association.

During discussion Officers responded to the comments and concerns raised around the issue of streetlighting and David Shiel provided clarification of the streetlighting plan.

Councillor David Kelly commented that Community Councils held responsibility for lighting in many areas and said there was a need to have Community Councils 'on board'. He also referred to the need to the replacement of ageing stock in certain areas.

Howard Sutcliffe said that the Buffer areas needed to be considered.

In response to the concerns and comments raised David Shiel explained that street lighting had been contacted and some work had taken place. He acknowledged the need to engage with Community Councils and said there had been enthusiasm and a number of the Community Councils were keen to assist with monitoring activities. AONB champions had also been engaged.

Howard Sutcliffe suggested that Councillor Carolyn Thomas from the Joint Committee coordinate a meeting for all three Local Authorities Lead Members for lighting and their officers, as she is the lead member for lighting in Flintshire. The meeting would be supported by David Shiel from the AONB Team. Councillor Carolyn Thomas agreed to chairing a future meeting and advised that Flintshire County Council were bidding to replace street lighting and had asked local Community Councils to replace lighting with 'soft' lights.

Councillor Martyn Holland commented on the problems arising due to security lighting. Howard Sutcliffe explained that lighting was considered by

the AONB Planning Officer Tony Hughes on relevant new planning applications. In response to a concern raised by Councillor David Kelly around rural crime, Howard Sutcliffe advised the evidence was that crime did not rise if there was no external lighting.

The Chair proposed that a workshop be arranged and Community Councils be invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the designation of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley as a Dark Sky Community – as defined by the International Dark Sky Association, be pursued.

8. OFFA'S DYKE PATH NATIONAL TRAIL

Rob Dingle, Offa's Dyke National Trail Officer, gave a presentation on the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas asked if there was access to accommodation on the Trail, Mr. Dingle explained that there were a number of bed and breakfast facilities and campsites on route.

During discussion Mr. Dingle responded to the questions raised by Councillor Derek Butler concerning the Wales Link paths.

Mr. Dingle explained that a survey of the Offa's Dyke had been undertaken and funding from CADW and Historical England for conservation work was being looked into. In addition a submission for lottery funding was being planned for monument restoration.

The Chair thanked Mr. Dingle for a detailed presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

9. GRANTS AND BIDS

Howard Sutcliffe, AONB Manager, gave a verbal report on the following grants from the Welsh Government (WG) and bids to Natural Resources Wales. He advised that £45K had been secured from the WG. Three year programme for the AONB was also being sought from NRW, together with three bids to their latest round of Funding.

AONB Special Projects

WG Funding

- £10K Dark Skies is confirmed
- £5K strengthening AONB/WHS Management is confirmed

- £24K AONB threshold signs await Ministerial sign off
- £6K clinker path awaits Ministerial sign off

NRW Competitive Funding

- OPL Match Bid in
- Healthy Walking Bid in
- DL National Bid in
- Marine bid (for information only)

10. UPDATE ON SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Howard Sutcliffe, AONB Manager, gave a verbal report on the AONB Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and referred to the following main points:

- That FCC is compiling a Report on the consultation on the SPG which would be circulated and discussed by officers
- That each Authority needs to formally adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance following the current consultation
- That Flintshire County Council will take the Supplementary Planning Guidance back to Cabinet in March 2018 and that Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council do the same.

11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mr. Howard Sutcliffe presented the Forward Work Programme and reported on the main items scheduled for consideration as detailed in the Programme appended to the report.

The Chair commented on the issue of discarded litter on roadsides and cited the A483 through Wrexham County Borough Council as an example (although this is outside the AONB). He commented that the trunk road agency had not addressed the issue. Councillor Derek Butler commented that there was no funding available to resolve the issue of litter. Councillor Carolyn Thomas proposed that the Chair writes to the Minister to request the frequency of how often litter is cleared from the three trunk roads (A55, A494 and A5) in the AONB and this was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and
- (b) That the Chair writes to the Minister on behalf of the AONB Joint Committee to raise concerns on the issue of discarded litter on roadsides.

12. STAFF UPDATE

Mr. Howard Sutcliffe informed members that Helen Mroweic, Senior Recreation Officer, would be commencing a new position with Flintshire County Council. He expressed thanks on behalf of the Joint Committee for her hard work and commitment. Members also expressed their thanks and best wishes for her future success.

13. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Friday, 22 June 2018, 10.00 am
Friday, 23 November 2018, 10.00 am
Friday, 8 March 2019, 10.00 a.
Friday, 21 June 2019, 10.00 am
Friday, 22 November 2019, 10.00 am

(The meeting commenced at 10.00am and ended at 11.58am)