

**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 Meeting Room 1, Guildhall, Wrexham on Friday, 23 November 2018.

PRESENT

Councillor Julian Thompson Hill (Denbighshire County Council)
Councillor Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council)
Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council)
Councillor David Kelly (Wrexham County Borough Council)

ALSO PRESENT

Ceri Lloyd (AONB SDF Officer), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer), Michael Skuse (AONB Partnership and Friends of AONB), Andy Worthington (Chair of AONB Partnership), Paul Mitchell (Natural Resources Wales), Iwan Davies (DCC), Paula O'Hanlon (DCC), Huw Rees (Head of Countryside & Heritage Services DCC), Gareth O Williams (Finance Manager, DCC), Gary Williams (Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services DCC), Dereck Butler (FCC), Tom Woodall (FCC), Allan Forrest (Regeneration Project Manager, World Heritage Site, WCBC), Anna Irwin (Senior Conservation & Environment Officer, WCBC) and Ken Bickerton (Committee Officer, WCBC).

**In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee,
Councillor Carolyn Thomas presided.**

1 INTRODUCTION, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Tony Thomas, Denbighshire County Council.

The Chair asked all the attendees to introduce themselves.

2 MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2018

The Minutes of the Joint Committee held on 22 June 2018 were submitted.

Matter Arising

Item 3, page 4 - With reference to discarded litter on roadsides and the frequency of litter clearance from the three Trunk Roads (A55, A494 and A5), Councillor Hugh Jones reported that he had written to Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport, Welsh Government. The North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) had now ceased providing funding to local authorities to clear roadside litter. Wrexham County Borough Council continues to clear litter along the A483 and within the World Heritage at its own cost.

Item 8, page 6 - With reference to dog fouling a policy on 'stick and flick' was in place by NRW on its land. The Local Authorities have a slightly different policy.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 DRAFT MINUTES OF AONB PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2018

The Chair welcomed Andy Worthington, Chair of the AONB Partnership to the meeting.

Andy Worthington highlighted the main points that had been discussed at the Partnership meeting and provided relevant updates where applicable.

During consideration of the Minutes, the following points were raised in particular:

- Curlew Cymru Project: The RSPB had submitted a funding application to the Welsh Government on behalf of the Partnership Group.
- Dark Sky Initiative / Lighting Plan: The work undertaken by Denbighshire County Council in replacing their street lighting with 3000 kelvin bulbs was welcomed. Councillor David Kelly commented that Community Councils were responsible for street lighting in many areas and they too should be encouraged to use 3000 kelvin bulbs when lamps were due to be replaced. Also buffer areas to prevent light spillage from land just outside the AONB boundary should be considered.
- Llantysilio Mountain Fire: Gary Williams (Denbighshire County Council) reported that, to ensure that the lessons learnt following the incident are used to improve multi-agency responses to similar emergencies in the future and determine whether land management practices could be better utilised and to assess the fire's impact on the local area, environment and business, a special meeting of Denbighshire County Council's Communities Scrutiny Committee will be held in February/March 2019. The meeting will be held in Llangollen and open to the public to attend.

RESOLVED – That the AONB Partnership Minutes be noted.

4 JOINT COMMITTEE BUDGET

Gareth O Williams (Denbighshire County Council) introduced the report (previously circulated) which provided a summary of the AONB's revenue budget for 2018/19 as detailed in Appendix 1. Members were also asked to note the signed Welsh Audit Office Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2018 (Appendix 2).

RESOLVED – That the report be received and its contents noted.

5 FUTURE LANDSCAPE WALES

Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer) referred to a letter, dated 14 May 2018, from Hannah Blythyn AM, Minister for Environment, Welsh Government, seeking the views from AONB Officers on the issues which need to be addressed to provide greater parity for the AONBs with the National Parks in Wales. A collective

response had been prepared by the five AONB Lead Officers in Wales in collaboration with colleagues from NRW and the National Association for AONBs. Twelve proposals have been put forward to the Minister including proposals dealing with status and profile.

During consideration of the report the following matters were raised:

- At present AONBs are not statutory consultees for planning applications within their area.
- National Parks and National Trust can enforce certain farming practises within their area.
- Welcomed the suggestion that there should be AONB representation on a new 'National Partnership for Designated Landscape' that has yet to be convened.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that a further update be submitted to this Joint Committee in due course.

6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Ceri Lloyd (AONB Sustainable Development Officer) introduced the report and commented that the £50k grant funding provided by the Welsh Government Sustainable Development Fund during 2017/18 had supported 19 individual projects, 3 staff and over 3000 volunteer hours. The match funding contribution in terms of public / private cash and time in kind amounted to the equivalent of £270k. She then outlined how the SDF project funding contributed towards the AONB's Management Plan priorities.

The Chair commented upon the undoubted success of the programme and the support it gave to a range of activities and engaging communities within the AONB area.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that the Chair sends a copy of the report to the Welsh Government to highlight the good work being funded by the scheme.

7 GRAZING ANIMALS SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT SCHEME

David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer) gave a verbal update and reported that funding had been made available for 2018/20 and two members of staff, based at Loggerheads Country Park, have been appointed. The scheme offers grants to collaborative groups to re-instate marginal areas of land not within farming areas. The project will assist forty sites.

The initiative was welcomed by some Members as a way to protect, encourage and maintain the traditional Welsh Hill farm.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8 **NATIONAL GRID LEI LEGACY TO MOLD AND SCOTTISH POWER ENERGY NETWORKS (SPEN) (UNDERGROUND SCHEMES)**

Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer) presented the report and said that Scottish Power Energy Networks were considering proposals for areas to be included in the next phase of undergrounding electricity lines in protected landscapes. A map indicating existing National Grid Overhead Lines had been circulated previously.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Consideration was already being given to undergrounding the line around Llangar Chapel.
- The National Grid were preparing a Landscape Character Assessment of the overhead line between Legacy and Nercwys. This line was just outside the AONB boundary but was within the area of the protected landscape setting.
- The overhead line at Ty Mawr Country Park (primarily along the Dee Valley) should be considered for undergrounding.
- The National Grid provided funding for Landscape Enhancement Initiatives to assist to reduce the visual impact of the electricity infrastructure. An application has been made for hedgerow planting scheme by landowners within the Morwynion Valley.
- Howard Sutcliffe agreed to make further investigations of the SP Energy network overhead electricity line at Minera Quarry.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and further information be sought on the status of the overhead electricity line at Minera.

9 **UPDATE OUR PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE (OPL)**

David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer) gave a verbal report on progress made since the previous meeting and highlighted the following points in particular:

- Two of the three key appointments have now been made. Kate Thomson has been appointed OPL Partnership Officer and Sallyanne Hall appointed as OPL Community Officer. The Communication Officer post was still vacant. The OPL team will be based at Y Caban, Plas Newydd.
- OPL Match Funding bid for Healthy Walking Scheme had been approved.
- The Out and About Programme needed to be finalised.
- Welsh Government funding of £6k for the Clinker Path project from Llangollen Community Centre to the Llangollen Canal had been granted.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

10 **SUMMARY OF AONB PLANNING CONSULTATIONS APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2018**

Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer) introduced the report which was for information only.

AGREED - That the report be noted.

11 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer) presented the Forward Work Programme (previously circulated) and highlighted the main items scheduled for consideration.

During discussion of the report the following points were noted in particular:

- SP Network Lines – Both the Ty Mawr and Horseshoe Falls schemes were on track to be completed by March 2019. Four additional schemes were being evaluated.
- Dates were being arranged for the presentation of Awards for outstanding contributions to the AONB 2018/19. Corwen Community Garden (AONB Award) and John Lawton Roberts (AONB Volunteer Award).

RESOLVED – That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

12 FUTURE MEETING DATES 2019

The Committee were reminded that the next meeting of the AONB Joint Committee will be held on **Friday, 8 March 2019**. It was suggested that in future, these meetings be held in different venues throughout the AONB area.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas
Presiding Chair