



**Meeting of the  
AONB Partnership  
Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021  
at 10:00 online Teams Meeting**

**AONB Partnership Members**

**In Attendance**

**AONB Partnership Members**

Councillor Tony Thomas <b>Chair of Joint Committee</b>	DCC
Councillor Christine Marston	DCC
Councillor Martyn Holland	DCC
Councillor Sonia Benbow-Jones	WCBC
Councillor Paul Cunningham <b>Vice Chair of the Partnership</b>	FCC
Councillor Owen Thomas	FCC

Chair of the Partnership  
Andrew Worthington OBE

Representing Rural Interest  
Christine Evans, Roger Cragg

Representing Landscape Interest  
Michael Skuse

Representing Urban Interest  
Rajan Madhok,

Representing the Natural Environment  
Les Starling, David Davies

Representing Land Management  
Sandy Archdale, Huw Morgan,

**Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB**

Howard Sutcliffe	AONB Officer
David Shiel	AONB Area Manager
Karen Weaver	AONB Coordinator
Rhun Jones	AONB Senior Ranger (South)
Graham Berry	Moorland Field Officer
Paul Evans	Plas Newydd Site Manager
Tony Hughes	AONB Planning Officer

Representing Our Picturesque Landscape (OPL)  
Kate Thomson OPL Partnership Officer

Representing Denbighshire County Council  
Huw Rees Head of Countryside &  
Heritage Services

Representing Natural Resources Wales  
Alun Price



Apologies for absence were submitted from: Allan Forrest, Councillor Hugh Jones, Del Roberts-Jones, Rachel Jones, Tony King, Ceri Lloyd, Councillor Colin Legg, Ian Papworth, John Roberts, Councillor Graham Timms, and Tom Woodall

**1. Welcome**

The Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed two new member's Councillor Rondo Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Councillor Graham Timms (Denbighshire County Council).

**2. Notes of the previous meeting held on February 19<sup>th</sup>**

Membership of the Partnership

Dewi Davies had submitted his resignation of membership of the partnership. Dewi had been Chair of the Business and Tourism Working Group, the Chair and the AONB Officer had thanked Dewi for his contribution over the years to the Partnership. Four people had recently applied to join the Partnership however, there was currently no capacity for further members.

Dark Sky Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The Planning Officer explained that the three Local Authorities had agreed to the guidance and an eight week public consultation period would commence shortly.

Big Covert - large scale tree felling at the Big Covert, Llanarmon yn Ial

Councillor Martyn Holland said that he was not aware of any further developments to date.

**2a. Notes of the previous meeting - Our Picturesque Landscape Project (OPL)**

OPL Partnership Officer, Kate Thomson completed a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted some of the projects being completed including:

The Glyn Valley Tramway Wharf wall restoration, new benches that were made from a felled elm tree at Plas Newydd, Artists in Residence and the Picturesque bus.

Discussion was held and it was raised how the project was being publicised, it was explained that the project was mainly promoted via press releases, Facebook and social media (posts being minimum fortnightly). The project also contributed to local news letters along with Denbighshire County Council's online newsletter County Voice.

Dinas Bran Event

The Partnership Officer explained that the event that was due to be held last year was cancelled due to Covid restrictions. Plans had been convened for this year for a camera obscura to be sited on Dinas Bran however, the company providing the mobile obscura had cancelled the event. The Team were now working in partnership with Andrew Gale to consider holding a scaled down version of the event using smaller camera obscuras with communities and schools. It was hoped that the larger scale event would be held next year.

Councillor Sonia Benbow-Jones asked for further information on the project that could be included in a local newsletter that she contributes to.

In summing up, the Chair said that OPL Team was a small team and were completing some fantastic work, and thanked them for all for their hard work.

**3. Llantysilio Mountain Restoration Update**

Moorland Field Officer, Graham Berry completed a power point presentation explaining some of the work that had been completed to date.

It was raised how engagement with landowners was being held, the Moorland Officer explained that he was working in partnership with the Search and Rescue Team, and that engagement was planned to be held with local landowners. Responsible recreation and how appropriate behavior could be addressed was currently being considered.

The use of disposable BBQ's was raised, and whether they should be banned within the AONB in order to gain better control, especially with the climate becoming warmer. It was explained that

responsible access was currently being considered as part of the review of the CROW ACT. It was raised that enforcement was also an issue.

A member proposed for designated areas for portable BBQ's to be sited within the AONB this would ensure that BBQ's were in the correct location and a safe place for them to be disposed of which could be controlled. It was explained that the AONB would consider this option if there were appropriate areas to do so.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of responsible behavior of some visitors, it was agreed that there was an increase of visitors to the key sites of the AONB, and consideration was being given on how to address target specific issues, litter, dog waste, dogs on leads etc. The AONB was also working in partnership with other AONBs and Nations Parks who were all experiencing similar issues. Funding had been obtained to increase the number of Ranger's at weekends and it was hoped that this would assist with some of the problems.

The Moorland Officer invited members who had an interest in moorland management to contact him and he would discuss further.

#### 4. **Wenffrwd Pocket Park**

AONB Area Manager, David Shiel completed a power point presentation explaining, that the former landfill site was one objective of the OPL project. Thirty seven car parking spaces had been created, along with wider road side verges, and trails had been created around the site. The Park opened on April 16th and was very well received. Phase one was now complete, phase two would include a trail from the health centre to the park, and this would be progressed within the next few months.

##### Linking to the canal

Surveys were currently being completed to consider linking the canal path to the World Heritage Site (WHS).

Discussion was held, and it was raised that the old railway line from Trevor to Llangollen, was also being considered. The AONB Area Manager, David Shiel said that he was delighted that the people of the Dee Valley were making use of the site. The Chair said Wenffrwd was a fantastic project and a tremendous recreation opportunity for the people of the Dee Valley and congratulated all involved.

##### **Action**

A site visit was convened for Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June meeting 11 am - 1 pm

All welcome. Current Welsh Government Covid guidelines would be adhered to.

#### 5. **Update from the AONB Officer**

##### Welsh Government - Special Landscape, Special Spaces

AONB Officer, Howard Sutcliffe said that the annual revenue funding that the AONB received from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had been reduced by 6 - 8 % however, capital funding had recently become available.

Potential projects for capital funding included: fixed point photography, Rights of Way networks, green infrastructure within the Dee Valley, landscaping of the wastewater treatment works at the World Heritage Site (WHS).

##### Local Access Forum (LAF)

Consideration was currently being given to an all North East Wales Local Access Forum.

##### Minister for Climate Change

The AONB Officer had received notification that all AONB's had moved into the Minister for Climate Change portfolio.

##### Heritage, Culture and Communities Working Group

The AONB Officer explained that the group had met twice. Excavation work had been completed at Chirk Castel via Ian Grant (Cadw).

##### The Offa's Dyke Monument – near Chirk

The monument had been damaged and consideration was being given on how to rectify the damage.

##### Tomen y Faerdre

A geophysics survey had been completed and Ian Grant would now complete a report of the results.

##### Prestatyn Rotor Radar Station

The former Royal Airforce radar site that was last in use in the 1960's was currently used by Prestatyn Rifle and Pistol target shooting club. The buildings were still intact and unique, especially given their military history. Ownership had recently changed to the shooting club and there were some concerns regarding the protection of the buildings. Cadw are investigating the site.

#### Action

##### AONB Annual Forum

The AONB Officer informed that **Heritage, Culture and Communities** would be the theme for this year's Forum. The Forum would be held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 7 pm the location would be decided nearer the date.

The Chair said the value of the working groups feeding back to the Partnership was valued and it was hoped that this would happen at the next meeting.

#### 6. **Progress of the Management Plan Review**

AONB Area Manager, David Shiel completed a PowerPoint presentation.

Discussion was held regarding the future of sheep farming and grazing due to some of the elements of Brexit and competitive farming from abroad, it was explained that the AONB was supportive of all of the farmers within the AONB and the continuation of sheep farming and grazing.

Councillor Martyn Holland thanked David and the team for all of their work on the Moel Famau car park project.

#### 7. **AONB Projects Update**

**To receive an update from:**

##### Plas Newydd

Site Manager, Paul Evans said that the team were preparing the sites and house to welcome visitors back, and would open next weekend. The Tea Rooms could now open indoors, and groups were starting to meet up again at the site.

Michael Ball and S4C and Bargain Hunt, had recently filmed at Plas, and the Welsh programme Cynefin would be filmed there shortly. Discussion was held and it was explained that no income was received for filming at the site and all of the arrangements for filming were made via Denbighshire County Council. Parking issues at the site were also discussed and it was explained that a long-term solution was being considered.

##### Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

The Sustainable Development Officer was unable to attend the meeting but provided an update on the fund which was circulated to members.

##### AONB South

##### Caer Drewyn

Senior Ranger for the South, Rhun Jones explained that Ellie and Ros had worked hard clearing gorse to allow for a greater extent of acid grassland and to encourage a greater floristic diversity.

##### Dinas Bran

Work was being completed on a Management plan for the section of land that had been obtained by the AONB. Local volunteers are monitoring reptile numbers in coordination with Ranger, Ellie. There was a healthy population of slow worms at the site.

##### Llantysilio Green

Twelve tonnes of top soil had been delivered in March and wild flower seeds had been planted, working in partnership with North Wales Wildlife Trust.

##### Offa's Dyke Path (ODP)

Eight hundred metres of ODP path was being repaired with sleepers being replaced, the work would start around mid-August and be completed by the end of the year. Additional funding was being considered for restoring some badly damaged bog areas of the path.

#### North of the AONB

Senior Ranger for the North, Rachel Jones was unable to attend today's meeting due to annual leave. It was raised that a presentation on the work / projects of the north of the AONB would be welcomed.

#### **Action**

The north AONB team to be asked to complete a presentation at the next meeting.

### **8. Any Other Business**

#### Regional Senedd Member for North Wales

The Chair asked for a message of congratulations to be sent to Councillor Carolyn Thomas on her recently appointment as Regional Senedd Member for North Wales.

#### **Action**

The AONB Officer would contact Cllr Thomas.

#### Bridge at Cefn Bychan woods

The Chair raised concerns regarding a bridge over the Alyn in Cefn Bychan woods Pantymwyn that was in need of urgent repair

#### **Action**

Cllr Owen Thomas to raise with Flintshire County Council

### **9. Future Meeting Dates**

AONB Joint Committee Meeting	Friday 25th June 2021	10:00	Venue to be decided
AONB Annual Forum	Thursday 23rd September 2021	19:00	Venue to be decided
AONB Partnership Meeting	Friday 15th October 2021	10:00	Venue to be decided
AONB Joint Committee Meeting	Friday 5th November 2021	10:00	Venue to be decided