

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AND DEE VALLEY AREA  
OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON  
FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 2021**

**MEMBERS PESENT**

Councillors Tony Thomas (Chair) (Denbighshire County Council)  
Councillor Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council)  
Councillors Hugh Jones and David Kelly (Wrexham County Borough Council).

**ALSO PRESENT**

Steve Gadd (Head of Finance and Property DCC), Howard Sutcliffe (AONB Officer DCC), David Shiel (Assistant AONB Officer DCC), Karen Weaver (AONB Co-ordinator DCC), Paula O'Hanlan (Senior Finance Officer DCC), Huw Rees (Countryside & Heritage Services Manager DCC), Ceri Lloyd (AONB SDF Officer), Councillor Glyn Banks, Lisa Jones and Sandra Williams (Translator, WCBC).

**1 INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Derek Butler (FCC), Linda Sharp, Head of Planning Policy (WCBC), Rachel Jones (AONB Team Leader North) and Helen Mrowiec.

There were no declarations of interest.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair congratulated Councillor Carolyn Thomas on her appointment as regional Senedd Member for North Wales. Councillor Thomas thanked the Committee and advised that she would continue to be in regular attendance at the Committee as an observer. She advised that she would continue in her new role to be supportive of the great work the AONB was carrying out.

**2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

***RESOLVED – That Councillor Tony Thomas (DCC) be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.***

**3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

***RESOLVED – That Councillor Hugh Jones (WCBC) be appointed Vice Chair of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.***

4 **MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19/03/21**

The minutes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held on 19 March 2021 were submitted and they were agreed as accurate.

***RESOLVED - That the minutes of Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee held on 19 March 2021 be approved.***

5 **DRAFT MINUTES OF AONB PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 21/05/21**

The draft notes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership held on 21 May 2021 were provided for information.

***RESOLVED - That the notes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership meeting held on 21 May 2021 be noted.***

6 **JOINT COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT (STANDING ITEM) ANNUAL RETURN**

The Head of Finance and Property, Steve Gadd and Paula O'Hanlon - Senior Finance and Assurance Officer introduced their joint report (previously circulated).

The report provided a summary of the AONB's financial position as at 31 March 2021 and sought approval of the budget for 2021/22.

The relevant officers presented their report and responded to questions accordingly thereafter. During the ensuing debate the following issues were noted, in particular:

- An overall underspend had been achieved and was welcomed.
- WG had awarded a number of grants towards the end of the financial year; the majority of this funding had been for specific projects though.
- The budget assumed a minimal contribution from the reserve.
- The budget would place greater focus on response to climate change issues.
- There was a system in place to ensure that funding could be claimed from WG Covid-19 fund.

***RESOLVED –***

- (i) That financial outturn for 2020/21 (Appendix 1) and the Reserve Balances as at 31st March 2021 (Appendix 4) be noted; and***
- (ii) The 2021/22 draft budget (appendix 2) and the Annual Return for 2020/21 (Appendix 3) be approved.***

## 7 **DARK SKIES SUPPLEMENTRY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

David Shiel, Assistant AONB Officer DCC presented his report which provided draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for lighting in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which, if adopted, would be used in the determination of planning applications.

In presenting his report he referred to the AONB Management Plan which defines the Special Qualities which make the area a nationally protected landscape. One of the special qualities noted in this plan was tranquillity – which was defined as ‘an atmosphere of calm and stillness; peace and quiet; and with dark night skies’. It was noted that the SPG would help conserve this special quality by providing further guidance for developers and local planning authorities on lighting.

The Assistant AONB Officer advised that the AONB Joint Committee and Partnership was seeking formal recognition of the area as a Dark Sky Community by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and the SPG was an essential pre-requisite to such a designation.

The relevant officer responded to questions accordingly and in particular he acknowledged concern from one member that the project was encouraging policing related to lighting. He confirmed that this was not the case and that the project would be used to support planning guidance and encourage greater consideration around the effects of planning developments.

***RESOLVED - That the Joint Committee supports the draft SPG ‘Planning for Dark Night Skies - Supplementary Planning Guidance for lighting in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB’ for public consultation.***

## 8 **AONB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND ANNUAL REPORT**

Ceri Lloyd (AONB SDF Officer) presented a report which covered the financial period of April 2020 to March 2021. During the year the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) supported 18 projects, 5 Countryside Grant Schemes and 1 Community Transport Schemes. She gave a presentation to the Committee which further supported her report.

In response to a question Ceri gave an update on guided walking events which were taking place.

***RESOLVED – That the report be noted.***

## 9 **ANNUAL PLANNING REPORT**

Howard Sutcliffe, AONB Officer DCC presented a report which highlighted the important role of the Joint Committee and Partnership in advising on development proposals and policies affecting the AONB.

He responded to questions accordingly and during the ensuing debate the following issues were highlighted in particular.

- Confirmation that a proper process was in place through NRW where applications were made to the Welsh Minister.
- The number of planning applications had increased.
- Concern from one member at the increase in the number of shepherd huts that were appearing. Officers advised that the Planning Department within the relevant LA should be contacted directly with any specific concerns.

***RESOLVED – That the update be noted.***

## **10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Howard Sutcliffe, AONB Officer DCC presented the work programme.

***RESOLVED - That the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee notes the forward work programme.***

## **11 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Friday 5th November	2021
Friday 18th March	2022
Friday 24th June	2022
Friday 4th November	2022

Councillor Tony Thomas  
Chair