



Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley

Natal a Bwrdeisth Naturiol Eiddiedig
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Meeting of the AONB Partnership
Friday 20th October 2023
at 10:00
Coleg Cambria, Llysfasi

In Attendance

AONB Partnership Members

Chair of the Partnership
Andrew Worthington MBE

Chair of the Joint Committee
Councillor Dave Hughes FCC
Councillor Emrys Wynne DCC
Councillor Martyn Hogg DCC

Representing Landscape Interest
Michael Skuse

Representing Urban Interest
Ian Papworth

Representing Land Management
Huw Morgan, Sandy Archdale,
Rhian Pierce, Sian & Rhys Hughes

Representing Heritage & Rural Interest
Christine Evans, Fiona Gale,
Fiona Grant (Cadw)

Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB

Howard Sutcliffe AONB Officer
David Shiel AONB Area Manager
Karen Weaver AONB Coordinator
Graham Berry Moorland Officer
Ros Stockdale Development Officer
Huw Morgan Natural Resources
& Farming Officer
Mari Roberts AONB Engagement Officer

Representing Denbighshire County Council
Huw Rees Countryside & Heritage Services
Manager

Representing Flintshire County Council (FCC)
Tom Woodall Access & Natural Environment
Manager

Representing Natural Resources Wales
Richard Dearing Partnership Officer
Ash Pearce Designated Landscapes
Programme Team Leader

Representing Wrexham County Borough Council
Mike Bather

Representing Dŵr Cymru
Simon Cowan, Emily Payne

Apologies for absence were submitted from:

Councillor David Healy, Cllr Win Mullen James, Cllr Nigel Williams, Ashely Batten, Carole Rothwell, Les Starling,
Kate Thomson, Rajan Madhok, Helen Job, John Roberts,
David Davies



Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley

Natal a Bwrdeisth Naturiol Eiddiedig
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cyngor
sir ddenbych
denbighshire
County Council



CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

wrexham
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
wrecsam

1. **Welcome & Apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Rhys and Sian Hughes, Simon Cowan, and Emily Payne to the meeting.

2. **Pentre Dŵr Community Project - A Day in the Life of a Farmer**

The footage of the Pentre Dŵr Community Project was played to meeting members.

The footage demonstrated all of the hard work that went into the production of mountain grain fleece.

The Chair introduced Rhys and Sian Hughes and explained that the couple had been farming on Pentre Dŵr, (east of Llangollen) for many years, and that Sian was the Project Coordinator for the Community Project. Sian went on to explain that due to a very poor return on mountain grain fleece the hefted flock sheep were disappearing from our hillsides and in order to raise awareness of the issue a partnership project had been created with the AONB and Gwangollen.

Discussion was held and it was acknowledged that the footage was excellent and captured the farming community within the valley, and raised awareness that common land and hefted flocks were a very important aspect of the landscape. The AONB was commended for recognising the significance of the situation. It was hoped that the footage could be shown at the Gallery, Loggerheads.

Action

- AONB Development Officer, Ros Stockdale to update the Partnership on the progress of the project.
- The footage to be shown at the Gallery, Loggerheads.
- A member of Llyfasi Team to be considered for membership of the partnership as part of the review process.

3. **Notes of the Previous Meeting and matters arising**

Matters Arising

National Park for Northeast Wales

The AONB Officer, Howard Sutcliffe along with Huw Morgan had recently met with Mr & Mrs Archdale at Penbedw Estate.

Levelling up Fund

Clwyd West – Funding had been successful for the upgrade of Café Florence and the visitor area at Loggerheads Country Park, along with a permanent visitor facility at Penbarras, Moel Famau. All projects were to be completed by 2025.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Notes of Our Picturesque Landscape Project (OPL)

Project Officer, Hannah Marubbi, provided an update on the project explaining that the Team had been extremely busy prepping for the Dory Gallery exhibition, and that the exhibition had been very successful with 890 people engaging and good feedback received. A book explaining the journey of the project was being drafted and would be launched at the end of November. An extension for the project had been granted by HLF.

4. **Ten Year Review of the Terms of Reference**

Howard said that the Terms of Reference for the Partnership were being reviewed/updated (they had not been reviewed for 10 years).

Two publications would be produced, one would be in a more friendly/plain English format.

Action

- That the Chair of the Partnership to be appointed for a two-year period.
- Minutes to be added to the website – further discussion to be held on this.

5. **Update on the Review of Working Groups**

AONB Development Officer, Ros Stockdale said that six groups had now been identified:

- 1 Landscape Character and Quality,
 - This group would meet when necessary

	Built Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AONB Planning Officer, Dave Williams was the lead officer for this group.
2	Habitats and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Shiel was the lead officer for this group. • This group would be made up of the AONB Team and key external officers.
3	Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howard was the lead officer for this group. • This group would remain the same
4	Access and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah Arndt was the lead officer for this group. • This group would remain the same •
5	Sustainable Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceri Lloyd was the lead officer for this group.
6	Sustainable Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceri Lloyd was the lead officer for this group. • This group would include communities and culture and would help to steer the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) grants. • It was being considered whether more funding could be given to SDF for Welsh language and communities and culture.

A health specific group, a farming group, as well as engagement with high schools and young people were also being considered.

Monitoring of the groups and organised workloads for the Team should ensure for the groups to be a good mechanism for the Partnership going forward.

Action

Terms of Reference for all of the groups to be completed.

6. Presentation from Dŵr Cymru

Quality Liaison Manager, Emily Payne provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting:

- The sites managed by Dŵr Cymru
- Wastewater treatment processors and the regulators involved in the process.
- Sewer overflows and how they operated.
- Sewage Network and Storm Overflows - and how they were being assessed.
- Phosphorous reduction timeline, and removal timeline, key challenges

6a Henllan and Tremeirchion Treatment Works Project

Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) Manager, Simon Cowan explained the four objectives of SMNR: Safeguarded Natural Resources, Resilient Ecosystems, A Healthy Environment for People, a Regenerative Economy.

He went on to explain about a project that had been completed in partnership with Natural Resources Wales, land owner and the AONB Team at Tremeirchion Treatment works, **where** a wetland area had been created. He also informed members of a similar project at Henllan Treatment Works.

Planning

Discussion was held. A member enquired about the process /priority regarding phosphates and planning applications. It was explained that final decisions came from the Planning Departments and SAC Teams. Another member raised concerns regarding a disconnect/ lack of communication between the complaints department and the planning department.

Cllr Martyn Hogg raised concerns regarding the amount of red warning sewage overflows at Rhyl, and that Rhyl Treatment Works did not seem cope well in heavy rainfall. He enquired how the situation could be improved,

and whether the Blue Flag status for beaches could be reintroduced. Discussion was held, and Emily explained that a 'priority area list' was currently being created to try address problem areas. Roger Cragg said that there seemed to be telemetry issues with the monitoring of data, and that the maintenance and monitoring of sites required improvement.

Blue Flag Status – It was explained that in order to achieve the status Local Authorities were required to comply with a specific set of criteria e.g. installing more toilets, no dogs on beaches etc and because this was not completed by the Local Authorities the scheme was abandoned.

Fiona Gale asked for the archaeological environment to be considered when looking at sites.

7. General Update from AONB Officer

AONB Officer, Howard Sutcliffe provided an update on some of the news of the AONB:

Chair of
the Friends of the Clwydian Range & Dee
Valley

- Martyn Holland had been appointed

New branding of the National Association of
AONB's
(NAAONB)

- It has been proposed for AONB's to be rebranded / renamed 'National Landscapes'
- The AONB's draft logo is a ram's head.

Purchase of land at Caer Drewyn

- The land has been purchased as part of dcc DCC's Climate Change & Ecological Emergency Fund.

Access work

- New stepping stones have been added at Plymog.

Mold and Ruthin Markets

- Protected Landscapes Projects were being considered.

8. National Park for Northeast Wales Status

Designated Landscapes Programme Team Leader, Ash Pearce, provided a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the process for the designation, and the aims of the assessment, forces for change assessment, and the communication and engagement period. He summarised how the project was progressing and explained the data that had been collated to date, and the key programme risks.

He encouraged as many people as possible to attend the engagement events that were currently being held, as feedback from these events would be the only data that could be used within the process.

Questions and Answers Session

Ash responded in a questions and answers session.

- ✚ **Q. *Would the areas of the Brenig and the Alwen (wind turbines were present within these areas) be considered for the search area, in order to provide extra recreational areas?***
 - A. No areas had been excluded due to renewable energies being present, and early initial assessments were mainly completed via Land Map. Also following the legislation, the area was required to be a continuous tract of land. He added that any areas that people felt were worthy of being included in the search, must be included in the feedback form. Then they could be considered, reiterating that the land would have to be framed around the core criteria of natural beauty and recreation.
- ✚ **Q. *Would there be any further engagement events held in the North area?***
 - A. No further engagement events were planned, but the questionnaire would be available online to complete.
- ✚ **Q. *Had any groups been identified that were opposed to the National Park?***
 - A. Yes, the farming community, the designation would be another level of change for them. The 'forces for change' would examine any Implications, and NRW's proposals would look for the best solution.
- ✚ **Q. Had extending the existing AONB been considered?**

A. Yes, in order to do that the AONB would be 'de-designated'. The extended area would have to meet the criteria for both natural beauty and recreation to achieve National Park status. The AONB would remain in place if the criteria were not met. Either way the boundary would change.

✚ **Q. Who would fund the National Park if designated?**

A. An indication had been given that the NP would be funded via 'new money'.
A clearer commitment was awaited but it would be funded mainly via Welsh Government.

✚ **Q. If the criteria for a National Park was met but a lot of people were opposed to it would NRW be obliged to designate?**

A. NRW's recommendation would be balanced one, working through the framework, a professional considered judgement would be made. If there was a clear overarching objection, it would be considered, but it would not be the only deciding factor.

✚ **Q. Is there any engagement with younger generations and under privileged sector?**

A. To date no groups have been targeted, additional efforts would be made to contact underrepresented groups, including people who lived outside of the area. Further work would be undertaken on this.

✚ **Q. Feedback of the survey and break down of groups - The majority of people opposed to a National Park designation were farmers and land owners. The group that required engagement was the farming community. The majority of land within DCC was farmland.**

A. This would be indicated from the data received. NRW would work with the farming communities to consider any issues and look forward. Farmers and all people who live in the area would be impacted.

✚ **Q. How would house prices be affected by the designation?**

A. An option would be to examine Snowdonia NP and to consider the affordable housing scheme that they have, when considering the impacts. All of the issues would mirror that of Snowdonia NP. House prices were a concern to everyone.

9. **Any Other Business**

No other business was raised.

10. **Summing up of the Meeting from the Chair**

The Chair thanked Rhys and Sian for their thought-provoking presentation and congratulated the OPL Team on the extension of the project. Regarding the Working Groups, there would now be six groups. He thanked Simon and Emily from Dwr Cymru for their most interesting presentations.

He thanked Ash Pearce for his presentation and for his balanced approach to the project. He added that in the main the Partnership was on the positive side of the designation. However, the concerns of the farming communities must be considered as it was their livelihoods. They must be reassured that there was something within the process for them, and a balance must be met. He added that the designation process was a thorough one that had been promoted by Welsh Government, and WG would not have proposed the designation without having the funding in place and forward thinking for the future of the area. He explained that currently there were concerns regarding the financial situation of DCC, and reminded meeting members that in 1945 the country was bankrupt, but both a National Health Service and a National Park were created. Ultimately, NRW would make its decision and advise Welsh Government accordingly.

11. **The Chair requested that the next proposed date of the AONB Partnership meeting be moved from Friday 15th March 2024 to Friday 26th January 10:00 - to be agreed.**

AONB Champions & Community
& Local Members Forum

Wednesday 8th November

Community Hwb, Coleg Cambria,
Llysfasi

AONB Joint Committee Meeting

Friday 17th November 2023

FCC to host

AONB Partnership Meeting

Friday 15th March 2024
Moved to 26/01/2024

To be arranged

DRAFT