



**Bryniau Clwyd a  
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**  
Clwydian Range  
and Dee Valley

Ardal o Harddwch Natïrïol Eithriadol  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Meeting of the AONB Partnership**  
**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024**  
**at 10:00**  
**Hybrid Meeting held at Caledfyn Denbigh**

**In Attendance**

**AONB Partnership Members**

Andrew Worthington OBE (Chair)  
Councillor Bobby Feeley DCC (online)  
Councillor Martyn Hogg DCC  
Councillor Dave Healey FCC (online)  
Councillor Dan Rose FCC (online)  
Ian Papworth, Del Roberts-Jones (online)  
urban interest  
Roger Cragg - Rural Interest  
Sandy Archdale Land Management Interest  
Michael Skuse Landscape interest  
Fiona Gale – Heritage and Rural Interest  
John Roberts Access & recreation Interest  
Les Starling Natural Environment Interest  
Rajan Madhok Health & Wellbeing Interest  
(online)  
Helen Job, (online) David Davies (online)  
Individual Interest

**AONB Joint Committee Member Observers**

Councillor Dave Hughes (Chair) FCC  
(online)  
Councillor Emrys Wynne DCC (online)

**Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Team**

Howard Sutcliffe AONB Officer  
David Shiel AONB Area Manager  
Huw Morgan N R & Farming Officer  
Rachel Jones Senior Ranger  
Ceri Lloyd AONB SDF Officer  
Karen Weaver AONB Coordinator  
Ros Stockdale Development Officer

**Denbighshire County Council**

Huw Rees Countryside & Heritage  
Services Manager

**Flintshire County Council**

Tom Woodall Access & Natural  
Environment Manager

**Wrexham County Borough Council**

Mike Bather World Heritage Site  
(online)

**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

Anna Jones (online)

**Landscapes Wales**

Ruth Lovell (online)

**Natural Resources Wales**

Ash Pearce Designated  
Landscapes  
Programme  
Carole Rothwell (online)  
Richard Dearing (online)

**CADW**

Fiona Grant, Guy Salkeld (online)

**Meeting Observer**

Clive Jones



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Cyngor  
**sir ddinbych  
denbighshire**  
County Council

CYNGOR  
**Sir y Fflint  
Flintshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

**wrexham**  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
**wrecsam**

**Apologies for absence were submitted from:**

Cllr Win Mullen James Cllr Alan James, Cllr Paul Cunningham, Ashley Batten, Christine Evans, Rhun Jones, Rhian Pierce, Hannah Marubbi

**1. Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting and firstly welcomed Cllr Bobby Feeley back onto the Partnership, explaining that Cllr Feeley had replaced Cllr Jon Harland. He also welcomed Ruth Lovell, Anna Jones, Ash Pearce, and meeting observer Clive Jones. It was agreed for 'get well' wishes be sent on behalf of the Partnership to both Cllr Paul Cunningham and Dr Christine Evans who were currently in hospital.

**2. Notes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

Page 2 Item 2 'a member of Llyfasi Team to be considered for membership of the partnership', Howard said that this was not an 'action' but a proposal that would be considered as part of the review process.

**Action**

AONB Engagement Officer, Mari Jones, to investigate options.

Page 3 item 5 - Update on the Review of Working Groups – A health specific group and farming working group, to be considered. Howard responded that the working groups were still being considered and that a number of landowners/farmers had been identified. Ongoing.

Page 5 National Park for Northeast Wales Status

Mike Skuse referred to the Questions and answers session – 'Would the areas of the Brenig and Alwen (wind turbines were present) be considered for the search area', and enquired if the response was accurate, Ash Pearce responded that that no areas had been excluded due to renewables. some suggestions had been received via the engagement period and those areas would be considered.

He also referred to Question 4 'Had an extension to the AONB been considered'.

Ash said that all areas would be reconsidered and, in all probability the area of the existing AONB would stay roughly the same with some boundary movement.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

**2b Notes of Our Picturesque Landscape Project (OPL)**

David Shiel provided an update on the project:

A final exhibition was held at the Dory Gallery, and the main content of the exhibition would be displayed a Llangollen Museum. The work on the extension from Wenffrwd to the canal was complete, and it was now possible to walk easily into the town.

OPL Legacy book – 'The Making of the Dee Valley'. The book was launched in November and was on sale at Loggerheads and Plas Newydd and was £12.

An extension to the project had been agreed for 12 months. The project was now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year.

The Chair congratulated all the Team for their outstanding work.

**3. Update on Working with Wool Project**

AONB Development Officer Ros Stockdale presented an update to the project, including the objectives of the scheme, the work carried out by Gwlangollen and the AONB, and how the project helped to reduce our carbon footprint, fleece mulch at Corwen Community Garden, woven fleece mats (Flintshare), Wool Insulation Wales.

A member raised concerns regarding the importation of wool and said that Welsh wool should be used wherever possible. The Chair commented on the remarkable the amount of progress that had been made with the project.

#### 4. **Presentation Landscape Wales**

Ruth Lovell explained that Landscape Wales was a partnership of the five AONB's (National Landscapes) and the three National Park Authorities in Wales, which were working together to address key shared challenges, including action on climate change and the state of nature. It was convened following the Marsden Report. Howard had a seat on the Board, and other members of our AONB staff were also involved.

Information on the following slides was presented: playing a part in the nature and climate emergencies, collaborating across landscapes and across work areas, Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital investment programme.

#### 5. **Presentation on Inclusion, Diversity and Governance**

Anna Jones provided some background information and explained the Strategic Objectives for the role: To develop, implement and lead an action plan across the three National Park Authorities and other designated landscapes as appropriate to make a significant improvement in relation to:

- ✚ Identifying and progressing training measures to support and develop members.
- ✚ Undertaking work to promote diversity among staff and members of NPAs.
- ✚ Increase diversity internally.
- ✚ Identifying and progressing measures to increase the diversity of visitors to Designated Landscapes
- ✚ Supporting Designated Landscapes to respond to key Welsh Government initiatives including the socio-economic duty and Welsh language standards, as well increasing their contribution towards tackling child and rural poverty (WG initiatives focus).

Connecting younger people with the countryside was discussed, Fiona Gale proposed that Heritage could be a good route into the countryside for younger people, and Fiona Grant added that young archaeology groups aided perhaps by Cadw should be involved with the project at a strategic level, Howard added that the AONB had two Young Ranger groups and that the European Young Ranger Conference would be hosted by our AONB later this year.

Ruth explained that background work was being progressed with funding via the Heritage Lottery Fund being explored. Also, a social media and communication strategy was being developed. It was suggested for a pop-up gazebo to provide information to young people about the AONB to be considered.

#### Action

- ✚ It was proposed for a Young Ranger and Young Archaeologist be invited to attend a future Partnership meeting.
- ✚ A link with university and college students to be considered.

A member enquired how the work of Landscapes Wales would link to the AONB Management Plan, in response Howard explained that Landscapes Wales would influence large national and regional schemes, and the AONB Management Plan focused on local schemes.

Mrs Archdale enquired why farming and livestock were not more heavily featured in presentations of this nature. Ruth explained that a lot of expertise and knowledge had been gained from the farming community, and she apologised if that information had not come across clearly.

Rajan Madhok enquired what work was being completed to engage with Ethnic Minorities, Howard responded that outreach was very important. However, currently staff capacity was an issue.

In summing up the Chair said that at a national level and with some work that the group had heard about today, all should assist in addressing some of the problems going forward.

## 6. **National Park for Northeast Wales Project**

Project Manager, Ash Pearce thanked the Partnership for inviting him to attend the meeting. He went on to explain that a good response had been received during the engagement period which was held to help to identify any issues and concerns with the project. A thousand responses had been received, along with emails and enquiries. Meetings had been held with Local Authorities, Welsh Government, and stakeholders. A comprehensive list of queries was now being compiled, and an Engagement Report would be produced in due course.

Discussion ensued. In response to a question from Mrs Archdale regarding the budget for the project, Ash confirmed that the budget for the project was £700,000 per year over three years, noting that the budget was also for other national work on other aspects of Natural Beauty. However, last year the project was significantly under budget with only a third being used. In response Mrs Archdale said that in her view the area could not cope with the footfall, and she did not agree with the use of public money for this intended designation. General concerns were raised regarding any preconceptions of the NE National Park, until all of the evidence had been gathered and produced (the process should capture all the 'Forces for Change'). Ash reiterated that, NRW was impartial in the designation process.

It was raised whether onsite visits would be made to additionally proposed areas, Ash confirmed that all areas would be evaluated and visited, adding that up to now only an engagement exercise had been held, and not a consultation. The formal consultation period would now follow.

In reference to Hiraethog /Denbigh Moors, it was confirmed that the area had been considered and a response would be made in the near future.

A member noted that the impact of visitor numbers could be managed more effectively with the extra funding that would come with a National Park, and it could also assist with the resilience of communities.

In summing up the Chair said that all views raised at the meeting were noted and appreciated and reiterated that the benefits for the farming community must be considered. Referring to the budget for the project, he said that it was a small amount when set against the benefits of recreation and health and wellbeing would bring to the area. He added that National Parks were a huge national asset, there was no higher designation worldwide and the AONB could be part of that.

## 7. **Levelling Up Fund – Moel Famau & Loggerheads Country Park**

AONB Area Manager David Shiel provided a PowerPoint presentation on two Levelling Up Projects.

### **Loggerheads Country Park**

To be delivered by March 2025, to meet the pressure of increased visitor numbers.

The Project was in its early stages of design and concept:

Upgrade of Visitor Centre - cafe and outdoor space for catering. The buildings were built in 1985.

Flood alleviation - the park had flooded several times. Recently Waterco had been appointed to advise.

Extend Cycle Paths - a permissive cycle route was already there, the proposal was to upgrade the route, and make it more attractive. The route was all within DCC Common land.

### 🚧 **Moel Famau**

The visitor numbers had significantly increased at Moel Famau. The Shepherds Hut was currently present at Bwlch Pen Barass car park intermittently, but mainly at weekends. However, it was challenging to run, with no electricity. Consideration was being given to establishing a visitor hub, new toilet facilities, along with a facility to sell refreshments and also run campaigns.

There was no water or electricity at Pen Barras, and planning permission would be required. A consultation period would be held. Any hub would be designed to fit sensitively into the landscape and to enhance the visitor experience.

## 8. **General Update from AONB Officer**

### 🚧 **National Landscapes Branding**

Howard Sutcliffe introduced a presentation on the National Landscapes (The new name for AONBs) explaining that most of the AONB's in the UK had recently changed their names to '**National Landscapes**' from the rebrand launch in September 2023. He added that the acronym of AONB was not easy to use, and was regularly misspelt, and it had been agreed that National Landscapes would be far easier to remember and promote. All the funding for the brand change was via National Landscapes Association.

It was agreed that rebranding could be confusing alongside the National Park being considered. However, if the AONB did not change its name it could be the only AONB not to do so. A Task and Finish group was proposed to consider the item further. The Chair asked members if they would like to be included on the group.

#### Action

- 🚧 The AONB would consider transition to the new branding over the next few months.
- 🚧 A Task and Finish group to be convened to consider the change further and the item would be reported on at the next meeting.
- 🚧 Howard would take the proposal to the next Joint Committee Meeting

## 9. **Any Other Business**

### 🚧 Reservoirs at Cilcain

Sandy Archdale raised concerns that the reservoirs at Cilcain had been recently drained, and visitors could no longer fish there, in response Howard explained that the decision has been made by Dŵr Cymru.

- 🚧 DCC had recently purchased land close to Moel y Plas
- 🚧 Sam Kenyon had been appointed as the new AONB Curlew Officer.

## 10. **Future Meeting Dates**

**Friday 7th June 2024 10:00**

**Friday 18th October 2024 10:00**