

**NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**  
**COUNCIL OF PARTNERS**

**MINUTES of a meeting held at**  
**The Coronation Hall, Inkpen Road, Kintbury RG17 9TX**  
**on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018**

**Present**

Mr E Hiscocks  
Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe  
Cllr Anna McNair Scott  
Cllr Rhydian Vaughan  
Cllr Mike Badcock  
Cllr Peter Giddings  
Cllr Charles Mathew  
Mr Andrew Smith

**Representing**

Chairman  
Wiltshire Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Test Valley Borough Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Natural England

**Community & Parish Interest Group Members**

Mr Nigel Titchen  
Dr J Sharp

**Farming & Rural Business Interest Group Members**

Mr Peter Lemon  
Mr Chris Musgrove  
Mr E Humber

**Recreation & Tourism Interest Group Members**

Mr Richard Clarke

**North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust**

Mr D Sherlock

**North Wessex Downs Management Working Group**

Mr Robin Edwards

**In attendance**

Mr C Slack	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Mr G King	Hampshire County Council
Mr P Hendry	West Berkshire Council
Mr R Broadhead	Wiltshire Council
Mr J Wilshaw	Swindon Borough Council
Mr N Mottram	Oxfordshire County Council
Mr H Oliver	Director, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mr I Hepburn	Management Plan Review Manager North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs S Clarke	Partnership Coordinator North Wessex Downs AONB (job share)
Ms C McCorquodale	Partnership Coordinator North Wessex Downs AONB (job share)

**Also present**

Ms Susie Brew	Advisory Member, Historic Environment
Mr Donald Heath	Advisory Member, Community & Parish

Mr. B Castle                      Advisory Member (retired)  
Ms S Cardinal                    Hampshire County Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Mr D Bibby	Test Valley Borough Council
Mr D Lamb	South & Vale District Council
Ms P Brookman	Advisory Member
Mr M Crane	Advisory Member
Cllr G Sumner	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr C Martyn,	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr P Miller	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

**1. Members' Interests – none declared**

**2. Constitutional Item (paper 1)**

It was agreed that Susie Brew, Sharon Egan and Donald Heath serve as Advisory Members on the Council of Partners.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (paper 2)**

It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**4. Matters Arising from Minutes**

JS confirmed that the NWD logo will be on the refurbished RAF buildings at Harwell

**5. Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paper 3)**

The members noted the terms of reference for the Designated Landscapes Review commissioned by the Government. The review led by Julian Glover was expected to make a more formal call for views in September. It will also be discussed at the NAAONB Lead Officers' meeting at the end of September. There will be briefing sessions during the Landscapes for Life Conference in July 2018. It was agreed that NWD Management Working Group which meets on 18<sup>th</sup> September will feed in views on behalf of the Council of Partners.

**6. Chairman's remarks**

EH welcomed Cllr Badcock, Vale of White Horse DC and Cllr Vaughan, Hampshire CC. He noted that Swindon BC would now be represented by Cllr Sumner and Cllr Martyn (deputy). He also welcomed Susie Brew and Donald Heath as the new advisory members.

In response to the level of staff vacancies, five consultants with specialist expertise have been appointed on such projects as Wayfaring and Farmer Clusters. In addition EH thanked the four volunteer groups for their time and effort.

EH and HO have continued with the tour of partner local authorities. Since the last meeting there have been meetings with the leaders of Wiltshire Council, Basingstoke & Deane BC and Vale of White Horse DC.

EH, HO, GK, FdRP, RB will be attend the annual AONB Conference in July where there will be opportunities to discuss Brexit, the 25 year environment plan. EH reminded members of the date of the Annual Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> October with the working title "Farming Tomorrow"

The next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November is in Frilsham. Should anyone have a future venue in mind please get in touch with Susan Clarke

## 7. **Partnership Round Table**

PL explained that the value of farmer clusters; that a group was forming in the Burbage/Hungerford area that would cover 10,000 acres. He drew attention to the way farmers worked together on the Marlborough Downs. Over 2,000 people had attended the Open Farm Sunday in Rockley, a wonderful opportunity for people to see the farmed environment.

RNC, speaking as Chair of Action for the River Kennet (ARK), informed the meeting that a new project officer had been appointed who was focussing on the river from Hungerford towards Reading.

RB confirmed that the process for appointments to the three vacancies was under way. Interviews for the Communications Officer post will be held on 1st August.

FdRP indicated that after the meeting with Baroness Scott it is intended that there will be greater liaison and training sessions for members, allowing input from the NWD, Cotswolds and Cranborne Chase AONBs at an earlier stage. FdRP informed the meeting that she is now Chair of the Wiltshire Council Strategic Planning Committee.

CS - The consultation on Basingstoke & Deane BC Green Infrastructure Strategy is now closed and will be considered by Cabinet for adoption. The Landscape and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is being updated and will be submitted to committee.

AS explained that Natural England's environmental support has to be delivered at a strategic level as resources diminish.

NM said Oxfordshire Councils are preparing a Joint Strategic Spatial Plan addressing housing and environmental issues. Didcot will be a focus for house building.

EH (NFU) much work was being done on farming after Brexit. He drew attention to the Poole Harbour catchment Initiative. A farmer-led group that had been successful in reducing the amount of nitrates entering the water.

BC – drew attention to the opportunities linked to the Great West Way and the opening of Wolf Hall.

MB – noted the development pressure in the Vale of White Horse and defended the need to build more housing.

CM – With such pressures as the OxCam Expressway and other large infrastructure projects it was vital to continue to defend the protected landscape.

JS - informed the meeting that the Examination-in-Public of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Pt 2 for the period to 2031 is under way.

JW – at Cllr Sumner’s request JW queried the position on a planning application for 30 homes at Chiseldon; the AONB Team has responded.

RE – As SE Regional Director of the CLA he had attended a Water Summit hosted by CISL (Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership) at Moreton-in-Marsh on 29th May 2018, to promote the Catchment-Based Approach and call upon businesses to sign a declaration that aims to bring sectors and organisations together to enable more effective management of UK water catchments seeking to achieve high quality water. CLA, NFU, M&S, Nestle, Coca-Cola as well as a number of water companies including Anglian Water, Thames Water and Yorkshire Water attended.

In May 2018 the CLA published a paper on a new mechanism for how a post-Brexit public goods scheme of environmental payments should work for farming and rural businesses as well as delivering for the environment and society. This could be delivered through the CLA’s proposed Land Management Contract – Design & Deliver. Go to <https://www.cla.org.uk/Land-Management-Contract#>

NT expressed his concern and that of Shalbourne PC about the consultation on proposed closure of the Oxenwood Centre. The provision of education centres such as these was not a statutory duty and FdRP confirmed that the consultation period would run until the end of the year.

The British Society of Soil Science is hosting the world conference in 2022. NT felt this was an opportunity to showcase the environmental assets of the region and to draw up soil maps. He will be approaching the AONB Unit to explore options for working together.

PH reported that the contract with BBOWT for running the authority’s countryside services had proved successful and a volunteer coordinator for the rights of way volunteers is being recruited on an unpaid basis.

CM – retired from Temple Farms on 30<sup>th</sup> June. He felt strongly that working together in whatever form was the way to achieve success. The Marlborough Downs NIA covers 25,000 hectares and 42 farms working together. He supported the approach set out in the Government’s Command Paper *Health and Harmony: the Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit*.

**8. Financial Position at End of year 2017 – 2018 (paper 4)**

Members approved the report.

**9. Budget Update 2018 – 2019. (paper 5)**

Members noted the spend to 31st May 2018.

**10. Corporate Strategy (paper 6)**

The Council of Partners approved the Corporate Strategy. A copy will be available on the website.

**11. Management Plan Review - (paper 7)**

IH presented work to date on the Management Plan; he stressed that it was very much a working document and reminded the members that the Council of Partners had delegated the work to the Management Plan Review Group chaired by Cllr Miller and overseen by the Management Working Group. He presented the timetable for preparation to adoption. IH was seeking advice from the Council of Partners on ways to reach out to the various interest groups and constituent local authorities to achieve a successful consultation. Members offered advice including using the

Pewsey Tourism Partnership, the Area Boards across Wiltshire and Local Access Forums , local authority websites such as Marlborough Town Council's, reaching out through the farmer clusters as they develop, social media and using tools such as Survey Monkey with the cautionary note that the questions need to be carefully constructed.

The Council of Partners noted the progress on the draft Plan, agreed the timetable and noted that the Management Plan Review Group was meeting on 11th July where they would finalise an action plan for the consultation.

**12. Resources Group (Oral Report)**

JS reported that they had selected a consultant to work with the Group to develop income streams, particularly through sponsorship opportunities which include space at the NWD Annual Forum, the *Discover* leaflet, Annual Review and E Bulletin.

The Oxford Student Consultancy had undertaken a piece of work to assess how developed the ability of other AONBs is to generate additional funding. The findings were that it is early days for this approach in other AONBs. A youthful approach is needed to maximise the use of social media.

**13. Director's Report. (paper 8)**

The Director's report was noted. HO drew attention to the following projects

Defra – HO confirmed that the Council of Partners had responded to the Government's Command paper - *Health and Harmony The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment in a Green Brexit*. RC informed the meeting that the NAAONB had met with Defra at end of June and submitted a proposal for tests and trials for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme. The document detailed the collective offer from the AONB family towards the development of this. The submission will be circulated separately to the Council of Partners (circulated 9/7/2018).

Farmer Cluster Development. Led by Tim Clarke, actively developing three clusters: one around the catchments of the Dun and Shalbourne focussed on water quality; a second among farms and estates alongside the Ridgeway National Trail in Oxfordshire, linked to research looking at ecologically beneficial ways to manage it as a flora and wildlife corridor; and a third possibly in the Pang Valley.

Wayfaring – HO reminded members that the event at Basildon Park in Berkshire will be delivered during July. Volunteer help would be very welcome. He drew attention to the invitation and advised them to sign up through the Newbury Corn Exchange website

Staffing & Recruitment - the Senior Project Development and Funding Officer will be a FTE and the Project Officer part-time for 2 days a week.

**14. Planning Update (paper 9)**

Members noted the paper.

CS reported that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, acting as landowners, are submitting changes to the outline planning application for land at Manydown. HO asked how best the AONB could engage with the process. CS will take advice and come back to him with advice.

Network Rail – GW electrification - Discussions have reached a point where the AONBs are now looking to seek compensation from Network Rail. At their request the AONB sat on a Design & Review Panel for which we invoiced and the invoice has now been paid. PL suggested that farmers along the line could form a facilitation group to obtain any monies available. NM suggested that the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2) could be a useful partner delivering projects funded by compensation.

OxCam Expressway - Members asked if there was a map of the current proposed route available although it was noted that the situation was less than transparent. RB explained that the consultants had reluctantly admitted that there would be a need to widen the A34 although this will be dealt with completely separately.

**15 North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust (Oral report)**

DS reported that there are five SDF applications under consideration. A review meeting with the SDF Panel will be held. The Trust is looking for volunteers as trustees and in particular for accountancy expertise.

**16. AOB**

RNC reported that the NAAONB had won £160k of HLF funding for a governance review and for a staff development programme to develop staff skills to work with greater collaboration and effectiveness. He hoped that the NWD AONB Team would wish to benefit.

The next meeting of the Council of Partners will be on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
(Meeting closed at 12.15pm)

Signed.....



13.11.2018