

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

**MINUTES of a meeting held at  
Vernham Dean Village Hall, Vernham Dean, Hampshire  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Present**

Mr T Hiscocks  
Cllr A Bennett  
Cllr D Sherlock  
Cllr P Giddings  
Cllr A McNair Scott  
Cllr C Mathew  
Mr A Smith

**Representing**

Chairman  
Swindon Borough Council / Vice Chairman  
Basingstoke & Deane District Council  
Test Valley Borough Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Natural England – Thames Valley Area Manager

**Community & Parish Interest Group Members**

Mr B Castle  
Mr N Titchen  
Ms A Witcombe

**Farming & Rural Business Interest Group Members**

Mrs L Philipps

**Historic Environment Interest Group Members**

Mr P Lemon

**Recreation and Tourism Interest Group Members**

Mr M Crane

**Nature and Conservation Interest Group Members**

Mrs M Chambers (MMC)  
Mrs A Ingham

**In attendance**

Mr G King	Hampshire County Council
Mr N Mottram	Oxfordshire County Council
Miss C Riggs	Swindon Borough Council
Mr R Broadhead	North Wessex Downs AONB MWG Chairman & Wiltshire Council
Mr P Hendry	West Berkshire Council
Mr H Oliver	Director, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs R Somerset	Communications Officer, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs J Baldwin	Partnership Co-ordinator, North Wessex Downs AONB (minutes)
Mr H Mitchell	Project Coordinator – Friends Group

1. **Apologies.** 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 Councils
Mr I Brown	Wiltshire Council
Cllr F de Rhe-Philippe	Wiltshire Council
Cllr K Chopping	West Berkshire Council
Mr D Gower	Interest Group
Mr C Musgrave	CLA / Interest Group
Dr J Smith	Interest Group
Mr O Cripps	Projects & Development Manager, North Wessex Downs AONB

**No Apologies received**

Cllr J Cotton	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr J Shelley	Vale of White Horse District Council
Ms V Heal	English Heritage

Welcome was given by Chairman and a welcome and thanks expressed to Andrew Smith from Natural England, Area Manager for Thames Valley, North Hampshire, East Wiltshire.

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

This item was withdrawn before the meeting. To be tabled at the next meeting.

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

It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 7 July 2015 be confirmed and signed.

4. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

Action points from last meeting: **Para 3:** It was confirmed that a letter of thanks has been sent to Cllr H Cole. **Para 7:** Lambourn Sewage Discharge proposal has been resolved by West Berkshire Council. **CM** enquired about an update on planning proposals in Vale of White Horse. The Director advised the member that this would be covered in his report later on the agenda.

5. **Friends' Group Update – for information**

**HM** gave the members an update of the current status of the Friends' Group project. He advised members that the Chairman **TH** has agreed to represent the Council of Partners at all future meetings of the Friends project group and then subsequently the Friends' Group meetings. No chairman has as yet been voted in for the Friends Group, but when that person has they will be invited to sit on the Council of Partners. The current issue the project group is having is agreeing on a name. Market research has been carried out and that did not show any conclusive results, therefore if any member has an idea for a name please let **HM** know. **PL** wished to endorse everything that **HM** had done so far. **NT** highlighted that there will need to be clarity as to what the relationship will be with the AONB partnership. **HM** wished for his paper to be circulated around the membership and welcomed comments or suggestion for the group and its name via the Partnership Coordinator. **TH** thanked **HM** for attending the meeting.

**ACTION: PCO to circulate HM paper.**

**ACTION: PCO to invite HM to next meeting in March 2016.**

6. **Annual Review 2014-15**

**RS** introduced the Annual Review to the members. She explained that it sets out what the Partnership has done in the last 12 months in 2014/15, in line with the Management Plan. She advised members that it is available on the North Wessex Downs website to download and will be sent out in the upcoming e-bulletin. Members were asked to pass the Annual Review onto anyone who they think will benefit from it. **HO** mentioned that we need to be better at explaining what we as a team do on behalf of the partnership to our Local Authority Members. It would be most beneficial if Local Authority members could let us know who would be best to send the Annual Review to, supplying the PCO with contact names and email addresses. **PG** advised that he sends the Annual Review to all 48 council members of Test Valley. **AMS** and **GK** offered to provide a summary that covered the work for HCC and are happy for this template to be used for the other Local Authority's. **TH** thanked members for their suggestions and **RS** for her work on the Annual Review.

**ACTION: LA members to provide contact names and addresses of any of their members who will benefit from the review.**

**ACTION: Communications Officer to prepare in line with template received from Hampshire County Council, summaries for each Local Authority.**

7. **TH** to let members know the headlines of what he has been up to in Partnership name since last meeting in July. Have continued to meet with MP's covered by the AONB and although a very small group, a successful meeting was had with MP's in London. The Annual Forum was very successful and well attended. Will be attending the NAAONB Chairman's Conference and AGM with **HO** next week. Continuing to increase awareness with local businesses. He is very conscious that many Local Authority planners are still not fully aware of the significance of the AONB and will be working in partnership with Wiltshire Council in early 2016, to run a workshop with their Planning Department to educate them further and if successful, will look to roll the workshop out with the other Local Authority Planning Departments. **AB** asked if the Local Planners meeting would be a better forum for this. **HO** advised members that this group had not met as far as he was aware for at least 6 years. It will be something that our new planner will attempt to resurrect. **TH** explained that he wants to help Councilor's feel supported too in what they are doing representing the AONB and if they wish, is happy to hold one to one meetings with themselves and key colleagues to discuss concerns and any other matters pertaining to the AONB.

8. **Partnership Round Table**

**TH** wishes for members to use this item to mention general events/happenings and if there is a major issue or topic that a member wishes to discuss in future, that they contact either the Director or Partnership Coordinator to raise a paper for the next meeting. **MMC** recently attended the National Wood Fuel Conference, which was kindly paid for by the AONB. A guide to Harvesting wood fuel from hedges has been produced by the Organic Research Centre with funding from SDF grant and can be downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/twecom> along with other hedgerow wood fuel information. **NM** Local Nature Partnership Oxfordshire (Wild Oxfordshire) chief executive has now left and now the charity can no longer host the partnership. This has now been referred back to Oxfordshire County Council for a rethink. **PL** raised issue about future accommodation costs of the AONB team and not heard anything further on this issue. **HO** advised that the team are not currently looking for new accommodation; cost cutting is under consideration and working with Wiltshire Council as host authority to look at accommodation in the first instance. It will be raised at the next Management Working Group meeting. **AB** advised that currently having less time to dedicate to commitments whilst attending to Mayoral duties in Swindon. He wished to advise members of the The Enterprise Network (TEN), a £5.2m initiative

led by Wiltshire Council with Government and EU funding, nurturing new and growing small and micro businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire by supporting them right from the first 'light bulb' moment. **RB** advised that the MDNIA is now MDNEP, as a charity funding via farming stewardship, looking for other sources of funding. Also to advise members that there is still currently a vacancy on the Management Working Group for a Local Authority member and would like someone from the partner authorities to stand. For further information please contact **RB**. **LP** involved with Wild Oxfordshire and OCC raising profile of the water directive with local land owners and farmers to manage the water quality. **MC** Continuing to work with West Berkshire Council Transport Dept., on the 'Welcome to AONB' road signs. Also work moving forward with the Great West Way via the A4 project. **BC** Marlborough Town Council has now embraced the Great West Way project too and will be funding part of the project. Thames Water is putting a new pipe in off the River Ogg and is proposing to no longer draw off the River Kennet.

**9. Resources and Delivery: future prospects**

**HO** introduced the presentation, giving an overview on recent Core Members funding meetings. If any members have views please contact **HO**.

**ACTION: PCO to send presentation to members.**

**10. Budget Update 2015-2016 – for information (paper 3)**

**TH** introduced the paper and advised members that at this time this is for noting only.

**11. Sharing Historic Landscape Character**

This item was moved to the end of the formal meeting.

**12. Planning Update – for information (paper 4)**

**HO** introduced the report. **TH** asked for any comments from the members. **MC** highlighted that the Hungerford Marina proposal comments deadline is 11/11/15 and what is the position of the AONB. **HO** advised that a holding objection had been submitted pending concerns from Natural England, Wildlife Trust, the impact on the SSSI and the water quality at Freemans Marsh. Tree planting not appropriate for the area, car park design is that of an urban supermarket and needs to be more hidden. **BC** in relation to *para 7* would like to thank the AONB team in part for their comments and support on the Salisbury Road Marlborough proposal, in the reduction of number of houses to 175 but more importantly the Crown Estates has agreed to a limit of the height of the development to 160 meters above sea level. There is the need to ensure that the development is not seen from key advantage points. Marlborough Town Council approves in general of the plans but rejects overall because the transport problems have not been addressed. **HO** advised members that the proposal is still above our own required height and well outside the allocated site footprint.


**HO** advised of further updates: **VWH** planning proposals. The AONB have made a case against the principal in Stage 1 and now Stage 2 will be in February 2016. We have enlisted the services of Green Balance and Will Harley Landscapes to revisit details on landscape impact assessment and we are planning to participate in Stage 2.

**Para 9** have lodged an objection on the setting of the AONB. Has appeared at BDBC Local Plan review regarding Whitchurch Railway Car Park.

He advised members that after discussions with both chairman's it was agreed to flag up at future meetings which Local Authorities are in breach of their statutory duty of Section 85. **CM** asked if there has been any discussion at National Level on breaches of Section 85. The Chairman advised that this issue will be raised at the Chairman's Conference next week.

13. **Director's Report – for information (paper 5)**  
HO introduced the report. Further updates: there is the possibility that the AONB may host the Berkshire LNP officer in the building. Great Western Railway project at Streatley/Goring continues to be an issue. In conjunction with the Chilterns AONB communications with GWR have proved beneficial as they have now agreed that they got it wrong by not communicating with the AONB's before the project started, but it is now over budget and behind time and are moving on with laying the test track. There is further work going on with Chilterns AONB to discuss concerns.  
**ACTION: HO to send copy of submission to LEPs to CM.**  
**ACTION: PCO to circulate letters to members that have been sent to MP's.**
14. **Any Other Business**  
AB asked members to ensure they highlight any neighbourhood plans that are coming up to the AONB team and to be aware that some neighbourhood plans are implementing new parishes. CM asked for an update on the Royal Berkshire Show attendance. RS advised members that it was again a successful event and thanked those members present who attended. The AONB team will be looking at other venues next year and will consider attending the Royal Berkshire show bi-annually in future.
15. **Date and Place of Next Meeting**  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016, Ashmansworth Village Hall, Ashmansworth, Hampshire RG20 9SJ
16. **Dates and venues for next years' meetings**  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016, Ashmansworth Village Hall, RG20 9SJ  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016, The Chutes Village Hall, SP11 9EE  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Woodlands St Mary Village Hall, RG17 7SL

(Meeting closed at 12.04pm)

Signed..... 

Date..... 08 March 2016

