

NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS

MINUTES of a meeting held at
Frilsham Village Hall, Frilsham, Thatcham, RG18 9XF
on Tuesday 13th November 2018

Present

Mr E Hiscocks
 Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe
 Cllr Anna McNair Scott
 Cllr Jeanette Clifford

Representing

Chairman
 Wiltshire Council
 Hampshire County Council
 West Berkshire Council

Community & Parish Interest Group Members

Dr J Sharp Advisory Member

Recreation & Tourism Interest Group Members

Mr M Crane Advisory Member

North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust

Mr D Sherlock Representative

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 H Oliver	Director, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs R Davies	Principal Landscape and Planning Officer, North Wessex Downs AONB
Ms A Shepley	Communications Officer, 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)
Mr T Clarke	Farmer Cluster Development Advisor, North Wessex Downs AONB

Apologies for absence were received from:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Cllr M Badcock	Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr G Sumner	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr C Martyn	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr P Miller	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Cllr P Giddings	Test Valley Borough Council
Cllr C Mathew	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr R Vaughan	Hampshire County Council
Mr D Bibby	Test Valley Borough Council
Mr D Lamb	South & Vale District Councils
Mr N Mottram	Oxfordshire County Council
Mr R Clarke	Advisory Member
Ms S Drew	Advisory Member

Ms S Egan	Advisory Member
Mr. D Heath	Advisory Member
Mr P Lemon	Advisory Member
Mr C Musgrave	Advisory Member
Mr N Titchen	Advisory Member
Mr. R Edwards	Chairman Management Working Group

1. **Members' Interests – none declared**
2. Welcome – Councilor Clifford, West Berkshire Council was welcomed to the meeting.

Ted Hiscocks left the meeting and Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe chaired the Constitutional Item

3. **Constitutional Item (paper 1)**
It was agreed that the current Chairman's term be extended for a further two years from March 2019, and he continue as the Partnership's representative on the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust with immediate effect.

Ted Hiscocks re-joined the meeting

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (paper 2)**
It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 2nd July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising from Minutes**
Oxenwood - FdRP informed the meeting that a number of expressions of interest had been received by Wiltshire Council and will be considered in late November. The matter should be settled by March 2019 when she hoped that she would be able to report a positive outcome.

6. **Chairman's remarks**
EH thanked the Council of Partners for their vote of confidence and explained that he was keen to see that the Council of Partners continues to move forward and that it is able to identify and make adjustments as necessary. To that end he will be asking members to complete a short Survey Monkey to gauge how members think it is performing and he asked that they take the time to complete this.

He was pleased to highlight the following successes that will be covered by HO in greater detail in his Director's Report. These include Wayfaring, the Annual Forum at Rushall Manor and the successful recruitment to the posts of Communications Officer, Project Officer and Senior Project Development & Funding Officer, and the consequent reduction in the use of consultants.

He thanked the various committees that had been busy during the summer. Looking forward to the Glover Review he advised the CoP that Dame Fiona Reynolds is planning to visit in January 2019. He obtained their agreement to extending an invitation to Nicholas Gosse, the new Chairman of Cranborne Chase AONB, to attend the CoP as he felt that the respective AONBs could learn from one another.

He reminded members that the date for the next meeting was Tuesday 5th March 2019 and the next Annual Forum 16th October 2019. He asked for ideas on content and venue for the 2019 Forum and any ideas on venues for the CoP meetings.

He thanked all present for their continuing commitment and work for the AONB.

7. Partnership Round Table

RB explained that Wiltshire Council continues to be involved with the Marlborough Downs NEP, which is currently working on a Bee Roads project.

He is working with the Ridgeway Partnership and the Avebury World Heritage Site Steering Committee to apply for a permanent TRO on part of the Ridgeway. Wiltshire Council, as the Highway Authority, took an impartial stance and was interested in evidence in support of the application. FdRP observed that the application attracted significant conflicts of interest and a strong case needed to be made.

CS reported that the Green Infrastructure Strategy had been reviewed and was submitted to Cabinet on 13th November (*note: the Basingstoke & Deane BC Cabinet approved the revised Strategy which was not called in and came into force on 21st November*). He also drew attention to a Supplementary Planning Guidance document on Landscape, Biodiversity & Trees that will be submitted to Cabinet in December for adoption.

He drew Members' attention to an information meeting hosted by Basingstoke and Deane BC being held on 3 December about the detailed ecological network map for Hampshire produced on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC). For more information contact Natural England.

CS is coordinating the Management Plan input for Basingstoke & Deane BC.

JW indicated his support for seasonal TROs.

PH indicated support for TROs. He is working with the Friends of the Earth on a Pollinator Strategy and agreed to meet with RB in Hungerford.

MC reported the launch of the Great West Way London to Bristol tourism initiative. He circulated a design for Hungerford signage and explained that discussions were under way with West Berkshire Council highways dept.

8. Resources Group (oral Report by JS)

JS updated the meeting on sponsorship for the Forum and explained that their consultant Beth Maughan had made a great effort to attract sponsorship but the lead in time was too short, and the number of bookings too low until very close to the date, to be attractive to potential sponsors. £300 had been raised from sponsorship. The Oxford Student Consultancy was looking at the use of social media. Redesigning the *Discover* Leaflet to generate income was being discussed and members of the CoP thought there might be savings to be made by sharing distribution costs and using local authority partners to distribute through their networks. AS will look into this.

JS left the meeting

9. Developing Farmer Clusters in the North Wessex Downs

Presentation by Tim Clarke, NWD AONB Farmer Cluster Development Advisor

The meeting received a comprehensive presentation from Tim Clarke who explained that, although there would be no opportunity to bid for Government Facilitation Fund support this year, Natural England is very supportive.

There are two Farmer Clusters that may form over the coming weeks: Southern Streams and The Ridgeway with their first meetings on 20th and 26th respectively. There are three other potential clusters, the Pang catchment; a group of shooting estates around Combe Gibbet; and a themed rather than geographical cluster around arable wild plants.

Slides are attached to the minutes.

10. **North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust (oral report by Donald Sherlock)**
The Trust through the SDF is awarding grants totalling £16,750. There had been a shortage of assessors but that is being addressed including with the support of Rowan Whimster. Projects include Gt Bedwyn Phone Box, Shalbourne Village Hall and Ogbourne St Andrew signs.
11. **Budget Update 2018-2019 - (paper 3)**
Members noted the underspend on the salaries budget is due to vacancies. CM had sent in comments and asked for clarification on two specific budgets. Landscape & planning support - additional spend against this budget was principally through buying in additional planning support for the AONB to give evidence at the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 Examination in Public. The Projects budget and priorities for the best use of the underspend are discussed at Agenda Item 14 (paper 5)
12. **Designated Landscapes Review – (paper 4)**
The CoP was concerned about the short timescale to respond to the Call for Evidence by the Glover Review as there were so many unknowns. Any additional powers or responsibilities for protected landscapes without appropriate funding would be very difficult for local authority partners to support. Members agreed that the Management Working Group should advise on and approve the North Wessex Downs submission, to be drafted by the Director. HO asked for comments to him so that he could draft a report to be considered by the Management Working Group on 11th December 2018. The NAAONB were coordinating a national response by the AONB family. The National Park Authorities appeared to be less well co-ordinated.
13. **Spending Priorities to March 2019. (paper 5)**
The CoP agreed that funding of facilitation for the farmer-led groups arising from the Farmer Cluster Development Project was a first priority.
CM had expressed doubts about the usefulness of the Sustainable Development Fund. DS would contact CM to talk through his concerns.

There was significant discussion about the effectiveness of a design guide in such a diverse landscape. RD explained that often it was the materials used that were not in keeping. It was agreed that RD research examples of other design guides in AONBs and gather feedback on how useful they were found to be and review her findings with HO.
14. **Proposed Local Authority Partners Contributions 2019/2020 (paper 6)**
The CoP agreed the proposed contributions for 2019/2020 and noted that they were based on the undertaking made by Defra to AONBs in its four-year funding commitment 2016-2020.
15. **Management Plan Review Update (paper 7)**
The CoP thanks Ian Hepburn for his hard work in delivering the review to this point. They noted that there was to be a Joint Management Plan Review Group and Management Working Group meeting in January 2019 which will approve proposed modifications. The Management Plan will then be submitted to the Council of Partners Meeting in March 2019 for approval and recommended to each constituent local authority to sign and agree. In practice this can take up to six months.
16. **The Director's Report (paper 8)** HO reported that recruitment to the posts of Project Officer (p/t) and Senior Project Development & Funding Officer had been successful (*since the meeting the start date for both posts has been agreed as 9/1/2019*). This will have a significant and positive effect on the delivery of the work programme.

The Director noted that the NWDLT needed support for delivery of the SDF programme; more training for new Panel members was being organised.

The Annual Forum 2018 had attracted a significant number of land managers and farmers and HO was keen to ensure that engagement with this group continued.

The Wayfaring Project had been a huge success and had generated discussion about linking Art and Landscape.

16. Planning Update (paper 9)

Members noted the paper. RD updated the meeting. She had responded to Swindon BC's consultation on the Swindon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELA) sites and the Wiltshire Settlement Boundary Review.

JW briefed the meeting on an application for a Science Park near Wanborough. There was a significant local opposition and the AONB has submitted an objection.


In respect of Manydown CS Reported that there were concerns over biodiversity, greenspace and transport issues and that it would be considered by councillors in January 2019.

Oxcam - RD advised that the impact on the A34 corridor is being kept under close review.

The next meeting of the Council of Partners will be on Tuesday 5th March 2019
(Meeting closed at 12.15pm)

Signed.....




5/3/2019