

NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS

MINUTES of a meeting held at
Shalbourne Village Hall, Shalbourne, Wiltshire SN8 3QF
on Tuesday 2nd July 2019

Present

Mr E Hiscocks
Cllr Anna McNair Scott
Cllr Charles Mathew
Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter

Representing

Chairman
Hampshire County Council
Oxfordshire County Council
West Berkshire Council

Community & Parish Interest Group Members

Dr J Sharp	Advisory Member
Ms S Egan	Advisory Member
Mr N Titchen	Advisory Member

Farming & Rural Business Interest Group Members

Andrea Witcombe	Advisory Member
Mr Peter Lemon	Advisory Member

Recreation & Tourism Interest Group Members

Mr M Crane	Advisory Member
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Historic Environment Interest Group Members

Ms Susie Brew	Advisory Member
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North Wessex Downs Management Working Group

Mr R Edwards	Chairman
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North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust

Mr D Sherlock	Representative
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Also Present

Mr N Gosse	Chairman, Cranborne Chase AONB
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In attendance

Mr C Slack	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Mr G King	Hampshire County Council
Mr N Mottram	Oxfordshire County Council
Mr P Hendry	West Berkshire Council
Mr R Broadhead	Wiltshire Council
Mr A Norris	Swindon Borough Council
Mr H Oliver	Director, North Wessex Downs AONB
Ms E Prokop	Senior Project Development & Funding Officer. North Wessex Downs AONB
Ms J Akam	Project Officer, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs S Clarke	Partnership Coordinator, North Wessex Downs AONB (job share)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Name

Representing

North Wessex Downs Council of Partners 12.11.2019
Agenda Item 2 Paper
Minutes from meeting 02.07.2019

Cllr Paul Miller	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Cllr Rhydian Vaughn	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe	Wiltshire Council
Cllr Gary Sumner	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Cathy Martin	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Phil North	Test Valley Borough Council
Cllr Hilary Cole	West Berkshire Council
Mr D Heath	Advisory Member
Mr R Clarke	Advisory Member
Mr C Musgrave	Advisory Member
Mr J Wilshaw	Swindon Borough Council
Mr D Lamb	South & Vale District Council
Mr D Bibby	Test Valley Borough Council

1. Members' interests – none declared.
2. Welcome – Mr Nick Gosse, Chairman of Cranborne Chase AONB
3. Constitutional Items (paper 1a)
The Council of Partners (CoP) was advised that, following the May 2019 local elections, Cllr Phil North will represent Test Valley District Council, and Cllr Hilary Cole will represent West Berkshire Council. Decisions are awaited from South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils.

The CoP approved the appointment of Cllr Paul Miller as Chairman of the Management Working Group for the following two years.

Four vacancies remain for Advisory Members in the areas of historic environment, nature conservation and farming and rural business. EH asked members to identify potential individuals.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (paper 2)
It was agreed that the Minutes from the previous meeting held on 5th March 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
Oxenwood –RB informed the meeting that discussions were ongoing on its future
6. Chairman's Remarks
The Chairman's remarks had been circulated with the Agenda to make them more accessible. He thanked Robin Edwards, Chairman of the Management Working Group, who is leaving to take up a new role in Cyprus and Rowan Whimster, who has served the AONB over many years, for their significant contributions. The CoP recorded their thanks.
7. Colour & Design in Landscapes
Presentation by Jem Waygood of Waygood Colour.
Using examples from guidance produced for other AONBs, the presentation explained how careful assessment of natural colours in the landscape can add a new dimension to the planning system, helping to make the appearance of new buildings more sympathetic. It also touched the capacity in the market for manufacturers to supply paint and other building materials in the colours required.

The CoP was impressed with the technical presentation and agreed to commission a design guide based on this approach.

Action: HO to include the design guide in the work programme.

8. Partnership Round Table

With harvest approaching AW reminded members of the need for motorists to be patient when encountering slow farm vehicles on the highway and explained that her members had been reminded to exercise care when driving.

PL explained that with support from North Wessex Downs LEADER, the North Wessex Downs SDF and the dedication of volunteers, in the last two months a granary built in 1860 had been successfully transported to the Wilton Windmill site and restored.

SB drew the members' attention to the Walking and Cycling Leaflets that had been published for the Pewsey area. (Twelve out of a planned 20 had been published) There was also a commercial film of approx. 3 minutes 45 seconds and one of 15 seconds for use on websites and social media. these will be launched at the Bouverie Hall in Pewsey on 11th July. Sher invited the members to the launch and requested they let her know if they can attend.

CM reported that he had joined the Cotswolds AONB Executive.

AN confirmed that formal approval of the Management Plan by Swindon BC was in hand.

RB confirmed that formal approval of the Management Plan by Wiltshire Council was in hand. He explained that Countryside and Rights of Way had moved Directorates and was currently within Communities and Neighbourhoods as much of their work was in tune with local communities. However as some work is aligned with highways Countryside and Rights of Way may move again to Highways.

MC reported that the Great West Way magazine had been distributed in Germany, USA and Holland and Hungerford had taken out an advert in the publication. He thanked the Partnership for its support of providing signage to entrances to Hungerford.

Nick Gosse, Chairman of Cranborne Chase AONB, attended to see how others worked and to forge working relationships. He expressed his admiration for the dedication of those who worked within the AONB organisations. He felt strongly that the balance between the resource currently required to win funding and the level of funding secured was out of balance: too much time spend on bidding. His expectation was that the Glover review should address this issue. He supported the Great Bustard project.

NM informed the meeting that the six local authorities were producing a joint strategic spatial plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to provide an integrated strategic planning framework and evidence base to support sustainable growth across the county to 2050.

NT referred to the planned Soil Science Conference in the UK and BGS Soil Maps. Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter attended representing West Berkshire Council. His portfolio is environment. He informed the meeting that the Council was debating the Climate Change Emergency that evening. CM noted that Oxfordshire Council had debated the Climate Change Emergency and agreed to note it. AW advised that the NFU has a presentation available to support farmers in responding. SE noted that Whitchurch Parish Council had included this in their local plan.

9. End of Year Financial Report 2018 – 2019 (paper 3)

HO presented the paper for information and members noted the report.

10. Communications Strategy (paper 4)

HO presented the strategy and explained that in the paper he had sought to pull together what had previously been undertaken and to recommend the future approach developed by the Communications Officer. Once the strategy is in place it will become an integral part of the Unit's work programme. The Management Working Group had made an input into the strategy and recommended it to the CoP for approval.

PL reported that the Southern Steams Farmer Group was developing well and that at a meeting the night before farmers, who farmed collectively 10,000 hectares, had agreed to fund the cluster work to improve the water quality of the Dun and Shal at £1 per hectare.

JS noted that the Oxford University student consultancy had worked on communications projects in the past.

AS is very keen to develop the NAAONB presence on social media to extend our reach; this is an activity that is measurable. She has identified that the website is an area that requires attention.

CoP noted that the AONB Partnership with the Landscape Trust will have a presence at the Royal Berkshire Show (Newbury) in September.

The Strategy was approved.

11. Sustainable Development Fund Programme 2018-19 (paper 5)

On behalf of the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust (NWDLT), which currently manages the SDF on behalf of the AONB Partnership, DS presented the SDF Programme report detailing projects that had been supported in 2018/2019. A modest outlay of £15,655 of grants from the Trust attracted £112,174.00 in cash match funding and contributions in kind worth £34,563.00, supporting six projects to a total value of £162,000 – £10.30 for every pound invested.. He drew attention to the Assessors who are volunteers and whose opinions and advice are highly valued. He noted that support from the AONB was declining and drew members' attention to a push for membership to raise funds.

CM congratulated the NWDLT on their performance in 2018/2019.

11. Revised Partnership Agreement (paper 6)

HO explained that this was a minor revision to update terminology, add paragraphs relating to financial contributions, and include text about the relationship of the CoP to the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust.

He agreed to update the structure chart to acknowledge the Resources Group.

CM was concerned about a situation when a local authority funding partner indicated that they were unwilling to continue to contribute; he felt that the other core partners should be notified immediately. The CoP agreed and CM undertook to agree a form of words to be included. With those revisions the Partnership Agreement was approved and recommended to local authority members for signing. It will be sent to elected members and their local authority officers to steer through their respective organisations.

Action: HO to amend the wording and structure chart and arrange for circulation to partner local authorities.

12. Great Western Landscape Enhancement (oral report by the Director)

In March Network Rail and Chilterns, Cotswold and NWD AONBs signed an Agreement to conclude our dispute with Network Rail about their failure to fulfil their

s.85 duty in relation to electrification of the Great Western main line. We will receive £4.25m; made up of £750k for direct mitigation and £3m compensation for landscape enhancement in the rail corridor in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs, and £500k for Cotswolds mitigation/enhancement (gantry works carried out in the Cotswolds were valued at £2.5-3m). We have all been very clear to Network Rail that this is compensation, not 'offsetting' the damage done. The Chilterns Conservation Board will hold the funds and a Joint Project Board will sign-off on projects. The focus for the joint project will be a corridor 3km either side of the line between Tilehurst and Didcot.

HO paid tribute to Rebecca Davies on working hard to call Network Rail to account and to the Chairman for responding so quickly to requests for documentation to be signed.

With other electrification projects in the pipeline it is vital that lessons are learned but HO understood that although a draft report setting out the protocol and requirements for electrification through protected landscapes had been completed, it had not been published and made widely available within Network Rail. This is something that we should pursue with Network Rail; the National Association for AONB has offered its support.

Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter left the meeting

13. Report by the Resources Group (oral report by the Chair of the Group)
Sponsorship is being sought for the Annual Forum on 15th November. A significant contribution has been secured from the Englefield Estate as it is charging a minimum fee.
The *Discover* leaflet is being reviewed and there are plans to seek sponsorship for publication in 2020.
Investigation is under way on identifying university/college courses that could be linked to North Wessex Downs research ambitions; to date ten courses at Oxford University, Oxford Brookes, Reading and Cirencester have been identified
Finally JS asked that all members endeavour to identify five potential sponsors for the Forum.
14. Director's Report (paper 7)
HO introduced his report and work programme. He drew the CoP's attention to the Walking Festival which had been a success: all the walks had been supported even with challenging weather during the first week. Feedback forms have been sent to all who participated and those will be analysed later in the summer.
The farmer cluster work is continuing. The Ridgeway farmer cluster has not developed at the pace that was hoped for due to a lack of resources for facilitation. However there is some focus with an Oxford University student undertaking PhD research on management of grassland along the Ridgeway for wild flora. Several landowners are now showing some interest and we have secured some additional help for Tim Clarke. The profile of the Ridgeway is being raised through an approach by the BBC for HO to speak on R4 *Farming Today* about access to the landscape on 5th July.
PL has updated the CoP on the Southern Streams farmer group.
The AONB has agreed, through the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Group, to be the lead organisation for the Berkshire Downs County Target Area.
15. North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust (oral report by the Trust representative)
DS had covered this item under paper 5.

16. Planning Update (paper 8).

It was agreed that a further letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chief Executive Officer of Highways England expressing concern at the threat of upgrading of the A34 (in the wake of the proposed Oxford to Cambridge 'expressway') that threatens the tranquillity of the protected landscape and will cause more noise and air pollution and significant development pressure.

AOB

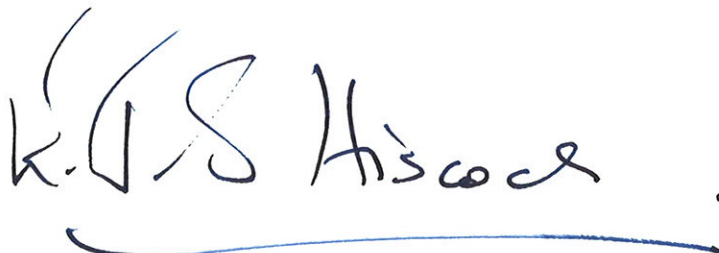
Manydown.

Considered by the Basingstoke & Deane Cabinet in June 2019 and negotiations continue with the private sector partner.

Meeting closed 12.35pm

Visit to Wilton Windmill

All members were warmly invited to join short visit to one of the Icons of the North Wessex Downs and see the granary recently moved from Lackham College with support from a North Wessex Downs LEADER grant

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "K. J. S. Hiscox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K". A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

12/11/2019