



North Devon Coast National Landscape

PARTNERSHIP

Wednesday 25th September 2024

**In-person at St Anne’s Arts and Community Centre,
Paternoster Row, Barnstaple, EX31 1BH, 10.00 – 11:00
Followed by Management Plan Review Workshops**

MINUTES

<p>Attendees Lewis Andrews (Community Rep.) Liesje Birchenough (Coastwise ND) Brian Butler (NFU) Carli Cocciardi (DWT) Ian Crawford (TTEF) Dominic Elson (Exmoor NPA) Kate Hind (DCC) Becky Hughes (NE) Claire Moodie (Community Rep.) Matthew Odgers-Brown (FC) Richard Prowse (Vice-Chair, TC Trust) John Rous (CLA) Justin Seedhouse (NT) Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson (NDC) Eirene Williams (Chair) Jane Young (Community Rep)</p>	<p>Officers Jamie Buxton-Gould (FNF Project Co-Ordinator) Jenny Carey-Wood (Joint Manager) Laura Carolan (Comms & Support) Evie Giblett (FNF Project Assistant) Joe Newberry (NL Officer) Louise Reynolds (Joint Manager)</p> <p>Observer Jamie Owen (FNF Project Assistant 14th Oct)</p>
<p>16 Voting Members</p>	<p>Apologies Mel Austen (ND Biosphere) Dave Brain (EA) Kevin Cook (Community Rep.) Chris Goodall (NE) Cllr Steve Harding (TDC) Pete Burgess (DWT) Andrew Moulton (NDC) Chris Preece (Voluntary Sector - NDAS) Rose Roberts (Community Rep.) Mark Saunders (NDC)</p>

1. Welcome and Apologies - Chair Dr Eirene Williams welcomed Partnership members to this in-person only meeting and reported apologies. Attendees introduced themselves. **EW** welcomed Kate Hind, officer representing Devon County Council and Jamie Owen, Finding Nature’s Footprints Project Assistant

2. Minutes of the meeting on 24th January 2024 and matters arising. Minutes agreed.

Matters arising:

- **IC:** has arranged meeting in collaboration with **JN** on Young Environment Group.

- **KC:** BH suggested working with Environment Agency for lab data analysis. No update available in KC's absence.
- **NL Team:** have noted to consider onward support to WRT scheme.
- **LR & JN:** arrange for members to visit FiPL projects in the Spring and perhaps take MPs along too. **ACTION LR/JN**
- **ALL:** no news items were sent to Laura for inclusion in newsletter. Communicate more on issues that can be jointly publicised and promoted. **ACTION ALL**
- **FNF TEAM:** bioblitz attendance was evaluated and findings shared with National Lottery in July, next Steering Group meeting with them in October.

3. National Landscape Managers' Report

1. Key updates to the Business Plan (LR):

- a. £28,000 awarded to Community Group 'Access for All' for water-immersible and beach wheelchairs for across the NL, starting with Westward Ho!
- b. New access route being funded through woodland, linking to South West Coast Path and creating 2 new parking places in Hartland
- c. Continuing 'engagement' theme and following concerns raised previously about increasing light pollution across accommodation sector, the NL team have engaged with the Nature Tourism Officer to produce 2 new 'Dark Skies' leaflets, one for visitors and one for businesses, informing about nature impacts from light pollution and potential visitor opportunities from the region's Dark Skies

2. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme update (JN)

- a. 8 out of 10 applications have been approved to date including pond creation, hedgerow scheme and an innovative wildlife tower.
- b. £23,000 remaining in the budget. **ACTION ALL** please publicise.

3. Communications (LC)

- a. Four SDF projects have received funding, applications remain slow with £11,000 left to spend. **ACTION ALL** Please promote widely within your communities
- b. e-news up and running again, about to go out. **ACTION ALL** please send items to LC for inclusion
- c. Commissioned a local film maker to produce a short punchy film to explain the work of the NL, involving various partners and narrated by local surf celebrity Andrew Cotton. Story board drafted and filming has begun.
- d. Attending national collaborative project 'Nature's Calling' training in preparation for new Arts Council England funding next year for a local arts engagement project - <https://www.naturecalling.org.uk/>

4. Planning and Development update (JCW)

- a. The massive boom in planning applications has calmed down from a previous 122 to 38 for this last 6 months.
- b. NL have been encouraging pre-applications and these remain quite high
- c. There remains a pressure on Saunton Road and a design review panel is taking place on a proposed site redevelopment

- d. The major development of 105 units along Woolacombe Station Road (Mortehoe) for 50% private and 50% social housing for which there was a significant response, went to full Planning Committee. The NL was represented by LA, taking the position that it was the wrong site as it sat on the skyline, would not conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the NL and that significant social housing is already under development in nearby Georgeham and Woolacombe to meet local needs. It was refused.
 - e. A comment from the floor: great credit to the AONB team's report which was an enormous and strong document. There were 300 letters of observation, 80% of which were 'no' that there were no housing needs. Excellent report by Jenny Meakins and the Planning Officers who invited the Protected Landscape to be there and make representation from the top table. In terms of votes: 8 against, 1 abstain and 0 in favour.
 - f. Response that Planning Officers are working with the National Landscape more and more now.
 - g. There is a real pressure for development in Croyde, Georgeham, Saunton and Woolacombe where architect designs are inappropriate for the locations. Suggestion that North Devon needs Design Guides however District Council are not supportive. South Downs National Park has done really good work on Design Guides. Exmoor National Park have a Design Guide process which could be shared and this considers ecological impact of large glass areas. Lessons from that: create division between old and new design to avoid pastiche. **ACTION DE** to share design guides
 - h. White Cross FLOW – developers are suggesting phases of work to minimise social and economic disruption which look favourable. No additional comments from NL at this stage. Question: why not bring Whitecross in at XLinks landing point at Saunton? National Grid insisted they be kept separate for security purposes, and so they join the Grid separately at Yelland and Alverdiscot terminals to avoid power surges.
 - i. The new LURA duty to 'further the purpose' of the NL is being used with Planning despite still awaiting formal government legislation to assist here.
 - j. Question: Management Plan is essential guide for Planning Officers and LA yet will be out of date in January; how to proceed? Minister agreed official extension till end 2025 as NL's waiting for 1 year for guidance on the review process from NE. This was signed off by the 3 councils in mid-2023. **ACTION JCW** to share this written extension with LA and Planning Officers.
5. Finding Nature's Footprints (**JBG**) - Over 300 species logged in one day at Ilfracombe Bioblitz. Doing more around Nature's Tonic aspect and focusing on local Nature Recovery Plans with Welcombe and Hartland communities. Welcome to Jamie Owen who begins on 14th October as Project Intern.
6. Upcoming opportunities (**JCW**)
- a. National Lottery Heritage Fund have launched a £150 million Landscape Connections fund targeted at Protected Landscapes for activity over 10 years including an 18 month development phase, looking at projects over £10 million and that are visionary. It is following the themes of environmental

improvement, nature recovery and connecting people to nature set by the Glover Review. Indications are they are looking to fund around 20 projects across England and National Lottery are keen to fund projects across North Devon and Torridge. Clear message in initial meeting with them that there is no need to rush. They recommended producing a draft of new Management Plan with partners in Spring and then talk with them again and apply as a partnership, playing to the strengths of partners. Any organisation can bid so long as it has support of NL. Really exciting opportunity and a new opportunity enabling work to take place in the setting of our designated boundaries.

- b. Creative People and Places Arts Council funding (£1 million) partners within North Devon District exploring this opportunity

- 7. Partnership Review (**LR**) - Most members have now met with LR, 4 more to speak with. Some interesting discussions and ideas, in summary: to reduce the number of members coming together for each meeting; to hold thematic meetings; to consider 'task and finish' sub groups on distinct topics; to consider the members more as extensions to the main 'team'; to arrange the membership into 'cluster groups' huddled around themes; aim for more varied mix of members to better reflect EDI ambitions; include South West Water (**KH** offered a contact) in some way; and in considering carbon footprint of the NL consider including transport/highways representative (**KH** offered a contact) and also rural public transport representation. Aiming for a draft report later in the Autumn for presentation to the January Partnership meeting to discuss recommendations.

4. Any Other Business

a. **JY** is on the Board of the Georgeham Community Land Trust (proposal for 19 social rent houses) with reference to the national consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) section 182, the national CLT groups propose great weight added to housing developments by community led proposals in Protected Landscapes. **JY** not supportive of this and asked about response from National Landscapes Association? **JCW** advised not aware of this and would follow-up. **ACTION JCW** to follow up

b. **CM** Held a really successful Tarka Trail and Estuary clean up recently, gathering 500kgs in one day and engaging 8 businesses who volunteered their staff to help, and 5 other local organisations. Not many public engaged and finding this more and more, and a growing trend for businesses looking for opportunities to engage staff in environmental action. Ian Roome MP joined them at Fremington.

c. **MW** is part of the Local Government Association (LGA) Coastal Issues Group and hosted their 3 day AGM and Study Visit last week with 30 national delegates visiting Ilfracombe and Woolacombe focusing on what has been done and what still needs to be done within those coastal communities. It was very successful with a clear message that this area needs a strongly dedicated coastal minister and stressed the importance of the APPG for which our MP has put his name down. Important presentations from Andrea Beacham and the head teacher from Ilfracombe Academy stating evidence that

50% of their students are registered as 'Special Needs' as a direct effect of the area's deprivation.

d. MOB gave a wider introduction to FC (his first meeting) which offers wider forest research and forest services and bespoke plans for the creation and management of riparian woodlands, and advice on pressures (eg from Beavers). FC now have 2 Agroforestry Officers as well as a new Deer Officer covering the South West region. The Agroforestry Officers can assist with Woodland Condition Assessments (eg for BNG and ELMS) and simplified online assessment of condition of woodlands uploaded on an app which has the added benefit of helping with national monitoring.

e. BH would be keen to be involved in wider Landscape Connections discussions.

f. KH DCC are interviewing for new Coastal Estuaries and Marine Officer next week.

g. CC DWT are currently reviewing their 10 year strategy (which will contain targets to 2030)

5. Management Plan Review Workshops (reported separately)

6. Date of Next Meeting – WEDNESDAY 29th January 2025 10am (venue tbc)