

North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty PARTNERSHIP

Friday 2nd February 2018
Caddsdow, Bideford

MINUTES

Meeting Attendees

Steve Mulberry (Chairman)
Steve Pitcher (Community Rep.)
Cllr Rodney Cann (North Devon C)
Terry Green (Community Rep.)
Richard Prowse (Tarka Country Trust)
Rob Joules (National Trust)
Pete Burgess (Devon Wildlife Trust)
Andy Bell (ND Biosphere Reserve)
Cllr. Ken James (Torrige DC)
Chris Goodall (Natural England)
Richard Butler (Community Rep.)
Paula Ferris (Coastwise)
Alison Boyle (Community Rep)
Chris Preece (Voluntary Sector – NDAS)
Brett Grosvenor (Environment Agency)
Paul Green (Community Rep.)

Apologies

Rose Day (Community Rep.)
Cllr Linda Hellyer (Devon CC)
Alasdair Barclay (TTEF)
Peter Chamberlain (Devon CC)
Cllr Andrea Davis (Exmoor NPA)
Barbara Fryer (Community Rep.)

Officers

Jenny Carey-Wood (Manager)
Dave Edgcombe (Projects Officer)
Cat Oliver (Education Officer)
Sean Kearney (TDC)
Andy Jones (NDC)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed all Partnership members including new member – Chris Preece from the North Devon Archaeological Society as the new Voluntary Sector representative, and received apologies.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising. Minutes agreed.

Matters arising:-

- External Partnerships - TTEF – Jenny Carey-Wood to attend for the Partnership; Exmoor National Park – Steve Mulberry as and when requested
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3. Governance

- a. Recruitment of Vice Chairman** – Steve Mulberry extended thanks to Steve Pitcher for acting as interim vice chairman and chairing the last Partnership on his behalf. There have been no nominations for the position. The chairman proposed an open public recruitment for the position. This was agreed – **Action: Chairman and JCW** to draft advert.
- b. Proposal on Partnership Membership** – following the proposal's circulation, Rose Day had responded by email supporting the proposal for new members to represent the four proposed categories but requested these were additional to the Community members and to maintain community member places at 10. Rose Day also advised

that it should be the Partnership making the final decision on members joining the Partnership rather than the Executive, and that Community membership was not dealt with correctly at the last Partnership meeting. The email was tabled.

Community Representatives: Steve Mulberry acknowledged that the correct procedure was not followed at the September 2017 meeting and proposed to rectify it following this meeting. In discussion there was support for the proposal and for maintaining Community membership at 10 places whilst recognising there was a need to rotate members and ensure appropriate skills and knowledge for changing priorities. **Action: AONB Manager** to write out to all Community representatives.

Proposed new member categories representing young people, health and wellbeing, sport and recreation – general agreement to support these but concerns about how representative individuals or businesses may be. Jenny Carey-Wood advised that the skills and knowledge from a sector representative could help to guide the Partnership's decisions and actions as well as provide a representative role. **Young People** - Pete Burgess suggested a 'forum' of young people separate to the Partnership may be more achievable, other suggestions were to approach the Devon Youth Council and the Young Farmers Club for an individual who could then report back to a wider group. This would be explored. **Parish representatives** – proposal agreed. Paula Ferris requested that Partnership members need to be briefed on their roles and responsibilities. JCW responded that new members have an information briefing and induction meeting. See attached copy of information.

Process: the chairman proposed that the team would assist with practical tasks and invited two volunteers from the Partnership to oversee these actions with him

Action: All – contact the chairman if you would like to be part of this group.

Proposed new members will be presented to the May Partnership for their decision.

- c. **Nominations to SDF Panel** – no nominations received. The Panel will appoint a new chair at their next meeting.
- d. **Nominations to Planning Panel** – Terry Green has been nominated. **This was Agreed.**
- e. **Outgoing Members** – thanks were expressed by the chairman to outgoing members for their time and expertise: **Richard Butler** – Community representative. Richard raised his concern that with such a small team, it was important to have pro-active Partnership members. Although there is good legal support for protecting landscapes (and not the violence internationally for landscape rangers with 40 killed last year), there is an ongoing loss of green spaces and considerable development pressure. He urged members to be active, to fight for the environment and to communicate the AONB message widely. **Caroline Leaver** has stepped down as Voluntary Sector representative as no longer involved in the formal voluntary sector. **Richard Dyer** – has stepped down as the NFU representative, there is currently no replacement. Thanks and tributes were expressed by members too.

4. AONB Manager's Report – additional Points

Projects Update

- **Coastal Creatures** – latest steering group requested consideration of a follow on project given the success and engagement delivered by the team. Given

additional time from Cat Oliver, this will be explored possibly linking to increasing public focus on plastics and litter.

- **Coastal Heritage project** – thanks to partners for their ongoing commitment awaiting decision on resubmission of HLF bid (decision March). If not successful, some activities will still be delivered by partners within existing capacity and using match funds for additional costs.
- **Catchment Partnership** – Brett Grosvenor advised the Partnership on a new opportunity through the £9m **Water Environment Grant (WEG)** opening on 19th March 2018 and running until end of 2020 (RDPE funded). Up to 100% funding for capital, revenue and feasibility work. Open to all non-government organisations, businesses and individuals. Ecosystem services, people and wildlife will also feature on the scoring system in addition to water quality – covers river and estuarine water. It will be delivered through the Environment Agency and Natural England but waiting for formal information online.
- **Interpretation** – hard copies of all new walks booklets displayed at meeting. AONB Review 2017 booklet will be widely distributed.
- **Defra Pioneers** – publicity now possible following publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan by Defra. AONB manager attending Landscape Pioneer workshops this month and Marine Pioneer stakeholder workshop this week.

Sustainable Development Fund

- **Update** – thanks to National Trust and Pete Burgess for helping install some chough nesting boxes at Baggy Point, but weather prevented work at Hartland. Chris Preece reported on interesting results from the North Devon Archaeological Society's second survey of Clovelly Dykes hillfort. These will be reported to their membership. Northam Burrows – Sean Kearney reported that the District Council would hope to provide free access on the day of the Bioblitz (15 June) to promote the Country Park, this was welcomed.

Communications and Events

- **Reports** for December and January were circulated, showing a quiet month in December but engagement picked up again in January on website and social media. Cat Oliver is assisting with core AONB social media and website work until new officer recruited (process starting February). Anticipating more press coverage when many of the SDF projects are completed this quarter.
- **Events** programme – **Action: All** – please advise team if you can assist with any events - from two hours, half day or full day – all welcome.

Draft Business Plan and Budget for 2018/19

- Section 1 will be updated at the end of March 2018 to show a full review of the year's activities. **Action: All** – please share any partner activities helping to deliver Management Plan actions for inclusion in this section.
- Funding is indicative until final confirmation from partners in February. Torridge District and Devon County councils have indicated a probable maintenance of grant level from last year, North Devon Council grant is still under consideration. Steve Mulberry thanked local councils for their important contribution to the AONB costs and the value they placed on the work of the team and Partnership.

Paula Ferris asked about possible private sector contributions from development? Andy Jones reported that this kind of levy had not been included in the Local Plan and was not possible.

- Plan Delivery – Annual Priorities - the Executive Group and team would like to propose continuation in delivery of the two themes of ‘Historic Environment’ and ‘Health and Wellbeing’ as projects are ongoing. **This was agreed.**
- SDF grant allocation is proposed to continue at £25,000 depending on final financial settlement.
- The final version of the Plan will be circulated in April to all members.

National Association of AONBs – Report

- Thank you to Rose Day for comprehensive report
- Steve Mulberry reported on Chairmen’s conference and very positive input from the Defra Minister Lord Gardiner, now reflected in the action within the 25 Year Environment Plan to carry out a review of National Parks and AONBs in a positive light to consider their roles and the areas that are or need protection
- Jenny Carey-Wood reported on agenda for Lead Officers meeting this week, that includes discussion of AONBs potential involvement with agri-environment schemes

5. Landscape Report

Planning Update

- Steve Mulberry thanked the District Councils for respecting the view from the AONB Partnership on many planning matters, with the vast majority of final decisions matching the AONB recommendation, not always the case in other parts of Devon. Steve Pitcher expressed special thanks to Dave Edgcombe and Pete Leaver for the quality of the responses and the input of Planning Panel members.
- Cllr Rodney Cann expressed concern about the losing battle on developments along the coastline in particular, and Richard Prowse commented on the value of ‘views’ in the AONB which need to be protected as such an important feature.
- Dave Edgcombe emphasised that already made 84 comments, double the number of previous years, with pressure noticeably higher in the North Devon section of the AONB.

Update on Line Removal Works – Woolacombe

- All undergrounding of lines now complete, road closure not too problematic, posts and overhead wires will be removed by April, £850,000 spent, publicity will be on completion.
- Pete Burgess asked if any research been completed locally on whether development conditions being implemented? Andy Jones reported that LPA were pro-active on large developments but reactive on smaller developments due to lack of resources. PB reported on recent research in South Devon showed that a significant proportion of biodiversity conditions were not being met. The Chairman suggested this should be raised with the AONB’s Planning Panel.

6. Any Other Business

Flooding in the Estuary - Paula Ferris raised concerns about Horsey Island, and the status of the Shoreline Management Plan – is it still valid? See <http://www.ndascag.org/finalsmp/docs/html/frameset.htm> Brett Grosvenor replied that it is not a statutory document but is referenced by statutory documents like the Flood Management Plans and the Water Framework Directive; has a technical assessment of sites carried out by University researchers and is subject to a ten year review process. Andy Bell reported that Defra had approved the Review of the Plan in December 2017 and this provides the policy approach. However Horsey Bank is privately owned, therefore owner's responsibility to decide on approach and to pay for any works. On the other hand, the Great Bank is a publicly fundable defence feature. Paula Ferris requested written clarification of the position to be able to communicate to the wider community in Braunton who are very concerned by the threat to the Marsh. She thanked local Environment Agency staff members who have been very effective. **Action: Andy Bell** to provide briefing note to be circulated to all members.

7. News from Partners

- **Devon Wildlife Trust** – recommended the Devon GHB project website for information and resources including films, walks <http://devonbatproject.org/>
- **Natural England** – Countryside Stewardship open for new agreements with deadlines of 9 March for Higher Tier and 31 May for Mid-Tier
- **North Devon Council** – second hearings on Local Plan completed and positive responses from the Inspector. Council is strengthening litter enforcement actions and supporting Plastic Free Coastline initiatives to reduce single use plastic
- **Environment Agency** – new team tackling plastic on land, rivers and seas to be established in Devon and Cornwall to work with businesses, councils and communities <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>
- **National Trust** – to be circulated
- **Tarka Country Trust** – 'Life on the Verge' Project has new coordinator Jo Pullin see <http://www.tarkacountrytrust.org.uk/love-b.html>
- **Biosphere Reserve** – 'Wood for Water' project will be working in the Umber River at Combe Martin, as well as offering planting and management advice to improve water quality across the area
- **Torrige District Council** – engaging on plastic and fly tipping issues across district
- **Alison Boyle (community representative)** – applauded the work of the team and Partnership for the benefit of the AONB
- **Leader 5** – Steve Pitcher reported changes to the programme that would be of interest to Partnership members and suggested inviting a presentation to next meeting. **Action: JCW** to invite Manager Louise Adams.

8. Dates of Next Meetings:

Friday 18th May 2018 at 10.00am

Friday 28th September 2018

Friday 25th January 2019