

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Management Board
Minutes of Meeting 11th May 2016
AONB Partnership office, Drovers House, Craven Arms



Present:

James Williamson (Chair)	Individual member
George Chancellor (Vice-chair)	Individual member
Caroline Beddell	Country Land & Business Association
Veronica Cossons	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Chris Turley	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr David Turner	Shropshire Council

AONB Partnership staff:

Phil Holden	AONB Partnership Manager
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1. Apologies

Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)	Shropshire Council
Lee Chapman	Shropshire Hills Tourism
John Pritchard	Individual member
Fran Lancaster	Telford & Wrekin Council

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed and there were no matters arising.

3. Developing an independent structure

Requirements of a new organisation. There were no particular comments on the bullet points proposed.

Phil updated on the stage of contact with Defra, and conversations with Tamar Valley AONB, who were also interested in pursuing Conservation Board on potentially a similar timescale. Contact with NAAONB was also ongoing.

The options for an independent structure were discussed in some detail, and there was unanimous support from the Management Board for Conservation Board as the preferred option. It was agreed to take this as a recommendation to the 14th June Partnership meeting, and to encourage the two Councils to make the formal request to Defra to initiate the process of creating a Conservation Board as soon as possible after the Partnership meeting. It was also agreed to continue the informal dialogue with Defra, hopefully with a face to face meeting before 14th June. **ACTION – Phil & James.**

It was agreed that a letter should be written to the Defra Minister Rory Stewart informing him of the Partnership's intentions, and also to write to Philip Dunne, MP – **ACTION James & Phil.**

A timeline of the anticipated stages in the transition should be drawn up – **ACTION Phil.**

Proposed Shadow Board. The proposal to create a Shadow Board was supported, along with agreement with comments from some members of the Partnership that the new Board should all be voted in by the AONB Partnership to give a strong mandate. The Shadow Board would replace the Management Board, and so it would need to take a role in relation to overseeing existing work as well as the transition issues.

Terms of Reference for the Shadow Board would be drafted, along with a process to achieve appointments at the 14th June Partnership meeting – **ACTION Phil & James.** It was recommended that the Shadow Board should be given the capacity to co-opt additional full members from outside the AONB Partnership, and to draw in people on a more limited basis for advice as needed. Meetings would probably be arranged monthly though it was recognised that not all of these may actually be needed. It was felt that officers from the two Councils should not be 'members' of the Shadow Board, but could be invited to attend for particular meetings if needed.

Of those present, Heather, Veronica, Chris, David and James would all be willing to stand for membership of a Shadow Board, George would but his time was limited, and Caroline said her time commitments would probably mean she couldn't be a full member but would be happy to support where possible. From the wider membership of the Partnership, Hilary Claytonsmith had volunteered already, which would provide a Parish/Town Council representative (in line with Conservation Board categories of membership). Other Partnership members may come forward as the question had not been yet asked directly.

It was suggested that there could be other working groups on a time limited basis in support of the Shadow Board if necessary. The involvement of the National Trust would be welcomed in some capacity.

Negotiations with Shropshire Council. The current stage of proposals was discussed, and opinions shared in support of the ongoing negotiations. A realistic level of funding by Shropshire Council to an independent body going forward was seen as critical.

Further budget projections were needed – **ACTION Phil.**

4. Budgets

Time did not allow for detailed discussion of the budgets.

5. Any Other Business

none

6. Date of Next Meetings

If agreed by the Partnership, it was intended that the Management Board would now be superseded by the Shadow Board and not meet any further. Dates for meetings of the new Shadow Board would be circulated alongside the appointment process.