

Shropshire Hills AONB Transition Board
Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 1st November 2016
AONB Partnership office, Drovers House, Craven Arms



Present:

James Williamson (Chair)	Individual member, AONB Partnership Chair
Cllr Chris Turley	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr David Turner	Shropshire Council
Andrew Wood	Co-opted member
Veronica Cossons	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Neil Willcox	Shropshire Council
Janine Hayter	Parish Council representative

AONB Partnership staff:

Phil Holden	AONB Partnership Manager
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1. Apologies

George Chancellor	Individual member, AONB Partnership Vice Chair
Hilary Claytonsmith	Town/Parish Council representative
Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)	Shropshire Council, AONB Partnership Vice Chair
Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council

2. Minutes of Transition Board meeting of 27th September 2016 and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed as correct. Phil had come across the process for applying for small business rate relief and would complete this – **ACTION Phil.**

3. Update on publicity/ engagement with key organisations

- 3.1 Phil reported that a joint press release had been issued on the afternoon of the Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting on 19th October. No coverage resulting from this had been seen, though papers had picked up the item being on the Cabinet agenda. A news item had been posted on the AONB website, along with a prominent call for comments on the home page. An email with the leaflet, followed by the same on paper, had been sent to all the Parish and Town Councils, and one reply had been received so far. An email had also been sent to organisations, and from this three letters of support had been received so far. The Shropshire ward Councillors would be emailed for information – **ACTION Phil.**
- 3.2 Neil asked about the expected form of the informal consultation by Defra, and this was clarified as far as is known. Veronica suggested that describing the ongoing role of the Partnership would be useful to reassure partner organisations that the new structure would not exclude them. This was supported, and it was agreed to prepare new Terms of Reference the Partnership for discussion at a Transition Board meeting in the New Year prior to it going to the Partnership meeting in March – **ACTION Phil with others.**
- 3.3 James had approached Philip Dunne to request a meeting with Lord Gardiner, which he would do when the letters had gone to Defra.

3.4 The timing of submission to Defra was discussed. No reply had yet been received to James' letter of 26th September, though advice had been given about who to address the formal letters to. James had requested confirmation from George Candler of the Council's agreement to full transfer of reserves and had been told this was awaiting a further discussion with James Walton. The Board agreed unanimously that this explicit confirmation was needed in writing before the submission to Defra was made.

4. Options for size of Conservation Board and representation of seats

4.1 The issues raised in the paper and general matters around representation were discussed. A small Board was felt to be the most effective. The Board supported the option of a 10 member Conservation Board, comprising 4 local authority appointed seats (3 for Shropshire Council and 1 for Telford & Wrekin Council), 2 Parish/Town Council appointed seats and 4 Secretary of State appointed seats. This fits the ideal 40:20:40 % balance.

4.2 It was agreed to take this option as a firm recommendation to the AONB Partnership meeting on 15th November. It was felt that agreement to this by the Councils lay within responsibilities delegated by each of the Cabinets to Directors, and that their agreement should also be sought, in order to include this recommendation in the Defra submission.

4.3 It was felt that when the time comes, the Board should indicate to the local authorities the skills it was looking for in appointments. The Board would handle the Parish appointments, so this could be included here as well.

4.4 The process for appointment of Parish and Town Council appointees was discussed. Phil would find out more from the existing two Conservation Boards and draft a proposal. With only two seats for this category, this would probably be based on a simple geographical split into two groups of parishes. **ACTION – Phil.**

5. Approval of Business Case for submission to Defra of Conservation Board request

5.1 Phil explained that the main changes to the draft were removal of some background sections on the legal basis of AONBs, and additional paragraphs in section 8, the case for the Conservation Board, addressing the guidance regarding scale and number of authorities.

5.2 It was agreed to add the firm proposal for size and representation of the Board, and to move the Executive Summary before the Introduction and Background.

5.3 Minor detailed comments were welcome from any members. Subject to minor changes, the Business Case was approved for submission.

6. Progress with development of HLF 'Resilient Heritage' Fund project

6.1 Phil outlined that a working group with members of the team, the Transition Board and the AONB Trust had met on 25th Oct, and he had also met with Rosie Wood on 26th. Nigel McDonald was going to do the initial drafting of the application, and Phil had arranged to meet Janine to discuss the organisational development aspects. The group preferred the AONB Trust as the applicant, and the desirability of VAT registration for the Trust was discussed. A skills audit for the team, trustees and the Board would be carried out at some point to inform training needs. The aim was to have a full draft application by Christmas.

7. AONB Team 2016-17 Work Programme and budgets update

- 7.1 Phil talked through selected items on the work programme update. He mentioned the submission to NAAONB of three case studies on 2015-16 work to go on to Defra. The suggestion was made for other team members to attend the Board occasionally to discuss aspects of work.
- 7.2 Budgets for the current Financial Year are expected to outturn much as projected. It was noted that various contributions outstanding from Shropshire Council for 2015-16 and 2016-17 amounted to £37,200 and that these did need to be secured. The challenges of the 2017-18 budget were again noted, and the importance of the Commons project as potential income.

8. Date of Next Meetings

Thursday 1st December 2016 (this may be cancelled if there is insufficient business). Tues 17th January 2017, ~~Tues 7th March 2017~~ now Tues 14th March 2017.