

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Transition Board
Minutes of Meeting Thursday 7th December 2017
AONB Partnership office, Drovers House, Craven Arms



Present:

James Williamson (Chair)	Individual member
Andrew Wood	Individual member
Veronica Cossons	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chair)	Parish/Town Council rep
Neil Willcox	Shropshire Council
Tim Jenkins	Shropshire Council
John Long	Individual member
Janine Hayter	Parish/Town Council rep
Cllr David Turner	Shropshire Council

AONB Partnership staff:

Phil Holden	AONB Partnership Manager
Nigel McDonald	Sustainable Tourism Officer (for item 9)
Alison Kay	Administrator (minute taker)

9. Sustainable Tourism Strategy Action Plan (item taken first, while Nigel was available)

- 9.1 The plan is at the final draft stage but is not completed. Agreed that it would be helpful to include a description of the Destination Partnership on the index page. **Action - Nigel**
- 9.2 Nigel McDonald answered questions from the Board for clarification, explaining that the action plan is an overview. Further detail on some of the actions will be developed through the forum of the Destination Partnership or by particular partners.
- 9.3 The Destination Partnership is meeting next week to discuss the Strategy but if more time is needed to improve certain areas, it may not be fully endorsed until January 2018. The Europarc Federation have agreed to an extension to the end of February for the Charter re-application, but will not reduce the fee.
- 9.4 Possibilities are being explored for a new scheme for sustainable businesses.

1. Apologies

Cllr Cecilia Motley	Shropshire Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Chris Turley	Telford & Wrekin Council
Mark Latham	Telford & Wrekin Council

Introductions were taken for the benefit of new members of the Board.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 5th September 2017 were agreed as correct.
- 2.2 James had written to Cllr Robert Macey who has agreed to meet, but no date is yet set.

- 2.3 The Hay Meadow Festival is to be repeated with the AONB Partnership as lead, on Saturday 7th July. It was noted that volunteers will be needed on the day, and there was support for an evening barbecue. It was proposed that the joint Partnership/Trust/Friends event for 2018 take place on the same day as the June Partnership meeting, which is Tuesday 19th, and this was supported.
- 2.4 Europarc had been contacted about the Charter, as discussed earlier.
- 2.5 The AONB Partnership membership changes had been completed. It was agreed to send thanks to George Chancellor for his longstanding involvement in the Management Board.
- 2.6 Presentations by partners about issues for the Management Plan were given at the Partnership meeting. Notes from these have been circulated.
- 2.7 Proposal for increasing capacity in the team is on the agenda at item 6.

3. AONB Team 2017-18 Work Programme update

- 3.1 Joy has accepted the role of Project Manager for the national Upland Commons project. She will start on 2.5 days per week increasing to 3.5 days per week. She will continue to work on Landscape Partnership Scheme until the end of the project in March 2018. It is hoped that she will be able to work on the new project from Drovers House.
- 3.2 It is hoped that Cath can take on the role of Area Facilitator for the commons project, but this will have to go through procurement.
- 3.3 The Stepping Stones project is progressing slowly. The HLF grant process is changing and this will affect the project's proposed bid, and make it more competitive.
- 3.4 The proposed Monuments Volunteering project has support from Historic England, and the project enquiry has been accepted by HLF to go forward for a full application.
- 3.5 Phil drew attention to the fact that an upgrade to the AONB website is required to make the site more functional, especially on mobile devices.

4. AONB Partnership budgets update

- 4.1 It was noted that a small surplus was proposed on 2017-18 due to successful cost cutting and income earning, and that annual turnover was expected to break £1m for the first time.
- 4.2 The current £9,540 net contribution from Shropshire Council is a substantial reduction on previously, due to repayment for support services. This was not intended to be a long term arrangement and needs to be revisited if a positive decision about Conservation Board status is not forthcoming.

5. Conservation Board update

- 5.1 Discussion took place on the issues raised in the paper. The Board felt that attention should still be on the Conservation Board request. It was decided that the two Councils should be asked to write to Defra requesting a decision. **Action – Neil and Mark with Phil**
- 5.2 Potential ways ahead in the event of a negative decision from Defra were discussed. The Board decided that a sub-group (consisting of James Williamson, Andrew Wood, Cecilia Motley or David Turner, Tim Jenkins, Phil Holden) should be convened to explore this further. **Action – Phil**

(David Turner and Tim Jenkins left the meeting).

8. AONB Management Plan Review (brought forward)

- 8.1 It was agreed that farmers within the AONB should be engaged in debate on post-Brexit farming and environment issues. James would also like to improve representation of farmers on the Partnership and the Transition Board, and would like to approach one or two people about possible co-option onto the Transition Board. This was supported.
- 8.2 Following a change of personnel, a new dialogue had been started with the Shropshire Council South Development Management team, and AONB team members had been invited to a training session on landscape matters.
- 8.3 There were no further comments from the Board.
- (Andrew Wood left the meeting).

6. Proposed new Funding & Programmes Officer post and reapplication for Resilient Heritage funding

- 6.1 The hours for the proposed new post are now reduced to 1.5 days/week. The Board agreed to resubmit the Resilient Heritage funding bid in the New Year, not to wait for the Defra decision on Conservation Board. **Action – Phil**. The redeveloped project could be brought to the Board at their February meeting unless the submission date was before this.
- (Neil Willcox and Janine Hayter left the meeting).

7. Shropshire Local Plan Partial Review – Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development, Draft consultation response

- 7.1 Thanks were offered to Hilary Claytonsmith for her contributions to the response.
- 7.2 Discussion took place and the Board supported the response for submission, subject to amendments as follows:
- Add comment about the heritage assets on east side of the A49 road
 - Change of wording in para 11 to be more positive. **Action - Phil**
- 7.3 Phil agreed to send information to Hilary with regard to Natural England work on access to greenspace. **Action - Phil**

10. AONB Trust update (verbal)

No update given due to lack of time.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Dates of Next Meetings –

Tuesday 6th February 2018,
Tuesday 22nd May 2018,
Tuesday 17th July 2018,
Tuesday 4th September 2018,
Tuesday 4th December 2017.
All 9:30am at Drovers House.

Meeting closed at 12:25pm.