

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Management Board
Minutes of Meeting Friday 6th April 2018
AONB Partnership office, Drovers House, Craven Arms



Present:

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| James Williamson (Chair) | Individual member |
| Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chair) | Town/Parish Council rep |
| Tim Jenkins | Shropshire Council |
| John Long | Individual member |
| Joe Manifold | Individual member |
| Veronica Cossons | Shropshire Wildlife Trust |
| Cllr David Turner | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair) | Shropshire Council |
| Cllr Heather Kidd | Shropshire Council |
| Hazel McDowall | Natural England (by invitation) |

AONB Partnership staff:

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| Phil Holden | AONB Partnership Manager |
| Alison Kay | Administrator (minute taker) |

1. Apologies

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| Cllr Chris Turley | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Andrew Wood | Individual member |

2. Minutes of Transition Board Meeting 6th February 2018 and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the Transition Board meeting of Tuesday 6th February 2018 were agreed as correct.
- 2.2 All actions arising from these minutes had been completed.
- 2.3 As Philip Dunne cannot be at the next Partnership meeting, it was agreed to schedule a future Partnership meeting on a Friday so that he would be able to attend.

3. Update on discussion with Defra and next steps

- 3.1 The meeting with Lord Gardiner was recapped for the Board and discussed.
- 3.2 Discussion took place on the recommendation in the paper that alternative forms of independent structure should not be pursued while the national review goes on, and that improvements to the hosting arrangement with Shropshire Council be sought instead. The Board unanimously agreed with this, and that this also needed to be agreed by the Partnership, which had two years ago agreed to pursue an independent structure. It was clarified that the renewed hosting arrangement should be capable of being a long term solution.
- 3.3 After further discussion, the Board agreed that a sub-group be set up to recommend amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Partnership with the aim of improving and strengthening them, before getting them formally agreed by both the Councils.
- 3.4 Some members of the Board felt that the current governance structure is overly complicated and lacks clear accountability and would like to explore ways of improving it.

- 3.5 It was agreed that the sub-group be made up of James, Tim, John, Cecilia and Hilary, with Phil in attendance.
- 3.6 The sub-group would meet at Drovers House at 2pm on Thursday 26th April 2018. A second date of 2pm on Friday 11th May was also set in case needed.
- 3.7 The sub-group will report back to the Management Board meeting of 22nd May 2018, which will then make recommendations to the Partnership for its 19th June meeting.

4. 2018-19 AONB Partnership budget and team work programme

- 4.1 The 2017/18 accounting year had not been closed, so those figures were not final.
- 4.2 The 2018/19 and 2019/20 budgets have been amended to assume the model of Council hosting rather than a Conservation Board.
- 4.3 The 2018/19 budget has been updated to include the increased contribution from Shropshire Council and the HLF Resilient Heritage grant.
- 4.4 For the Rivers project, 2018/19 is the final year of WREN funding. However, extra funding has been received from Environment Agency for 'Unmuddying the Waters'. Hours for Alison Jones have been increased to full time for 2018/19, and ways of retaining her at the end of her current contract are being looked into.
- 4.5 The Shuttles have a new contract with Boultons, and some reserves will be used to maintain the extent of the service.
- 4.6 Extension of contracts have been awarded for Joy, Prue and Joe from the Landscape Partnership Scheme for a few weeks into 2018/19. The Chirbury office has now closed.
- 4.7 The earned income requirement has reduced due to the increased contributions from Shropshire Council, Environment Agency and earned income from the Commons project.
- 4.8 Cash match funding is required for the Commons project, and for the development phase most of this will come from a grant awarded from the Conservation Fund. Cath is now working half time for the project as a fee earning contract for the Partnership. Joy is employed by the National Trust in her national role but based at Drovers House.
- 4.9 A bid has been submitted to be part of a national bid to HLF led by Woodland Trust for 'Trees Outside Woodlands'. We have been shortlisted to 13, from 105 areas.
- 4.10 Invitations have been sent for the 60th anniversary event on 19th June.

5. Resilient Heritage project implementation

- 5.1 The Resilient Heritage bid has been successful following the resubmission for a reduced amount. The bid was a joint application from the Partnership and the Trust to undertake business planning and developing income generation, but not governance.
- 5.3 The consultancy briefs are being prepared to go out. Suggestions for consultancies to invite to bid were requested from the Board.
- 5.4 The Board recommended that the Funding & Programmes Officer be given a financial target.
- 5.5 Suggestions were requested for items relevant to the Management Board for the skills audit.

6. AONB Management Plan Review – follow on from Partnership workshop

- 6.1 The State of the AONB report had been moved on through the Partnership meeting but is still to be completed.

- 6.2 A public survey has been launched using SurveyMonkey. The Board recommended that the survey should be sent to a wider audience by sending to parish councils and the press and by further use of social media. **Action Phil with team**
- 6.3 The results of the workshops at the last Partnership meeting had been collated and would be used to inform the new Plan.
- 6.4 Andrea Ledward, the new Director of Natural Environment at Defra, had asked to visit the AONB on the afternoon of 24th April and a programme was being put together.
- 6.5 Phil will meet with Vincent Maher to progress his suggestions for the Management Plan for planning, arising from the Partnership meeting. Heather, Cecilia and Hilary requested to be involved in a meeting with Vincent. Heather and Cecilia are involved with policy work for appropriate housing development within rural areas, and it was agreed that they will feed information on this into the Management Plan review. **Action Phil, Heather, Cecilia, Hilary**
- 6.6 A corresponding meeting with Mark Latham at Telford & Wrekin Council would also be arranged, and Tim asked to attend this. **Action Phil & Tim**
- 6.7 James suggested a list of the main changes expected for the new Management Plan be brought to the May meeting of the Management Board. **Action Phil**
- 6.8 The recommendation to delay taking the draft new Plan to the Partnership until its October meeting was agreed.
- 6.9 The Board commented on the value of an executive summary of the Management Plan, and the use of appendices to reduce the size of the document. It was noted that some AONBs have considerably shortened Management Plans.

7. Any other Business

- 7.1 The Board was reminded that a new trustee is required for the AONB Trust, following the resignation of Janine Hayter.
- 7.2 It was brought to the Board's attention that there is a planning application being considered for a holiday lodge site in Mortimer Forest. Phil said he thought this was too far outside the AONB to comment on and this was agreed. It was suggested however to monitor the situation and consider at a later date what would be acceptable within the AONB boundary.
- 7.3 Tim Jenkins requested that Alison Kay attend the Terms of Reference sub-group meetings as scribe and this was agreed.

8. Dates of Next Meetings:

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