

West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 23rd July, 2012 at 10.30 am in Cabinet Room 'C' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Peter Malpas, Lancashire Count Council

Committee Members

Cllr Andy MacNae, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor Eileen Entwistle, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Councillor Elaine Sherrington, Bolton Council
Councillor Marie Gray, Chorley Borough Council
County Councillor Jimmy Eaton, Lancashire County Council
Neville Kidd, United Utilities
Mr GH Hammersley, Conservation, Access and Recreation Advisory Committee

Officers

Ms Bronwen Earnshaw, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Fiona Cruchley, Lancashire County Council
Tim Mitcham, Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and north Merseyside

Also in attendance

Alice Kimpton and Alex Lowe were in attendance for agenda item number 9 to give a presentation to the members.

1. Election of Vice-Chair of the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee

Councillor Andy MacNae, Rossendale Borough Council, was proposed and seconded as Vice-Chair of the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee until the meeting scheduled for July 2014 as per the amended Terms of Reference.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor Joyce Kellett (Bolton Council), Councillor Yvonne Wright (Bury Council), Councillor Trevor Maxfield (Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council), Councillor Brian Essex (Rossendale Borough Council) and Tamzin Percival (Rossendale Borough Council).

3. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Andy MacNae declared an interest as a member of a mountain biking club which uses the moors.

4. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 5 July 2011

Apart from the addition of Councillor Joyce Kellett (Bolton Council) as an attendee these were agreed as a true record.

5. West Pennine Moors Revenue Budget 2012

Members noted the report attached to the agenda. Fiona Cruchley informed the meeting that the small budget for the West Pennine Moors had been not been committed until the outcome was known of the recent Heritage Lottery Fund bid. The aim would be to use it to lever in match funding from other sources wherever possible.

6. Partner Reports on Project Activity

Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council

It was reported that any expenditure had been incurred only on maintaining any public rights of way and that they were continually looking for funding to help with any projects.

Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council reported that any expenditure had been incurred only on maintaining any public rights of way and that they were continually looking for funding to help with any projects.

Bolton Council

No members were available to report.

Lancashire County Council

The report had been attached to the agenda. Fiona confirmed that there is no funding for major projects and that Healey Nab is the only part of the moors which is owned by the County Council and has a volunteer Ranger Service, supported by county council rangers. Issues on the Nab mainly related to access. Most other works on the moors related to rights of way issues. The Heritage Lottery Fund bid had required a significant proportion of officer time over the last year.

7. Ranger and Information Services Report - United Utilities

Neville Kidd presented his report as attached to the agenda. He confirmed that United Utilities was now split into seven sections.

They were currently working on Scamp 2 with tenant farms to restore the moors to their original state, to re-wet the moors and to protect water quality.

He also confirmed that there was a full woodland plan for five years and this would be reviewed shortly. Visitors to the moors were increasing and this was encouraging. The service had recently lost one ranger but it was also encouraging that they were able to maintain a ranger service.

The members of the committee expressed their thanks to United Utilities for the work they carry out on the moors and it was noted that over the years the look of the moors has

improved greatly, despite diminishing funds. It was evident that any money available was spent wisely.

Following questions from members, it was noted that:

- the Scamp budget was helping generally with the overall funding budget for the moors and that the farms were in very good condition.
- it was not possible to count user groups (eg walkers, cyclists etc) who access the moors but it was noted that there are spot counts for numbers and these are increasing.
- testing had taken place regarding Phytophthora tree disease by Defra and had shown a 50 hectare span of Rhododendron in a localised area. It had taken 2/3 years to clear this and a recent test had proved negative.

8. Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme

It was noted that the recent Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid had not been successful.

Fiona Cruchley informed the members that there was a meeting with the HLF during the next month to find out exactly where the application failed. She also confirmed that it was unlikely to re-submit as a complete bid but it may be split into more manageable sections and she hoped that other councils and organisations would help with the administration of these where the projects were in their particular areas.

An officer group was to meet on Tuesday 24 July 2012 to discuss the way forward and individual meetings with partners will take place over coming months. It was noted that notification of the outcome of these discussions, and those with HLF, would be sent to members for information.

Neville Kidd reported that the Rivington Heritage Trust had a HLF bid being presented in August, in partnership with Groundwork Trust for the Rivington Terraced Gardens.

9. Site of Special Scientific Interest Presentation from Natural England

Alice Kimpton gave a detailed presentation on the Designation of the West Pennine Moors as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Following the presentation members queried:

- whether councils and the general public would be consulted and this was confirmed as would all interested parties. The support, or objection, would be considered on an individual basis as to the impact on the moors of the concern of the group. It was noted that members could contact Natural England directly if they had knowledge of any group who should be consulted.
- the timescale of the project and it was noted that by Christmas 2013 the site should be designated.
- how members of the general public would be notified and it was confirmed that information could be placed on the West Pennine Moors website to alert people to the consultation and proposed designation. It was also noted that when the consultation was opened there would notices placed on the moors for information. Again if members knew of any suitable groups which could be contacted to get in touch with Natural England.

10. Any Other Business

A copy of the Terms of Reference and the Membership was handed out to all members for information.

It was noted that there was an issue with dog fouling on the embankment on the new bridleway at Roddlesworth as the fencing is in a state of disrepair. This was causing a health hazard to the United Utilities staff when mowing the grass. Fiona Cruchley agreed to contact Nick Haigh to discuss.

It was agreed that a member of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust would be co-opted onto the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee with immediate effect. The Secretary to arrange this.

11. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be scheduled for Tuesday 2 July 2013 at a venue and time to be decided.

It was also agreed that a 'site visit' would take place in the morning and the meeting held in the afternoon. The Secretary and Lead Officer to arrange but if any members wished to view a particular site to contact with details.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston