



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 24th April, 2014 at 1.30 pm in Bentham Town Hall

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson

Committee Members

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles

County Councillor Kevin Ellard

Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council

Councillor Roger W Brooks, Wyre Borough Council

Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Michael Helm, LAPT C

David Kelly, Ramblers Association

Graham Jones, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (for early part of meeting)

Geoff Morries, Friends of Bowland

Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association

Councillor Roger Sherlock, Lancaster City Council

Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council

Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum

Officers

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Nick Osborne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

David Padley, Lancashire County Council

Stephen Murphy, Natural England

Jude Lane, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Tarja Wilson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council

Apologies

Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
James Lloyd, United Utilities plc
County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council
Janet Sharp, Champion Bowland
Barrie Tyrer, Bowland Experience Limited
Martin Putsey, Preston City Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, County Councillor Albert Atkinson, welcomed all to the meeting, round table introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

It was reported to the Committee the sad news that former Committee member Robert Harrison had passed away. The Committee asked that their condolences be passed on to Mr Harrison's family.

The meeting began with an introduction to Bentham from the Chair of Bentham Town Council, Thomas Marshall, who briefly outlined the significance of Bentham (Higher and Lower) to the Forest of Bowland and surrounding areas.

Hen Harriers

Stephen Murphy from Natural England gave a presentation on Hen Harriers. Stephen firstly talked about the history of Hen Harriers and explained that the species was lost from mainland Britain at the end of the 19th century. Following the second World War the species was re-colonised into Britain, particularly in Northern England in the 1960's, up to 25 pairs of Hen Harriers were in Britain in the 1970's and 1980's.

A Hen Harriers recovery project was started in 2002, with the population down 22% in recent years. There was a severe decline in numbers in 2009. It is thought that human persecution is responsible for some of the decline.

Efforts are being made to encourage Hen Harriers to breed in England, and specifically the Forest of Bowland, with a lot of the land within the Forest of Bowland having to potential to home a lot more pairs of Hen Harriers.

Work is being done by northern Protected Landscapes Group, RSPB and Local Raptor Study Groups to assist with increasing the population of Hen Harriers. A Northern England Raptors Forum has developed a Breeding Season Response Protocol to ensure all key stakeholders can respond quickly and effectively.

Jude Lane (RSBP) also explained that, presently, there are a pair of Hen Harriers in the area and their nest is under 24hr surveillance / protection, it is hoped that they will be able to successfully breed.

The Committee noted the presentation and thanked Stephen and Jude for attending and providing such a detailed update regarding the Hen Harriers population.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2014

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2014 be approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

None

5. Budget 2014/15 update

Nick Osborne, Forest of Bowland AONB, provided a brief update on the 2014/15 Budget. It was noted that there are no changes to the Budget, but that the offer made from DEFRA of £208,143 which was reported to the previous Committee meeting had now been accepted.

Resolved: The Committee noted the verbal update regarding the Budget for 2014/15 and that the offer from DEFRA had been accepted.

6. AONB partner updates

A number of AONB Partners provided verbal updates regarding activities taking place in the Forest of Bowland. A Walking Festival was planned in the Wyre. An Outdoor Activities brochure was also being produced for the year. It was also reported that Wyre Council are working in partnership with the Environment Agency to set up a Wyre River Catchment Partnership called 'Wyre Waters'.

It was also reported that in North Yorkshire the Craven Local Biodiversity Steering Group is winding down, it will move into the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Partnership.

7. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

AONB Report – Presentation on headline achievements over the last six months

Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB, outlined all the projects as set out in the report (circulated). This included Bowland Hay Time Project, Network for Nectar, Wolf Fell Peat Resoration and Public Access Improvements, Priority Peat and EU Life Bid, Undergrounding for Visual Amenity Programme, Bowland Revealed, the AONB 50th anniversary arts programme, Champion Bowland, Bowland Experience, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Development Fund, Stony Fold Farm Educational and Trumper Access, Festival Bowland 2014, Forest of Bowland AONB 50th Anniversary Launch, Real Ale Guide to Bowland, A Leap in the Park, Garstang / River Wyre Access for All Path and Monitoring promoted routes across Bowland.

The Committee were pleased to note the number of projects taking place, and thanked all who have contributed to the success of the projects.

The AONB Unit Business Plan for 2014 – 2017 was also circulated to the Committee which provided an update on activity progress since the last meeting of the Committee.

Resolved: That the update on headline achievements in the last six months

8. AONB Management Plan Review

AONB Unit Management Plan 2014/19

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB, briefly explained that following approval of the final draft Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2014/19 at the February 2014 Committee meeting, that the Plan had been approved by Natural England on 21st March 2014. The final designed version of the Plan had now been completed and had been uploaded to the AONB website. At the time of preparing the update for the Committee, three partner local authorities (Lancaster City Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Preston City Council) have formally adopted the Plan.

It was reported that the remaining local authorities plan to consider the Plan for adoption during April / early May 2014. Once notification is received from these partners of this adoption, the Plan will then be formally submitted to the Under-secretary of State for Defra with responsibility for AONBs Lord de Mauley.

David Kelly, Ramblers Association, asked if some stronger wording regarding footpath restoration on blanket bog moorland could be picked up in the next version of the Plan. It was agreed that this section would be reviewed and if necessary updated.

Resolved: The Committee noted the update regarding the publication of the AONB Unit Management Plan for 2014/19.

9. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme update

Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB, provided an update on the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme bid to Heritage Lottery Fund. It was reported that a number of discussions have been held with a variety of groups and organisations, a steering group has been set up and an advisory appointed to support the bid development process. Meetings have also been held with Lancashire County Council's Outdoor Education Centre at Whitehough near Barley to discuss how we might work together to find some accommodation for an eventual project team. Discussions are continuing with potential match funding opportunities, particularly RDPE/LEADER funds and Natural England's new agri-environment scheme which will both be launched early in 2015.

The next steps are to continue to gather evidence of needs and issues, but also to begin to pull together project ideas which will begin to build up a programme of activity. To this a number of consultation events will be held in the Pendle Hill area during June 2014 to which Committee members will receive an invitation. A initial draft project proposal will be presented for consideration at the next JAC meeting in October 2014.

Resolved: That the update regarding the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme – Heritage Lottery Fund bid be noted.

10. AONB 50th Anniversary update

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB, provided an update on the AONB's 50th Anniversary celebrations. Various events have been arranged throughout the Forest of Bowland to celebrate the 50th Anniversary, this began with the launch event and will continue with various events, including picnic days, gala dinner, Champion Bowland events, attendance at agricultural shows and other events. Members of the Committee were encouraged to attend events and promote them as appropriate.

Resolved: That the update regarding the 50th Anniversary of the AONB be noted.

11. Urgent Business

None

12. Dates of Next Meetings

It was noted that the next meetings will be held on Thursday 9th October 2014 (Ribbles Valley venue TBC) and Thursday 23rd April 2015 (Lancaster District venue TBC).

Stuart Benson
Principal Executive Support Officer

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston