



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd April, 2015 at 2.00 pm at
Overwresdale Village Hall, Abbeystead**

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council
Councillor Roger Sherlock, Lancaster City Council
Roger W Brooks
Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Michael Helm, LALC
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Jeremy Duckworth, The Moorland Association

Officers

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Tarja Wilson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Martin Putsey, Preston City Council
Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
David Porter

Apologies

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles
County Councillor Kevin Ellard
County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council

Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council
Phil Johnson, Ribble Valley Borough Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair, County Councillor Albert Atkinson, welcomed all to the meeting. Round the table introductions were made and Jeremy Duckworth representing the Moorland Association was welcomed to the AONB Committee and the meeting.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

Martin Charlesworth made a presentation on the work of the 'Friends of Bowland' and took questions from the Committee. He explained that the Friends of Bowland is a voluntary based group whose aim is to conserve and teach about the Bowland Landscape and its wildlife and flora. It was launched in October 2014 and currently has around 60 members. It is grant funded and carries out improvement works in the AONB, having one practical activity event each month.

During the discussion that followed, the issue of the potential for test fracking in AONBs was raised and concerns expressed; Elliott advised that there had been a government policy change in December 2014 which meant there would be a ban on fracking in AONBs and National Parks.

The Committee noted the presentation and thanked Martin for attending and providing an informative account of the work of the Group.

The Committee was advised that Councillor Whaites had sadly passed away; Councillor Whaites was the Craven District Council elected representative for the Settle and Ribblebanks Ward and had formerly served on the AONB Committee. The Committee express its sadness at the news and agreed that these be recorded in the minutes.

Councillor Roger Brooks, Wyre Borough Council, announced with some regret that he would no longer be the Wyre Member representative for the Forest of Bowland AONB Committee; he had thoroughly enjoyed his time serving the AONB and advised that it had been one of the most enjoyable aspects of his role.

The Committee expressed its thanks for the dedication and commitment shown by Councillor Brooks during the years he had served on the Committee.

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council officer, wished to personally record her thanks, adding that she had appreciated Councillor Brook's great enthusiasm and support over the years.

Elliott Lorimer advised the Committee of changes to officer support in light of the reorganisation of Lancashire County Council (LCC). Note was made of the departure of Stuart Benson, former clerk to the Committee, into a role outside of the Council; the Committee wished to send its thanks and best wishes for the future to Stuart and agreed that these be recorded in the minutes.

Elliott also advised that Nick Osborne, principal officer (LCC countryside service) who had served and supported the work of the AONB and its Joint Advisory Committee for many

years, was taking voluntary redundancy and would be leaving the Council at the end of March 2016. The Committee wished to send it's thanks to Nick for his dedication and support along with its very best wishes for the future and agreed that these be recorded in the minutes.

Elliott advised that Jackie Flynn would be taking over from Nick but was unfortunately unable to make the meeting.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 October 2014

The Committee noted that the minutes attached to the agenda were the wrong ones, for which an apology was made by the clerk.

Resolved: That the correct minutes be made available to the Committee and that they be formally considered at the next meeting.

4. Matters Arising

Owing to the oversight made in respect of the minutes, no matters were raised.

5. Budget 2015/16 update

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB, provided an update report on the revised 2015-16 Budget.

The Committee was asked to note that the accounts as set out at Appendix 'A' take account of the increase in salary costs due to the local government pay increase agreed during 2014 for the financial year 2015/16. This provided for £97,022 for the annual programme of projects to deliver the AONB Management Plan, which included the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) total of £15,000.

The Committee was further asked to note that projects funding would continue to be used as match funding to attract additional income to the AONB Partnership to better deliver the AONB Management Plan.

Resolved: That the Committee note the revised AONB Budget for 2015/16.

6. AONB Partner Updates

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council provided a verbal update to the Committee on activities taking place involving the Forest of Bowland. These included:

Garstang Walking Festival

Alison advised that the Garstang Walking Festival would run from the 9 to 17 May and was being coordinated by the 'Friends of the Garstang Walking Festival'. The Festival helps to

promote the Forest of Bowland and an invitation to attend was extended to the members of the Committee.

River Wye Catchment Project

A project event took place on 22 April. The purpose of the project is to promote and monitor what is on the river and involves the control of invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. She advised of another event to take place at Springfield House in Scorton on 6 May as well as Volunteer Work Programme Days which will include spraying at the waterside. Alison emphasised that links were being made with the Forest of Bowland AONB. Taking a strategic approach, and working in partnership across Lancashire, means that there is a good chance of keeping invasive species at bay.

Ribble Life Partnership

This project, which is being partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund will deliver a range of projects through partnership and community development, to improve the condition, management and awareness of water environments within the Ribble Catchment for the benefit of all. The project will include work in woodlands, wetland and fish passage projects. The project invests in communities and people living in them by developing their skills through education.

David Kelly, Ramblers Association complimented the clean-up that was taking place on the riverbank between Garstang Millenium Green and Scorton along the existing Right of Way. He reported that prior to the clean-up, it had been muddy all year round and felt that it was a massive improvement.

Resolved: That the Committee note the AONB Partner update.

7. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

AONB Unit report - presentation on headline achievements over the last six months

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB, outlined all the projects as set out in the report (circulated). This included Bowland Hay Time Project, Networks for Nectar, Biodiversity projects including the Pennine Peat LIFE bid (news still awaited) and species recovery plans, Traditional Boundaries, Access Improvement Works, Champion Bowland & Bowland Experience, Bowland Scrapbook, Sustainable Development Fund, Bowland Revealed, Festival Bowland, Dark Sky Discovery Sites, Museum of Lancashire Forest of Bowland AONB 50th Anniverary, Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership, Undergrounding for Visual Amenity and the Rural Development Programme for England – LEADER Local Action Groups.

She advised that the new 'mobile friendly' website had been launched in January. The Website was now more interactive and allowed people to upload their photographs of Bowland onto the site, providing the AONB with a great portfolio of pictures. Local

Businesses had also agreed to contribute to meeting the costs of printing promotional leaflets.

She also advised that the Interactive Management Plan had been simplified this year. Elliott Lorimer advised that copies of the Management Plan were available for committee members to take away following the meeting.

Resolved: That the committee note the update on headline achievements over the last six months.

AONB Unit Business Plan 2015/16

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB, presented the report on the AONB Unit Business Plan for 2015/16 (circulated). He referred members to the Plan and asked that if Committee Members had any questions that they emailed him following the meeting and he would respond to their queries individually.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the AONB Unit Business Plan for 2015/16.

8. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme Update

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB, presented the report providing an update on the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The Project Steering Group (supported by the AONB Unit) was in the final stages of putting together the Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme and plan to submit this before 1st June 2015.

Recent milestones in the scheme's development include:

- Agreement from Lancashire County Council to act as lead applicant and accountable body for Stage 1 application
- Presentation of the bid to Lancashire County Councillors 'Bitesize Briefing' at County Hall
- First meeting held of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Board
- Chair of the Partnership Board appointed – Ralph Assheton, Downham Estate and Bowland Bio-energy

The scheme is currently estimated to cost £2.4m and £1.8m grant will be requested from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The remaining £600,000 will be raised from partners, including: the AONB Partnership, Defra's Countryside Stewardship grants, RDPE/LEADER funding, landfill tax funds, local businesses/private sector and others

Elliott referred the Committee to summary details of all 15 projects which were set out in the report, which all fall under one of three main themes – Environment, Economy and Everyone.

There was another board meeting due to take place on 12 May and it was expected that the draft bid would be made available for the Board to approve.

HLF were due to visit the AONB over the summer, with any decisions on the bid being expected in late October /early November.

Elliott advised that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved: That the Committee notes the report.

9. Urgent Business

None.

10. Provisional Dates of Next Committee Meetings

The Committee noted that the next two meetings would be held on Thursday 15 October 2015 in Pendle and Thursday 21 April 2016 in Wyre.

Sharon Montgomerie
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston