

Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Tuesday, 26th January, 2016 at 10.00 am in Ellel Village Hall, Main Road, Galgate, Lancaster, LA2 0LQ

Agenda

1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence	
	Before the meeting commences proper, a presentation will be made by Harvey Hamilton-Thorpe, Project Manager for the 'Ribble Life Together'.	
2.	Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests	
	Members are asked to consider any Pecuniary Interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the Agenda.	
3.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2016	(Pages 1 - 8)
	The Committee is asked to consider approving the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015.	
4.	AONB Revenue Budget 2016/17	(Pages 9 - 14)
5.	Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership	(Pages 15 - 18)
6.	Urgent Business	
	An item of Urgent Business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of	

urgency. Wherever possible, the Chief Executive should be given advance warning of any Members' intention to raise a matter under this heading.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The dates and locations of the meetings to be held in 2016 are:

Thursday, 21 April 2016 in Bleasdale Parish Hall, Wyre Thursday, 13 October 2016 in Preston District

Samantha Gorton Governance Officer

Lancashire County Council County Hall Preston

Agenda Item 3



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 15th October, 2015 at 2.00 pm in Barley Village Hall, Cross Lane, Barley

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council Councillor Jane Parkinson, Lancaster City Council Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council Councillior Ian Thompson, Craven District Council Alderman Roger W Brooks, Wyre Borough Council Michael Helm, LALC Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum David Kelly, Ramblers Association Jeremy Duckworth, The Moorland Association Barrie Tyrer, Bowland Experience Ltd

Officers

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit Tarja Wilson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit Mike Williams, Pendle Borough Council Martin Putsey, Preston City Council Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council David Porter, Lancaster City Council Sarah Robinson, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Apologies

County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association

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Helen Dix, Environment Agency Geoff Morries, Friends of Bowland David Padley, Lancashire County Council David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The current Chair for 2014/2015 Municipal Year, County Councillor Albert Atkinson, welcomed all to the meeting. Round the table introductions were made and members of the public were welcomed.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

The Committee was advised that Councillor Ian Thompson, Craven District Council had replaced Councillor Lin Barrington.

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Resolved: County Councillor Albert Atkinson and County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the 2015/2016 Municipal Year.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

Resolved: The Committee approved the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference for 2015/2016, after the amendment to Roger Brooks by adding the title 'Alderman' to his name.

5. Minutes of the Meetings held on 23 April 2015 and 16 October 2014

Resolved: The minutes of the meetings held on 23 April 2015 and 16 October 2014 were agreed as an accurate record.

Resolutions from these minutes have either been included on this agenda or have since been resolved.

6. AONB Partner Updates

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council

The Discover Bowland brochure which has been devised has been well received by everybody. Volunteers and full-time rangers have done a good job.

Garstang Walking Festival

The Garstang Walking Festival again was a huge success this year. Plans for next year's event are well underway, with around 50 walks and events having been organised. The Festival dates will be 2-15 May 2016.

The Walks from Garstang is a project linked with Healthy Streets and Alison shared the leaflet with the Committee. The leaflet has been funded and the photo on the back is of the volunteers who have created it and also walked the routes. It has been found to be a useful piece of literature and it will be going on the website too. Partnership working with Thornton and Caldervale is also taking place to promote it further. It has been a great success.

The River Wyre Catchment Project (as reported at the last meeting on 23 April 2015), is still on-going and reports are being produced from it. It is hoped that the project will continue next year as there is still a lot more work to do. River Lune and the River Ribble have similar projects also.

Helen Dix, Environment Agency (EA) (presented by Elliott Lorimer)

EA are working with United Utilities (UU) and other partners to formalise a way of preventing UU abstraction points from holding back sediment in the River Langden. At the moment an intake for raw drinking water provides a barrier for gravel which would otherwise move naturally down the river in times of high flow. The gravel blocks up the intake and would otherwise provide important habitat for invertebrates and fish downstream. A group of organisations, also including the Ribble Rivers Trust and the Hodder Fisheries Consultative trialled an approach of reintroducing the gravel (digging it out of the intake and moving it downstream of the barrier) so it could continue to move downstream with the flow. This was successful, so the EA are now supporting UU and working on an agreement for this to become a long-term way of working.

A weir and ford on Kettles Beck (NE corner of the AONB) was recently removed in a partnership between the EA, Amey (construction company), United Utilities and the Lune Rivers Trust. The weir and ford were impeding the passage of fish so it was removed and replaced by a bridge.

EA unfortunately had to investigate a few fish kill incidents in the AONB over the Summer – one on Waddington Brook at Waddington and one on West Bradford Brook. EA think these were due to intense rainfall following a period of hot, sunny weather which resulted in warm water flushing into the watercourses. Many species of fish are intolerant to high water temperatures and it holds less oxygen than cold water. As EA couldn't find any evidence of pollution, they think the temperature change was the cause.

Ribble Life Together –The Ribble Rivers Trust (on behalf of the Ribble Life Catchment Partnership) were recently successful in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of a programme of improvements across the Ribble Catchment. The EA is supporting this development phase and there are several projects which are being developed within the AONB, including some farm advisor training and river walks which Hetty would be able to elaborate on if required.

The Wyre and Lune Catchment Partnership are also making progress and have delivered some fencing and tree planting projects aimed at reducing diffuse pollution from agriculture. I believe these have been outside of the AONB boundary, but other representatives (e.g. Alison Boden) may be able to elaborate if required.

David Porter – Lancaster City Council

David gave an update on the North West Coastal Connections project that is happening in southern Cumbria and North Lancashire, which will also create around 1000 jobs. National Grid are proposing building a tunnel and infrastructure to reduce visual intrusion around Morecambe Bay. The new grid connection will end at Heysham and will therefore have little or no effect on the Forest of Bowland AONB.

A consultation by Lancaster City Council is about to commence on a plan outlining potential sites for future development in the district, including commercial and residential sites. Significant development sites are proposed for Dolphinholme and east of the M6, near Caton on the western side of AONB. Details are available on the City Council website.

Michael Williams – Pendle Borough Council

The Pendle Walking Festival took place between 15-23 August 2015 and a large number of the 68 walks were in Bowland. A competition was held to encourage families to take part in the festival and this proved to be popular. It will be held again in 2016 in the school holidays and the week before the Blues Festival.

The Tour of Britain bike race covered lots of AONB and coverage was streamed to over 100 different countries, so hopefully this will have a positive outcome and see an increase in visitors to the area.

Resolved: That the Committee note the AONB Partner update.

Networks 4 Nectar

Dr Sarah Robinson from the project presented the aims of the project from April 2014-October 2015 which were:

- to create 'stepping stones' of nectar rich grassland and 'mini meadows'
- to encourage planting and management of high nectar value plants
- to provide advice ad guidance on management
- to involve businesses, community groups, schools and the public

The methods were as follows:

- Add species to existing grassland
- Start from bare ground
- Use seed
- Use plug plants
- Use trees and shrubs
- Provide bug houses

And the results:

- A total of 25 sites created & managed
- 'Flagship' sites created
- Schools project underway 'Wildflowers into the Meadows'
- Private land, public open spaces, businesses, schools & church groups involved
- Public events

Sarah also presented case studies to the Committee from Lancaster Beekeepers and Stirk House Hotel. Wildflowers for the Meadows involved around 110 children from five schools in the Ribble Valley.

Next steps for the project are:

- Hay Time work continues on two new sites with funding from Coronation Meadows project (BIFFA)
- LEF application to grow specific species to enhance nectar patches and meadows
- Link established with Kew Gardens Millennium Seed Bank
- Species work continues on Bowland's scarcest plant species
- Further funding being pursued

Cllr Ian Thompson asked as to whether Network 4 Nectar could help with the hedges as this is something that North Yorkshire County Council can no longer provide. It would need volunteers and risk assessments, but felt that negative could be turned into a positive situation here and involve this project.

Resolved: This proposal be discussed further between Cllr Thompson and Sarah and that the Committee thank her for this presentation.

7. Revised Estimates 2015/16 and Revenue Budget 2016/17

Elliott Lorimer presented a report on the Revised Estimates 2015/2016 and Revenue Budget 2016/2017. He stated that the Defra grant offer is expected before Christmas following the Government's announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review planned for 25 November 2015.

Given the uncertainty this poses, it is proposed that the Committee meets in January 2016 to consider again the Revenue Budget 2016/17.

Elliott drew the Committee's attention to page 19 of the agenda papers and the following points:

Gross Expenditure Income Net Expenditure Additional resources **Resolved:** that the Committee agreed to

- i) note the 2015/16 Revised Estimates with the amendment to Column 3 figure from £357,813 to £358,888
- ii) approve the 2016/17 Revenue Budget as set out in the report
- iii) subject to the approval of (ii) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets
- iv) hold a special 'budget' Committee meeting in January 2015 (date to be confirmed) to review 2016/17 Revenue Budget, following confirmation of the Defra AONB grant offer.

8. AONB Team Report

The Committee received the AONB Unit report which provided updates on a whole range of issues and projects, as attached to the agenda and also verbally presented at the meeting by Hetty Byrne.

Cathy Hopley agreed to inform the Committee of the outcome of the bid made by the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership as soon as it was received.

With regards the Dark Sky Discovery Site accreditation, Hetty Byrne agreed to speak to Michael Williams with regards an alternative site for Pendle to put forward and as soon as accreditations for the other sites have been received will inform the Committee.

Information on the Underground for Visual Amenity programme has been sent to Parish Councils and the Committee requested that they also be sent a copy of the letter.

Resolved: i) That the report be noted.

9. Planning and Development and the Forest of Bowland AONB

The report attached to the agenda papers outlines two planning and development matters for consideration by the Committee in relation to the Planning and Development Protocol between Natural England and the AONB Partnership and also the FoB AONB Obtrusive Lighting Position Statement and Guidance.

Following a brief discussion it was:

Resolved: that the Committee agreed to

- i) consider the draft Protocol, offer comments and if minded, approve adoption of the by AONB Partnership.
- ii) consider the draft AONB Obtrusive Lighting Position Statement and Guidance, offer comments and if minded approve adoption of the policy by the AONB Partnership

10. Hen Harriers in the Forest of Bowland

Elliott Lorimer gave a verbal update which had been received from James Bray, RSPB Bowland Project Officer.

There were a total of seven nesting attempts in Bowland in 2015. Six of these failed and one was partially successful with one surviving juvenile.

The season started very optimistically with four pairs laying eggs. However, four males disappeared in unexplained circumstances from these active nests soon after the females had laid full clutches, which resulted in these nests failing.

Lancashire Police appealed for information about the disappearances of the males.

Highlander, who was born in Bowland in 2014 (and was satellite tagged just before she left the nest) was one of the birds that returned to breed in Bowland this year. Her first attempt failed when her first partner disappeared. She laid a second clutch in the same nest but this also failed. We think this might have been due to the adopting male being a young bird who lacked the experience to provision her well enough. Her third attempt in a different valley with a third male was predated by a stoat on the day that her last egg hatched. The RSPB are following her movements, and she is still in Bowland.

One other nest hatched chicks with four chicks fledging from this nest. However, soon after three of them were found dead nearby, leaving only one surviving juvenile. The corpses were sent off for post mortem analysis but the tests were inconclusive. We suspect that they succumbed to either starvation or disease or a combination of both.

Last year, two pairs of hen harriers bred successfully in Bowland, fledging a total of nine chicks.

Only one pair of Peregrines bred successfully in Bowland this year. In the recent past the number of pairs nesting was in the double figures.

Over 20 people volunteered to watch the harrier nests in Bowland this year, with employees of United Utilities, the AONB and the local police all giving their time to help. The RSPB are very grateful for the volunteers' help, as well as to the shooting and farming tenants on the United Utilities Bowland estate for their help.

Resolved: the Committee noted the report.

Following discussion, Jeremy Duckworth from the Moorland Association commented that it would be useful to invite the Wildlife Crime Police Unit to discuss further at a meeting as this is a number one priority across the board. This requires Government involvement and currently there is a Joint Recovery Plan awaiting Ministerial approval. Jeremy also reported that all partners have signed up to the Joint Recovery Plan, except the RSPB.

11. Any Other Business

Cllr James Starkie raised the issue again regarding the replacement of the AONB boundary signs in Pendleside. The signs are ready, but are yet be installed.

Resolved: That Elliott agreed to speak with Cllr Starkie and Dave Padley (LCC officer, who has the replacement signs) to seek to resolve this and also to discuss repainting old signs.

12. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business received.

13. Date of Meetings in 2016

The dates and locations of the next meetings are Thursday, 21 April 2016 in Wyre District and Thursday, 13 October 2016, in Preston District.

As discussed there will be a special 'budget' Committee meeting in January 2016 (date and venue to be agreed).

Samantha Gorton Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council County Hall Preston

AONB Revenue Budget 2016/17

(Appendix A refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Revenue Budget 2016/17
- b) AONB 'Projects' provision and Sustainable Development Fund

Background

The budget provision for the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee is funded by eight constituent local authority partners and grant from Defra, which is also enhanced by an additional contribution from United Utilities.

A core team is established from this budget provision, to assist in the delivery of the statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee and the local authorities. The AONB Unit continues to work to a 3-year business plan (draft to be presented for approval at JAC meeting in April 2016), on which partners are consulted to ensure it reflects local priorities for the AONB.

Due to uncertainty regarding the future Defra AONB grant when the AONB JAC met in October 2015, it was agreed to meet in January 2016 to re-consider the AONB Revenue Budget 2016/17.

a. Revenue Budget 2016/17

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 4, the costs associated with the Committee's Projects and management service in 2016/17, including estimated pay and price levels.

Provision reflects the new core team of 4 full-time equivalent posts, operational budgets for core activities and projects:

- Principal AONB Officer
- Development and Funding Officer
- Sustainable Tourism Officer
- Community Projects and Events Officer

Total Committee income from contributions has been included in the budget for 2016/17 based on estimated contributions from funding authorities, equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for 2015/16[#]. In addition, it is also based on a continuation of a contribution from United Utilities, matching the level requested from district/borough councils.

Income in respect of grant support from Defra towards core costs and projects costs has now been included on the no reduction to the 2015/16 grant offer. In the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review outlined that funding for National Park and AONBs would be protected up to FY2019/20. A grant offer letter for 2016/17 from Defra is expected by the end of January 2016 to formally confirming this.

[#] North Yorkshire County Council has proposed a reduction of 20% (£1350) in their core funding contribution to the AONB Partnership (made from its 'Waste and Countryside' budget). Discussions between relevant officers and members are on-going to identify other County Council funding to allow the authority to maintain its full contribution for 2016/17.

b. AONB 'Projects' provision and Sustainable Development Fund

'Projects' provision

It is assumed that the Defra grant for 2016/17 will continue to be a single grant offer to be used in ways which the AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers will deliver the best performance in terms of achieving delivery of the Management Plan, without restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity.

Therefore, the level of provision for 'Projects' is based on the resources estimated to be available to the Committee after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at the existing office base, plus related core activities costs.

AONB Sustainable Development Fund

Since 2005, this 'Projects' provision has been able to support an AONB 'Sustainable Development Fund'; a grant scheme currently managed in partnership with Champion Bowland, which supports local projects that bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the AONB. However since 2011, the annual total pot available to SDF has had to be reduced very significantly and this appears to have affected the scope and ambition of project applications, as well as demand for grant support.

With increasing and competing demands for 'match-funding' to support the delivery of other AONB Management Plan objectives which offer significant added value, it is therefore proposed that the AONB Sustainable Development Fund is closed to new applications from April 2016. Any remaining funds for FY2015/16 will be committed before 31st March 2016.

Champion Bowland will continue to offer a small grant scheme (up to £750) to support local projects, which benefit the environment, local communities and visitors.

The attention of the Committee is drawn to the following:

1. Gross Expenditure

It is proposed that total expenditure be £359,653 in 2016/17, similar to that in 2015/16. The total expenditure results from providing for the effect of increased pay and prices, staff increments, employers national insurance and superannuation contributions, host authority support costs and reflecting a level of provision for 'Projects'.

2. Income

Defra grant towards core costs and projects costs of £208,143 reflects no reduction on 2015/16 grant funding levels.

A contribution of £6,800 from United Utilities has been included, on the basis that the company can maintain a level of contribution equivalent to that of the district/borough councils.

3. Net Expenditure

The £303,343 net cost of management services is based on maintaining the level of contributions from the funding authorities requested for 2015/16. It is essential that the funding authorities are notified of the approved expenditure and requested to make due provision in their own estimates.

4. Additional Resources

It should also be noted that, as normal, resources from other funding bodies for projects in AONB will continue to be sought during 2016/17 (e.g. Lottery Funds, European Union, Government Agencies, Lancashire Environment Fund), which are over and above the Joint Advisory Committee budget provision 2016/17.

Furthermore, the AONB Unit contributes to the generation of additional schemes and projects in liaison with organisations operating in the area e.g. local authority countryside services or rivers trusts.

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

- i) approve the 2016/17 Revenue Budget as set out in the report
- ii) subject to the approval of (i) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets
- iii) agree the closure of the AONB Sustainable Development Fund from April 2016 onwards

APPENDIX 'A' AONB Partnership Budget

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Income John State John State<	Sub total of Non Core Costs	97,031	97,285	94,832
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	Total Income	303,343	303,343	303,343
	Contrib. to support costs (LCC in-kind)	55.545	55.545	56.310
		358,888	358,888	359,653

* Based on no reduction of AONB grant, but awaiting formal confirmation from Defra

Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership

(Appendix B refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Progress update on Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership
- b) Implications for AONB Unit staffing and delivery

Background

In November 2016, the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme awarded a Stage 1 pass to the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership to develop and deliver the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (PHLP). The proposed £2.7m scheme (of which £2.02m is now 'earmarked' by HLF) comprises a programme of activity to re-connect people from both urban and rural communities with their landscape and their past, to help safeguard the area's wildlife and heritage and to improve people's access to this popular countryside area.

The AONB Partnership has been successful at Stage 1 application and HLF has now made an initial grant offer of £156,000 towards the costs of an 18 month 'Development Phase'. This will support the AONB Partnership to employ a PHLP Development Officer, offer a Graduate placement and also contract consultancy support to work up full details for the Stage 2 application (see Appendix B).

The Stage 2 application requires more precise information to be provided in the form of a Landscape Conservation Action Plan (including detailed project plans, cost estimates, a signed partnership agreement and security of match-funding for Year 1 of the Delivery Phase). Submission of the Stage 2 application is planned for summer 2017 and if successful would release subsequent funds for the Delivery Phase (£1.86m over 4 years) from HLF.

The development phase is fully funded by HLF, with additional 'cash' match-funding secured from the AONB Partnership, the Pendle Hill Fund, the Arts Council and 'in-kind' support services from the County Council as the accountable body.

a. Progress update on Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership

The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Board met on 18th November 2016 to agree next steps following the award of the Stage 1 pass. In future, the Partnership Board will report to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee on scheme progress, via JAC Members on the Board and also the Landscape Partnership Development Officer.

The AONB Unit received a grant notification letter from HLF in late November 2016, outlining the Development grant offer and details of the funding earmarked for the Delivery Phase. AONB Unit staff have since met with the HLF case officer and an appointed project mentor to discuss the documentation required to allow HLF to issue a formal 'Permission to Start' letter (including accountable body information, project management structures/procedures and a proposed recruitment process for the Development Officer and Graduate placement).

The AONB Unit staff have also begun reviewing and preparing various briefs for contracting consultancy services for the surveying and planning work outlined for the Development Phase. This is to allow this work to be advertised as soon as permission to start is given by HLF. In particular, the Phase 1 Habitat Survey needs to begin in early spring 2016 to meet approved timescales.

b. Implications for AONB Unit staffing and delivery

<u>Employment of the PHLP Development Officer</u> The Principal AONB Officer has submitted a 'Recruitment Business Case' to the accountable body, Lancashire County Council.

It is proposed to recruit the PHLP Development Officer (Grade 9) via the secondment of the Development and Funding Officer (Grade 8) from within the existing AONB Unit. This officer has been instrumental in the successful Stage 1 application and therefore will offer continuity, knowledge, understanding and experience of the scheme and the area. This secondment will allow the Development Phase to progress quickly towards the submission of the Stage 2 application within the prescribed timeframe outlined above. HLF Development Phase funds will be used to pay the costs of the Development Officer.

HLF will allow the secondment of an existing member of staff on the basis that the position vacated is temporarily 'back-filled'. Therefore, it is proposed that this 'back-filled' position will be a temporary Grade 8 position with fixed-term contract for up to 18 months or pending the return of the substantive post holder, whichever is the sooner. This position would be recruited via the normal County Council recruitment process and the AONB Revenue Budget will be used to pay these costs.

Other AONB Unit input

In addition, the PHLP 'in-kind' officer time will be offered by other AONB Unit Staff, namely:

- Principal AONB Officer to liaise with accountable body and PHLP Board
- Sustainable Tourism Officer to manage the development of a communications strategy and 'sense of place' consultation for PHLP This will take place alongside a similar review of the AONB Partnership's overall communications strategy)

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

i) note the progress report and offer comments on the development of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership.

Appendix B – Approved Development Phase budget for PHLP

Income	Secured	Total (£)
Forest of Bowland AONB	Yes	20,000
Arts Council England	Yes	7,000
Pendle Hill Fund	Yes	10,000
Non-cash contributions	Yes	22,750
Heritage Lottery Fund	Yes	156,400
Total		216,150

Development Phase - Income

Development Phase - Expenditure

Cost Heading	Description	Cost
		£
New Staff Costs	Development Officer salary, inc. NI & SA, over 18 months + 12 month graduate placement	80,900
Professional fees	External consultancy support to prepare actions plans for the LCAP	88,800
Recruitment	Advertising costs, candidate expenses	500
Contingency	10%	20,000
Non-cash contributions	LCC central departmental and technical costs	22,750
Other costs (accommodation)	Accommodation costs in local office base	3,200
Total costs		216,150