



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 20th April, 2017 at 2.00 pm in Sports Pavilion, Bentham Moor Road, Burton-in-Lonsdale, Carnforth, LA6 3LJ

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Jane Parkinson, Lancaster City Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Councillor Ian Thompson, Craven District Council
Michael Helm, LALC
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum

Officers

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Liz Small, North Yorkshire County Council
Mike Williams, Pendle Borough Council

Apologies

County Councillor Kevin Ellard, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Val Wilson, Wyre Borough Council
Mike Burke, Natural England
Jeremy Duckworth, Bleasdale Estate
Graham Jones, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
David Porter, Lancaster City Council

Alex Shutt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Tom Wiggans, Preston City Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were presented on behalf of the Committee members and Officers listed above.

Before the meeting started the Committee received a presentation from Sarah Littlefield, the Secretary and Project Manager for the Lune Rivers Trust, a charity dedicated to the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and improvement of the River Lune throughout its whole length and its associated tributaries.

Sarah described a number of current and recently completed projects undertaken by the Trust. These included working with businesses and partners to mitigate the impacts of the December 2015 floods and to put in place measures to prevent any future flooding.

The Trust was also working with partners to:

- Open up manmade obstacles allowing the upstream movement of migratory fish;
- Restore and repair the spawning side channels and pond of the Lansil section of the Lune;
- Provide innovative solutions for improving water quality and flood risk management throughout the North West.

Other activities included:

- Working with 16 to 25 year olds to help build up their CV's through environmental volunteering and project work through the 'Dirtworks' initiative.
- Working with volunteers from the Lancaster and Morecambe College to clear flood damaged areas and assist with a number of environmental projects;
- Hosting several events to log and remove invasive non-native species from the area including Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed;
- Providing educational presentations for local community groups and schools.

Sarah also reported that the red squirrel population was doing well in the North West. This was in part due to the culling of grey squirrels in the area. Sarah invited anyone interested in increasing the red squirrel population or managing the grey squirrel population to contact her.

The Committee noted the presentation and thanked Sarah for her informative contribution.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 November 2016

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3 November 2017 be signed and confirmed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

5. AONB Budget Update

Elliott presented a report on the revised and updated budget for 2017/18.

The revised estimates took account of the protected AONB funding settlement agreed by Defra in January 2016. In addition, minor adjustments had been made to salaries and on-costs to reflect the 1% local authority pay increase.

The budget allowed for £97,671 for an annual programme of projects to help deliver the AONB management plan. Elliott emphasised that this 'Projects funding' would continue to be used for match-funding to attract additional funding.

Resolved: That the revised AONB budget for 2017/18 be noted.

6. AONB Partner Updates

The Chairman asked representatives of partner organisations around the table to update the Committee on activities.

Alison Boden referred to the earlier presentation with regard the Lune Rivers Trust. She advised that Defra was currently developing a strategic plan to improve the water environment of the River Lune and the River Ribble. Alison therefore suggested that this would be a good time to approach Defra with the aim of securing funding in this respect. This could be used to develop community involvement projects such as identifying the number of invasive non-native species of plants along the catchment areas.

Alison circulated a leaflet with details of the Garstang Walking Festival which would be held from the 6th to 14th May, 2017.

Mike Williams reported that the Pendle Walking Festival would be held from the 12th to 20th August. The meeting was informed that the event would promote the Pendle Way which was now 30 years old, and complement the work of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership.

Andrew Laycock circulated a short guide on the advice available to eligible businesses wishing to obtain grant funding for projects in the Craven District. He advised that businesses should be encouraged to apply for funding and urged interested parties to contact the District Council as soon as possible.

Resolved: That the updates as set out above, be noted.

7. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

A) AONB Unit Activity Report, October 2016 – April 2017

The Committee received the AONB Activity report which provided details of some of the key AONB projects and activity delivered by the AONB Unit, since the last meeting in November. These included:

- The Bees Needs and Pollinator project – This would assist large scale land-owners within the Northern Upland Chain to support the five strategic aims of the National Pollinator Strategy.
- Funding for additional peatland restoration on the Abbeystead Estate.
- The delivery of 18 hedge-laying training days during 2016/17.
- Obtaining funding for maintenance and fingerpost signage.
- Producing the 'AONB Discovery Guide' which included details of 'Festival Bowland 2017'.
- Meeting with partners to discuss future actions to address the decline in the UK curlew population.

In addition, the meeting was informed that the AONB Unit was looking at the governance arrangements of Champion Bowland. It was hoped that by the end of the year, Champion Bowland would be established as Charitable Incorporated Organisation and registered as a charity. This would hopefully enable it to extend and enhance the range of its planned activities and fund raising opportunities.

The meeting was also given an update on the establishment of the Northern Hill Farmers Panel. It was noted that their remit would include promoting high nature value farming in the uplands and supporting development of future agri-environment schemes to support HNV farming, as the UK leaves the European Union.

B) Draft AONB Unit Business Plan 2017/18

The Committee received the draft AONB Unit Business plan which represented an ambitious programme of activity whilst recognising the current economic climate.

Alison Boden commented that Wyre Borough Council had a large volunteer base and would welcome the opportunity of participating in a variety of funded projects with various AONB partners in the future.

Resolved: That:

- i) The AONB Unit Activity Report be noted.
- ii) The AONB Unit Business Plan 2017/18 be approved.

8. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Update

Cathy informed the meeting that work was underway on the Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application which would be submitted in September 2017.

She also presented an update on the Partnership's programme of planned projects. These were categorised under 4 headings – 'Environment', 'Economy', 'Everyone' and 'Bringing it altogether':

Environment projects would include:

- Repairing the network of dry stone walls and hedgerows that give the landscape its characteristic appearance.
- Seeking funding to repair footpaths and to provide a shelter for walkers on the Pendle Hill summit.
- Further work to restore woodlands and eradicate invasive species.

Economy projects would include:

- Creating opportunities for graduate trainees.
- Developing the 'Discover Pendle' guide to promote tourism and boost the local economy.
- Working with Lancaster University on the 'What's a hill worth' project.

Everyone – Projects providing an opportunity for everyone included:

- A series of linked projects investigating and interpreting the Pendle Radicals: free thinkers and non-conformists.
- A number of developing projects including the Story Map and the PEN project (focusing on providing outdoor opportunities for people suffering from isolation or mental health issues).
- Community archaeology and heritage placements to widen understanding and interest.
- Funding.

Bringing it all together:

- To weave together the two different sides of the hill, , and the variety of people who live, work in and visit the area with a creative approach, building cohesion, introducing dialogue and creating shared points of view.

The Committee raised questions in relation to the proposed shelter for walkers as referred to above. In response, Cathy advised that they were working with Manchester University on a design for the proposed shelter which would be built into the existing dry stone wall and remain open-topped whilst still offering shelter from the wind.

Resolved: That the oral update be noted.

9. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

10. Provisional Dates of Next Committee Meetings

The Committee noted that the next two meetings would be held on Thursday 19 October 2017 in Ribble Valley and Thursday 19 April 2018 in Lancaster.

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
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Preston