



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 19th October, 2017 at 2.00pm in Bolton-by-Bowland Village Hall, Main Street, Bolton-by-Bowland BB7 4NS

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Michael Helm, LALC
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum
James Bray, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Officers

Jayne Ashe, AONB Unit Graduate Trainee
Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
David Porter, Lancaster City Council
Alex Shutt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Tom Wiggans, Preston City Council
Graham Nuttall, Wyre Borough Council
Barrie Tyrer, Bowland Experience
Samantha Gorton, Lancashire County Council

Apologies

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council
Councillor Jane Parkinson, Lancaster City Council
Councillor Ian Thompson, Craven District Council
Andrew Laycock, Craven District Council

Councillor Val Wilson, Wyre Borough Council
Mike Burke, Natural England
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
Graham Jones, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Paul Reynolds, Champion Bowland
Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
Liz Small, North Yorkshire County Council

1. 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 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

2. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the meeting.

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

3. Presentation on Pennine Peat LIFE Project, Dr Chris Miller

The Committee received a presentation from Dr Chris Miller, Pennine PeatLIFE which is a €6,502,760 blanket bog restoration project funded by the European Union (EU) LIFE programme with match funding from the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water, United Utilities and Yorkshire Water.

Pennine PeatLIFE will be delivered over 4¹/₂ years by North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Forest of Bowland AONB.

The aim of the Pennine PeatLIFE project is to demonstrate and evaluate geographically appropriate Blanket Bog restoration techniques suited to the harsher climatic environment of northern England and the development and showcasing of a financial payment for ecosystem services (Payment for Environmental Services) mechanism in the UK Peatland Code.

The four objectives are:

- i) Restoration techniques for re-activating blanket bogs in Northern England.
- ii) Demonstrating the UK Peatland Code, as a viable payment for ecosystem services for upland peatlands by working with landowners.
- iii) Demonstrating new approaches using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to assess vegetation change.
- iv) Disseminating the demonstration activities to policymakers, landowners and managers, government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other key stakeholders in the UK and across the EU.

The expected results are:

- i) Blanket bogs restored.
- ii) Avoided losses sequestered after five years.
- iii) Wider stakeholder awareness as to the importance of peatlands.
- iv) A better methodology for the use of UAVs in restoration monitoring.
- v) Detailed assessment of a PES mechanism – UK Peatland Code.
- vi) A UK and EU wide increase in the awareness of the UK Peatland Code.
- vii) Development of a legally binding contract for PES.

Dr Miller was thanked for his detailed presentation.

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none declared.

5. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

Resolved: The Committee approved the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference for 2017/2018.

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2017

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017 were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising from them.

7. AONB Partner Updates

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

Graham Nuttall had sent a report regarding a small area in Wyre of AONB, Cobble Hey Farm Scorton that were to have interpretation panels installed up to Brock Valley. Elliott Lorimer thought this had now been completed.

Resolved: That Hetty Byrne follow up the interpretation panels' query with Alison Boden.

Colin Price asked if there were any grants, as well as the Parish Grant, to keep the work on the lowlands in Clapham ongoing.

Resolved: That Colin Price and Elliott Lorimer will speak regarding grants outside of the meeting.

8. Revised Estimates 2017/18 and Revenue Budget 2018/19

Elliott Lorimer presented a report on the Revised Estimates 2017/2018 and Revenue Budget 2018/2019.

a) Revised Estimates 2017/18

Since last reported in April 2017, the AONB Unit has been successful in obtaining additional funding of £165,500 to support delivery of projects within the area.

Resolved: That the Committee:

- i) Noted the 2017/18 Revised Estimates.
- ii) Approved the 2018/19 Revenue Budget as set out in the report.
- iii) Subject to the approval of (ii) that the funding authorities be requested to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets.

9. AONB Unit Activity Report

The Committee had received the AONB Activity report which provided details of some of the key AONB projects and activities delivered by the AONB Unit since the last meeting in April 2017. These included:

- Haytime – this had been the most challenging year to date because of the wet weather. 25 hectors to work with and only two dry days together between mid-July and October.
- Wildflowers for the Meadows Open Day was held at the beginning of July and around 150 people attended. A series of instructional videos have been produced by Pendle Film Makers Association and these can be found on the AONB website.
- Due to remaining funds in the AONB Sustainable Development Fund the AONB made a grant to support the development of new community-based web platform "Pendlefolk" as part of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership development phase.
- Champion Bowland – started the process of renewing their governance arrangements jointly with Bowland Experience Directors to explore the benefits of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The application was submitted over the Summer and should expect to hear something shortly and will announce its' launch as soon as possible.
- Bowland Experience – going forward it will not have a formal organisational structure but will continue as an informal tourism network. "Start Tips for Profit" free business workshop was held on 26 September 2017.
- Bowland Explorer has been providing a service between Lancaster and Bentham on Sundays and Bank Holidays and links with transport through Bowland. Farm Visit Transport Fund is a small grant which schools can apply for. Six schools have made 10 visits and the fund will be promoted again next year.
- Discovery guides have been produced again and the collation of next year's guide is currently underway.
- AONB Calendar profits go to Champion Bowland and the photos for it are submitted online and then the select few appear in the calendar. Last year's profit was approximately £750.

- Events – the Festival Bowland annual events programme offered a host of opportunities for people including Bluebell strolls, moorland bird safaris, bat walks, heritage discovery, a brown hare walk and a trek to the summit of Pendle Hill. There was also the Garstang and Pendle Walking Festivals and the Ribble Valley Rambles. Family-friendly events ranged from crafts and kite flying to pond dipping and shelter craft, plus the Gruffalo walks at Beacon Fell and the Countryfile Show.
- Route monitoring – a group of volunteers monitor and maintain promoted routes on the Forest of Bowland website and keep them up-to-date. There is also an App version called View Ranger available now, so it can be accessed on mobiles and tablets more efficiently. A refresher training session and recruitment drive was organised during the Summer of 2016, which saw a number of new volunteers joining existing members.
- Upskilling Lancashire – a European funding bid application for skills for growth was submitted on 10 March 2017 and notification was received in July 2017 that the outline application was successful with the partnership invited to submit a full application by 21 September 2017. If successful the project is likely to start in January 2018 and end in September 2020. The project aspires to increase the competitive and productive capability of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and microbusinesses across the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership area.
- Undergrounding for Visual Amenity – 3km of overhead lines between Cow Ark and Newton have been removed which has made a big difference to the landscape. This is part of the Undergrounding for Visual Amenity Programme run jointly between AONB and Electricity North West Limited (ENWL).
- Landscape Planning – the Principal Officer has commented and attended a number of meetings relating to various local plans and policies affecting the AONB. In addition, the Principal Officer has reviewed 81 planning applications between April and October and provided comments for 15 of these.

Councillor Starkie commented that the Wildflowers Scheme was coming to an end and would it be possible for the villages to plant their own. It was reported that the expertise is still available in Sarah Robinson and that it could also be funded through the Pendle Hill project.

Resolved: Councillor Starkie will speak to Cathy Hopley regarding funding for wildflowers.

It was also noted that with regards wooden footpath signs, Lancashire County Council has begun a process of replacement and renewal in Lancaster District. Colin Price asked for it to be recorded that the metal AONB signage is looking good.

James Bray from RSPB was asked to provide an update on hen harriers in Bowland. James reported that it had been another blank year for hen harriers with no nesting taking place. One male held territory for a month, however there was no mating. Two peregrines did fledge chicks. Merlin population is stable and it was recorded that it was the best year on the United Utilities estate for this raptor.

10. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership update

The Landscape Partnership (LP) delivered stage 2 of the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in September 2017 and it is hoped that a response will be received by Christmas. The AONB/LP team will lead the remaining 10 or so projects. Currently applying for match funds and drafting project plans for individual projects and carrying out a pilot activity. The final bid is just under £2 million.

Cathy Hopley and Jayne Ashe were thanked for putting the bid together.

Resolved: that the updates be noted.

11. Management Plan Review - Outline Plan

The Management Plan published in 2014 is due to be reviewed under the periodic review timetable set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The report attached to the agenda provides the context for the Review and an outline plan and timetable for consideration by the Committee. Several of the review stages will be open to wider comment from all interested parties, partly through circulation of review documents, but also using on-line consultation, public consultation events and local information. If any of the Committee want to join the Management Review Group please let Elliott know.

Resolved: The Committee:

- i) Noted the report and offered comments.
- ii) Approved the outline plan for the Review.
- iii) Agreed for the AONB Principal Officer to notify partner authorities of the Committee's intention to carry out the Review.

12. Any Other Business

Countryside Service, LCC

As part of the Council's transformation the Countryside Service will reduce significantly from March 2018.

Sites will remain LCC responsibility, however will also look at commercial opportunities and possibly business lettings.

13. Urgent Business

There had been no items of urgent business received.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next two meetings would be held on:

Thursday, 19 April 2018 in Lancaster
Thursday, 25 October 2018 in Pendle

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston