



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 19th April, 2018 at 2.00 pm in Melling Institute, Hornby Road, Melling, LA6 2RA

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
County Councillor Shaun Turner
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Jane Parkinson, Lancaster City Council
Michael Helm, LALC
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum
Jackie Monk, Environment Agency
Rosemary Budd, Natural England

Officers

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
David Porter, Lancaster City Council
Alex Shutt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Sam Gorton, Legal and Democratic Services, LCC

Apologies

Councillor Val Wilson, Wyre Borough Council
Marilyn Pilkington, Friends of Bowland
James Bray, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Andrew Laycock, Craven District Council

Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Liz Small, North Yorkshire County Council
Tom Wiggans, Preston City Council
Mike Williams, Pendle Borough Council

1. 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.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2017

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record following the amendment on page 4, Item 9 AONB Unit Activity Report, first bullet point – change the word 'hectors' to 'hectares'.
There were no matters arising from them.

4. Matters Arising

There was an issue raised regarding road signs in the Goosnargh area being pushed round to face the wrong way and that a more secure fastening was required to stop this happening.

Resolved: That County Councillor Atkinson agreed to speak to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport regarding this issue.

The situation for birds of prey, and in particular the hen harrier, in Bowland was raised. Elliott Lorimer, Lancashire County Council commented that he was aware of the on-going prosecution for case involving persecution of peregrine falcons in Bowland. James Bray, RSPB reported that hen harriers have been sighted in and around Bowland more this spring, however was unable to say anymore on this and the prosecution. He also reported that a pair of peregrines had been seen on Pendle Hill recently.

5. Planning Policy in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

David Porter, Lancaster City Council gave a short presentation on the planning policy in the AONB.

There was a proposal in 2013 that Lancaster and South Lakeland Councils develop a Local Plan for Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB.

On 28 February 2018, two councils submitted the final plan and the hearings are planned for June 2018. There would be one joint plan for the AONB and the test will be to see if it succeeds at examination.

For the Arnsdale and Silverdale Local Plan, the City Council had made a call for potential development sites. 130 sites had been put forward for development. A detailed analysis of these sites was made, which particularly considered the impact on the landscape if such a site was to be developed. Of the 130 sites assessed, nine had been put forward for inclusion in the Local Plan.

There were 15 accompanying planning policies for Arnsdale and Silverdale which had been jointly commissioned, assessed and written by both Councils.

Some of these policies could be applicable to the Forest of Bowland.

Work on developing policy statements had been progressed by David and members of the AONB Funders Group, working closely with local planning authorities. These statements could be formally adopted by the JAC at a later stage and made available for local planning authorities to consider when required to review their Local Plans in the future.

Resolved: i) That David Porter be thanked for his presentation.
ii) That David Porter report back at the next meeting on the planning inspectors report following the examination.

6. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partner Updates

Alison Boden updated the Committee on the Garstang Walking Festival, with many of the events in the Festival having been included in the Discover Bowland brochure. Alison reported that health and wellbeing was a big part of the festival's agenda and it was very important to residents as well as visitors. Training courses had also been undertaken by volunteers on helping to survey and maintain Public Rights of Way.

Wyre Council staff and volunteers had been working with AONB to produce a new interpretation panel for the Brock Valley. Some changes had been required due to significant flooding events affecting some of the routes, making some walking routes impassable.

7. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Budget Update

Elliott Lorimer presented a report on the revised and updated budget for 2018/19 which took account of the protected AONB funding settlement agreed by Defra in January 2016.

There was a significant increase in salary costs in the revised budget from the position presented in October 2017. This reflected the additional costs of establishing two part-time positions as follows:

- AONB Countryside Access Officer (0.5fte)
- AONB Farming and Wildlife Officer (0.4fte)

The positions had been created to help address the loss of support previously provided to the AONB Partnership by Lancashire County Council Environment and Community Officers who helped to deliver aspects of the AONB Management Plan.

The budget allowed for £69,649 for an annual programme of projects to help deliver the AONB management plan. Elliott emphasised that the 'Projects' budget would continue to be used by the AONB Unit to attract additional external income to supplement the Partnership budget and help to deliver the AONB Management Plan.

The Committee requested that an item for information on the AONB Unit structure be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Elliott also informed the Committee that the lease for the offices in Dunsop Bridge ends in September 2019 and future accommodation options for all AONB staff (including Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Team) would be investigated from late 2018.

Resolved: i) That the revised AONB budget for 2018/19 be noted
ii) That there is an item on the next agenda with regards an update on the AONB Unit structure.

8. Delivering the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan

a) AONB Management Plan Review

Elliott Lorimer informed the Committee that the review was ongoing and that a Management Plan Review Group had been established and an online survey was going live from today and would be available for all to offer their views on the AONB and the work of the Partnership. This was the [link](#) to the survey and it was out for consultation until 25 May 2018.

The first working draft of the plan would be in June, then a refined and final draft would be available in September/October when formal consultation would take place for approximately 6-8 weeks and the local authorities would be asked to comment.

Resolved: That Elliott Lorimer would keep the Committee updated on the progress of the Management Plan.

b) AONB Unit Activity Report

Sandra Silk gave an update on the activities the AONB Unit had carried out in the last six months and highlighted areas from the report that was attached to the agenda.

- Peat Restoration – Hawthornthwaite was at the top of the catchment between Langden Brook and the Wyre. An area of deep peat which has had additional gully re-profiling and re-wetting followed by re-seeding with grass seed and heather brush. A film about the peat work on Abbeystead Estate had been produced and would be available on the AONB website in the very near future.
- Hedge laying – Nine training sessions were held during the 2017/2018 season involving 38 people. 424 metres of hedge was laid over four sites at Crook O'Lune, Lancaster, Fell View Camp Site, Scorton; Higher Gills Farm Rimington and Lane Side Farm, West Bradford. Next season, they were looking to focus some sessions on young people – especially the Young Farmers group – as encouragement was needed for the hedge layers and trainers of tomorrow.

- Bowland Experience – Bowland Experience Limited closed as a company at the end of 2017 but the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network would remain active in its place.
- Cluster Business Leaflets reproduced – this was due to popular demand – Gisburn Forest Bike Trails and Teashops and Villages in Bowland. The Gisburn Forest and Stocks leaflet had been updated to include wider visitor information for the businesses that had made contributions to be included in the listings. The Teashops and Villages leaflet now included more village information including history and walking opportunities – encouraging people to stay and explore.
- Training for Bowland Experience Members Autumn/Winter 2017-2018 - Opportunities included two social media workshops run by Salar Media at the Shireburn Arms in October 2017 and Wyreside Lake Fisheries in January 2018. 12 business attended in all. Also a Sense of Place/Know your AONB workshop was held at Holmes Mill in Clitheroe for managers of James' Places business.
- Annual Sustainable Tourism Forum – this was held at Browsholme Hall's Tithe Barn in November 2017. The focus was a celebration of achievements of Bowland Experience and Champion Bowland over the past decade. A link to the film can be found [here](#).
- Discover Bowland – 50 people celebrated the launch of the Discover Bowland 2018 guide hosted at Gisburn Forest Hub in February. The guide included everything from walking routes and wildlife information to features on traditional countryside skills, archaeology and local food. It also highlighted two new Bowland visitor itineraries (Journey to the Centre of the Kingdom and Gisburn Forest and Stocks Adventure) – these were the first in a series of five planned over the next 12 months or so and were to cover the whole AONB. They would provide inspiration for short breaks – what to do and where to stay and eat. Each would have offers and discounts provided by local businesses. Holding the launch at the Hub meant that people had the opportunity to try out the Champion Bowland Trampler, which was now located there and available to hire via the café. The vehicle could be used on a five mile easy access route which linked the Hub with the Birch Hills Trail, Festival Bowland – of the 70+ events in the calendar for the 2017 programme, figures show from 65 of them, there were 1662 attendances over these events. This year three themes had been introduced, running for approximately two weeks each, which sit within the main programme: Springtime Wildlife (late April/early May), Meadow Magic (early July) and Bowland by Night (late September). The idea of the themes was to focus on particular aspects of Bowland and perhaps persuade people to stay in the area during that time.
- Promoted Routes – in preparation for the launch of the Journey to the Centre of the Kingdom, maintenance work had been carried out on several footpaths in and around Dunsop Bridge, including the Hodder Bank Fell circular walk, in anticipation of increased use of the paths which were highlighted in the new feature.
- Bowland Explorer – the minibus service would run again this summer on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays and will commence on 27 May 2018 and finish at the end of September 2018. Organised by the Bentham Line Community Rail Partnership and the Dales and Bowland CIC, it runs between Bentham and Clitheroe and along its journey it calls at Ingleton, Clapham, Gisburn Forest/Stocks, Slaidburn, Newton and Waddington. The bus connects with rail services in both Bentham and Clitheroe allowing visitors from West Yorkshire and Manchester to travel to Bowland on public transport. It also provides a route into Bowland from

Lancaster on a Sunday morning when no rail service is available. It is also a great opportunity for people to access walking routes and visit Bowland's pubs and cafes without having to use a car.

- Pendle Hill Farmer's Network - The AONB Partnership submitted a funding application to Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund in November 2017 to support the development of a farmer facilitation group in the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (PHLP) area. The group would identify and address local training/skills gaps to help deliver better outcomes for biodiversity and landscape from existing and new agri-environment schemes. 21 farmers/land managers within the PHLP area signed up to be involved in this group. Natural England confirmed the bid was successful in December 2017. The project would support one day/week dedicated time from PHLP Farming and Wildlife Officer and one day/week PHLP Business Support Officer to develop the network, provide group support and training events/workshops.

c) AONB Unit Business Plan

Elliott Lorimer reported that this needed updating as soon as possible and would include staffing updates including roles and responsibilities.

- Resolved:**
- i) Elliott Lorimer would circulate as soon as this was available.
 - ii) A staffing update would be given at the next Joint Advisory Committee.

9. National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Update

The report circulated with the agenda provided an update on key areas of policy work being progressed by the National Association for AONBs to strengthen and raise the profile of AONB Partnerships at a national level particularly within Government.

There are two main parts to the policy:

- i) Statement of commitment
- ii) Proposal to commission a review

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Environment Plan for the Future

The Plan sets out the Government's goals for improving the environment, within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than was found. The plan formed the culmination of over two years work and consultation with environmental bodies, including close work with the National Association for AONB (NAAONB).

The NAAONB were in early discussions with the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs and Natural England about the proposed review and would be fed back to the AONB Partnerships and Conservation Board as it progressed.

Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was currently inviting views on the Government's proposals for future agricultural policy. The consultation was the first step towards a new agricultural policy outside of the EU with the intention of securing a "bright future for farming and the environment".

The NAAONB had again been working closely with Defra in the development of these early proposals and in particular the nature of and delivery mechanisms for future Environmental Land Management Schemes outside of the EU. The NAAONB had presented an offer to Defra focused on using our statutory Management Plans as the framework for identifying priorities upon which any future schemes should focus within our individual AONBs.

Environmental Land Management Schemes

The main proposal of 'Health and Harmony' was a new agricultural policy that would be underpinned by payment of public money for the provision of public goods to include environmental enhancement and protection, better animal and plant health, animal welfare, improved public access, rural resilience and productivity.

Resolved: That the Committee:

- i) Noted the AONB update report and offered comments.
- ii) Approved the AONB Principal Officer to continue liaising with and assisting the NAAONB on key policy work, in particular bidding for delivery pilots for the new Environmental Land Management schemes within AONBs.

10. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Update

The report as attached to the agenda, provided an update on progress in establishing the Pendle Hill Lancashire Partnership (PHLP) scheme, following the successful Stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund approved in December 2017.

It was agreed to have a partnership update as a standing item on future agendas of the Committee.

- Resolved:**
- i) That the update report on the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership be noted.
 - ii) That a standing item be added to future agendas of the Committee on Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership updates.

11. Urgent Business

25 Year Environment Plan Northern Forest

Elliott Lorimer reported that he had received a letter from Pendle Borough Council on the Government's 25 year Environment Plan's proposal for a Great Northern Forest and that Lancashire had not been included in the plan. Following discussion with Pendle Borough Council, they were proposing to seek support for the inclusion of the County from Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership.

Resolved: That the Committee approved to support Pendle Borough Council should they decide to progress with this proposal. Elliott Lorimer agreed to write to Pendle Borough Council to offer the Committee's support.

National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative

This was a £24 million fund managed by National Grid available to AONBs and National Parks affected by large, high voltage overhead powerlines. The fund will consider proposals to improve the condition of the landscape and some AONBs had been successful in gaining funding to support creation and management of hedgerows, dry stone walls and generally enhancing the landscape close to the overhead lines.

Resolved: That the Committee agreed for the AONB Unit to progress a potential bid to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on:

Thursday, 25 October 2018 in Pendle District
Thursday, 18 April 2019 in Wyre District.

The proposed date of Thursday, 18 April 2019 in Wyre will need to be rescheduled. The Committee will be informed when a new date has been agreed.

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston