

West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 10th September, 2013 at 10.00 am in The Barlow, Edgworth, Bolton

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Jackie Oakes

Committee Members

County Councillor Sean Serridge
Cllr Andy MacNae, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor Kim Snape, Chorley Council
Councillor Trevor Maxfield, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Councillor Stephanie Brookfield, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Councillor Brian Essex, Rossendale Borough Council
Councillor Tony Cummings, Bury Council
Councillor Robert Caserta, Bury Council

Officers

Guy Barker, United Utilities
Daveen Wallis, Wildlife Trust
Amy Cowburn, Natural England
Fiona Cruchley, Lancashire County Council
Ms Tamzin Percival, Rossendale Borough Council
Ms Lindsey Blackstock, Chorley Borough Council

1. Election of Chair of Area Management Committee

County Councillor Jackie Oakes was unanimously agreed to be the Chair of the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee until the meeting in July 2014.

2. Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Marie Gray (Chorley Borough Council, Councillor Joyce Kellett (Bolton Council), Joanne Keenan (Natural England), Howard Hammersley (Conservation, Access and Recreation Advisory Committee) and Tim Mitcham (Wildlife Trust).

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 23 July 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Terms of Reference and Membership of Area Management Committee

It was requested that the membership list be changed to reflect that Bolton Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council are now not funding councils.

6. WPM Revenue Budget

The report was noted by the members.

7. Partner Reports on Project Activity

- Blackburn-with-Darwen - no report was received.
- Bolton Council - the report attached to the agenda was noted by the members.
- Lancashire County Council - the report attached to the agenda was noted by the members. Fiona Cruchley confirmed that the majority of the work on the moors was carried out on Healey Nab and the public rights of way.

8. Ranger and Information Services Report

The report was presented as sent out with the agenda. The attached newsletter was also handed out to the members at the meeting. It was suggested that if members needed more up-to-date information they logged on to the www.forestplans.co.uk website.

It was noted that Guy Barker was deputising for Hazel Gregory until February 2014 whilst she was on maternity leave.

It was also noted that whilst the ranger services had lost staffing numbers the issues raised were still trying to be covered and the funds were spread over the area as evenly as possible.

Following a request regarding funds it was noted that if anyone had a request for funds to be used to get in touch with Guy Barker direct for further information.

Following further queries it was noted that the dam work at Foulden Wood would weather with age, there was tree planting going on as per the SCAMP 2 initiative and there was an issue with birds' egg being stolen. Guy confirmed that if the area is awarded SSSI status it would receive more resources. In the meantime rangers were only able to do so much.

9. The Three Towers

A summary of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid had been attached to the agenda and she suggested that if anyone wanted a full copy then please contact her direct as this was a 50 page document.

Fiona confirmed that the bid was submitted at the end of May and the decision would be known sometime during October 2013. If the bid was successful it would allow for a 18 months - 2 years development phase when the fine detail of the plans would be looked into.

At that stage the Committee would need to meet to suggest a sub-group to take this phase forward.

If the bid was successful the start date of the actual project would be mid 2015.

It was noted that the Heritage Lottery Bid team were making a visit on 11 September 2013 to look at the bid area in more detail.

Following a query re feedback from the recent information day held earlier in the year Fiona confirmed that substantive and valuable feedback had been received. A copy of the minutes in the form of wall frieze was placed on the West Pennine Moors website for information. It was also requested that this frieze be available for general viewing.

Councillor Essex wished to thank everyone involved in this project even without the benefit of the decision.

The Wildlife Trust reported that they had been successful in obtaining grant funding to help local groups to get involved and motivated.

10. Site of Special Scientific Interest Update - Natural England

Progress has been made with the additional survey work required for the notification process to continue following last year's initial vegetation and fungi surveys.

Amphibian and reptiles: An amphibian population survey was completed this spring across the draft SSSI area at 32 ponds however preliminary results suggests the site does not meet the selection criteria for its amphibian assemblage. The reptile survey is due to be completed in September as not all survey attempts could be carried out during the spring and summer due to the very hot weather experienced during the survey season. The results should be made available in October.

Fungi: The site failed to meet the selection criteria for waxcap fungi following last year's survey at selected grassland sites, however a further survey at some of the best sites identified from the last survey has been commissioned again for this year autumn. Last year was a particularly bad year for fruiting and it is thought that some of the sites could reach the threshold of 12 species counted at a single visit if surveyed again this year. The results of the survey should be made available in December.

Further NVC work at Musbury Heights and Anglezarke: This is required to establish whether these areas should be included within the proposed SSSI boundary for habitat interest as well as for breeding bird interest. These areas were previously excluded from phase II survey due to the lack of peatland habitats present.

Refinement of last year's vegetation survey and presentation of results: Habitat condition assessments had not been completed for all habitats by the end of the survey season last year and therefore has had to be completed during the survey season this year. The final report is due to be delivered by our contractors this week and the findings will be published on our website in October following QA from National specialists.

Due to the additional survey work that has needed to be conducted this year it is likely that the SSSI proposal will be considered by Natural England in the summer of next year and the site formally notified by September 2014. This will allow us to undertake further owner/occupier and stakeholder liaison in early 2014 and receive external feedback on the proposed SSSI boundary and the preliminary results of our survey work.

A formal update on the notification process shall be sent to all owner/occupiers and stakeholders by the end of September and uploaded onto the West Pennine Moors website in order to inform everyone of the new project timetable.

A map of the area is attached to the minutes for information.

11. Any Other Business

Nothing reported.

12. Date, time and venue of Next meeting

Unless a meeting is arranged to discuss the successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid the next meeting of the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee would be held on Tuesday 8 July 2014. Time and venue to be decided.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston