

## **West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 15th July, 2015 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston**

### **Present:**

#### **Chair**

County Councillor Jackie Oakes, Lancashire County Council

#### **Committee Members**

Councillor Kim Snape, Chorley Council

Councillor Gordon France, Chorley Borough Council

Councillor Mrs Jean V Rigby, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Councillor Brian Essex, Rossendale Borough Council

Councillor Adrian Lythgoe, Rossendale BC

Neville Kidd, United Utilities

Hazel Gregory, United Utilities

Tim Mitcham, Wildlife Trust for Lancs, Manchester & N Merseyside

Michael Counter, Representative for Local Advisory Groups

Ben Williams, Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside

#### **Officers**

Fiona Cruchley, Lancashire County Council

Lindsey Blackstock, Chorley Council

Andy Grundy, Bolton Council

#### **14. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephanie Brookfield, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Amanda Wright and Mick Houlding, Natural England.

#### **15. Minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2015 and 8 July 2014**

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2015 and 8 July 2014 were **agreed** as a correct record.

#### **16. Partner reports on project activity**

##### **Lancashire County Council**

Fiona Cruchley gave the Committee an update on project activity since the last meeting and re-iterated that as in 2013/14, Lancashire County Council activity in the West Pennine Moors continues to be limited, but mainly extends to a ranger post which covers Healey Nab as part of overall duties, complemented by the work of a dedicated team of volunteer rangers, who patrol the site on Sundays, carry out site checks and help interpret the site to visitors.

Fiona reported that maintenance of the public rights of way network is ongoing as part of the statutory responsibilities of the County Council (often carried out in partnership with United Utilities' ranger team)

However, she also advised that a project had been developed, which pays nominal fees to Parish Councils and community groups to undertake routine maintenance on Rights of Way on behalf of the County Council. If anyone is interested in finding out more, they should contact Fiona Cruchley.

Clarification was sought on whether the task and finish group was still meeting and it was confirmed that proposals for management of the Moors Area considered by the task and finish group were still being explored and that an update would be provided later in the meeting under Agenda Item 6.

Members paid compliment to the standard and condition of signage within the WPM and the standard of bridge repairs that had been carried out.

### **United Utilities**

Neville Kidd gave the Committee an update on activity since the last meeting and included:

- Clearing back, thinning out and mowing at Jumbles
- Work at Crookland Road Car Park
- Drainage work in Rivington at Anglezarke and Blackwood High School
- Footpath extension at Spizers Edge
- Signing in Smithills
- Japanese Knotweed Control
- Path and Step Refurbishment
- Replacing Fencing at Bradshaw Valley
- Friends of Lever Park tree labelling

### **Lancashire Wildlife Trust**

Updates were given to the Committee in respect of:

- New Grasslands Project, in its first year, but with the possibility of a presentation to the next meeting of the AMC
- Biodiverse Society, a Heritage Lottery funded project, which supports people by providing training courses, mentoring and engaging with school children in respect of biodiversity.
- Blanket Bogs in the WPM – a bid had been submitted, although funding had not yet been confirmed. It was hoped to be able to provide a positive report to the next meeting.

Neville Kidd reported to the Committee the SCAMP project, delivered over the last five years, and which had aimed to re-wet Moors, and re-create Bogs that were degrading, was due to come to an end.

Councillor Jean Rigby advised that there was a poaching problem at Entwistle; Neville Kidd was aware that there were issues with poachers setting up on the river bank; Ian Harper, the Wildlife Warden and the Police were getting involved.

Councillor Snape reported that Chorley Council had given £5,000 to Friends of Healey Nab, to be included in their joint bid for funding with LCC.

Councillor Essex reported that the LWT was undertaking a programme of Japanese Knotweed eradication on the River Ogden; to which Rossendale BC had made a financial contribution. A suggestion was made that this might be included on the agenda for next time.

Neville Kidd added that the problem of invasive species was growing; to bring it under control would be a massive undertaking, and involve a 3 to 5 year programme of works.

### **Local Advisory Groups (LAGs)**

Michael Counter, representing the Local Advisory Groups within the WPM advised that in future issues raised in the minutes of the LAGs would feed into AMC meetings, so that these could be brought to their attention.

The Chair thanked partners for the updates provided and it was **resolved** that the update reports be noted.

### **17. Rivington Terraced Gardens:**

Ben Williams, from Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside made a presentation on an HLF funded project which Groundwork have been undertaking to preserve, protect and repair Rivington Terraced Gardens.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

It was noted that plans for the future included further proposed project work to conserve, protect, repair and interpret the Gardens. In terms of timeframes, this has required a Stage 2 HLF submission which would be submitted in August, with a decision expected in December.

Assuming the application was successful, further design, development and tendering would take place through 2016, with a 12 month implementation phase during 2017; followed by management and maintenance from 2018-20.

Should members wish more details, they should contact Ben by emailing him at: [ben.williams@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:ben.williams@groundwork.org.uk)

Or alternatively they could find further details on the Rivington Terraced Gardens Facebook page.

Members expressed their thanks and enthusiasm about the presentation and were keen for the Committee to take a visit to Rivington Terraced Gardens;

It was **resolved** that such a trip would be organised for AMC Members post September.

#### **18. Verbal Update on SSSI notification project**

Fiona Cruchley reported to the Committee in Mick Holding's absence. The application for SSSI designation has been ongoing for a very long time. At the moment, outstanding applications for designation have been put on hold nationally, and therefore no decision would be made on the application for SSSI status for the West Pennine Moors.

Members expressed concern about the potential for waste and mineral (quarry) planning consent to be granted within the area which may have a detrimental impact upon the landscape and putting at risk the designation being applied for.

It was **resolved** that a letter of representation be prepared on behalf of the Committee and submitted to the Secretary of State. It was pointed out however, that in taking this action, this did not preclude individuals on the Committee from making private representation on the same issue.

It was also **resolved** that a further update on SSSI designation be requested for the next meeting.

#### **19. West Pennine Moors Task and Finish Group Next Steps**

Fiona Cruchley presented the report of the task and finish group on future governance and activity.

She advised that the last meeting of the Area Management Committee established a task and finish group to look at how the Committee's work could be progressed with the resources currently available.

It was recognised that joining up activity around the West Pennine Moors is crucially important, building on a long history of cooperation. It was felt that despite limited resources available to local authorities at present that the group needs to continue meeting and looking at creative ways to maintain activity and ensure that the broad range of interest in the area was represented effectively.

#### **Priorities identified**

- Getting WPM designated – as soon as possible as SSSI.
- Strengthen links between officer working group and area management committee
- Strengthen links between local advisory groups and area management committee

- Recognition of the role of volunteers in managing the area – and potential for a project to encourage better coordination of this
- Ensuring relevant partners are represented on Area Management Committee – current membership is strong from local authorities and conservation organisations but more limited from access and recreation groups

It was reported that over the next 6-12 months, there were a number of actions to be undertaken and that these would be as follows:

- Investigate the potential for a project to join up the volunteering opportunities and good practise in the area – including how they can support maintenance of access routes. Review which organisation could best host this project, and which groups currently make significant contributions to the area – this could include Friends of Healey Nab (maintaining trails), Lancashire Wildlife Trust (managing their sites and monitoring wildlife) and parish councils. Identify potential sources of funding to support this work, and lead organisations for delivering this.
- Identify additional interest groups that should be invited to join the AMC.

Suggestions were put forward by Members, particularly around making greater use of volunteering and exploiting links with partners, charities and social enterprise companies such as Pennine Prospects to further the aims of the AMC in protecting, conserving and promoting the natural and cultural heritage of the West Pennine Moors, promoting sustainable development within it and encouraging enjoyment of the area.

The Chair thanked Fiona for updating the Committee and it was **resolved** that the report be noted.

## **20. Any Other Business**

None was raised.

## **21. Date of Next Meeting**

It was resolved that the next meeting of the West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee would take place on the following dates and at the following locations:

- Wednesday 27 January 2016 at Jumbles Country Park
- Wednesday 13 July 2016, location to be determined

A date and time was proposed for a visit to the Rivington Terraced Gardens, as 23 September 2015, meeting at 2pm, at the Barn in Rivington; refreshments would be provided for those in attendance.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and concluded the meeting.

I Young  
Director of Governance,  
Finance and Public Services

County Hall  
Preston