



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 22nd October, 2020 at 2.00 pm in Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

County Councillor Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council

County Councillor Shaun Turner, Lancashire County Council

Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council

Councillor Joyce Pritchard, Lancaster City Council

Matthew Upton, United Utilities

Mike Pugh, Champion Bowland

David Kelly, Ramblers Association

Chris Kynch, Lancashire Association of Local Councils (Parish Councils)

Ginny Hinton, Natural England

Officers

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council

Richard Camp, Lancaster City Council

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Alex Shutt, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Hugh Clear Hill, North Yorkshire County Council

Christina Marginson, Preston City Council

Sam Gorton, Legal and Democratic Services, LCC

Sarah Robinson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit

Apologies

County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council

Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Marilyn Pilkington, Friends of Bowland

David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council

Andrew Laycock, Craven District Council
Robin Gray, Lancashire 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 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

2. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

All were welcomed to the meeting, introductions made, and apologies presented on behalf of the Committee members and officers as detailed previously.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

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

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager, Lancashire County Council, informed the Committee that membership for Lancaster City Council should be Councillor J Pritchard not Councillor J Parkinson and that this would be amended accordingly.

A request was made to Elliott Lorimer to contact the Moorland Association to identify representation for this Committee.

The Committee was also informed that a request had been made from Barry Tyrer, who was a volunteer, with regards to possibly have a member with archaeological interests on the membership. As detailed in the Management Plan, it is recommended that the membership is regularly reviewed to ensure the right representation is appointed to the Committee.

Resolved:

- i) The Committee approved the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/2021 following the amendment as detailed.
- ii) That Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager contact Barry Tyrer and the Moorland Association with regards to representation, as well as reviewing the membership as a whole to ensure the right representation is on the Committee.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 October 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

In terms of the Haweswater Aqueduct project, Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager, Lancashire County Council, provided the Committee with an update following a meeting that had taken place with colleagues from United Utilities and from the Consultants, Jacobs, who are working on the project.

The Committee noted that some consultations mentioned at previous meetings did go ahead, however, some were curtailed due to the current COVID-19 pandemic as they were due to take place in Spring. Since then, there have been over 6,000 responses to an online consultation. Elliott Lorimer, along with a Senior Landscape Architect and Senior Ecologist from Lancashire County Council have been consulting with Jacobs and United Utilities on pre-applications prior to submission of the planning applications for proposals, and discussions have focussed mainly on the compounds for the launch and reception sites and also surplus materials from the tunnelling work. Currently the preferred option for the removal of surplus materials is to look at whether there is some restoration remediation that can take place at Waddington Fell Quarry, rather than being moved through to the A59.

Planning applications are expected to be submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancaster City Council for sections of the tunnel, alongside an application to Lancashire County Council in relation to the amendments for agreements for restoration and remediation at the quarry.

Matt Upton, United Utilities had been in contact with the Project Team prior to this meeting and agreed to circulate a presentation giving further details of the updates below of where the project was up to:

- i) Face to face exhibitions took place in March
- ii) A virtual exhibition is online at www.harpconsultation.co.uk
- iii) Ongoing meetings with stakeholders will continue around the planning elements.
- iv) From a design development perspective, there has been some refinement. Originally there was seven shafts proposed in the AONB, which has now been reduced to four.
- v) The construction access routes are also being defined.
- vi) There is also further field survey work ongoing which will ultimately inform the Environment Impact Assessment and subsequent grounds inspection works.
- vii) Opportunities in Bowland to benefit from bio-diversity net gain.
- viii) Hodder Water Treatment Works project started in Spring and the main construction work is due to complete in 2022, with reinstatement following in 2023.

It was confirmed that there is some spoil from Wray and there is an intention to look at that and potentially put some of that spoil close to the reception site near Lower Houses Barn.

6. Partner Updates

Wyre Borough Council

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council provided an update on the planned programme for Festival Bowland, conservation activity and access works. The Star Gazing event was very successful with over 30 people attending in February. Following the commencement of lockdown, events had to be postponed including the Garstang Walking Festival. From August, all activities that have been run are following the rule of six people, including the health walks. These walks have been welcomed, particularly with those people who feel isolated. Volunteering also had to stop due to COVID-19 and was able to restart it mid-July (again to the rule of six) and work continued with the River Wyre Catchment Partnership on flood management.

Work is also continuing on access improvements on the Wyre Way Upper Catchment and redoing the way marking. It was noted that all contacts with the Rangers and Countryside Services are booked in and registered for Track and Trace and everything is fully planned in advance.

The Ranger Service has also carried out a food hub delivery service and continues to provide this service throughout the Borough including Scorton and Bleasdale and volunteers also helped provide this service as well. Signs and notices were also erected in response to the guidance given by Government and the Service responded to people's non-compliance and members of the public's concerns.

The biggest impact has been the Staycation which has had an increase on visitors to the sites and litter has caused issues and has been removed by staff, volunteers and the Local Authorities as well as other issues, ie fires and people getting lost.

Planning work continues for activities going forward into 2021/2022 in whatever format that may be due to the ongoing pandemic and understanding the limitations and learning from each other about good practice. A huge thank you was noted to the Forest of Bowland Team for their Zoom sessions and delivering great activities.

North Yorkshire County Council

Hugh Clear Hill from North Yorkshire County Council updated the Committee on the Local Government Reorganisation that was taking place in North Yorkshire and that the formal invitation had now been issued by the Secretary of State to the Local Authorities to put forward proposals for a change to Unitary status. There are two models, the County Council's preferred model is the single unitary and the districts are proposing an East/West split. The change could potentially be in place in April 2022. It was noted that the White Paper had been delayed.

RSPB

Jeremy Sutton from RSPB gave an update on Hen Harriers in Bowland. There were eight nests in Bowland this year, seven on the United Utilities Estate and one on the Duchy Estate. Five of the nests in Bowland were successful and produced only six chicks, which possibly was due to the inclement weather at the end of May/early June. A grant application had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Green Recovery Grant for capital works for Curlew in Bowland. If successful it will be a joint project working with the Rivers Trust and the AONB to try and deliver this for Curlew, where farmers and landowners are not in existing Defra schemes.

United Utilities

Matt Upton, United Utilities, gave an update on the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) and is currently working through the programme for this year and up to 2025 on the scheme. It involves a number of objectives including blanket bog restoration work, vegetation management framework and prioritising restoration projects. There are a number of farms on the United Utilities Estate that will be identified to

undertake investigations and field surveys which will be carried out before the end of March 2021.

At Fell Wood, Barley, United Utilities need to look at felling the wood and plans need to be drawn up to carry this out. Access and surveys are currently underway to support planning and this is an early indicator of the intentions to fell the wood and look at recreational areas to be put in place as well as replace a large area with native planting and improving biodiversity. Work will continue with stakeholders and the AONB to support those plans.

There has also been a marked increase in anti-social activities over the last six months and particularly throughout the lockdown period, and an increase in vandalism, fly tipping, littering and fires. It was noted however, that things had started to quieten now.

Work is continuing on the Pennine Peat Life Project and a lot of good work has been carried out, however, it has been hampered quite significantly by poor weather and COVID-19, albeit good progress has been made. Materials have been flown in over the summer via helicopter. The latest update from the Project Officer is that they are now a third of the way across the site putting in stone, timber and peat dams primarily and also reprofiling a lot of the gullies and hag edges. There is still quite a significant amount of work to be done as well as a large part already having been completed.

Lancaster City Council

Richard Camp, Lancaster City Council informed the Committee that the Lancaster City Local Plan had undertaken a partial review in terms of climate change of the adopted plan and consultation is underway currently, finishing on 20 November 2020 and there may be plans/policies that overlap the AONB. A Green Infrastructure Strategy is also being developed and looking at how that links into biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks.

7. Revised Estimates 2020/21 and Revenue Budget 2021/2022

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager, presented the report as set out in the agenda papers, on the revised estimates 2020/2021 and revenue budget 2021/2022.

a) Revised Estimates 2020/2021

The Revised Estimates took account of the changes in comparison (see Appendix A, column 3) with the Original Estimates in column 2. The principal revision related to an estimated reduction in travel and subsistence costs for the AONB Unit staff due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The net effect of this change allowed an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 'Projects' programme totalling £68,879 to be delivered in 2021/2022.

In addition, it is anticipated that the AONB Unit will be in receipt of £720,000 in additional funding as detailed in the report, to support delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

b) Revenue Budget 2021/2022

Details of the costs associated with the Partnership's projects and management service in 2021/2022, including estimated pay and price levels were also detailed in the report attached to the agenda.

It is assumed that the Defra grant for 2020/2021 will continue to be a single grant offer to be used in ways which the AONB Partnership considers will deliver the best performance in terms of achieving delivery of the Management Plan, without significant restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity. Details of the Defra funding was expected before the end of 2020.

The Committee were drawn to the summary contained within the report on:

- i) Expenditure
- ii) Income
- iii) Additional Resources

Resolved: That the Committee:

- i) Noted the 2020/2021 Revised Estimates
- ii) Approved the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget as set out in the report.
- iii) Subject to approval of (ii) above, requested the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their Revenue Budgets for 2021/2022.

8. Landscapes Review Report - Update

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager, Lancashire County Council, updated the Committee on the progress on the implementation proposals outlined in the Landscapes Review Report attached to the agenda.

The Committee noted that the Government had not formally responded to the report or commented on the proposals it contained. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted Government business since March 2020 and the response has been delayed. It was now expected before the end of 2020.

Notwithstanding the delay, AONB Partnerships and the National Park Authorities have been working closely over the last six months with the Defra, Natural England and other stakeholders to identify how the report's proposals could begin to be implemented. Further details of this can be found in the report, alongside the progress update on other areas of work that has been carried out.

Ginny Hinton from Natural England updated the Board in terms of activity that has been going on in the background from Natural England on the Glover Review. A lot of the focus is bringing together the protected landscapes work with the new nature recovery networks area of activity under a Government policy paper which was produced on 21 October 2020 on nature recovery networks.

Resolved: That the AONB Joint Advisory Committee noted the update report.

9. AONB Tree, Woodland and Forestry Strategy

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager provided an update on behalf of Robin Gray, Planning and Environment, Lancashire County Council on work he has been carrying out on the Trees, Woodland and Forestry Strategy. The National Forest Inventory indicates that an area of 67km² (approximately 8% of the AONB) is woodland largely fragmented except for the Forestry England estates at Knots Wood, Gisburn and the Dunsop valley and privately owned woodland on Grindleton Fell and Longridge Fell, which are predominantly conifer plantations. Sections of the strategy will cover the following:

- Woodland and nature recovery.
- Woodland and carbon.
- Woodland and landscape.
- Woodland and water.
- Woodland and cultural heritage.
- Sustainable woodland management.

Mapping work has been done on identifying where woodland creation may be possible, and this is in conjunction with colleagues in Nidderdale in the Yorkshire Dales, North Pennines and Northumberland on the constraints mapping. This is still largely dependant on landowners bringing forward sites for woodland planting.

The Committee were shown the English National Park Authorities definition of "Right Tree in the Right Place" which was:

- In English National Parks, when identifying or assessing the suitability of sites for tree planting/restocking and considering the appropriateness of species to be planted, the nature of their planting and their ongoing management needs, there is a presumption in favour of schemes that will conserve and/or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park in question, as expressed in the relevant National Park Management Plan.
- There is similarly a presumption against schemes that overall do harm to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of National Parks as expressed in their respective National Park Management Plans.
- In meeting these requirements, schemes that also provide for public access and thereby provide opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Parks are likely to be seen more favourably.
- In assessing the wider effects of any planting scheme, the potential social and economic benefits to the local community will also be taken into consideration, but this will not override the presumptions identified above since these benefits have already been factored into the Management Plans.

An example of what the AONB Unit working on identifying where woodland creation is possible was outlined, namely the Quermore and Conder Valley. Proposals were put forward to the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative of which the outcome is still awaited in terms of approval of funding. In addition, for Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership there are a number of new woodlands that will be created as part of that

landscape partnership scheme and some that have already been created or planted in partnership with the River Ribble Trust.

There are a series of principles for encouraging the creation of woodland schemes which are:

- Clough Woodland: opportunities for new woodland.
- Encourage protection and management of farm-scale woodland.
- Trees outside woodland: returning and conserving our 'landmark trees'.
- Ancient replanted woodland is restored to a semi-natural state.
- Encouraging field copses and new farm woodland.
- Productive woodlands: managing existing woodland to UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS).
- Promote continuous cover forestry where appropriate particularly on sites with high landscape value.

The Committee noted that Government had published a draft Tree Strategy in the summer and the strategy that has been produced locally reflects it and will be published shortly.

The Committee were informed that Wyre Council have an ambition to plant significant numbers of trees as part of its Climate Change Strategy and they are working with Wyre Rivers Trust via the Lancashire Woodlands Connect campaign.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the update.

10. AONB Unit Activity Report (April - Oct 2020)

Sandra Silk, AONB Unit, Lancashire County Council outlined the AONB Team Report to the Committee for April 2020 to October 2020 that was detailed in the agenda pack. Further details on the following areas can be found in the report:

An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage

- Peatland Restoration.
- Bowland Hay Time.
- Farming and Wildlife Advice.
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund.
- 'High Nature Value Farming in the Northern Upland AONBs' – A Defra Environmental Land Management Test.
- Undergrounding for Visual Amenity Programme (RIIO-EDI).

Resilient and Sustainable Rural Communities

- Discover Bowland website.
- Sense of Place Toolkit.
- Dark Sky Friendly Business Workshop.
- Planning and Development.

A Strong Connexion between People and the Landscape

- Champion Bowland.
- Festival Bowland goes Virtual.
- Days to Remember.
- Promoted Route Volunteers.
- Promoted Route and Countryside Access.
- Parish Lengthsman.
- Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- National Association for AONBs.
- COVID-19.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the update.

11. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership - Update

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manger, Lancashire County Council presented the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Quarterly Progress reports April – June 2020 (Quarter 1) and July-September (Quarter 2), which was attached in detail to the agenda and circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the work of the Partnership had been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Fortunately, they have managed to adapt and create online events including the John Muir awards online for families, albeit on a smaller scale.

Key activities that has been able to continue throughout the pandemic has been:

- Peatland restoration and footpath works in partnership with the River Ribble Trust above Mearley Clough.
- Completion of the concessionary bridleway between Chatburn and Downham.
- The information centre in Downham village has been refurbished.

Discussions have taken place with the Heritage Fund since the start of COVID19 restrictions update them on where projects are up to and to discuss a potential extension of the programme beyond March 2022. A detailed proposal will be worked up in spring 2021.

Sarah Robinson, AONB Unit, Lancashire County Council updated the Committee on the farming and wildlife projects within the Pendle Hill Project and following the flooding and storms in February 2020, damage was discovered to the peat dams and the revegetation work on bare peat as part of the Summit project. The dams had been washed out and the brash had been completely washed away. An application was made to the contingency fund for £20,000, which was successful and in response to that event and projections that those type of events are going to become more common place, techniques are being changed and more timber dams, coir logs and geo textile are being used to slow water flow and stabilise the peat.

Sarah also reported on the delivery of the Bowland Haytime project to deliver hay meadow restoration. 15 hectares in all were restored using green hay, harvested seed, plug plants and purchased seed.

Sarah also provided further updates on various other projects that she had delivered as part of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership including:

- A waxcap survey at Worsaw Hill.
- Carried out training for the Friends Group at Clarion House on scythes and kits were provided.
- Boundary project – another wall commences in March 2021 and 5 lengths of hedges (over 1km) due to be restored in the winter season.
- The Farmers Network have met three times via Zoom and discussing farm carbon.

The Committee were asked to note that County Councillor Eddie Pope had been appointed as Lancashire County Council's Mental Health Champion and has a £10,000 grant available. For further information please contact County Councillor Eddie Pope, Mental Health Champion, email eddie.pope@lancashire.gov.uk.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the update.

12. Plotting the road to recovery - Post COVID-19 priorities for the AONB

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Manager, Lancashire County Council gave a presentation on "Plotting the Road to Recovery".

Elliott detailed to the Committee, what had changed:

- Public awareness and the desire to take action locally on climate change and biodiversity emergencies which are becoming more evident and the AONB will be focusing on this area of work.
- COVID-19 has brought to the fore the importance of health and wellbeing and access to the outdoors and delivering projects online.
- Nationally and locally, communities, economies and public services have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and support have been given to those businesses.

The Committee noted that the Agriculture Bill and the Environment Bill are being passed through Government and will have a significant effect on how the AONBs are managed and the environmental regulation is delivered as the years progress.

The strategic context is as follows and is likely to have a significant effect on the AONB in the short and long term:

- AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.
- The Landscapes (Glover) Review Report.
- Nature Recovery Network.
- The Government's 25 year Environment Plan.
- Environment Bill.
- Agriculture Bill.
- Planning White Paper and 'Project Speed'.
- Green Recovery.

The Committee were informed that the future priorities for the AONB were detailed as follows:

- Nature recovery at a landscape-scale:
 - AONB Nature Recovery Plan.
 - Peatland habitat restoration.
 - Species-rich grassland habitat restoration and enhancement.
 - Woodland regeneration creation and management.
 - Riparian (or river) habitat restoration, including wetland creation.
 - Making space in the landscape for natural processes to take the lead.
 - National and local species recovery plans.
 - Species re-introductions.

- A green recovery for communities and the local economy.:
 - Advice and support for land management sector as agricultural support moves to the "public money for public goods" Environmental Land Management System.
 - Support and promotion for local visitor economy via the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network and 'Discover Bowland' website.
 - Apprenticeships and job creation, particularly within environmental, land management, heritage and creative sectors.
 - Volunteering opportunities to work in the AONB via Countryside Services, Friends Groups, Rivers Trusts and Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership.
 - Collaborative working with Champion Bowland CIO to raise funds to support community-based projects.
 - Managing sustainable (and low carbon?) growth within designated landscape.
 - Landscape-sensitive super/hyper fast broadband and mobile.

- Landscapes for everyone:
 - Outdoor learning for children, young people and families.
 - Widening access to nature and landscape to a more diverse range of people.
 - Improving people's health and wellbeing through engagement with nature and the landscape.
 - Online face-to-face events activities and training.

Both local and national partnerships offer opportunities to secure resources and support for delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

At a national level:

- National Association for AONBs and National Parks England.
- Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership.
- 'Great North Bog'.
- 'Magnificent Meadows'.

At a local level:

- Champion Bowland.
- Farmer and land management groups.
- Local Authorities.
- River Catchment Partnerships (Rivers Trusts).
- The Wildlife Trusts.
- Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.
- RSPB.

The following were how delivery of the AONB Management Plan could be resourced:

- Defra AONB Grant Settlement 2021/22 and future CSR.
- Nature for Climate Fund.
- Nature Recovery Fund.
- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund.
- United Utilities AMP7.
- Private sector investment in 'natural capital'.
- Environmental Land Management System.
- National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Shared Prosperity Funds.
- Charitable Trusts.

The next steps are:

- AONB Unit Delivery Plans.
- Liaise with AONB Partners re: future plans and priorities.
- Bring revised AONB Partnership Fund Raising Strategy to the Committee in April 2021.

The Committee were asked to send any comments, ideas, thoughts following the presentation to Elliott Lorimer, email Elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk.

A request was made that Elliott Lorimer speak outside the meeting with Alison Boden, Wyre Council and Matthew Upton, United Utilities on the plans for the future and continuing to work in partnership.

- Resolved:**
- i) That the revised AONB Partnership Fund Raising Strategy be provided to the Committee in April 2021.
 - ii) That the Committee noted the update.

13. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business received.

14. Date of Next Meeting

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

Thursday, 22 April 2021 format to be confirmed.

Thursday, 21 October 2021 format to be confirmed.

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston