

## Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held at Hovingham Village Hall on 13 April 2017, commencing at 10.00 am

### Present

#### Members:

Hambleton District Council: Councillor Christine Cookman  
 North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillors Caroline Patmore and Clare Wood  
 Ryedale District Council: Councillor Robert Wainwright  
 Parish Councils: Chris Stratton (Hambleton)  
 Country Land and Business Association: Sir William Worsley  
 The Forestry Commission: Jim Smith  
 Natural England: Alisa Kirkup  
 The Ramblers Association: Philip Catterall

#### Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB Team: Paul Jackson and Liz Bassindale  
 North Yorkshire County Council: Matt O'Neil (Assistant Director, Growth, Planning and Trading Standards), Patrick Duffy (Secretary), Liz Small (Heritage Services Manager)  
 Hambleton District Council: Caroline Skelly (Planning Department)  
 Ryedale District Council: Howard Wallis (Economic Development)

**Also present:** Amy Thomas, Programme Manager for the North York Moors, Coast and Hills Leader Programme,

**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

### 75 Election of Chair

On being nominated and seconded, it was

#### Resolved

That Councillor Robert Wainwright be elected Chair of the Committee.

**Councillor Wainwright in the Chair**

### 76 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of:-

- Jenny Craven (Natural England)
- Councillor Fiona Farnell (Ryedale District Council)
- Rebecca Hesketh (National Farmers Union)

**77 Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 14 April 2016**

**Resolved**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**78 Notes of the informal meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 10 November 2016**

**Resolved**

That the Notes of the informal meeting held on 10 November 2016, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**79 Matters Arising**

Minute 4 – Matters Arising

Councillor Wood asked if contact had been made with Dementia Forward. Liz Bassindale said that she had not yet been in touch, but would be contacting them shortly. Four easy access routes had been commissioned, with the contractors providing another two free of charge.

Minute 6 – AONB Unit Activity

The AONB Manager updated the Committee on the Geology Trust Lottery Bid. Survey work had been knocked back and the bid would now focus on work to be undertaken with local schools. The new display banners were almost complete.

Minute 11 – Reports from Partner Organisations

Philip Catterall, representing the Ramblers Association, reported that he had been in contact with the Estate Manager at Castle Howard regarding the timescale and plans for the reconstruction of the closed car park that was used by walkers and others at Coneysthorpe Crossroads. The car park was an ideal starting point for walking in whatever direction.

He had been informed by the Estate Manager that due to the anti-social behaviour of some individuals, complaints had been received which meant that, regrettably, the car park would remain closed. People could still park at the main Castle Howard car park and commence their walk from a different point. This was an example of the actions of a small minority of people spoiling things for everybody else.

The AONB Manager added that the issues related to evenings and night time. He was working with the Estate on alternatives that would allow better movement around the Estate.

**80 Election of Vice-Chair**

On being nominated and seconded, it was

**Resolved**

That Sir William Worsley be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee.

## **81 Presentation - The North York Moors, Coast and Hills Leader Programme 2015-2020**

Amy Thomas, Programme Manager for the North York Moors, Coast and Hills Leader Programme, made a presentation on this initiative.

She made the following points in particular:-

- There were six priorities – the main four being:-
  - Farm Productivity
  - Rural Tourism
  - Forestry; and
  - Cultural Heritage
- It was essential that proposed projects fitted into one of the six priorities and helped to create new employment opportunities.
- The majority of the funding that was available was for capital projects.
- The minimum grant was £5,000 - £2,500 under Farm Productivity.
- Ideally, projects should be completed by March 2019.
- There was a two-stage approval process, with the final decision being taken by the Executive Group.
- Private sources of funding were required to match funding.

Jim Smith, representative of the Forestry Commission, enquired if could they do anything to assist. Amy Thomas responded that it would be a great help if they would encourage people to apply by spreading the word about the initiative.

The Chair thanked Amy Thomas for her presentation.

### **Resolved –**

That the presentation be noted.

## **82 AONB Unit Activity**

Members considered a detailed report of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the last meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee. This was accompanied by a slide presentation showcasing some of the work undertaken.

Liz Bassindale, AONB Officer and Paul Jackson, AONB Manager, illustrated the following activities:-

- Hedge planting had taken place at Bulmer; Crambe, Hovingham and Castle Howard.
- Exmoor Pony sites – work had been undertaken to fix posts and gates and carry out minor repairs.
- The Monument Management Scheme had resulted in work being carried out to control brambles and scrub on Scheduled Monuments at:-

- Grimston Moor
  - South and High Woods, Hovingham
  - Wiganthorpe
  - Scarrish Wood, Coneysthorpe
  - Roman Plantation near Oulston
- Conservation work had been undertaken at Amotherby Churchyard.
  - Name signs had been restored or reproduced for Cawton, Terrington, Ganthorpe, Crayke, Oulston, Yearsley, Crambe and Kirkham.
  - The River Rye Landscape Partnership Scheme bid had been successful. Initial Phase 1 approval had been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund, for development work leading to a £2 million project to revitalise the heritage of the River.
  - The above project would be known as Ryevitalise. There were four themes:-
    - Water environment
    - Water quality
    - Water level management
    - Reconnecting people
  - A Turtle Doves project had also received Heritage Lottery funding, to support surveying and land management advice to help the declining population.
  - Undergrounding schemes – work completed to remove the overhead lines at Cawton. Work in progress at Nunnington and Ganthorpe and due to start soon in Oswaldkirk.
  - Junior Rangers:-
    - numbers had increased
    - In December - tree work and increasing awareness of what is around them
    - In February - orienteering and map reading
    - 26 children had participated in yesterday's activity day, details of which would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee
  - Six routes had been created for the AONB by iFootpath, providing easy countryside trails on farm tracks or quiet roads.
  - The AONB Photographic Competition had attracted more than 100 entries (the winners in each section were displayed at the meeting).

Councillor Clare Wood thanked officers for their excellent report. She felt that the Ryevitalise Project was exciting and one which could make a huge difference. Her concern, however, was the budget underspend - if the staff could not be recruited the scheme could collapse. In response, the AONB Officer advised that the scheme would be headed by the North York Moors National Park and came with a staff Team. Therefore, the Council would not be carrying the risk. The AONB Manager added that a large underspend in the AONB budget had been carried forward as it had been anticipated there would be a large reduction in Government Grant.

In response to a comment about undergrounding, whereby hideous electricity wires are routed underground, there had been complaints about the verges being left in an untidy state. The AONB Manager commented that it came down to the technical aspects of delivery, which were the responsibility of Northern Powergrid and its

contractors. There was a need to take the aesthetics into account to keep disruption to a minimum and reinstate verged areas to a high standard.

Sir William Worsley, of the Country Land and Business Association, asked whether a survey of landscape improvements that people would wish to see had been carried out – such as repairing old Lime Kilns which were part of the area's heritage? The AONB Manager responded that the Management Plan contains a long list of Priority Sites and work focusses on improving these. Sir William suggested that perhaps there was a need to be more specific; the Committee had achieved a lot and needed to consider whether there were now any specific areas it wanted to see improved.

Chris Stratton, representing Hambleton Parish Councils, felt that there had been a lot of reactive work. This was a good opportunity to decide what was important to the AONB landscape in advance of discussions with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The AONB Manager advised that the National Association for AONBs was working with partners and DEFRA to consider the impacts of BREXIT. Defra would be holding a local Workshop on post BREXIT priorities and the AONB would feed into that.

The AONB Manager mentioned that most of his report had been covered as part of the presentation but he also highlighted the planning applications that he had been asked to comment on and his responses. There was an increasing trend in relation to applications for mobile 'phone masts. Councillor Clare Wood asked whether there was a policy on the size of masts and commented that providers sharing masts would be preferable to a plethora of individual masts. The AONB Manager said that he was generally supportive of these applications as the trend now was for smaller masts.

Chris Stratton referred to page 47 of the papers. Husthwaite and Coxwold Parish Councils had asked him to raise a problem caused as a result of the number of caravans stored at Sunley Woods Farm at Husthwaite. The AONB Manager confirmed that the planning application for repairs and associated storage had been refused. Therefore, if activity was continuing then it would be for Hambleton District Council to undertake enforcement action if appropriate.

Caroline Skelly, Planning Officer at Hambleton District Council, advised that this would be referred to the Council's Enforcement Team.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chair, the AONB Manager estimated that approximately 15% of his workload was taken up on matters relating to planning applications.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **83 Development within the AONB**

Members considered a report from the AONB Manager giving details of the number and type of planning applications determined within the AONB during 2016.

The AONB Manager commented that there had been a surprising reduction in the number of applications in the Ryedale part of the AONB.

The approval figure was similar to that of the five year average.

Members had asked for a report on the number of applications withdrawn before a decision had been made. In Hambleton the figure was three.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **84 AONB Action Programme 2016/17**

Members considered details of progress made on implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2016/17.

Achievements against the following aspects of the Management Plan were specified in the report:-

- Ecosystem approach
- Natural Environment
- Historic Environment
- Local Communities
- Agriculture
- Forestry and Woodland
- Development and the Rural Economy
- Roads, Transport and Traffic Management
- Access and Tourism
- Awareness and Promotion
- Implementation
- National Association for AONBs

It was noted that no work had been carried out this year under the Monitoring heading.

A detailed summary of progress against each objective was provided in an annexe circulated separately to the Agenda. The AONB Manager highlighted the following:-

- 80% of targets had been fully achieved.
- 15% had either not started or not progressed significantly.
- Whilst the aim was always to do more, he was really pleased with what had been achieved especially as it had been a year of change in terms of staffing and methods of working.
- The AONB Team restructure had been completed.
- There had been 180 days of volunteers work.
- Undergrounding works continued and it was hoped that BT would be on board soon.
- Philip Catterall representing The Ramblers asked which four Parishes were being targeted in respect of Public Rights of Way improvements. The AONB Manager said he believed that it was Nunnington, Terrington, Welburn and Bulmer but that he would ascertain the correct position and let him know.

## **Resolved**

That the achievements against targets for 2016/17 be noted.

### **85 AONB Business Plan and Action Programme 2017/18**

The AONB Manager presented a report which sought the Committee's approval for proposed activity to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2017/18. A detailed set of proposed targets against each objective was provided in an annexe circulated separately to the Agenda.

The AONB Manager highlighted the following aspects:-

- It was hoped that the Geodiversity survey project would be commissioned and carried out.
- The new project on the conservation of Turtle Doves, referred to earlier, would be proceeding.
- The impact of BREXIT should start to become clearer.
- Year 3 of the Monument Management Scheme would be delivered.
- Re-vegetation work on selected Monuments would be trialled.
- It was hoped to hold a meeting for farmers to update them on issues and funding opportunities, some of which had been covered by the Committee's discussions.
- Undergrounding work of electricity cables should commence shortly in Ganthorpe, Oswaldkirk and Easthorpe.
- It was hoped to report that the Public Rights of Way Improvement Programme is up and running.
- Officers were starting to plan consultation processes for reviewing the Management Plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the AONB Manager advised that, unfortunately, there was no progress to report on the Gilling Castle Lakes Management Plan. This would be coming back to the top of the list of projects and there would be discussions with Natural England as to what assistance we could offer.

## **Resolved**

That the targets for 2017/18, as contained in the Action Programme, be agreed.

### **86 Business Planning – Review of Delivery Mechanisms**

Members received details of the recent restructure of the Howardian Hills AONB team, and of potential future mechanisms for project delivery.

The AONB Manager advised the Committee as follows:-

- The administrative support, which could be accessed via the National Park Authority, had been useful.

- Additional staff resources had been filled.
- It was anticipated that more pieces of work would be commissioned, as had been done with the easy access routes and the Monument Management Scheme.
- Village name signs restoration work had been batched in one go which reduced the amount of paperwork required.
- The Team were approaching a point where they would not be able to take on any additional partnership work. Input into existing projects would be consolidated and other work only taken on if capacity allowed.
- The Team had learnt some important lessons which they were taking forward.

### **Resolved**

That the report be received.

## **87 National Association for AONBs Activity**

The Committee received an update on activity by the National Association for AONBs.

The Newsletter, Landscapes for Life Update, produced by the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, had been circulated.

As part of the Newsletter there was an informal note of a meeting held with Lord Gardiner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity. Members noted that Lord Gardiner had stated his support for the work of AONB partnerships and conservation boards.

### **Resolved**

That the report be received.

## **88 Reports from Partner Organisations**

Members of the Committee shared the following information:

### North Yorkshire County Council

Councillor Clare Wood advised that she had no specific updates but that, in her role as Executive Member, she would be happy to answer any strategic questions that the Committee may have.

Matt O'Neil expressed his thanks to Paul Jackson, Liz Bassindale and the Team for the good work that they were doing. His Team would be keeping an eye on the impact of BREXIT for the area.

### The Ramblers

Philip Catterall referred to a blocked footbridge near Ampleforth. This had now been dealt with.

#### Forestry Commission

Jim Smith advised that the Commission were keeping an eye on tree health. There would be an aerial flyover of Yorkshire and the North East to check for any further outbreaks of Phytophthora ramorum disease and, subject to funding, a Tree Health Event was likely to be held in September 2017.

#### Hambleton District Council

The Hambleton Local Plan continues to move forward. A short consultation was launched in April on 83 Additional Sites and 140 new Green Spaces. Further consultation is scheduled to take place prior to Christmas 2017.

### **89 Concluding remarks by the Chair**

The Chair thanked Councillor Wood for all her hard work as a previous Chairman of the Committee and as an active and keen Member of the Committee.

The Vice-Chair thanked Christine Cookman in similar terms.

### **90 Date of next Joint Advisory Committee Meeting**

#### **Resolved**

That the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 16 November 2016 at 10.00 a.m. – venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 noon

PD