

**Minutes of Isle of Wight AONB Partnership Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday 14 July 2009 - Seaclose Offices, Newport**

Present:

Tony Tutton	Chairman
Denis Russell	Vice-Chair/Community and Parish Portfolio Holder
Vicky Basford	Historic Environment Portfolio Holder
Richard Grogan	Nature Conservation Portfolio Holder
David Meeks	Natural England
Bill Murphy	Isle of Wight Council
Councillor John Hobart	Isle of Wight Council
Peter Fellows	West Wight Landscape Partnership
Fiona Hanna	AONB Lead Officer
Joel Bateman	AONB Communication Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

1) Apologies

Geoffrey Case	Farming and Landowning Portfolio Holder
Steve Blamire	Tourism Portfolio Holder
Nicky Downer	AONB Planning Officer

The meeting was advised that resignation letters have been received from both Jill Green and David Groves. It was agreed letters would be sent thanking them for their valuable service to the Committee and AONB Partnership.

Action: Thank you letters to be sent to Jill Green and David Groves

2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings of the last meeting.

Regional Tourism Bid to RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England)

There will be full presentation by SEEDA on this bid on 30 July 2009, and if it does not go ahead, we will have to look at tourism from a regional perspective.

AONB Unit to obtain information on disease resistant elms from Island 2000

Made contact with Ian Boyd and Peter Fellows, to develop a pro-active project on the way forward, with a sub-group being set up to assess what we want out of the project. It was suggested this should be built into the PFI, but concern was expressed that 2013 would be too late, as any strong winds this winter may bring down already diseased trees, and although some have been removed, this work needs to continue.

Although consultation is currently taking place with Highways, it was felt there are other tree issues to be considered, as well as conservation, signage, local distinctiveness and character. Concern was expressed that at the recent Environment Forum attended by the PFI Programme Director, little mention was made of the Environment. It was advised there are four stages in the PFI progress as follows:-

- Stage 1 is to outline the business case, which has a target date of the Autumn.
- Stage 2 is the submission and determination of this outline case by the Department for Transport, which has a long lead time of 12-18 months.
- Stage 3 is procurement and contract, subject to funding.
- Stage 4 will be commencement of work.

The Committee felt it was important to provide information at Stage 1 before the case is submitted, or Stage 2 during consideration. The AONB Unit are in discussion with the PFI team providing information into the first stage, and talking further with them over the next few months.

Demonstration of Digital Mapping

This will now take place at the next meeting.

Action: Demonstration of new programme for the next meeting

Maternity Cover

We have proceeded with Option 1 as per the decision from the May meeting, and two good candidates had a formal interview along with a written exercise. It was decided that Mark Buckett would be offered the post, based on his level of experience and knowledge of countryside issues. He will commence work on 01 August, and have two weeks training with Nicky prior to her departure on maternity leave.

Local Elections

A meeting to formalise the appointment of Councillors to external bodies will take place at the end of July. Councillor Hobart advised that the post of Champion no longer exists, and concern was expressed about this course of action, as English Heritage have encouraged these posts.

A new Councillor structure will be put in place aligned to four themes one of which, Environment and Economy, will include heritage. BM agreed to circulate information on this new system in due course.

Action: BM to circulate information on the new structure when available

South East Plan

BM provided an update to the meeting, regarding the current situation with regard to the South East Plan and Core Strategy.

3) Presentation by Peter Fellows from the West Wight Landscape Partnership

Mr Fellows gave a presentation on the WWLP covering the following areas:-

- Background of the Partnership
- Overview of scheme and arrangements for delivery of projects
- What they are doing to support the policies and objectives of the AONB
- Looking ahead to challenges in the coming months

4) AONB Unit Update

a) Quarterly Report

Copies of the first quarter report were circulated with the Agenda. Natural England have recently requested information on regional success stories for national reports, and this prompted ND to review planning applications. In 2003 one-third of applications where the AONB had lodged an objection were still being approved in contrast with last year, where only 3% were approved against our objection. This reflects the improvements within the Planning Service via protocols, better liaison, member training

and the more consistent approach that decisions must strictly adhere to policy. There are also a very high percentage of cases that have gone to appeal being upheld by the Inspector, which have now increased to an 87% success rate.

There is still one area, however, where applications rejected by the AONB Planning Officer may still be approved. These cover proposals within settlements that are also within conservation and nationally designated areas, especially where such proposals fulfil social and economic need.

b) Financial Report

Copies of this report, which has taken time to produce due to the new Council accounting system, were circulated to the meeting and overall, the situation is as we would expect at the end of the first quarter. The report for the Sustainable Development Fund was also circulated with £30,000 of funding still available, but there are sufficient projects in the pipeline to cover this amount.

5) Steering Committee Elections and Annual General Meeting

Steering Committee Elections

Tony Tutton will be standing down as Chairman at the Annual General Meeting after a period of ten years. In line with the AONB constitution, Denis Russell as Vice Chair will take over the role of Chairman, and this will leave the Community and Parish Portfolio vacant. The Committee offered a vote of thanks to Tony for all his hard work as Chairman, and his support for the AONB Unit and wider Partnership.

Following the resignations of Jill Green, David Groves, David Court and the change of Chairman, this means that four portfolios are now vacant. The normal procedure will be for letters to be circulated to those Advisory Group members in each portfolio, requesting nominations for these four posts. There are also two portfolio posts, Historic Environment and Tourism which are eligible for extension for a further two years, and this extension was approved by the Committee.

Annual General Meeting

In previous years, both the Annual General Meeting and Open Forum have been held together on the same day. However, following the confusion last year surrounding who were members of the Advisory Group, the following has been suggested:-

- Annual General Meeting to be a short approximately two hour meeting held in October, to deal with a review of the work of the AONB team on behalf of the Partnership and election of new Steering Committee members
- Open Forum to be a separate event in Spring 2010 along similar lines to the recent Management Plan launch

Following some discussion this suggestion was approved, and the venue will be in a Village Hall within the AONB.

6) Steering Committee Members Updates

Nature Conservation - At yesterday's meeting of the Environment Forum, a sub-group will be created with members of Planning Policy, to oversee the Green Infrastructure Framework.

Also regarding the new Pan development, it has been agreed to create a green funnel between this development and the AONB, to improve access to the wider countryside and wildlife. This is a very positive step forward to providing good experiences for all to enjoy. The Wildlife Trust have a new environmental agenda and three way agreement, to talk to the farming community about diffuse pollution. The IW Agricultural Show are promoting surveys for farmers with maps on this type of pollution on the Island, how it will affect wildlife and landscape and the delivery mechanisms to deal with it. This will probably be via ELS and HLS schemes, as the first five year schemes will soon be coming to an end.

The SDF panel decided not to support the Chines project, as they felt it was important to put the funds towards a specific aspect of the project rather than in an overall pot. There are several projects in the pipeline which it is hoped will fulfil their criteria.

IW Council - The Pan development is a good example of pre-empting a Supplementary Planning Document, using Planning to work on the Green Infrastructure Framework. This development is very important and as the land is owned by the Local Authority, it provides an excellent opportunity to make it work. It has moved forward quickly over the last three months, in light of the policies within the Community Strategy.

Councillor - a farm in Shorwell have set up a shooting lodge, which is an adventurous business for the countryside and will hopefully bring in new jobs.

Several concerns have been expressed locally, regarding the Summer Madness concert due to be held at Froglands Farm below Carisbrooke Castle in August. This event, expected to attract ten thousand people, is adjacent to a Grade 1 listed building, in an area of archaeological sensitivity, ancient hedgerows, sunken lanes and the AONB.

FH advised it is has been difficult for the AONB to make any legitimate comments, as the application is for a license under the IW Act, and one-off events can take place under permitted development rights. We had to ignore the nature of the event, and make a comment based on any community event involving the potential impact of large vehicles on lanes, and the number of people. The 2003 Licensing Act will only allow us to consider the following - prevention of crime and disorder; protection of children from harm; public safety and prevention of public nuisance. A response has been sent to the Licensing Authority highlighting our concerns, and the Legal department have advised that these should be dealt with under existing legislation.

Consultations have also be made with Ecology, Archaeology and Parks and Countryside, who have made separate comments to the Licensing Authority. For events of this scale, the organisers would also have to get agreement from Highways, but there would only be a refusal if the Police made an objection. Initially English Heritage were against the event, but now there is agreement to screen the castle, they have given approval. The meeting agreed the AONB would send a copy of our concerns to the English Heritage contact on the AONB Partnership, and ask that English Heritage should give more serious consideration to the wider implications of this event on the Historic Environment.

We can endeavour to safeguard the environment as much as we can, but unfortunately there is a gap whereby the AONB have no mechanism to make an objection.

Action **FH to advise our concerns to English Heritage representative on the AONB Partnership**

Natural England - The South East Plan published in May, includes a specific policy promoting the importance of green infrastructure (GI) planning. The framework is designed as an aid for Local Authorities and planners, on the protection and improvement of our green spaces for the

future. There will be a Ministerial launch on 09 September 2009, and workshops will be organised for planners and Local Authorities in October. Natural England also have a policy in the pipeline with regard to wind turbines and offshore energy production.

Historic Environment - attended the opening of the Princess Beatrice Garden at Carisbrooke Castle which was very impressive, although the ongoing maintenance will probably be very costly. Also spent time recently in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB, which is smaller than that of the Isle of Wight. Their offices are situated in an old station which is interesting, as there is currently a project being undertaken at Brading Station.

Community and Parish - ongoing problems with elms, and still concern about speeds in rural areas.

6) **Any Other Business**

A comment was made that the format of the workshops under the Management Plan Review with the relevant organisations under each portfolio were very useful, and perhaps such focus groups could be used in the future.

Dates of Future Steering Committee Meetings

2009

06 October	venue tba
08 December	venue tba

All meetings will commence at 10.00 a.m. unless otherwise advised

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.56 p.m.

cdm/17 July 2009