

Committee, with the final vote 4-3 for refusal. It was also advised the Planning Authority would robustly defend any allegation regarding lack of Duty of Regard, as the Planning Authority via the Planning Committee are entitled to reach a different conclusion.

BM proposed to request a report from the Appeals Officer providing an analysis of those appeals within the AONB to which the AONB have objected, to identify what the Government Inspector took into account in terms of impact on the designation.

Action: BM to provide report on appeals

Concern was expressed regarding the conditions attached to the application that was approved, and whether or not they could be enforced. It was felt they could, as there are specific restrictions on when the dwelling can be occupied and if these are not adhered to, a breach of condition notice can be served against which there is no appeal. The applicant can then be taken to court where fines can be imposed, which escalate if further breaches take place.

FH advised the issue of Section 85 has been raised in the SE Protected Landscapes Area, and a regional Working Group is being set up to look at Section 85 monitoring.

A question was asked about what would happen if the applicant applied to have the conditions removed, and it was advised this would be the subject of a new planning application, which would be reviewed by officers and subject to the decision of the Planning Committee.

3) **AONB Unit Update**

a) **Financial Report**

Copies of this report were circulated to the meeting. There is still an over spend on maternity leave, but this will not cause any problems by year end. There has been a problem with procurement cards being put on the system more than once. This has resulted in inflated travel figures, but Finance are reviewing this problem. The point was raised that as a possible alternative to train travel to London, the Greyhound bus is efficient and cheaper.

b) **Quarterly Report**

A copy of the third quarter report was distributed to the meeting, and no queries were raised.

c) **Sustainable Development Fund**

The monies available for the year 2009/2010 have now all been allocated, with £1,500 being transferred to the Small Grant Fund for the recent Hedgelaying Training weekend, in conjunction with West Wight Landscape Partnership. It is anticipated that all this year's projects will be completed within the relevant timescale.

4) **AONB Work Groups - Membership and format**

At December's Steering Committee, it was agreed that membership of the AONB Work Groups should be reviewed, and a paper on this subject was distributed to the meeting. It was proposed that as the Management Plan 2009-2014 had now been adopted by the Isle of Wight Council, the Management Plan Work Group should be suspended until the next Review, and this was agreed.

The Development Control and Planning Work Group is currently one member short, and a replacement can be from either the Steering Committee or the Advisory Group. It was also agreed in future, meetings should be held on a quarterly basis. The point was raised that a balance was required for members of this Work Group, who need some knowledge about the constraints of the Planning system. BM advised that training sessions have been undertaken for Planning Committee members, and these could be rolled out to existing and new members of the Work Group. CF would be happy to serve on this Committee, but felt that training was required; JH also volunteered to serve, and already has some planning knowledge.

Action: BM/MB to arrange training session for DCPWG members

The Sustainable Development Fund Panel is currently one member short, and again members can be drawn from either the Steering Committee or the Advisory Group. It was agreed if the Committee have any suggestions for a replacement, they should provide these to FH. It was also agreed the Terms of Reference for this Work Group will be reviewed at the next SDF Panel meeting.

5) **AONB Spring Forum**

The AONB as a team have had some preliminary discussions regarding this event, following the result of feedback forms from Partnership members. It was felt a similar format to that of the Management Plan launch involving outside visits to projects, followed by lunch and presentations was a good mix. The suggestion for a theme was that of sustainable living covering some of the following:-

- Leader work on woodlands and providing new energy systems.
- SDF project at Medina High School concerned with the impact of climate change and beach waste.
- Chale Housing Association dwellings with ground source heat pumps.
- Regional Tourism project
- Healthy Living
HEAP and climate change

The meeting agreed on the theme of Sustainable Living, and the date for the Forum should be the first week of May. It was also suggested we could work together with the West Wight Landscape Partnership.

Action: AONB Team to draw up draft programme

6) **Draft Document - Renewable Energy Technologies in the IW AONB**

MB has produced a draft document, copies of which were distributed via e-mail, although accept limited time for members to review the content. Our intention is to have a short consultation prior to sending this out to the wider Partnership; following this consultation a final document will be brought to the July Steering Committee for ratification. Discussion on the document included the following:-

- concern was expressed that enquiries from farmers to Planning regarding small turbines were not receiving a clear response, and it was agreed to work with Planning Policy, to disseminate the relevant information to customers. As well as information on current technology, clear guidance was required on what is and is not acceptable, and the best way to take this forward.

- the point was raised that we need to emphasise there are more types of renewable energy which should be considered, as well as wind power. The document does not mention wave power or tidal turbines, and perhaps these should be included.
- the meeting was advised a new method of producing ethylene for fuel from wheat, is being investigated by the local Grain Group. An important asset to make this viable is the continuation of wharfage facilities in Cowes, as spin offs into the local Island economy could be huge.
- thought should be given as to whether anaerobic digestion can be linked with landfill, as the Lyn Bottom waste site is in the AONB. It may perhaps be more appropriate to expand the existing site, which currently has good transport structure in place, rather than source a new site which would require new infrastructure to be provided.
- a question was asked about the impact of the offshore wind farm to the west of the Island, on the Heritage Coast and AONB. Currently difficult to comment, though likely distances suggest visual impact might be minimal. Issues could occur, however, with regard to the infrastructure needed to bring the generated power onshore and connections with the National Grid; although these connections are more likely to affect the mainland.

It was agreed that Steering Committee members would forward any comments on the document to MB by the end of February

Action: Any comments on document to be sent to MB

A question was raised about the current position with regard to applications for turbines at Span Farm and Ventnor Gold Club, and MB will provide an update on these.

Update:

Ventnor wind turbines - the developer has submitted an Environmental Statement (ES), however, did not advertise they had submitted this in the local paper and on a site notice. They now have to do this. The IW Council is intending to employ an independent expert landscape consultant to assess the impact of the proposal on the landscape.

Span Farm - the developer has submitted an Environmental Statement (ES), which the IW Council is currently assessing, to establish if it meets the requirement for a valid ES.

7) **Steering Committee Member Updates**

Historic Environment - attended a recent HEAP meeting, where Ruth Waller presented a report on climate change. This is interesting, as this is the first report of its kind to be produced at a local level.

Farming - the wharf at Cowes is now under new ownership (Canadian), and a new lease has been negotiated with options for an extension. However, the lifespan of the wharf due to its current condition could be only five years, and to bring it up to a serviceable standard could cost some £6-7 million. This is an important asset for the Island, especially if ethylene fuel from wheat proves to be viable, and it will also be important if the PFI contract comes to fruition in terms of bringing in the aggregate.

Coastal - attended the recent Shoreline Management Plan2 meeting, and work is currently moving along with several documents being produced for comment. Will read these through, and flag up any issues that impact on the AONB for discussion with FH. Concern was expressed these meetings are powered by large statutory bodies, rather than small local organisations, who are an integral part of the consultation. The second part of the Eastern Yar consultation is due to take place this Friday, the outcome of which needs to be included in SMP2.

Cliff movement along Military Road has now reached ten metres from the road surface, and the lay-by on the left hand side travelling west has been closed. Highways are monitoring the situation closely, and intend to provide a paper for discussion at the March Council meeting, which will provide an overview of options and recommendations. If it proves impossible to keep the road open to two-way traffic, the road will have to be downgraded and reclassified.

There are a lot of issues to be addressed, with the potential for considerable impact on the AONB. It is important we have an input into any debate about how people can continue to enjoy this part of the coastline. There are recreation opportunities if the road disappears. FH was requested to arrange a special AONB Steering Committee meeting, with appropriate organisations/representatives to discuss Military Road.

Action **FH to organise meeting**

It was advised there is a lot of funding available for coastal adaptation and assisting local communities with any problems. This funding is available through Interreg, and it is important we explore the availability of European money with assessment of any links that are currently in place to provide assistance.

Nature Conservation - the SE Biodiversity Forum has highlighted Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, which are designated sites in an overarching target area covering SINC's, SSSIs and AONB. This will involve a change in the way resources are distributed, from small to large operational areas.

Proposals for options regarding Undercliff Drive are being presented at an exhibition at Ventnor Botanic Gardens from 09 - 26 February. This covers proposals regarding improvements to Undercliff Drive, and using existing road networks to improve traffic flow. The proposal to build a new road to bypass Niton and Whitwell would be very expensive, and did not receive support from the AONB Unit.

Councillor - a point was raised that in the past the Island had 37 water mills and only seven windmills, so alternatives to wind power existed in the past.

An infill for Alverstone Garden Village was refused planning permission, and a barn conversion at Puckwell Farm Niton requires further information before a decision is made. A Public Enquiry recently took place regarding the Petticoat Lane diversion that resulted in the loss of a pathway, which indicates that urban communities are keen to protect amenities in their local areas.

Rural Business - the consultation on the woodland project with contractors is moving forward and on schedule. A workshop for farmers on renewables is planned before the end of this financial year, and Leader projects are still ongoing although budgets are quite tight.

A preliminary report of the survey covering food producers and processors is now available, and copies can be provided if required. The recent Tourism Workshop was excellent, with a number of new businesses becoming involved.

Regarding fallen stock, consultants are currently working on their report but the decision on viability is touch and go, as there has been a drop in the number of cattle. British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) figures confirm this drop and if this continues the project may not be viable, as the number of cattle and horses drive the project, rather than numbers of sheep.

Community and Parish - a question was asked whether Binfield Marina was in the AONB, but it is not.

Natural England - work is continuing on processing this year's funding claim and next year's bid. No information is yet available from DEFRA about funding for 2010/2011. HR also confirmed her position with Natural England is now permanent.

Recreation - the Ramblers Association are continuing their work regarding designated access land. In particular work is currently being undertaken on St Georges Down contacting relevant landowners with regard to the placement of furniture, to improve the access for less mobile users. JH will keep us informed of progress in this area.

The Tourism Workshop was also very encouraging in terms of the level of interest from all attendees. FH advised that a regional Steering Group has been set up to correlate all the information from the workshops across the South East, to see how we take this proposal forward. SEEDA are making encouraging noises, so there are grounds for optimism. However, even if funding does not materialise, there is enough enthusiasm from attendees to develop a local project.

8) Any Other Business

Concern was expressed regarding the closure of the Coastal Centre in Ventnor. Are the IW Council relocating staff, and are steps being taken to retain the exhibition somewhere else, to ensure this information is not lost? FH agreed to obtain an update on the situation.

Action: FH to provide update on changes at Coastal Centre

Concern was also expressed about the severe deterioration on many of the Island's roads, not just due to the recent weather, but over a period of time. A better infrastructure is needed across the Island to deal with this problem.

Dates of Future Steering Committee Meetings

2010

11 May	venue tba
06 July	venue tba
05 October	venue tba
14 December	venue tba

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

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.20 p.m.