

**Minutes of Isle of Wight AONB Partnership Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday 08 December – Brading Roman Villa**

Present:

Denis Russell	Chairman
Richard Grogan	Vice Chairman/Nature Conservation Portfolio Holder
Tony Tutton	Coastal Portfolio Holder
Geoffrey Case	Farming and Landowning Portfolio Holder
Mike Carr	Community and Parish Portfolio Holder
Carol Flux	Rural Business Portfolio Holder
Vicky Basford	Historic Environment Portfolio Holder
Wendy Perera	Isle of Wight Council
Councillor John Hobart	Isle of Wight Council
Councillor Julie Jones-Evans	Isle of Wight Council
Fiona Hanna	AONB Lead Officer
Joel Bateman	AONB Communication Officer
Mark Buckett	AONB Planning Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

1) Apologies

Helen Rawlinson	Natural England
John Hague	Recreation Portfolio Holder
Liz Walker	Tourism Portfolio Holder

Concern was expressed about the lack of an attendee from Natural England, especially as the dates are circulated well in advance, and decisions cannot be made if the meeting is not quorate. FH has made contact with Natural England to discuss the funding bid for next year, and as a result of these telephone discussions, they have agreed this meeting will still be quorate. It was agreed a letter should be written on behalf of the Steering Committee, expressing their disappointment at the non-attendance of Natural England, especially as they are a core funder.

Action FH to draft letter to Natural England

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Jones-Evans, who has been officially appointed as IW Council representative on the Steering Committee, together with Councillor John Hobart. Official deputies are Councillors Vanessa Churchman and Paul Fuller.

2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

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

Meeting on disease resistant elms

This took place on 11 November, and JB is currently putting together a project plan on how to move this forward, which will be submitted to the Steering Committee when available.

Action Project plan available for next meeting

Feedback on meeting with Licensing regarding events in the AONB

This was a very positive meeting, centred round a number of issues regarding the Isle of Wight Act. There are limitations on what can and cannot be taken into account, and what is and is not appropriate for us to comment upon, and it has been agreed that Licensing will consult us at an

existing buildings, which the LPA said had some potential. Nothing further has been heard from either group.

3) AONB Unit Update

a) Financial Report

Copies of this report were circulated to the meeting. There is a current overspend on salaries as we are not yet recouping the savings from maternity leave, but this will balance out by the end of the year.

b) Sustainable Development Fund

JB gave an overview of the eight projects which have been approved, of which two have been completed, the remainder are underway, and the Fund currently has a further £4,800 to spend before the year end. It was agreed if no further suitable projects are received, some funding could be switched to the Small Grant Fund, if it could be allocated under that scheme.

c) Update of Work Programme

As we are not yet at the end of the third quarter, the usual Natural England report was not available. However the AONB team are currently working on several projects including the Regional Tourism project, where SEEDA have now provided funding for Phase 1 of the project. We are now producing an evidence base of potential tourism projects or packages, to put forward for a further £1 million of funding for the South East Region, of which approximately £100K will be available for the Island. We have had a good response from the relevant organisations, and have identified four suitable projects which will be discussed at a Workshop to be held on 21 January 2010 at Quay Arts.

Following a meeting with the PFI team, the AONB have agreed to co-ordinate the development of guidelines for use by PFI contractors. These will combine pertinent information regarding landscape, natural and historic environment considerations, and should be drafted by March 2010. It was pointed out that footpaths and bridleways are not included in the PFI.

We are also linking with Medina High School in a cross-European project on how climate change affects choices, and its impact on areas of outstanding beauty. A project plan is being developed, and further details will be provided as they become available.

4) Delivery Plan Progress

A report was circulated to the meeting, on how we are progressing with this year's Delivery Plan. This identified items that have been completed, commenced, need moving to a new timeframe or removed from the schedule. It was noted the 50th anniversary of our AONB designation is in 2013, and we will need to plan some events or projects to lead into these celebrations.

A question was asked about areas of the Island becoming a Geopark. It was advised that colleagues at Dinosaur Isle are currently drafting the Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP). Further progress with a Geopark will be unlikely, until a co-ordinated approach to the Island's geology under the LGAP is more fully established.

5) 2010-2011 Grant Bid

A draft copy of the Grant Bid was circulated to the meeting, and FH advised the current information from Natural England is that our funding will be at least 95% of the amount we received in 2007/2008. The current bid is based on the same amount of funding as this year.

A question was asked as to why AONBs did not received their funding from DEFRA, as was the case with National Parks. It was advised the administration process was different, and DEFRA have delegated this responsibility to Natural England. FH said the bid included an ambitious work programme, but was achievable; the meeting congratulated the team on producing a good bid and expressed their support for the programme of work.

7) Steering Committee Member Updates

Historic Environment - nothing at this time

Farming - several areas have expressed an interest in the provision of allotments, and have asked if these would be suitable within the AONB and/or whether eligible for funding under the Sustainable Development Fund. We have already received a previous approach from Brighstone, and it was felt that potentially allotments could be supported, providing they were sited in the right place. Concern was expressed they should not be sited too far from villages, as this would increase car use and potential impact.

Coastal - recently attended a meeting with the Isle of Wight Council, which included their plans for Island beaches. Shoreline Management Plans are progressing slowly, but the Environment Agency are now involved, and keen to keep to the relevant deadlines.

The consultation process for the Eastern Yar Strategy is due to commence, and will include scenarios for ten, fifty and one hundred years into the future.

Nature Conservation - attended a Green Infrastructure Workshop in Reading. IW Council have just undertaken a survey to provide an audit of the unbuilt and undeveloped areas of the Island and how they contribute to recreation, entertainment and quality of life. It is important we get on board with these discussions, especially as much of these areas are part of the AONB. The Pan development has brought into focus the importance of buffer zones between housing and the wider countryside, and data needs to be provided as to how we provision these for the future.

Next year will be the International Year of Biodiversity and the IW Council, together with other organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, will be organising some events. Perhaps this is something in which the AONB should be involved.

Councillor - would like to put on record that although the application for three large wind turbines at Cheverton has been refused, the original planning permission for three smaller turbines is still open. If the applicant wishes to appeal, they must do so within six months.

Regional policy is clear that Planning Authorities have to consider the scale and capacity of turbines, and their impact on the landscape. They also have to judge each application on its merits, rather than the policy in place when the original application on this site was approved. Planning Policy has moved on, AONBs now have much higher protection and Local Planning Authorities now have a Duty of Regard regarding protected landscapes.

