

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 at Barton Le Clay, Village Hall AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.45PM

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr Anna Badcock	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr Roger Emmett	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Dave Taylor	Luton Borough Council

Appointed by the Secretary of Sate	
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Dr. Helen Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Dr. Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils	
Cllr Mary Goldsmith	Bedfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Annette Venters	CCB Access Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

#### 12/13.1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Alan Walters and John Willson

Chris Richards arrived 10.05

## 12/13.2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

## 12/13.3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made:

- Marion Mustoe was absent from the meeting, but also shown as present. Her name was removed from those present.
- Item 75 recommendations; the following was added to the minutes after *Planning Committee*, " and the decisions taken under delegated powers."

# 12/13.4. Matters Arising

- 1. Re item 77: the sub group is in progress, but has not yet prepared a report on the case for reviewing the AONB boundary in North Hertfordshire and Totternhoe.
- 2. Re item 81: the setting up of a Student Grants panel has been delayed.
- 3. Re item 81: a bid to the Chiltern LEADER programme to develop a Chilterns tourism web site was successful.
- 4. Re item 82
- 5. : a detailed programme for the Review of the Chiltern AONB Management Plan had been taken to the Executive Committee in May and is now in progress.

#### 12/13.5. Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

## 12/13.6. Report from the Executive Committee

The members received the report of the Chief Officer advising the Board members of the matters considered, and decisions taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 the Executive Committee:

- 1. Received and approved a finance report on the provisional outturn to the end of March 2012. The better than expected performance was due to higher than estimated income from local authorities and earned income.
- 2. Noted the report of the internal audit.
- 3. Approved an allocation of £5,000 from the Development Reserve to publish a booklet on "The People and Places of the Chilterns".
- 4. Received an update on HR policies and personnel issues.
- 5. Approved a proposal to develop a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Traditional Farmstead Survey and allocation of upto £5,000 p.a. for three years from the Development Reserve.
- 6. Received a report on the review of the AONB Management Plan.
- 7. Received a report on High Speed 2
- 1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.

## 12/13.7. Report from the Planning Committee:

Members received the report from the Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

- 1. The High Speed 2 update.
- 2. AONB Planning Forum.
- 3. Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils.
- 4. Chilterns Building Design Awards
- 5. Student research project
- 6. Responses to development plans
- 7. Responses to planning applications.

The Planning Officer had received the student research project report since the Planning Committee meeting and he would circulate it to the Board members.

Ray Payne arrived 10.25

1. The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.

#### 12/13.8. Statement of Accounts 2011-12

The Finance Officer presented the formal Statement of Accounts 2011-12 and the associated Annual Audit Return and Governance Statement.

- 1. The year-end position showed an overall net surplus from all activity of £75,370, primarily due to some project expenditure being deferred to 2012-13.
- 2. The General Reserve remained unchanged at £135,000
- 3. The Restrictive Reserves were reduced by £804 to £22.977
- 4. The Earmarked Reserves were increased by £76,174 to £439,785
- 5. The pension liability had increased by £362,000 to £636,000. This represents the liability to the Board if every employee had retired on 31 March 2012 and collected their pension entitlements (this increase is due to the volatility in the financial markets and the valuation methodology and derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting Standard 17).
- 1. The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts and Annual Audit Return, including the Annual Governance Statement for 2011-12 and signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board.

#### 12/13.9. Report on HS2

The Chief Officer gave a report based on a paper presented to the Executive Committee on 23 May 2012 (circulated with the agenda) to bring the members up to date with current HS2 related activities. Most recent events include:

- 1. an invitation to meet the Secretary of State for Transport
- 2. Discovery of a DfT commissioned report which significantly undermines the business case for HS2
- 3. The re-configuring of the areas covered by Community Fora
- 4. Submission of comments on the draft scoping report for the Environmental Impact Assessment.

The draft position statement on mitigation plan-B had been circulated with the agenda. The members discussed the statement.

1. The Board will continue to attend local community forum meetings

- 2. The Board will accept the invitation to participate in the Planning Forum
- 3. The Board will seek a close working relationship with those bodies represented on the National Environment Forum, if full membership is not offered.
- 4. The Board ENDORSES the draft position statement on mitigation.

#### 12/13.10 Review of Work Programme 2011-12

The Chief Officer gave an overall review of how the Works Programme had been implemented and reported that despite the decline in Government grant more had been achieved overall than originally included in the Work Programme. Inevitably some areas suffered due to the diversion of effort to HS2 and a number of Government initiatives required a response at short notice. The Annual Review of 2011-2012 will be published in August. Members provided feedback on the lessons to be learned.

- 1. The Board NOTED the review of the Boards Works Programme for 2011-2012
- 2. The Board provided comments on the performance review and lessons to be learned and applied in 2012-2013.

## 12/13.11. Report on Chiltern Cycleway Sustainable Gateway Project

The Access Officer gave a presentation to the Board on this project. The Department for Transport has awarded a grant of £868,000 for a project to increase car-free tourist travel from gateway towns in the Chilterns, linking with the Chiltern Cycleway. The project will be hosted by Wokingham BC and a development officer will be employed to deliver the 3 year programme, partly based at The Board's offices.

The project aims to encourage more visitors to travel by rail to the Chilterns and to increase cycling within the Chilterns as an alternative to the car. Members took the opportunity to comment.

1. The Board NOTED the successful application for a grant of £868,000 to promote cycle based tourism in the Chilterns.

#### 12/13.12. Report on undergrounding of electricity wires.

The Planning Officer informed the members of electricity Supply Company schemes to put wires underground. Since 2005 the Board has been involved in a steering group that promotes the undergrounding of overhead power lines in the former EDF supply area. One scheme has been completed in the AONB so far and a number of others are due to be promoted shortly.

Scottish and Southern Electricity has recently started the process of forming a steering group and schemes in their area will also be promoted and submitted.

The main commitment from the Board is officer time.

The schemes are an excellent way of bringing significant enhancements to the landscape of the AONB.

The Board has recently submitted a response to an OFGEM consultation exercise which ensured the retention of the undergrounding fund for the period to 2015. A number of possible projects are on file, but it would be useful to have a wider portfolio of schemes in order to demonstrate to OFGEM that the fund would be overspent if all schemes were approved.

#### The Board:

- 1. NOTED the report and that SEE will now support the undergrounding of overhead wires within the protected landscapes area in its network area.
- 2. APPROVED the Planning Officer's involvement in the two steering groups that cover the AONB.
- 3. Would suggest potential schemes for undergrounding to the Planning Officer.

# 12/13.13. Consultation on Management of the National Trails.

The Access Officer informed the Board that Natural England is consulting on the future management of national trails and is inviting ideas for new management models.

- 1. Members' views were sought on the Boards draft consultation response.
- 2. The Boards views were also sought on the proposal to take on the management of part of the Ridgeway National Trail. There are two national trails passing through the Chilterns AONB, the Ridgeway and the Thames Path.
  - The Ridgeway is split evenly between two AONBs. It is proposed that the Board takes on the management of the eastern half of the Ridgeway overseen by a Trail Partnership.to ensure both halves of the Ridgeway retain the same brand identity and quality standards an agreement would need to be in place with North Wessex Downs. The management model proposed for the Ridgeway would be similar to that of the Cotswold Way National trail, which works well.
  - Funding would consist of a NE grant of 75% of the costs and the remainder funded by the Highway Authorities, who would retain their duties.
- 3. The Thames Path National Trail passes through 3 protected landscapes and many different regions with much falling outside the AONB. There are no obvious alternative management arrangements for the Thames Path, therefore none are presented at this stage. The Chilterns section could be marketed separately and more effectively than at present.

Members commented and made contributions to the discussion. Funding is a serious consideration. Members to send additional comments to the Access Officer.

Anna Babcock left 12.10

# The Board:

- 1. APPROVED, subject to any amendments, the draft response to the consultation on the future management of National Trails.
- 2. DECIDED that, on behalf of a Chilterns Ridgeway Partnership, it would develop a proposal to take on the management and promotion of the eastern half of the Ridgeway.
- 3. DECIDED that would seek better promotion of the Chilterns part of the Thames Path.

# 12/13.14. Report on the Local Nature Partnerships.

The Chief Officer updated the Board on the developments with regard to the LNP proposals within the AONB and the prosed Board involvement. LNPs were main commitments in the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper. Defra is committed to supporting the establishment of approx. 50 LNP's across the country. The matter was a subject of a Board paper in October 2011.

Four application bids have been submitted to Defra and an outcome is expected by the end of July. The remit of the LNPs mirrors the Board's purposes and the Board can contribute much expertise and experience of the area based approaches. The extent to which the LNPs will help deliver the AONB management plan are unclear. It also remains unclear what resources, if any, will be channelled through the LNPS.

In order for the LNPs to be effectively established the Board considered making a limited financial contribution as this is a Government initiative and the Board cannot afford not to participate at this stage.

#### The Board:

- 1. SUPPORTS the creation of any Local Nature Partnership which covers the AONB.
- 2. DECIDED to provide funding of up to £3,000 in total for the establishment of Local Nature Partnerships.

## 12/13.15 Presentation of Chiltern Building Design Awards

The Planning Officer informed the Board of the presentation of the Chilterns Building Design Award 2012. The presentation had taken place 14/06/12.

A new format had been used which was well received and pleasing.

The overall winner was Horseshoe Hill House, Littleworth Common.

There were 2 highly commended awards, 37-39 London End, Beaconsfield and The Studio, The Lodge, Bledlow Ridge.

The Old Brewery House, Ivinghoe received a commended award and the new Visitor Centre at College Lake Nature Reserve received a special commendation.

## 12/13.16. AOB:

There was no other business.

12/13.17. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Location TBC.

The meeting closed 12.45	
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The Chairman	Date