



Members of the Chilterns Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to a meeting of the full Chilterns Conservation Board on

16th October 2019 at 10.00 am

Flauden Village Hall, Birch Lane, HP3 0PP

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 26 June + AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Board Review - including Report from Executive and Planning Committees
7. Governance arrangements for Programme of Work to restore landscapes and biodiversity after Network Rail electrification work
8. External Annual Audit Report
9. Any other business

Presentation: Chalk Streams Project by Allen Beechey

Lunch

Visit: Site visit to the Chess

Future Meetings:

<u>Full Board</u>	26 th February 2020
	17 th June (and AGM) 2020
	21 st October 2020
<u>Executive Committee</u>	15 th January 2020
	6 th May 2020
	23 rd September 2020
<u>Planning Committee</u>	20 th November 2019
	4 th March 2020
	15 th July 2020
	18 th November 2020



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD
FOR THE CHILTERN'S AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY held on
Wednesday 26th June 2019 at Y2K Hall, Cavendish road, Markyate AL3 8PS
commencing at 10.05 am**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown
Cllr Paul Duckett
Cllr Steve Jarvis
Cllr. Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Nick Rose

Appointing Body

Buckinghamshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council,
North Hertfordshire District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Chiltern District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
Alison Doggett
Paul Mains
John Nicholls
Ray Payne
Elizabeth Wilson

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn
Cllr Susan Biggs
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Clive Thomas

Hertfordshire
Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers

Sue Holden
Graham Hurst
Lucy Murfett

Chief Officer
Finance Officer
Planning Officer

Other:

Deirdre Hansen
Les Mosco

Clerk to the Board
Trustee Chilterns Society

The Chief Officer opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council and Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee.

2. Election of Chairman

The Board RESOLVED that IAN REAY be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

IAN REAY took the CHAIR.

He thanked the members for electing him.

3. Election of Vice- Chairman

The Board RESOLVED that Ray Payne be elected Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

He thanked the members for electing him.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

5. The Chairman welcomed the new member, Cllr Steve Jarvis, North Hertfordshire District Council, who replaces Cllr **David** Barnard. Steve Jarvis introduced himself.

6. Minutes of the meeting 20st June 2018.

The minutes of the meeting of 20st June 2018 were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7. Public Question Time.

There was no public present

8. Election of Members to the Executive Committee

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Executive Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives (3)

Alison Doggett

Paul Mains

John Nicholls

Ray Payne

Local Authority Representatives (4)

Cllr Bill Bendyshe- Brown

Cllr Lynn Lloyd

Cllr Ian Reay

Parish Council Representatives (2)

Cllr John Griffin

Cllr Charles Hussey

9. Election of members to the Planning Committee

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Planning Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives (3)
Colin Courtney
John Nicholls
Elizabeth Wilson

Local Authority Representatives (4)
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Hugh McCarthy
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Nick Rose

Parish Council Representatives (2)
Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn
Cllr Susan Biggs

10. Date of next meeting- TBC

11. AOB:

A vote of thanks was proposed and carried to the Chief Officer and all the staff for their hard work during this difficult year.

The Chairman.....

Date.....



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE CHILTERN'S AREA
OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY held on Wednesday 26th June 2019 at Y2K Hall,
Cavendish Road, Markyate AL3 8PS following the AGM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown
Cllr Paul Duckett
Cllr Steve Jarvis
Cllr. Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Nick Rose

Appointing Body

Buckinghamshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council,
North Hertfordshire District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
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Cllr Susan Biggs
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Clive Thomas

Hertfordshire
Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers

Sue Holden
Graham Hurst
Lucy Murfett

Chief Officer
Finance Officer
Planning Officer

Other:

Deirdre Hansen
Les Mosco

Clerk to the Board
Trustee Chilterns Society

19/20.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council and Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee.

Absent without apologies: Cllr Raj Khiroya, Three Rivers District Council and Cllr Luisa Sullivan, South Bucks District Council.

19/20.2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

19/20.3 Minutes of the Board Meeting 20th February 2019.

The minutes of the Board Meeting of 20th February 2019 were signed by the Chairman as a true record after 'not' was added to 18/19.32 second paragraph "the risks of *not* achieving the plan".

19/20.4 Matters Arising.

a. Management Plan.

The Members were presented with the final copy of the Management Plan, which was praised. The Chief Officer thanked the authors of the Management Plan 2019-2024, the Planning Officer, the Countryside Officer, the Conservation & Landscape Officer, the Landscape Heritage Officer, the Communications Officer and herself the Chief Officer for their work on producing this outstanding piece of work.

Some hard copies will be available for the CCB's key partners and a web version will soon be available. A summary is being printed.

b. There is no update on the National Park application.

c. The Secretary of State members have not had a meeting with the Secretary of State as requested at the last meeting (18/19.32- recommendation 5)

19/20.5 Public Question Time.

No public questions.

19/20.6 Board Review including reports from the Executive and Planning Committees.

a. The Chief Officer had provided a summary of the CCB's work with some highlights:

1. Accolade was given to the Planning Officer for securing a substantial funding package of £3.75m for AONB enhancements in the Great Western Rail corridor (Reading to Didcot). This had been a hard-fought gain.

2. The People and Society Officer received thanks for her success in securing a £120,000 grant from the HS2 BLEF towards a 3-year programme to boost the visitor economy in the Chilterns.

3. The May visit of Julian Glover, Chair of the Landscapes Review was noted.

4. LiDAR discoveries will soon be available on the website.

5. It was noted that the Chilterns Walking Festival in May had been a great success.

b. Reports from the Executive Committee, the Planning Committee, Landscape and Conservation, People and Society and Development and Communications had been received.

c. Members were presented with copies of the Annual Review and asked to distribute copies to their Council members and other interested parties.

d. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and comment.

- Members offered assistance to have Local Authorities adopt the AONB Model Planning Policy.
- It was noted that the Planning Officer has asked for the application for the M1-A6 link road to be called in by the Secretary of State. The Central Bedfordshire member thanked her for her work on this and the update she gave.
- It was noted that all the CCB's work in the recent year is a remarkable legacy thanks were given to the Chief Officer and her team.
- The Members offered staff support if they felt it may be required.
- The Chair of the Planning Committee had represented they Board at Oxford-Cambridge expressway meetings, she had opposed the justification of this road and had assisted the Planning Officer with the Boards comments on the plans.

It had been a successful year and all the staff were congratulated on this.

1. The Board NOTED the review June 2019.

19/20.7 Statement of Accounts 2018-19

The Finance Officer presented the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2019. The overall deficit for the year was £8,967 which is deducted from reserves, but was smaller than expected.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and once approved by the Board is subject to external audit. The AGAR contains the internal audit report, which shows as good, there were no recommendations and no management actions had been issued.

1. The Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 was approved and signed in the appropriate places by the Chairman and the Clerk.
2. The Accounting Statement 2018/19 was approved and signed in the appropriate places by the Chairman and the S151 Officer.

The Finance Officer made the following observations:

- a. 2019/20 is the last year of the current 4-year Defra fixed funding agreement.
- b. Core expenditure is very near to budget.
- c. All reserves are earmarked, with very little reserve for core expenditure.
- d. The Pensions reserve is a statistical figure, provided by actuaries, not an actual one.

Members had a wide-ranging discussion on funding. It was noted that local authority members needed to engage with their local authorities to ensure full contributions.

The Finance Officer was thanked for his hard work on the accounts.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the Annual Governance Statement included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the Accounting Statement included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19**
- 3. The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts 2018-19**

19/20.8 Statutory Requirements and Code of Governance

The Chairman and Vice Chairman presented some minor amendments to the Statutory Requirements and Code of Governance which was last revised in 2017.

The edits have been accepted by the Executive Committee at its May meeting.

The main edits are:

- To use the title of Chief Executive Officer instead of Chief Officer
- To Standing Committees and Advisory Groups as more flexibility is required.
- To use gender neutral pronouns where possible.

- 1. The Board ADOPTED the revised Statutory Requirements and Code of Conduct.**

19/20.9 Future Meeting Dates

The Chief Officer informed the Board of the future meeting dates for 2019/20

Full Board:

16th October 2019

26th February 2020

17th June (and AGM) 2020

21st October 2020
Executive Committee
18th September 2019
15th January 2020
6th May 2020
23rd September 2020

1. The Board NOTED the future meeting dates.

12.30 The Countryside Officer and the Conservation and Landscape Officer arrived.

19/20.10 Landscape Enhancement associated with Major Infrastructure and Development

The Conservation & Landscape Officer started the presentations updating the Board on the current initiatives to bring significant landscape enhancement to the AONB.

1. He gave a presentation on the HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project.
2. This was followed by the Planning Officer presenting on the Network Rail fund for mitigating the Great Western Rail Electrification through the AONB (12m), to provide significant improvement and connected landscape, valued and protected for the future through a stronger sense of place. The two AONB's and the Railway Action Group involved sit on the Steering Committee.
3. The Conservation & Landscape Officer presented on various Visual Impact Provision projects, OFGEM, VIP, LEI, UKPN undergrounding and the two projects approved, Dunstable Downs and Chess Valley.
4. This was followed by Biodiversity Accounting. The use of biodiversity offsetting within the planning process is evolving. The aim is to offset loss with requirements ending up with net gain.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss items as they came up. Lively discussion took place. Members supported the thoughts on capturing opportunities for the CCB to show that it can make the Chilterns better.

The Conservation & Landscape Officer and Planning Officer were thanked for their interesting presentations.

1. The Board will CONSIDER the potential for enhancement projects arising as mitigation and compensation for the impacts of major infrastructure and development on the AONB.

19/20.11 Any other Business.

1. The Chairman informed the Board that Elaine King, the new Chief Executive Officer, will take up her post on 9th July.
2. Sue Holden, Chief Officer, will leave the Board 17 July. In her 4 years she has brought a new look to the Board, transformed the financial situation, brought fresh ideas and challenged the Board. She leaves it with many new projects on board.

Sue was presented with some Chilterns gifts.

Lunch would be followed by a visit to Dunstable Downs.

The Chairman.....date.....

Item 6 Board Review October 2019

1.0 Highlights

1.1 The Landscapes Review, led by Julian Glover, was published on 21 September. The report is wide-ranging and thorough in its approach, acknowledging the challenges and opportunities facing our protected landscapes. The report makes 27 proposals, one of which is for AONBs to be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, and that the implementation of Management Plans have a stronger status in law.

1.2 The Glover report also proposes that the Chilterns AONB be designated a National Park in recognition of i) the huge pressures on the Chilterns AONB from housing and major infrastructure projects - such as the Ox-Cam growth corridor and HS2 - and ii) the huge recreational opportunities that the Chilterns provides. A team workshop was held in early October to explore the report's proposals in more detail.

1.3 HS2 has been a focus of our work in recent weeks. The CCB sent a [letter](#) to the Chair of the independent HS2 review group, Douglas Oakervee, expressing concern regarding the damage HS2 will cause to the Chilterns AONB. A [letter](#) was also sent to Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, asking him to pause the felling of trees as part of 'enabling works' in a village in the Chilterns AONB.

1.4 We were joined in August by Lizzie Buckley, Communications and Community Engagement Officer for the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme.

1.5 The Chilterns Chalk Streams Project published its [Annual Review](#) this month, setting out achievements from the past 12 months and highlighting the crisis chalk streams are experiencing through a combination of climate change, high and rising demand for water and over-abstraction. This issue was the subject of the Chiltern Society's AGM in October, with the CCSP Project Officer and CCB's CEO contributing to a constructive discussion involving campaigner Feargal Sharkey, the Environment Agency, water companies and Ofwat.

2.0 Report from Executive Committee, 18 September 2019

2.1 The Finance Officer reported on the financial position for the first four months of the new financial year 2019-20. Expenditure showed a small deficit of £1,367 over income, which was less than had been expected, due to externally generated income as fees and interest were higher than expected.

2.2 The largest project to date is the GWR (Great Western Railway) project. Income has been received in advance and the project is in its early stages. The North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership, which is also part of the GWR project, has requested that the CCB hold the GWR funds. The Committee discussed ensuring that governance, project planning and financial arrangements comply with established CCB governance arrangements.

2.3 The Finance Officer highlighted the issues caused by the external auditors' use of s151 (financial administration) Local Government Act 1972 when examining the CCB's annual accounts. The Finance Officer will be seeking a clear understanding with the external auditors to enable the CCB to present its financial statement in a responsible and comprehensive way as well as complying with the regulations.

2.4 Committee discussed the Defra grant funding agreement, which is almost finalised. Future funding once the Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority has been established was also discussed,

due to the risk that five authorities becoming one may result in a reduced contribution to the CCB overall.

2.5 The Finance Officer reported on the review of the CCB's Treasury Management Strategy. Committee agreed to continue to maximise interest received from deposit accounts where the risk of losing capital is minimised, and agreed to review the Treasury Management procedures and, if required, bring the matter to a future meeting.

2.6 Committee authorised the Finance Officer to add Dr Elaine King to the CCB banking mandate and remove Sue Holden.

2.7 Committee agreed to establish an HR Advisory Group and also discussed and provided comment and guidance on the governance, project planning, recruitment and financial arrangements for the GWR project.

2.8 Committee discussed and agreed a proposal for the CCB to facilitate and administer the activities of two local farm clusters.

2.9 Committee discussed an audit of the Chilterns Woodland Project, which the CCB's Vice Chairman had been asked to carry out by its former Chief Officer

3.0 Report from Planning Committee, 17 July 2019

3.1 Elizabeth Wilson stepped down as Chair of Planning Committee after two productive and successful years in the role and was thanked very much for her work. John Nicholls was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected as new Planning Committee Chairman, assisted by Elizabeth Wilson as Vice-Chair.

3.2 The Planning Officer gave an update on the settlement agreed with Network Rail of the compensation and mitigation for the harm resulting from the now completed rail electrification project on the Great Western Mainline through the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns AONBs. The project will run for five years, with £750,000 associated with mitigation planting and £3m for projects to address the residual harm by enhancing the AONBs in this rail corridor. A steering group will steer the project made up of the Chilterns Conservation Board, the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership and the Railway Action Group. The CCB will employ two members of staff to lead this project, line managed by the Planning Officer. Recruitment would start soon. Members made suggestions and discussed various possibilities. It was noted that lessons had already been learned from the Great Western Electrification Project regarding design of overhead line equipment in protected landscapes, and the Planning Officer is bringing that learning to the HS2 Review Group.

3.3 There was a report on the 2019 Chilterns Building Design Awards and photos of this year's winners. Members briefly discussed the criteria used in this award and suggested to review the criteria before the next awards to include, for example, minimising light pollution to protect dark skies.

3.4 A discussion on light pollution invited members to consider light pollution, how to increase public awareness of this issue and how to implement the new stronger policies on light pollution in the AONB Management Plan. Members asked the CEO and the Planning Officer to bring suggestions to the next meeting as this is likely to require more resources.

4.0 Landscape and Conservation

4.1 Chalk Streams: The drought and the dire state of our Chalks Streams have meant advocacy and education work have been high priority for the Chalk Streams Project over recent months. This has included:

- active involvement with the preparation of the [Chalk Streams in Crisis](#) report and contact with MPs in support of the debate in the House of Commons on 22nd July.
- media work including BBC news and Mail on Sunday interviews
- input to the Chiltern society Chalk Streams in Crisis Conference
- visits organised to chalk streams for 400+ children

The 2018-2019 Chilterns Chalk Streams Project annual review is now available [here](#).

4.2 Trees and woods strategy: Neil Jackson, Conservation and Landscape Officer is leading work to develop a trees and woods strategy for the Chilterns, in discussion with key stakeholders. This work is at an early stage and will be developed over the coming months.

4.3 Landowner engagement: Two site visits have been carried out through the HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connections Project, to draw up proposals for habitat enhancements.

4.4 Support has been provided to the Oxfordshire (Christmas Common) farm cluster project, and an application has been submitted to the Facilitation Fund, to provide support and training to the group of 12+ farmers.

4.5 HS2 - an updated CCB position statement and letter has been developed and posted on our website, in light of the independent review ('the Oakervee' review) of the costs and benefits of the scheme. Meanwhile the HS2 Programme Manager, Helen Hall, continues to work with a range of partners to develop schemes which deliver Review Group objectives for the area impacted by HS2.

4.6 Chiltern Partners Event 10th October: This event will launch a call to action for strengthened collaboration to deliver the AONB Management Plan. 50+ representatives of 40+ organisations are taking part.

5.0 Chalk Cherries & Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme

5.1 The delivery team is now in largely in place, and work is underway across all three themes - wildlife, heritage and people. The team includes 4 FTE staff employed by CCB and part time staff with BBOWT, Chiltern Rangers, Amersham Museum and Bucks New University. Highlights to date include:

- Partner launch event planned for 28th November at Wycombe Arts Centre, 4-7pm.
- Style guide and logo created, and communication protocols in place.
- Monitoring and evaluation consultants appointed.
- First claim successfully submitted to NHLF and HS2 Community Environment Fund.
- 18 farmers covering a total of 6000 hectares have come together to form the Central Chilterns Farm Cluster. Initial activity packages now in place include owl boxes and supplementary feeding. Habitat management plans developed on 4 farms, with practical works commissioned on one site, and one stewardship application submitted.
- Rough Around the Edges project, is actively working with 7 community sites, with 6 more in the pipeline. BBO Wildlife Trust lead this project.
- The first CCC volunteer work party has been held, with more planned. Chiltern Rangers lead this work.

- Tracking the Impact – this is the wildlife & habitat monitoring component of the project. Volunteer recruitment for this project will go live in November.
- Routes to the Past project – recording the story of historic routeways of the Chilterns - is live, with the first volunteers starting to sign up and 2 guided walks planned.
- Understanding the Chilterns - a project to deliver an education for local children, led by Amersham Museum – is now live, with work underway to host the first school visits.
- Woodlanders' lives and Landscapes project will be launched 9th November, volunteer recruitment will go live on that date.
- CCC Festival dates confirmed for 2020 (June 13-21), with bookings underway for venues in Wycombe, Aylesbury and Amersham
- Four 'Rock Around the Chilterns' themed train journeys and dates confirmed in partnership with Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway for 2020
- Partnership agreed with Wycombe Sound for the delivery of Echoed Locations

6.0 Beacons of the Past

6.1 LiDAR results: The Citizen Science Portal (chilternsbeacons.org) launched on 12 August and currently has 943 registered users, who have thus far recorded over 2500 features across our 1400km² survey area.

6.2 We have arranged half-day training sessions for primary school teachers across the AONB to take place from January 2020 onwards. Through a combination of lecture and practical exercises, these sessions will enable KS2 and KS3 teachers to more effectively deliver the National Curriculum on British and local prehistory. In tandem with these sessions we will be launching the Online Learning Zone, a web-based hub for teaching resources for History to begin with, but with room to expand into Geography and Science (ecology and habitats). A Legacy Goal of the project is that this will continue to grow as a dynamic website under the joint aegis of the CCB and the Chiltern Society (led by CS after end of 2021).

6.3 Beacons of the Past applied for and received a grant of £9,000 from the Pye Charitable Trust (via the Vale of the White Horse & Ridgeway Archaeological & Historical Trust) for a complementary piece of investigation and outreach specific to the Oxfordshire Grim's Ditches. This will commence in November 2019 and complete within 12 months.

6.4 The projects first Community Excavation took place from 9-19 September at Burnham Beeches, in partnership with City of London. More than 70 volunteers worked in the trench and received skills training, and more than 400 people came for the Site Open Day which was held on 14 September. Preliminary results are available on the CCB Project webpage

7.0 People and Society

7.1 The 'Open for Business' tourism project in the central Chilterns funded by the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund commenced mid-August. We have appointed Neil Matthews as the project manager. A promotional launch for the project will be held on 24th October at Missenden Abbey with key partners and businesses present.

The three-year project will deliver:

- A new Chilterns Pass to encourage custom at local businesses to be launched Feb 2019
- 6 'Celebrations of Chilterns Food & Drink' due to take place April and October each year
- Expanding the Walking Festivals to include new walks and businesses in the central Chilterns
- Consumer and business-to-business communications programme
- A destination guide and themed visitor itineraries

7.2 The sixth Chilterns Walking Festival is underway, running from 5-20 October. We have 80 walks and events on offer, including some new walks and bespoke events in the northern Chilterns as part of our efforts to reach audiences in the Luton/Dunstable area. A Walk Leader workshop was held in July to recruit and train volunteers to plan and lead some of these walks to ensure their future sustainability. Eighteen people attended and some are now leading walks. This is the last of the Leader grant-funded Festivals but they will continue as they have become an established and popular event in the Chilterns calendar which has engaged large numbers of people. We are on track to making them financially sustainable.

7.3 We have been closely involved with the development of the Bucks Cultural Partnership, leading one of the outcome groups 'Re-vitalised heritage and transformed places'. We are currently scoping some ideas for a Chilterns arts-inspired public engagement project as a way of reaching new audiences. This is still at the early stages but has great potential and is in tune with the National Association of AONB's aspirations to embed the arts into the AONB offering, connecting people to nature, the basis of their recent successful Arts Council bid.

8.0 Development and Communications

8.1 The Management Plan has been formally published and distribution across our networks is in progress. Copies have been sent to local authorities, town and parish councils, partner organisations, libraries and a partner event to launch the Plan is scheduled for 10th October. A summary leaflet introducing the Plan has also been published and this has been distributed to the general public across the region alongside Outstanding magazine.

8.2 Outstanding Magazine 2019-20 has been published and 18,000 copies have distributed through a new distribution company (Direct Publicity) across the whole of the Chilterns. Copies can be found in shopping centres, hotels, leisure centres, theatres and many other establishments with a high footfall. A further 2,000 copies have been distributed to partner organisations, libraries and local authorities. Work on the next edition has now commenced.

8.3 National Moment – the CCB participated in the coming together of AONBs to celebrate its first 'National Moment'. At 2pm on September 21st people made hearts in the landscapes and took photographs to share on social media. The moment was held to celebrate 70 years of National Parks and the Countryside act. The CCB celebrated with a beautiful heart-shaped cake, baked by Board Member Alison Doggett.

8.4 Response to the Glover Landscapes Review – Alongside the CEO and with support and feedback from the rest of the team, we are working on a response to the recently published Landscapes review which will be published on our website and social channels soon.

8.5 Response to the HS2 review – the CCBs response to the HS2 review was sent to the Douglas Oakervee, Chair of the Review and information published on the website, news items, in social media and in our monthly newsletter.

8.6 The new website project progresses slowly. The Communications Officer has held internal meetings/taken briefs from all staff and a requirements document is being finalised. This document will go out to tender by the end of October and the selection process will take 6 weeks.

8.7 The Communications Officer has been working closely with the new project teams; Chalk, Cherries and Chairs and Open for Business to assist with comms and help get the projects off the ground. Some of the assets include; launch press releases, project flyers, web content and

leaflets. The Communications Officer's priorities for the next quarter include: new website progression, implementing new branding guidelines and processes for internal staff, and implementing a content plan to ensure planned social campaigns.

8.8 The Development Manager has been working with the Countryside Officer to redevelop the North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative bid, *Chalkscapes*, which was unsuccessful when submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in August 2018. Having received feedback on the application in March 2019, the bid has been redeveloped to take into account the recommendations of the Heritage Lottery. We have since identified a number of potential project partners and networks in both the Luton and Dunstable areas, but primarily focusing on Luton, and are now working with these partners to set out the activity which would take place during the Development Phase of the project which, if successful, will commence in Spring 2020 for 24 months.

8.9 Project partners and opportunities include a number of community groups working directly with adults and young people in Luton. The deadline for the bid is mid November 2019.

8.10 The Development Manager is also exploring contributing to national projects led by the National Association and other AONBs, in particular an Arts project focused around the Colchester Declaration, and a revival of a previous project, 'Big Chalk', in conjunction with the Kent Downs, both of which would be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund within the next 6 months.

5. The CCB's revised Statutory Requirements and Code of Governance approved by the Board at the last meeting (see Board Paper for 26 June 2019 item 8) allows for Deliberative and Advisory Groups to be set up. A meeting of Executive Committee on 18 September 2019 approved the setting up of an Advisory Group for the Great Western Railway programme of work. Nominations for Board Members to serve on the Advisory Group are invited. The Advisory Group will include members from the two partner organisations. The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group is at Appendix 1.

Finance

6. The amount of funding from Network Rail is £3.75m, which was transferred to CCB in April 2019.
7. The contract with Network Rail requires a split in spending as follows:
 - £750,000 must be allocated to line-side tree planting and vegetation to help screen the steel gantries which have been installed in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONB.
 - A further £3 million must be allocated on landscape enhancement projects within the wider corridor of the electrification works.
8. The draft MoA establishes that CCB will be responsible for employing the staff, for holding the funds and carrying out the financial transactions.
9. CCB's Financial Scheme of Delegation will apply.
10. A Budget has been drafted.

Project plan and timetable

11. A Programme Plan, including a timetable for the programme of work has been drafted.
12. Mitigation and compensation projects arising from a planning or infrastructure programme like this are unlike Heritage Lottery Fund projects where a development phase of 1-2 years takes place as part of bidding for funding. In this case we have secured the funding and can develop and deliver the programme of work with certainty of the funding. The reporting requirements to Network Rail consist of an annual report to Network Rail on progress and spend.
13. In summary, the draft Programme Plan proposes that the programme will run for five years. Posts have been advertised and candidates shortlisted. The recruitment process has been put on hold pending consideration of the programme, including its governance arrangements. Staff will be recruited as appropriate and in accordance with the timescales agreed at this Board meeting.

14. A programme development phase will identify projects to meet the programme aims, vision and scope. The GWR Steering Group will develop criteria for evaluating projects and will develop the overall programme of works. The GWR Advisory Group will scrutinise the criteria and the overall programme of works to ensure compliance with CCB and North Wessex Downs AONB policies and in accordance with s4(a) of the GWR Advisory Group Terms of Reference, and with industry best practice.
15. The project delivery phase will commence as soon as is feasible. The £750,000 lineside planting element is relatively straightforward and will have a shorter development phase, aiming for tree planting during the winter planting seasons to achieve some visible quick wins for the project.
16. The £3 million AONB enhancement element is wider in scope and geography, looking beyond the lineside but still focussed on the rail corridor impacted by the electrification works. The AONB enhancement project will address the residual harm to the natural beauty of the AONBs, to local communities, to the visitor experience, particularly those enjoying the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails or on the river, and to the tourist economy. Suitable projects are likely to benefit the protected landscape, biodiversity, visual impact, wildlife, historic landscape, heritage, landscape connectivity & resilience, public enjoyment and access. Some elements may involve capital works, others funding for events and community initiatives.
17. The programme plan will recognise the two elements of the programme (lineside mitigation planting and AONB enhancement) and their different timescales and levels of complexity. Subject to review by the GWR Advisory Group, the programme plan will be developed and monitored by the Steering Group. Opportunities will be sought to lever in more funds to expand and lengthen the project.
18. The project will be evaluated annually, with a final evaluation phase in year five. The legacy of the tree planting and AONB enhancement projects will be secured through mechanisms including involving the local community.

Conclusion

19. This programme of work will provide the opportunity to make a substantial investment of money and time into restoring a recently damaged area of the AONB. It is fully funded and provides for CCB to carry out much needed landscape restoration work. Alongside the Chalk Cherries Chairs project, the proposed Chalkscapes project and the HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project, it will provide a programme of landscape-scale conservation projects for the Southern Oxfordshire part of the Chilterns. It will allow CCB to forge and strengthen partnerships with the North Wessex Downs and local stakeholders. It provides the opportunity for CCB to become a national leader in mitigation and compensation in protected landscapes. In

future there may be scope for the Board to partner on work relating to airport expansion and the proposed Ox-Cams corridor.

20. The first necessary step is to set up governance arrangements. To this end, it is proposed that the Advisory Group will operate in accordance with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1, to include, but not be limited to, advising the Steering Group to finalise (i) an MoA for CCB and North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership, (ii) the Programme's Aims, Vision and Scope, (iii) a Programme Plan (iv) assist with personnel appointments, and (v) develop the Budget.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Board establishes and appoints members to the GWR Advisory Group.**
- 2. That the Board approves the GWR Advisory Group Terms of Reference.**

Appendix 1. Terms of Reference for the GWR Advisory Group

GWR Advisory Group

1. The purposes of this paper are to describe the objectives, outputs currently anticipated, and the membership framework of the GWR Advisory Group.

The GWR Advisory Group is appointed in accordance with: Paragraph 25 of the Chilterns Conservation Board's Statutory Requirements and Code of Governance (First Edition June 2017, Second Edition June 2019 Version V3A) in the following way:

The Board may appoint from time to time deliberative and advisory panels and working groups in relation to its various functions. None of these panels or working groups enjoys decision-making functions. All matters arising from the work of these bodies which require a decision will be brought to the Board or an appropriate committee by a member of the advisory group or the chief executive officer.

and

paragraph 12 of the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners Partnership Agreement (revised June 2019) in the following way:

The Council of Partners may require the staff of the AONB to commission any research, and set up and determine the terms of reference for any panels or working groups, which it considers necessary or appropriate for the performance of its functions, with the help of the Management Working Group (see paragraphs 56-62).

2. The GWR Advisory Group is a deliberative and advisory group. It does not have any decision-making functions and it will be chaired by xx a member of the Chilterns Conservation Board's Full Board, and include two additional members of the Chilterns Conservation Board's Full Board, one of which will be a member of the Executive Committee, in addition to two members of the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners and/or Management Working Group. It will also include the Chilterns Conservation Board's Chief Executive Officer and the North Wessex Downs AONB's Director and two or more co-opted members including one from the Railway Action Group (RAG). The co-opted members should, ideally, be experts in the field of programme management and will be treated as non-voting members as defined in paragraphs 27 and 28 of the Chilterns Conservation Board's Code of Governance.
3. The GWR Advisory Group will report directly to the Chairman of the Chilterns Conservation Board (via the Executive Committee) and the Chairman of the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners on a regular basis, together with any recommendations. The Executive Committee will of necessity take any decisions appropriate to it on the

arrangements. It will also receive reports from the Steering Group which it will share with the Chilterns Conservation Board's Planning Committee. In addition, it will receive requests for advice, help and assistance which it will respond to promptly.

4. The GWR Advisory Group will review all the arrangements necessary generally in accordance with the Management of Successful Programs guidance issued jointly by the Cabinet Office and Axelos to:

- a) ensure that the programme of work relating to the anticipated benefits of the proposed lineside and other environmental improvements which form the basis of the agreement between Network Rail, the Chilterns Conservation Board and North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership is delivered in accordance with the requirements of the contract and current best practice;
- b) confirm the appointment of the Senior Responsible Owner [it is proposed that this be the CCB's Chief Executive Officer];
- c) assist with the appointment of programme and project personnel;
- d) advise on:
 - Ensuring that the programme delivers a coherent capability, achieves its strategic outcomes, and realises its benefits, to include advising on a programme plan;
 - Ensuring the viability of the business cases, including advising on programme and project spending and ensuring compliance with the financial scheme of delegation;
 - Maintaining the interface with key senior stakeholders, keeping them engaged and informed;
 - Monitoring the key strategic risks facing the programme;
 - Maintaining alignment of the programme with the statutory purposes and overarching strategic direction of the Chilterns Conservation Board and the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership;
 - Ensuring the effectiveness and performance of the programme organisation;

The GWR Advisory Group will operate for the duration of the Programme or until such time as the Chilterns Conservation Board and North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership are satisfied that all requirements at paragraph 4 have been met, or that quantified or unquantified risks are outstanding, or significant contingent liabilities remain.

Item 8 **External Annual Audit Return****Author:** Graham Hurst, Finance Officer**Summary:** The external auditor has completed their review of the Annual Governance and Accounting Return 2018-19 and has given an “except for” opinion.**Purpose of the Report:** To inform members of the completion of the external audit for 2018-19 and matters raised by the auditors.**Background**

1. The Board prepares an Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR) which:
 - Summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2019; and,
 - Confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to the auditor’s responsibilities.
 - The Annual Return was presented to, and approved by, the Board at its meeting on 26 June 2019.
2. The auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, is required to conduct an assurance review and issue an external audit report and certificate.

Audit Conclusion

3. The notice of conclusion accompanies this paper. The auditor has certified that they have completed their review of the annual return and discharged their responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Audit Report

4. The auditor’s report accompanies this paper. The auditor has given an except for opinion:

The smaller authority has not addressed the ‘except for’ matters raised by the external auditor when qualifying the prior year AGAR which reported that the smaller authority should restate Boxes 1, 3 and 7 for the prior year and correctly account for deferred income in the current year. We note that there is again a large reconciling item (£336,198)

between Boxes 7 and 8 representing deferred income which should be held in Box 7 as an earmarked reserve.

5. The Board will recall that the previous years accounts were qualified because income received but not yet earned was treated as deferred until the time that it was earned. The treatment adopted by the CCB is in accordance with FRS 102 (Financial Reporting standard 102 is the principal accounting standard in the UK financial reporting regime). The auditors were not prepared to debate the matter having raised the issue on the Monday requesting a response by the Wednesday and qualifying their opinion on the Thursday without further correspondence.

Action required

6. The notice of conclusion of the audit together with the auditor's report are required to be published on the CCB website
7. The Finance Officer will seek further advice on this matter as Deferred income will be even greater in this current year having received the National Rail GWR funds.

Recommendation

1. **To approve and accept the auditor's report and approve the actions noted.**

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19

In respect of **Chilterns Conservation Board - OT0011**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2019; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2018/19

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR:

- The smaller authority has not addressed the 'except for' matters raised by the external auditor when qualifying the prior year AGAR which reported that the smaller authority should restate Boxes 1, 3 and 7 for the prior year and correctly account for deferred income in the current year. We note that there is again a large reconciling item (£336,198) between Boxes 7 and 8 representing deferred income which should be held in Box 7 as an earmarked reserve.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2018/19

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2019.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

24/09/2019

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews for 2018/19 in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Chilterns Conservation Board

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2019

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

<p>1. The audit of accounts for Chilterns Conservation Board for the year ended 31 March 2019 has been completed and the accounts have been published.</p> <p>2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Chilterns Conservation Board on application to:</p> <p>(a) <u>THE FINANCE OFFICER</u> <u>CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD</u> <u>THE LODGE 90 STATION ROAD</u> <u>CHINNOR OXON OX39 4HA</u></p> <p>(b) _____ _____ _____</p> <p>3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £ <u>1</u> (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.</p> <p>Announcement made by: (d) <u>GRAHAM HULST. FINANCE OFFICER</u></p> <p>Date of announcement: (e) <u>16 October 2019</u></p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website.</p> <p>(a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR</p> <p>(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised</p> <p>(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs</p> <p>(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice</p> <p>(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice</p>
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