



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE CHILTERN'S AREA
OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY held on Wednesday 16th October 2019 at Flaunden
Village Hall, Birch Lane, Flaunden HP3 0PP commencing at 10.10**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown
Cllr Steve Jarvis
Cllr. Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Hugh McCarthy
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Nick Rose

Appointing Body

Buckinghamshire County Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Wycombe District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Chiltern District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Alison Doggett
Paul Mainds
John Nicholls
Ray Payne
John Shaw
Elizabeth Wilson
Ian Waller

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

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr Susan Biggs
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Clive Thomas

Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers

Kath Daly
Graham Hurst
Elaine King
Lucy Murfett
Claire Readey
Donna Webb

Countryside Officer
Finance Officer
Chief Executive Officer
Planning Officer
Development and Funding Manager
Administrative Officer

Other:

Deirdre Hansen
Paul Hayes
EJS Hiscocks
Paul Miller
Henry Oliver
Ian Haslam

Clerk to the Board
Co-opted member Planning Committee
North Wessex Downs AONB
North Wessex Downs AONB
North Wessex Downs AONB
Railway Action Group

The Chairman welcomed all present

19/20.12 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn, Hertfordshire Parish Councils, Colin Courtney, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Raj Khiroya, Three Rivers District Council, Cllr Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Council and Cllr Richard Newcombe Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Absent without apologies: Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council

The Chairman welcomed John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee to his first Board meeting and invited him to introduce himself. John Shaw leads Chiltern Rangers and is a lifelong resident of the Chilterns.

19/20.13 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

19/20.14 Minutes of the AGM and the Ordinary Board Meeting 26th June 2019.

The minutes of the AGM were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. The minutes of the Board Meeting of 26th June 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record after two typing errors were amended in 19/20.6.

19/20.15 Matters Arising.

None

19/20.16 Public Question Time.

No public questions.

19/20.17 Board Review including reports from the Executive and Planning Committees.

- a. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had provided a summary of ongoing activities with the following highlights:
 1. Publication of the Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover: a wide ranging and thorough report, acknowledging the challenges and opportunities facing protected landscapes. It makes 27 proposals. The report also proposes that the Chilterns AONB be designated a National Park. The CEO mentioned the team workshop held on the Glover Review. The CCB will produce a response. To be provided to members.
 2. HS2: a letter has been sent to the Chair of the independent HS2 Review Group expressing concern regarding the damage HS2 will cause to the Chilterns AONB. A letter also went to the Secretary of State for Transport, asking him to pause the felling of trees as part of the enabling works in a village in the Chilterns AONB.
 3. The Chilterns Chalk Streams Project has produced its annual report.
 4. A very successful Chilterns Partnership event was held 10th October. The Countryside Officer reported that 60 people had attended, representing 50 partners and 40 organisations. It sits alongside the Planning Forums and the Management Plan. The focus was: "How will the Management Plan be delivered". The event was jointly facilitated by some of our partners. It was noted that there is a growing list of interested stakeholders and the CCB is engaging them.
- b. Reports from the Executive Committee, the Planning Committee, Landscape and Conservation, Chalk, Cherries & Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme, Beacons of the Past, People and Society and Development and Communications had been received.
- c. The CEO gave a short overview of her first few months in post. She had met with staff, Board Members, a range of stakeholders and made contact with Local Authorities. She had familiarised herself with the various projects. Delivering the Management Plan is a key part of ongoing work.

- d. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and comment. It was agreed that the format of the Board Review presented with the agenda was helpful and useful to members.
- e. The Chairman informed the members that he had been asked by Defra to report to them on the CCB's achievements over the last 12 months. Members asked for a copy of this report when published.

1. The Board NOTED the review October 2019.

19/20.18 Governance arrangements for Programme of Work to restore landscapes and biodiversity after Network Rail electrification work.

The Planning Officer had reported that the funding received from Network Rail is to develop and deliver a programme of work to help mitigate the impacts in partnership with the North Wessex Downs AONB.

She introduced the partners from the North Wessex Downs and the Railway Action group who attended the meeting; E Hiscocks, Chairman, North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners; Paul Miller, member North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners; Henry Oliver Director North Wessex Downs AONB; and Ian Haslam, Railway Action Group (RAG).

The Planning Officer informed the members that the Great Western project had been renamed as 'Restoring Landscapes and Biodiversity after Network Rail electrification work'.

She gave a presentation on the project, with some background and the involvement of the partners. It was noted that RAG's involvement had been key to securing the funding from Network Rail. She had been working successfully since 2015 with the RAG and the North Wessex Downs AONB. The funding provided is to ensure enhancements to the AONB.

She presented initial thoughts on the management structure of the project, finance, planning and timetabling. The Executive Committee at its September meeting had raised various issues related to governance and suggested a new advisory group be established to assist the programme. The Vice Chairman had tabled terms of reference for this advisory group and a proposed management structure.

The Board were asked for their views. Members asked questions and a wide-ranging discussion took place. Partnership arrangements, transparency and accountability were all discussed and made clear. Modifications to the terms of reference of the advisory group were suggested and accepted.

The CEO thanked the members for their helpful comment.

The recommendations as tabled were taken in reverse order.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the GWR Advisory Group terms of reference, subject to some minor modifications to be made as discussed. The final terms of reference will be sent to all Board Members.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the establishment of the GWR Advisory Group and APPOINTED Ray Payne as Chairman, John Griffin and John Nicholls as members.**

Ian Waller, the Countryside Officer and the Development and Funding Officer left the meeting.

19/20.19 External Audit Report 2018-19

The Finance Officer had reported on the completion of the external audit 2018-19 and the point raised by the external auditor.

The auditor has certified that the review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2018-19 had been completed and the responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 have been discharged.

The auditor has given an “except for” opinion on their review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018-19.

- a. The CCB has consistently prepared its accounts on an “accrual” basis which the AGAR does not permit.
- b. The treatment of the accounts as in a. is in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102). This is the principal accounting standard in the UK financial reporting regime.

It was noted that the accrual basis used ensures that the accounts are a suitable management tool for the CCB, but that Local Government accounting rules are not ideal for CCB purposes.

The Finance Officer will publish the notice of conclusion of the audit together with the auditor’s report on the CCB website. He will also seek further advice on the matter of deferred income.

1. The Board APPROVED and ACCEPTED the auditor’s report.

2. The Board APPROVED and AGREED the actions noted.

Chalk Streams Project Officer arrived-Allen Beechey.

19/20.20 Chalk Streams Project

The Chalk Streams Project Officer gave a comprehensive and enthusiastic presentation on the project’s work and its future plans.

The project has been running since 1997. It was noted that the chalks streams are in crisis, especially after three years of consecutive dry winters, and a large part of the project is to protect chalk streams into the future.

Future Meeting Dates

Full Board:

- 26th February 2020
- 17th June (and AGM) 2020
- 21st October 2020

Executive Committee

- 15th January 2020
- 6th May 2020
- 23rd September 2020

Planning Committee:

- 20th November 2019
- 4th March 2020
- 15th July 2020
- 18th November 2020

Lunch would be followed by a site visit to the River Chess

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