



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2012 at The Baptist Hall, TRING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.30PM**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Body</b>
<b>Appointed by Local Authorities</b>	
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
Cllr Alan Walters	South Buckinghamshire District Council

<b>Appointed by the Secretary of State</b>	
Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

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

<b>Officers</b>	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Neil Jackson	CCB
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer

Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

## **51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Dr Simon Mortimer, Ray Payne and Kevin Mayne

## **52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were declared

## **53. Minutes of the previous meeting**

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

John Wilson was added to the attendees, Kevin Mayne was removed from the apologies and the 'd' was removed from the word cost on item 41.

## **54. Matters Arising**

1. Re item 43: the "Boris Island" plans have been rushed out. This could change everything for Heathrow. The Luton Airport development plans will also affect the Chiltern AONB. The timing may allow for the matter to be discussed at the next Board meeting. The Luton Airport development plans have infra-structure implications. Dave Taylor offered to organise a presentation by Luton Airport at the next Board meeting.
2. Item 44. The Board had not been successful in its bid for a Chiltern Chalk Nature Improvement Area grant.
3. Item 44. The Government has not given reassurances that they will apply the National Ecosystem Assessment approach to their own activities.
4. Item 47. Promoting wood fuel. Following a mild winter the domestic market has dropped.

## **55. Public Question time**

No members of the public were present.

## **56. Election to the Executive Committee.**

This item was move up the agenda with agreement of the meeting.

Following the resignation of Kevin Mayne, a new member, who is also a Secretary of State appointee has to be elected to the Executive Committee. Ray Payne was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected to the Executive Committee.

## **57. Report from the Executive Committee**

The members received the report of the Chief Officer

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 the Executive Committee:

1. Received a report on the financial position to the end of October. There were no significant issue to report.
2. Received a report on the Medium Term Financial plan 2002-20105 and additional matters covering salary increments, allowances and incentives.
3. Received a report on the responses from Parish and Town councils to the request to provide financial support.
4. Approved a report on celebrating the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
5. Received a report on High Speed 2
6. Received the Chief Officer's report.

**The Board:**

1. **NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.**
2. **DECIDED to postpone the Review of the Member's Allowance scheme and review the proposal in 2013.**
3. **APPROVED the proposed cost of living award of 1% applied to staff salaries and members allowances.**
4. **APPROVED the changes to the mileage payments and essential car user allowances.**
5. **APPROVED the unfreezing of discretionary performance related salary increments for 2012-2013.**
6. **NOTED the proposed review of options for the staff incentive scheme.**

**58. 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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

1. Barbara Wallis had stepped down as Chairman and Bettina Kirkham was nominated and elected as Chairman of the Committee.
2. The High Speed 2 update
3. Feedback from the AONB Planning conference 2011. The feedback provided was overall very positive and the field trip to Matthew's brickyard at Bellingdon was regarded by many as inspirational.
4. Feedback from the Planning Forum and an update on visits to local authorities. Following the feedback it had been resolved that the Planning Forum should continue in its present format. The visits to local authorities to try and re-invigorate the Forum had been successful and will continue in early 2012.

5. Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils for early summer 2012.

The committee had approved the setting up of a short series of events during the summer of 2012. There are a number of topics to be discussed. The costs would be covered by a small fee.

6. Proposed student research project- implications of internet land sales.

Students at Oxford Brookes had been approached about this research project and the matter will be reported at future meetings.

7. The Committee was informed about Development Plan Responses made under delegated powers and planning applications on which the Board had been consulted on.

8. The Committee had been given a planning applications update.

**1. The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee.**

## **59. Report on High Speed 2**

The Chief Officer reported that the Government had announced on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012 its intention to proceed to the next stage on the current preferred line along the Misbourne Valley and seek Parliament's approval in 2013. The route changes included some improvements to the Chilterns, but other changes given less prominence, were negative. The Governments had given little weight to the outcome of the public consultation (55,000 responses) which was overwhelmingly critical, with responses to some questions registering objections rates of up to 90%. There had been considerable media coverage and the Board has played a full part in voicing objections to the proposal.

Neil Jackson, CCB Conservation and Landscape Officer, gave a presentation explaining the proposed changes.

Following the announcement by the Secretary of State:

1. The Board needs to undertake a detailed analysis of the effects of the proposed changes to design and alignment.
2. Having made an initial assessment the changes do not significantly affect either the environmental or business case therefore the Board should maintain its opposition to the plan.
3. The Board needs to take note of the legal advice on options for opposing the railway. It is not proposed that the Board initiates any legal challenge or provides funding towards legal fees. If appropriate the Board should consider indirect support for any legal challenge which it believes would result in reducing or avoiding damage to the AONB.
4. HS2Ltd has confirmed it will commission an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Board must ensure it is consulted at all stages including interpretation of the findings.
5. HS2Ltd has indicated that during 2012 it intends to create a number of Community and Environmental Fora. the Board must seek involvement in each.
6. The Board must be prepared to work closely with HS2 Ltd to ensure the best possible outcome for the AONB, if the railway is to be built.

7. The Board must continue to press for the Business plan for HS2 to be revised to incorporate monetised value on the environmental impacts, based on the National Ecosystem Appraisals approach adopted by the Government in June 2011.
8. In view of the likelihood of additional mitigation, it is crucial that the Board continues to work closely with environmental bodies, local action groups and local authorities. The good relationships with local MPs will be vital in the run up to the presentation of a Hybrid Bill to Parliament in late 2013.

The issue was discussed at length by the members.

- 1. The Board MAINTAINS its opposition to the Railway as it will cause major and irreversible damage to the AONB.**
- 2. The Board DECIDED that in 2012 involvement with the Environmental Impact Assessment, the new fora to be created by HS2 Ltd, and scrutiny of mitigation and design are a high priority in the Board's overall work programme.**
- 3. The Board DECIDED to allocate funding as required from the Development Reserve, subject to authority being given by the Executive Committee.**

## **60. Report on the Water White Paper- Water for Life**

The Chalk Streams Project Officer, Allen Beechey, briefed the Board on the Government's Water White Paper launched 8th December 2011. It sets out its vision for water management in the future. The paper aims to address the key challenges of protecting the health of the rivers and lakes, maintaining water infrastructure and managing water resources effectively.

Despite of £90 billion investment in the Water Industry since privatisation, water supplies in many areas of the country are stressed and only a quarter of water bodies are healthy because of over abstraction and pollution. Low flow and pollution are the chief reasons the 9 rivers in the Chilterns do not attain Good Ecological Status or Potential according to Water Framework Directive standards. The proposed changes to the abstraction legislation will be too late to address the issue of over-abstraction in the Chilterns in time for the Water Framework Directive reporting deadline in 2027. The White Paper falls short on strategy how to deal with the problems in the Chilterns.

This type of legislation does not occur very often. The White Paper is not ambitious enough to make much progress. The Board will make a submission to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

Members posed questions and comments were made.

- 1. The Board NOTED the Government's policies and strategies to manage water resources.**

- 2. The Board WILL MAKE a submission to the Committee registering the Board's concern that the measurers do not go far enough and are unlikely to be successful in the Chilterns.**

#### **61. Progress report on the Chilterns' Commons Project.**

In June 2011 the Heritage Lottery Fund approved a grant of £403,000 for a project to enhance the conservation, understanding and enjoyment of common land in the Chilterns which will run from July 2011 to June 2015. Rachel Sanderson was appointed as the project manager in August 2011.

She gave a report on the programme of works on commons and training events held so far and planned. The members provided feedback and comment on the excellent work carried out and planned.

- 1. The Board NOTED the progress to date.**
- 2. The Board provided feedback on the achievements to date and the planned programme.**

#### **62. Celebrating the Olympics and the Jubilee**

The Chief Officer reported that the Executive Committee was of the view that the Board should mark the 2012 Olympics, the Paralympics and the Queen's 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee and recommended that a budget of up to £3,000 be allocated from the Development Reserve. The Board's suggestions and feedback was sought on the most appropriate ways to mark the occasions. After discussion it was proposed to concentrate on the Jubilee.

Some discussion took place on marking the Paralympics as Buckinghamshire is the spiritual home of these games.

12.25 Cllr Chris Richards left the meeting.

12.28 Cllr Roger Emmett left the meeting.

- 1. The Board members provided suggestions on how the Board could celebrate the Olympics incl the Paralympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.**
- 2. The Board AGREED to a provisional budget of £3,000 being created from the Development Reserve.**

#### **63. Works Programme update to December 2011.**

- 1. The Board NOTED the works programme update to December 2011.**

**64. Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 29 March 2012 location tbc.**

**65. Dates of Future meetings:**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Locations to be confirmed.**

The meeting closed 12.30

The Chairman..... Date.....