



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE CHILTERN'S AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at Hambleden Village Hall, Hambleden RG9 6RP commencing at 10.05**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Appointed by Local Authorities**

Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown  
Cllr Steve Jarvis  
Cllr. Lynn Lloyd  
Cllr Charles Mathew  
Cllr Hugh McCarthy  
Cllr Richard Newcombe  
Cllr Ian Reay  
Cllr Nick Rose

**Appointing Body**

Buckinghamshire County Council  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Wycombe District Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council.  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Chiltern District Council

**Appointed by the Secretary of State**

Colin Courtney  
Paul Mainds  
John Nicholls  
Ray Payne  
Elizabeth Wilson

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

Oxfordshire  
Oxfordshire  
Buckinghamshire

**CCB Officers**

Graham Hurst  
Elaine King  
Claire Readey  
Donna Webb  
Annette Weiss

Finance Officer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Development and Funding Manager  
Administrative Officer  
People and Society Officer

**Other:**

Deirdre Hansen

Clerk to the Board

The Chairman welcomed all present.

**19/20.21 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn, Hertfordshire Parish Councils, Alison Doggett, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council, John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Clive Thomas Buckinghamshire Parish Councils and Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee.

Absent without apologies: Cllr Raj Khuroya, Three Rivers District Council.

**19/20.22 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**19/20.23 Minutes of the Ordinary Board Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.**

The minutes of the Board Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record after under item 19/20.17 "October 2019" was removed from the recommendation at the end of the item.

**19/20.24 Matters Arising.**

An update on the state of the rivers in the Chilterns AONB was requested.

**19/20.25 Public Question Time.**

No public present.

**19/20.26 Board Review including reports from the Executive and Planning Committees.**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had provided a summary of ongoing activities with the following highlights:

1. She talked about the staff changes that had taken place.
  2. She informed the meeting that the Planning Officer is leaving in March. They are now recruiting for a Principal Planning Officer. The Board wished Lucy Murfett well in her new position. She has been an effective Planning Officer, and made a great impact during her time with the CCB.
- Members expressed their appreciation for the CCB teams' achievements and their diligent commitment to their work. It was noted that the workload and activity keep increasing.
3. The new website is expected to be up and running in June.
  4. The CCB had responded to the Government announcement that HS2 will go ahead and expressed its disappointment with this decision.
    - a. It was noted that the relevant Local Authorities and Statutory Agencies will be receiving S17 applications soon and that the response time for these will be short.
    - b. It was noted that a hydrology report on a green tunnel had identified problems due to the area and the geology. This issue had been brought to the Select Committee by the CCB four years ago.
  5. 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.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and comment.

**1. The Board NOTED the review****19/20.27 Business Plan and Budget 2020-21**

The CEO presented the Business Plan and Budget for 2020-21, which had been approved for recommendation to the Board by the Executive Committee at their meeting 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The CEO informed the Board that the Development and Funding Manager had driven the Business Plan forward with the staff, taking a lead from the Management Plan, linking it to the Budget and the Risk

Register. The Business Plan is for one year, but is forward looking with the aim being to develop a longer-term planning framework to set longer-term organisational priorities.

The CEO confirmed that the new Buckinghamshire Council has agreed to make the same financial contribution in 2020-21 as the five combined Councils had made in 2019-20.

It was noted that Defra had not yet confirmed the new settlement for 20/21, but the Finance Officer has assumed, for budgeting purposes, that the contribution will be at the same level as in 2019-20.

The Finance Officer confirmed that he has taken a conservative view on spending and that he is looking at a balanced budget. He was asked to provide detailed budget arrangements with the papers in future.

Members asked questions and discussed the papers.

**1. The Board APPROVED the Business Plan**

**2. The Board NOTED the draft Budget.**

**19/20.28 HR Advisory Group**

The Vice-Chairman gave a summary report on the functions, the membership and actions of HR Advisory Group.

It was noted that this group does not have decision making powers, it only advises. The HR Advisory Group reports to the Chairman of the Executive Committee, who reports to the Board.

The CCB's new ways of working and new staff require the HR policies and processes to be reviewed and updated.

The Vice-Chairman is working on a coherent and contemporary set of documents that will form the basis for future policies. It will take some time to do this and, once completed, he will bring the papers to the Board. The AGM is the place to accept or reject the proposals. The work is not expected to be completed before the AGM in June 2020.

**1. The Board NOTED the report on the HR Advisory Group.**

**19/20.29 Review of the Risk Register**

The CEO presented the updated Risk Register to the Board.

The Risk Register is reviewed and updated annually. The Executive Committee had suggested some minor changes which are now incorporated.

Members discussed and reviewed the Risk Register, noted the immediate key funding risks and the recommendations in the Government's Landscapes Review (Glover Review), including a need to improve diversity.

Following the Chairman's meeting with DEFRA he asked the members their thoughts on the suggestion that the CCB consider setting up a Risk Register for the AONB as a whole, in addition to the current risk register concerned with the management of the Board. The Board indicated that it was in favour of such an approach.

**1. The Board REVIEWED and APPROVED the updated Risk Register.**

**19/20.30 Glover Review of Designated Landscapes.**

The CEO gave a presentation to update the Board on the Landscapes Review and related work. She highlighted the 27 key recommendations made by the review team and how these have been incorporated into the CCB's Business Plan, along with reporting on, the outcomes of our Partnership Forum meeting, team away days to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation framework,

and visits held and planned with National Lottery Heritage Fund, Defra and Natural England. The CEO also described her work with other AOB Lead Officers on the National Association of AONB’s Colchester Declaration.

The CEO was thanked for her presentation. She recognised the work of the whole team and drew attention to her slides, which use the improved branding organised by the Communications Officer.

**19/20.31 Any Other Business**

1. The hope was expressed that Local Authorities would adopt the emerging joint Chiltern Society and CCB Transport Policy.
2. Concern was expressed on the effects on the setting of the AONB with the plans for a third bridge at Reading.
3. The CEO updated the meeting on MHCLG’s new statutory instrument for the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority and her communications on the matter with the CEOs of our Local Authorities.
4. Concern was expressed about the protection of trees not covered by Tree Preservation Orders and not in Conservation Areas.
5. Three Board members will be leaving the Board at the formation of the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority, Cllrs Bill Bendyshe- Brown, Hugh McCarthy and Nick Rose. The Chairman thanked them for their work and help given to the CCB and wished them well for the future.

**19/20./32 Open for Business Programme.**

The People and Society Officer gave a presentation on the Open for Business Programme. This is a three-year HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund funded programme working with a range of partners.

The Chilterns Pass was launched earlier in the month. This is a new way to reach new audiences and an opportunity to promote independent Chilterns businesses and attractions, while also promoting the countryside and environmental messages.

A similar initiative is already operating successfully in East Anglia.

The Chilterns Walking Festival has some new themed walks and outdoor events this year and the CCB will be holding a Celebration of Chilterns Food and Drink (7-12 April) based on the successful Taste of the Chilterns pilot festival 2017.

Media coverage about the Chilterns Pass has been good.

She was thanks for her presentation.

**Future Meeting Dates**

**Full Board:**

17<sup>th</sup> June (and AGM) 2020

21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

**Executive Committee**

6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

**Planning Committee:**

4<sup>th</sup> March 2020

15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

18<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Lunch would be followed by a site visits to the Chiltern Valley Winery and Turville Studios.

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