



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th June 2011 at St. Giles Church Hall, Totternhoe LU6
1RH COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts 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

Appointed by the Secretary of State	
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Dr Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Kevin Mayne	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
Neil Jackson	CCB Conservation and Landscape Officer

Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

15. Apologies

Apologies were received from: John Wilson, Cllr Roger Emmett and Cllr Geoff Andrews.

16. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

17. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman

18. Matters Arising

Members' allowances: the Chief Officer asked for assistance to commence the creation of an independent review mechanism for members allowance for 2012/13.

19. Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

20. Report from the Executive Committee

1. The members received the report of the Chief Officer
2. At its meeting on 18th May the Executive Committee received a report on the provisional outturn of 2010-2011.
3. The performance of the internal auditor was approved.
4. The medium term financial Plan was discussed and significant reductions in grant aid from local authorities is anticipated in the next 3 financial years.
5. The option of Financial Memorandum of Agreement with local authorities covering their financial contribution for the period 2012-2015 was discussed. The Chief Officer had been instructed to contact all authorities to investigate the need for a MOA. The members of the Board were asked for advice. The other items in the Chief Officer's report were covered elsewhere in the minutes.

The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.

21. Report from the Planning Committee

1. 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 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following was noted:

2. Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the AONB. Following the consultation exercise changes had been approved and were incorporated in the statement circulated.

3. The Chilterns AONB Planning Conference will take place 5th October 2011. The event will focus on renewable energy. Members to inform the planning officer if they wish to attend. Details to be circulated nearer the event.

4. Core Strategy soundness concerns. The Committee was informed about two Core Strategy exploratory meetings which had taken place to discuss the inspector's concerns about various issues of soundness. The inspector had suggested in both cases to delay the examination procedure.

5. The Committee was informed that four Planning applications had been submitted for the development of the Arla milk processing plant in Aston Clinton. The size of the development is significant. The social and economic well being of the local community will be taken into consideration, but the Board's purpose is to enhance and conserve the natural environment.

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

2. The Board ADOPTED the Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the AONB.

22. The members received the Statement of Accounts 2010-11 from the Finance Officer.

The Finance Officer gave a summary of the accounts and answered questions from the members.

1. An overall net surplus for the year of £27,835 was recorded.

2. The General Reserve remains unchanged at £170,000 of which £21,000 was related to core activities.

3. Restricted reserves were reduced by £1,217 to £23,781.

4. Earmarked reserves were increased by £29,052 to £328,612

5. The Pensions Liability had decreased by £348,000 to £274,000. The decrease is due to volatility in financial markets and the impact of the valuation methodology and the derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting standard (FRS) 17.

The Heritage Lottery Fund bid of £403,000 for the Commons project was successful.

The Chairman thanked all the staff for their efforts during a difficult year.

The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Audit return for 2010-11.

23. Proposal to create a "Caring for the Chilterns" Fund.

The Chief Executive Officer laid before the Board the option to secure donations from all parts of the community to create a special fund- Caring for the Chilterns Fund_ which would be used for projects to conserve natural beauty and promote enjoyment of the AONB. The fund would not be used to meet operating costs of the Board itself. The current high levels of public concern for the Chilterns arising from

the HS2 proposals have raised the public profile of the CCB. This would be a clear way for locals and businesses to support small scale projects. The Board has to generate new forms of income. The aim would be to generate £10,000 net per annum within 3 years of its launch. The Chief Executive Officer invited comment and views from members.

The Board discussed the proposal and made a number of suggestions.

- 1. The Board DECIDED to set up a “Caring for the Chilterns” Fund**
- 2. The Board DECIDED to launch the Fund by the end of 2011.**
- 3. It was DECIDED to set up a sub group of staff and volunteers to set up the fund.**

24. Funding from Parish Councils.

The Chief Executive Officer put the proposal to the Board that it should seek financial contributions from Parish Councils. Even though cost savings have been made the Board is still facing a deficit.

The Board discussed the matter at length

- 1. The Board DECIDED that financial contributions would be requested from Parish and Town Councils from the financial year 2013-13 onwards.**
- 2. The Board DECIDED to set up a working group with delegated powers to work out and agree a mechanism for charging. Cllr Wallis would chair this working group and the Chief Executive Officer would be a member.**
- 3. The Board DECIDED to conduct a review to determine the optimum methods of communication with Town and Parish Councils.**

25. Report on HS2

1. The Chief Officer reported that the Board had been heavily involved in the anti HS2 campaign. The level of activity had increased markedly since the public consultation began on 28th February. In addition to responding to the formal consultation a submission has been made to the Transport Select Committee. The Board is also committing staff time and resources to preparing a technical analysis of the environmental impact along the route in the AONB.

2. There is widespread concern over the way the public consultation is being handled and legal advisors retained by a number of anti HS2 groups are assembling a possible legal challenge. The Board has been asked to endorse a letter of concern sent the Dept for Transport.

3. At the moment the Boards officers are working on the Board's response to the consultation. When available in draft this will be added to the AONB web-site to enable its use by others interested in HS2.

The Planning Officer and the Landscape and Conservation Officer gave presentations on the appraisal of sustainability and the Impact assessments.

The members debated the issues.

- 1. The activities of the Board were NOTED.**

2. The Board **NOTED** that a written submission had been made to the Transport Select committee
3. The Board **DECIDED** to request the Government to review the business case for HS2 based on the principles in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment and the White Paper on the Natural environment.
4. The Board **DECIDED** to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change highlighting the likelihood of HS2 increasing carbon dioxide emissions.

26. Tring Park.

The Chief Officer asked for comments on the proposal to work closely with the Woodland Trust on the future management of Tring Park. Tring Park is important as historic parkland, for its chalk grassland and woodland, and as a place for quiet enjoyment. The management of the parkland has been neglected for decades. The Chief Officer explained the significance that the site has to the AONB and the benefits the CCB could enjoy with greater involvement.

1. The Board **NOTED** that a significant opportunity has arisen to enhance the management and enjoyment of Tring Park.
2. The Board **AGREED** to actively seek a close working relationship with the Woodland Trust, the Chiltern Society and local community groups.
3. It was **AGREED** that the Board should be prepared to provide support in the form of staff time and possibly grant aid.

27. Box Wood.

The Chief Officer reported that the Chilterns is important for Box woodland, but local knowledge of its ecology and silviculture is very limited. He proposed to develop a programme to raise awareness and understanding of Box Wood.

The Board APPROVED the creation of a Chiltern Box Wood project.

28. Education Programme- Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.

The Chief Officer reported that Natural England has indicated that it would like to hand over the role of promoting educational use of the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve to the Board. The main commitment would be staff time as little cost is involved. Involvement would benefit the good profile of the Board.

The Board APPROVED the proposal to take over the education programme for Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve from 1st October 2011.

29. Education Resource Pack.

The Chief Officer reported that the Board has been working with the education department of BCC to produce a Chilterns-wide, cross-curricular education pack which is aimed at local studies in history and geography at key stage 2. The pack will shortly be available.

The Board NOTED the publication of the Education Resource Pack.

30. Report on the Natural Environment White Paper.

The Chief Officer reported that the government has published the White Paper on the Natural Environment on 7th June. A full assessment of the implications of the White Paper for the Board and the AONB will be prepared over the summer months. The White Paper is unlikely to lead to additional legislation or provision of significant new government funding.

1. **The Board NOTED the publication of the Government’s White Paper on the Environment.**
2. **The Board NOTED that a full assessment of the implications of the White Paper will be prepared and circulated to the members before the next Board meeting.**
3. **The Board NOTED that in general it responds positively to opportunities to work at a Chilterns scale.**
4. **The Board would provide feedback on the proposal to encourage “offsetting”**

31. Urgent Business:

Chilterns Gateways Project

Kevin Mayne declared an interest in this item because his employer is also a possible beneficiary of the project.

Working with CTC, the national cyclists' organisation the Board has brought together a consortium to submit an expression of interest for the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

The expression of interest will lead to an £800,000 bid to extend use of the Chilterns Cycleway as a way of getting tourists in and commuters out of the Chilterns in a more sustainable manner. The Board will host a development officer at Chinnor as its contribution and will receive a contribution to its own costs if the bid is successful.

As the local authorities who have supported the Cycleway to date were committed to other LSTF bids the Expression of Interest was submitted by Wokingham Borough Council of behalf of the consortium. Their specific interest is in improving congestion on routes to the AONB at Henley and Sonning.

32. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19 October including the AGM, location tbc.

The meeting closed 13.00

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