



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  20 November 2012  9.30am	<u>Item</u>  <b>2</b>  Public
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**Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2012**  
9.30am – 12.15pm

**Responsible Officer** Tim Ward

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Telephone: (01743) 252739

**Present**

**Local Authorities**

Shropshire Council

Cllr Tim Barker (Vice Chair)

Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd

Shropshire Council

Cllr Cecilia Motley

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

**Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members**

Individual member

George Chancellor (Chair)

Individual Member

Lee Chapman

Individual Member

Tom Eyre

individual Member

David Francis

Individual Member

Liz Thomas

Parish Council representative

Keith Bartlett

Parish Council representative

Jenny Collingridge

Parish Council representative

Viv Parry

Parish Council representative

Bob Welch

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Caring for God's Acre

Michael Whithouse

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Clare Cox

Institute of Chartered Foresters

John Voysey

Long Mynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

National Trust

Jo Dimitri (for Wenlock Quarries item)

Ramblers Association

Sue Jones

Severn Rivers Trust

Emma Buckingham

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

Upper Onny Wildlife Group/Shropshire

Leo Smith

Ornithological Society

**Observers/Officers**

Shropshire Council

Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff team

Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

Glynn Barratt (Planning & Landscape Officer)

Mike Kelly (River Valleys Officer)

Ewa Prokop (Catchment Project Assistant)

## Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The Chair welcomed Ewa Prokop, who had joined the AONB Partnership staff team as Catchment Project Assistant. He also noted with appreciation the contribution to the Partnership of Councillor James Gibson who had passed away recently.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Gill Binks and Joy Greenall (Life Land and Livelihoods), Alison Caffyn (Individual Member), Veronica Cossons (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), John Harrison (Shropshire Council), Jon Parry (Walford & North Shropshire College), Rachel Taylor (Telford & Wrekin Council), David Watson Jones (NFU) and Caroline Whiteman (SASTAK).
3. Mrs Motley advised that she would leave the meeting prior to discussion of the planning application at Wenlock Edge Quarries as she was a member of the South Planning Committee which would be determining the application.

## Election of Chair, Vice Chairs and Members of the Management Board

4. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the number of nominations for each position matched the number of vacancies. It was duly resolved that:-
  - Mr George Chancellor be elected Chair of the AONB Partnership for the forthcoming year,
  - Councillor Tim Barker and Ms Alison Caffyn be elected Vice-Chairs of the AONB Partnership for the forthcoming year,
  - Lady Veronica Cossons, Councillor Mrs Heather Kidd, Councillor Mrs Cecilia Motley, Mr Jon Parry, Mr Leo Smith and Mrs Liz Thomas be elected to serve on the Management Board for the forthcoming year.

The AONB Partnership Manager pointed out that the Terms of Reference indicated that Natural England held a seat on the Management Board, but that as they were no longer the AONB funding body they had agreed that they would no longer take this up.

## Note of Last Meeting

3. It was resolved that the note of the meeting held on 19 June 2012 be approved.

## AONB Partnership Activity Update

4. The meeting received a report giving a brief summary of current activity and progress of the AONB Partnership's staff team. The AONB Partnership Manager highlighted some key points from the report, as set out below:
  - Submission of the Stage 2 Application for the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme was imminent, following work to prepare the Landscape Conservation Action Plan and agreement of proposed projects by the Steering Group and Board. £50,000 of match funding had been secured from the Jean Jackson Trust which would enable some staff

retention in the period between submitting the bid and the formal start of the project.

- Work was ongoing with the Farming Project, with 120 one to one farm advice contacts made and other events. A children's book was being produced and work was ongoing with the Stapeley Commoners Association on the development of a collaborative agri-environment scheme. Mr Francis commented that he had attended a farm visit run by the project with Corvedale School which had been very good.
- Site works had been completed on the Upper and Lower Clun as part of the Pearl Mussel Project. An additional £100,000 funding had been secured from Natural England for catchment related work. A new one year post for a Catchment Project Assistant had been created and Ewa Prokop had been appointed.
- Use of the Shuttles this season had been good, with the new Wenlock Wanderer proving more successful than the Craven Arms service that it replaced. Consultations were currently being undertaken on a new service running from Ludlow. There were some operational issues around procurement of services. Mrs Thomas commented that the service had been well received around Much Wenlock and added that it provided a much needed link to Ironbridge. Mr Welch asked whether the Transport Review that was currently being undertaken by Shropshire Council would look at links within the transport system as there was currently a lack of co-ordination. Mr Barker advised him that the review had only looked at bus services.
- £14,015 had been allocated to 8 projects from the Sustainable Development Fund, and all these projects were now under way. Mr Whithouse asked what levels of funding would be available from the SDF in the forthcoming financial year. The AONB Partnership Manager advised him that levels were expected to be similar for next year.

## LEADER Update

5. A report updating the Partnership on the progress of the Shropshire Hills LEADER programme had been circulated.
6. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that nationally only 50% of the national LEADER programme had been spent, but that the Shropshire Hills LEADER Action Group (LAG) had now allocated all of its funds, which meant it continued to perform well at a national level. He went on to say that no decision had been made regarding redistribution of national funds. Mr Barker commented that the LAG would not have performed so well without the vast amount of work done by the LEADER Co-ordinator. Mr Chancellor and other members echoed these sentiments and asked that thanks be passed to the LEADER Co-ordinator for all the hard work he had done.
7. The AONB Partnership Manager informed members that negotiations were continuing nationally regarding the next programme. There was a high degree of uncertainty over the levels of funding that would be available and the rules applied to the new scheme, but that whatever national framework emerged, the Shropshire Hills LAG was probably well placed to continue as there was a strong case for continuity of delivery. He went on to say that given the high levels of

uncertainty that the new programme was unlikely to start before the 2014-15 Financial Year.

### **Rivers Project**

8. The meeting received a presentation from Mike Kelly, River Valleys Officer on the conservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the Clun Catchment Area.
9. The River Valleys Officer informed the meeting that there were only 30 populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussels in England and Wales and only the population on the River Ehen in Cumbria was viable. He went on to say that there were two distinct genetic groups and that the population the Clun was the most important southern group. He went on to say that the River Clun was significant as it was only one of three English pearl mussel rivers designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). He advised the meeting that the main threats to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel were:
  - Intensification of agriculture across the catchment area
  - Enhanced sedimentation through agricultural practice leading to smothering of adult and juvenile mussels
  - Eutrophication of waters through fertiliser run-off
  - Upstream domestic sewage treatment works which give a significant nutrient loading.
  - Alder disease which posed a risk through loss of shading and bankside tree cover.
10. The River Valleys Officer advised that current work included: -
  - The establishment of riparian buffer strips with the erection of fencing to exclude grazing animals
  - The provision of alternative sources of water for livestock through provision of troughs and water pipes or the erection of drinking bays
  - Managing alder disease and planting of other species.
  - Awareness raising through public meetings and drop in sessions – recent sessions had been held regarding septic tanks.
11. Mrs Motley commented that there was need for education of householders regarding the outflow from septic tanks and works that could be carried out in way of mitigation. The River Valleys Officer advised her that some work had been done in the Newcastle area and an awareness raising leaflet had been produced. He went on to say that it may be possible to obtain funding from the Environment Agency through the Murky Waters project.
12. Mr L Smith commented that there was need to look at the impact of agricultural intensification both on the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and on wildlife habitats in general.
13. The Chair thanked the River Valleys Officer for his presentation.

### **AONB Management Plan Review**

14. A report providing members with background material in support of further discussion in a workshop session had been circulated.

15. The AONB Partnership Manager took the meeting through the list of new issues for consideration as part of the management plan. The meeting then broke for a workshop session. Notes of the workshop are included as an appendix.

*Mrs Motley left the meeting*

### **Wenlock Edge Quarries**

16. A report updating members on the current situation with the contentious planning application for Lea Quarry and proposing submission of further comments had been distributed.
17. Ms Dimitri updated the meeting on the position of the National Trust with regard to the planning applications. She advised members that the National Trust continued to strongly object to the application.
18. Several members expressed concerns that planning conditions with respect to restoration of the site following cessation of quarrying activities had not been complied with.
19. Mr Eyre commented that part of the AONB remit was to ensure a flourishing economy within the AONB and asked whether the objection to the planning application went against this as the proposal created jobs.
20. Mr Voysey commented that he struggled with this application as there was a lack of detail contained in it. He went on to say that if permission was granted there may be an opportunity for the AONB to develop woodland management plans which could supply the plant.
21. It was agreed that the AONB Partnership would continue to object to the planning application on the same grounds as the previous objection. It was also agreed that the AONB Partnership should write to the Local Planning Authority to remind them of their enforcement duties with regard to the reinstatement of the quarries.

### **Other Items**

22. The AONB Partnership Manager updated the meeting on Ash Dieback Disease and advised members of websites where more information could be found.

### **Dates of Next Meetings**

23. Members noted that future meetings of the Partnership would be held on Tuesday 19 March 2013, Tuesday 16 July 2013 and Tuesday 19 November 2013.