



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 19 November 2013 9.30am
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<u>Item</u> 2 Public

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013

9.30am – 11.00am

Responsible Officer Tim Ward

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Present

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

Alison Caffyn (Vice Chair)

Individual member

George Chancellor (Chair)

Individual Member

David Francis

Individual Member

Liz Thomas

Parish Council representative

Keith Bartlett

Parish Council representative

Jenny Collingridge

Parish Council representative

Dom Wilson

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Claire Cox

Institute of Chartered Foresters

John Voysey

Land, Life and Livelihoods

Gill Binks

Long Mynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

Ramblers Association

Sue Jones

Severn Rivers Trust

Mike Morris

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Veronica Cossons

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council

Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff team

Pete Banford (LEADER Co-ordinator)

Clare Fildes (Development Officer)

Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

Mike Kelly (River Valleys Officer)

Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The Chair welcomed as observers Ian Dormor from Church Stretton Civic Society, who were interested in becoming an organisational member of the Partnership,

and Fiona Pidduck who had expressed an interest in becoming an individual member. He also welcomed Dom Wilson from Church Stretton Town Council who had replaced Bob Welch.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Lee Chapman (Shropshire Hills Tourism), John Harrison (Shropshire Council), Bill Klemperer (English Heritage), Phil Ridley (Walford & North Shropshire College), Rachel Taylor (Telford & Wrekin Council), Cllr David Turner (Shropshire Council), Andrew Tyley (Walford & North Shropshire College), Michael Watney (Country Land and Business Association) and Simon West (Forestry Commission).

Note of Last Meeting

3. It was resolved that the note of the meeting held on 19 March 2013 be approved.
4. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that Lee Chapman had stood down as an Individual Member and was taking up the seat on the Partnership for Shropshire Hills Tourism. He reminded members that the two year term for individual members ended in October and that all individual members' seats would be up for election.
5. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that a new short format Annual Review for 2012-13 had just been completed and would be distributed shortly.

LEADER Update

6. A report had been circulated updating the Partnership on the progress of the current Shropshire Hills LEADER programme and outlining possibilities for the next programme.
7. The LEADER Co-ordinator informed the meeting that the LEADER programme was 100% committed and informed them that 95% of the total budget had been spent by the end of March, which equated to £1,065,437 of the available £1,122,253.
8. The LEADER Co-ordinator recommended that the Partnership as the Shropshire Hills Local Action Group (LAG) express its intention to run another LEADER programme from 2015-20 subject to clarification on certain factors, and that the Partnership make an application for one year of transition funding. This would enable work to be carried out to evaluate the current LEADER programme and made recommendations for the new programme, including preparation of a new Local Development Strategy (LDS).
9. The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that to avoid the Partnership potentially getting into a difficult situation, it would be important to avoid any conflict between the primary purpose of the AONB and a new LEADER programme. The government have stated that the next LEADER round should have a greater focus on economic growth and job creation. Any such conflict may well be best achieved by the AONB Partnership once again being the LAG, and therefore being in a position to focus a new programme on linking economic benefit to the high quality landscape without harming it. He recommended however that the scope for achieving this should be looked at carefully when further government guidance

on LEADER was released, before the Partnership made a final decision to go ahead. He reminded members that the LEADER role had fundamental implications for governance of the AONB Partnership, since the Partnership's own Terms of Reference had been amended to include LEADER, with formal approval from both the local authorities. He hoped strongly that the AONB Partnership would be able to deliver a future round of LEADER, but said that if it emerged that aligning this sufficiently with core AONB activity was going to be difficult, it should remain an option to look at alternatives to the AONB Partnership itself being the LEADER Local Action Group.

10. Mr Voysey expressed concern that the key priority for the next round of LEADER was to support jobs and growth in rural areas, and commented that it was important to do all that we can to look after 'society'. The Development Officer commented that one of the six objectives for the next programme was promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, and that social goals remained an important part of LEADER.
11. Mrs Thomas commented that there was need to look at the relationship between the Sustainable Development Fund and LEADER. The LEADER Co-ordinator agreed, and commented that under the current round of LEADER it had not been possible to establish a small grants scheme, but that this may be possible under the next programme.
12. It was agreed that the Partnership endorse the aspiration for the AONB Partnership to deliver a future round of LEADER subject to the provisos given and a final decision in due course. Support for an application for Transition funding was confirmed.

Consultation on Draft AONB Management Plan 2014-19

13. The Chair reminded the Partnership that the new AONB Management Plan for 2014-19 had been launched for public consultation. He expressed thanks to the AONB staff for all the work that had been done preparing the document.
14. The AONB Partnership Manager drew members' attention to certain areas of significant change from the previous Plan, and members made suggestions and comments.
15. The Chair asked that if members had any further comments or suggestions that they make them directly to the AONB Partnership Manager.

Housing and Employment Site Allocations (Church Stretton)

16. The meeting received a report giving extracts of Shropshire Council's current consultation on site allocations in Church Stretton which were relevant to the AONB.
17. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the next stage of the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) was currently out for consultation showing changes made to site allocations made after the last round of consultations. He went on to say that the plans for Church Stretton had changed from the previous consultation, with a number of sites now being discounted. A site at New House Farm on the eastern side of the town had now been identified for 85 houses below Helmeth Hill, linked to a new site for employment use further north, along with tourism and sporting developments.

18. Mr Wilson commented that the local community was divided on this issue. He went on to say that the Town Council recognised the need for some development to ensure the future viability of the town, but that the majority of the residents took the view that no further development should take place. He added that the sites now proposed had not been suggested by the Town Council and that they would be objecting to their inclusion.
19. Several members commented that the sites suggested would be very visible from hills surrounding the town, and that access from the suggested housing site to the town centre and amenities would be very difficult.
20. It was agreed unanimously that the AONB Partnership should object to the site allocations on the grounds of their detrimental effect on the AONB.

Date of Next Meeting

21. Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Partnership would be held on Tuesday 19 November 2013.