



<p>Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership</p> <p>22 March 2016, 9.30 am</p>

<p>Item</p> <p>2</p>

**MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2015
 9.30 - 11.50 AM**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward
 Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council	Cllr Heather Kidd Cllr David Turner
Telford & Wrekin Council	Cllr Chris Turley

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual member	Andy Boddington
Individual member	Alison Caffyn
Individual member	George Chancellor (Chair)
Individual member	John Pritchard
Individual member	James Williamson (Vice-Chair)
Individual member	John Woolmer
Town & Parish Council representative	Hilary Claytonsmith
Town & Parish Council representative	Clive Leworthy
Town & Parish Council representative	John Tucker
British Horse Society	Ronald Repath
Country Land & Business Association (CLA)	Caroline Bedell
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Sarah Bury
Caring for God's Acre	Gillian Binks
Forestry Commission	Donna Tavernor
Longmynd & District Bridleways Association	Sue Lee
National Farmers Union	Carol Griffiths
Natural England	Hazel MacDowell
Ramblers Association	Sue Jones
SASTAK	David Mills
Strettons Civic Society	Ian Dormor
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Veronica Cossons
Upper Onny Wildlife Group/ Shropshire Ornithological Society	Leo Smith
Walford & North Shropshire College	Phil Ridley

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council	Deb Hughes (Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Manager) Tim Ward (Committee Officer)
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff team	Alison Jones (Clun Catchment Officer) Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed new members Andy Boddington, John Pritchard, John Woolmer, Clive Leworthy and John Tucker to their first meeting of the Partnership. He advised that Councillor Robert Tindall had replaced Councillor Tim Barker as one of the Shropshire Council representatives on the Partnership and paid tribute to the role that Councillor Barker had played during his time on the Partnership.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Lee Chapman (Shropshire Hills Tourism), Cllr Cecilia Motley (Shropshire Council), David C Smith (Shropshire Geological Society), Cllr Robert Tindall (Shropshire Council) and Tom Whiteman (Individual member).

2 Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2015 had been circulated.
- 2.2 **Resolved:** -
That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

3 Proposed Amendments to the Terms of Reference

- 3.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set out proposed changes to the Partnership's Terms of Reference.
- 3.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised Members that following the loss of the LEADER programme, the Partnership's Terms of Reference required updating, and that in addition to the removal of the content relating to LEADER, the following amendments were being proposed: -
 - Increasing the number of Town and Parish Council seats from 3 to 6
 - Increasing the term of the Chair, Vice Chair and elected Management Board seats from 1 year to 2 years.In addition a new section on the role of the host authority, which had previously been in the DEFRA Memorandum of Understanding, had been added.
- 3.3 Several members welcomed the proposal to increase the number of Parish Council representatives but commented that it was important to ensure good geographical spread of the representatives. Mrs Kidd commented that improved engagement with Parish Councils by the Partnership would be a good thing.
- 3.4 Mr Smith commented that during the re-appointment of membership of the Partnership it was important to get a good balance of interests represented.
- 3.5 Mrs Claytonsmith pointed out that there was still a reference to LEADER in paragraph 5.4. The AONB Partnership Manager thanked her and said that this would be deleted.
- 3.6 **Resolved:**
That the Partnership approves the changes and endorses the updated Terms of Reference.

4 Election of Chair, Vice Chairs and Seats to the Management Board

4.1 Resolved: -

That Mr James Williamson be elected Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

4.2 Mr Williamson took the chair and paid tribute to the vast amount of work that Mr Chancellor had done during his time as Chair of the AONB Partnership.

4.3 Resolved: -

That Councillor Cecilia Motley and Mr George Chancellor be elected Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

4.4 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded Members that in addition to the Chair and Vice Chairs, Councillor Turley representing Telford & Wrekin Council, and the two Council lead officers, there were a further six elected seats available on the Management Board.

4.5 Resolved: -

That Mrs Bedell, Mr Chapman, Lady Cossons, Councillor Mrs Kidd, Mr Pritchard and Councillor Turner be elected to the Management Board.

5 AONB Partnership Activity Update

5.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which gave an update on work being carried out by the AONB Partnership staff team.

5.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that the transfer of the LEADER Programme to Shropshire Council's Outdoor Partnerships Team had been completed, and that Pete Banford had transferred to that team. He added that he and the Chair had provided support and advice with the transfer where needed. He informed members that following a commitment to make good the income lost from the transfer of LEADER, Shropshire Council had agreed to contribute to the rental and service costs of the new offices. Mr Chancellor confirmed that he was representing the AONB Partnership on the Local Action Group (LAG) and that he had recently attended the first meeting and undertook to give regular updates to the Partnership.

5.3 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme was half way through its five year duration, and advised that a mid-term review was being carried out by an external consultant. He gave an update on the work that was being carried out and advised that the contract for the provision of apprenticeships had been terminated. The training element of the scheme was being redesigned and would primarily be delivered in-house through a new part time post.

5.4 The AONB Partnership Manager advised that due to the ongoing squeeze on core funding, and the increasing difficulties in securing contributions to core running costs from projects, the 2015-16 budget was predicted to be slightly in deficit, and that all possible savings were being made. He added that the office move would reduce ongoing costs, but there were one off costs associated with the move. Any deficit would

be met from the reserve of earned income held from previous years. The Chairman commented that suggestions of ways of increasing earned income would be welcomed.

6 Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund

- 6.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which updated members on progress with moves to establish the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- 6.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that since the last Partnership meeting, a group of founding trustees comprising Anthony Morgan, George Chancellor, Sarah Bury and himself had been formed. They had held two meetings and had approved and adopted the draft constitution; the Trustees were in the process of opening a bank account and applying to the Charity Commission to register as a CIO.
- 6.3 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that the CIO was not directly part of the AONB structure and needed to exist independently of it. However he added that the constitution contained some of the preferred links between the CIO and the AONB Partnership, including the ability for the Partnership to appoint up to three Trustees, and the AONB Partnership Manager as an *ex-officio* trustee, but that this was subject to approval by the Charity Commission.
- 6.4 Mr Smith queried the timescale for the creation of the CIO. The AONB Partnership Manager advised that it was hoped that the CIO would be in place in time for the next round of conservation grant to come from the Charity.
- 6.5 **Resolved:**
- That the Partnership notes the progress made to develop the CIO and the proposed links between the Partnership and the CIO.

7 River Clun Recovery Project

- 7.1 Members received a presentation from the Clun Catchment Officer on the work being carried out as part of the River Clun Recovery Project.
- 7.2 The Clun Catchment Officer reminded the meeting that the project had started in April 2015 and provided capital funding for schemes that would improve river habitats and water quality, and that the scheme offered attractive levels of funding and aimed to keep "red tape" to a minimum. She went on to outline some of the work that was being funded which included:
- riverbank tree planting and woodland creation which would help to decrease riverbank erosion,
 - work to exclude livestock from the rivers by installation of fencing and alternative water sources such as troughs, and
 - creating alternative river crossings and working with landowners to minimise the impact of land use on watercourses through run off management works.
- 7.3 The Clun Catchment Officer then outlined some of the work being carried out to create two 'recovery sites' on the River Clun, with a view to potential future translocation of freshwater pearl mussels from the threatened SAC site.

7.4 The Chair thanked the Clun Catchment Officer for her presentation.

8 Update on Tourism Work

8.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided them with an update on team activity on sustainable tourism, and changes to the organisation of tourism structures within the county.

8.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that the team's activity on tourism had increased over recent years and that the aim was to influence the patterns and impacts of tourism on the AONB. He then outlined the work that had been carried out over the past 5 years.

8.3 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that Shropshire Council had recently reduced the number of Tourism Officers from two to one and had also changed the nature of their role, which had resulted in the withdrawal of administrative support for the Destination Development Partnership (DDP). He informed members that the AONB Partnership had taken over this role to ensure the continued momentum of the group. He then outlined other changes and areas of potential work.

8.4 Ms Jones asked about the future of the Shuttle buses. The AONB Partnership Manager informed her that sufficient funding was in place for 2016 to run the Long Mynd – Stiperstones service, although the contribution from Natural England had been lost.

8.5 Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

9 Proposed Uplands Commons Project

9.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which outlined the proposed national project on upland commons involving the Shropshire Hills AONB along with four English National Parks.

9.2 The AONB Partnership Manager informed members that the proposed project, co-ordinated by The Foundation for Common Land, would focus on enhancing the heritage of common land in five areas, Dartmoor, the Yorkshire Dales, the North York Moors, Cumbria and the Shropshire Hills. The project would aim to share experience and learning between the five areas through a programme of mentoring, skills sharing and promotion of best practice.

9.3 The AONB Partnership Manager advised that a national steering group had been formed to develop the project application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and that if successful, there would be a two year development stage and a three year delivery period. The aim would be to work with three commons in each area.

9.4 Several members welcomed the development of the project. In response to a query the AONB Partnership Manager confirmed that the National Trust was represented on the national steering group.

9.5 Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

10 Dates of Next Meetings

- 10.1 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that he was currently looking at dates for future meetings and would advise them of the dates as soon as they were available.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: