



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
18 March 2014
9.30am

<u>Item</u>
2
Public

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013
9.30am – 11.00am

Responsible Officer Tim Ward

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Present

Local Authorities

Shropshire Council

Cllr Tim Barker (Vice Chair)

Cllr Heather Kidd

Cllr David Turner

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual Member

Alison Caffyn (Vice Chair)

Individual member

Harriet Carty

Individual Member

George Chancellor (Chair)

Individual Member

Edward Dugdale

Individual member

Fiona Pidduck

Individual member

Liz Thomas

Individual member

James Williamson

Town & Parish Council representative

Keith Bartlett

Town & Parish Council representative

Jenny Collingridge

Town & Parish Council representative

Dom Wilson

British Horse Society

Ronald Repath

Butterfly Conservation

Mike Williams

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Sarah Bury

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Marc Liebrecht

John Voysey

Land, Life and Livelihoods

Gill Binks

Long Mynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

National Farmers Union

Carol Griffiths

National Trust

Dave Cowell

Natural England

Dawn Griffiths

Ramblers Association

Sue Jones

SASTAK

Caroline Whiteman

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

Shropshire Hills Tourism

Lee Chapman

Shropshire Tourism

Geoff Grimes

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Veronica Cossons

Strettons Civic Society

Ian Dormor

Upper Onny Wildlife Group and Shropshire

Leo Smith

Ornithological Society

Walford & North Shropshire College

Phil Ridley

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council

John Harrison (Environment and Sustainability Manager)
Joy Tetsill (Planning Policy Team)
Tim Ward (Committee Officer)

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff team

Pete Banford (LEADER Co-Ordinator)
Clare Fildes (Development Officer)
Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager)

Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that following the biannual review of membership, the following had been appointed as individual Members: -

Alison Caffyn
Harriet Carty
George Chancellor
Edward Dugdale
Fiona Pidduck
Elizabeth Thomas
James Williamson

He advised the meeting that David Francis and Tom Eyre had not sought reappointment, and formally thanked them for their contribution to the work of the Partnership.

2. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the following organisations had been appointed as members: -

Butterfly Conservation
Church Stretton Civic Society
National Trust
SASTAK
Shropshire Tourism

He advised that the Offa's Dyke Association had not sought reappointment.

3. The AONB Partnership Manager welcomed all the new and returning members to the Partnership.
4. Apologies for absence were received from Tony Bostock (Severn Rivers Trust), Bill Klemperer (English Heritage), Rachel Taylor (Telford & Wrekin Council), Michael Watney (Country Land and Business Association), Simon West (Forestry Commission) and Michael Whithouse (Caring for God's Acre).

Welcome to new Members and signing of Membership Accord

5. The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that copies of the Membership Accord had been circulated with the papers for the meeting and asked that all

members sign the Accord and return it to the Committee Officer at the end of the meeting.

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

6. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that one nomination had been received for the position of Chair.

It was resolved that Mr George Chancellor be elected Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

Mr Chancellor took the chair and thanked the Partnership for re-electing him. He advised the Partnership that he would be looking to hand over the role of Chair in the near future.

7. The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that under the Terms of Reference, one of the Vice Chairs should be a representative of Shropshire Council and one from among the other members. He advised that two nominations had been received for the two positions of Vice Chair.

It was resolved that Cllr Tim Barker and Ms Alison Caffyn be elected Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

8. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that four nominations had been received for membership of the Management Board.

It was resolved that Cllr Cecilia Motley, Cllr David Turner, Mr James Williamson and Lady Veronica Cossons be elected to serve on the Management Board.

The AONB Partnership Manager advised that there were still two vacancies on the Management Board and that these would be filled by co-option.

Note of Last Meeting

9. Mr Wilson commented that minute 18 did not accurately reflect what he had said and asked that the minute be altered to read: -

“Mr Wilson commented that the local community was divided on the issue of housing but virtually unanimous in its opposition to the New House Farm proposals. He went on to say that the Town Council recognised the need for some development of both housing and employment land to ensure the future viability of the town, but that, like the residents, the Council wanted as little encroachment as possible into the surrounding countryside. He added that the New House Farm site now proposed had not been suggested by the Town Council and that they would be objecting to its inclusion.”

10. It was resolved that subject to the above amendment the note of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 be approved.

AONB Partnership Activity Update

11. A report had been circulated updating the Partnership on recent activity by the AONB Partnership Team.

12. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the delivery phase of the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) was under way, and that the six members of staff had been in place since September and that they were currently based in the AONB office at Craven Arms. The LPS team would be moving into an office in Chirbury, but the move had been delayed due to difficulties with getting the broadband connection set up. Mrs Kidd offered to let the office have a contact within BT in an effort to move things along.
13. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that extra funding for the Sustainable Development Fund had been obtained from the Jean Jackson Charitable Trust, and that a total of £24,160 had been awarded to 12 projects. He went on to say that a review of the membership of the SDF Panel had been carried out.
14. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that a great deal of project planning work had taken place for the proposed Clee Hill Heritage Project and that representatives from the HLF would be visiting the area in November.
15. The AONB Partnership Manager advised the Partnership that professional advice was being sought with regard to the drafting of the constitution for the proposed new charitable body.
16. Mr Voysey asked for an update on the Woodlands Project. The AONB Partnership Manager advised him that the project had finished in March 2013 as the available funding had come to an end. He went on to say that the project had been very successful and that he would have liked to be able to continue it. The AONB Development Officer informed the meeting that she was currently looking to develop a project for the Marches Uplands as a successor to the AONB Farming Project, and that part of this would be looking at farm scale woodlands. Mrs Carty advised the meeting that the Woodland Trust were currently applying for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a national project that may be of interest.

AONB Management Plan 2014-19

17. A report presenting to members the revised draft of the new AONB Management Plan for 2014 -19 had been circulated.
18. The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the draft plan had been submitted to Natural England for their formal observations, and would then go to the local authorities for final approval. He then took the meeting through the major changes within the document.
19. Cllr Barker commented that the statement on page 34 regarding housing in Church Stretton was potentially misleading, since even though there was not designated development in the hinterland of Church Stretton, the single plot exception site scheme was expected to lead to an 18% increase in new housing in the settlements around the town.
20. Mr Smith suggested an amendment to the second paragraph of the section regarding priority species, and went on to say that further content on actions to protect critically endangered species was needed. Lady Cossons commented that there was a lot of good work on biodiversity being done by different organisations and went on to ask whether it would be possible to draw all this together. The AONB Partnership Manager agreed that there was a need to set up a small group to do this.
21. The Chair thanked members for their input and asked that if members had any further comments that they pass them to the AONB Partnership Manager.

LEADER Update

22. The meeting received a report giving an update on the close of the current 2009-13 round of LEADER, and setting out proposed activity for the 2014 year of LEADER transition funding.
23. The LEADER Co-ordinator advised the meeting that the Shropshire Hills Local Action Group (LAG) was the first in the country to allocate all its money, with 99% already claimed, leaving £12,543 to be claimed by the end of December. He went on to say that he would be carrying out a programme evaluation as the current programme drew to a close.
24. The LEADER Co-ordinator advised the meeting that the LAG had made a successful application to Defra for LEADER Transition Funding which would cover a full time extension to the LEADER Co-ordinator's post for 2014 and some other minor costs. He went on to inform the meeting that the aims of the transition funding were to:
 - To review performance of the current programme, identifying and addressing areas for further development.
 - To set out a new Local Development Strategy (LDS), to be submitted by August 2014, and build relationships with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and other local stakeholders.
25. The LEADER Co-ordinator reminded members that the Partnership had expressed an aspiration regarding being a LAG for the next round of LEADER, but had not yet made a firm decision on this. Further guidance from Defra was awaited which would allow a clearer consideration of issues regarding the fit of the new LEADER priorities on economic development with the primary purpose of the AONB, and potentially about the geographical area to be covered by the LAG. He added that if there was an unresolvable conflict, there would be a need to look at a different approach that may require the development of a new LAG, but hopefully this would not be the case. However, as the current LAG with the transition funding, we had the responsibility to prepare the new LEADER Local Development Strategy for the Shropshire Hills, and look to the best means of delivery.
26. The Chair thanked the LEADER Co-ordinator for all his work to date and commented that the programme had been very good both in the levels of funding that had been brought into the area and the effectiveness of the projects funded.

Local Nature Partnership

27. The AONB Partnership Manager updated members briefly on developments with the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Partnership (LNP). He reminded the meeting that Local Nature Partnerships had come out of the Natural Environment White Paper. He went on to say that currently there was no funding for the running of LNPs, and that Dan Wrench, Biodiversity Officer at Shropshire Council was supporting the Partnership alongside his other work. Government guidance encouraged links between LNPs and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
28. Mr Harrison commented that there were two LNPs within the Marches LEP area, the second one covering Herefordshire, and that Cllr Cecilia Motley was acting Chair of the Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin LNP.
29. The Chair noted the valuable role of the Local Nature Partnership, and looked forward to further information in future.

Cllr Barker left the meeting prior to the commencement of discussion on the Church Stretton SAMDev Site Allocation.

Church Stretton SAMDev Site Allocation

30. The Chair reminded members that this matter had been discussed at the last meeting and that it was felt that an agenda item needed to be included at this meeting. He then introduced Joy Tetsill, Planning Policy Officer for Shropshire Council who was the officer dealing with the Site Allocation process in the Church Stretton area.
31. The Planning Policy Officer reminded members that in a previous position she had been Planning Officer at the AONB Partnership and that she understood their concerns. She informed members that following a number of stages, the SAMDev process was nearing its end. A document giving final recommendations would be published in March 2014 for final consultation, the scope of which would be limited to tests of 'soundness' in the decisions made. She went on to say that following this consultation period, an independent inspector from the Planning Inspectorate would be appointed to carry out a public hearing prior to the document being approved. The Planning Policy Officer advised that she would be recommending the New House Farm Site for inclusion in the SAMDev document for Church Stretton, as it was the only site that was deliverable.
32. Mr Wilson commented that the Town Council had expressed a preference for other sites put forward and would be objecting to the inclusion of the New House Farm site on a number of grounds. Mr Chapman commented that 94% of people that had attended a public meeting regarding the SAMDev sites had been opposed to the one at New House Farm, and for that reason the local ward councillors were not in support of the site. Discussion followed as to whether the other sites put forward, including for employment use, were felt to be deliverable or not.
33. It was noted that there were concerns that the proposed new access road to the New House Farm site for housing could lead to further development in future. It was also noted that the proposed development of a Visitor Centre on the site had potential to draw people out of the town centre, with economic disadvantages. Ms Caffyn said the proposal made assumptions about tourism benefits which were questionable.
34. The Chair thanked the Planning Policy Officer for attending the meeting and thanked members for their input. The process for the Council to progress to final decisions was noted, and it was hoped that the discussion at today's meeting had been useful.

Date of Next Meeting

35. The dates of meetings of the Partnership for 2014 were confirmed as:-
Tuesday 18 March 2014
Tuesday 8 July 2014 (N.B. this date however needs changing), and
Tuesday 18 November 2014.