



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
19 October 2010
9.30am

Item
2
Public

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2010

9.30am – 11.00pm

Responsible Officer Tim Ward
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Present

Shropshire Council

Shropshire Council
Shropshire Council
Shropshire Council

Cllr Tim Barker (Vice-Chair)
Cllr James Gibson
Cllr Heather Kidd

Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual member
Individual member
Individual member
Individual member
Parish Council representative
Parish Council representative
Advantage West Midlands
Butterfly Conservation
Caring for God's Acre
Country Land & Business Association
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Hereford Diocese
Institute of Chartered Foresters
Long Mynd & District Bridleways Association
National Farmers Union
Natural England
Ramblers Association
SASTAK
Shropshire Geological Society
Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Walford & North Shropshire College

Alison Caffyn (Vice-Chair)
George Chancellor (Chair)
Lee Chapman
David Francis
Dr Keith Bartlett
Bob Welch
Amanda Cunningham
Jenny Joy
Michael Whitthouse
Michael Watney
Clare Cox
Rev. Nick Read
John Voysey
Sue Lee
David Watson-Jones
Sally Powell
David Shelley
Julia Brereton
David C Smith
Lady Veronica Cossons
Jon Parry

Observers/Officers

Shropshire Council

John Harrison
Tim Ward

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff team

Glynn Barratt
Pete Banford
Clare Fildes
Jodie Griffith
Phil Holden

Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and explained the format of the day, which included the Annual Tour in the afternoon in the Cleve Hill area.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Sophie Andreae (Offa's Dyke Association), Mark Blount (Shropshire Council), Tony Bostock (Severn Rivers Trust), Pat Fairclough (Parish Council Rep), David Gibbon (Individual Member), Marcus Halliwell (National Trust), Cllr Tracy Hope (Borough of Telford & Wrekin), Bill Klemperer (English Heritage), Leo Smith (Upper Onny Wildlife Group/Shropshire Ornithological Society), Elizabeth Thomas (Individual Member) and Michael Watney (Country Land & Business Association).

Note of Last Meeting

3. It was resolved that the note of the meeting held on 9 February 2010 be approved.

AONB Partnership Activity Update

4. A report giving a short summary of the recent activity and progress of the AONB Partnership staff team had been circulated. The AONB Partnership Manager highlighted some key points from the report. He drew members' attention to the Natural Assets funding, and to LEADER funding which had been secured for the 'Discover Local' project, for which match funding for this was being sought.
5. Mr Welch commented that it was an extensive work programme and suggested that an extra column be added to the work programme which showed how each item related to the strategic priorities of the AONB Management Plan. The AONB Partnership Manager explained that the table in the report was a summary of the full team work programme which contained more detail, and said that projects often spanned more than one of the priorities of the Management Plan.
6. Mr Barker asked whether the Buy Local Project could be used to publicise the Shropshire Hills across the county and whether work was being done in conjunction with Transition Towns. The Development Officer informed him that Transition Town Shrewsbury were working on a version of our Buy Local website and there was also a project rolling out joint promotion of Farmers Markets over the whole of the county.
7. Mrs Kidd commented that with regard to planning issues there were big issues with new chicken shed developments which would have an impact on the AONB and that there was a need to balance the need to keep farms viable and the effect on the landscape. She asked whether there was any guidance from the AONB which would mitigate the effect of these big developments. The AONB Partnership Manager commented that the AONB Partnership had objected to a number of such developments, and that the issue had been raised in discussions with the Economic Development department at Shropshire Council, and that an Agricultural Building Design Guidance document was being developed. Other members commented on the value of screening large chicken sheds, the changing economics of the egg industry, and the potential for woodland rearing of free range chickens as a more compatible enterprise.
8. The Chair mentioned that a standard presentation was being put together for those members of the Partnership to use who had volunteered to give talks to Parish Councils and other groups. It was clarified that the general AONB leaflet was being reprinted, and this would be useful to support these talks.
9. The Chair noted the progress since the last meeting and thanked the AONB Partnership Manager for his update.

LEADER in the Shropshire Hills Update

10. A report updating members on the progress of the Shropshire Hills LEADER programme had been circulated. The LEADER Co-ordinator informed the meeting that Alison Caffyn had been appointed Chair of the LEADER Approvals Panel in succession to Glyn Barratt. He went on to reiterate the strategic overview role of the Partnership which was formally the LEADER Local Action Group. It was hoped that the LEADER programme would provide a legacy of increased activity on wellbeing linked to the landscape. With around half of the money allocated, the Co-ordinator's role would be moving gradually from advising new projects more to working on claims, maximising the impact of projects and bringing groups together. The Shropshire Hills LEADER projects were set to meet a substantial proportion of regional LEADER output targets, and the emphasis could therefore be on maximising the quality of the outputs rather than making up numbers.
11. It was clarified that there was a vacancy on the Approvals Panel if any member was interested. A summary of projects approved was being put on the website. There was discussion over the possible effects of funding cuts and the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies. It was clear that these changes will have some impact on the LEADER programme, though the full effects are not yet clear.
12. The Chair thanked Alison Caffyn for taking the Chair of the Approvals Panel and thanked the LEADER Co-ordinator for his work.

Offa's Country and Sustainable Tourism Project Work

13. The meeting received a report and a presentation on the Offa's Country and Sustainable Tourism Strategy, for which funding had been secured from AWM's Natural Assets programme (administered by Natural England). The Development Officer informed the meeting that there were currently two related projects which were being undertaken jointly with the Wye Valley AONB:
 - the 'Walking With Offa' project which would include the development of long distance path infrastructure, the development of walking routes, the promotion of walking together with interpretation and information materials and providing training for businesses and
 - the development of Sustainable Tourism Strategies for both AONBs.

She then gave more details of the projects.

14. Mr Shelley commented that the area was well served by railway lines but that the Heart of Wales Line only ran four trains per day. The Development Officer informed him that part of the project bid had been to commission research to look at transport links across the area, but this had been cut from the project grant offer. Mr Gibson commented that the Welsh Assembly Government had provided funding for research into the use of trains. Dr Joy commented that the project was a good opportunity to link sustainable transport with a landscape scheme.
15. The Chair congratulated the Development Officer on securing the funds and looked forward to implementation of these projects.

Site Allocation and Management of Development Consultation

16. A report outlining the draft AONB Partnership response to the Site Allocation and Management of Development (SAMDev) Issues & Options consultation had been circulated. The AONB Partnership Manager said that the Partnership's response would not address the detail of the many potential sites identified, but was a good opportunity to push for policy approaches set out in the AONB Management Plan to be adopted in new

- planning policies. The draft response made the general observation that there did not seem to be adequate differentiation of the AONB in the development of planning policy.
17. Mr Shelley stated that he was concerned that the AONB was not being treated differently, and supported the views expressed in the paper.
 18. Mr Welch commented that with regard to Church Stretton, the way the consultation had been carried out had raised unnecessary concerns over the amount of development and the number of sites. He went on to say that the status of the AONB and the Church Stretton Town Design Statement should be given much higher credence. Mr Welch commented that there was much focus on renewable energy and that there was a need to look at the consequences of this both in and outside the area. He felt there was a need to plan for the future landscape around the towns (e.g. wetland creation) as well as housing and employment land.
 19. Mr Barker said that the intention was to consult fully, but there had been some confusion. The detail of particular sites was especially for local communities to comment on.
 20. Mr Francis felt that there was need for a measured approach. The 'minimal' amount of development recommended for Church Stretton in the draft response may have a knock on effect on services such as schools. He went on to say that affordable housing was a major priority and that there was need to be creative in the ways that this is provided.
 21. Mr Bartlett commented that there was need to improve infrastructure prior to any new development taking place.
 22. Mrs Kidd said that it was right to look from the bottom up at communities and their needs, but had concerns that work done was not being acknowledged, and that the holistic view of what makes a community live had been lost. She said that while the towns are important service centres, they shouldn't be looked at in isolation from the surrounding rural area, and felt that the AONB should have a stronger role.
 23. Mr Harrison said that despite the abolition of regional planning, Shropshire was going ahead with its Local Development Framework as the housing numbers given by the Region had been those put forward by the Council itself. An Infrastructure Plan was also being developed.
 24. Rev Read felt that we may be selling ourselves short, and should set out why the AONB was significant, e.g. tourism numbers, LEADER, etc. Mrs Kidd said that we needed to express what we would like, in terms of overall vision, and more detailed matters such as design.
 25. It was resolved that the Partnership endorse the draft response subject to points raised in the discussion being included.

Partnership Member Involvement and Format of Meetings

26. The Chair asked for members' views on the format and length of meetings, following suggestions after the February meeting about whether more time was needed, and whether more use should be made of break out groups to aid discussion. After discussion it was agreed that meetings could start at 9.30am to allow a little longer, and agendas would try to avoid too many presentations. There were mixed views about break out groups, and the use of task and finish groups was mentioned. The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members of the various Working Groups which already existed. The Chair thanked members for their input.

Date of Next Meeting

27. The date of the next meeting of the Partnership was confirmed as Tuesday 19 October 2010 at 9.30am.