

North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
Minutes of Meeting on 5th June 2015
Combe Martin Parish Hall

Meeting attendees

Steve Pitcher (AONB Chairman)
Jenny Wallace (TDC)
Jane Whittaker (TDC)
Lesley Garlick (DCC)
Richard Dyer (NFU)
Cllr. Robin Julian (DCC)
Hannah Harrington (NDC)
Jonathan Fairhurst (NT)
Richard Butler (Community Rep.)
Rose Day (Community Rep.)
Cllr. Rodney Cann (NDC)
Caroline Leaver (Community Rep.)
Richard Prowse (Tarka Country Trust)
Paul Green (Community Rep.)
Pete Burgess (DWT)
Andy Bell (ND Biosphere Reserve)
David Appleton (NE)

Officers

Jenny Carey-Wood (AONB Manager)
Dave Edcombe (AONB Project Officer)
Gigha Klinkenborg (Administrator)

Guest

Pat Chesterton (Combe Martin Museum)

Apologies

Hon. John Rous (CLA)
Charlotte Russell (EH)
Jay Rowntree (Environment Agency)
Cllr. Andrea Davis (ENP)
Paula Ferris (Coastwise North Devon)
Barbara Fryer (Community Rep.)
Terry Green (Community Rep.)
Alison Boyle (Community Rep.)
Chrissie Ingle (AONB staff)

1. **Introductions and apologies**
The Chairman welcomed the members and speaker Pat Chesterton. Apologies were recorded.
2. **Minutes of 27 January 2015 and matters arising:** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.
 - a) Biosphere Review: LG reported that, for a number of reasons, the proposed externalisation has been put on hold while alternative arrangements and funding sources are investigated. Martin Caddy has moved to DCC Highways PRow team.
 - b) AONB MoA Update: The previous MoA expired at the end of March. A new template has been drawn up and circulated by DCC. TDC declined to sign and NDC will consider it in June. Following the Executive's decision to ring-fence the 2014/15 underspends for redundancy liabilities, Jenny Wallace is to re-present the revised MoA to TDC.
 - c) Steve Pitcher has written to express thanks to the outgoing Partnership members.
3. **Combe Martin Museum & HLF Young Roots project – Pat Chesterton**
Pat gave an update on the Young Roots project – this is an HLF funded project for three young people from Combe Martin which carries UCAS points and an Artsmark award. Dave Edcombe is on the steering group and the aims of the project are to raise awareness of the mines, attract volunteers and raise funds to enhance and conserve the sites and finds. There is also an oral history project (part of Fishing for History) which is providing training in Combe Martin in June. The Museum will be celebrating with an open day on August 15th, open to all. Pat expressed thanks to the AONB for support through the SDF grant towards the video camera and laptop, and work by Chrissie Ingle with the young people to create a mobile exhibition which will initially be on display at Lynmouth Pavilion in July.
4. **AONB Manager's report**
Jenny expressed thanks to the team and Partnership members for advice and support during her induction period – meetings with individual partners will continue.

Seascape Character Assessment

Land Use Consultants have been appointed to carry out the work, starting in June and including Lundy. The assessment will define and evidence what makes the coast special to feed into marine planning and any future sea based proposals; the entire Welsh coast already has a Seascape Assessment. Thanks were expressed to all funders, particularly support from both NDC and TDC.

North Devon Aquaculture Centre

Workshop in January was successful and very well attended. Comments have been made on the draft report with the final report due at the end of June.

North Devon Skates and Rays

This is a small project to pilot tagging of rays and plot their movement. The data will be sent to the MMO to enable them to make better informed decisions and to support local management of the ray fishery. There is good co-operation from local fishermen with the project.

Greater Horseshoe Bat Project

The final submission to HLF was made on 21st May by Devon Wildlife Trust. Richard Dyer is hugely supportive as the GHB Bat roost near Braunton remains the focus of the North Devon part of the project. Richard Dyer commented that the development phase raised expectations but NE were not following up. David Appleton responded that delivery can't happen until the next phase.

Clean Marine Project

Ongoing success in engaging volunteers and key schools, for example Bideford College want to do a big event with their students. Focus on the project legacy now to ensure there will be groups of volunteers who can carry on once the project finishes, with timely input from the AONB team. Cllr. Rodney Cann added that he is hoping to start an 'Eco Warrior' scheme to supply litter picking equipment to community groups and arrange pick-up of litter, this could include beaches. DE advised that co-operation and assistance from the Local Authorities was key in disposing of the collected rubbish.

Undergrounding of overhead wires.

A scaled down project to underground overhead wires in Woolacombe will be considered by the steering group in July.

Royal Geographical Society Walks

Still waiting for approval from RGS for the Combe Martin walk.

Sustainable Development Fund

Summary presentation by GK on the 2014/2015 fund. This year we have £23,000 available and the scheme is being managed by JCW, with a more pro-active approach to help deliver the AONB priority themes. Getting information to parishes and communities was discussed, with Cllr. Rodney Cann suggesting attending the Parish Forums and Cllr. Robin Julian offering to share information or get SDF on the parish agenda. Direct mailing to councillors was also recommended and JCW agreed to produce an e-flyer. JCW proposed that the theme for 2016-17 be Biodiversity and Geo-diversity.

Agreed: SDF theme for 2016-17 Biodiversity & Geodiversity, and to produce an e-flyer

Communications

The communications contract with Alison Heimann is continuing, with a review after 6 months. Priorities are to review how we use social media and considerable work needed to update the websites.

Budget (tabled)

JCW presented a budget for 2015/16 demonstrating the availability of a small amount of potential match funding for additional activity or to match external funding.

5. Planning Update

DE presented his report. The Public Inquiry on the Route 39 Free School had highlighted our limitations with regard to formal representation on major projects, due to a lack of resources and expertise. This needs to be considered by the planning panel to anticipate future requirements.

The demand for pre-application planning advice from the AONB team has increased now that the local

authorities are charging for this. A discussion on whether to charge or not was held and agreed to take advice from other AONBs who already offer/charge for advice and re-consider this at the planning panel.

Planning issues raised by partners:

- Cllr Julian advised that he had raised the issue of bats at the Route 39 proposed school site.
- Cllr Cann reported that a planning inspector had been dismissive of the Estuary's value which could lead to the urbanisation of this landscape, (an important part of the AONB setting).
- HH reported that the District Council was holding a consultation on the value of the estuary landscape, and would welcome input from partners:-
https://www.engagespace.co.uk/devon/northdevon/survey/ConRespForm.aspx?Consult_Id=1695&request_response=new&status=&criteria=

6. Discussion Groups – delivering the 'access, recreation and health' theme:- Key points:

- Information on access is good but needs to be promoted and more easily accessible to those who need it, so they can decide what and where to access the coast and countryside
- Recommend targeting disadvantaged groups (possibly using SDF) to increase access
- Establish an 'Access Forum' bringing together land management agencies, landowners, community representatives and agencies working with target groups
- Identify resources to support AONB team to deliver this work with partners
- Use activities and itineraries to engage different groups with the coast
- Develop an 'offer' for agencies/communities (work with LNP on this)
- Consider appointing Public Health / Education / Tourism representatives to the Partnership
- Programme of awareness raising/education on the AONB opportunities

Agreed: working group of JCW, CL, RD, PB, JF and CVS reps to progress

7. NAAONB update.

Report tabled by Rose Day. RD, SP, JCW and DE attending national conference and will report back.

8. Partnership

- **SDF Panel** requires additional members, which will be formally appointed at Partnership in September. In the interim, CL volunteered to join the SDF panel. Agreed.

Agreed: North Devon+ to be approached

- **New members** – JCW to provide an induction

9. Partners' Contributions to the AONB Management Plan

National Trust: starting a third project to clear Bucks Mills Iron Age fort, have established Peppercombe Bothy for overnight stays and restoring Rockham steps at Mortehoe this summer.

Tarka Country Trust: Final Taw River Improvement Project report received; exploring some new ideas to bring and distribute more funds locally.

Natural England: rollout of Countryside Stewardship, and contributing to the Seascape Assessment.

NFU: Current Issues for farmers: increased problems with dogs attacking livestock and wildlife therefore need to raise awareness; Basic Payment Scheme impacting on small farms with decrease in livestock numbers, changes to crops impacting on biodiversity, growing size of dairy farms with consequent pollution problems; new schemes substantially different and will impact on local farms; challenges for younger people getting into farming with changes to DCC farm estate.

Devon County Council: Key actions include (i) Consultation on draft Minerals Plan will start early August for 12 weeks; (ii) Historic Environment National Mapping Project for AONB summary published on https://new.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/the-devon-historic-environment-record/nd_aonb_nmp/ (iii) Project for community engagement in recording and management of roadside verges being developed with Biosphere.

10. Date of next meeting: Friday 2 October 2015 at 9.30am (venue in Torridge TBC)

