

North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
Minutes of 27th January 2015
Civic Centre, Barnstaple.

Meeting attendees

Steve Pitcher (AONB Chairman)
Cllr. Gaye Tabor (TDC)
Lesley Garlick (DCC)
Jenny Carey-Wood (ND+)
Hannah Harrington (NDC)
Hon. John Rous (CLA)
Richard Butler (Community Rep.)
Alison Boyle (Community Rep.)
Cllr. Rodney Cann (NDC)
Caroline Leaver (Community Rep.)
Richard Prowse (Tarka Country Trust)
Paul Green (Community Rep.)
Pete Burgess (DWT)
Terry Green (Community Rep.)
Stuart Ayres (NT)
Andy Bell (ND Biosphere Reserve)
David Appleton (NE)
Cllr. Derrick Spear (North Devon+)

Officers

Dave Edgcombe (AONB Project Officer)
Gigha Klinkenberg (Administrator)
Natalie Gibb (Clean Marine Officer)
Chrissie Ingle (Project officer)
Alison Heimann (Communications Officer)

Apologies

Rose Day (Community Rep.)
Charlotte Russell (EH)
Jay Rowntree (Environment Agency)
Cllr. Andrea Davis (ENP)
Cllr Robin Julian (DCC)
Paula Ferris (Coastwise North Devon)
Richard Dyer (NFU)
Rob Joules (NT)
Barbara Fryer (Community Rep.)

**Action/
Decision**

1. Introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed the Partnership members.

2. Minutes and matters arising:

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

- a) The Chairman announced that the new AONB Manager is to be Jenny Carey-Wood who is presently a Partnership member working for North Devon+. Her first official day will be April 7th. He also expressed thanks to Dave who has been in temporary charge since Elaine Hayes's departure.
- b) LG gave an update on the tender process for hosting the Biosphere Reserve. The pre-procurement briefing has taken place, attended by Devon Wildlife Trust, Westcountry Rivers Trust, the Biosphere Reserve Foundation and North Devon+. The main concerns were the TUPE implications covering pensions and redundancy liabilities. Formal tender will be out in March.
- c) The Greater Horseshoe Bat (GHB) project is progressing well although initially, landowner involvement was poor.
- d) The proposal to set up a CIC will be revisited once JC-W is in post.

Alison Boyle
to be
referred to as
ABo & Andy
Bell ABe

3. AONB Manager's Report (Project officer summary)

Greater Horseshoe Bat project is now progressing towards a Stage 2 HLF application in May. It is a five year project and support has been exceptional.

SA offered
assistance with
the GHB

A large number of landowners attended events arranged in the Braunton area. Elaine had agreed a contribution of £5k from the AONB. The focus is on the Braunton area maternity roosts. project as he is a licenced bat worker.

Rate my View App – This is a smartphone application designed to gather pictures and feedback from people as they photograph the protected landscape, adding positive or negative comments. Over time it will enable us to build up a picture of how the AONB is perceived. It should also inform our seascape/landscape assessment. The contribution from the AONB is £750.

Skates and Rays – £2k contribution from the AONB towards the £25k cost.

RGS Self-Guided Trails – further trails will be rolled out for the summer of 2015, these include Combe Martin and Ilfracombe

SDF - 17 projects supported to just under £30k, seven in TDC and eight in NDC and two projects that covered both districts. The AONB receives around £17k in funding from each of the districts and in 2014-15 NDC projects received £15.5k and TDC projects received almost £14k .The total value of the projects for 2014-15 was almost £280k which represents excellent leverage of match funding from local, national and European sources.

Business Plan 2015/16 (prepared by EH before her departure)

- **Finances** - Once the hosting and staffing costs are deducted, there is very little in the budget outside of our usual commitments to Planning, Communications and SDF fund. Next year's focus will be on the coast/marine. The three local authority contributions for next financial year remain the same. The Partners were thanked for their continuing support in very uncertain times.
- **Offices** - It is uncertain where the AONB team will be housed next year, with the proposed closure of the Civic Centre later this year. One possibility is the top floor of the library in Barnstaple. The new AONB Manager will be tasked to look at future accommodation.

4. Management Plan Monitoring

DE reported that DBRC has been contracted to provide a State of the Environment set of indicators which will assist in monitoring the area and measure the success of the AONB Management Plan.

5. Planning Update – tabled

- The summary for the previous quarter of this financial year was provided, with the final section relating to the Route 39 School which has been refused and has now gone to a Public Inquiry.
- We have employed an additional planning advisor, Ben Dancer to prepare the Route 39 response for the public enquiry. It is likely to begin on 2nd June and to continue for 6 working days.
- The previous reporting quarter September to November 2014 was significant in so far as we engaged in more pre-application discussions, something the AONB has traditionally not been involved in.
- In total we have commented on 28 applications, 14 in Torridge district and 14 in North Devon.
- There are 4 refused applications from Duckhaven awaiting a decision by the Planning Inspectorate.
- Steve Mulberry has been co-opted back onto the planning panel.
- The statement regarding the R39 School is primarily focused on the principle for development within an AONB (Paragraph 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework) it does not include some other aspects of the proposal, namely sewage treatment and effects on bats, as we don't have the resources to defend this. It is possible that the

Parish Group might make these arguments - PB is happy to be put in touch with this group.

Successes:

- The 5X 109m turbine wind farm at Harbour Cross has been refused.
- The 1ha slurry lagoon has also been refused – this was a retrospective application.
- A new housing development at Langleigh Lane Ilfracombe within the AONB has been refused.

6. Funding Partners' Memorandum of Agreement - Update

Defra have indicated that they will not sign up to a new MOA or accept redundancy liabilities. The current MOA expires in March 2015. DCC agreed to provide a template where the districts and County funding partners agreed to share liabilities on a 1 year rolling agreement. It will contain a clause to allow a 6 month notice of withdrawal from the MOA. Defra needs to accept that redundancy is a legitimate employment expense. 2015-16 funding is confirmed, but there is no commitment beyond the election year.

7. Communications

Alison Heimann gave a presentation on the new Communications Plan.

8. Presentations (powerpoint presentations available from the team)

Clean Marine, project officer Natalie Gibb

Since October 2014 the project has gained an established identity across several communities in North Devon. The focus of the second quarter has been on delivering the beach cleaning programme, managing current volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, and developing a talks and events programme to raise awareness on the issues of marine litter. Outputs:

- Attendance at 10 engagement events
- A volunteer contact list of 180 people
- Delivery of 12 beach cleans
- Attendance of 320 volunteers across these 12 events
- Removal of over 200 bags of rubbish from North Devon beaches
- The most successful beach clean was Saunton Sands in mid-October where 80 volunteers removed over 50 bags of rubbish from the beach
- Set up of beach cleaning community group in Croyde

Clean Marine has now expanded to include the Fishing for Litter Project. This will be run across three locations (Clovelly, Ilfracombe and Appledore) which cover the FLAG priority fishing communities. There has been some delay in getting Appledore Fish Dock on board but actions are in place to ensure their involvement.

North Devon Aquaculture Centre – Feasibility Study, Chrissie Ingle

This project is exploring the possibility of developing a focal point or points for aquaculture and related services (R&D, vocational training/ education, technical support) in North Devon, which will result in a business plan/ report at end of May 2015. Workshop attended by local, regional and national stakeholder on 29th January 2015. Project funded through Northern Devon FLAG, Seafish and Devon & Severn IFCA.

Seascape Character Assessment, Dave Edgcombe

Proposal to commission a Seascape Character Assessment for North Devon and Exmoor working with local partners. Plymouth University could carry it out for around £10k, with additional cost to include all of ENP coast. A consultant

experienced in seascape assessments would probably cost around £30k. The AONB can commit £10,000 to the project and further financial support is being sought from the National Trust, Exmoor National Park Authority, Natural England and the Local Authorities. If we get sufficient support we will look to commission an experienced consultancy to undertake the work.

Skates & Rays Tagging Pilot project, Libby Ross, Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

Libby presented the issues with the local skate and ray populations and the consequences of the fishing ban last Autumn. She presented the reasons for proposing a project to pilot new tagging technology, with the potential benefits of increasing understanding of their movements.

9. Date of Next Meeting –

Friday 5th June at 10.15

At the Church Hall, Combe Martin followed by lunch and an overground visit to the Silver Mines

