

**North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
Friday 20th May 2016, Barnstaple**

MINUTES

Meeting attendees

Steve Pitcher (Chairman)
Cllr. Rodney Cann (NDC)
Rob Joules (NT)
Rose Day (Community Rep.)
Caroline Leaver (Community Rep.)
Paul Green (Community Rep.)
Lesley Garlick (DCC)
Richard Dyer (NFU)
Cllr Pat Barker (ND+)
Christine Goodall (NE)
Steve Mulberry (Vice Chairman)
Richard Prowse (Tarka Country Trust)
Lewis Andrews (TDC)
Ed Parr-Ferris (DWT)

Officers

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

Apologies

Jane Whittaker (TDC)
Andy Bell (ND Biosphere Reserve)
Hon. John Rous (CLA)
Terry Green (Community Rep.)
Cllr. Andrea Davis (ENP)
Cllr. Alan Whittle (TDC)
Paula Ferris (Coastwise)
Peter Burgess (DWT)
Charlotte Russell (HE)
Andrew Woolacott (Christie Estate)
Barbara Fryer (Community Rep.)
Richard Butler (Community Rep.)
Alison Boyle (Community Rep.)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed partners and introductions were made., welcoming Lewis Andrews, planning team leader from TDC.

2. Minutes of the last meeting – these were agreed and there were no matters arising that were not on the agenda

3. AONB Manager's Report

JCW summarised her report adding the following points:

a) The Priorities this year are Biodiversity and Geodiversity

b) Projects

- **Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat project** The GHB project will help to deliver some of the priority actions across the AONB.
- **North Devon Aquaculture Centre Study** – Biosphere team are considering a project to take forward some of the recommendations
- **Coastal Creatures Project** – presentation from JCW. This two year project will recruit an education and interpretation Officer to support a range of citizen science activities, species surveying, bioblitzes, beach cleans, schools and community group engagement and produce learning and interpretation materials. External funding sought from Heritage Lottery Fund and Tesco Bags of Help totalling £61,000 grant plus local partners' and AONB match funding towards total project cost of £90,586.

- **Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project**

JCW attended the volunteers launch in Bovey Tracey with four volunteers from North Devon. DE is working with local partners to develop a 'bat trail' around Branton. The GHB team is working with local schools and bat surveying will be included in Bioblitzes. Bat detectors will be available to hire in the autumn from Branton Countryside Centre. The team will encourage activity across the AONB.

- **Beach Cleans (Clean Marine)**

Whilst awaiting funding decisions on Coastal Creatures, the AONB team are continuing to work with community volunteers and partners (National Trust, Northam Burrows, Petroc, Branton Countryside Centre, SAS and Parkdean) to carry out beach clean during the Spring tides. Kate Weld has been contracted to support this work with DE. RC commended the work the AONB has done. Crow Point is a problem with black bags of dog excrement left all over the place! This prompted a debate on the subject of **Dogs in the AONB**, particularly with regard to Branton Burrows. Since the fencing has been put in this has effectively concentrated the excrement. **RC** mentioned the need to strengthen enforcement and education. Dogs in general are now a big issue for the whole area. **RP** reported that sheep worrying is on the increase. **RDay** suggested a concerted publicity campaign around North Devon with Codes of Conduct and dog waste facilities. **RC** suggested we get together to discuss 'dog' issues such as a code of conduct and increased signage. He reported that there are 31 dog bins in Fremington and that Parishes have a role to play too. Potential to involve the Dog's Trust. **RJ** offered to share information from National Trust. **Action: Team** to work with partners to explore potential for a Code of Conduct.

c) Activities under development

- **Heritage Trail booklet** – Silver, Smoke and Strawberries about the history of Combe Martin being finalised by Chrissie Ingle for production in the summer
- **Geodiversity** interpretation and education project – in development by Chrissie Ingle for consultation with potential partners, prior to funding applications
- **Devon AONBs** exploring opportunity for a joint report on economic productivity of the protected landscapes, JCW leading on the project and liaising with National Parks
- **Devon Local Nature Partnership – Pollinators Month (July)** – working with BR to develop workshops for land managers and communities to support pollinators. **RP** raised concern about arrival of Asian Hornets in North Devon
- **Tourism and Access** – JCW meeting with key stakeholders across the AONB to explore issues and joint working opportunities
- **Marine Plan for South West England** – JCW and SP attended the consultation briefing event at Caddsdawn in April and will follow through as it progresses
- **Northern Devon FLAG** – EMFF bid – JCW supported work with local partners on the expression of interest which has not been successful, however an appeal has been submitted to the MMO

d) Sustainable Development Fund - Budget this year increased to £25k

- **Heaven and Hell** – A story of churches in North Devon - to introduce 120 young people aged 11-25 to the heritage and importance of churches in North Devon through archive, field visits, practical activities and interpretation. The AONB is the

heritage partner in 'Seize the Moment's' HLF Young Roots 2 year project. **(Policy: Historic Environment E2 and Community J1)**

- **Hartland Abbey** – Project to design and purchase display panels for the restored 'housekeepers' room with interpretation on the history of the estate, land management details, the AONB context of the estate and the use of the estate for film/TV locations **(Policy: Historic Environment and Culture E2)**
- **Wild Shorts** – wildlife film production training for schools and individuals, plus a competition for films of wildlife in the AONB **(Policy: Biodiversity B8 and Community J1)**
- **Character of our Coast** - A Beaford Arts/AONB project with 'then and now' images of the coast has held two talks, two exhibitions and 2 radio interviews. More events are planned for later in the year **(Policy: Coast D1 and Historic Environment E2)**

e) Communications Report – key points:-

- **January – March 2016 Quarterly Communications Report** - circulated from Alison Heimann whose contracted work on communications finished on 31 March 2016. Thanks were expressed for Alison's significant contribution over the years.
- **April 2016: - Social Media** - less frequent posts made now as being done by the team, rather than a communications contractor; staff training in progress; engagement continues to increase; **Websites** - new AONB website to be launched in May following considerable staff time on design and content working with Cosmic; Explore the Coast website has fewer hits as not being updated or promoted until merger of two sites occurs later in 2016; **Press** – SDF project promotions imminent; **Events** – primarily SDF projects and beach cleans. Thanks to DE and Kate Weld for delivery of events.
- **Communications Plan 2016/17** - New plan was circulated following input from the working group. The plan covers a scaled back delivery; however this will be boosted once the Coastal Creatures officer is in post. SM commented that it was a major change to the team delivering communications and would be reviewed in July. Thanks expressed by the chair to SM for taking the lead on communications.

4. Landscape Report (DE)

- **Planning Update** – 42 applications have been commented upon. Since January we have been giving more pre-planning advice, to meet NPPF guidance.
- **Seascape Character Assessment** – this has been adopted by NDC and will be presented to TDC and ENPA shortly; training supported by DE and AJ
- **Route 39 Academy** – The Secretary of State has approved the development. The Partnership does not have legal standing to launch a judicial review and was not a statutory consultee. Only the District and Parish Councils have the ability to challenge the decision. LA mentioned that there are 30-40 conditions on the planning, however they may be difficult to enforce and the indications are that the development is proceeding. LA thanked AONB team for attending the Inquiry.
- **Langley Park** in Ilfracombe was refused by the District Council and the appeal was dismissed. The Inspector deemed the landscape impact was significant and overturned the housing supply policy.
- **Yelland Power Station** – plans show the raising of the embankment thereby significantly altering the landscape. It was judged that the effect on the landscape was significant, as well as on the wildlife in the setting of the AONB.

- **Beckland Farm** – the 1ha slurry lagoon built without planning permission requires enforcement action to mitigate risks and impacts. EA advises that any water quality issues need to be reported to them and responses will be in proportion to the scale and frequency of incidents. DE welcomed response from Natural England.
- **Undergrounding of Wires** – project being proposed to Western Power for lines in the Morteheo/Woolacombe area on National Trust land
- **Planning Panel** – Panel advised that Natural England is changing their response to planning in protected landscapes to focus solely on national infrastructure projects. This could have implications for the AONB's responses given planning pressures, particularly in the setting of the AONB. **Action: DE** to follow up issues with NAAONB.
- **Planning Protocol** – a draft has been circulated to Local Planning Authorities. **Action: JCW** to finalise with partners and follow up with Natural England given issues above.

5. Presentation on the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project – by Ed Parr-Ferris of Devon Wildlife Trust (attached)

6. National Association of AONBs (attached)

RDay summarised her written report and apologised for inadvertently misleading Partnership members regarding Alison Heiman's role in supporting the NAAONB's Outstanding Week involving collaboration with National Parks. RDay was unaware that Alison had been unable to carry this out. **RDay** reported on Visit England funds to support tourism initiatives aimed at international visitors, and the forthcoming NAAONB conference that she would be attending as a trustee. (SP and JCW attending too).

7. News from Partners – on contributions to the AONB Management Plan

- RP – Tarka Countryside Trust will launch a Community Wildlife Fund across the two districts with grants up to £500. See website <http://www.tarkacountrytrust.org.uk/>
- NE – CG noted that nothing new to report on boundary issues; agri-environment schemes hoping to be launched in Spring/Summer. Decisions on two possible Facilitation Funds bids (agri-environment schemes) in North Devon coming soon.
- NFU – RDyer reported low prices at the moment, particularly milk. Rural payments agency RPA stand to be fined for not delivering the money to farmers.
- NT – RJ reported that Rockham was now open.
- RC – Local Plan has been submitted
- SM – finding the role of Vice-Chairman quite busy.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

**Friday 23 September 2016 from 10am – 2pm
at the Royal North Devon Golf Club, Northam**

Friday 27 January 2017 location tbc