

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Joint Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held at Oswaldkirk Village Hall on 5 April 2012, commencing at 10.00 am.

Present:-

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Clare Wood in the Chair.

Ryedale District Council: Councillors John Hicks and Robert Wainwright.

Hambleton District Council: Councillor Christine Cookman.

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Parish Councils: David Pontefract (Hambleton).

Country Land and Business Association: Jane Harrison. (substitute for William Worsley).

Officers:

Paul Jackson, Francesca Pert and Maggie Cochrane – Howardian Hills AONB.

Jane Wilkinson (Secretary) and Graham Megson – North Yorkshire County Council.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

63. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Gaynor De Barr (Parish Councils Ryedale), Geoff Eastwood (Ramblers Association), Justine Clark and Nancy Stedman (Natural England), William Worsley (Country Land & Business Association), Paula Craddock (Ryedale District Council) and Graham Banks (Hambleton District Council).

64. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2011, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Page 1 Minute Number 41 – Matters Arising – Retaining Wall at Oulston Bank

The AONB Manager said that discussions with the estate had now taken place. The estate proposed to replace the wall with a block wall faced with a dry stone wall. Estimates for the repairs works had been received and the estate proposed to carry out the work in phases starting first with those sections of the wall that had already fallen.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore said that the general condition of the wall was deteriorating. Further sections were on the verge of collapse and that the situation required attending to as a matter of urgency.

The AONB Manager agreed to monitor the situation.

Page 2 Minute Number 41 – Matters Arising – National Association for AONB's (NAAONB) Activity

It was reported that supplies of stationery incorporating the new branding scheme had been received.

Page 2 Minute Number 46 – AONB Business Plan and Action Programme 2011/12

It was confirmed that the finger post sign in Hovingham had been repaired and reinstated.

Page 7 – AONB Budget

The anticipated reduction in the funding contribution from DEFRA for 2012/13 as reported at the previous meeting had been confirmed in December. The level of NYCC funding however remained the same as the previous financial year.

Page 9 – Minute Number 61 – National Farmers Union

In December 2011 the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) went into financial administration. Subsequently a new county group had been established which had the support of the AONB.

65. AONB Unit Activity

Considered -

The joint report of AONB Officers detailing their activities and the progress achieved by the Unit since the previous meeting in November 2011.

The Committee received a power point presentation of photographs of completed and on going projects referred to in the report that included countryside management works, community projects, volunteer activity and Junior Ranger Club days.

Members referred to the photographs of the restoration works to the gate pillars at Hardy Flatts, Whitwell. They said that the wooden posts erected in front of the stone pillars to protect them from being damaged by vehicles were unattractive and detracted from the visual success of the project. Members appreciated the need to protect the restored pillars and asked the AONB Manager to explore alternative options. The AONB Manager undertook to research the options available and report his findings to the next meeting.

It was reported that a letter was about to be sent to all parish councils within the AONB. The letter would invite parish councils to identify locations to site the commemorative natural oak log seats for the 25th anniversary of the AONB. Installation of the seats was planned to commence in Autumn 2012 and would continue through until Spring 2013.

The AONB Manager referred Members to paragraph 2.9 of the report and summarised the reasons the Committee's annual budget was likely to be underspent. He said that reserves brought forward from 2010/11 and the anticipated current underspend meant that significant reserves were predicted to be carried forward into 2012/13. With this in mind several potential projects had been identified that were aimed at achieving full spend and reducing reserves to a more comfortable level. Members agreed the situation had been unavoidable and supported the approach outlined but said that they would not like to see monies being allocated to unworthy

projects just to spend the budget. The AONB Manager gave assurances that this would not be allowed to happen. Members noted that as the new Memorandum of Agreement had been signed by all parties there was a degree of certainty for the next four years about the level of income the Committee could expect.

Members discussed the planning application for the touring caravan site at Redcar Farm, Yearsley. The AONB Manager said that the application affected Ryedale and Hambleton District Councils as well as having traffic implications for the County Council. All three local authorities were aware of the application as was the local parish council and each had submitted a response. The original application had in response to comments made been amended before being finally approved (delegated decision) subject to conditions pertaining to landscaping and traffic access. Members expressed concern about the suitability of the route traffic would use to access the site. They said that the route was very narrow in parts with a steep drop on one side and was frequently used by agricultural traffic. Also people playing rugby on the pitches adjacent to the lane were in the habit of parking their cars on the roadside. For these reasons it would very difficult and dangerous for cars pulling caravans to use the access road. The AONB Manager said that permission had been granted subject to two new passing places being created. Members said that the creation of two new passing places was not sufficient and that they could not understand how the application had been approved in the light of the level of objections that had been made. The AONB Manager said that no formal objections had been lodged only serious reservations. As all relevant parties had been consulted there was nothing further he could do. Members concerns regarding the application remained unchanged and they expressed their dissatisfaction that the decision had been made using delegated powers.

In response to queries from Members, the AONB Manager said that different working practices between Hambleton and Ryedale Area Highways Offices were responsible for differences in repair costs and the time taken to reinstate renovated traditional highway direction signs.

In conclusion, the Chairman and Members of the Committee congratulated the AONB Manager on a comprehensive and informative report.

Resolved -

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.

66. AONB Action Programme 2011/12

Considered -

The report of the AONB Manager on progress implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2011/12. Full details of progress and performance against 2011/12 targets was appended to the report.

The AONB Manager said that an analysis of performance revealed that 75% of specific targets had been achieved and/or exceeded and that statistically this was a better performance than that achieved in the previous year.

A Member commented on the increased number of days worked by volunteers and asked how the volunteers were recruited and how many there now were. The AONB Manager replied that they were approximately 15/20 volunteers in the AONB and that they were a sub-set of the County Council's countryside services volunteers. County Councillor Caroline Patmore said she was aware of a number of people living locally who would like to be involved but did not know who to get

in touch with. She said that if volunteers were recruited from the local area they were more likely to take ownership of projects which would be beneficial. Her comments were supported by other Members of the Committee with similar experience. Members praised the work done by volunteers but said that it was closed shop and that new recruits were not encouraged. The Chairman said that volunteer numbers were restricted because of issues surrounding supervision. The AONB Manager said that he would report Members comments to the new volunteer coordinator following the retirement of the previous postholder.

Councillor John Hicks commented that landowners should be encouraged to carry out repairs and countryside management works themselves or face losing their Single Farm Payment. The AONB Manager said that the conditions attached to Single Farm Payments did seek to address cross-compliance issues but he acknowledged it was a difficult area and that the extent of penalties was a matter of long standing debate between interested parties.

The Chairman congratulated the AONB Manager and his team on their excellent performance during what had been a difficult year which was further complicated by the maternity leave of a member of staff.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made to date implementing the Management Plan be noted.
- (b) That the achievements against Targets for 2011/12 be noted.

67. AONB Business Plan and Action Programme 2012/13

Considered -

The report of the AONB Manager inviting the Committee to approve a programme of proposed activity designed to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2012/13. The Action Programme and Targets for 2012/13 together with a timetable for completion of the tasks were appended to the report.

Members enquired how Howardian Hills SDF applications would be processed if the the joint panel with the National Park was discontinued. The AONB Manager confirmed that the National Park was unsure about the future of their SDF grant and consequently the panel. He had suggested to the National Park that they use the panel as an E-Panel to determine applications in the interim pending the outcome of their review of grants. Members would be sent details of applications via email and asked for their comments. Members expressed their support for this approach.

Resolved –

- (a) That the targets for 2012/13, contained in the Action Programme be approved.
- (b) That the continued contribution to the Native Woodland Development Officer post is approved and noted.
- (c) That if required an E-Panel comprising of nominated SDF representatives be used to determine SDF Applications received within the area of the Howardian Hills.

68. National Association for AONB

Considered -

The report of the AONB Manager on initiatives being developed by the NAAONB. Appended to the report were the notes of a meeting of northern area chairmen that took place in York on 25 January 2012 attended by the Chairman of the Committee County Councillor Clare Wood.

The AONB Manager drew Members attention to potential forthcoming changes to the funding formula and the possibility of 100% funding by DEFRA. He summarised the implications arising from these changes and their possible affect on the AONB Unit.

County Councillor Clare Wood said that the meeting in January had been very interesting and that she had argued strongly for the funding formula to remain unchanged.

Members asked to be kept informed of developments.

Resolved –

That the information provided at the meeting and progress on various initiatives described in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

69. Development within the AONB

Considered -

The annual report of the AONB Manager on the number and type of planning applications determined within the AONB during 2011. A summary of the planning applications determined during 2011 was appended to the report. Copies of responses submitted by the AONB Manager to Hambleton & Ryedale District Councils in respect of planning applications received within the area of the AONB since the previous meeting were appended to an earlier report on the Agenda on AONB Unit Activity. The AONB Manager agreed to circulate information for Ryedale District when it became available.

Members noted that the AONB continued to be under little development pressure

Resolved –

That the responses and information in the report be noted.

70. Reports from Partner Organisations – Oral Reports

Considered –

North Yorkshire County Council

It was reported that the Volunteer Co-ordinator, David Ranner had now retired. As part of the on-going restructure of Waste and Countryside services his post was to be transferred into waste management and recruited to in due course. A report was being prepared for consideration by the Executive on a bid proposal for a Local Nature Partnership for North Yorkshire and York. This was in response to the release by Defra of details of the application process. Negotiations regarding the proposed partnership structure were ongoing. It was hoped that the Local Nature

Partnership would adopt a broad approach encompassing health and well being as well as conservation and environmental matters

Country Land and Business Association

The reorganisation of the Association was now complete and Dorothy Fairburn had moved to her new office at Scotch Corner and assumed responsibility for the new Northern Region. The Association expressed concern regarding some aspects of the proposed Local Nature Partnership for North Yorkshire & York and said that it continued to encourage farmers to actively support the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

Ryedale District Council

The content of the National Planning Policy Framework had resulted in further delays in the publication of the Local Development Framework. Recommendations regarding the number of traveller sites meant that the LDF document would have to be further amended before being the subject of further public consultation.

Hambleton District Council

Publication of the National Planning Policy Framework document meant that all planning applications would now be considered bearing in mind its content.

71. Dates of Future Meetings

Resolved:

- (i) That the date of the annual site visit is 27 July 2012.
- (ii) That the date and time of the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee is 5 November 2012 commencing at 10 00am at a venue to be confirmed

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm.

JW/JD