

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Joint Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held at Hovingham Village Hall on 29 October 2015, commencing at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Hambleton District Council: Councillor Christine Cookman in the Chair
North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillors Clare Wood and Caroline Patmore
Ryedale District Council: Councillor Robert Wainwright and Councillor Eric Hope
Parish Councils: Chris Stratton (Hambleton) and Sally Brown (Ryedale)
Forestry Commission: Jim Smith
The Ramblers: Philip Catterall
Natural England: Rosy Eaton

Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB team: Paul Jackson, Liz Bassindale and Maggie Cochrane
North Yorkshire County Council: Kate Arscott (Secretary) and Liz Small (Heritage Services Manager)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

52 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Fiona Farnell and Paula Craddock (Ryedale District Council), Ian Fielding (North Yorkshire County Council), Caroline Skelly (Hambleton District Council), Sir William Worsley (Country Land and Business Association) and Justine Clark (Natural England).

53 Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 26 March 2015

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

54 Matters Arising

Minute 31 – DEFRA report “Maximising Revenue for Protected Landscapes”

The AONB Manager advised that this report had still not been released. If it is published, a copy will be placed on the website and members would be provided with a link.

Minute 45 – Development within the AONB

The AONB Manager reported that he had responded to further consultation on the High Malton development, objecting on behalf of the AONB due to the impact on the AONB setting. The application had been refused.

Minute 46 AONB Action Programme 2014/15

The AONB Manager reported that due to the levels of current activity in relation to fracking, the Chair had agreed to an urgent item of business at the end of the agenda to circulate information notes on the current position in relation to the AONB. He apologised that it had not been possible to give earlier notice of the item.

The AONB Manager also reported on the work currently taking place to restore the Lime Avenue at Castle Howard.

55 JAC Virtual Site Tour of 2014/15 Work

The AONB Manager reported that, in light of the number of sites that it might be possible to visit with Members and after consultation with the Chairman, it had been decided to give a slide presentation at this meeting as an alternative means of demonstrating the achievements of the past year to the Committee.

A slide presentation of work undertaken during 2014/15 was shown:

- Kirkham – new hedge planting
- Firby, Howsham and Crambe – traditional direction sign restoration
- Bulmer – traditional direction sign and village name sign restoration; electricity line undergrounding
- Terrington – enhancement of outdoor area for pre-school club
- Brandsby and East Newton – wall restoration
- Oulston – Scheduled Monument management
- Husthwaite and Scackleton – hedge restoration
- Newburgh Park – new fencing
- Oswaldkirk – village name sign restoration

Members referred to problems with verges being left in a poor state following undergrounding work. The AONB Manager confirmed that this had been fed back to Northern Powergrid and the contractors.

Members particularly welcomed the positive approach by many landowners and farmers to the reinstatement and restoration of hedges. It was particularly encouraging where they were carrying out some of the works themselves.

Resolved –

That the presentation be welcomed and that the virtual tour format replaces the site visit for future annual reports.

56 AONB Unit Activity

Members considered a detailed report of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the Joint Advisory Committee meeting in April 2015. This was accompanied by a slide presentation showcasing some of the work undertaken, which was well received by Members.

Members asked whether more could be done to raise public awareness of Himalayan Balsam and to encourage members of the public to pull it up where they see it. The AONB Manager reported on joint working with the National Park on this matter. Some Parish Councils are co-ordinating local action and the River Derwent Partnership is active on this issue. Liz Small also agreed to raise it through the Local Nature Partnership.

The Committee discussed the role of Parish Councils generally and the contribution many already undertake. The roles, training and potential of volunteers were also discussed.

Members noted that schemes had been submitted for a new period of funding for the undergrounding of overhead electricity lines.

It was reported that the relocation of the AONB Office to Helmsley was on track for December. The Committee commended the team for progressing this move.

Resolved –

That the content of the report and information provided at the meeting be noted.

57 JAC Planning Consultations

Members noted the responses to planning consultations submitted by the AONB Manager since the last meeting.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

58 AONB Indicators

Members considered a report detailing performance against selected indicators used to measure AONB performance annually.

The AONB Manager highlighted that there was no longer a requirement to report the indicators to Natural England. However it was felt that certain indicators still provided a useful tool for year on year comparisons and these would continue to be collected and reported.

Resolved -

That the Performance Indicator results contained in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

59 AONB Budget

Members considered a report detailing final income and expenditure during 2014/15; the current position on the 2015/16 budget; and anticipated budgetary requirement for 2016/17.

The AONB Manager reported that there had been a 4% underspend in 2014/15. He also highlighted that over the year volunteers had contributed at least 193 days of time, valued at £13,000.

He confirmed that it was anticipated that funding from North Yorkshire County Council and Defra would reduce in 2016/17 and this was indicated in the budget estimates at Appendix 3 of the report.

Members reflected that the financial future for local authorities was very uncertain at the present time, but that the work of the AONB team was valued, and confirmation of levels of funding for 2016/17 would follow in due course. Members acknowledged the contribution to savings that was being made by the office move.

Resolved –

- (a) That the details of AONB expenditure during 2014/15 be received for information;
- (b) Partner authorities be asked to consider making financial contributions towards the work of the AONB in 2016/17, in line with Appendix 3 and section 4 of the report

60 National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) - Activity Update

The AONB Manager circulated a copy of the report of the Chief Executive of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) to the organisation's AGM, regarding the NAAONB Business Plan. This report had not been available at the time of agenda despatch.

He stressed the joint working and lobbying that had been taking place nationally between AONBs and National Parks, including the joint production of the document 'So much more than the View'. A copy of this would be circulated to all members by email. Members welcomed the information on joint working.

The AONB had also taken part in 'Outstanding Week', designed to showcase the work of AONBs nationwide. Philip Catterall indicated that The Ramblers would be able to offer some organised walks for similar events in future, with sufficient advance notice.

The Chair asked whether the recent announcement of the extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park area was likely to have any implications for the AONB. The AONB Manager confirmed that government funding for AONBs and National Parks came from the same source, so there may be some budgetary implications.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

61 Reports from Partner Organisations

The Ramblers

Philip Catterall offered to circulate a recent article on the AONB from the organisation's magazine. He reported that the organisation had recently submitted a survey on the state of Ryedale's paths, which had taken two years to complete, to the County Council. It was a credit to local landowners and the AONB that no AONB parishes appeared in the bottom 10.

The AONB Manager reported that the team had recently met with the County Council's Countryside Access Service team following its restructure, and a more integrated approach to addressing issues was anticipated.

It was noted that any concerns about specific path matters should be taken up outside the meeting.

Forestry Commission

Jim Smith reported on a tree health event due to be held at Askham Bryan on 4 November. He also reported that support was being offered to forestry businesses to put together bids for capital projects under the LEADER scheme, which runs until 31 March 2016.

Ryedale District Council

On behalf of Ryedale District Council, the AONB Manager reported that the Site Allocation Plan consultation was currently taking place, with a closing date of 14 December. The consultation identified preferred sites in service villages including Hovingham and Ampleforth. The consultation was available at the Council offices and on the website.

Natural England

Rosy Eaton reported on the assessment of applications under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. One higher tier agreement was going ahead, with a further agreement deferred to next year. No figures were available yet for mid-tier agreements.

Natural England had been unable to fill the Catchment Sensitive Farming post and this work was currently being covered by the River Esk officer. The Catchment Partnership was taking on a facilitation officer, who would develop a forward plan and source funding. This would cover the River Derwent and tributaries.

North Yorkshire County Council

Liz Small reported that the County Council was looking to work with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council in relation to the Local Nature Partnership.

The anticipated reduction in North Yorkshire County Council budgets was likely to result in funding being limited to the provision of materials for Public Rights of Way furniture repairs, where previously they may have also carried out work on behalf of landowners. It was noted that the AONB may be able to provide some assistance on priority routes.

Hambleton District Council

The District Council is reviewing its Local Plan, looking to 2035. The call for sites closed in September and these were now being registered. Housing figures would come forward shortly, followed by options for consultation in the New Year.

62 Date of next JAC Meeting

Members confirmed that they wished to continue meeting in local facilities within the AONB area. However, they agreed to hold their next meeting at the National Park Offices in Helmsley (subject to availability) in order to see the new location of the AONB team.

Resolved -

That the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 14 April 2016 at 10.00am at the National Park Offices, Helmsley.

63 Urgent Business - Shale Gas Information Notes

The AONB Manager reported that due to the levels of current activity in relation to fracking, the Chair had agreed to an urgent item of business to circulate information notes on the current position in relation to the AONB, to keep members of the JAC updated. He reiterated his apology that it had not been possible to give earlier notice of the item. Two information notes on shale gas in the Howardian Hills AONB were

circulated. The AONB Manager indicated that they were also available on the AONB website.

County Councillor Clare Wood made colleagues aware that North Yorkshire County Council's Executive had agreed earlier in the week to proceed to public consultation on a Preferred Options draft Minerals and Waste Joint Plan, with a view to adoption of the Plan in 2017. The draft plan contained a number of policies aimed at ensuring that, wherever shale gas development is proposed, the impacts of any proposals for exploration, appraisal or development are managed and controlled in a robust way.

Resolved –

That the production of the information notes be welcomed, and that the Committee continue to receive updates at appropriate points in time.

The meeting concluded at 12.25pm

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