

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the meeting held on Teams on 19 November 2020, commencing at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillors Caroline Goodrick and Caroline Patmore
Ryedale District Council: Councillor Claire Docwra and Councillor Susan Graham
Parish Councils: Christopher Pickles (Ryedale)
Country Land and Business Association: Sir William Worsley
National Farmers Union: Jennifer Costello
Forestry Commission: James Shallcross

Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB team: Paul Jackson and Liz Bassindale
North Yorkshire County Council: Kate Arscott and Liz Small
Ryedale District Council: Jill Thompson

Observer:

CPRE North Yorkshire: Kate Atkinson

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

148. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Di Watkins (Hambleton District Council, Nick Eleanor (Hambleton Parish Councils), Poppy Arnett (National Farmers Union), Harry Whitehouse (Ramblers) and Ailsa Kirkup (Natural England).

149. Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 7 November 2019

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed as a correct record.

With regard to minute 139, James Shallcross updated on enforcement action in relation to felling of trees north of Whenby.

With regard to minute 141, Paul Jackson reported that a site for tree planting during National Tree Planting week had been identified at Autism Plus, with 130m of new hedging and six trees planted on site. AONB volunteers had also assisted at an event in Dalby Forest.

150. JAC Virtual Site Tour of 2019/20 Work

JAC members were given a slide presentation of examples of work undertaken in 2019/20.

The Chairman congratulated officers on the work undertaken.

Members were pleased to report that the Rural Watch Group was making good progress.

Members raised concerns about lorries causing damage at Coulton Mill, due to the very sharp corner. Paul Jackson undertook to follow this up and check on any weight limit restrictions.

Members also raised queries about the preservation of wood used for signposts. They were informed that tanalised larch posts were now used as standard.

151. AONB Unit Activity

Members considered a detailed report of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the last meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee. This was accompanied by a slide presentation showcasing some of the work undertaken. The Appendices to the report set out the following:-

Appendix 1 - details of the work, meetings and site visits that had been carried out by the AONB Manager, AONB Officers and the Community First Yorkshire Officer in the period April to October 2020.

Appendix 2 - full details of the grants offered and projects developed to date during the current financial year

Appendix 3 - details of the more significant planning consultations that the JAC had received during the current year and the AONB Manager's detailed responses to specific applications

The AONB Manager drew attention to the impact of Covid-19 on the work of the team this year. He made members aware of approaches to mixed use of contractors and volunteers on some projects, and the approach to volunteer work under social distancing guidelines.

Members raised a number of specific local issues, which the AONB Manager responded to, with further detail to be picked up outside the meeting if appropriate.

Members discussed raising public awareness about Himalayan Balsam and how members of the public can help. The AONB Officer advised that awareness raising work had been planned by Ryevitalise, but had been deferred due to Covid-19 restrictions on outdoor activity. It would be picked up again as soon as practicable.

Members commented that it was useful to see the responses to planning applications and gain an overview of the types of issues raised.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

152. AONB Key Performance Indicators

Members noted a report detailing performance against selected indicators used to measure AONB performance annually. The AONB Manager drew Members' attention to the welcome news that all AONBs had now reported against these indicators which would feed into the national annual report to Defra.

52.4 hectares of land had been conserved or enhanced; 40 heritage assets had been conserved or enhanced; 17 partnerships had been influenced and 359 people engaged with; 131 consultations appraised or developed by the team; and £341,952 worth of work delivered or secured through the AONB team.

Resolved

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

153. AONB Budget

Members noted a report detailing final income and expenditure during 2019/20, setting out the current position with the 2020/21 budget and considering the anticipated budgetary requirement for 2021/22. The AONB Manager highlighted some of the current financial uncertainties arising from the Covid-19 situation.

Resolved

- (a) That details of JAC expenditure during 2019/20 be received for information.
- (b) Partner authorities be asked to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets for the work of the JAC in 2021/22, in line with Appendix 2 and section 4 of the report.

154. Glover Review of Protected Landscapes

Members discussed a report giving details of the Protected Landscapes Review and its Proposals. Appendix 3 of the report contained the AONB Manager's thoughts on what each proposal might involve and its potential relevance/effect in relation to the Howardian Hills AONB and its partnership.

This report had previously been considered at the JAC meeting in November 2019, but detailed discussion had not been possible due to purdah in advance of the December 2019 General Election. The AONB Manager reported that there had been little significant progress on the main proposals since that time.

The JAC recognised the significance of the review as probably the most fundamental development for AONBs since the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in 2000 and awaited further detail on implementation.

Resolved

- (a) That the Proposals contained in the Landscapes Review be noted as still current.
- (b) The AONB Manager reports future progress and announcements to the Chairman and JAC when available.

155. National Activity and Initiatives

The Committee received an update on current national issues and the work of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) covering the following topics:

- Response to the Covid-19 pandemic
- The Glover Review
- Nature Recovery

- Unsuccessful NAAONB bid to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund
- Agriculture Act
- Environmental Land Management Scheme

A copy of the NAAONB Prospectus “An Offer to the Nation” was appended for members’ information.

Resolved

That the work being carried out on national initiatives be noted for information.

156. Reports from Partner Organisations

Members of the Committee shared the following information not already covered elsewhere on the agenda:

Forestry Commission – James Shallcross reported that there had been limited reporting of alleged illegal felling. He was also pleased to report that no sites had been identified as having diseased larch trees at the latest inspections.

Members generally thanked the AONB officers for the comprehensive reports to the Committee and the impressive work going on within the AONB area to look after the countryside.

Resolved

That the updates be noted.

157. Date of next JAC Meetings

Resolved

That the next meetings of the Joint Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 8 April and 11 November 2021 at 10 am. The venues of the next meetings are to be confirmed, subject to the possibility of reverting to face to face meetings by this time

The meeting concluded at 12.00.

KA