

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Teams on 8 April 2021, commencing at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Caroline Goodrick
Ryedale District Council: Councillor Susan Graham (part)
Parish Councils: Chris Pickles (Ryedale), Nick Eleanor (Hambleton)
Country Land and Business Association: Sir William Worsley (Chair)
Forestry Commission: James Shallcross
Ramblers: Harry Whitehouse
Natural England: Jenny Rowntree

Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB team: Paul Jackson, Liz Bassindale and Francesca Pert
North Yorkshire County Council: Kate Arscott and Hugh Clear Hill
Ryedale District Council: Rachael Balmer

Observer:

CPRE North Yorkshire: Rosy Eaton

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

158. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillor Caroline Patmore (North Yorkshire County Council, Vice Chair), Councillor Claire Docwra (Ryedale District Council), Councillor Di Watkins (Hambleton District Council), Jennifer Costello (National Farmers Union), Harry Whitehouse (Ramblers), Justine Nelson (Natural England), and officers Liz Small (North Yorkshire County Council) and James Campbell (Hambleton District Council).

159. Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 19 November 2020

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed as a correct record.

With regard to minute 149, Paul Jackson reported that he had received a report that there had been no action on replanting following enforcement action in relation to felling of trees north of Whenby. James Shallcross was asked to check the situation.

With regard to minute 150, Paul Jackson confirmed that there was no weight limit on the road past Coulton Mill, although there is an advisory warning regarding long vehicles.

With regard to minute 154, Paul Jackson updated the Committee that there was a lot of work going on in the background in response to the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes, and further reports would be brought to the Committee as appropriate.

160. 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 and AONB Officers in the period November 2020 to April 2021

Appendix 2 - full details of the projects supported during the 2020/21 financial year

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

Members noted that, due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, officers had had limited access to the AONB area during this period, there had been limited work with volunteers and no events had been possible for children. However, the Team had continued to carry out as much work as possible in the circumstances.

Members raised a number of specific issues in regard to the use of interpretation panels and information signs at various sites.

The AONB Manager confirmed that an expression of interest had been lodged with Natural England for the Yorkshire Wolds to become an AONB.

The AONB Manager reported that the Monument Management Scheme had ended and he would shortly circulate a report on the work of the scheme. The Team intended to continue work to maintain these sites based on the learning from the scheme, especially around tackling brambles and bracken.

The AONB Manager reported on DEFRA funding for an Environmental Land Management Advocacy Project which had gone well.

In relation to budget, the AONB Manager reported that the impact of Covid-19 and a windfall payment had led to an underspend, with reserves now increased to £72k.

Francesca Pert, AONB Officer, gave a presentation on work currently being undertaken to reduce the impact of plastic tree protection on the landscape and to reduce plastic waste. Work currently being undertaken included removing plastic waste to 'clean up the past', and also planning for a more sustainable future. Members enthusiastically welcomed the presentation and the work being undertaken on this extremely important topic.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

At this point in the meeting, due to technical difficulties, the Committee became inquorate, based on the requirement for two authorities to be represented. The meeting continued as an informal meeting.

161. Development within the AONB

The AONB Manager presented a report giving details of the number and type of planning applications determined within the AONB during 2020. This continued to be an unpredictable area of workload for the team.

The AONB Manager noted that there had been a theme of house extensions, some quite significant, and this had raised some new issues in terms of commenting to the planning authorities.

162. AONB Action Programme 2020/21

The AONB Manager presented a report on progress made on implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2020/21. A detailed summary of progress against each objective was provided. 78% of targets were fully achieved; 10% were 25-75% achieved; 7% were less than 25% achieved; and 5% were not progressed at all.

He highlighted the start of work on a Nature Recovery map, which would feed into the Environmental Land Management Scheme; good progress with undergrounding of electricity cables; and the difficulty in completing some tasks due to Covid-19 restrictions. At a strategic level, there had been discussions around the Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the new Agriculture Act and follow-up to the Glover review.

163. AONB Business Plan & Action Programme 2021/22

The AONB Manager presented a report on proposed activity to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2021/22. A detailed set of proposed targets against each objective was provided.

Key activities highlighted included:

- Completing the transition to a new AONB Manager, following Paul Jackson's retirement in the autumn
- Developing and implementing the first year of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, once full details of its operation are available from Defra
- Responding to and starting to implement any changes announced by Defra in relation to changing to a National Landscapes Service model of delivery
- Completion of the Nature Recovery Map, which will be shared with partners when ready. Natural England were also doing substantial work in this area.

Members were supportive of the targets for 2021/22 as contained in the Action Programme.

164. National Activity for AONBs Activity

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

- Farming in Protected Landscapes
- The National Landscapes Service
- Environmental Land Management
- Art in the Landscape, including the proposed local Sounds in the City project

Members were supportive of the NAAONB Art in the Landscape Strategy.

165. Reports from Partner Organisations

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

Natural England – Jenny Rowntree introduced herself, having started working in this region in January 2021. Following a team restructure, she and Justine Nelson would be covering the AONB, North York Moors, Yorkshire Wolds and York areas, building up their local knowledge of this part of the wider Yorkshire & Lincolnshire region.

She reminded members of the deadlines for applications for Countryside Stewardship schemes of 30 April for higher tier and 31 July for mid tier. Funding would last until 2024. She also referred to the deadline of 11 April for expressions of interest in the pilot Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. The first agreements are expected to be in place in October.

North Yorkshire County Council - County Councillor Caroline Goodrick reported that Local Government Review was in progress. The Driffield Show was due to take place over two days this year.

Sir William Worsley – reminded members that the Great Yorkshire Show would be held over four days this year.

Forestry Commission – James Shallcross reported on the award of a woodland creation grant for around 4.5 hectares near Oswaldkirk, with two new woodland management plans in progress locally. A Woodland Creation Officer had been appointed, to reflect the expansion of work associated with the Tree Planting Partnership.

Ramblers – Harry Whitehouse reported that Ramblers groups had been cleared to restart from 27 March under Covid-19 guidance and requiring advance booking. Groups were exploring various options to minimise public concerns around large groups, and pressure on parking space. The organisation had provided a letter for walk leaders to show if challenged. He also reported that Park Runs were due to restart in June, again with protocols and guidance in place.

Hambleton parishes – Nick Eleanor reported on a much improved path at Crayke which had received funding from the AONB. He thanked the AONB for work related to the pending refurbishment of the Oulston traditional direction sign.

Ryedale District Council - Rachael Balmer reported that the Local Development Scheme had been agreed in February. There would be a consultation on a Call for Sites from late April, which the AONB unit would be invited to respond to. It was noted that this would be dependent on the outcome of Local Government Review

166. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 10 am. Subject to the possibility of reverting to face to face meetings by this time, the next meeting would either be held via Teams or at Amotherby Village Hall.

167. Paul Jackson

Members paid tribute to Paul Jackson's service with the AONB, having been here almost since the AONB was founded and having led the team for 20 years. They

thanked him for the huge amount he had achieved and his significant impact on the landscape, as well as his effective running of the service and the JAC. Members reflected on how well respected he was, and as a result the respect the AONB is held in.

Paul replied by thanking the Committee and colleagues for their support and he wished the JAC the best for the future.

The Chair outlined the recruitment process for Paul's successor as AONB Manager.

The meeting concluded at 11.56am.

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