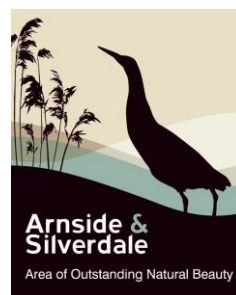


Arnsdale & Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 15th March 2017 at 2.00pm
RSPB Leighton Moss



MINUTES

Attending

Members of the Executive Committee:

Fiona Allan	Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust
Andrew Frankish	Environment Agency
Cllr Nigel Goodrich	Lancaster City Council
Sue Harrison	CLA
Brian Jones	Local User Group (Ramblers)
Ann Kitchen	Local Business (Bittern Countryside CIC)
Cllr Pete McSweeney	SLDC
Cllr Brian Meakin	Beetham Parish Council (Chair)
Cllr Keith Palmer	Silverdale Parish Council
Craig Russell	Local Business (Beetham Holiday Homes)
Cllr Jim Shaw	Arnsdale Parish Council
Jarrold Sneyd	RSPB

In attendance:

Lucy Barron	AONB Manager
Barbara Henneberry	AONB Communications & Funding Officer
Sue Hunter	AONB Officer
Elliott Lorimer	Lancashire County Council
Tony Riden	AONB Countryside Officer
Lorayne Woodend	South Lakeland District Council

Apologies:

Ruth Ainsworth	AONB Funding & Communications Officer
Cllr Kevin Briggs	Warton Parish Council
Joan Jackson	NFU
Cllr Mike Macklin	Yealand Redmayne Parish Council
Stuart Perigo	on behalf of Cumbria County Council Development Control & Countryside Management Team
David Porter	Lancaster City Council
Cllr Ian Stewart	Cumbria County Council

1 Welcome, apologies and introductions

1.1 Apologies are listed above. Each person present introduced themselves

2 Presentation of national Landscapes for Life Award

2.1 The AONB Manager was delighted that Joan Jackson (NFU) and John Wilson (President of the Landscape Trust and previously Senior Warden at Leighton Moss) both received national recognition for their outstanding contribution to AONBs when they were awarded the 2016 Landscapes for Life award at the NAAONB Annual Conference in July. John was unable to attend the Conference and so was invited to the Executive Committee meeting to receive his award.

John has made an exceptional contribution to nature conservation in the Arnside & Silverdale AONB over more than 50 years being one of the most influential individuals in conserving the biodiversity of the area since the AONB was designated.

Growing up on the family farm in the AONB village of Warton, John nurtured a passion for wildlife and the local landscape and was appointed the first Warden of a new RSPB nature reserve, Leighton Moss, in Silverdale, in May 1964. At the time, Leighton Moss was a little known site which received just 375 visitors in its opening year. John worked there as Warden, then Senior Warden, until his retirement in 2000. The reserve is now one of the most popular RSPB reserves in the country receiving around 110,000 visitors each year.

John played a vital role in creating and maintaining the reedbed at Leighton Moss, the largest in the north west, making it the best possible home for the wildlife that lives there, including avocets, bitterns, marsh harriers and otters. John has carried out an incredible 40 year study into bearded tits, which breed nowhere else in the north west becoming one of the world's leading authorities on them.

As time went on John also became ever more involved in nature conservation on a wider landscape scale and he was instrumental in ensuring the RSPB acquired additional areas of habitat in the AONB. Under John's expert eye, Leighton Moss grew into a diverse reserve which now incorporates a large section of saltmarsh and mudflats in Morecambe Bay, home to thousands of waders and wildfowl, two large satellite areas of freshwater wetland where new reedbed and fen has been created and part of Warton Crag, a limestone grassland site home to rare high brown fritillary butterflies.

John has worked closely with the AONB Partnership over many years extending his influence right across the area. He became one of the first members of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, the charity which supports the AONB, when it was formed in 1986 and subsequently became President, a role he still holds and remains active in. He has for many years provided expert advice and guidance on habitat management and monitoring at key sites. From the very first edition, John has been a regular contributor of articles to the Landscape Trust's magazine Keer to Kent.

John has been a mentor to the next generation of conservationists in the area, some of whom are now forging careers locally. This is a valuable legacy ensuring that the AONB is left in good hands.

The award was presented to John by Cllr Brian Meakin, AONB Partnership Chair

3 Presentation: Morecambe Bay Coastal Community Team

3.1 The formal business was preceded by a presentation by Jenny Wain of Morecambe Bay Partnership on the Morecambe Bay Coastal Community Team.

Coastal Community Teams are supported by government to help revive coastal towns and areas and to develop and deliver plans for future economic growth.

A new team for the rural areas of Morecambe Bay will be led by Morecambe Bay Partnership and South Lakeland District Council and will bring together local people, councils and businesses in the area to decide where investment and action is needed to grow the rural and coastal economy. Plans will tap into our local heritage and stunning coastal assets and develop local skills and opportunities to benefit from new jobs and investment. The Morecambe Bay Coastal Community Team will work with similar teams approved for Morecambe, Barrow and Fleetwood.

£10,000 has been awarded to help develop an economic plan to support jobs and growth for coastal communities around the Bay area. Initial work done by consultants has highlighted several emerging issues including Commuting; Under-exploited tourism potential; Local Authority spend on social care; Aging population and Declining workforce.

A draft plan will be submitted to government by the end of March 2017.

3.2 The presentation was followed by Q&A. Topics discussed included

- a request for consideration to be given to all users, including horse riders, when creating any new routes such as a Bay Coast Path
- a request to take into account the value of the farming/landowning industry and related sports such as shooting
- clarification that the Coastal Community Team will be made up of organisations rather than individuals and that these organisations will develop funding bids to implement the plan
- the importance of broadband and good public transport in the rural areas

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2016

4.1 The minutes were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting held on 19th October 2016.

5 Matters arising from the minutes

5.1 (16.1) The AONB Manager reported that several nominations for the Bittern Award had been received and that it had been decided it should go to Rob Petley-Jones of Natural England. Rob received his award at the AONB Conference in January.

Rob has managed Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve since 1992 and will retire from Natural England in July 2017. In that time, Rob has developed, then shared his considerable habitat expertise, particularly around coppice management and butterfly conservation, to ensure that this special limestone landscape is managed in a way that conserves its iconic habitats and species. Working with Kew Gardens, Rob has been

instrumental in the success of the species recovery programme for the Lady's-slipper Orchid including enabling the public to see and experience these rare and beautiful flowers. He has also developed a successful volunteer programme which has enabled the local community to be involved with looking after and monitoring the reserve. Rob is always generous with his time and expertise to help others to develop their interest and knowledge.

- 5.2** (15.1) Brian Jones (Ramblers) requested an update on the availability of the AONB Tramper to members of the public. The AONB Manager reported that the Tramper is freely available to members of the public for use on the reserve and has been well used to date. It is also available for other organisations to use by arrangement and under a hire agreement. It is the intention to make it more widely available in the future, however there are various operational issues to overcome. The AONB Team is willing to work with the Ramblers and RSPB to bring this to fruition and Brian Jones was invited to attend a meeting with the AONB Manager and RSPB representative to discuss this further.

ACTION: to arrange a meeting

**Brian Jones &
AONB Manager**

6 AONB Team Business Plan (report circulated)

- 6.1** The Team Business Plan 2015-18 has been reviewed and updated. It details how the AONB Team will act to contribute to the implementation of the statutory AONB Management Plan and associated Delivery Plan. It sets out the operating context of the AONB Team, and details a work programme for 2015-18, including proposed actions that require further resources to be delivered, targets for delivery in 2017/18, the 2017/18 budget and risk analysis.

- 6.2** Ann Kitchen (Bittern CIC) suggested that under *Objective 5: Make a significant contribution to Biodiversity 2020 outcomes by delivering conservation, enhancement, restoration and connectivity of the AONB's characteristic mosaic of habitats including woodlands, grasslands and coastal and freshwater wetlands and taking targeted action for key priority species* there was an opportunity for the AONB to take a lead role in pulling together the various bits of research being carried out by different organisations and developing a more coordinated approach.

It was suggested that this be an item for discussion on the Agenda for the next Executive Committee meeting

ACTION: to arrange a meeting with relevant parties to discuss further and to include on the Agenda of the next committee meeting

AONB Manager

AGREED: to approve the updated Business Plan 2015-2018 (Proposed Ann Kitchen (Tourism/Business), Seconded Fiona Allan (Landscape Trust))

7 AONB Budget 2016/17 revised and 2017/18 proposed (report circulated)

- 7.1** Small in-year adjustments to the 2016/17 budget have been required to cover higher pension costs/recharges as advised by Lancaster City Council.

7.2 Members wished to record their thanks to the Local Authorities and Parish Councils for maintaining their level of financial support.

7.3 The AONB Manager advised members that Defra is encouraging AONB Partnerships to look at adding value in terms of income generation and diversifying funding streams to help deliver AONB Management Plans. The AONB Team will work in close cooperation with host authority, Lancaster City Council, and partner organisations, over the coming months to review current policies and practices and consider new ways of securing income. It was agreed to include an update on this on the Agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: to undertake a review of current policies and practices and explore ways of generating additional income and to report any findings and recommendations at the next committee meeting

**AONB Manager
& AONB Chair**

AGREED: to note the report and approve the revised 2016/17 budget and proposed 2017/18 budget (Proposed Brian Jones (User Group/Ramblers), Seconded Cllr Pete McSweeney (SLDC))

8 Draft AONB Development Plan Document (report circulated)

8.1 Lorayne Woodend of South Lakeland District Council updated members on progress made with the AONB DPD to date. Key points included:

- 114 responses were received following the Draft Plan consultation held between 10 November & 5 January
- Over 250 people attended the consultation events
- Support was expressed for the joint-working approach, the general principles of the Plan and for the landscape-capacity led approach to development.
- A key challenge for the final plan is demonstrating the viability of the 50% affordable housing requirement as the Plan will only be approved if it is deliverable.
- 11 preferred development sites were included in the Draft Plan, of which one has been completely withdrawn and one has been reduced in size.
- All the responses have been summarised and are now being assessed.
- The 6 week consultation period on the final Plan is due to start in September.
- Comments supporting the Plan would be welcome in addition to any objections or concerns.

8.2 Q&A

- Q: Does the Plan in its draft form carry any weight?
- A: Plans do carry more weight as they go through the process and at the current stage, the AONB DPD should be taken into account by decision-makers but will not carry full weight until adopted and until then, current adopted policies apply.
- Q: If land is classed as a brownfield site, what development, within the curtilage of the property, is allowed under permitted rights, based on the current use, without permission being required?
- A: **ACTION:** to seek clarification

AONB Manager

AGREED: to note the report on progress of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document.

9 AONB Planning work update (report circulated)

9.1 The AONB Officer provided the Committee with an update on planning and development management work carried out by the AONB Team on behalf of the AONB Partnership since the last meeting in October. She also highlighted some important consultations to which the AONB Team has provided responses – the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB DPD; AONB DPD Sustainability Appraisal Report; SLDC's Draft Development Management Policies DPD; Lancaster City Council Strategic Policies and Land Allocations; and Lancaster City Council Development Management DPD.

9.2 It was suggested that we also give consideration to voicing support in certain cases to avoid the perception that the AONB Partnership is anti-development. The AONB Manager confirmed that if a proposal directly and very clearly delivered an action within the AONB Delivery Plan that formal support may be given but that it was not possible to do this for the majority of applications. The Team reviews all applications and responds in line with the approved planning protocol.

AGREED: to note the report on planning work and to congratulate the AONB Officer on the quality of her responses.

10 AONB volunteer work programme update (report circulated)

10.1 The AONB Countryside Officer reported on the continued success of the volunteer programme, with a good number of volunteers turning out regularly for the Tuesday tasks. Volunteer tasks over the winter have included erecting new fingerposts to maintain the AONB's well sign-posted PROW network; scrub-cutting; species-rich limestone grassland restoration and aquatic pond work. Training courses for the volunteers in drystone walling, hedgelaying and First Aid have taken place. Other volunteering opportunities have arisen through species monitoring and helping at events such as the AONB Hedgelaying Competition which took place in November.

AGREED: to note the report on the volunteer work programme. The AONB Countryside Officer was also thanked for the site management advice he provided to Beetham Holiday Homes.

11 AONB Delivery Plan update from the AONB Team and partners – verbal updates**11.1 Lancashire County Council**

reported that the County Council has now decided to retain most of its countryside sites and to re-introduce its Countryside Service.

ACTION: to confirm whether or not this includes Warton Crag LNR

Elliott Lorimer

11.2 Local Business – Beetham Holiday Homes

Beetham Holiday Homes will be running several workshops in support of the Kendal Torchlight event. Members were encouraged to take part and use the opportunity to raise awareness of the AONB.

11.3 The Environment Agency

reported that two farm inspections had been carried out within the AONB since October. Areas for improvement have been identified and follow up visits will take place.

11.4 RSPB

reported that further talks have taken place with the landowner and local residents about RSPB's proposal for land at Warton. The project is looking at flood alleviation, habitat creation and community benefit. A detailed hydrology study is being undertaken to inform the proposal. The AONB Manager was thanked for attending the latest meeting and giving her support.

11.5 Silverdale Parish Council

reported that good progress is being made with bringing hyperfast broadband to the village through the B4RN project.

11.6 The Landscape Trust

reported that the 2017 events programme has now been published. The Trust now has more than 1000 members, 50% of whom live outside the area. Enhanced biodiversity is now being recorded on the Trust's reserves as a result of practical management.

11.7 The AONB Team

reported that the AONB Communications and Funding Officer is progressing the WILD! project, which will include Forest Schools activities and events for young families, encouraging families and children to spend more time outdoors.

The Priority Habitat Survey, a joint project with Natural England, has now been completed. The findings will feed into future planned work around biodiversity.

The AONB Team has also been working with Natural England on a national research project "Mapping Your Valued Places" The information collected by Natural England will help develop a better understanding of what people value about the area so that it can be considered when making decisions about landscape and nature conservation or other types of landscape change. A "word-cloud" created from the responses was tabled.

The AONB Conference – Our Local Heritage - was held in January and was well attended, with good feedback being received.

The AONB Grants Fund, which is being delivered working together with the Landscape Trust, has been fully allocated this year, with 4 projects benefitting from grant support.

12 Update on the work of the National Association for AONBs

12.1 The AONB Manager advised members that she has been co-opted onto the NAAONB Board as a Trustee for the Association. This will provide a good opportunity to have a direct link to national activity, which is currently focussing on agri-environment schemes (post-Brexit) and securing continued support from Defra.

The National Association's Landscapes for Life Conference will take place on 18th & 19th July in Winchester

13 Any other business

13.1 There was no further business to discuss

14 Dates for your diary**2017**

Tuesday/Wednesday
18th & 19th July Landscapes for Life Conference
University of Winchester Business School

Saturday 30th September
10am – 4pm Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Apple Day
Orchard Barn, Briery Bank, Arnsdale

Wednesday 18th October
2pm AONB Executive Committee meeting
Education Room at RSPB Leighton Moss

2018

Wednesday 14th March
2pm AONB Executive Committee meeting
Education Room at RSPB Leighton Moss,
Silverdale (TBC)

Signed Date: