

**Arnside & Silverdale
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Executive Committee Meeting**

28/4/2021

Online (via Microsoft Teams)



MINUTES

Attendees

Members of the Executive Committee:

Cllr Brian Meakin	AONB Partnership Chair & Beetham Parish Council Chair (Meeting Chair)
Cllr June Greenwell	Silverdale Parish Councillor & Lancaster City Councillor
Andrew Tait	Friends of the Lake District & Campaign to Protect Rural England, Cumbria
Ann Kitchen	Bittern Community Interest Company Chair
Brian Jones	User Group Rep, Ramblers
Cllr Helen Chaffey	SLDC Councillor (Arnside & Milnthorpe Ward) & Arnside Parish Councillor
Craig Russell	Business Rep, Beetham Holiday Homes
Andrew Frankish	Environment Officer, Environment Agency
Jarred Sneyd	Senior Site Manager, RSPB Leighton Moss & Morecambe Bay
Cllr Jim Ferguson	Silverdale Parish Councillor
Cllr Pete McSweeney	Cumbria County Councillor (Kent Estuary)
Maggie Robinson	Team Leader South Cumbria Natural England (until 3pm)
Sam Stalker	Lead Ranger, South East Cumbria & Morecambe Bay, National Trust

In Attendance:

Richard Camp	Planning Policy Officer Lancaster City Council
Elizabeth Scott-Clarke	South Lakeland District Council Strategy Team
Elliott Lorimer	Lancashire County Council (until 3.15pm)
Lucy Barron LB	AONB Manager
Sue Hunter SH	AONB Officer
Belinda Barclay BB	AONB LNR Warden
Dougie Watson DW	AONB Countryside Officer
Caroline Howard CH	AONB Comms and Funding Officer (Minutes)

Apologies:

Fiona Allan	AONB Landscape Trust Chair
Damian Law	South Lakeland District Council (Represented by Elizabeth Scott-Clarke)
Sue Harrison	The Country Land and Business Association
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council
Alison Gibson	User Group rep, North Lancashire Bridleway Association
Helen Rawlinson	AONB Countryside Officer
Cllr Phillipa Williamson	Lancashire County Councillor
Julian Oston	Dallam Tower Estate
Cllr Keith Halford	Arnside Parish Councillor

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

- 1.1** The Chair welcomed everyone, and each person present introduced themselves. Apologies received are listed above.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting (11/11/2020)

- 2.1** The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on the 11th November 2020. Ann Kitchen proposed, Cllr June Greenwell seconded.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Presentation on the Gateway to Warton Crag Project (BB)

- 4.1** Funded by the Lancashire Environment Fund, Lancashire County Council and the AONB Partnership, the project refreshed and upgraded Warton Crag Quarry car park and local nature reserve, and developed community engagement to create a sense of local ownership of the site.

The project included:

- Grassland protection, protecting the bee orchids and species-rich grassland area through the positioning of limestone boulders.
- Clearance and scrub management around the car park.
- Visitor interpretation, especially on arrival, helping visitors to plan their visit, understand the Crag and behave in a way that respects the landscape and other users.
- Waymarking routes (longer and shorter routes), helping orientation and encouraging people to keep to the waymarked routes.
- Development of Friends of Warton Crag group, carrying out volunteering in the area.
- Development of Warton Crag Quarry Local Nature Reserve Management Plan.
- Short film (<https://youtu.be/FFmwASG1cQQ>) to highlight the site and its importance to the local community (produced by Land & Sky Media).
- A community board is available onsite to offer information to users.

- 4.2** There was a discussion of the potential for signposting from and to other sites, and BB suggested that the community board could be used for this.

ACTION: AONB Team to Investigate options for signposting to/ from Warton Crag.

5. AONB Budget 2020/21 and 2021/22 (CH)

- 5.1** A report with explanatory notes detailing the 2020/21 budget anticipated outturn and 2021/22 proposed budget was circulated. The AONB Funding & Communications Officer gave a brief overview of the budget.

- 5.2** Cllr Helen Chaffey requested clarification on the Parish Councils & Vol. Days income line. LB clarified that this includes both parish council contributions and a nominal charge for volunteer workdays for external organisations, which helps cover costs (materials, transport, lead staff member time, tools etc.).

- 5.3 Approval of the 2021/22 budget was proposed by Cllr Pete McSweeney, and seconded by Ann Kitchen.

6. AONB Team Work Programme Update (LB)

- 6.1 Team update: Barbara Henneberry has retired and Caroline Howard has joined the team. Naomi Dalton (shared post with National Trust) left in February. The team have worked well with the coronavirus restrictions, and the work programme has been adapted accordingly.
- 6.2 LB discussed the Meadow Makers Project, funded by Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Plantlife are the lead partner, the AONB Team is a delivery partner. The project aims to contribute to the management of 10 grassland sites in the AONB and support a trainee, in our case hosted by Cumbria Wildlife Trust and working with the AONB Countryside Officers at least 1 day per week. There will be community engagement activity associated with this. Elliott Lorimer reported that the Bowland Meadow Makers project officer was very pleased to join others from the project at Arnside & Silverdale AONB Office for an outdoor meeting last week, and that they have also just taken on a trainee.
- 6.3 Funding was confirmed in December for the Environmental Land Management scheme Advocacy Project. This was to develop relationships with land managers and farmers in the AONB, and was delivered by Helen Rawlinson, who has set up the Farming & Land Management Group within the AONB and contractor Tonia Armer. Helen has also produced a newsletter called Land Matters. The work has included delivery of land management advice and development of countryside stewardship and boundary funding applications with these land managers. We hope that this will feed into the farming in protected landscapes scheme in due course. Jarrod Sneyd indicated he was keen to discuss the project further.

ACTION: AONB Manager to contact Jarrod Sneyd re: Farming and Land Management Group.

- 6.4 Visitor Management & Access Group established. The group will consider both visitor management following increased visitor numbers due to staycation boom (and concerns about the impact on the AONB), and the Glover Report which recommends work to diversify audiences as part of the 'Landscapes for Everyone' theme.
- 6.5 The AONB Team is preparing to move back into the office at Arnside – it is currently still closed to the public. The current plan is to re-open from the 17th May. This may be a phased return over a period of time. The return will be following a flexible approach, with additional safety measures.

7. Communications and funding work update (CH)

- 7.1 CH gave an update on communications and funding work:
- Staffing change (Barbara Henneberry retired March 2021, CH started March 2021).
 - The team are currently developing an Interpretation Plan for the AONB, to lead communications across various media.
 - Social media channels and current following were discussed.

- The events programme for 20/21 was cancelled due to Covid 19. The events programme for 21/22 is currently in development.
- Two ARETI Trust-funded projects have been rolled over into 2021/22 – one working with a Pupil Referral Unit in Lancaster, and one working with local schools on making AONB-inspired Light Up Lancaster displays.
- The Arnside Volunteer Group won the 2020 Bittern Award.

7.2 Cllr June Greenwell suggested that Safety on the Sands should be a key area for messages to visitors to the area. CH noted this for discussion in the team Interpretation Planning workshop (29/4/2021).

ACTION: CH to include Safety on the Sands messaging in AONB comms.

7.3 The AONB Team have been communicating the refreshed Countryside Code, via social media streams and the Visitor Management & Access Group.

8. Planning work programme update (SH)

8.1 175 applications in the AONB, 68 responses prepared and submitted by the AONB Team.

8.2 Contributions to Lancaster City Council Local Plan Review on Climate Change. Key issues we responded to included:

- Woodland management, including planting native trees
- Light pollution

8.3 Craig Russell asked about planting of non-native species. SH confirmed that in planning responses we do refer to the importance of planting native species. Elizabeth Scott-Clarke stated that planning decisions are checked and monitored. The AONB Development Plan Document does include elements about biodiversity and biodiversity gain, and covers native species in policy.

9. Farming in Protected Landscape Scheme

9.1 While formal approvals and confirmation have not yet been received, it is anticipated that this scheme will be launched in early summer. The scheme will provide financial support to farmers and land managers who are managing land to benefit nature. There is likely to be funding to the AONB Partnership for administration and advisory work. There is likely to be funding available for the farmers and land managers to deliver objectives to do with nature recovery, improving access and diversifying income. This funding will need to be administered by the AONB Team, and will probably require additional staffing or consultants.

9.2 This financial year will be the first year and will run for 3 years. The scale of the funding is completely unknown at present. We are hoping to hear more shortly about the nature of that funding & more detailed information about the criteria.

9.3 The AONB will be looking for volunteers to be part of the decision-making panel. If anyone is interested in being part of this, please let us know; we are particularly

interested in working with farmers. Jarrod Sneyd indicated he would be interested in being involved.

ACTION: ALL to contact AONB team if they are interested in being involved in the Farming in Protected Landscapes panel.

- 9.4** Sam Stalker asked if there were any projects already developed, due to the short window for delivery. LB stated that there are ideas, but as details are not yet confirmed firm plans cannot yet be fixed. We are anticipating an announcement about this in May/June 2021.

10. Brief Updates from Partners

10.1 Lancaster City Council Planning Dept.

Richard Camp gave an update on planning matters relevant to the Lancaster district. A climate emergency review is being undertaken on the district-wide Local Plan adopted last year. Initial consultation has been undertaken, particularly with regard to sustainability and new builds, flood alleviation and transport issues.

The Department is working towards developing a green infrastructure strategy for the district.

10.2 RSPB Leighton Moss

Jarrold Sneyd gave an update on Leighton Moss, which opened for visitors in late March – with visitor numbers varying from 150 – 800 per week. Café service is takeaway only and takings are significantly less than in normal circumstances. Retail is not suffering as badly.

The site is seeing the benefits of some of the recent habitat management. There are up to 6 booming males on the reserve. Up to 59 avocets have been recorded. Ospreys are doing well.

Wardens have been resurfacing the paths and improving the causeway. The team are looking at a new stewardship scheme, and the Management Plan runs out at the end of December, so a new one is in development. The team have had to do a lot of work on interpreting the management of ash dieback in the high risk visitor zones.

The team are currently recruiting a new estate worker, and 2 new staff have joined the team recently.

10.3 South Lakeland District Council Planning Dept / Strategy Team

Elizabeth Scott-Clarke explained that SLDC are undertaking a review of their district-wide Local Plan. The next stage of the Plan review is the Issues and Options stage. The Council intend to publicly consult on an Issues and Options report and supporting documents this summer. The review will include district-wide policies relating to the AONB but will not review the AONB DPD itself. The review of the AONB Development Strategy and current allocations will take place through a future review of the AONB DPD.

10.4 Kendal Torchlight

Craig Russell is the Kendal Torchlight team leader – the event will be run on the 24th / 25th / 26th September this year. This year will be a big breakthrough year; the focus is on climate change and the parade is moving away from vehicles. This will likely be the

biggest community-based event in the area this year. The theme is 'Gardens of Delight'. Would be excellent to collaborate to highlight the Arnside & Silverdale AONB.

10.5 Cumbria County Council

Cllr Pete McSweeney updated that there is a current consultation for Arnside on traffic proposals – including a blanket 20mph speed limit in Arnside. Planting of non-native species is a common issue for the SLDC planning committee; laurel is commonly proposed. There has been a recent concern about felling of Ash dieback at Hazelslack Caravan Park; discussions following on from this has created native planting long term.

10.6 Environment Agency

Andrew Frankish discussed the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan – to improve water quality in SSSIs; this involves writing to 200 householders whose properties are within the catchment for Leighton Moss and Haweswater with guidance about septic tank maintenance.

10.7 Friends of the Lake District & Campaign to Protect Rural England

Andrew Tate discussed planning applications in gardens etc. There is enthusiasm for rewilding gardens and there might be an opportunity for educational messaging to contact people planting outside the planning process.

The planning for the Dark Skies Festival for Friends of the Lake District is underway, there is lots of enthusiasm around this topic, and opportunities for the AONB. They are also working with Keep Britain Tidy on visitor motivations – key findings so far suggest that it is important to get messages to people before they reach the site. CH asked if any findings could be circulated as they might help inform the Visitor Management & Access Group's work.

ACTION: Andrew Tate to circulate results of Keep Britain Tidy project.

10.8 National Trust

Sam Stalker gave an update, reporting that the Trust have had to fell a large number of ash trees due to ash dieback. The Trust now have countryside stewardship schemes on several sites, including putting in new fencing to allow grazing in a different way. The visitor management group is really appreciated by the team. They have established a wetland at Park End, and now have their first booming bittern. The Park End project was originally delivered through the Nature Improvement Area project, which the AONB Team led.

11. Update from the National Association for AONBS (inc. National Arts Strategy)

11.1 The National Association have an important role at a national level. They have been working with DEFRA on the response to the Glover Review. This work has gone on intensively during the pandemic. We are expecting the government to release a statement with the ministerial response to the Glover Review in May or June.

11.2 LB shared the national Arts Strategy initiative (circulated). The objective is to connect people to nature through the arts and culture. We have been asked to sign up to the national strategy.

ACTION: Committee members asked to indicate their support for the Arts Strategy.

11.3 Climate change is an enormous issue affecting us all and will have a profound effect on the biodiversity of our area – the NAAONB is pulling together a project looking at the role of National Landscapes in impacting climate change (particularly with COP26 this year), which we intend to contribute to. This will generate evidence base about what AONBs can do to tackle climate change and develop objectives which can be used in future management plans.

12. AOB

12.1 Cllr June Greenwell gave an update on progress on local government re-organisation. Consultations have gone out and results are expected shortly. It would be useful to contact parish councils in the AONB to suggest a briefing meeting to consider what issues may affect the AONB if we do get a Bay Unitary Authority. LB confirmed AONB happy to facilitate this if required.

12.2 Cllr Jim Ferguson raised that the AONB has a lot of traffic problems. Silverdale Parish Council has worked with Lancaster City Council and police on traffic management. LB has stated that this is an issue that needs to be tackled in partnership; it has been raised in the Visitor and Access Management Group and will be a topic for discussion for them. Cllr Jim Ferguson also raised the issue of the impact of a 20mph speed limit if there is no monitoring.

12.3 Jarrod Sneyd raised that streetlamps are an issue for dark skies and energy usage. LB noted that the AONB Team are working with Lancaster University on several research projects including one looking at the effect of light pollution on bats, and also a project to develop design guidance to minimise light pollution.

13. Dates for your diary / dates of future meetings

13.1 Next Executive Committee Meeting will be at 2pm on the 20th October 2021. Depending on Covid 19 restrictions this may or may not be in person. Further dates will be circulated.

Table of Actions

Action	Assigned to	Deadline
Investigate options for signposting to/from Warton Crag.	AONB Team	October 2021
Contact Jarrod Sneyd re: Farming and Land Management Group.	LB	May 2021
Include Safety on the Sands messaging in AONB comms.	CH	June 2021
Contact AONB team if they are interested in being involved in the Farming in Protected Landscapes panel.	ALL	May 2021
Andrew Tate to circulate results of Keep Britain Tidy project.	Andrew Tate	When Available
Committee members asked to indicate their support for the Arts Strategy.	Committee Members	June 2021