

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

20/10/2021

2pm

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
Ann Kitchen	Bittern Community Interest Company Chair
Brian Jones	User Group Rep, Ramblers
Cllr Helen Chaffey	SLDC Councillor (Arnside & Milnthorpe Ward) & Arnside Parish Councillor
Fiona Allan	AONB Landscape Trust Chair
Andrew Frankish	Environment Officer, Environment Agency
Jarrold Sneyd	Senior Site Manager, RSPB Leighton Moss & Morecambe Bay
Cllr Jim Ferguson	Silverdale Parish Councillor
Julian Oston	Landowner/farmer representative, Dallam Tower Estate
Cllr Keith Halford	Arnside Parish Councillor
Glen Swainson	Senior Reserves Manager, Natural England
Cllr Pete McSweeney	Cumbria County Councillor (Kent Estuary)

In Attendance:

Lucy Barron LB	AONB Manager
Sue Hunter SH	AONB Officer
Dougie Watson DW	AONB Countryside Officer
Helen Rawlinson HR	AONB Countryside Officer (until 3.30pm)
Caroline Howard CH	AONB Comms and Funding Officer (Minutes, from 2.45pm)
Richard Park RP	AONB Farming in Protected Landscape Officer
Richard Camp	Planning Policy Officer Lancaster City Council
Damian Law	South Lakeland District Council
Elliott Lorimer	Lancashire County Council
Rachel Whaley	Cumbria County Council

Apologies:

Maggie Robinson	Team Leader, South Cumbria, Natural England
Representative	Friends of the Lake District & Campaign to Protect Rural England, Cumbria
Sam Stalker	Lead Ranger, South East Cumbria & Morecambe Bay, National Trust
Cllr Kevin Briggs	Warton Parish Councillor
Cllr Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Councillor

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone, and each person present introduced themselves. Apologies received are listed above.
2. **Presentation: Farming in Protected Landscapes programme**
 - 2.1 RP delivered a presentation on the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme. RP gave an introduction to the national programme, what it means and how it's being administered by Arnsdale and Silverdale. The presentation included a very brief summary of the applications the team are currently hoping to progress under the programme. Elliott Lorimer enquired about numbers of applications, as Forest of Bowland AONB have had a very large number of applicants thus far. Julian Oston mentioned that a tenant from the Dallam Estate has been in touch but has not heard back – RP will follow this up. The value of projects compared to more beneficial ongoing management was discussed.
3. **Annual re-endorsement of User Groups, Business and Farming representatives**
 - 3.1 No members stepping down, and all committee representatives proposed by Cllr Pete McSweeney, seconded by Fiona Allan.
4. **Election of Chair and Vice Chairs**
 - 4.1 Cllr Brian Meakin would like to step down as chair in the future to ensure good practice but as no members have yet expressed an interest to take over is prepared to continue for another year.
 - 4.2 Cllr Pete McSweeney and Ann Kitchen are the Vice Chairs and agreed to continue for another year.
 - 4.3 Chair and Vice Chairs duly elected; Keith Halford proposed, Julian Oston seconded. Anyone interested in the roles for the future are asked to contact LB to discuss.
5. **Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting (28/4/2021)**
 - 5.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on the 28th April 2021.
6. **Matters Arising**
 - 6.1 Under item 4.1: To ensure a legacy following on from the Gateway project, the AONB Team has put a formal funded agreement together with Lancashire County Council to take over the day-to-day management of the Warton Crag Quarry and Car Park. This work includes management of the Friends of Warton Crag Volunteer group who are taking a more active role in managing the site. The Local Nature Reserve Warden is delivering this work.
 - 6.2 Under item 4.2: Waymarking to Warton Crag from other parts of the AONB is being considered as part of the wider AONB waymarking project, which is continuing well.
 - 6.3 Under item 7.2: Ann Kitchen raised the issue of safety on the sands which is still a significant concern and asked what more can be done in terms of signage. LB responded that the AONB Team have consistently included safety on the sands messaging in communications and indicated that there was already a great deal of safety signage in key locations and that there was a need to find new and creative ways to get the message across. Jarrod Sneyd raised recreational disturbance of birdlife on the estuary as a related concern. It was agreed that there was an opportunity to work together to see how these multiple concerns could be best managed.

ACTION: CH to investigate Safety on the Sands and Recreational Disturbance as Interpretation Topics for the AONB Team.

7. AONB Team work programme update (report circulated)

- 7.1** We have welcomed Richard Park and Tonia Armer as the new Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers.
- 7.2** Helen Rawlinson has been working on the Meadow Makers Project and has made significant progress during the first half of this financial year: 16 meadows have been surveyed in the AONB and a range of sites have had some kind of management or enhancement. Some meadows are acting as donor sites and seed has been harvested by hand, brush harvester or vacuum harvester, and spread on receptor sites. This project is having a significant impact on meadow restoration in the AONB.
- 7.3** AONB Volunteer programme has re-started and has been undertaking many activities:
- Tree nursery
 - Dry stone walling
 - Litter picks
 - Planting for the Bee on the Verge project

There are 25 new volunteers since March, and induction sessions are now being held as group inductions monthly. Thanks were given for the work that goes into the volunteer programme. Cllr Helen Chaffey specifically thanked the AONB Team for their support and facilitation with the roadside verges project in Arnside.

8. Planning work programme update (report circulated)

- 8.1** SH discussed the Planning work programme report. 97 planning applications have been reviewed and 31 responses submitted. Policy consultation responses have also submitted for the Lancaster City Council Climate Emergency Review of the Local Plan, the Lancaster District Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Lakeland Local Plan Review – Issues and Options Consultation.
- SH raised that light pollution is a priority for the AONB Team due to the impact on climate and dark skies.

9. Communications work programme update (report circulated)

- 9.1** LB / CH discussed the Communications work programme report.
- 9.2** In addition, an update was given on the Walks for All programme, which has re-started and is offering a welcome opportunity for people who would like to access the countryside in a supported way, in particular those living with dementia and their carers, to get back out and about and enjoy the AONB.
- 9.3** Wheelchair accessibility within the AONB was discussed; work has been done in Trowbarrow LNR and a new tramper route can be taken through the AONB. There has also been additional accessibility information added to the AONB website.

10. AONB Budget 2020/21 (outturn) and 2021/22 (revised) (report circulated)

- 10.1** CH discussed the Budget report. Some slight changes have been made in reporting to show the Countryside Stewardship income more clearly. A Farming in Protected Landscapes budget for 2021/22 was also reported.
- 10.2** Ann Kitchen enquired why electricity & misc. energy charges increased substantially between the 20/21 outturn and 21/22 budget. CH explained this was due to the lower office costs whilst staff were working from home during Government Covid restrictions, reducing electricity use (computers) and the boiler / woodburner use in the office.

11. Update on Glover Review and the National Association for AONBs

- 11.1** LB gave a brief overview of the Glover Review and current progress. A National Contact Group with representatives from AONBs and National Parks is working with Defra to advise on the response to the review. LB was on the Contact Group, but has now stepped

down to allow another AONB Manager to participate. The Government is expected to give a response to the Glover Review within the next few months. As soon as further information becomes available LB will update the Committee.

- 11.2** Howard Davies – the Chief Exec of the NAAONBs has left (September 2021) – the new Chief Exec is John Watkins, who started in Summer 2021. John has a background working for the Welsh Government. The NAAONB is firmly focussed on getting the best possible outcome for AONBs across the country following on from the Glover Review. Their national role is vital in supporting AONB Partnerships across the country.

12. Brief updates from partners

Lancashire County Council

Elliott Lorimer

The Lancashire County Council Environment and Climate Programme includes a close look at woodland creation and tree planting and how that is delivered across the county, and also work on Nature Recovery. This includes surveying Local Wildlife Sites in preparation for development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy as well as covering a broad range of other work streams including energy efficiency etc. Further information about the Lancashire County Council Environment and Climate Programme is available here: [Report to Cabinet or Cabinet Committee \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/cabinet/cabinet-committee-reports/).

Cumbria County Council

Cllr Pete McSweeney

South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council will cease to exist on the 31st March 2023 due to local government reorganisation; the new shadow authority will be created in May 2022. Arnside & Silverdale AONB currently receive funding from both; so will need to progress discussions to ensure that the funding continues.

ACTION: A joint discussion between CCC, LCoC, SLDC and LCiC on future funding for the AONB Partnership.

Work is also underway considering light pollution. Could the AONB deliver a campaign to promote dark skies to residents?

LB highlighted that we have been working with Lancaster University on a project about dark skies within the AONB and are hoping that this will enable more data to be collected and interpreted/ presented in new ways.

ACTION: CH to investigate options for interpreting dark skies / light pollution issues to residents.

Cumbria County Council

Rachel Whaley

As far as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is concerned the Council is waiting to see what guidelines are developed by Defra for the national roll-out. As a Pilot area we anticipate having some further discussion with Defra about this once they have considered the response to the current public consultation on the LNRS process.

We now have a new Environment and Sustainability Lead Officer in post (Hannah Girvan) who will be overseeing the increasing range of environmental and biodiversity related projects the county council and other partners are getting involved in. Additional posts are also being recruited to support delivery of this work including some funded as part of the Planting for Pollinators project working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust: [Jobs | Cumbria Wildlife Trust](https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/jobs/).

Lancaster City Council

Richard Camp

There are two consultations running at the moment: Climate Emergency Local Plan and Green/Blue Infrastructure Strategy Review. Initial consultations have finished; the documents will be amended accordingly and consultation on final versions will take place in the new year. Green & Blue Infrastructure data gathering is ongoing and the Council will liaise with AONB team.

South Lakeland District Council

Damian Law

Current consultation on Local Plan Issues and Options – the consultation is ongoing, due to finish at the end of October, but may be extended. SLDC holding public drop in events at present. [Please see website for details.](#)

Cumbria LPA has had discussions with Friends of the Lake District about a possible Dark Skies Supplementary Planning Document to cover the county.

Environment Agency

Andrew Frankish

Discussed the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan – to improve water quality in the Leighton Moss and Haweswater catchment; the letters to householders whose properties are within the catchment providing guidance on septic tank maintenance are still to be sent. Following a more detailed examination of the data, the estimate for the number of households in the catchment is now up to 350 (from 200).

Landscape Trust

Fiona Allan

The Landscape Trust committee have been significantly impacted by the Covid 19 restrictions, but activities are starting up again now. The Trust are working with the AONB and BCCIC on a collaborative events programme. An observatory has been suggested for the Coldwell Meadow reserve, supporting the dark skies interest. Opening the reserves to a wider range of people is an increasing priority and this period of reflection has helped to identify new activities and priorities. The Landscape Trust needs people to step up and volunteer to join the committee.

RSPB Leighton Moss

Jarrold Sneyd

There were 6 male bitterns booming this year and 4 nests. This is great progress. The RSPB have been developing a rejuvenated hydrological reed bed cell; this should create further suitable habitat for Bitterns.

There has been a high amount of recreational disturbance on the Morecambe Bay Special Protection Area within the AONB.

Water quality data being collected at Leighton Moss is broadly mirroring monitoring work being done by the EA.

Membership recruitment at Leighton Moss has skyrocketed post covid; along with the percentage of non-members visiting the reserve – potentially indicating new audiences within the AONB. Does the Eden project progress require a focus group for the AONB to consider the potential impact and opportunity of new audiences?

The RSPB has a strategic shift which prioritises working in collaboration on conservation projects.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Jim Ferguson: Traffic in Silverdale remains a problem.

This may be a concern with the Eden project. LB has raised this with the senior management at Lancaster City Council. CH stated that the AONB comms have shifted to try to include public transport for locations advertised on the website and walking routes.

14. Dates for your diary / dates of future meetings

14.1 Executive Committee Meetings in 2022 will be 23rd March 2022 & 19th October 2022 2pm – 4pm.

Depending on Covid 19 restrictions this may or may not be in person. Further information will be circulated closer to the time.

Table of Actions

Action	Assigned to	Deadline
Investigate Safety on the Sands and Recreational Disturbance as Interpretation Topics for the AONB team.	CH	Next Meeting
Organise a joint discussion between CCC, LCoC, SLDC and LCiC on funding.	LB	Next Meeting
Investigate options for interpreting dark skies / light pollution issues to residents.	CH	Next Meeting