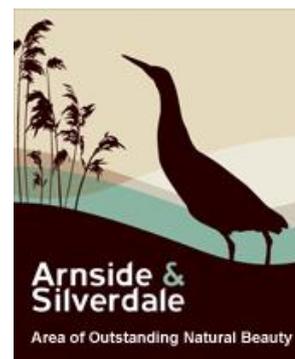


Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership



AONB Executive Committee meeting

2pm, 7th June 2023, Storth Village Hall

In Attendance

Cllr Brian Meakin (Chair), Beetham Parish Council

Cllr Helen Chaffey (Vice-Chair), Westmorland & Furness Council

Ann Kitchen, BCCIC – Business Rep

Brian Jones, Ramblers – User Group Rep

Julian Oston, Dallam Tower Estate – Landowner Rep

Mike Warren, Landscape Trust

Simon Waller, CLA

Jim Turner, Natural England

Elliott Lorimer, Lancashire County Council – Officer Rep

Damian Law, Westmorland & Furness Council – Officer Rep

Lucy Barron, AONB Manager, AONB Partnership Team

Sue Hunter, AONB Officer, AONB Partnership Team

Dougie Watson, Countryside Officer, AONB Partnership Team

Caroline Howard, Funding & Communications Officer (mins), AONB Partnership Team

Apologies

Fiona Allan, Landscape Trust

Sam Stalker, National Trust

Dan Taylor, National Trust

Jarrold Sneyd, RSPB Leighton Moss

Cllr Keith Reed, Silverdale Parish Council

Cllr Steve Porter, Arnside Parish Council

Laura Partington, Friends of the Lake District

Gemma Wren, Nature's Gems – Business Rep

Adam Briggs – NFU Rep (alternate) / Farming in Protected Landscapes Local Assessment Panel Chair

Richard Camp, Lancaster City Council – Officer Rep

Rachel Whaley, Westmorland & Furness Council – Officer Rep (represented by Damien Law)

Helen Rawlinson, Countryside Officer, AONB Partnership Team

Richard Park, Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, AONB Partnership Team

Tonia Armer, Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, AONB Partnership Team
Belinda Barclay, Local Nature Reserves Warden, AONB Partnership Team
Julia Seir, Wildflower Nursery Coordinator, AONB Partnership Team

Not in Attendance

Sarah Wilson, Natural England
Liz Cheslett-Davey, Environment Agency
Cllr Philippa Williamson, Lancashire County Council
David Harpley, Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Cllr Kevin Briggs, Warton Parish Council
Cllr Mike Macklin, Yealand Redmayne Parish Council
Cllr Angela Metcalfe, Yealand Conyers Parish Council
Ailsa Gibson, User Group Rep – Bridleways Association
NFU Rep – Joan Jackson
Circulation – CLA, Libby Bateman

Vacant

Lancaster City Council Representative

Minutes

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions, including committee changes

- 1.1 Cllr Brian Meakin opened the meeting and gave updates on committee changes, giving thanks to all those who have stepped down and a welcome to the new committee members:
- 1.1.1 Jim Turner has replaced Glen Swainson as a representative for Natural England.
 - 1.1.2 Lancaster City Council are yet to appoint a new representative following the local elections in May. June Greenwell, the previous representative, did not stand as a councillor in these elections. We expect to be informed shortly who the new representative will be.
 - 1.1.3 Due to local government reorganisation the previous representative for Cumbria County Council, Pete McSweeney, has left the committee. Cllr Helen Chaffey has been confirmed as the new member representative for Westmorland and Furness Council and is happy to remain Vice Chair. Rachel Whaley and Damian Law will remain officer representatives.
 - 1.1.4 Cllr Keith Reed has replaced Jim Ferguson for Silverdale Parish Council, but has had to send apologies today.
 - 1.1.5 Cllr Angela Metcalfe has replaced Jane Panton for Yealand Conyers Parish Council.
 - 1.1.6 Gemma Wren is the new business representative, but has had to send apologies today.
 - 1.1.7 Fiona Allan has temporarily stepped down from her role within the Landscape Trust and is deputised by Mike Warren at this meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 19th October 2022

- 2.1 Brian Jones raised a correction – Ailsa Gibson is a representative of the Bridleways Association not the Ramblers Association.

2.2 Ann Kitchen proposed the minutes (with the above correction) be accepted as a true record, Julian Oston seconded.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Lucy Barron gave the following updates on matters arising from the last meeting:

3.1.1 An advert was shared for a new business representative and Gemma Wren of Nature's Gems Wildlife Tours has joined the committee as a business representative.

3.1.2 The Cumbria County Council contribution was secured with a modest increase in 2022/23.

3.1.3 Jack Ellerby delivered a talk on dark skies as a *Talking the Landscape* Event in Arnside in April 2023.

3.1.4 Caroline Howard organised a meeting with Beth Fox from RSPB Leighton Moss, and also hosted events co-ordination meeting with various organisations. This has resulted in the development of a more collaborative events programme.

3.1.5 Lucy Barron contacted the Rural Watch scheme and had a meeting with the organiser.

4. AONB Budget 2022/23 and 2023/24 (report circulated)

4.1 Lucy Barron and Caroline Howard gave a brief overview of the budget report.

4.2 Ann Kitchen asked about the increase in the water rates. Rates have risen, but the billing dates in 22/23 also meant that there was higher expenditure than usual – this should not be the case going forward. This is also the budget that covers the water filters for the office, which can be an irregular cost.

4.3 The core contribution from Westmorland and Furness Council was discussed. The AONB Partnership requested a core contribution of £32,000, which initially appeared to have been confirmed and was therefore included in the budgets. There has been correspondence this morning that this amount may not be correct. This will be clarified and the final adjustment will be confirmed at the next meeting.

4.4 A grant fund to be administered by Westmorland and Furness Council has been launched which will be available for climate and nature projects. Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership could bid for projects. Cllr Helen Chaffey will be chairing the Locality Board for South Lakeland, which also has some funding available. Julian Oston asked if Westmorland and Furness Council might also be administering the local Rural Prosperity Fund – this has been launched in the Lancaster District, and further details will be found and circulated regarding the fund within Westmorland and Furness.

4.5 Elliott Lorimer is currently negotiating a potential increase in the core contribution from Lancashire County Council; this may not impact the 23/24 financial year, but will hopefully impact from 2024/5 onwards.

4.6 The 2023/34 budget was proposed to be accepted by Ann Kitchen, and seconded by Julian Oston.

5. Presentation: National Landscapes – national rebranding progress update

5.1 Lucy Barron gave a presentation introducing the new National Landscape branding, with an update on the current progress.

Within the National Landscapes Review (Glover et al., 2019) it was recognised that the AONB brand does not have brand recognition widely in the UK.

The NAAONB have been working with Defra on the rebranding of AONBs nationally. This has resulted in a proposal for the re-naming of AONBs.

5.2 The rebranding presentation was discussed by the committee, and feedback given to the AONB Partnership team to pass on to the NAAONB.

6. AONB Team work programme update (report circulated)

6.1 Lucy Barron gave a brief overview of the AONB work programme, highlighting in particular:

6.1.1 The AONB Nature Recovery Plan which the AONB Partnership have been working on; a consultation draft is anticipated in Summer 2023. Simon Waller asked how this would be circulated and presented and how specific it would be – Lucy Barron responded that this will include some level of specificity. Julian Oston asked how this would work with CS – Lucy Barron responded that CS would be a key delivery mechanism.

6.1.2 We have negotiated a new Countryside Stewardship Agreement for the two Local Nature Reserves which will run from 2023-27.

6.1.3 The volunteer programme continues to attract new volunteers and deliver significant outputs which deliver the AONB Management Plan.

6.1.4 The events programme and engagement projects have engaged new audiences.

6.1.5 The Bittern Sustainable Schools Programme, delivered with the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company has been an effective tool for engaging local schools and delivering a range of low carbon and nature projects.

7. Planning work programme update (report circulated)

7.1 Sue Hunter gave an update on the planning work programme. There has been a substantial increase in planning applications and the number of responses.

7.2 During the Westmorland and Furness Council validation checklist process we made some comments highlighting the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Planning Document. We highlighted the priority habitats in the AONB, light pollution and the AS08 design policy in particular.

7.3 Damian Law raised that consideration of the extent of any review of the AONB DPD will begin within the next year as it will be five years in March since its adoption. Westmorland and Furness Council are currently considering future local plan needs for the authority and it cannot be confirmed how the current South Lakeland Local Plan review will be taken forward in this context. Planning for the Arnside & Silverdale AONB area within the Westmorland & Furness Council area comes under South Lakeland Local area committee which Cllr Helen Chaffey sits on.

8 Farming in Protected Landscapes programme update (report circulated)

8.1 Lucy Barron highlighted the circulated report and confirmed that the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme has been extended for another year to 2024/25 and that the allocation for 2023/24 has also been increased.

9 Brief updates from partners

- 9.1 Beetham Parish Council (Cllr Brian Meakin) – The main activity of the parish council recently has been responding to the planning application at Sandside; current understanding is that this is still awaiting a decision.
- 9.2 Lancashire County Council (Elliott Lorimer) – There is now a dedicated officer for working on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire. Current timeframe is expected to be over the next 18 months.
- 9.3 Westmorland & Furness Council (Damian Law) – There will be a team within Westmorland and Furness Council preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cumbria, working on behalf of Cumberland Council also.
- 9.4 Landscape Trust (Mike Warren) – The Landscape Trust reserves are doing well. The events programme is being delivered in partnership with the AONB team. The Landscape Trust are still in need of volunteers for the administrative activities.
- 9.5 Dallam Tower Estate (Julian Oston) – Funded via the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme fencing was constructed on Hazelslack marsh to allow cattle grazing to take place, and this year there have been redshank, oystercatchers and curlews nesting. A great success in just one year!
- 9.6 Natural England (Jim Turner) – Glen has been moved to another position in Natural England for a year. Jim is managing reserves across a wide area, including Gait Barrows NNR. The cow barn has been refurbished, the disabled access car park has been refurbished, the dormouse reintroduction has exceeded expectations. The site has had a couple of improved seasons for the Duke of Burgundy after reduced numbers in recent years.

10 Update from National Association for AONBs

- 10.1 Lucy Barron gave an update on the NAAONB. The association now have an expanded team with a Nature Recovery Officer and other staff working on recommendations coming out of the National Landscapes Review.

11 Any Other Business

- 11.1 Ann Kitchen discussed the newly formed AONB Botanical Surveying Project and proposed that a collaborative programme for biological record management be investigated.

Following the recent Nature Recovery Plan meeting a group of local botanists formed a new group with the aims to:

- 1) produce a set of typical species representing 11 habitat types (on average 5 species per habitat type) and monitor a fixed number of colonies/individual plants for each species. A max of 25 locations for any species spread over the AONB but probably less for most species. These would act as "canaries in the mine" - indicator species for overall habitat monitoring.
- 2) take a small number of sites, either small areas or linear walks along a footpath, that we have historical data for and see what was present in 2014, is present now and what is present in 5 years' time.

- 3) for those species that are at risk, encourage local landowners to host colonies grown from local seeds/spores and also to look out for them on their own land. The new AONB growing area could form a key part of this.

There is a lack of a consistent recording system, the county records are significantly backlogged, and biological record data are not widely available or shared effectively. Jarrod Sneyd at RSPB Leighton Moss is trialling Coreo, a biological record management programme. This programme is not free but is useable and might be fit for the purpose of collating biological records for the AONB.

Lucy Barron suggested that an action moving forward from this meeting should be to arrange a meeting to discuss options and resourcing. Jim Turner stated that Natural England would be interested in becoming involved and might have historical data to upload. Julian Oston stated that the Dallam Tower Estate might be interested, linked to their Countryside Stewardship Agreement.

ACTION: Meeting to further discuss biological recording software options; how it can be taken forward and resourced.

- 11.2 Sue Hunter showed the group a copy of the Geological Story of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB, which is now available for sale from the AONB Office.

- 11.2.1 The AONB Partnership team are in discussions with RSPB Leighton Moss to stock the booklet. Mike Warren suggested the team contact Steve Benner from the Landscape Trust to see if it could be stocked in the Landscape Trust online store. Brian Meakin suggested that the Storth Community Shop might be able to stock it.

12 Dates for your diary and dates of future meetings

Next Meeting - 2pm 18th October 2023

Spring 2024 Meeting - 2pm 22nd May 2024

Table of Actions

Action	Allocated to	Deadline
Organise a meeting to further discuss biological recording software options; how it can be taken forward and resourced.	LB	Next Meeting