



Dorset AONB Partnership  
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## Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Tues 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019

### Draft minutes

#### Present:

**Chairman:** Jim White (also Dorset Local Nature Partnership - LNP)

#### Dorset Council Members:

Cllr Roland Tarr

#### Sector representatives:

Rupert Best & Will Langer (Country land and Business Association - CLA), Hannah Jefferson (National Trust), Brian Bleese (DWT), Robert Lasseter (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Janet Page (DAPTC), Jeremy Pope (DNHAS), Lucy Culkin (JCT)

#### Defra family officers:

Jane Wright (NE), Ali Maxwell (EA)

#### Local Authority officers:

Hilary Jordan, Ken Buchan

**DAONB Team:** Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Sue Dampney (Learning, Culture & Communications Officer), Jill Hearing (Reconnecting the Ridgeway Project Officer), Sarah Barber (Landscape Planning Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

**Invitees in attendance:** Cllr Mike Dyer (Dorset Council Environment EAP Chairman), Gen Crisford (NT), Anthony Littlechild (Dorset Council)

#### Apologies:

Cllr Ray Bryan & Cllr Jane Somper (Dorset Council) Louise Stratton (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Ian Alexander (Natural England), Luke Rake (KMC), Maria Clarke (Dorset LNP), Ross Simonds (Eng. Heritage), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink Coordinator), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager).

#### Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our new board members in attendance for the first time – Jeremy Pope, Lucy Culkin & Ali Maxwell and our guests.

#### 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

#### 2. 2-Minute partner updates

**Janet Page (DAPTC)** – Big issue from T&PC's is the Climate Emergency. Many towns are declaring their own Climate Emergency and are working hard to support DC's declaration.

**Cllr Tarr** – Covers the Winterborne / Broadmayne Ward. Currently working on the funding issues relationship between the Parishes and DC.

**Ali Maxwell (EA)** – Dual role at the moment, working as Catchment Co-ordinator (until Jan/Feb) & Natural Fund Management for the area. Worked with Ian Rees on the Asker project and looking at how to expand on this work in the future.

**Jane Wright (NE)** – There has been a recent restructure and Dorset is now covered by the Wessex team (S’Set, Wilts, Avon & Dorset), managed in Dorset by Nikki Hiorns. Recently co-hosted (with DAONB) the first meeting of the Dorset Downs & Vales Conservation Forum, also working on stewardships, aftercare visits and working with NFU/CLA on Nutrient Management Scheme.

**Hannah Jefferson (NT)** – In September 2020 will hold Southwest Outdoor Festival at Golden Cap (Filcombe Farm). Hoping partners will be involved. Within the team they are recruiting for a Volunteering Development Officer to support volunteers & diversify their offer. The Hillforts project has been very successful and they are applying for Lottery Funding to extend the project.

**Lucy Culkin (JCT)** – New Chief Executive of the Trust. Busy summer working on the new Partnership Plan, consultation taken place over the summer and will be published end of March 2020. Then they will be working on the themes coming out of the plan.

**Ken Buchan (DC)** Executive Advisory Panels being set up to advise on key issues – Climate Emergency, Highways etc. EAP is not a decision-making panel but will advise cabinet & portfolio holders. Consider how environmental practices cut through the whole of Dorset Council, and a review of the Council’s green assets is being undertaken.

**Will Langer (CLA)** – Nationally lobbying about Brexit & creating a new brand ‘Rural Powerhouse’ – trying to unite rural stakeholders. Locally they are working on the Poole Nutrient Trading Schemes with NFU. Hustings taking place throughout the SouthWest.

**Anthony Littlechild (DC)** – Sustainability Manager for DC, his work covers developing an approach to the Climate Emergency and Low Carbon Dorset. Presenting to PB on this later in the meeting.

**Brian Bleese (DWT)** – Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve official opening postponed until after the election for reasons of purdah. Commended the work of NE and the NT. Poole harbour clam/cockle fishery-sustainable fishing station has good results. Wild Brownsea - partnership with NT, investing £1.3m on visitor access to the island. Reviewing strategic plan. Hustings tonight in West Dorset with Transition Town Bridport.

**Cllr Mike Dyer (DC)** - Chair of new Environment EAP. First meeting is set for January. There are 6 councillors on the panel. First priority will be to set the Terms of Reference.

**Hilary Jordan (DC)** – Service Manager for Spatial Planning. Currently preparing the new Local Plan for the whole of Dorset.

**Robert Lasseter (NFU)** – Reported there is good support from farmers for the Poole Harbour Nutrient Trading Scheme. Commended the AONB for their work on this & ELMS. Reported the widely-held view that Brexit will cause the biggest change to farming since the abolition of the Corn Laws and will have dramatic effects on the landscape.

**Jeremy Pope (DNHAS)** – Dorset County Museum is undergoing a £15m redevelopment. Natural History is now being taken more seriously. There will be 5 new galleries – Natural Dorset (exploring 250 million years of history), People’s Dorset, Writers’ Dorset, Artists and a temporary exhibition gallery.

**Rupert Best (CLA)** - It has been an outstanding year for the apple harvest – not sure why. There is a project to re-discover the lost varieties of cider making apples and create a unique Dorset taste (using DNA analysis). At Portland Port new power station plans have been announced (from refuse). Cruise ships continue to feed into visitor numbers (60/70k) which could feed into the efforts of AONB.

**Luke Rake (KMC) - via Robert Lasseter** – the Governors have instructed the team to go carbon neutral by 2025. They will be the first school to do so. Staff and pupils in support and working on this. Great opportunity for engaging youngsters in going carbon neutral and ties into the aims of the AONB.

**Jim White (LNP)** – Health & well-being agenda and doing lots of work with the AONB team.

### **3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan**

TM presented on AONB team delivery.

Team members updated the board additionally: -

**Sue Dampney** reported that following on from the success of the National Moment and the Landscapes for Life Festival there are a series of events planned over the coming months to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of the Dorset AONB, including:

January – launch of photo competition

February – ‘Have a Go’ events

March – Council of All Beings

April - Talking Tent (conversations will be recorded and archived)

May – Love Maps - mapping where people love to visit

June – ‘60 Days Out’ guide to be published

August – Photo exhibition at Durlston Country Park featuring photos from the competition.

**Ian Rees** reported on the improvements being made to the River Asker. Working in conjunction with the EA & local community, volunteer activities have been carried out to enhance the habitat, including silt traps, opening up the canopy and the removal of Himalayan Balsam. 8 volunteers have been trained to monitor the fly life in the river to determine the water quality. Further funding has been secured and he is looking at how this can be rolled out to other rivers.

**Julie Hammon** reported that following on from the success of the Picnic in the Park events which were arranged jointly with LNP / Active Dorset they are developing a Health & Nature Alliance to promote joined up working between health and well-being sectors. The first meeting was held last week.

Discussion points (in relation to National Grid Visual Impact Provision (undergrounding) and Landscape Enhancement Initiative):

- a. **RL** commented that only a small amount of money is being received by the AONB from the National Grid Community Fund and asked could larger a larger sum be applied for? **TM** commented that it is a small fund with strict parameters & tightly regulated. In a few years’ time, there may not be a cap and he will apply for a higher sum.
- b. **JP** asked about the archaeological finds on the Ridgeway as a consequence of the undergrounding work. **TM** replied that interesting burial sites & monuments have been discovered, along with flints and other artefacts. These will be deposited in the County Museum.
- c. **R Tarr** reported that there is a visitors centre but it won’t be open to the public (appointments only) and that road closures (due to the removal of pylons) will be posted on the DC website.

**RESOLUTION: The Board approved and noted the progress made on delivering the Management Plan 2014-2019.**

#### **4. Purbeck Beaver Reintroduction Feasibility Study – Gen Crisford (NT)**

Presentation can be found [here](#)

GC explained how the NT in Purbeck and a group of local partners are working on a project aiming to re-introduce Eurasian beavers back into the wild in Purbeck. She explained how we are behind in doing this compared to other countries and how although there have been other trials, this would be the first licensed wild introduction in England, as opposed to fenced projects.

She gave information about the species, its behaviour and consequential impacts - in particular with regard to positive flood management, increased bio-diversity and ecotourism. She also explained how some of the unwanted impacts could be managed & mitigated. Work is being undertaken with Exeter University to ensure that the location chosen for the re-introduction will be the best fit for the beaver, at present Littlesea, Rempstone Estate and Snag Valley are under consideration, with more checks continuing to be done on the ground. At present a feasibility study is being undertaken (consultation with stakeholders), following this a Task Group will be formed to create a Management Plan with the involvement of the wider community.

There were no questions from board members.

JW thanked GC for her very informative presentation.

**RESOLUTION: The Board supports the aims and ambitions of the feasibility phase of this project.**

#### **5. Dorset Council Climate Emergency Declaration – Anthony Littlechild**

Presentation can be found [here](#)

AL explained how the Council’s carbon emissions are decreasing, but there is a lot of work to be done, not just by DC but by everybody. The aim is to get to net 0% and although DC has not set a target date to reach this, the

national target is 2050. His team will be looking at ways this can be achieved as quickly as possible and will produce an Action Plan. An EAP has been set up which will meet once a month, working in conjunction with the Technical Officer groups. From this a Draft Action Plan will be ready Spring 2020 and will go out for consultation. Alongside this they will be looking at 'quick wins' that can be implemented straight away.

Questions/comments from the board:

- a. **WL** commented that if we are to go electric we need the necessary infrastructure to be able to do so.
- b. **JW** said we need to look at Mineral Resource Plan.  
**AL** replied that work will be taking place to look at the infrastructure issues, the grid network and renewable energy production.
- c. **R Tarr** said that in Norway, electric cars more common, but they have found better public transport is key.
- d. **JP** commented that in the recent DC newsletter there was no mention of community transport. DC did a hatchet job on public transport but towns are creating their own. **AL** replied that this is now being looked at through a different lens. **JP** said they should consult the communities that have implemented their own public transport schemes.
- e. **RBest** commented that there is probably not enough power nationally. **AL** said this will need a clear steer from national level. Lobbying is required from LA's to affect national policy.
- f. **AM** said future planning and flooding needs to be considered to make sure it is a resilient as possible.
- g. **WL** if changing diets we need to think about where our food comes from – consider the carbon footprint & use local produce.
- h. **BB** commented that a green infrastructure will need to be implemented.
- i. **JW** thanked **AL** for his presentation and said that he is very grateful that the Council has taken bold steps in its leadership to deal with this.

## **RESOLUTION:**

- 1. The Board declares a climate and ecological emergency.**
- 2. The Board endorses the team's engagement with Dorset Council in its response, particularly using the AONB Partnership's advocacy role, and in-house expertise in planning and coordinating mitigatory and adaptive nature recovery and natural climate solutions.**

## **6. NAAONB Colchester Declaration**

TM summarised the report circulated with the board papers. At the NAAONB's conference this year a joint declaration was formed by the AONB's, as a consequence of the Glover Review, to make a broad commitment to nature recovery in the landscape and to combat climate change.

Of the targets which have been set (see section 6.4 of the report) the following steps are being taken by the Dorset AONB:

- a. – By July 2020

Emotional engagement projects being delivered as part of the AONB's 60<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

Nature Recovery Plan: Farming for the Nation – ELMS Test/Trial will have taken place.

- b. By 2024

We have commenced taking an ecosystems service approach and will continue to learn and refine this.

Implementing targets for climate change is a challenge, the challenge is measurable targets - but we have good carbon sink in the landscape (below ground / wood) and will continue to work on this.

- c. By 3030

Species recovery - we will be looking at an endangered species we can collectively champion and extending trees into the wider landscape/tree crops and agro-forestry.

The declaration to some extent throws down the gauntlet to the government to provide the power and resources among the AONB Family and all others engaged in this field to make these targets achievable.

TM is active on the national steering group and is in particular championing regenerative agriculture and natural climate solutions in terms of nature-based carbon drawdown into soils and terrestrial biomass.

There were no questions/comments from board members

**RESOLUTION:** The Board notes the ambition and targets, and supports the team's engagement in delivering this ambition.

## 7. Glover Review of Protected Landscapes

TM summarised the report circulated in the board papers. He explained that the Glover Review has received a strongly positive response following its publication. It has been acknowledged by its authors that there are areas it didn't cover (notably coastal issues and issues of cultural/built heritage). Both the main political parties have expressed their support for the findings of the review.

Key challenges have come from the review which TM has summarised in the Appendix – These include:

- Nature Recovery
- Relevance to society – See [YouTube video](#)
- Planning policies stifling development
- Collaboration and partnership working
- Issues around making AONBs / National Parks equal

Questions/comments from the board:

- a. **KB** – reported that DC cabinet has discussed NP proposal and will keep things under review until the government responds to the Glover Review. Concerns raised around Dorset AONB becoming a National Park and the impact of this on the new Local Plan, but this will go ahead as the NP proposal is a long way off yet.
- b. **Cllr Dyer** – said that it cannot be assessed as yet until we know the bigger picture.
- c. **JP** – commented that DAONB is effective as it is and expressed fears that a new NP would increase bureaucracy.
- d. **JWh** – said it will increase resources.
- e. **WL** – said lots of the Glover Review is good. Not keen on DAONB becoming a NP, but increased funding to DAONB desirable.
- f. **R Tarr** – commented that within the NPPF both AONBs and NPs have the same level of protection, so conversion to NP should not represent an increase in restrictions. Converting to a NP would bring a financial boost, not necessarily another layer of bureaucracy. NP's bring a rural tourism benefit.
- g. **RL** – said the Glover Review has lots to offer us – a Ranger service and landscape scale environmental work, to bring individual farmers together. Colchester Declaration and Environmental Emergency Declaration not working fast enough. Agree with having one name, 'National Landscapes', to soften borders and join the land up.
- h. **JWh** – said he agrees with softening boundaries/ joining up a wider geographical area and calling it a National Landscape.
- i. **JP** – commented that the role of tomorrow's museum – can illuminate the work that is being done and signpost people to assist. Supports more Coastal & Countryside Rangers. The maps & guides currently on offer are very useful.
- j. **SBarber** – said 20 years ago there was a very good Ranger service, but the service was cut.
- k. **RBest** – supports the view that there is a distinction between the very landscapes of NPs and AONBs. In the Lake District it is a different environment. Believe that farmers would appreciate the advice from an increased Ranger service.

**RESOLUTION:** The board

- a. Welcomes the review publication and its findings
- b. Endorses the response made by the National Association for AONBs
- c. Delegated the production of a local response to the AONB Team Manager (to be signed off by steering group) to add context to the joint interim statement with East Devon AONB.

## **8. Dorset AONB 2020-2021 Budget Outline**

TM presented the paper.

**RESOLUTION – The board approved the proposed budget and funding priorities for the next financial year.**

## **9. Any Other Business**

**IR** – Ecosystem Approach questions will be circulated via email. Please respond to it from the point of view of your organisation.

**TM** – CPRE have requested representation on the board. **RBest** queried if they were a good fit. All agreed they would be a good fit. **TM** to invite them to appoint a representative.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**VENUE: TBC**

If you wish to have items added to the agenda for that meeting, please ensure suggestions are sent to Tom Munro [tom.munro@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:tom.munro@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by 5pm Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 so they may be considered by the AONB Steering Group.