



Dorset
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

Dorset AONB Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
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Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, Thursday 25th May 2023

At Cricket Club, Dorchester

Draft minutes

Organisation	Representative	Status	2023-05
Independent chairman	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Piers Brown	Voting member	
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	
Forestry Commission	Roly Boughton	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	
National Farmers' Union	Robert Lasseter	Voting member	
Natural England	Robert Lloyd	Voting member	Apologies
Natural England	Tania Carvisiglia	Voting member	Present
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Vacant	Voting member	
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Apologies
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Imogen Davenport	Attending member	Present
Dorset Council	Giles Nicholson	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	Mark Burton	Supporting Officer	
National Farmers' Union	Gemma Harvey	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Neil Wedge	Supporting Officer	
LAF	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present

DAONB Team: Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Sue Dampney (Culture, Communications & Learning Officer), Rachel Janes (FIPL Officer), Pia Lindstrom (FIPL Support Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Imogen Davenport who will be board representative for Dorset Wildlife Trust, Tania Carvisiglia for Natural England and Pia Lindstrom who has joined the AONB team as the Farming in Protected Landscapes Support Officer.

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in November 2022 were agreed as a true record.

No matters arising.

2. Partners' 90 second updates

- a. GDickinson (CPRE): Reported concern that a battery storage plant application has been submitted in Chickerell and an action group has been set up as a consequence. RBrown: We're aware and engaged in the application.
- b. PBowyer (DAPTC): Some TCs have undertaken footpath reviews. Concern raised over high fire risk esp. Corfe / Studland areas and how LA is dealing with this. Concern in communities over the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the disparity in communities between well off & less well off, leading to fractured communities. PSterling: We can help with visitor management issues, DC campaigns to highlight fire risks have had excellent results.
- c. TCarvisiglia (NE): Extension of Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve completed. Peat Discovery grant work has been completed. All Countryside Stewardship applications have been completed. Wareham Arc project and Landscape Recovery Pilot Scheme both progressing well. The Upper Axe project is in development.
- d. JPope (Dorset Museum): Income from museum has grown, in part. due to weddings & use of Roman Town House. The Askerswell hoard has been secured for the museum, no news on N-Grid finds. TMunro: 5 years of cataloguing the finds to go.
- e. LRake (LEP/KMC): LEP undergoing radical changes and now has a business engagement role, thus may need to rethink role on this board. KMC - higher education / university centre will be offering degree courses from September and looking for businesses and partners to join the centre. LNP – doing good work and welcome partners involvement.
- f. GNicholson (DC) Restructure underway to re-align functions of the team. DAONB included but not affected. A name change from Coast & Green Spaces to Environment is likely. Extra resource in place to get the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) completed and implemented. No ROWIP officer in post at the moment, recruitment likely later in the year. Rename of South West Coast Path to 'English Coast Path – King Charles III National Trail' has occurred. Work on Climate & Ecological emergency actions continues – all DC vehicles & some tools are now electric. Busy with 'Cut & Collect' verge management programme. Successful campaign to stop disposable BBQ sales has seen many large suppliers signed up & BBQs off shelves & recycled. Important to help prevent wildfires. Cllr Andrew Kirby is now the lead member for the natural environment, supporting Cllr Ray Bryan.
- g. CllrRTarr: Expressed thanks to Cllr Ray Bryan & DC Rangers for implementation of new cycle route in the Winterbourne Valley, especially important to the students at Thomas Hardy School. N-Grid have felled the last pylon. Archaeological finds will come to Dorset Museum in several years' time. Concern over Whitcombe Stables planning application. Contact Cllr Tarr directly for further information
- h. IDavenport (DWT): DWT are the lead for 3 farm clusters in DAONB, with support from FiPL, many interesting findings. Farmer led work underway in Upper Frome area, in particular the Hook catchment, hoping to extend this further in conjunction with Wessex Water. Brownsea Island lookout and welcome area are being made more accessible. Student trainee programme has seen 30 trainees come through scheme and hope this will continue and encourage more people to take up a career in the sector. The Peat Partnership project has submitted a funding bid to convert feasibility study into action, including several sites in AONB
- i. JDavis (Local Access Forum) concentrating on no use cars and shared routes. Awaiting to comment on ROWIP.

- j. GHarvey (NFU) More clarity out over ELMS and advising farmers on this. Future Farm Resilience Fund is available for further support. Farm to Fork summit was a result of NFU lobbying to improve resilience in food production. Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme now closed for applications, huge uptake in the scheme and gained attention from across the country. New livestock worrying campaign launched with NE. Shareable resources available include [Shaun the Sheep Campaign](#) and [How to keep your dog and livestock safe in the countryside \(countrysideonline.co.uk\)](#). In process of setting up a Farm Tenancy Forum.

3. Sue Dampney: AONB equality, diversity and inclusion – Statement of Intent

Link to presentation [here](#)

Inspired by the Glover Review and last years' National Conference of AONBs, which had an EDI focus, the team have taken proactive steps to become more inclusive in our work. We have developed a new EDI statement of intent and identified 5 key steps which we will undertake to steer us both strategically and practically in this area.

These key steps are

- Embed EDI work into our Management Plan, due to be reviewed in 2024, through the inclusion of more diverse voices in its development phase via the Steering Group.
- Reach new and diverse audiences and build new relationships through our project work. We have started to do this with our new projects 'Grace the Space' & 'Flavours'
- Review how we communicate with audiences of all backgrounds, increasing our communication channels, and undertaking a website review to make sure our messaging & imagery is welcoming to all audiences.
- On going team training

Comments:

- a. CllrRTarr: Very interested in this. Bollywood at Beach have been very successful. SDampney: We are linking in with this year's Bollywood event at Studland and through our new project 'Flavours.'
- b. PSterling: How do we define who that audience is? Local people can be harder to reach than visitors. SDampney: Marilyn Croft (NE) has helped us to prioritise. We are targeting young people, older people with long term heath disabilities and ethnically diverse groups. We're making time to have conversations with these groups so as to co-create activities together and build relationships.
- c. PSterling: Using our landscape to help improve people's health and wellbeing is also important. CllrRTarr: I agree, in particular through inexpensive methods of access.
- d. SDampney: Do bear in mind joining the steering group for our Management Plan review.
- e. LRake: We are not a very diverse group, worth widening reach.
- f. CllrRTarr: County Hospital a good place to start as a diverse workplace.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves the statement of intent and endorses the actions described.

4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery report. This report is compiled under a new format. To make it more digestible it has been split up in line with DEFRA priorities, with more detail found in the appendix. Feedback on the new format is welcomed. Team members updated the board additionally:

a. Rachel Janes - Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

Rachel shared an example of a Place funded FiPL project. In 2023/23 Magdalen Farm were awarded an £80k grant to help fund residential farm stays to people from diverse backgrounds across the country. 900 people have benefitted in total, some coming from very deprived areas, refugees, victims of trafficking, people suffering with mental health conditions. This equates to £90 per person which is exceptional value. The feedback received was very positive and can be shared upon request.

The FiPL scheme has been extended to 2025, with a further investment of £1million. We understand government ambition is to make it a bespoke part of ELMS.

b. Steph Aburrow – Stepping into Nature

Link to presentation [here](#)

The Stepping into Nature project funding has now come to an end. Steph presented the project's achievements, legacy and gave an insight into future plans.

There is an array of resources which will continue to be available from the AONB website (including history walks, audiobooks and Your Seasons of Stories resources). '[Picnic in the Parks](#)' their well-being from home website which is packed with self-led resources to help people to access nature, will remain live.

The project delivered dementia training, opened up networking opportunities amongst professionals, funded a Barrier Research project and supported fun 'Give Nature a Go' activities. Through its Nature, Art and Well-being grant fund, projects to the value of £220k have been completed successfully.

Jules & Steph are currently in the development phase for an exciting new project called Nature Buddies, which aims to partner up a volunteer with a person who could benefit from nature.

c. Sally King – Defra Access Projects

Link to presentation [here](#)

The Defra Access Fund was used to fund works to improve pathways around Happy Island, Bridport and in West Bay. These pathways will allow easier accessibility all year round and help reduce traffic.

Sally successfully co-ordinated these works, despite the bad weather and short turnaround time, using local, trusted contractors.

This year we are expecting £120k from the Defra Access Improvement. Let Sally know if you have any access improvement project ideas for her to consider.

d. Caroline Richards - Dorset Food & Drink update

Link to presentation [here](#)

Dorset Food & Drink (DF&D) currently have 125 members. Resulting from the pandemic, in 2022, a change in strategy was needed - membership fees were put on hold and the organisation split from the PR/marketing consultancy company commissioned to run the membership and marketing side of the business. With a new flat fee membership rate just launched, members continue to benefit from expertise, networking, and the opportunity to attend 4 key events throughout the year, alongside various markets organised by DF&D. This is an exciting new era, with a streamlined, focused offer to celebrate local products and producers and explore opportunities for a more diverse and inclusive future.

In January 2023 DF&D were awarded a FiPL grant for a new project 'Flavours' which aims to bring people from diverse groups and backgrounds together to enjoy, benefit and experience the AONB, using food as a leveller. This new project is currently in development and work is being done to identify suitable host farms, working alongside Dorset Race Equality Council and Grace the Space, to build trust and understanding with the communities they want to reach out to. This will culminate with a food and drink themed event at [Inside Out Dorset festival](#), Wild Woodbury between 15th – 24th September 2023.

Comments:

a. CllrRTarr: concerns over sewage overflow in Winterbourne Abbas and Martinstown. Met with Wessex Water and considering the use of reed beds as a solution. IRees: There are some examples in Wiltshire. PSterling: It's complicated, there's not a single solution.

b. PSterling: Congratulated the team on the work they have achieved, in particular added value through the various initiatives highlighted in this report.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.

5. 2022-2023 AONB Partnership accounts

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

a. LRake: Is this for the period April 2022 – March 2023? Acronyms used might not be recognised by all.

TMunro: yes, it covers that period – and acronyms will be spelled out in the annual review

RESOLUTION:

The Board approve the partnership accounts for 2022/2023.

6. Sue Dampney - National Landscapes Re-branding

Link to presentation [here](#)

Sue is sitting on the steering group leading the rebrand work taking place across the AONB family to 'National Landscapes.' Nice & Serious (design consultancy) have been working with the National Association on the new branding. Logos for all AONBs are currently in design phase. Financial support from Defra to support the rollout is expected to be announced soon. All AONBs are aiming to make the change at the same time, likely to be winter 2023/spring 2024.

Comments:

- a. PBowyer: Can you explain what Glover meant by AONB being 'exclusive.' TMunro: Focus groups reported that AONB name was not very visible or understood amongst the general public, hence the need for a rebrand/relaunch.
- b. GDickinson: Will you still have the same level of protection? TMunro: Yes, nothing in law changes - we will remain a Protected landscape.
- c. GNicholson: The new name, with strapline is a bit of a mouthful. SDampney: We will predominantly use Dorset National Landscape. GNicholson: Will all AONBs use it? SDampney: Yes, this will be rolled out across the AONB family, it will give us a collective voice, so better to go along with this.

7. Any other business

- a. LRake: South West LEPs doing a joint piece of work under the [Great South West](#) banner and I'm chairing the rural food, farming and fisheries group, taking a proposal to government.
- b. PBowyer: Is the council leading public discussion on transport, in particular to north/south and east/west of county? CllrRTarr: There's an idea to divert traffic through Yeovil and avoid Golden Cap, potential 20% reduction in traffic. No decisions on this yet, it will come out for discussion in next few years. PBowyer: Is that the same with linking us to the M4? CllrRTarr: I believe so. RBrown: Highways England Strategic study have been in contact with us to notify us about the study area, Dorset coast a key feature in connectivity. CllrRTarr: Implications are that Dorset Council would pay for a road between Dorchester and Lyme Regis so might not be keen on it.
- c. TMunro: AONB Management Plan review timeline update – we have been given an extension and may extend to December 2025 to allow for delayed NE guidance to be considered. In any case we will prepare an interim statement and bring it to the next meeting for your decision. In Autumn we will run Annual Forums to help us start drawing up priorities for the plan.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of next meetings

	Winter	Spring (tbc)
AONB Steering Group	17 th October 2023	18 th April 2024
AONB Partnership Board	21 st November 2023	23 rd May 2024

If you wish to have items added to the agenda for the Board, please ensure suggestions are sent to [Tom Munro](#), [Kate Townsend](#) or the [AONB Chairman](#) at least 7 days before the date of the Steering Group meeting which precedes the Board meeting, so they may be considered for timetabling by the that group.