



Dorset

Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

Dorset AONB Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
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Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, Thursday 21st November 2023

At Cricket Club, Dorchester

Draft minutes

Organisation	Representative	Status	2023-11
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	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Piers Brown	Voting member	
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
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	Present
Natural England	Robert Lloyd	Voting member	Apologies
Natural England	Tania Carvisiglia	Voting member	
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Vacant	Voting member	
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	
Dorset Wildlife Trust	Imogen Davenport	Attending member	Apologies
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	Present
National Farmers' Union	Gemma Harvey	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Neil Wedge	Supporting Officer	Apologies
LAF	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present

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

Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in May 2023 were agreed as a true record.

No matters arising.

Partners' 90 second updates

- a. JPope (DNHAS): New director at the museum who has put in place a new marketing strategy, already seeing an increase in footfall as a result.
- b. CllrRTarr (DC): At Parish level the ROW law is being discussed; many believe it's outdated and a new Countryside Act is needed.
- c. CllrCTurner (DAPTC): Agree with Cllr Tarr, it needs to be redesigned. Encouraging developers to be green by design and install electric charging points / solar panels etc.
- d. GDickinson (CPRE): Kate Adie has been enrolled as the new President of CPRE. Encouraging roof top solar as does not impact countryside. Incinerator appeal coming up and battery storage issue continues.
- e. WBond (DLNP): With basic payments declining, farmers feeling the pinch and may need help from the AONB to help them diversify. LNRS / nitrate mitigation may provide an income but there's no certainty.
- f. MBurton (CLA): More engagement in the Poole Harbour nutrient mitigation scheme. Ensuring all parties talking to each other & sharing resources. [Rock Review](#) of recommendations to Defra around tenant farming may lead to changes in the sector.
- g. CllrRBryan (DC): In past 3 weeks won 5 awards around the climate agenda, an example of councils punching above weight despite limited resources. Recently secured additional DfT funds for highways, but there are testing times ahead, and an election coming.
- h. RLasseter (NFU): Seeing an increase in land abandonment and decreasing production levels in this country (pigs, eggs, salad and cereals). Re KMC, need to develop a long-term vision for a land-based education college. [Dorset College](#) would be a merger between Kingston Maurwood & Weymouth College (talks ongoing).
- i. HJefferson (NT): Team dealing with the aftermath of the recent storms in particular at Burton Bradstock, Cogden and Ringstead. In general visitor numbers are down across the southwest, both in terms of visitors and stays and the Trust predict that this trend will continue next year and is a reflection of the cost-of-living crisis. Team has a new office at Kingston Maurwood college.
- j. JDavis (LAF): Looking into shared use issues along ROW so that maximum number of users can access the countryside. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) due in the new year and will comment on this once published.
- k. GNicholson (DC): ROWIP will be published next year and includes practical ways of implementation. Working with Buglife as a leader to advise on increasing biodiversity of motorway verges on a national level. Landscape Recovery application bid in for Portland, expecting to hear outcome in next few weeks. Strong support DAONB and for FiPL projects & outcomes which could be rolled out nationally.

Comments:

CllrRTarr: Attended meetings with National Highways on managing verges for wildlife, flooding & drainage issues.

PSterling: Also attended meetings with National Highways and advised on their Biodiversity and Net Zero policy e.g. not using topsoil.

JPope: BT Openreach wanted to install a new pole-mounted line on the verges around West Compton Hill but are re-routing thanks to intervention from the AONB team & local opposition.

CllrRBryan: The Greenspaces team are working on a Hedge-to-Hedge review and a new policy on weed maintenance on edge of tarmac roads.

GDickinson: Concerned over land abandonment and importing food. Solar panels being installed on the ground needs to change.

CllrCTurner: There should be legislation to ensure that new builds have solar panels installed.
CllrRBryan: Please feed these comments into the Local Plan when out for consultation. Believe government guidance on sustainable development is due imminently.

1. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery report. In addition, team members updated the board.

a. Rachel Janes: Farming in Protected Landscapes

Link to presentation [here](#)

Rachel outlined some of the positive outcomes of the Farming in Protected Landscape programme so far, giving examples of projects which have benefitted Climate, Nature, People and Place across the Dorset AONB. These include innovative projects such as funding for a compost turner to improve soil health/reduce reliance on artificial fertiliser, a brush harvester for wild seed collection, a hemp trial to investigate if this could be a climate change resilient crop, funding for new audience farm visits and restoration work to Holditch Tower, removing it from the Buildings at Risk register. In total 124 projects have been awarded funding across the Dorset AONB. The scheme (funded by Defra) has been extended to run until March 2025 (4 years total), with a total grant funding pot of £2.18 million.

Comments:

- a. MBurton: The finding of research projects funded by FiPL could be of national interest and benefit. Findings need to be circulated nationally.
- b. CllrCTurner: Does the compost turner support no till farming? RJ: Yes, as it limits soil disturbance, feeds it with nutrients and improves soil health.
- c. CllrRBryan: Proud of team for the work they've done on this and want it to continue. Please promote the success to MP Simon Hoare who now has a ministerial position.
- d. WBond: Sit on the local panel and find it very interesting and rewarding. Good panel debate.
- e. GNicholson: Some of the compost is made from arisings from roadside verge management.
- f. CllrRBryan: A challenge for the FiPL team - please set up a webinar for Members to let them know how good this scheme is.
- g. TMunro: 15% of farmers across the AONB engaged with the project, will be 20% by the end.
- h. CllrCTurner: Benefits of the compost turner are that it will also use less fuel / miles and avoid use of huge tractors.
- i. GNicholson: Another benefit is the reduction in artificial fertilisers being used.
- j. RLasseter: It's a success because AONB team appointed good people who get to know local area. Just like in times gone by and that is the key.
- k. HJefferson: Could this be replicated nationally? TM: Yes
- l. JPope: I chaired England Farming & Food partnership in 2000s. Getting farmers working in collaboration is very good. It worked well at that time and generated income.

Published after the board meeting: [case study](#) on compost turner project.

b. Caroline Richards – Flavours: project update

Link to presentation [here](#)

Caroline highlighted the rich, positive and joyful experiences undertaken by participants during farm visits as part of the Flavours project. These visits, organised primarily for new & diverse audiences, have taken place at farms and country parks across the Dorset & Cranborne Chase AONB and have opened up opportunities for conversation, collaboration and a deeper understanding of cultures both for participants and organisers as they have explored and enjoyed both the landscape and food together.

Comments:

- a. CllrRTarr: This work is so important and helps people to live peacefully together.

c. Kate Townsend – AONB Photo Competition

Link to presentation [here](#)

Kate presented the winning entries from the recent AONB photo competition to the board. There will be an exhibition of the photos in the springtime at Durlston Castle, Swanage. More details to follow

RESOLUTION:

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

2. 2022/2023 AONB Partnership accounts

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

- a) CllrRBryan: Advise Tom to speak to Steven Ford at DC re. funding.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approve the proposed budget and funding priorities for 2024-25.

3. AONB Management Plan Review Process

TM presented the paper. He advised he will be establishing a Management Plan Review Group and will be looking for board members and other experts to sit on this. Some additional online partnership meetings may be needed during the process. The recent Annual Forums were a good starting point for conversations with the public around the review.

Comments:

- a) WBond: Advise caution over treating all consultee feedback equally at Stage 4 of the process.
- b) HJefferson: The Trust has recently published its 10-year strategy. They undertook a large amount of consultation, there may be useful learning points about the process for the AONB team.
- c) CllrRTarr: In general the public are tired of consultations. Check what else is on the DC calendar for this period to avoid clashes. TM: we could extend into 2025 if needs be.
- d) PSterling: Consider reviewing the panel procedure. TM: I will seek advice from the Steering Group and come back with a proposal.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approve the proposed intention to review, the timeline and broad outline of the process.

4. National Landscapes Re-branding

The rebrand launch takes place tomorrow when we will be known as Dorset National Landscape. This is an opportunity for us as a landscape family to restate and clarify our purposes and intent as landscapes for everyone and for nature.

Alongside this, the briefing note (appendix 2) explains how the duty of regard to AONBs is changing and strengthening on the back of the government amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. In the New Year we expect to have more information from government around this and we will circulate guidance to partners. We hope to receive additional funding from Defra to back up the extra responsibilities.

5. Any other business

- a) MBurton: Could there be a dial in facility for these meetings as it's not always easy to make them in person?
- b) CllrRBryan: Would this work legally if making decisions?
- c) TM: advisory group only so yes it could be an option. We will look into it.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of next meetings

	Spring	Winter (tbc)
AONB Steering Group	18 th April 2024	17 th October 2024
AONB Partnership Board	16 th May 2024	21 st November 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.