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NP15 1GA

30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## Notice of meeting:

### Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 6th November, 2017 at 2.00 pm,  
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.

### AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence and introductions.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 10
4.	Public Question Time.	
5.	Local Authority contributions and Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021.	11 - 14
6.	Wye Valley River Festival 2018.	15 - 18
7.	Future Landscapes Wales and Governance Review.	19 - 22
8.	Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).	23 - 24
9.	AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback.	25 - 26
10.	NAAONB update.	27 - 28
11.	AONB / Partner progress.	29 - 32
11.1.	Lydbrook Bridge.	
11.2.	mindSCAPE Conference.	
11.3.	Youth Rangers.	

<b>11.4.</b>	<b>Venison Processing and Marketing Feasibility Study.</b>	
<b>11.5.</b>	<b>Wales National Parks (NPs) Seminar and hosting BBNPA event / visit 2018.</b>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting.</b></p> <p>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.</p> <p>Schedule of Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meetings for 2018/19: all commencing at 2.00pm in Coleford.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018  5<sup>th</sup> November 2018  4<sup>th</sup> March 2019</p>	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

**Local Authority Members with Voting Powers**

**Gloucestershire:**

T. Hale  
P. Molyneux

**Herefordshire:**

P. Cutter  
B. Durkin  
J. Hardwick  
E.J. Swinglehurst

**Monmouthshire:**

L. Jones  
D. Dovey  
M. Lane  
A.E. Webb

**Forest of Dean:**

G. Davies  
B. Hogan

**Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers**

Councillor B. Evans – Gloucestershire Association of Town / Parish Councils  
R. Gething – Herefordshire Association Local Councils  
Councillor G. Powell – One Voice Wales

**Co-opted Members with Voting Powers**

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire  
B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire  
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire  
R. Goodwin – Country Land and Business Association  
M. Price – National Farmers Union  
L. Taylor – The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

**Co-opted Members without Voting Powers**

C. Barron – Wye Valley Society  
S. Dereham – River Wye Preservation Trust  
A. Lee – Recreation Sector  
D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector  
A. Nixon – Local Wildlife Trusts  
D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

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### **Welsh Language**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Sustainable and Resilient Communities

### Outcomes we are working towards

#### **Nobody Is Left Behind**

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

#### **People Are Confident, Capable and Involved**

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

#### **Our County Thrives**

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

### Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

### Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,  
3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor: P. Cutter (Chair)

**Elected Members (with voting powers)**

**Monmouthshire County Council**

Councillors: D. Dovey, M. Lane and A. Webb

**Gloucestershire County Council**

Councillor P. Molyneux

**Herefordshire Council**

Councillors: J. Hardwick and E. Swinglehurst

**Forest of Dean District Council**

Councillors: G. Davies and B. Hogan

**Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers**

Herefordshire Association of Local Councils - Mr. R. Gething

**Co-opted Members (with voting powers)**

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire - Mr. A. Thomas

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire - Mr. B. Nash

National Farmers Union - Mr. M. Price

**Co-opted Members (without voting powers)**

Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron

River Wye Preservation Trust - Mr. S. Dereham

National Farmers Union Wales - Mr. D. Price

**Technical Advice Officers**

Wye Valley AONB Manager - Mr. A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. M. Lewis

Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. R. Williams

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor B. Durkin, Dr. G. Peterken, Mr. D. Broadbent, Mr. R. Niblett, Ms. D. Griffiths  
and Councillor L. Taylor.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm**

### **1. Election of Chair**

We elected Councillor P. Cutter as Chair.

### **2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

We appointed Councillor A. Webb as Vice-Chair.

### **3. Introductions and new Members**

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair welcomed Councillor M. Lane to his first meeting of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

The following Councillors declared interests as Planning Committee Members of their respective authorities in matters that may arise relating to development control issues:

Councillor P. Cutter  
Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst  
Councillor J. Hardwick  
Councillor A. Webb

Councillor P. Cutter declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of Agenda item 6 – Public Question Time, as solar panels were discussed under this item. Councillor Cutter has business interests relating to solar panels.

### **5. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair. In doing so, it was noted that Simon Dereham had not been present at the meeting and had submitted his apologies.

It was also noted that Simon Dereham was no longer the representative for the Country Land and Business Association serving on the Committee. However, he remained as the River Wye Preservation Trust representative serving on this Committee for the rest of this year.

### **6. Public Question Time**

Mr. A. Thomas raised the following issues:

#### **Solar Panels**

It was considered that the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) needed to be more involved in advising local authorities within the AONB regarding the style of solar panels on properties. It was noted that there were various types of solar panels available on the



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market and some had prominent bright edging. The JAC should be advising local authorities accordingly to encourage the use of the least obtrusive style which would be in keeping with the surrounding area.

#### **Bigswear Bridge**

Concern was expressed that the aesthetics of the bridge were being compromised. For example:

- Too much vegetative growth on the bridge. Saplings and weeds are growing from cracks on the bridge and require cutting back.
- An adjacent monitoring station has been installed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Concern was expressed that additional furniture added to the bridge and its environs were not taking into account the detrimental effect that these additions were having on the bridge itself and on the surrounding area.
- Previously a BT Openreach cabinet has been replaced with a much larger cabinet. No consultation has been undertaken with the AONB unit.
- It was considered that the Joint Advisory Committee should be advising the relevant authorities to address these issues.

The Chair thanked Mr. Thomas for raising these issues.

We resolved that the AONB Manager would liaise with the planning authorities with a view to producing a report on solar panels to be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee.

#### **7. Annual Report 2016/17**

We received the annual reports for 2016/17 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the contracted Planning consultants for the AONB Unit.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- High standards of achievement were maintained despite staffing issues and illness continuing to hamper AONB Unit activity throughout the year. However, these issues have now been resolved.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department was contracted to provide advice to the AONB Unit on strategic planning documents and development issues, and where necessary prepare appropriate responses for the AONB Unit. The AONB Manager informed the Committee that good advice is received from Worcestershire County Council and the process is working well.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm

- The expectation that the AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, comments on Planning Applications and pre-application enquiries has continued during the year.

We resolved to welcome the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2016/17.

#### **8. Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, Future Landscapes Wales**

We received the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales report and commitment to addressing the 'first steps to realising the proposition'.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales continues to build momentum.
- On 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017, Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Lord Elis-Thomas published *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, The Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales*.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously in support of the vital role that AONBs & National Parks provide to Wales and endorsed the publication of the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report.
- The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, will meet again on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to take forward the priorities identified in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Welsh Government launched a consultation document *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, which includes a chapter on Designated Landscapes. The consultation closes on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
- Actions that the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and AONB Unit can take to help implement *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, are tabulated in the report and include adopting 'Our Vision', the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'.
- Further assessment of what local actions are needed to realise the Proposition in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* will be reported back to the JAC.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The AONB Manager will be meeting with the Working Group later in the month with a view to taking this matter forward.

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### Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm

- This has been a beneficial process in Wales with the AONBs and the National Parks working more closely together.
- An issue relating to excessive phosphates in the rivers Wye and Lugg was raised. Following discussion it was noted that Herefordshire Council, Farm Herefordshire, the Wye and Usk Foundation and the Wye Catchment Partnership are addressing the issue. The AONB Manager would refer this matter to the Wye and Usk Foundation with a view to obtaining further information.

We resolved:

- (i) to welcome the motion supported by the National Assembly for Wales on the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales*.
- (ii) to endorse the relevant actions in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and address the 'first steps to realising the Proposition' under 'Delivering for Wales' and 'Fit for Purpose' including adopting the Vision, the 'Principles of good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'.

#### **9. AONB Partnership Study Tour - 22nd September 2017**

We received a report regarding the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- This year the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be dispatched shortly.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 16<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017, which is the third year of this week promoting and celebrating AONBs.
- Perseverance over a joint initiative with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) has yet to bear fruit. However, representation from the Wye Valley AONB Partnership has been requested at the Welsh National Parks' Seminar in Brecon on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

We resolved to:

- (i) note the date of Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 for the Study Tour.

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(ii) encourage a good attendance on the Tour.

#### 10. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory

We received a report regarding progress and forthcoming events generated through the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Gloucestershire part of the Wye Valley AONB contains some of the best preserved and most dramatic sections of Offa's Dyke, the eighth century earthwork believed to be commissioned by the Offa, King of the Mercians, to delineate the boundary between the 'Anglo-Saxon' kingdom of Mercia and the 'British' kingdoms of eastern Wales.
- The inaugural Offa's Dyke Collaboratory workshop, held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017, was a great success with 45 attendees from across the country, academia and heritage management.
- Several further workshops and conferences are planned.
- Project proposals are also developing, including on and around the Lancaut peninsular with the landowner and the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 11. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

We received a report regarding the achievements of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2016/17 and forthcoming applications during 2017/18.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) of £55,000 in Wales was fully allocated in 2015/16 leveraging in £166,222.
- The Welsh Government has confirmed that the SDF for 2017/18 will remain at £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel meets on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to assess the next tranche of applications.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

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### **12. NAAONB update: Landscapes for Life Conference & Awards**

We received a report regarding the recent work of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) including the forthcoming Landscapes for Life Conference and Landscapes for Life Award.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) met with DEFRA Under Secretary of State, Lord Gardiner, after the General Election to discuss the role AONBs play in delivering the DEFRA agenda.
- The theme and dates for the national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is "Do Different – Leading, Sharing, Learning, Inspiring" on 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in Winchester.
- Three representatives from the AONB Partnership are attending the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference including Simon Dereham who is nominated for a Landscapes for Life Award.
- Outstanding Week 2017 is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Simon Dereham for the work that he has undertaken and congratulated him on receiving the Landscape for Life Award.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

### **13. AONB & Partner Progress**

We received a report regarding the activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:

- Welsh Government Access Grant.
- Wye Valley River Festival 2018.
- AONB Farming Awards.
- Roadside Verges.
- mindSCAPE.
- Youth Rangers.
- Wye-Being.
- The Ash Project.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Wye Valley AONB Access Grant 2016/17 has enabled the following improvements to be undertaken:
  - Fingerpost Replacement – 118 roadside way marker / finger posts at various locations across the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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- Resurfacing the Wye Valley Walk at Chepstow School - part of the route 355/P2 leading to Piercefield Woods which has suffered from repeated wash out due to drainage issues and 376 metres has been tarmacked to provide a long term solution.
- Resurfacing of Bridleway 382/119 at Whitelye – 146 metres of bridleway resurfaced to a 3 metre width. This bridleway link between unclassified roads was previously in a poor and boggy condition.
- Bridge replacement at Trellech – replacement of a 3 metre footbridge on footpath 382/161.
- Total costs incurred were £50,530 including project management costs. The grant of £48,500 received from Welsh Government was match funded by Monmouthshire County Council's Rights of Way budget.
- AONB Farming Awards 2017 – Coppet Hill Common Trust were the winners of the award with Gadr Farm, the runner up. Councillor Cutter presented the awards at the Monmouthshire Show on 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- The end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of Youth Rangers was marked with a summer camp on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017. Recruitment of the next cohort of Youth Rangers will commence in October 2017.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 14. Additional items raised

The Chair allowed for the following items of business to be considered:

##### **Wye Valley Walk**

An anomaly had been raised by Councillor Hogan regarding a section of the Wye Valley Walk at Lower Lydbrook bridge. The right of way is recognised as a public right of way within Herefordshire. However, this is currently not the case when it crosses the border into Gloucestershire.

We resolved that the AONB Manager liaises with Councillor Hogan and writes to Gloucestershire County Council to obtain a report regarding the feasibility study undertaken in respect of this matter.

##### **Overgrown hedges along the A466**

We resolved that the AONB Manager would investigate this matter with a view to identifying and liaising with landowners to encourage appropriate tree and hedge management within this area.

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday,  
3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm**

**15. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council, Coleford on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 2.00pm.

**The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.**

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES' CONTRIBUTIONS AND AONB MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING 2018 - 2021**

### ***Purpose***

To request contributions from the four constituent local authorities to the budget for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership for 2018/2019, 2019/20 and 2020/21 to be included in the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities for this period.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC

- A. request from the constituent local authorities the agreed financial contributions for the Wye Valley AONB for 2018/2019, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- B. encourages the constituent local authorities to renew the AONB Memorandum of Understanding for 2018 - 2021

### ***Key Issues***

- The AONB Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the AONB Partnership.
- The current MoU ends in March 2018 and the next version is proposed to run until 2021.
- Prior to the MoU the JAC annually recommended to the constituent local authorities the contribution required for the continued effective operation, management and governance of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- Gloucestershire County Council have already confirmed their financial contributions for the Wye Valley AONB until 2020/21. Other funding partners are requested to make similar 3 year commitments where possible.
- The contributions from the local authorities form the foundation to the budget managed by the AONB Unit.
- DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are not signatories to the MoU but are party to the negotiations and their funding offer letters are appended to the MoU. The DEFRA grant offer currently extends until 2020. NRW will issue a new offer in 2018.
- For every £1 of Local Authority contribution the AONB Unit has levered in over £8 on average in recent years.

### ***Reasons***

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides a framework for the delivery of duties and obligations in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) arising from

Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 including the operation and management of the AONB Partnership and the AONB Unit. The MoU is intended to give medium term security to the AONB Partnership and sets out a shared vision for, and commitment to, AONB management by the funding local authority partners. The MoU outlines the functions of the AONB Unit and the expectations on all parties to achieve the shared vision, which includes the understanding that:

- AONB management structures should be strongly supported by partners and relevant authorities.
- the statutory requirement to produce a Management Plan provides an important opportunity to strengthen partnerships and achieve better outcomes.
- security of funding and flexibility of funding for the AONB will deliver better outcomes.
- there should be a “can do” culture which is not risk-averse but where lessons from novel approaches are encouraged and learnt from, in both success and failure.
- monitoring of environmental outcomes is essential and needs to be undertaken to develop a sound, spatially-relevant evidence base.
- opportunities should be taken to maximise the synergies between the outcomes of the Management Plan with the plans of other Parties, and of the wider Protected Landscape network.

The MoU complements the JAC Agreement, which constitutes the JAC, signed between the four local authorities.

### *Implications*

The following Local Authority partner contributions are proposed for the MoU 2018-2021, with a 0% flat rate. They are based on land area in the AONB in an established historical formula. The local authorities retain the discretion to index link contributions, if or when appropriate.

<b>Funding Partner</b>	<i>2017/18</i>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Herefordshire Council	<i>£23,860</i>	£23,860	£23,860	£23,860
Monmouthshire County Council	<i>£15,716</i>	£15,716	£15,716	£15,716
Forest of Dean District Council	<i>£5,826</i>	£5,826	£5,826	£5,826
Gloucestershire County Council	<i>£3,600</i>	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600
<b>Total LA contributions</b>	<i>£49,002</i>	<b>£49,002</b>	<b>£49,002</b>	<b>£49,002</b>

The proposed base budget for the AONB Unit for 2018/19 is £285,725 (down from £317,538 in 2013/14 when the LA contribution was £73,414). The local authority contributions receive up to 75% match-funding for core AONB initiatives from DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The NRW grant was £52,210 in 2017/18 and they are currently working with their Finance and Partnership Funding colleagues on securing budgets for AONB funding and hope to have confirmation of arrangements in due course. DEFRA has provided a funding offer up until 2020 with £128,405 for 2018/19. The remainder of the Wye Valley AONB budget is made up from income from other sources.

During 2017/18 the AONB Unit has been managing partnership projects totalling £65,905 primarily funded from other sources. Projects include mindSCAPES, the Wye Valley River Festival (Research & Development), ex-LEMUR+ Surveyors contracts and the AONB Youth Rangers programme. These externally funded projects extend the work of the AONB Unit and allow project investment as well as some elements of cost recovery. The contracts for the two ex-LEMUR+ Surveyors are about to come to an end having been extended with funding from

Natural England and the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for project work on the Garren and Gamber brooks, works on Ross riverside with Ross Town Council and an options & opportunities assessment of views along the A466. The development and delivery of externally funded projects will continue into 2018/19 and beyond. In addition 2018 will see the delivery of the third Wye Valley River Festival with a budget of about £170,000. Over recent years for every £1 of Local Authority contributions the AONB Unit has levered in more than £8.

The AONB Unit is constantly reviewing the structure and delivery of services in the AONB alongside income streams. Two members of staff work reduced hours. However, without growth in core income on current projections the AONB Unit will need to downsize during 2019 from 5 core posts to 4. It is hoped that growth of core and project development will mitigate this change but the necessity of reduced staffing cannot be ruled out. The AONB Steering Group ensures that staff and resources are maximised and operational structures are fit for the future in the face of ongoing budgetary pressures. The focus remains on consolidating the activity of the core AONB Unit to maximise the leverage and spend on the delivery of initiatives that fulfil the statutory purpose of the AONB designation and benefit the landscape and local communities in the Wye Valley.

### ***Background***

Each Local Authority has a statutory Duty of Regard towards the purposes of AONBs under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. A considerable amount of the AONB Unit's core and project work (planning / promotion / advice / preparation & delivery of the Management Plan etc.) goes towards supporting each Local Authority in fulfilling its Duty of Regard. Through project delivery the AONB Unit also supports the Local Authorities' Statutory Duty for biodiversity under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2018

### *Purpose*

To inform members of the outline programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC welcomes the funding to date for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and the evolving programme.

### *Key Issues*

- The Wye Valley River Festival presents high quality, original art works in the landscape with an inspiring, collaborative & vibrant programme of unique, provocative & spectacular events. The Festival is led by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and contracted independent arts practitioners.
- Sufficient funding for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 to proceed has been secured from Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and several other sources (see table below).
- Additional funding applications are being submitted along with campaigns on sponsorship, advertising and sales planned for the remaining parts of the programme.
- The programme of events between 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018 is being finalised and is outlined below, based on the theme of 'Woods & Trees'.
- The future of the biennial Wye Valley River Festival is also being considered in the context of the three Festivals in 2014, 2016 & 2018.

### *Reasons*

In 2013 a six year Business Plan covered three biennial festivals of which the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is the last. The 2014 & 2016 Wye Valley River Festivals were recognised as successes, creating the opportunity to engage new audiences with the AONB's work and to broaden appreciation of the landscape. The JAC has previously recognised the value that this Festival and the arts have in helping deliver the AONB Management Plan by engaging people with their environment and the Special Qualities of the Wye Valley in a fresh way. The general aims and objectives of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 remain:

To celebrate nature, culture, landscape and life along the Wye Valley

- Create a high quality arts programme with artists to reflect the unique qualities of the area and its people, that brings communities together
- Increase participation in the arts and the AONB Partnership's work, building new audiences
- Invest in professional development for artists, enabling them to create work beyond their normal range and cultivating positive working partnerships and new collaborations
- Work with local partners, organisations and businesses and to provide a platform for local artists, groups and voluntary sector organisations

- Foster community cohesion, social and cultural capital between individuals, groups and communities, including new networks for artists within the region.
- Creatively engage schools and colleges and encourage volunteer involvement in the event organisation
- Encourage sponsorship, promotion and engagement of the event by local business
- Promote the profile of the Wye Valley as a premier destination, encouraging visitors to visit more frequently and stay longer, helping to support and develop cultural tourism in and for rural communities.
- Develop a sustainable, nationally recognised biennial Wye Valley River Festival that complements the areas and the AONB's purposes
- Increase awareness of the local and global conservation & environmental issues that affect the Wye Valley landscape
- Vigorously market and promote the Festival through social media and tourist and destination organisations to reach wider audiences and build the Festival profile.

### ***Implications***

In early 2017 the Research and Development (R&D) process elaborated on the theme of 'Woods & Trees' for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 with various partners, environmentalists, artists and local communities. Discussions have continued and funding has been secured sufficient to lay on a Festival in 2018. Confirmed offers of funding to date have been received from various organisation (see below), including Arts Council England, SDF, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Shire Hall Monmouth and the Woodland Trust of both in-kind and/or cash match funding. Applications for funding have also been submitted to Arts Council for Wales and Lottery 'Awards for All'.

<b>Income:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Secured</b>
Arts Council England	£59,000	✓
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)	£50,000	✓
Arts Council Wales	£25,000	
Lottery - Awards for All	£10,000	
AONB (contingency)	£9,000	✓
Shire Hall, Monmouth (in kind)	£9,000	✓
Woodland Trust (in kind)	£9,000	✓
Environment Agency	£5,000	✓
Forestry Commission	£5,000	✓
Foresters' Forest - Landscape Partnership	£5,000	✓
Cadw	£4,800	✓
Ticket sales (Tintern / Museum of the Moon)	£3,700	
Sponsorship, concessions and advertising	£3,500	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£198,000</b>	

The Wye Valley AONB Unit, together with the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, have been developing the marketing and programming for the Festival, along with the various artists and environmental professionals. The evolving programme of events between 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> May is outlined below.

## Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Draft Programme

### Outreach Workshops: in schools and communities from January 2018:

- Making and designing flags, banners, lanterns, masks and a ‘community connectivity machine’ for use in the Festival, working with and training local artists.
- Music Workshops with Lydbrook and Monmouth brass bands, Open Up Youth Orchestra and young musicians, creating new pieces and developing outdoor music skills
- Filming of content for projections and performance plus CPD for professional artists and amateur film makers.
- Veteran Trees Walks with environmentalists and community volunteers developing walks routes, designing maps and collating images.
- Arborealists ‘long draw’ and exhibition for the Festival
- CPD for ensemble performers, exploring outdoor poetry recitation and further research & reflection regarding trees and woods
- Creation of two additional large animal puppets
- Youth Performers workshops to integrate material into central shows
- Creative Canopy, Forest of Dean partners, working to develop additional content and opportunities for local and professional artists

### Main Festival:-

- ✚ **May 5<sup>th</sup> – Hereford: The Hereford River Carnival:** Giant Puppets in the daytime Carnival procession plus the WVRF Ensemble ‘Pub Show’. Anticipated audience of 10,000
- ✚ **May- September - Monmouth Museum: The Arborealists’ Art Exhibition.** Anticipated Visitors 1000
- ✚ **May 5<sup>th</sup> - May 7<sup>th</sup> - Symonds Yat Rock: The Town in the Trees.** A participatory, immersive and interactive site exploring and re-imagining the future of the forest, and the resourceful use of woodlands. Installations from local & national artists (in pictures, sound & sculpture), performances, music, parade, dance, workshops and activities for families and adults, hands on building and construction of dens and forest ‘dwellings’ with investigations into how we might inhabit the woods again in the near future. Conservation and environmental organisations, woodland crafts and forest food outlets. Artefacts and objects created during these four days will form part of the installations when The Trees Go to Town.
- ✚ **May 7<sup>th</sup> - Bishopswood Village & the Lydbrook Tump fetes:** Ensemble Pub Show, music, canoe procession.
- ✚ **May 10<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc: Sylvia Rimat ‘Tree’ Immersive digital Installation**
- ✚ **May 9<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 10<sup>th</sup> - venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 11<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 12<sup>th</sup> - Monmouth: The Trees Go to Town.** Installation in the Shire Hall turning the building into a living breathing Tree; street installations, Ensemble Pub Show, music, performances including University of South Wales drama students, Monmouth Band and Open Up Youth Orchestra. Day time conference on new woodland thinking. Evening finale, light and video projections.
- ✚ **May 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon. Luke Jerram Museum of the Moon installation** <https://my-moon.org/> from 7:30pm – 10pm
- ✚ **May 14<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon Press Night**
- ✚ **May 15<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon Opening Night.**
- ✚ **May 15<sup>th</sup> - venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show
- ✚ **May 16<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon + Under One sky,** Walkers converge on the Abbey from a variety of start points (afternoon into evening).
- ✚ **May 17<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon**

- ✚ **May 18<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon + Under One Sky.** Community picnic, Wye Valley River Festival ensemble of actors and fire garden
- ✚ **May 19<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon**
- ✚ **May 19<sup>th</sup> – Llandogo: Festival Finale.** A day and night time jamboree with stalls, food outlets, picnics and family entertainment, with animations and interventions from many of the Festival artists, workshops and performance, local musicians, dancing, Ensemble Pub Show, street band and Lydbrook Band building to a night time show with fire torch procession and ‘fire tree’
- ✚ **May 20<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon & Sacred Site and Sound.** Orchestral music funded separately and ticketed separately.

<b>Expenditure:</b>	
Artistic Activity	£111,500
Marketing	£12,000
Evaluation	£1,500
Outreach	£18,000
Running costs	£28,000
In-kind	£18,000
Contingency	£9,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£198,000</b>

The Festival Team, the AONB Unit the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, retain the supervisory overview of the programme. Over the next 6 months the Festival will become the dominant focus for the work of the AONB Unit.

The enthusiasm and energy that the Wye Valley River Festival receives from all quarters continues to impress and motivate the Festival Team. As with 2014 & 2016 a considerable amount of monitoring is planned for the Festival and a full evaluation and will be undertaken to appraise whether there are sufficient benefits to continue with the Wye Valley River Festival after this third of the original 3 Festival Business Plan.

### ***Background***

The River Festival provides a unique opportunity to engage new audiences with the AONB, broadening understanding through art and reaching a more diverse public. Before the 2014 Wye Valley River Festival there was nothing of this kind in the area and the 2014 & 2016 Festivals showed that there is an appetite for quality arts and community led events that link communities throughout the valley that also attract visitors.

The Wye Valley River Festival is a direct legacy of AONB Partnership’s success in delivering the £3.1m Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership scheme 'Overlooking the Wye' between 2008 – 2012 and the AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 from which the idea for a festival spanning the length of the river emerged.





## Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### FUTURE LANDSCAPES WALES AND AONB GOVERNANCE REVIEW

#### ***Purpose***

To inform members of the opportunity to peer review the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership.

#### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the opportunity to peer review with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes', as outlined in the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report.
- B. Investigates with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership the establishment of a Task & Finish Group to undertake the 'Good Governance Review'.

#### ***Key Issues***

- The JAC agreed at the last meeting to adopt the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.
- Swansea City Council, the lead authority for Gower AONB Partnership, are also interested in adopting the 'Principles of Good Governance'.
- A joint initiative between the Wye Valley and Gower AONB Partnerships over the adoption of the 'Principles of Good Governance' would demonstrate good collaboration in line with Future Landscapes Wales (FLW) programme and introduce some peer-review scrutiny to the process.
- The Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales has continued with the Welsh Government consultation *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, which closed on 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, stated that "The recent review has provided an opportunity to reaffirm the importance to Wales of our designated landscapes."
- The AONB Manager continues to contribute to The Future Landscapes Wales (FLW) Working Group, chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, which is taking forward the priorities identified in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.

## **Reasons**

At the last meeting the JAC agreed to adopt the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and report back to the JAC with any further actions. This fulfils the Future Landscapes Wales (FLW) Action

Fit for Purpose - Refreshing Governance: Improving Performance and Accountability  
 Adopt the Governance Principles as a model for any future designation. Undertake a more detailed review of current governance against the Principles and make recommendations for change.

In discussing this with colleagues at Gower AONB the proposal was made that the two AONBs could share and peer review the process. This helps fulfil the FLW Action

Delivering for Wales - Collaboration and Partnership

All participants in the FLW Programme to adopt the way of working developed, which emphasises building relationships for effective collaboration.

## **Implications**

The ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report (page 11. Table 1.) are:

Legitimacy, participation and voice	• Acceptance in society
	• Representation and participation
	• Active dialogue and consensus
	• Subsidiarity
Developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area	• Inspiring and consistent vision
	• Consistent with national outcomes
	• Reflect obligations
	• Adaptive management and innovation
Effective performance management	• Management effectiveness
	• Learning culture, skills and knowledge
	• Advocacy and outreach
	• Acknowledging and addressing weakness or poor performance
	• Efficient use of financial resources
Accountability and transparency	• Integrity and commitment
	• Decision making and reporting
	• Allocation of resources
	• Communication
Fairness and rights	• Ethical and fair decision making
	• Impartial and without discrimination
	• Respectful of language and culture
	• Respect rights
	• Active engagement

Consequently the intention is to “undertake a more detailed review of current governance against the Principles and make recommendations for change”. Current governance of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership is through the four constituent local authorities and the Joint

Advisory Committee with the AONB Unit acting as the primary delivery agent, guided by the statutory Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

A governance review based on the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ could be conducted either ‘in-house’ or facilitated by an external consultant. However, the opportunity to collaborate with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership has several benefits. These include:

- a) closer collaboration with our neighbouring AONB in south Wales
- b) peer review and objective scrutiny by another local authority and AONB Partnership.

The details of the review and the nature of the collaboration will need to be determined. The most likely scenario is that a small Task and Finish group is established with 2 - 3 members from each AONB Partnership, supported by both AONB lead officers. This group may need to meet 2 or 3 times over the coming months. The findings and any recommendations of the review will then be reported back to the JAC, as with the original decision.

### ***Background***

The previous Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, established the Future Landscapes Wales (FLW) programme after commissioning the independent Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales which published the ‘Marsden Report’ in October 2015. The FLW Working Group, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM, was established to monitor implementation of the review programme.

In May 2017 Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs published *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, as the next stage in the review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales. The FLW Working Group continues to be tasked with monitoring the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report.

There was a chapter on Designated Landscapes included in the Welsh Government consultation *Taking Forward Wales’ Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, which closed on 30th September. The responses and conclusions of that consultation are expected sometime in the new year. Lesley Griffiths recently stated during a National Assembly for Wales plenary debate that “The recent review has provided an opportunity to reaffirm the importance to Wales of our designated landscapes... I will make a statement on the way forward when I have considered the wide range of comments in response to the recent consultation on ‘*Taking Forward Wales’ Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*’... I will not bring forward any proposals for reform that would put the natural beauty and special qualities of areas of outstanding natural beauty and national parks at risk.”

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)**

### ***Purpose***

To endorse the allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2017/18 and 2018/19, subject to available funds.

### ***Recommendation***

That the JAC endorses the recent allocations of the SDF for 2017/18, and for 2018/19 subject to funds being available.

### ***Key Issues***

- The 2017/18 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) from Welsh Government is £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel allocated £53,977.46 for 2017/18 to date (see attached table).
- The SDF Assessment Panel has provisionally allocated £36,000 for 2018/19 (see attached table) subject to funds being made available from Welsh Government.
- The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of allocating any remaining SDF at end of year to specific AONB projects that meet the SDF criteria.

### ***Reasons***

The SDF has been running in Wales for seventeen years and provides a good opportunity for local communities, businesses and organisations within or adjacent to the AONB in Monmouthshire to establish innovative initiatives that benefit the Wye Valley AONB.

### ***Implications***

The SDF has nearly been fully allocated for 2017/18 in the Wye Valley AONB. The Welsh Government have not yet determined the level of SDF for 2018/19. However, the SDF Assessment Panel have provisionally approved £36,000 of SDF grant aid for 2018/19 on the assumption that the Welsh Government will not decide to decrease the SDF below this level. For the current year £55,000 of SDF was available which was the same level as 2016/17. All offers to date for 2018/19 are offered conditional to the funding being available.

### ***Background***

The AONB Unit and other partners promote the availability of the SDF to as many sectors as possible in Monmouthshire. Members are similarly encouraged to do so. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, is available to discuss and advise on potential applications (contact [community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk) or call 01600 710844).

Table	SDF Wales Summary 2017/18 & 2018/19				
Ref.No	Applicant	Project Name	SDF Amount	Status	Date of Decision
<b>2017/18</b>					
WV00 YR17W	Wye Valley AONB	Admin	£5,000.00		
WV01 YR17W	Monmouthshire Meadows	Enhancement Wet Meadow Trellech	£2,227.46	Approved	26/04/2017
WV02 YR17W	Sylvia Rimat	Tree	£1,000.00	Approved	26/04/2017
WV05 YR17W	Drew Moore	Drystone wall	£1,000.00	Approved - Delegated	01/06/2017
WV03 YR17W	Jon Dunkelman	Fungi booklet	£1,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV04 YR17W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018	£25,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV06 YR17W	Nelson Garden Preservation Trust	Nelson Heritage Triangle Leaflet	£500.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV07 YR17W	Wye Woods Partnership	Wye Woodland Interpretation	£2,800.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV08 YR17W	Cadw & AONB partnership	Tintern Abbey Beacon Technology	£2,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV09 YR17 W	John Sterry, Old Station Tintern	Community Performance Space- Interpretative sculptures	£6,450.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV10 YR17W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Livestock Trailer	£1,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV11 YR17W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Volunteer Project	£4,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV12 YR17W	AONB Partnership	A466 River Visibility Study	£2,000.00	Approved – Fast track	9/8/17
		<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£53,977.46</b>		
<b>2018/19</b>					
WV00 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB	Admin	£5,000.00		
WV01 YR18W	Sylvia Rimat	Tree	£1,000.00	Approved	26/04/2017
WV02 YR18W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018	£25,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
WV03 YR18W	Cadw & AONB Partnership	Tintern Abbey Beacon Technology	£5,000.00	Approved	6/7/17
		<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£36,000.00</b>		

## Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### FEEDBACK ON AONB PARTNERSHIP STUDY TOUR

#### *Purpose*

To feedback on the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour.

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### *Key Issues*

- A total of 29 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour.
- There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused predominantly on the south Herefordshire part of the AONB.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.
- There is still the ambition for a joint initiative with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA), now probably sometime in 2018.

#### *Reasons*

The AONB Partnership Tour continues to be popular and is a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB particularly to local Ward members and the Town, Parish and Community Councils. The Tour has always traditionally been held on one of the last Fridays in September.

#### *Implications*

Of the 29 attendees on the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour, 11 were JAC members or officers, 3 were local Ward members not on the JAC, 7 were from Town/Parish/Community Councils and 3 others, including officers from Natural England. 9 came from Herefordshire, 8 from Gloucestershire and 7 from Monmouthshire plus 5 AONB staff.

The 2017 Tour looked at a selection of projects and issues between Ross and Lydbrook. The day started in Ross-on-Wye, looking at a partnership project with the Town Council, with funding from Natural England, to better understand and manage the grassland and riverbank along the town's prestigious frontage. At Goodrich Castle visitor centre English Heritage staff explained their work. Then Coppett Hill Common Trust members led the group up the hill outlining the Trust's management of the site, which was recognised through them winning the 2017 AONB Farming Awards. In the afternoon the two AONB trainee ecologists explained surveys and habitat improvements considered around the Garren and Gamber brooks under the National Grid pylons that may be eligible for Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) funding. The final visit was Lydbrook Bridge, closed in 2016 due to safety issues, but an important link for the Wye Valley Walk. The AONB Unit is currently working with Gloucestershire County Council on options for the bridge, prompting much discussion.

#### *Background*

The 2016 Tour visited sites in and around Tintern in Monmouthshire.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## **NAAONB UPDATE**

### ***Purpose***

To advise members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB)

and

To suggest any questions to be asked on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership at the NAAONB Chairman's Conference.

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM is on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 and will be attended by the AONB Manager.
- The NAAONB gave Oral Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
- Outstanding Week was 6<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017 with over 90 events held nationally.
- A joint publication and declaration has been signed with Europe's Nature Parks entitled 'Living Landscapes'

### **NAAONB Chairman's Conference**

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference which will take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 in London. This year's Chairmen's Conference builds on the work from last year, focusing on 'Brexit and Landscape'. In brief, last year, received presentations from

- Lord Gardiner MP, Under Secretary of State for Environment, Defra
- Professor Dieter Helm – the implications of Brexit on British Agricultural Policy
- Dr Victoria Jenkins – the implications of Brexit on Environmental Law
- Vince Holyoak, Historic England – the implications of Brexit on legislation affecting the historic environment

Discussions followed in-the-round over what the UK's Designated Landscape organisations had to offer post Brexit. This resulted in a longlist of 11 ideas which were subsequently shared with participants via a SurveyMonkey poll to create the following shortlist of 4:

- The Designated Landscapes will work together to propose a new type of agri-environment support that delivers Ecosystems Services and Natural Capital through approaches that have been tailored for local conditions.
- Post Brexit upland/marginal farming will be very challenging. In those Designation Landscapes where this is an issue they will promote support for High Nature Value Farming (HNVF).

- Designated Landscapes will prepare case studies from their areas that demonstrate exemplary approaches to agri-environmental support that could be adopted in a post Brexit world and the NAAONB will collate and publish them on its web platform.
- The Designated Landscapes, through the National Parks farming working group, will develop a statement on agricultural policy.

This year's programme will review what has been achieved over the past year and investigate how these and any new ideas can be taken forward.

Lord Gardiner will be keynote speaker again, along with other guest speakers, talking about the implications of Brexit on environmental legislation, UK agriculture post CAP and legislation affecting the environment. The one day conference will look at the UK's Designated Landscape Family's work as dynamic living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society. It will provide a timely and valuable opportunity to take Post Brexit thinking forward together as a Designated Landscape Family.

There will be a short Q&A after the Minister's address. Therefore please advise whether there are any questions that should be asked on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

#### **House of Lords Select Committee**

The NAAONB gave Oral Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 on 10th October. Earlier in the year the Committee called for Written Evidence on natural environment, rural communities and biodiversity. The NAAONB will also be providing written evidence that will build upon on some of the points made in the Oral Evidence at the Committee and provide evidence to address questions that were raised by members of the Committee.

#### **Outstanding Week: 16<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The AONB Family came together, for the third year running, to organise a week long programme of events to help people enjoy and be inspired by the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Over 90 events were run during the 10 days with the NAAONB leading on the promotion of these with a dedicated page on the website. Both @AONBFamily and @NAAONB were active on Twitter to demonstrate the value and relevance of the AONB Partnerships and their work. Using key messages, the difference the AONB Family makes were highlighted and the messages backed up with project case studies from the AONB Family. This social media and online promotion helps show the value and relevance of our AONBs to a wider audience than usual and enables people to appreciate and understand how AONBs are 'Landscapes for Life' in very many different ways.

#### **Living Landscapes – a joint publication with Europe's Nature Parks**

The NAAONB has collaborated with almost 900 European Nature, Regional, and Landscape Parks to produce a book entitled 'Living Landscapes' to demonstrate how protected landscapes are models for the sustainable development of rural areas. The book provides information about Europe's Regional Nature Parks and is the result of the first comprehensive study on these protected landscapes. The book was launched at the first European Summit of Regional Nature Parks where a declaration was signed by the NAAONB and 20 other organisations who represent the European Parks.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## AONB & PARTNER REPORTS

### *Purpose*

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:-

- a. Lydbrook Bridge
- b. mindSCAPE Conference
- c. Youth Rangers
- d. Venison Processing and Marketing Feasibility Study
- e. Wales NPs Seminar & hosting BBNPA event/visit 2018

FOR INFORMATION

### **a) Lydbrook Bridge**

Following the release of the Feasibility Study by Gloucestershire County Council for the Lydbrook Bridge / Black Bridge / Stowfield Viaduct, the AONB Manager submitted a 'Project Enquiry Form' to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This was an outline 'expression of interest' and is (according to HLF guidance) "a good way of getting feedback from us [HLF] before you start work on a full application. The Project Enquiry was based on the bridge restoration costs of £1,246,650 from Option 6.4 of the Feasibility Study. Further elements were based on other figures from the 2013 HLF bid submitted for Redbrook Bridge. The project total was estimated at £1,710,775 with the request for 85% funding from HLF of £1,457,075.

The HLF have responded that the project appears to have the potential to achieve the Heritage Grant outcomes to a good standard. However they highlighted that there is considerable competition for HLF grants and at present the success rate for Heritage Grant applications is running at around 27%. Consequently it needs to be recognised that even good projects are being rejected through lack of funds. HLF also raised a number of points for clarification and advised that the budget and project plan should only include items that are really crucial to deliver a good quality, rounded and value-for-money project. Decision makers will need to be comfortable that National Lottery money would not be used to fund something that is a statutory responsibility and as half the bridge is a public right of way it needs to be clarified why the highway authority maintenance had not prevented its closure. HLF would also want to know why is it now reasonable for National Lottery good causes money to be invested in this project. Similarly, the long term plans and commitments need to be demonstrated for maintaining the bridge after an HLF funded project is complete. Maximising the amount of partnership funding will also help strengthen the value-for-money case and evidence that other organisations are committed to the project.

The AONB Manager is now liaising with Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council, who have shared ownership of the Bridge, over how best to progress a full application to HLF. The local community Black Bridge Steering Group is also involved and a wider public campaign will be needed to secure widespread support.

#### **b) mindSCAPE Conference**

On 5<sup>th</sup> October, 54 delegates including dementia professionals and carers, artists, environmentalists and volunteers, came together to share best practice and raise awareness of the mindSCAPE project. The events was also a celebration of the success of mindSCAPE which is now in the fourth and final year of Big Lottery funding, led by the AONB Unit. MindSCAPE works to reconnect people with dementia and their carers to the landscape of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean. Numerous studies have shown that spending time in the natural environment and connecting with nature have an extremely positive effect on our general well-being and physical health. As part of mindSCAPE people with dementia and their carers to take part in stimulating and enjoyable activities, inspired by the natural environment, devised and co-ordinated by ArtSpace Cinderford and local artists.

The mindSCAPE conference brought together inspiring speakers to show how the project has made such a huge difference to patients and their families at crucial times in their lives. Speakers included Helen Vaughan - NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group Health Policy and Activity in Older People, Tina Kukstas - 2gether NHS Foundation Trust, Hannah Elton-Wall - ArtSpace Cinderford & mindSCAPE manager, Liz Lavender - a mindSCAPE carer and Julie Hammon - Dorset AONB, Stepping into Nature project. Surrounded by the stunning scenery of Lindors Hotel in the heart of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean, afternoon workshops introduced delegates to mindSCAPE type activities, including Willow Weaving with Lin Powell, Poetry with Roger Drury and Watercolours with Mariette Voke.

#### **c) Youth Rangers**

The next cohort of Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers has begun with a Celebration and Recruitment event at Biblins Youth Camp on 30<sup>th</sup> September. The Youth Rangers programme is now part of the Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership, with HLF funding. Over 60 young people have become Youth Rangers to date and enhanced their knowledge, experience and skills in all matters that fall within the countryside management sector; including drystone walling, hedgelaying, coppicing, wildlife survey, farm visits, recreation, rural craft skills, bushcraft and heritage interpretation. Taking part in Youth Rangers counts towards the Duke of Edinburgh voluntary activity, the John Muir Award and a host of other new skills.

#### **d) Venison Processing and Marketing Feasibility Study**

The study is nearing completion and a final report should be available early in the New Year. The Venison Marketing and Supply Feasibility Study is being funded through Monmouthshire LEADER, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Natural England. The Deer Initiative have been working over the last six months carrying out surveys

of stalkers, butchers, restauranteurs and the general public to investigate the production, marketing and sale of locally produced wild venison in and around the Wye Valley AONB. It is investigating where wild venison is processed and sold, and how it is marketed. Also whether there is an opportunity to develop local marketing for wild venison and what gaps need to be covered to ensure the venison can be sourced, processed and marketed locally, using as a marketing tool the benefit to woodland habitats.

Recommendations produced within the study will inform future work on the local wild venison supply chain. Further applications are likely to be necessary for funding to enable this work which will enhance the economic benefit locally to all those within the venison supply chain, including woodland managers, stalkers, butchers, distributors, retailers and consumers.

The objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate the current situation with venison supply and distribution of carcasses across the area and by whom the venison is being supplied by.
- Research the potential demand for locally sourced wild venison.
- Investigate the opportunities for supplying wild venison into local outlets including butchers, restaurants and pubs and food hubs and distribution centres.
- Determine the interest among Lower Wye Valley Deer Group (LWVDG) members and other local venison suppliers, to supply wild venison into the local food chain.
- Establish the location and availability of facilities for the storage, butchery and distribution of carcasses and determining if there is an opportunity for linking with or cross promoting the supply of other local meat products, both farmed and wild, including wild boar.
- Establish the steps necessary to fill gaps in the existing local supply chain to include but not restricted to butchery skills, distribution and seasonality of supply.
- Raise awareness of the marketing opportunities to suppliers and sales outlets and outline the brand values.
- Make recommendations as to future steps needed to ensure sustainable supply and sales of locally sourced wild venison (LWG), including branding opportunities.

**e) Wales National Parks Seminar & hosting BBNPA event/visit 2018**

The AONB Manager attended the National Parks Wales Seminar on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The event was hosted by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. Speakers included Baroness Eluned Morgan AM (on The economic challenges facing Rural Wales, the changing agricultural situation and post Brexit) and Andrew Slade, Director, Agriculture, Food & Marine, Welsh Government (on Delivering on Welsh Government Priorities). Workshops were also held on ‘The Wellbeing of Future Generation Act: Compliance Reporting’, ‘Working in Partnership: Partnership approach to the Management Plan’ and Future Landscapes Wales.

The AONB Manager and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority staff and members reiterated the ambition for a shared event, recognising that this is likely now to be in first half of 2018.

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