

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 6th 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

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

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 9th 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 6th 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 20th July 2017 to take forward the priorities identified in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.
- On 20th 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 13th 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.

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

- 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 22nd 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' 16th – 24th 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 3rd & 4th October 2017.

We resolved to:

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

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

(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 28th 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 6th July 2017 to assess the next tranche of applications.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

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

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 18th - 19th 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 16th -24th 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

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

- 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 1st July.
- The end of the 3rd cohort of Youth Rangers was marked with a summer camp on 1st and 2nd 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 6th November 2017 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.