

MINUTES OF THE 71st MEETING OF THE NAAONB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Held on Wednesday 1st June 2016 at 11.00am in Birmingham

Attendees - Trustees Philip Hygate, Rose Day, Michael Mounde, Peter Foulkes,
Chris Woodley-Stewart, David Hill, Mat Roberts

Attendees - Staff Howard Davies - Chief Executive, Jill Smith - Communications & Events Manager,
Richard Clarke - Policy & Development Manager, Amber Livingston - Office & Membership Manager

Attendees - Observers Lisa Tomos - NRW, David Henshilwood - NE, Mehdi Kurrimbux – Defra,
Ulrich Koester - Europe's Nature-Regional-Landscape Parks

Attendees - Speakers Katharina Denking - 'Europe's Nature-Regional-Landscape Parks'

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Nick Holliday

2. Minutes and matters arising

The Chairman called for any errata in the minutes of the previous meetings.

On page 3 NE/NRW should read Defra and NRW.

Chris Woodley-Stewart requested that a comment he made (also on page 3) be reworded to avoid his meaning being lost. Addition of "against a backdrop of 27% cuts" is necessary.

Resolved that with amendments, the minutes be accepted as a true report.

Agreed: Unanimously

Matters arising: A query was received regarding any progress on regaining Cannock Chase AONB Partnership's membership. The CE responded that our doors are always open to them but the choice to apply for membership remains with the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee. Jill Smith added that the Partnership had been offered a briefing spot at L4L Conference 2016.

Richard Clarke commented that a Future Landscapes Wales paper will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Chris Woodley-Stewart gave an update on the Landscapes for Life Awards progress: the nominees have been written to, some of them have responded and are coming to Conference to receive their award (approximately half of them, however not all are prepared to attend for the full day and are therefore not intending to pay conference fees). There was then a short discussion around appropriate gifts to go alongside the certificate.

Resolved that £250 to be found from the Board Expenses budget to cover these gifts.

Agreed: Unanimously

3. Landscapes for Life Conference 2016

This report was introduced by Jill Smith

A summary was given as to the current situation regarding speakers, bookings and sponsorship.



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There was a query regarding Trustees attendance at Conference and the fees associated with this. It was clarified that their costs will be covered by the Charity.

4. Business Reform Update

This report was introduced by the CE

Michael Mounde suggested that there be more emphasis on Business (there is need to acquire the skill to “make our own money”).

There was a query regarding the current funding structure, during which, it was clarified that this discussion is around the funding structure of the NAAONB as a charity, rather than the AONB Family, and the need to position ourselves to support change (as there is the fear that the recent situation in the Shropshire Hills AONB may precipitate change in other areas).

The German attendees were invited to summarise their funding structure, as they represent a similar organization in their country. They outlined that they also gain funding through membership fees, individual project funding and from enterprises, although they receive no state funding. There is, however, variety in Europe, for instance Swiss Protected Areas are state funded.

There then followed, a brief discussion around the strategic communication of the Charity’s Defra funding and also the position the Charity is in, to encourage local authorities to deliver on their Section 85 duty.

Michael Mounde volunteered to lead on taking this paper forward.

Resolved that the next steps be agreed, Michael Mounde be appointed Lead, with offers from Rose Day, Chris Woodley-Stewart and Mat Roberts to form a working group.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: Chris Woodley-Stewart

Agreed: Unanimously

5. Trustee Succession

This report was introduced by the Chairman

Michael Mounde suggested that there is a need to progress the business reform before there can be precise specific skills sought.

There was a discussion during which it was agreed that

- This will not be cast in bronze, and will be up for review, perhaps annually.
- There will need to be an application process, including advertisement of a role profile.
- A formal induction process is necessary (to be in place by November AGM - where one third of the current Trustees will be required to stand down).
- A governance handbook needs to be developed/updated and used as a tool (rather than for recruitment). It was suggested that the Directory of Social Change be contacted for advice.

Resolved that with the Chairman as lead, a role profile be developed and advertised, as well as development of an application process, a governance handbook and an induction process.

Proposed: Chris Woodley-Stewart

Seconded: Michael Mounde

Agreed: Unanimously



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6. Strategic Risk

This report was introduced by the CE

The then up-coming EU referendum was briefly discussed.

There was a suggestion that the risk register be altered to be sure that the focus is on the risk involved rather than focusing on the tool (e.g. the evidence gathering ability, rather than the functionality of the website).

It was requested that the 'relevance of the NAAONB' be acknowledged as a higher priority risk than is reported in this paper.

The CE requested that Trustees feed into the risk assessment directly via Basecamp.

ACTION Trustees to feed into the risk assessment directly via Basecamp.

Proposed: Chris Woodley-Stewart

Seconded: Rose Day

Agreed: Unanimously

7. Budget

This report was introduced by the CE

Michael Mounde suggested that there is need to update the reserves policy, and, he added that it could be valuable if the AONB Partnerships could be encouraged to project future budgets in a similar fashion to this paper.

There was a discussion around the possibility of an increase in membership rates in the financial years 2019 or 2020.

A discussion around full cost recovery/surplus on projects – freeing up restricted income followed. The Board requested that a column for the budget be presented as well as the actual and 3 year projection.

Michael Mounde suggested that a short paper be presented at the next board meeting around the possible increase of membership rates. Chris Woodley-Stewart offered to produce and present this.

ACTION CWS to submit and present a membership rates paper to the next Board meeting

The German attendees were then asked for insight into the structure of Germany's Nature Parks. They reported that their membership rates differ depending on the size of area and they are currently undergoing discussions around increasing the rate by 400 Euros per year, which would raise their membership income from 160,000 to 200,000.

Resolved that this budget be agreed.

Proposed: Rose Day

Seconded: David Hill

Agreed: Unanimously

At this point there was a short break for lunch (12.30pm)

8. Management Accounts

This report was introduced by Jill Smith

The Board thanked the staff for realigning the format of this report.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: David Hill

Agreed: Unanimously



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9. NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report

This report was introduced by the CE

A summary was given outlining the risk section and current activity around these.

The Chairman updated the Board on his recent activity which included:

- A meeting with the new Chair of NRW - Diane McCrea. Good discussion was had.
- A meeting with the Chair of the National Trust - Tim Parker. Discussion focused on moving to a formal accord.
- A meeting with the Chair of NPE - Jim Bailey. Discussion focussed on the health and wellbeing agenda.

10. Defra Report

This report was introduced by Mehdi Kurrimbux

It was reported that there has been no template from HM Treasury to create proforma

There was a brief discussion regarding non exchequer funding.

The CE highlighted the ongoing work developing Key Performance Indicator reporting.

It was reported that the 25 Year Plan is still in development, the 8 point plan has moved from development to implementation and delivery.

Michael Mounde queried when the 25 Year Plan will be in the public domain.

Mehdi Kurrimbux responded that drafts are being drawn up but there is no date for release at the moment.

There was a comment on the difference between the environment, and food and farming 25 Year Plans, and the suggestion that these should be integrated.

11. Natural England Report

This report was introduced by David Henshilwood

It was reported that:

- The discussions around the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths extension has been delayed due to EU Referendum purdah.
- The Conservation strategy is continuing in development.
- Cuts have forced a further 40% reduction in staff in 10 years (by 2020).
- They are moving to more strategic plans rather than local plans.
- Alternative forms of funding are being sought.

The CE queried whether there has been a discussion around the impact of public sector bodies charging for services on the wider market.

David Henshilwood responded that this had been considered.

Chris Woodley-Stewart commented on the funding issue and the need for NE to avoid competing with partners.

12. Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (NRW) Report

This report was introduced by Lisa Tomos

It was reported that there is a new Cabinet Secretary for the Environment in Welsh Government - Lesley Griffiths. There is also new legislation for Wales supporting the sustainable management of natural resources, the delivery of which will be based on 8 area statements covering Wales.

Welsh Government has produced a national guidance document to help explain the changes, particularly as they relate to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and its seven wellbeing goals.



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There was a comment that National Parks were represented on the public service boards where AONBs were not, Lisa responded that AONBs should be represented by their LAs. The Future Landscapes Wales report is to be taken to the Cabinet Secretary in July. There are to be cuts going forward within NRW, including a voluntary exit scheme and service reviews. The corporate plan will be framed around the delivery of wellbeing goals.

AOB - none received

Dates of next meetings for information

19th October 2016

24th November 2016 (AGM)

End of normal business 2pm

13. Europe's Nature, Regional and Landscape Parks Project

There was a presentation to the Board by Katharina Denking and Ulrich Koester, Naturparke Deutschland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. S. H. J.', written over a light blue rectangular background.

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