

AONB Communications Officers Meeting - NOTES

Date: Tuesday 6th December 2016

Time: 10.00 – 16.00

Venue: Ibis Birmingham Centre New Street, Ladywell Walk, Birmingham B5 4ST

<http://www.ibis.com/gb/hotel-1459-ibis-birmingham-centre-new-street/index.shtml>

Howard Davies, NAAONB Chief Executive

Howard thanked everyone for attending and emphasized how important the AONB Communications Officers are to the AONB Family

Jill Smith, NAAONB Communications and Events Manager

Welcomed the NAAONB team and emphasized to attendees that the fact that the full national team was attending fully backed up Howard's statement about the value of the Comms Officers to the AONB Family.

As part of the AONB Family, the NAAONB, now a small charity, is a communications organisation and works very closely with its members to ensure that our messages are consistent and collective. It has produced a [brand strategy](#) to back up its [visual ID guide](#) and has a [communications strategy](#) with clear mission and messages – this is due for review and the outputs from the day will feed into this review.

Programme for the day is to look at how we should be communicating so the AONB Family is best placed by the next spending review.

What are our communications priorities?

What do we want to say?

How do we want to say it?

To whom so we want to say it?

Who will say it?

Everyone's thoughts are valuable – challenge if you don't agree, support if you do.

22 attendees this year – more than a 50% increase on last year's attendance – indicates an increased commitment to and a recognition of the value of working collaboratively and with a collective voice.

Other indications of closer working throughout the year are

The 3 Working Groups set up at last year's event had input to the AONB Family comms work

- Themes and events that the AONB Family could easily piggyback on (Campaigns Group)
- A template for case studies to both promote the work of the AONB Family externally and "share, learn and inspire" internally. This had been used to populate the library on basecamp and the Resources page on <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/resources.html> The information had also formed part of an Annual Review produced for Defra and Welsh Government. (Case Studies Group + website Group)
- Some local collaboration with NPAs that had fed into the national work of the NAAONB with Natural Parks England (NPA Collaboration Group).

Input by comms officers to L4L Conference Communications Update

2 Infographics (Wales and England) produced

Basecamp collaboration

Countryfile engagement

European Parks book

Outstanding Week

and stuff that might not resonate as much but which touches all of you

Chairmen's Conference

Lead Officers meeting

Future Landscapes Wales

Brexit

NE Conservation 21

Defra 25 year plan

Consultation responses

<p>Howard Davies, NAAONB Chief Executive Setting the scene for why communications is important over the next five years. See attached presentation</p>
<p>Richard Clarke, NAAONB Policy and Development Manager Communicating the need for change and the essential role Communications Officers play. Reiterated the importance of the need for change within the AONB Family to respond to our changing context highlighted in Howard’s presentation. AONB partnerships have to move away from a dependence on public sector funding, being - to all intents and purposes - extensions of Local Authorities towards more independent of Local Authorities and towards a more collaborative and connected network of Social Enterprises albeit focusing on the environment. Only through working together can the outcomes we seek be realized. Attendees role in all of this is communicating the need for change and this is essential role Communications Officers play as part of the AONB Family. You know how Important collaborative work is. But, consider also, how Acceptable it is and finally how Possible is it going to be for you to work in this way. <i>What do we want to say?, How do we want to say it?, To whom so we want to say it?, Who will say it?</i></p>
<p>Priorities Discussions of priorities in small groups and feedback to plenary</p>
<p>Lunch</p>
<p>Prioritisation of Actions - each attendee allowed 3 votes Value of the AONB in terms of natural capital/ecosystem services - 17 Health and Wellbeing - 8 Inspiring People to feel ownership and sense of place - 7 PR – 5 Development Control Pressures – 5 Agri- environment – 3 What’s our service/justify our existence – 1 Brand consistency – 1 Moving people from very local immediate horizons to landscape scale – 1 Ongoing Duty of Regard at risk – 1 Community LED Charitable status Woodland Management Project work – events and activity is funded and resources Utilising and galvanizing local groups This matters here! Individual partnerships awareness and buy in Social Heritage/Enterprise</p>
<p>Change project – Future Landscapes Wales – Richard Clarke The task NPs, AONBs, Welsh Government, NRW and Third Sector representation. Very diverse, lack of trust and huge suspicion. The journey intense demanding and challenging at times. Personal Evaluation was very positive and participants gained a huge amount from it. When considered from an organisational perspective realised part of the issue was a lack or organisational maturity. Real products came of this work. See evaluation attached.</p>
<p>Change project – Basecamp – Jill Smith Gave a demonstration of what’s on Basecamp beyond AONB Family Forum, Communications Portfolio and the Library – all useful sources of information. Showed it as an inclusive collaboration and communications tool – also involve NPAs, academia, Defra, NRW, Natural England, corporate organisations where appropriate Agreed to give regular “all access” updates of what other projects were being undertaken so people could request access to further interests or all access</p>
<p>Change project – KPIs and Annual Report – Richard Clarke and Jill Smith Earlier this year at Lead Officer Meeting we talked about developing KPIs for AONB partnerships.</p>

The Lead Officers came up with 3 KPIs Slide and the NAAONB through its discussions with Defra proposed a further 2.

Richard talked about the Quantitative components of the KPIs.

I Landscapes for Wildlife (nature)

Total hectares of land enhanced for nature through the work of your AONB team.

II Landscapes for People (wellbeing)

Number of people engaged through the work of AONB teams.

III Landscapes for Business (economy)

Gross Value Added (GVA) for AONBs

IV Landscapes for History (Historic Environment)

Number of Scheduled Monuments where the condition has been enhanced through the work of the AONB team.

V Landscapes for Life – (income generated)

Jill showed how the Qualitative components of the KPIs had been used so far

Annual Report <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/images/Annual-Report-2016-FINAL.pdf> launched at the L4L Chairmen's meeting and sent to Defra and Welsh Government. Further plans to promote it in the new year to partnerships and LAs

Resources area on <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/resources.html> Work is ongoing to amalgamate the information on the current three websites. The amalgamated website will be redesigned and launched in March 2017.

Priority Action One - Value of the AONB in terms of natural capital/ecosystem services - 17

Small group discussion, key message and feedback to plenary – see separate document for discussion on the top three priorities

Priority Action Two - Health and Wellbeing - 8

Small group discussion, key message and feedback to plenary

Coffee and Comfort Break

Priority Action Three - Inspiring People to feel ownership and sense of place - 7

Small group discussion, key message and feedback to plenary

Change project – Outstanding Week – Jill Smith

Jill reported that the AONB Family had owned the Week more this year, working with other AONBs to promote the week, locally and regionally. There had been some very innovative social media - namely the Mendip Hills "Family" campaign. This had freed the NAAONB up to work more strategically at a national level to get others to use the week to campaign on our behalf. As a result partners, like minded organisations and potential partners or those we would like to influence had been more involved. As examples:

NT blog on AONB and work being done by NT in AONBs

GWCT blog

CPRE social media coverage

VisitBritain VisitEngland Tweets

Countryfile Magazine blog

CLA Press activity resulting in coverage of AONBs, the work landowners are doing with AONB Partnerships all year round in CLA mag and Shooting Times

GreenTraveller blog

Supportive Tweets by the Welsh Minister

Statement from Lord Gardiner and coverage by Defra social media (see attached)

She concluded

Is it enough? No... it's never enough

Could we do better? Yes. Of course we could

Do we need to change behaviours to do things better? Yes. And she looks forward to next year with great expectations after the work and enthusiasm of today.

Outstanding Week 2017 - based on the survey monkey popular vote - will be 16-24th September 2017.

Howard Davies closing remarks

Howard thanked everyone for coming, asked for a volunteer to chair a working group to take the “priority work” of the afternoon forward and asked for volunteers to be part of that working group.

Hosts

Howard NAAONB Chief Executive
Jill NAAONB Communications and Events Manager
Richard NAAONB Policy and Development Manager
Amber NAAONB Office and Membership Manager

Attendees

Clare Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership
Emma Chilterns Conservation Board
Karen Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Partnership
David Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership
Cathy Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership
Sue Dorset AONB Partnership
Sandra Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership
Gerry High Weald AONB Partnership
Liz Howardian Hills AONB Partnership
Joel Isle of Wight AONB Partnership
Helen Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Partnership
Sarah Malverns AONB Partnership
Jim Mendip Hills AONB Partnership
Gigha North Devon AONB Partnership
Kaye North Pennines AONB Partnership
Rose North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership
Georgie Quantock Hills AONB Partnership
Nigel Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Diane South Devon AONB Partnership
Caroline Surrey Hills AONB Partnership