

MINUTES OF THE 73rd MEETING OF THE NAAONB MANAGEMENT BOARD

Held on Tuesday 14th March 2017 11.00am in Birmingham

Invitees - Board Members Philip Hygate, Rose Day, Michael Mounde, Chris Woodley-Stewart, Nick Holliday, Mat Roberts, Paul Walton, Denise Hewlett, James Williamson, Lucy Barron

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

Invitees - Observers Lisa Tomos - NRW, David Henshilwood - NE, Mehdi Kurrimbux - Defra

1. Apologies

The Chairman called for a minutes' silence to reflect on the recent death of NAAONB Trustee Michael Mounde who passed away earlier in this month. Richard Clarke had volunteered to represent the NAAONB at the Funeral and a collection for charity was started.

Donations collected at the Board meeting were sent to the Family's chosen charity, Salisbury District Stars Appeal - A link follows for those who may like to make a donation

<http://www.starsappeal.org/how-to-help/donate/>

Apologies were received from Chris Woodley-Stewart, James Williamson, Mat Roberts, Lisa Tomos, Nick Holliday. A message was received from David Henshilwood to notify of his late arrival due to delayed trains.

2. Minutes and matters arising

MINUTES OF THE 72nd MEETING OF THE NAAONB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

Matters arising

The Chief Executive highlighted that there has been no review of membership rates and no membership strategy as yet.

The Chief Executive noted that Key Performance Indicators are being developed with the Lead Officers, this is expected to be complete by June.

There was then an update on the Future Landscapes Wales (FLW) work, during which, it was reported that the report has been circulated for discussion internally, but, it has yet to be signed off by Government.

ACTION Howard Davies to circulate FLW report to Trustees, once it is signed off.

Resolved that the minutes, with the above amendment, be accepted as a true and accurate report.

Agreed: Unanimously



22nd June 2017

MINUTES OF THE NAAONB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Matters arising

The Chief Executive highlighted that there will be more on the calculation of reserves covered later in this Board meeting as part of the discussion.

Resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate report.

Agreed: Unanimously

MINUTES OF THE NAAONB Extraordinary Board Meeting

Resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate report.

Agreed: Unanimously

3. Co-options and Appointments to the Board

The Chairman introduced this paper.

Resolved that James Williamson be appointed as Honorary Treasurer

Proposed: Rose Day

Seconded: Philip Hygate

Agreed: Unanimously

Resolved that Lucy Barron be co-opted onto the Board of Trustees

Proposed: Philip Hygate

Seconded: Paul Walton

Agreed: Unanimously

There was a brief discussion regarding the recently vacated seat on the Board.

4. Brexit - A NAAONB response

This paper was introduced by the Chairman, it was highlighted that now is the time to work with National Parks England and Defra to come forward with proposals for ways to apply government's potential investment in farming / future agri-environment schemes.

The Chief Executive then summarised some comments passed on by email by Trustees Nick Holiday and James Williamson.

There was then a discussion regarding the possible ways the National Association could resource work to move forward the NAAONB's response to Brexit, with a focus on the issue of capacity. A suggestion made that the AONB Family be encouraged to match NAAONB input from reserves to increase capacity.

There was a comment that two pilot projects have been suggested, one in a National Park and one in an AONB.



22nd June 2017

There was a query about the possibility of additional capacity as a result of the end of the FLW programme.

The Chief Executive responded that while the recent FLW work has come to a close, discussions are being had around the next phase of this programme, and, capacity outside of the NAAONB core team is being considered.

Lucy Barron queried whether there are other areas of the business plan which could be given a lower priority to make room for this important issue.

The Chief Executive responded that there is some inflexibility regarding the NAAONB funding contracts and membership base when it comes to changing the business plan.

Paul Walton commented that there is need for a common request from the membership.

The Chief Executive responded that a poll taken from the membership at the chairmen's meeting, in November, which provided a set of 4 priorities which will be worked to.

Rose Day suggested the creation of a task and finish group, to discuss the direction of this work, in conjunction with representation from the membership.

Jill Smith highlighted that there is a tool for collecting case studies in place already (as part of the KPI work).

A brief discussion was had as to the possibility of seeking secondment from within the AONB Family or the employment of a contractor to carry out this work. It was concluded that a certain set of skills are needed for this work. The Chief Executive commented that there is a split in aspiration across the AONB Family on this issue which needs to be pulled together sensitively.

Lucy Barron added that there won't be one solution for all situations, this is a discussion to suggest a range of scenarios.

Paul Walton added that the National Parks voice is not a unified one either. It is therefore important that the NAAONB be a clear voice.

Denise Hewlett suggested that Phil Stirling from Dorset County Council could be a possible lead on this.

The Chairman requested that Mehdi report back to Defra that the NAAONB is working on this.

Resolved that, along with the £6000 which has been committed from the NAAONB reserves, a task a finish group will be set up to seek the "crowd sourced" funding from the AONB Family for work on a NAAONB response to Brexit.

Proposed: Paul Walton

Seconded: Rose Day

Agreed: Unanimously

ACTION Howard Davies to set up a task a finish group to seek this additional funding from the AONB Family for work on the NAAONB response to Brexit. The details, once this is developed, are to be circulated to the Board electronically as timeframe on this is tight.

5. Communications Strategy

This report was introduced by Jill Smith.

Jill Smith responded to a query that as a response to feedback from the AONB Family the key messages need looking at as they need to be snappier. How the messages go out, and to who, is also being looked into. A one page toolkit or calendar is being worked on, which, outlines the NAAONB's role and what the AONB Family's input should be.

The Chief Executive added that the previous communications strategy was very Local Authority based. There is need to be more focused in how the NAAONB communicate, with the AONB Family, to stakeholders, and, to potential funders. He then called for a discussion to agree the direction of



22nd June 2017

travel for this and he highlighted that communications need to be different in Wales, England and N.Ireland.

Denise Hewlett added that there is value to having a common thread to messages as there are many forms of social media to keep up with.

The Chief Executive clarified that the NAAONB is in place to promote the work of the AONB Family, however, is not so good at promoting the work of the NAAONB, so the benefit of the NAAONB can be unclear.

It was commented that there are age gaps to be considered between the different types of social media, and, that it is not just about social media either.

The Chief Executive called for a steer as to how the message is split from the messages of the AONB Family and the messages of the NAAONB.

Paul Walton responded that it is down to the toolkit, which needs to be clear, the communications officer's role needs to be spelt out to the membership. E.g. 50% of NAAONB Communications officer time will be spent on raising the profile of the NAAONB and it is the job of the AONB Partnerships to feed up to NAAONB Communications officer their news - to promote the AONB Family.

Rose Day added that there is a disconnect between AONB partnerships and AONB units, information is not always passed on to the entire unit. Rose Day suggested that there could be a ground swell of information if there were national work reports delivered to Partnerships.

Resolved that quarterly briefings be produced at sent to the chairmen and vice-chairmen.

ACTION Jill Smith to write a quarterly briefing paper on NAAONB Board and Staff action for Partnership meetings to be sent to the chairmen and vice-chairmen

The Chief Executive added that input from the Board on the communications strategy is welcomed as an agreed communications strategy needs to be produced by the end of the month. Comments should be sent to Jill Smith on the Trustee area on Basecamp by the 23rd of March.

ACTION Trustees to send any comments on the communications strategy by 23rd of March
ACTION Jill Smith produce communications strategy by end of March

David Henshilwood arrived at this point 12.10pm

6. Landscapes for Life Conference 2017

Jill Smith introduced this report.

The Chief Executive summarised Nick Holliday's comments submitted via email.

Lucy Barron proposed a widening out of the criteria for the Landscapes for Life Awards. It was suggested that these should go beyond AONB Staff and Partnership employees as there are a number of individuals who have made significant contributions, and should be able to be recognised. The Chief Executive added that last year there was a discussion around continuing the award at all due to the criteria not being quite right. The Board were generally agreed that the award is a very powerful way to recognize community involvement.

Resolved that the criteria to be distributed electronically for Trustee comment

ACTION Jill Smith to distribute L4L award criteria to Trustees for comment and further liaising with Lucy Barron on the wording.

Denise Hewlett suggested that there could be a variety of categories.

The Chief Executive highlighted that there are capacity issues around administering this award. The conference layout has been amended in order that the winners are more meaningfully involved in conference.

Resolved that the award be limited to a certificate in future.

Richard Clarke then summarised the developing relationship with Winchester business school. He highlighted his concerns as to the ability to develop their input to Conference in the given timeframe.



22nd June 2017

Denise Hewlett added that the planned immersive learning sessions sound fantastic, there is work being carried out developing what topics would be valuable as subjects. However, there does need to be information about the attendees of these sessions in order to allow preparation of these sessions. Jill Smith responded that the amount of work going into this is very valuable, there is usually a natural process to the themes of the briefings we have run in the past. Denise Hewlett requested information on who might be attending, what level of interest they will have in the topics and time to develop this. It was suggested that information be gathered and given to Winchester by May.

Resolved that the immersive learning programmes be progressed by going out to the membership to collect information on levels of interest in order that the academics can put the programmes together.

ACTION Jill Smith and Richard Clarke to contact the Winchester academics with necessary additional info by May

Lucy Barron added that she is keen to ensure that there be a diverse range of speakers.

There was a queried as to the appropriate timing of the minister in the programme.

Jill Smith responded that this is being worked on and he is now expected in the morning of the second day.

Lucy Barron added that there is work needed round the wording of the conference advertising to increase the appeal.

ACTION Jill Smith to work on the wording of Conference advertising with Lucy Barron

The meeting broke for Lunch at 12.42

7. NAAONB Draft Budget 2017/18

The Chief Executive introduced this report, it was highlighted that James Williamson, the new Honorary Treasurer, has suggested a rolling 4 year budget. There is concern that there is not a clear idea of where funding is going. Membership rates are currently under discussion, which should be reflected in the budget. The Chief Executive requested thoughts on this from the Board.

The Chairman suggested that the discussion would be better placed with James Williamson present. The lack of expected income for 2017 Conference was briefly discussed.

Resolved that the budget be agreed.

Proposed: Denise Hewlett

Seconded: Rose Day

Agreed: Unanimously

8. NAAONB Reserves Policy

The Chief Executive introduced this report and added that there has been a suggestion from Nick Holiday that the reserves be reduced to a minimum.

The Board discussed this and were generally agreed that this would be too risky, especially considering the effort that has gone into building our reserves.

Resolved that the Reserves Policy be agreed.

Proposed: Lucy Barron

Seconded: Denise Hewlett

Agreed: Unanimously



22nd June 2017

9. NAAONB Business Review update

The Chief Executive verbally updated the Board on this report, he reported that in June last year the Board agreed the case for reform and a timetable was set out, there was then a sub-group meeting in August - notes from this be circulated.

ACTION Howard Davies to circulate the notes from the NAAONB Business Review sub-group meeting which took place in August

The Chief Executive continued, that the Strategic plan was taken to the AGM and was agreed by the membership, but, the Business plan is coming to the end of it's active life as it feels out of date already. A cross section of AONB Lead Officers have been approached, and, an externally facilitated meeting on the 31st of March to discuss the next round of business planning, is planned. Details of the outcomes of this will be circulated. Once progress has been made it will go out to the full AONB Family for testing.

ACTION Howard Davies to report outcomes of the facilitated business planning meeting on 31st March to Trustees

The Chief Executive added that so much of the work NAAONB is doing falls outside of the business plan which makes reporting difficult.

There was a brief discussion around the invitees to the meeting.

Lucy Barron added that the NAAONB shouldn't be afraid of standing up and leading, in an inclusive way, taking a firm stance on issues believed to be important. The AONB Family are looking for strong leadership and wants this as a development to come out of these discussions.

The Chief Executive responded that for leadership to be effective there needs to be a degree of followship.

10. Strategic Risk

The Chief Executive introduced this report, he reminded the board that the document is on Basecamp as a live document which can be altered by Trustees. He then summarised the top three risks from the paper.

Agreed progress on the Resourcing Strategy has not yet been made, therefore, there is need to pick this up and continue progress by drawing up a resourcing strategy.

The Chief Executive suggested that Chris Woodley-Stewart still be involved in this as he is successful at drawing down funding for his AONB Partnership. However, Chris Woodley-Stewart had commented via email that he is not able to progress within the next few months.

The Chief Executive highlighted that there are two options, find more to do more or do less.

Rose Day commented that this links with the membership strategy.

Lucy Barron commented that there is emphasis on the inflexibility with the current way of working needed. e.g. the model doesn't allow for response to Brexit due to lack of capacity.

The Chief Executive responded that this inflexibility is a real problem. We are operating above capacity, with currently little scope of reducing workload.

The Chairman added that it is not about flexibility of mind, the NAAONB is a very lean team and yet never says no.

There was a comment that achieving consensus across the membership makes the process of business planning very complicated.

Lucy Barron stated that capacity of the team needs to be identified.

The Chairman called for Trustees to volunteer to work on this.

Denise Hewlett commented that this doesn't feel like a Governance responsibility, she suggested finding funds to support a role.

The Chief Executive suggested that there is need for further discussion on the resourcing strategy following the business planning meeting on the 31st of March.

The Chairman requested that two directors be tasked with furthering this discussion following the meeting on the 31st.



22nd June 2017

It was suggested that Lucy Barron be involved as she has a clear appreciation for the necessity for change, and that Chris Woodley-Stewart also be involved as he will be the link to the Board at the business planning meeting and can report back.

There was then further discussion around the lack of funds and the lack of a clear steer on what the NAAONB should drop in favour of more important or new bodies of work.

Resolved that following the meeting on the 31st of March to discuss the direction the membership want the charity to go, this will involve a discussion on resourcing. This will be reported to the Board electronically in order that the discussion be continued following this, directors will then be assigned to develop this policy.

11. Management Accounts

Jill Smith introduced this report, it was highlighted that membership has shown a slight increase. Defra and Natural Resources Wales have not reduced NAAONB income. £6000 has been allocated to contingency, this has resulted in the deficit in the Conference 2016 budget not being felt as badly as it could have been. An additional £7000 is to be drawn into the reserves.

The Chief Executive explained that the 2016/17 budget contained inbuilt contingency which was not drawn upon. This has served to mask falling income in other areas. Conference, for instance, did not secure the income budgeted. Trustees must understand the reasons behind the end of year surplus.

Resolved that the Management accounts be agreed

Proposed: Rose Day

Seconded: Paul Walton

Agreed: Unanimously

12. NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report

This report was introduced by Philip Hygate who reported his activity. The Chief Executive and the Chairman had a successful meeting with Lord Gardiner, thanks were given to Mehdi Kurrimbux for his work relating to this. The meeting made clear the importance of change, it focussed on the need to engage proactively on farming interests. At a further meeting with Margaret Paren at National Parks England, there was a practical discussion which led to the agri-environment proposals, mentioned toward the start of this meeting. If these can be furthered swiftly then there will be more relevance to Government.

The Chief Executive requested feedback on the form of the activity report, the document was designed to make reporting to Defra easy, however, it is now regarded as too hefty and no longer fit for reporting the NAAONB's work.

Paul Walton commented that the summary in annex 1 is good, but, he agreed that the RAG is a beast.

There was a suggestion that a one page summary is necessary. The completed elements should be taken out as they are completed, but a cumulative document be preserved for reporting to funders.

13. Defra Report

This report was delivered verbally by Mehdi Kurrimbux, he reported on the work with Lord Gardener on the aforementioned meeting and a series of regional workshops planned in May to seek input into Defra plan. Defra are already liaising with Howard Davies on this. The registration of two AONB State aid schemes are now in place.

Richard Clarke commented that the state aid work has been appreciated.

Mehdi Kurrimbux responded that the report will be delivered soon.



22nd June 2017

14. Natural England Report

This report was introduced by David Henshilwood, he reported further delay with Suffolk boundary consideration and that there has been a meeting between NE and Defra to consider further AONB designation. These will not progress until after Suffolk and Surrey boundary variations have been considered.

David Henshilwood also noted that a stronger, greater partnership is welcomed.

Richard Clarke queried a meeting with James Marquick and John Lewis – changing people's outlooks – sharing thinking.

David Henshilwood responded that it is a significant issue for Natural England and he will report this back so remind them.

Rose Day commented that she is glad to hear that protected landscapes are moving up the agenda. The Chief Executive added that there is work being carried out to draw together something for the next round of management planning.

Terrestrial biodiversity group - outcome 1C - designated landscapes delivering using an ecosystems services approach. A rapid assessment by AONB teams on their current delivery of outcome 1C took place, and served to highlight the lack of capacity within AONB teams to do anything further, in more detail. Natural England recognised this and agreed to explore options around support

15. Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report

No verbal report was given.

AOB

AOB Denise Hewlett raised a concern relating to resources for the Board travel to Board meetings. There was a brief discussion around ways to save money by splitting train tickets or travel by coach. There was a suggestion that the timings of meetings be changed in order to avoid the need for peak rate travel and a request was made that there be a review of the location of venues and timing of meetings.

ACTION Amber Carter to carryout an audit of venues / times / cost of travel for Board meetings.

Meeting Closed at 14.48pm

Dates of next meetings for information

Thursday 22nd June 2017

Thursday 12th October 2017

Thursday 23rd November 2017 (AGM)



22nd June 2017