



Cornwall AONB Partnership Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 29th March 2007
at 2.00 pm in the Grenville Room, New County Hall, Truro

Present:

Peter Mansfield Chairman, Cornwall AONB Partnership

Members:

Cllr Val Newman North Cornwall District Council
Cllr Gill Wilson Carrick District Council (substituting for Cllr Sue Callen)
John Holmes Natural England
Jimmy Scobie Country Landowners Business Association (CLBA)
Patrick Watson National Farmers Union/CLBA (substituting for Amy Dinsdale)
Heather McBeth Government Office for the South West
Sue Wearing South West Regional Development Agency
Ron Daniel Cornwall Association of Local Councils
Mike Robins Environment Agency

Supporting Officers:

Mike Hawkey Cornwall County Council
Steve Crummay Cornwall County Council
Marcus Healan Kerrier District Council
David Attwell North Cornwall District Council
Paul Walton Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager
Colette Holden Cornwall AONB Assistant Officer
Karen Johns Cornwall AONB Office Manager

1. Welcome and Apologies

Actions

Members:

Sarah Manning, Natural England; Cllr Neil Hatton, Cornwall County Council; Cllr Annette Egerton, Restormel Borough Council; Cllr Russell Bartlett, Caradon District Council; Cllr Owen Philp; Penwith District Council; Cllr Sue Callen, Carrick District Council; Cllr Graeme Hicks, Kerrier District Council; Amy Dinsdale, NFU; Nick Lawrence, The National Trust; Veryan Heal, Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service.

Supporting Officers:

Robert Lacey, Carrick District Council; Malcolm Pinch, Restormel Borough Council; Al Collings, Caradon District Council; Deborah Boden, Cornwall County Council World Heritage Site Team.

Partner Presentations: there were no presentations prior to the meeting as previously arranged, due to various circumstances. Steve Crummay offered to give a presentation at a future meeting.

AONB Unit

2. Minutes of last meetings and matters arising

2.1 Partnership meeting (14th December 2006)

- The minutes were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record, except in the Members attendance list on page 1, Sarah Manning now represents Natural England, not the Countryside Agency.

Matters arising:

Agenda Page 2, item 2, Penwith ESA scheme – as discussed at the last meeting, the ending of this scheme in Penwith is of concern to Partners as there could be adverse consequences for the landscape if farmers currently within the ESA cannot qualify for the new HLS once their current ESA agreement ends. J Holmes reported that he does not know how much funding is available in the region or Cornwall for HLS. The HLS application process is being investigated and a new filtering system for new applications will be introduced to help ensure that farmers know from the outset if their application is eligible rather than being turned down further along the application process. J Holmes is writing suggested criteria for the agri-environment schemes and will be focusing on schemes with economic outputs in addition to biological factors.

S Crummay reported that he had recently had the opportunity to speak to David Milliband MP 1 and mentioned the concerns in Cornwall regarding the ending of the ESA scheme and issues regarding the HLS. David Milliband requested that the concerns be put in writing to him. S Crummay will do this and asked Partners for their input. Partners suggested in addition to setting out concerns, the positive work being undertaken in the Cornish landscape should be highlighted in the response. e.g. Cornwall Heath project.

AONB Unit
to contribute
to report

Agenda Page 2, item 2, Funding for Cornwall FWAG – the AONB Unit has worked with FWAG to submit project bids to the Cornwall AONB SDF and Strategic Project funds for 2007/08.

Agenda Page 3, item 3.1, Wave Hub proposal – SW RDA queried the minute recording that the project management for the wave hub in West Cornwall has been delegated to Cornwall County Council. Following the meeting, the SWRDA confirmed that Cornwall County Council has no project management role in Wave Hub. In 2006, the SWRDA began discussions regarding Cornwall County Council having a role in the ownership and operation but these were curtailed before the end of the year and the SW RDA have since been proceeding on the basis that it will own and operate the project, at least in the early years. A Partnership Board for the Wave Hub is being established - confirmed members are Cllr Mitchell, Cornwall County Council; Cllr Bennett, Penwith District Council; representatives from the DTI and Exeter/CUC/Plymouth universities plus an industry representative. The Board has no executive or financial responsibility but will coordinate activity to ensure the best outcomes for Cornwall and the South West.

Agenda Page 3, item 3.2, County Council's Heritage Assets Panel – the findings of the Panel are currently being reported to the relevant County Council Committees. A final report is due in May 2007 and it will be reported to the June AONB Partnership meeting. Two project areas within the Cornwall AONB – Port Isaac in North Cornwall and Germoe parish in West Penwith – are suggested in the report as areas for the audit of heritage assets to be undertaken.

AONB Unit

Agenda Page 4, item 3.2.1, Members Attendance at Partnership meetings – the

Chairman has not yet written to members regarding lack of attendance, but the matter was highlighted again due to the lack of attendance by local authority members at this meeting.

- Partners were asked if they felt reducing the number of meetings per year to 3 would help, but Partners **AGREED** that the existing 4 meetings per year should remain as this allows time for 2 of the meetings each year to include site visits in the AONB which members find particularly beneficial.

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The Council elections on 3rd May 2007 will provide an opportunity for the AONB Unit to contact local authority officers immediately following the elections to discuss appropriate representation by councillors at Partnership meetings.

The Local Government Review currently taking place in Cornwall may result in new and reduced number of local authorities in the County, possibly a unitary authority. If agreed the new authority (or authorities) will commence in 2009 which is also when the current Partnership Statement of Intent ends. Any changes in the local authority arrangements in Cornwall will mean that the AONB Partnership constitution will need to be reviewed.

- It was **AGREED** the Partnership should discuss its constitution in more detail at the September Partnership meeting when the government's response to local government reform in Cornwall will be known. The policy views of Natural England, as majority funders, on the future structure of Partnerships will be crucial.

AONB Unit
and Natural
England

Agenda page 5, item 5.2, Cornwall County Council Countryside Access Strategy – the Draft Strategy is due out for public consultation very soon and Partners are encouraged to read and make comments on the Strategy.

Agenda page 5, item 5.3, Coastal Access – an extract from Natural England's Board Report February 2007 summarising its proposals for their new Coastal Access initiative was circulated at the meeting for Partners' information.

2.2 Officer Meeting (1st March 2007)

The minutes were **AGREED** to be a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Agenda page 7, item 2, undergrounding of electricity wires – a report from Ofgem regarding the involvement in undergrounding schemes by all distribution companies in England and Wales is still awaited. It was clarified that the article in the NAAONB December Newsletter that was referred to at the last meeting concerned transmission wires for the national grid, not distribution lines.

Agenda page 7, item 2, Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project – in February 2007, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) requested more information to accompany the project bid. David Attwell, North Cornwall District Council is undertaking this work and HLF will consider the bid in June 2007.

Agenda page 9, item 4.1, Landscape Monitoring – a contract has been let to Land Use Consultants to undertake a landscape monitoring project which is being jointly funded by the Cornwall, Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONBs. The aims of the project will be to produce a set of baseline indicators for monitoring landscape change in year one, and the second year of the project will develop best practice.

An initial workshop was held involving officers from the 3 AONB Units; Natural England; District Planning Officer and the Director of Land Use Consultants. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Robert Tregay, author of the 1994 Cornwall Landscape Assessment and 1997 assessment of the AONB, *A Cornish Landscape*. The proceedings of the workshop are on the Partnership website <http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/learn/documents/LandscapeMonitoringWorkshop8thMarch2007.pdf>

Agenda page 9, item 4.2, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study – the consultants will complete their work on the Study at the end of March 2007 and presentation will be made to the project Management Group, wider Stakeholder Group and other interested parties on 2nd May 2007 at County Hall, Truro. Partners are very welcome to attend and should contact the Cornwall AONB Unit to book a place. C Holden has jointly managed the project with Judith Hawke, Spatial Planning, Cornwall County Council, since Nigel Mathews, Cornwall County Council retired in September 2006 which has taken up a great deal of C Holden’s time. Now the consultants work on the Study is complete, C Holden’s involvement will be much less, allowing more time to work on other tasks.

All Partners

3. Reports for Decision

3.1 Carrick’s Truro and Threemilestone Area Action Plan

The Plan forms one of the documents that make up the Local Development Framework for the Carrick District. It sets out the options being considered for the location of new transport infrastructure, housing, offices, shopping and leisure facilities in Truro. A map depicting the proposals was shown to the Group.

- It was **AGREED** that a copy of the map should be circulated with these minutes (Appendix 1) and that in future, wherever possible, plans should be circulated with papers.

AONB Unit

The AONB Unit was invited by Carrick District Council planning officers to consider the potential impact upon the AONB of the development proposals. The area which concerns the AONB is to the south of the city around Newham and Calenick. The AONB Unit appointed a planning consultant to undertake an assessment which raised a number of issues for consideration by the Partnership. The possible impact of the proposals upon the AONB were set out in the agenda paper and have been sent to Carrick District Council.

Cllr Val Newman stated that she had to abstain from commenting on this item as it concerned the affairs of another local authority.

Cllr Gill Wilson reported that she has met with concerned residents in Calenick area who are concerned with the proposals regarding potential flooding problems etc and they would like to see a feasibility study undertaken.

- Partners **AGREED** to formally endorse the comments submitted by the AONB Unit to Carrick District Council regarding the potential impact upon the AONB of the proposals contained within the Area Action Plan (as set out in the extract from the agenda paper attached as Appendix 2).

3.2 Cornwall AONB Unit Work Programme 2007/08

The AONB Unit had produced a draft Work Programme for the Unit for 2007/08 and a

copy was circulated at the meeting. This complements the Partnership Business Plan for 2007-2010, agreed in December 2006.

The draft Work Programme sets out the key work areas for the Unit; the resources required for its delivery; and a timetable detailing when tasks and activity will take place. Changes have been made to the AONB Unit in order to deliver the work programme. The Community Officer post (held by Ed Thompson) was a fixed term contract until 2006 (subsequently extended until March 2007) will be replaced by a part-time Planning Officer (2 days/week) and part-time Communications Officer (3 days/week).

Adverts for the 2 new posts and the vacancy for 1 year maternity cover for the Office Manager will be sent out as soon as the core budget grant offer letter has been received from Natural England, which is hoped to be received during the first week of April 2007.

Partners were asked to let the AONB Unit know if they have any comments on the draft Work Programme, or to raise it at the next Partnership meeting in June.

All Partners

3.3 Sustainable Development Fund – Review of Cornwall AONB SDF Delivery

In December 2006, a report was produced by Land Use Consultants following their evaluation of the first year (2005/06) of the SDF programme across all AONBs in England, undertaken on behalf of Natural England. An Executive Summary of the report was included in the agenda papers.

C Holden gave a Powerpoint presentation highlighting the key points of the national evaluation report and how they applied to the delivery of the SDF in the Cornwall AONB

Partners were asked to consider 2 key issues:-

1. What are the key Cornwall AONB Management Plan issues that the Cornwall AONB SDF should consider addressing in 2008/09?
2. Does the Partnership agree to a greater proportion of SDF being used to deliver the sustainability/climate change agenda and diversity objectives?
 - Partners **AGREED** that the Cornwall AONB SDF programme should continue to be used to fund projects in Cornwall and not put into a ‘South West Regional pot’, unless a regional project would also benefit the Cornwall AONB.
 - Partners **AGREED** that key Natural England priorities, climate change and access for disadvantaged groups should be supported by future SDF money.
 - Partners **AGREED** to the recommendation in the agenda paper – namely that a working group be formed of Cornwall AONB Partnership members, including representation from the existing Cornwall AONB SDF Grants Panel, to consider changes to the administration of the Cornwall AONB SDF programme.
 - The following Partners/Officers **AGREED** to form the Working Group:
 - Steve Crummay
 - Natural England (John Holmes agreed to put forward a colleague)
 - Mike Robins
 - Following the meeting, Sue Wearing and David Attwell also volunteered to join the Working Group. The AONB Unit will arrange a meeting of the Group and the outcome of discussions will be reported at the Partnership meeting in September 2007.

AONB Unit

3.4 Joint working with other AONB Partnerships

A request has been received from the Isles of Scilly (IoS) AONB Officer that a member of staff from the Cornwall AONB Unit attend the IoS AONB Joint Advisory Committee meetings to provide the IoS members with additional experience of AONB management.

In considering this request, the Partnership were also asked to consider the merits of exploring opportunities for joint working with the Tamar Valley and North Devon AONBs.

Partners felt that there will be benefits of joint working e.g. sharing best practice with Tamar Valley AONB as the staff unit are set up differently to Cornwall AONB Unit and their way of working is different.

Cllr Val Newman added that she had recently met with the Chairman of IoS and North Devon AONBs at the NAAONB meeting and knows they are both keen on closer working and with the continued funding issues which face local authorities, any cost savings that can be made where local authorities are funding more than one AONB should be considered.

- Partners were agreed on the principle of closer working with the Isles of Scilly AONB but that IoS members should first be invited to attend the next Cornwall AONB Partnership meeting to establish clear objectives for the involvement of the Cornwall AONB staff in IoS meetings.
- Partners **AGREED** that further opportunities of closer working with North Devon and Tamar Valley AONBs should be explored and reported back to a future Partnership meeting.

AONB Unit

AONB Unit

3.5 Cornwall AONB Annual Conference 2007

It was noted that due to the district council elections on 3rd May, there may be fewer member representatives able to attend the Conference this year.

- Partners **AGREED** that the 2007 Annual Conference should be held on Saturday 19th May 2007 at the Maritime Museum, Falmouth. Format of the day to include presentations by appropriate speakers in the morning, and a boat trip around the Carrick Roads/Helford River in the afternoon.
- The AONB Unit will continue with the arrangements for the Conference.

AONB Unit

4. NAAONB/SWPLF

P Walton and Cllr Val Newman (in P Mansfield's absence), attended the South West AONBs Chair's meeting organised by the NAAONB. The meeting provides an opportunity for AONB Chairs and Lead Officers to discuss common issues. The 'joint working with other AONBs' (item 3.4) arose from discussions at that meeting. Cllr Val Newman reported that she found the meeting very useful.

Partners were reminded that the NAAONB Annual Conference will be held on 3rd – 5th July 2007 in the Cranborne Chase AONB. Any Partners wishing to attend should contact the Cornwall AONB Unit for further information.

All Partners

5. Any Other Business

- **The Cornwall Lecture 2007** – the Chairman reported that CPRE Cornwall had

approached the AONB Partnership for advice on the effective use of a recently received legacy. He had suggested it could be used to promote the importance of the landscape to Cornwall. This could be through support for the Cornwall Lecture in November 2008 which could have a landscape theme and an associated publication. The following year is the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Cornwall AONB and the Lecture could be a useful event to focus attention on the landscape of Cornwall. One suggestion was to invite Robert Tregay (see 2.2 above) to speak at the event.

➤ Partners **AGREED** their support for this possibility.

- Cllr Val Newman reported that with elections pending on 3rd May, and the possibility that even if she is re-elected, she may not be re-appointed as North Cornwall District Council's representation on the Partnership – she wished to express how much she had enjoyed representing North Cornwall District Council on the Partnership and the opportunities the site visits has provided for her to see some of the Cornwall AONB. Cllr Newman was warmly thanked for the priority she had attached to supporting the AONB Partnership over the last 4 years, with the hope that future circumstances will enable her to continue.
- This was K Johns' last Partnership meeting before she goes on maternity leave - she will be back at work at the end of April 2008.

6. Date of next meeting

Thursday 28th June 2007 at 2pm (venue to be confirmed). This will be preceded with site visits in the AONB in the morning from 11.30 am (tbc).

Chairman
and
AONB Unit

All Partners

Item 3.1 of the minutes refer - **Carrick's Truro and Threemilestone Area Action Plan**

Comments submitted by the AONB Unit to Carrick District Council regarding the potential impact upon the AONB of the proposals contained within the Area Action Plan.

The following is an extract from the 29th March 2007 Cornwall AONB Partnership meeting agenda paper item 3.1.

4 Possible impact of the proposals upon the Cornwall AONB

- 4.1 While there is much to support in the TTAAP, particularly the need for a strategy for growth, the master planning approach and the emphasis on landscape character in determining the location of housing, the AONB Unit report concludes that:
 - 4.1.1 The proposed location strategy for housing in Truro and Threemilestone is in conflict with the national, regional and local policy guidance for the protection of designated landscapes and that the proposed development would cause significant indisputable harm to the character of the nationally protected landscape.
 - 4.1.2 Housing allocations for the Newham area of the city (H4 & H5) go against the recommendations of the landscape strategy for Truro, prepared by Landscape Design Associates on behalf of Carrick District Council which provides a key part of the evidence base for the TTAAP.
 - 4.1.3 No justification is given for making proposals that contradict this evidence base and no attempt has been made to assess the potential impact of the development upon the parts of the Cornwall AONB affected by the proposals
- 4.2 If these issues are not addressed the proposals could prove to be in breach of Carrick District Councils' duty of regard for the AONB under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and, if considered relevant at the Enquiry in Public for the plan, could be enough for the Inspector to rule the TTAAP unsound.
- 4.3 It is the view of the AONB Unit that Carrick District Council should assess the extent of any possible impact of the proposals for H4 & H5 of the TTAAP upon the Cornwall AONB and use the assessment to inform its development proposals prior to the formal submission to the Secretary of State in March 2008.