



Cornwall AONB Partnership Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 28 June 2007
at 2.00 pm at Zennor Village Hall

Present:

Peter Mansfield Chairman, Cornwall AONB Partnership

Members:

Cllr Val Newman North Cornwall District Council
Cllr David Hughes Restormel Borough Council (substituting for Cllr Annette Egerton)
Cllr Beryl Martin Caradon District Council
Peter Bowden Natural England (substituting for John Holmes)
Vaughan Robbins Natural England
Jimmy Scobie Country Landowners Business Association (CLBA)
Patrick Watson National Farmers Union/CLBA (substituting for Amy Dinsdale)
Ron Daniel Cornwall Association of Local Councils
Sonia Thurley Environment Agency
Simon Trehane South West Regional Development Agency (substituting for Sue Wearing)

Supporting Officers:

Mike Hawkey Cornwall County Council
Steve Crummay Cornwall County Council
David Attwell North Cornwall District Council
Rachel Bray Penwith District Council
Al Collings Caradon District Council
Malcolm Pinch Restormel Borough Council
Veryan Heal Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service
Ann Reynolds Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service
Ann Preston-Jones English Heritage/Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service
Paul Walton Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager
Pete Maxted Cornwall AONB Communications Officer
June Crossland Cornwall AONB Planning Officer
Tasha Dale Cornwall AONB Office Manager

1. Welcome and Apologies

Members:

Sarah Manning, Natural England; Cllr Neil Hatton, Cornwall County Council; Cllr Annette Egerton, Restormel Borough Council; Cllr Russell Bartlett, Caradon District Council; Cllr William Maddern; Penwith District Council; Cllr S Chamberlain, Carrick District Council; Cllr Graeme Hicks, Kerrier District Council; Amy Dinsdale, NFU; Nick Lawrence, The National Trust; Phil Dyke, The National Trust; John Holmes, Natural England; Ian Morrison, English Heritage; Heather McBeth, Government Office for the South West; Sue Wearing, South West Regional Development Agency

Actions

Supporting Officers:

Robert Lacey, Carrick District Council; Deborah Boden, Cornwall County Council World Heritage Site Team; Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Unit; Rodger Dewhurst, Kerrier District Council

Welcome: Cllr Beryl Martin, Cllr David Hughes and Sonia Thurley of the Environment Agency were welcomed to their first Partnership meeting, along with the new team members within the AONB Unit - Pete Maxted, Communications Officer, June Crossland, Planning Officer and Tasha Dale, Office Manager (covering maternity leave for Karen Johns). Greg Clouter, Policy Monitoring Officer at Penwith District Council was also welcomed to the meeting, following his attendance at the morning site visit.

Discussion on the morning site visits

Following presentations by Rob Poole of Penwith District Council and Ivan Annibal of Globe Regeneration, Partners and guests had attended a site visit in the morning to Gear Farm, Zennor, hosted by the owner, Mark Pilcher. The potentially damaging effect of the closure of the ESA Scheme upon the landscape and the incomes of farms in the AONB was the theme of the morning and Mark provided an insight into the realities of farming in the ESA which were a valuable illustration of the key points highlighted by the morning presentations (copy attached as Appendix 1). Ann Reynolds, Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service, provided an informative talk on the historic environment in the West Penwith ESA (briefing note attached as Appendix 2).

- It was **AGREED** that the Cornwall AONB Partnership should take the lead in raising awareness of the implications for the landscape that might result from the ending of the ESA scheme. The AONB Unit will prepare a briefing note to highlight the concerns raised and the possible courses of action open to the members of the Partnership. AONB Unit
- In considering how the Partnership could address some of the issues discussed during the morning, it was **AGREED** that the AONB Unit would raise the issue with other designated ESA's through the South West Protected Landscapes Forum and NAAONB to ensure a collective representation to Natural England. AONB Unit

2. Minutes of last meetings and matters arising

2.1 Partnership meeting (29th March 2007)

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

Matters arising:

Agenda Page 2/3, item 3.2.1, Members attendance at meetings – Following Council Elections on 3rd May 2007, Member representation had been confirmed as:

Re-Appointed:

Cllr Annette Egerton	Restormel Borough Council
Cllr Russell Bartlett (Deputy)	Caradon District Council
Cllr Val Newman	North Cornwall District Council
Cllr Neil Hatton	Cornwall County Council

New Appointments:

Cllr S Chamberlain

Cllr Beryl Martin

Cllr William Maddern

Carrick District Council

Caradon District Council

Penwith District Council

Confirmation was still awaited from Kerrier District Council.

- It was **AGREED** that the AONB Partnership Manager and the AONB Chairman would contact the local authority supporting officers to arrange visits to Cllr S Chamberlain, Cllr Beryl Martin and Cllr William Maddern, to welcome them and provide further information on the aims of the AONB Partnership.

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Agenda page 3, item 2, Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project – the project bid had been unsuccessful due to HLF's assessment of risk. A meeting is due to take place next week with HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) to obtain feedback regarding the project's unsuccessful bid. David Attwell, North Cornwall District Council, advised that the project bid would be re-visited.

Agenda page 4, item 4.2, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Study – The consultants presentation to the Project Management Group, wider Stakeholder Group and other interested parties planned for 2nd May 2007, did not take place. This will be re-arranged at a later date.

Agenda page 4, item 3.1, Carrick's Truro and Threemilestone Area Action Plan – Following agreement by the Partnership at the last meeting to formally endorse the comments submitted by the AONB Unit, the AONB Partnership Manager advised that this process is ongoing.

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Agenda page 4/5, item 3.2, Cornwall AONB Unit Work Programme 2007/08 – The Work Programme was circulated at the last meeting, with a request for comments. The AONB Partnership Manager advised that no comments had been received to date, and as a result the programme would continue as proposed.

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Agenda page 5, item 3.3, Sustainable Development Fund – Review of Cornwall AONB SDF Delivery – It was confirmed that the meeting of a working group, to consider changes to the administration of the Cornwall AONB SDF programme, had not yet taken place. Confirmation of the representative from Natural England was requested. Sonia Thurley confirmed that she would represent the Environment Agency on the working group, in place of Mike Robins.

AONB Unit

Agenda page 6, item 3.4, Joint working with other AONB Partnership – As agreed in the last meeting, an invitation had been extended to the Isles of Scilly members to attend the June Cornwall Partnership meeting. Unfortunately this was not convenient due to tourism commitments of a number of the members. This would also apply to the September meeting. The Cornwall AONB Unit and the Isles of Scilly AONB Unit had recently worked together at the Royal Cornwall Show.

Agenda page 6, item 3.5, Cornwall AONB Conference 2007 – Feedback from Conference attendees was circulated at the meeting, detailing opinions connected to the venue, the morning presentations, lunch and the afternoon boat trip, with an overall very positive response received.

Agenda page 6, item 5, The Cornwall Lecture 2007 – The AONB Partnership Manager reported that the possibility of supporting the Cornwall Lecture in November 2008 was in progress, with a focus on the 50th anniversary of the Cornwall AONB designation.

Chairman
and AONB
Unit

2.2 Officer Meeting (16th May 2007)

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

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising from the Officer Meeting Minutes.

3. Reports for Decision

3.1 Natural England Grant Support 2007/08

The report updated the Partnership on the level of grant support received by the AONB Unit from Natural England for 2007/08.

	Amount applied for	Amount offered by NE
Core activity (75% grant)	174,000	174,000
Project work (50% grant)	42,200	20,000
SDF	100,000	70,000

The grant settlement means that:

- The core activity of the AONB Unit, which includes the staff costs, will continue as set out in the Business Plan.
- The number of projects that will be supported by AONB funds has been reduced from four to two – the Cremyll Townscape and Access Improvements on the Rame Peninsula and the Heritage Assets pilot project.
- The reduction in the SDF (£100,000 in 2005/06, £80,000 in 2006/07) will mean that the selected projects will receive a smaller level of grant intervention than was previously agreed. All projects can continue despite the drop in funding.

A letter was sent by the NAAONB Chairman to Sir Martin Doughty, Natural England Chairman, expressing disappointment at the reduction in the SDF budget countrywide. The NAAONB then requested that all AONB Partnerships write to Sir Martin Doughty and local MP's, highlighting the value of continued support for project work within the AONB and seeking reassurances about the SDF in particular in future years.

- It was **AGREED** that the Cornwall AONB Partnership would write a positive letter to express their gratitude for the funding allocated but also to raise concerns regarding the impact that grant reduction will have on projects within the AONB and therefore the AONB itself.

AONB Unit

3.2 Cornwall AONB Management Plan Review

Sections 89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created a statutory responsibility for local authorities and conservation boards to produce AONB management plans and thereafter to review adopted and published plans at intervals of not more than five years.

The Cornwall AONB Management Plan was published in June 2004 and planning for the review of the management plan needs to begin this year in order to identify the resource requirements needed during 2008/09.

Guidance on reviewing management plans was published by the Countryside Agency in September 2006. This sets out the legal requirements for local authorities as follows:

- The relevant local authority (or authorities acting jointly) or conservation board should carry out a review of their management plan.
- Based on the outcome of this review they should determine whether it is expedient to amend the plan.
- They should make any such amendments that they consider appropriate; and
- They should publish a report on the review, specifying the amendments they have made.

The guidance goes on to actively encourage authorities to publish something “more ambitious and extensive” than the report on the review, although it does make it clear that it is up to individual partnerships to decide on the approach they take.

The Partners were advised of the process required to commence the review of the plan, as below:

- Notify Natural England of the intention to review the plan.
- Form a sub-group, which would include all local authority officers, to review the plan, identify key issues, and ascertain the extent of necessary changes. It would be necessary to consider the possible implications that a Unitary Authority might have.
 - The Partners **AGREED** that the AONB Unit should proceed as proposed. The sub-group would be formed of local authority officers initially, with interest invited from non local authority members.

AONB Unit

4.1 Cornwall County Council Heritage Assets Single Issue Panel

Mike Hawkey, Cornwall County Council, provided an update on the work of the Cornwall County Council Heritage Assets Single Issue Panel (SIP). On the 23rd May the SIP reported to the CCC Executive where 12 policies and 15 actions were agreed. Those specifically relevant to work of the Cornwall AONB Partnership are attached as Appendix 3. It was confirmed that 2 pilot projects will take place within the AONB, in North Cornwall and Kerrier districts.

As a result of the agreed policies and actions, the following key elements have been raised:

- An audit will be undertaken to ascertain current practices and their impact on heritage assets. The new Access Proposals for the English Coast will be taken into consideration to ensure that improving access does not prove detrimental to heritage assets.
- Kath Statham, the newly appointed Landscape Officer, will be the lead officer, working with AONB Unit input, including design solutions at the completion of the audit process.
- Training would be a key element towards ensuring correct procedures at ground level. The creation of a new officer post within CCC Natural Environment, with responsibility to translate policy to a practical level would assist with this. It would also be necessary to

ensure that all information is filtered through from senior level to the employees undertaking the works.

- It was **AGREED** that Mike Hawkey would provide a further update on the progress of the audit at the December Partnership meeting.

M Hawkey

4.2 Rural Development Plan for England

Since 2000 EU funding for rural development initiatives in Cornwall has come through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). For 2007-13 the EAGGF will be replaced by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development which will be delivered in England through the Rural Development Programme (RDPE), with the main aims being:

- To support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors.
- To bring wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities.

Simon Trehane of the South West Regional Development Agency circulated a presentation document (attached as Appendix 4) which shows the principles and priorities for the South West. The SWRDA have produced a Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) which has identified a number of investment themes having funding allocated to them. The themes are:

- Skills Development
- Business Support
- Supply Chain and Adding Value
- Resource Management
- Sustainable Rural Tourism
- Social Enterprise
- Community-led Development

A breakdown of the budget and measures for each of the investment themes is included in Appendix 4.

Simon Trehane reported that these were indicative budgets and there may be requirement for adjustments in some areas.

Copies of the Regional Implementation Plan are available from Simon Trehane, SWRDA (simon.trehane@southwestrda.org.uk).

4.3 South West Coast Path Framework and coastal access

The AONB Unit had received a formal copy of Natural England's advice to Government – Improving Coastal Access and the consultation paper on Proposals to improve access to the English coast. The consultation on these proposals ends on 11 September 2007. The AONB Unit requested guidance on how the Partnership would like the consultation process to be approached. The South West Coast Path already provides exemplary coastal access around Cornwall but is not without its own problems. New legislation under these proposals needs to address the problems of reinstating access after coastal erosion via cliff falls or flooding, which is currently hindered by cumbersome and time consuming Rights of Way legalisation. Additionally, an ability to provide spreading room and avoid confined access would be welcome.

- It was **AGREED** that the AONB Unit will formulate comments and respond to the consultation. This will include sending comments to the Cornwall Countryside Access Forum. Comments to be submitted by 31st July 2007 to the Secretary of the Forum, Shirley Growcott. Should any Partnership members require a copy of the response, this will be available from the AONB Unit

AONB Unit

The AONB Unit has also received for comment a copy of the South West Coast Path (SWCP) National Trail Framework for Action. In respect of the coastal access proposals Ros Love, who was unable to attend the Partnership meeting, sent the following text to introduce the Framework:

The Framework for Action was put together by the SWCP Team in partnership with six managing authorities (including Cornwall) and organisations such as the South West Protected Landscapes Forum, South West Regional Development Agency, South West Tourism, Culture South West, the National Trust and Natural England.

It is more a positioning document than a strategy, designed to raise awareness of everything the SWCP and its wider corridor can do to help deliver other existing strategies. It is also designed to encourage partners help to deliver a range of outcomes, associated with the path itself, the landscape/cultural corridor, sustainability, health and wellbeing, economy and understanding. The Framework is already working - Natural England see it as a model approach to achieving multiple objectives – and the SWCP is judged to be one of 12 key infrastructures in the recently published regional cultural strategy, *People, Places and Spaces*

The Cornwall AONB is one of five protected landscapes through which the SWCP is routed (45% of the whole National Trail is in Cornwall) and there are strong natural alliances between the AONB Partnership and the SWCP Partnership who would welcome the endorsement of the Framework by the Cornwall AONB Partnership.

Further copies are available from the AONB Unit

5. NAAONB/SWPLF

No comments to add.

6. Any Other Business

There were no other items raised.

7. Date of next meeting

Thursday 27th September 2007 at 2pm (venue to be confirmed). This will be preceded with a site visit to the AONB in the morning from 10.30 am (tbc).

All Partners