



Cornwall AONB Partnership Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 28th September 2006
at 2.00 pm at Trevoze Golf and Country Club, Constantine Bay, nr Padstow

Present:

Peter Mansfield Chairman, Cornwall AONB Partnership

Members:

Cllr Neil Hatton Cornwall County Council
Cllr Val Newman North Cornwall District Council
Cllr Russell Bartlett Caradon District Council
Sarah Manning The Countryside Agency
Patrick Watson Country Landowners Business Association
Mike Ellingham National Farmers Union
Sue Wearing South West RDA

Supporting Officers:

Mike Hawkey Cornwall County Council
Al Collings Caradon District Council
Tim Dingle North Cornwall District Council
Robert Lacey Carrick District Council
Paul Walton Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager
Ed Thompson Cornwall AONB Community Officer
Karen Johns Cornwall AONB Office Manager

1. Welcome and Apologies

Actions

Members:

Cllr Annette Egerton, Restormel Borough Council; Cllr Owen Philp; Penwith District Council; Cllr Sue Callen, Carrick District Council; Cllr Graeme Hicks, Kerrier District Council; Nick Lawrence, The National Trust; John James, Cornwall Commercial Tourism Federation; Ron Daniel, CALC*; Veryan Heal, Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service; Amy Dinsdale, NFU; Heather McBeth, GOSW; Mike Robins, Environment Agency; John Holmes, English Nature

* attended the morning site visits only.

Supporting Officers:

Rodger Dewhurst and Marcus Healan, Kerrier District Council; Malcolm Pinch, Restormel Borough Council; Rachel Bray, Penwith District Council; Steve Crummay, Cornwall County Council; Phil Dyke, The National Trust; Deborah Boden, World Heritage Site Team; Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Unit

Sarah Manning was thanked for her help to, and support for, the Partnership to date. Natural England commences on 1 October 2006 and their regional representative has yet to be decided.

It has been agreed that John Holmes will be the local Natural England representative.

2. Discussion on the morning site visits

Partners had attended site visits in the morning in the Bedruthan Steps to Padstow section of the AONB. Tourism was the theme of the morning and included visits to Constantine Bay; Mother Ivey's Bay Caravan Park and Trevoze Head where issues raised included design of beachside facilities e.g. toilet blocks and RNLI buildings, car parking, visitor management and the impact of tourism facilities upon the landscape.

- **In considering how the Partnership can address some of the issues discussed it was AGREED to discuss with the officer group the preparation of an audit of the AONB to identify priority targets and opportunities for landscape enhancement projects**

AONB Unit

3. Minutes of last meetings and matters arising

3.1 Partnership meeting (29th June 2006)

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

Matters arising:

Agenda Page 2, item 3.1 Under-grounding of electricity wires in the AONB – a formal letter is awaited from Ofgem in response to Western Powers' decision not to use the facility provided by the Ofgem price control agreement to underground overhead wires in AONBs and National Parks. The positive response of other Distribution Network Operators across the country is recorded in a Friends of the Lake District (FLD) newsletter. The FLD have long campaigned on the issue of overhead wires and have offered their assistance in efforts to persuade Western Power to review their decision.

North Cornwall District Council has reported on this issue to their Regeneration Committee meeting. It was suggested that other district council representatives also report it to their relevant committees.

The Duty of Regard to the AONB, placed on Western Power under Section 85 of the CRoW Act was discussed. Under the process of reporting on Section 85 progress, it was suggested that DEFRA should be made aware of Western Power's position.

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The Countryside Agency also AGREED to raise the issue through Natural England and DEFRA.

Countryside Agency

- **It was AGREED this is an important matter and the AONB Unit will continue to pursue it.**

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Agenda Page 3, item 3.1, SW RDA presentation – S Wearing is unable to attend the December Partnership but suggested giving a presentation to the March 2007 Partnership meeting. By March internal changes taking place at SW RDA will be complete and more will be known about the Convergence Programme for Cornwall.

AONB Unit /SW RDA

Agenda Page 3, item 3.2, Regional Spatial Strategy – the AONB Unit confirmed that comments on the draft Strategy had been submitted. The SWPLF had also submitted comments on behalf of all the AONBs and National Parks in the region.

Agenda Page 6, item 6, NAAONB/SWPLF – a note of recent NAAONB/SWPLF meetings was not included in the agenda papers, but will be circulated with these minutes.

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Agenda Page 6, item 7, Housing Growth Agenda – due to existing work commitments of local authority partners a bid for grant funding under the Countryside Agency's Countryside in and Around Towns programme has not been submitted.

3.2 Officer Meeting (6th September 2006)

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

Matters Arising:

Agenda Page 8, item 2, Countryside Access Strategy – the Countryside Agency confirmed that the core AONB grant and SDF bids have to be submitted to Natural England by end of December 2006 (not end November as detailed in the minutes); and the deadline for strategic funding bids is end January 2007.

Agenda Page 9, item 3, Living landscapes: hidden costs of managing the countryside – it was clarified that this new report had been jointly published by the NFU and CPRE. Amy Dinsdale, NFU will present the report at the December Partnership meeting. The report is available from the NFU website via the following link:
<http://www.nfuonline.com/documents/NFU%20and%20CPRE%20report.pdf>.
An Executive Summary of the report is available from the AONB Unit.

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A copy of the new **NFU leaflet 'Farming matters in the South West'** was circulated to partners.

Agenda Page 11, item 4.4, Cornwall AONB Website – this is currently being re-designed and will be live in October 2006. It will be presented at the December Partnership meeting.

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Agenda Page 12, item 6, Wave Hub Proposal – C Holden had attended meetings regarding the Wave Hub proposal in West Cornwall and through perseverance had finally persuaded Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership to include the possible impact of the Wave hub upon the landscape of the AONB as part of the scheme's Environmental Impact Assessment.

As the procedure for agreeing the suitable siting of the wave hub is a pilot and the methodology used will be applied to other proposals, it was important that the principle of assessing the effect of the scheme upon the landscape was included. The completed EIA judged that the wave hub will have no significant impact on the AONB.

Nick Harrington is involved in the Wave Hub project on behalf of the SW RDA and the AONB Unit **AGREED** to check that C Holden has been in discussion with him.

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- **It was AGREED that the involvement of the AONB Unit in this project should be put on the SWPLF and NAAONB websites.**

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4. Reports for Decision

4.1 Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project

Cllr Val Newman declared an interest in this project.

Background to the project is detailed in the agenda paper paragraph 2.1. The project had previously been presented at the December 2005 Partnership meeting.

Additional staff resources are required to help ensure the current stage of the project is successful and North Cornwall District Council have approached the AONB Unit for assistance through the secondment of Ed Thompson, the Community Officer. It is a Heritage Lottery Fund requirement that any seconded post is back filled and funding received by the AONB Unit for the secondment will be used to pay for additional resources needed in Ed's absence. The secondment will be for a period of 40 days between September and December. It was also noted that the help that Ed Thompson has already provided in attending meetings has proved invaluable to the success of the project.

During discussion on the proposal North Cornwall District Council clarified that it is a landscape and community project, encouraging not just the Large Blue butterfly but other wildlife.

Agreements are still being negotiated with landowners – agreements that will be crucial to the continuation of the delivery phase of the project. The need for dedicated support for farmers preparing HLS applications was highlighted, as well as the need to assess the potential impact of the scheme upon the character of the landscape.

- **It was AGREED that an assessment of the likely impact of the scheme upon the AONB landscape should be carried out. The AONB Unit will identify with the Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project team how this should be carried out.**
- **Partners AGREED to the proposal set out in the agenda paper (para 1.1 i)), namely, to second staff time from the AONB Unit to support the development of the Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project.**
- **It was AGREED that a visit to the Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project area will be arranged for Partners.**

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An update of the project progress will be provided at the next Partnership meeting. The AONB Unit will work with the Project officers to assess how the project can best enhance the landscape character of the project area.

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4.2 AONB Unit Business Plan 2007 – 2010

An initial meeting of members from the Officer Group was held on 2nd August to identify actions to be included in the AONB Unit Business Plan 2007 – 2010. Following that meeting, a list of key work areas for the AONB Unit had been drafted and outlined in the agenda paper.

In the light of the limited resources available to the Partnership highlighted in the previous item the question of whether the AONB Unit should get involved in marine issues was raised as it is not the direct remit of the AONB designation. However, 3 estuaries adjoin the AONB and the AONB Unit/Partnership has been involved in commenting on marine proposals that can impact upon the landscape e.g. the West Cornwall Wave Hub proposal and the Ship to Ship oil transfer proposal.

- **It was AGREED that the AONB Unit should monitor how much involvement it has on marine matters.**

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As agreed at the last Officer Group meeting, an additional item 'legislative change' will be added to the list of key work areas.

- **Partners AGREED the key work areas as set out in the agenda paper – with the addition of 'legislative change' (as agreed at the last Officer Group meeting).**

The AONB Unit will produce a Draft Business Plan 2007-2010 which will be reported to the December Partnership meeting for consideration prior to it being submitted with the core grant bid to Natural England at end of December 2006.

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5. Reports for information and discussion

5.1 Outcome of recent planning consultancy work on behalf of the Cornwall AONB Partnership

Between February and June 2006, the Cornwall AONB Unit commissioned June Crossland to provide advice on the Cornwall AONB Partnership's engagement with the Local Development Frameworks. The resulting report – *Cornwall AONB Partnership's Engagement with the Local Development Framework* – led to two further pieces of work: the preparation of criteria which the AONB Unit can use to assess the emerging LDF policies for the conservation and enhancement of the Cornwall AONB, and a framework for the review of the AONB Management Plan to ensure the Plan is complementary to and supports Local Development Documents prepared by the local authorities in Cornwall.

The consultancy work has proved of benefit to the work of the AONB Unit. The main conclusions of the work were reported as:

- The development of criteria against which policies affecting the AONB can be assessed has helped inform the response to consultations at local and regional level. The criteria will be circulated to officers and local authorities and the approach shared with the SWPLF.
- Developing the evidence base for use by local authorities, perhaps leading to a "State of the Cornwall AONB" report, can result from the work currently being done by the Cornwall Landscape Character Project and will lead on from the monitoring work highlighted in the AONB Management Plan.
- Developing the relationship between the revised AONB management plan and the Local Development Framework and preparing design guidance for the Cornwall AONB is highlighted in the key area of work for the AONB Unit 2007-2010 and work is ongoing to identify the resources that will be needed to do this successfully.

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Copies of the report produced as a result of the consultancy work are available from the AONB Unit and will be made available on the Cornwall AONB website.

6. NAAONB/SWPLF

A report of recent NAAONB/SWPLF meetings will be circulated with the minutes.

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7. Any Other Business

- ***Living buildings in a living landscape*** – English Heritage and the Countryside Agency have produced this document. The AONB Unit have discussed it with the County

Council's Historic Environment Service with a view to taking some of the suggestions forward.

- **AONB Partnership and Unit Indicators** – these have been produced by the Countryside Agency which will be used by Natural England to report on the work of AONBs to DEFRA. A copy of the indicators was circulated at the meeting.
- **Cornwall AONB Partnership Annual Review 2006** – Copies were circulated at the meeting. The Review covers the first 3 years of the AONB Partnership to date. The importance of ensuring the Review document is sent to the most appropriate people was raised, and also how to ensure that the document is read by those who receive it.

- **It was AGREED that the Review should be circulated with a covering letter, tailored appropriately to each type of organisation e.g. refer to a relevant page in the Review that would be of interest to that organisation.**
- **It was AGREED that copies could be sent by email where appropriate and effective.**

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- The importance of local authorities acting as champions of the AONB, particularly with regard to contentious planning applications within the AONB was reiterated. The **Guide for AONB Partnership Members**, produced by the Countryside Agency was referred to as a reminder of how Partners, including elected members, have a role in ensuring that planning policies and decisions contribute positively to the enhancement of the AONB. Concern was expressed that planning authorities do not always appear to be complying with the detail contained in the guide, even though they are a partner to the AONB Partnership. The AONB designation appears on occasions to be given due regard only when the planning authority want a reason to refuse an application. It was suggested that a briefing on the AONB for development control staff and/or local authority members might be trialled with a district.
- **Valuing our Environment report** – consideration should be given to revisiting this document, produced by the National Trust in 1999, with a view to providing an updated report to inform the new Convergence Programme
- Copies of the **Natural England Strategic Direction 2006 – 2009** document were circulated at the meeting.
- **Countryside Quality Counts** – consultation on this initiative by the Countryside Agency ends on 27th October. There have not been many responses from Cornwall and it was suggested the AONB Unit should try and comment on this to help ensure the final work produced will be useful to Cornwall.
- **Improvements to footpath network** – Cornwall County Council is currently meeting with all parish councils to discuss changes to maintenance programmes. The County Council will work closely with parishes to ensure better quality control and ensure hedges etc are only cut when necessary. Coastal parishes have been given a priority for maintenance as they fall within the South West Coast Path network – and many of these also fall within the Cornwall AONB.

AONB Unit to investigate
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8. Date of next meeting

Thursday 14th December 2006, 2pm, Grenville Committee Room, New County Hall, Truro. The meeting will be preceded with presentations by invited partners. The AONB Unit will check that this date does not clash with any local authority committee meetings or World Heritage Site meetings or Tamar Valley AONB meetings.

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