



Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Minutes of Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 'Virtual' Partnership Meeting on Microsoft TEAMS (due to Covid 19) held on Tuesday 15th September 2020, 11.00-12.30

This virtual online 1.5 hour meeting was convened during the Covid 19 pandemic. Agenda papers were circulated in advance of the meeting.

In Attendance (virtual via Microsoft TEAMS)

Members:

Gill Pipkin	Chairperson, Cornwall AONB Partnership
Dominic Fairman	Cornwall Councillor
Martin Alvey	Cornwall Councillor
Loic Rich	Cornwall Councillor
Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher	NFU
Cathy Woolcock	Cornwall Heritage Trust
Deborah Boden	Cornish Mining World Heritage Site team
Simon Browning	Westcountry Rivers Trust
Corine Dyke	Natural England
Ann Preston-Jones	Historic England
Mark Camp	Visit Cornwall
Gemma Finnegan	Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC)
Tim Light	Fal River Cornwall Partnership

Supporting Officers:

Peter Marsh	Cornwall Council, Environment Service
Steve Ford	Cornwall Council, Environment Service
Ann Reynolds	Cornwall Council, Historic Environment Service
Hannah Harris	Cornwall Council, Transport
Davina Pritchard	Cornwall Council, Planning
Grace Twiston-Davies	University of Exeter, Environment & Sustainability Institute
Emma Browning	Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager
Jim Wood	Cornwall AONB Planning Officer
Charlotte Goodship	Cornwall AONB Wheal Buzzy Project Officer
Melodie Manners	Cornwall AONB Business Development Officer
Karen Johns	Cornwall AONB Office & Finance Manager

Apologies:

Chris Coldwell, Cornwall AONB Project Development Officer; Kate Leyshon, University of Exeter; Cheryl Marriott, Cornwall Wildlife Trust; David Rodda, Economic Growth, Cornwall Council; Helen Rawe, Cornwall Heritage Trust
Becky Hughes & Lawrie Sampson, FWAG South West

Action(s)

1 **Hello and 'Check in' to virtual platform**

Partners joined the meeting and their attendance was noted for the minutes. Attendees were encouraged to also use the text 'chat' option as well as speaking during the meeting.

2 **Introductions**

Everyone introduced themselves and the Chairperson particularly welcomed Melodie Manners, new Cornwall AONB Business Development Officer who had joined the AONB Unit on 3rd August 2020 as Jane Davies' successor who has now retired and had left the Unit team on 31st August 2020.

Melodie provided a brief introduction and background to her relevant skills and experience to the new role.

3 **Actions from last meeting (15 June 2020)**

All actions from the minutes of the last meeting had been undertaken.

4 **AONB Unit Covid 19 Update**

Emma Browning reported that the AONB Unit team continues to be working from home but very much business as usual as it has been since March 2020 Covid 19 lockdown and have also started undertaking site visits again. The team have been really busy and able to progress on projects and activities via virtual online meetings.

Now had one social distanced face to face team meeting on 9th September and hope to do so at least fortnightly from now on if Covid 19 guidance allows.

Partners Covid 19 update: Partners were asked how their organisations and teams were working during Covid 19.

CRCC - staff can have 1 day a week in the office which they book in the calendar but for the most part working from home

NFU - meetings all virtual for the remainder of year. Staff working from home

CHT - still working at home, agree with Emma Browning re: the need to bounce off each other for more dynamic conversations!

University of Exeter- most still working from home unless they are student facing. Labs are open. Staff can visit stakeholders only if we have been given permission and have small meetings socially distanced if essential.

NE - is opening a few offices for only priority employees but Cornwall office is not yet open

5 **Annual Report 2019/20**

Karen Johns had compiled the Annual Report in-house resulting in no design or printing costs to save expenditure and to make it an online publication only. Partners had previously received a link to the online [Annual Report](#) and were asked for their feedback and the comments received were: very positive report - some great projects; good and good mix of words and pictures; like the online flipbook version.

6 **AONB Unit Project and Planning Update**

Emma Browning provided the following update on Chris Coldwell, Project Development Officer's projects as Chris was on annual leave.

Monumental Improvement

Events

Since the last Partnership project events have been able to re-start albeit at a slower pace and with restrictions in terms of numbers and social distancing requirements. To date the project has held two training events at Kynance Gate on the Lizard and Stowe's Hill on Bodmin Moor training 27 people in site surveying and recording with the support of Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

The Kurt Jackson "A Prehistoric Cornwall" Show also launched on 29th August, which features several project sites and is in collaboration with the AONB with a project display upstairs at the Jackson Gallery in St Just along with one by the Penwith Landscape Partnership. The show runs through to February 2021. Board members are encouraged to visit as the early feedback has been excellent: -

<https://www.kurtjackson.com/exhibitions/prehistoric-cornwall/>

Project Team

Following a recruitment exercise in July, provisional offers have been made for the Project Manager and Activities Officer to deliver the remainder of the Development Stage of the project through to November 2021 when the Delivery Stage National Lottery Heritage Fund application is to be submitted. The successful candidates are expected to start at the end of September and at the end of October.

Additional funding

Following a two-stage bidding process, we have been informed verbally that our Community Led Local Development Grant £70,279 bid for the project has been successful at the SE Cornwall Local Action Board. This will provide funding to deliver a one day a week Development Programme for residents of Liskeard, Torpoint and Saltash based at Maker Heights in our Rame Head section in partnership with the Rame Conservation Trust, Adult Education, Cornwall Archaeological Unit and Samaritans. The project will run for 2 years from November 2020 and cover the cost of a making the Activities Officer post full-time. In addition to providing training, skills development and wellbeing benefits the project will continue our efforts with local partners to stabilise Redoubts 4 and 5.

Project works

Survey work by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit has continued apace since the easing of lockdown with drone surveys completed for most of the sites within the project scope, which have been hugely popular on our social media pages.

Physical improvements separately funded by Historic England and Cornwall Council have continued again after lockdown with the contract let to Heritage Cornwall to re-instate a matching bridge back in Redoubt 5 for the first time since the Second World War.

Communications

During lockdown the project established a Friends group that now has nearly 50 members. A first newsletter in May has recently been followed up by a further one at the beginning of September.

Kerdroya

As previously notified by the Partnership Manager, enabling works have been undertaken on site at Colliford Lake by Golden Tree's contractor, Loveny Construction, pending the implementation of the main body of works in Spring 2021.

Work continues by Golden Tree Productions to "plug" a gap of £200,000 caused by the loss of eligibility for Highways England funding, the project having previously secured an in principle offer of support.

Sustainable Transport

Having delivered the Cremyll Ferry to Cawsand cycle route and launched this in January 2020, the final part of this Leader-funded project was completed following lockdown

delays in August. This was the installation of two waymarkers marking two of the entrances in to the Rame Head section of the AONB near Polhawn Fort on Whitsand Bay and at Furlanesend, Kingsand. These have been very well received locally. Funded by the AONB two further waymarkers have also been installed in South Coast Eastern marking the approach to Fowey and Polperro.

Maker Way

This project has developed from the Monumental Improvement project with local partners (Rame Conservation Trust, Pigshill Woodlands, Mount Edgcumbe Country Park and seeks to connect the scheduled monument sites of Rame with Mount Edgcumbe Country Park and the Cremyll Ferry to Plymouth, providing a facility for local people and visitors to bring increased tourism to this quieter part of Cornwall's "Forgotten Corner". A Rural Development Programme bid for £70,312 through the Rural Tourism strand was encouraged in April 2020 with the full bid currently being worked up for submission in October. A further bid for £50,000 for this project is being made for Community Infrastructure Levy to Cornwall Council.

The project has generated strong local support including from businesses, many of whom see it as a vehicle to generate increased footfall. A recent project survey found that 96% of respondents said they would be encouraged to visit Maker's historic redoubts if the Maker Way was implemented.

The funding if successful will pay for path improvements, signage and virtual reality interpretation.

Bee Happy, Be Healthy

Following an expression of interest to the National Lottery Community Fund for a £440,000 bid for a four-year pollinator project, this project was encouraged in April 2020. However unfortunately this coincided with the focus on the funding response to Covid-19, that caused a halt to all main funding programmes by the Community Fund.

We are hopeful that the full application process can re-start in late October with our partners Buglife, the University of Exeter and the Active Cornwall Partnership. Cornwall Council's Countryside Team have also recently expressed an interest in being involved as a project partner.

Bodmin Moor Peatlands

Further DEFR funded re-wetting through this project is soon to get underway at Priddacombe near Bolventor forming the final stage of the effort to re-wet 135 hectares of peat. Following a hiatus during lockdown with a number of partners being furloughed the Peatlands Partnership will be refreshed in October to explore the scope for a future re-wetting project to take advantage of new funding opportunities through the Government's 25 year Environment Plan.

Planning Update: Jim Wood provided an update – he confirmed the continuing pressure of planning applications within the AONB with typically between 30 and 60 applications per week.

Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher raised concerns regarding permitted development on agricultural buildings so will discuss separately with Jim Wood on this.

NFU Farming in Designated Areas – Patrick Aubrey Fletcher will share results of this survey with the AONB Unit

Wheal Buzzy Project – Charlotte Goodship provided the following update:

- Final few months of the project which has been extended until mid October
 - Through reworking of budget to reflect Covid output and subsequent mothballing of parts of the project (Schools, Engagement and walks)

P Aubrey-Fletcher/Jim Wood

P Aubrey-Fletcher

- Additional funding sourced to the value of £2000, to work in the West Penwith area predominantly bring Wheal Buzzy into the community around St Just Town and increasing our Health and Wellbeing output post Covid 19
- Resumed active program post easing of lockdown restrictions at beginning of July
- Bee Healthy Walks are now taking place in both St Agnes and St Just on a weekly basis (Wednesday in St Agnes, Thursday in St Just)
- Consulting on interpretation panels for project
- Revised target for land improved for Solitary Bees of 53.75 ha - an increase on the original stated 40ha and a subsequent increase on the target of 22ha improved
- Commenced Project evaluation report

Melodie Manners, provided an update on the **Cornwall AONB Trust** which had been mothballed since lockdown, but it is hoped meetings and activities of the Trust will be starting up again from October.

Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) – work has continued on this pilot project with farmers on the Lizard area. Initially meetings and workshops with farmers were online since lockdown, but the farmers discussion group has now started meeting up face to face and socially distanced.

Penwith Landscape Partnership (PLP) – progress with the individual projects has slowed down during Covid 19 due to volunteering activity being less active, but activity is now starting to resume with the 2 PLP projects that the AONB Unit leads on – That's our Parish and Outstanding Penwith now picking up momentum.

Slow Food Movement – importance of biodiversity is the theme of the online slow food event in Oct. Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher reaffirmed the importance of including the local supply chain – farm shops and local shops in the community. There are hashtags to promote #shoplocal and reducing food miles. Melodie will provide the info to Patrick. Patrick mentioned the food suppliers to care homes for example and this is being looked at with a view to making links.

Melodie Manners

7 **AONB Management Plan – 2016-2021 – Partners update on the 7 outstanding actions**

Partners were asked to focus on the 7 outstanding actions that appear to have little or no progress to date.

Dominic Fairman raised the Action C – produce a Supplementary Planning Document - as he wasn't aware of any progress. Jim Wood confirmed that he read a very early draft Document when he joined the AONB Unit just over 3 years ago, but this had not been pursued as there had unfortunately not been any appetite by Cornwall Council to further the Document.

With 27% of Cornwall designated as AONB, Dominic Fairman added that a dedicated SPD should be a priority – more clarity for making decisions in the AONB would be welcomed by some elected members.

Deborah Boden asked if the SPD would relate to Planning for the Future White Paper recommendations? Jim Wood confirmed that the Cornwall AONB hoped to be able to provide a response to the White Paper (possibly as part of a group response of SW AONBs), but this has not been possible to arrange to date. Jim Wood confirmed he had already read the briefing note on the White Paper that the World Heritage Site Planning Officer had prepared for their Technical Panel.

South Devon AONB Planning document - Corine Dyke mentioned and will discuss with Jim Wood if it is something the Cornwall AONB could also look to produce something similar. Jim confirmed that he is aware of the South Devon document. Corine Dyke added that Natural England has supported the North Pennines AONB SPD. Jim Wood will have a look at this SPD.

Corine Dyke/
Jim Wood

Jim Wood

Jim Wood added that The Cornwall SPD 'Draft' is very much a 'Draft' which is now outdated so would need more detailed work to get it ready to present to Cornwall Council Planning.

Dominic Fairman asked if applications for ELMS within the AONB could be given greater weight similar to SSSI for the higher level schemes which might be competitive? Corine Dyke will ask colleagues at Natural England and feedback their response. **UPDATE: following the meeting, Corine Dyke fed back the following response from local ELMS colleagues at NE:**

"I'm afraid there is no answer to this yet as Tiers 2 & 3 (higher level schemes) aren't the focus of current development. Work is focussing on Tier 1 currently. We will feed this query back to the NE lead on ELM, but it will be some time until this is considered."

Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher pointed out that Action Y has in fact been progressed as part of the Slow Food Movement that Melodie Manners is now working on.

Partners were asked to look at the 7 outstanding actions with their organisations and report back on any update on progress.

All Partners

8 Management Plan Review

The current Management Plan runs until 2021. The AONB Unit will commence the Management Plan Review process now to review the current Plan and discuss what needs to change or be added, draft and consult to create the new 5 year Management Plan for 2022-2027.

In addition, in tandem with this review process, the AONB Unit plan to let a contract to consultants over next 6 months to produce a State of the AONB report.

'What do you want from the next Management Plan?'

Partners were asked this question. Discussions included the 4 headlines in the Offer to the Nation links to Glover Review and if recommended to proceed how the AONB would prioritise them and make appropriate for Cornwall. Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher mentioned the recommendation of farm advisors and need to be independent (as an example of how Glover will be implemented).

'What is your Vision for the AONB?'

The Vision for the next 5 years could look quite different to the current Plan's vision to take account of issues affecting the Cornwall AONB such as coastal communities, climate change and decline in species.

Topic Working Groups (Steering Group) to gain feedback using designed question set – rolled out via Survey Monkey to Partners/Stakeholders

Instead of a Steering Group that was discussed at the last Partnership meeting, the AONB Unit will arrange a series of themed Topic Group online meetings to commence

	discussions on the Management Plan Review and structure and content for the new Plan. AONB Unit will be in touch with Partners and other colleagues from their organisations and stakeholders to invite them to the Topic Groups such as Farming, Planning, Biodiversity, Tourism, Marine etc.	AONB Unit
	Grace Twiston-Davies liked the Topic Groups idea and reaffirmed that the Management Plan review provides an opportunity to be able to respond to climate change emergency issues, connecting people with nature, health and well-being, changes in farming landscapes and the 25 year Environment Plan, green growth, nature recovery networks etc so some key topics can be addressed in the new Plan.	
	Management Plan extension request – Emma Browning reported that the AONB Unit has begun the process of requesting an extension to produce the Management Plan, partly due to Covid 19 and that consultation will take longer. AONB Unit has approached Natural England and Cornwall Council and their responses are awaited. Defra will then be contacted to finalise the decision.	AONB Unit
	Partners were asked to put any more questions in the online meeting chat comments or email Emma Browning emma.browning@cornwall.gov.uk direct with any comments or suggestions on the Management Plan Vision, Topic Groups etc.	All Partners
9	South West letter – Nature Recovery and NAAONB Colchester Declaration	
	Emma Browning referred to the joint letter from the South West AONBs that partners may have already received as it was circulated to a range of stakeholders. It sets out the way forward following the AONBs signing up to the Colchester Declaration in July 2019 to show AONBs commitment to nature recovery and that Cornwall AONB, as with all AONBs in the South West, will be contacting partners, stakeholders, LNPs etc to discuss how to work together to take this work forward via the local nature recovery networks pilots etc.	
10	Chair to meet LNP Chair	
	Gill Pipkin is due to meet the LNP chair to discuss NAAONB Colchester Declaration, etc and if Partners would like anything else to be added to the agenda then to let Gill or Emma Browning know Emma.browning@cornwall.gov.uk or gillpipkin@gmail.com	All Partners
11	NAAONB Offer to the Nation	
	Emma Browning recommended that Partners take time to read the Offer to the Nation document from NAAONB. An extract of an email from Howard Davies, Chief Executive, NAAONB was included with the agenda papers which provides introduction to the Offer to the Nation.	All Partners
	Emma Browning mentioned Natural England's advice to Government following the Glover Review. Natural England has strongly welcomed the 'Glover' Landscapes Review's vision and ambition for England's landscapes. A copy will be circulated with these minutes.	AONB Unit
12	Landscapes for Life Week (19th to 27th Sept 2020)	
	#MyNationalLandscapes and tag NAAONB	
	Melodie Manners introduced the National AONBs Landscapes for Life Week. This is a week (and a bit) PR campaign where all AONBs across the Country join in to promote	

	awareness of AONBs and their events, projects and activities taking place. Partners were asked to join in with any social media etc they are doing during the 9 days by including the #MyNationalLandscapes and tag NAAONB	All Partners
13	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Cornwall Community Flood Forum – Martin Alvey mentioned that the Forum’s Annual Conference will be a digital one, taking place online on 6th November 2020 from 09.15 – 15.30. It is a free event – please click this link https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cornwall-community-flood-forum-digital-conference-tickets-120175324631 for more details, the agenda and to book your place.</p>	All Partners
14	Date & Time of next meeting – Weds 2nd Dec 2020, 10.30am. This will be an online TEAMS meeting or possibly a face to face social distanced meeting depending on Covid 19 guidelines at that time.	All Partners