



Minutes of Cornwall AONB Partnership Meeting held on Thursday 26 Sept 2019 at 1.15pm, Polurrian on the Lizard, Mullion

In Attendance

Members:

Gill Pipkin	Chairperson, Cornwall AONB Partnership
Jim Flashman	Cornwall Councillor
Martyn Alvey	Cornwall Councillor
Loic Rich	Cornwall Councillor
David Marshall	Natural England
Ann Preston-Jones	Historic England
Mark Camp	Visit Cornwall
Becky Hughes	FWAG South West
Martin Goodall	ERCCIS & Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Supporting officers:

Ann Reynolds	Cornwall Council, Historic Environment
Marshall Plummer	Cornwall Council Planning Development Management
Jane Davies	Interim Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager & Development Officer
Jim Wood	Cornwall AONB Planning Officer
Chris Coldwell	Cornwall AONB Project Development Officer
Charlotte Goodship	Cornwall AONB Wheal Buzzy Project Officer
Karen Johns	Cornwall AONB Office & Finance Manager

1. Apologies

Helen Rawe, Cornwall Heritage Trust (attended morning site visit); Cathy Woolcock, Cornwall Heritage Trust; Dominic Fairman, Cornwall Councillor; Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher, National Farmers' Union; Nigel Blackler and Hannah Harris, Cornwall Council Transportation; Deborah Boden, Cornish Mining World Heritage Site; Ian Kemp, National Trust; Catherine Leyshon, Exeter University; Tim Light, Fal River Cornwall; Peter Marsh, Peter Herring & Ben Sansom, Cornwall Council Environment Service; David Rodda, Cornwall Agri-food Council; Grace Twiston-Davies, ESI; Jimmy Scobie, Will Langer and Rupert Hanbury Tension, Cornwall Land & Business Association; Nick Russell, Historic England; Cheryl Marriott, Cornwall Wildlife Trust; Simon Browning, Westcountry Rivers Trust

Welcome – The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including Steve Jermy, Chair, Wave Hub Ltd and Non-Executive Director of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP who gave a presentation under item 3a. The morning had been preceded with a site visit from Mullion Golf Club to Gunwalloe to hear about the National Trust's land management plans for the area and the Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement Project which includes Gunwalloe Fort as one of the project sites.

Cornwall AONB Partnership 2018/19 Annual Report, new AONB leaflet, Wheal Buzzy Project leaflet and a copy of the Poem commissioned for AONBs National Moment Day, were circulated at the meeting. National Moment Day on 21st September was a celebration by all AONBs across the

Actions

country as part of Landscapes for Life week (21-29 Sept), where AONBs held events with their communities such as forming a human chain heart, crop circle heart, labyrinth heart etc., to raise awareness and importance of AONBs. The Cornwall AONB Unit organised a sand art labyrinth heart at Porthcurnick Beach, Portscatho. It was a successful event, despite the inclement weather, with many day visitors to the beach taking an interest, joining in and following the labyrinth paths to the centre where the 'Heart of the Landscape' had been sculpted.

2. Minutes of last meeting (2 May 2019) – minutes were AGREED to be a true and accurate record. The following matters were arising:

Page 1, item 2 – Bodmin Moor Peatlands project – there has been no progress on this due to C Beckham leaving – A Reynolds will speak to J Davies and the new Partnership Manager about this when they are in post.

AONB Unit/
A Reynolds

Page 4, item 4, undergrounding overhead wires schemes – J Wood reported that he has picked this up since C Beckham left and both schemes at Zennor and Trevoze Head are progressing well and final legalities of completion of the schemes are being discussed.

Page 6, item 7, Royal Cornwall Show – J Flashman asked about the AONB stand – AONB Unit confirmed it was in the Forestry area as previous years, lots of visitors to the stand despite inclement weather on the Friday. The Archaeological finds provided by CAU proved a very popular exhibit as well the children's mystery competition.

3a. Presentation by Steve Jermy, Wave Hub Ltd on proposed floating wind turbines at Wave Hub, Hayle Bay

Steve Jermy is Chair of Wave Hub Ltd and a member of the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP and provided a presentation to the Partnership to set out the benefits the floating wind turbines could bring to achieving Zero Carbon Cornwall. The following is a summary of the presentation main points and discussion.

- The presentation covered Policy context, floating off shore wind and what have we been doing about it?
- The Climate Change Emergency Declaration has helped support the case for alternative energy alternatives and opportunities.
- Zero Carbon Cornwall – Cornwall Council Climate Change Emergency and LEP Industrial Strategy will work together and link towards Zero Carbon Cornwall
- Transport, heat and power is the current focus and talking to all industries - agriculture, construction, marine, manufacture and mining
- There is a huge gap in current supply and demand of renewable energy requirements.
- What is floating off-shore wind? Explaining engineering and operational factors such as water depth and also the policy and market factors.

3b. Cornwall AONB current position on proposed Wave Hub – J Wood presented this item. The Cornwall AONB Unit was consulted by MMO on the Section 36 Consent for the floating wind turbines and provided a consultation response on 5th December 2018. The proposal is not within the Cornwall AONB but lies offshore of the West Penwith section and more distantly the Godrevy to Portreath section of the AONB.

The importance of the seascape and the relationship to the AONB landscape and its remoteness and exposure are key attributes and special qualities of the character of this section of the AONB. The presence of turbines at sea (albeit at some distance offshore, but with little to provide scale or distance references) will erode the natural, untouched setting of the AONB which is currently largely open sea with little presence of shipping. The Cornwall AONB Unit, in its response letter dated 5 December 2018, objected to the proposed development on the basis of the significant effects of the proposed turbines within the seascape setting of the designated AONB landscapes

giving rise to unacceptable harm to those landscapes and the appreciation of them. J Wood added that the position of this objection still remains.

3c. Proposal from Cornwall Councillor Martyn Alvey on alternative energy sources – Cllr

Alvey set out the proposal on alternative energy sources and the balanced view of the AONB landscape and seascape and the strategy for achieving Zero Carbon Cornwall. It was felt necessary for the Partnership to debate the issue of the proposed floating turbines and their potential effects on the designated landscape in the light of the wider environmental issue of climate change and particularly the recent declaration by Cornwall Council of a Climate Emergency.

D Marshall mentioned the Glover Review states that National Parks are currently trying to preserve them in 'aspic'. The importance of communities to the AONB should be addressed.

B Hughes stated that there are going to be inevitable changes taking place in the landscape to address Zero Carbon Cornwall and in particular the NFUs goal of Achieving Net Zero in Farming by 2040 e.g. increased woodland planting on farms, increased soil carbon storage.

A Reynolds mentioned the 'Ancient Penwith' project as part of the Penwith Landscape Partnership project – the floating wind turbines would have an effect on the precious West Penwith landscape affecting the purpose and outcomes of the Ancient Penwith project. There is a need to make haste on addressing the need for Zero Carbon Cornwall but how can it be undertaken without unnecessary detriment to the precious landscape character?

A Preston-Jones stated that we should not forget West Penwith had been an industrial landscape in its day and is now facing more modern pressures for the provision of alternative forms of energy.

M Goodall mentioned that Cornwall is one of 3 favoured areas for Lithium Mining, so if this ever commenced and the floating wind turbines, there would be several factors that would be impacting on the historic character of the landscape.

M Camp stated that Cornwall does actually benefit from tourism as a result of its industrial heritage with many visitors coming to Cornwall to see the relics of the tin mining industry which actually has World Heritage Site status. Visitors do tend to accept that landscapes changes over time.

B Hughes – asked if there is scope for farmers to include in their planning applications that the proposal is to meet Carbon Neutral? M Plummer confirmed that there is consideration on this and relevance on planning applications forms that the proposed development is to benefit of Carbon Net Zero.

M Alvey put forward the following proposal:

'That the AONB Partnership reserves the right to look sympathetically at applications which may benefit Cornwall's ambition towards being Zero Carbon and gives this significant weight when balancing harm to the AONB and its setting'.

M Alvey added the further proposal:

'That the AONB Unit makes a neutral submission on the Floating Wind Turbines proposal and that each application should be considered on its merit'.

A vote was taken. 5 members voted in favour, 0 voted against so the above proposal and motion was carried.

- The Partnership AGREED the above motion and that this proposal is specifically for this 'Floating wind turbines' proposal.

In the light of this debate and resolution (specifically related to this application) approved by the Partnership, the AONB Unit will write to the Marine Management Organisation to state the Cornwall AONB Partnership would wish its position on this Floating wind turbines application to be considered to be neutral rather than the objection previously identified by the AONB Unit on the basis of the harmful effects on the AONB arising from the development within its setting.

AONB Unit

This change in position reflects recognition of the current wider environmental agenda and the imperative to respond positively to this rather than retraction from our previously stated position regarding the identified potential harm to the designated landscape, which remains unchanged.

4. Review of Cornwall Council/AONB Planning arrangements

Following the resolution at the 2nd May Partnership meeting, Louise Wood, Service Director for Planning & Sustainable Development, Cornwall Council, suggested that an independent review should be undertaken. L Wood contacted Martin Hutchings, Improvement Manager from the Planning Advisory Service of the LGA with a view to them facilitating discussion between Cornwall AONB and Cornwall Council Planning service. Discussions are progressing between Cornwall Council Planning and the AONB Unit to establish an agreed way of working for the benefit of both parties for the future. The 1st phase will be to establish the current picture with stakeholders; this will result in a short report from PAS with recommendations. Phases 2/3 will then be agreed and will be driven by the evidence from Phase 1 with the intention of drawing out parameters for change and who is best placed to support them/make them happen. Finally a Delivery Plan in partnership with both the AONB and CC Planners will be drawn up with a sequence of actions which should lead to a more conducive relationship between the two.

M Plummer reported that there is a review of Planning Management staff re-structure currently taking place so once this is finalised there will be new planning management staff structure in post which is timely as the new AONB Partnership Manager will also be recruited and in post in the next few months. It will provide a refreshed opportunity for the re-structured planning staff to work with the AONB Unit. The introduction of Area Teams for Development Management service has already proved successful and welcomed by parish councils etc.

5. Cornwall AONB Partnership Manager Recruitment

Unfortunately the previous advert, recruitment and selection process in the summer resulted in no-one being appointed. The Partnership Manager post is now re-advertised and interviews will be held on 11th October 2019. NAAONB Chairman, Philip Hygate, will be on the interview panel along with Gill Pipkin and Peter Herring from Cornwall Council Historic Environment Service.

Jane Davies, AONB Development Officer has been acting Interim Partnership Manager in addition to her Development Officer role during the summer and will continue until the end of 2019. Karen Johns, AONB Office & Finance Manager, has agreed to increase her 28 hours/week to full time for October and November 2019 to help with the workload capacity of the AONB Unit.

6. Annual Funding Agreement/Glover Review

Annual Funding Agreement – Contingency planning for future funding uncertainty was discussed at the 2nd May Partnership meeting, as Defra funding to AONBs is not confirmed beyond 31st March 2020. As agreed at the Partnership meeting, the Cornwall AONB Unit submitted a formal request to Cornwall Council to consider a 1 year funding bridging arrangement to March 2021, to cover any shortfall in funding from Defra. Peter Marsh, Cornwall Council Environment Service Director, has verbally confirmed that Cornwall Council has agreed to underwrite funding to the AONB Unit for 2020/21 if required, but he was not able to commit to this agreement in writing.

The Glover Review of Designated Landscapes final report has been produced and a link was circulated to the Partnership ahead of the meeting. The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) responded to the findings of the Review on 23 September

2019, when Philip Hygate, the NAAONB Chairman stated that the report recognises the immense value and potential of AONBs and sets bold ambitions for their higher profile within the urgent imperatives of nature recovery and improving the health of the Nation.

We now wait to hear how the report will be received by Government and how the recommendations are to be implemented and hopefully not lost in the welter of pressures facing the current Government and Parliament.

C Coldwell reported that the AONB has the lowest levels of participation in outdoor physical activity in Cornwall, which is also significantly below the national average. Working with the Cornwall Sports Partnership, the AONB Unit is hoping to undertake research and consultation to explore the reasons for this, the barriers people face and how we might overcome them as a Partnership.

7. ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme)

Cornwall AONB has received approval for the ELMS trials on the Lizard area. But, Defra has yet to approve the budget for the ELMS. Due to the extended delays, the scheme will now likely commence in November 2019 with Defra still expecting the test trials to be delivered within the original time frame.

8. Annual Conference – 23rd November 2019

This year's AONB Annual Conference will celebrate the 60th anniversary. It will be held on Saturday 23rd November 2019 at the Pavilion Centre, Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge. Two writers/authors, Mark Cocker (wildlife perspective) and Graham Harvey (farming perspective) are the keynote speakers. Theme for the Conference is – 'Diamond Landscapes, what does the future hold and what will be our vision for the next 10 years?' The day will run from 3.00pm to 8.30pm. No field trips this year as it is being held in the Autumn to tie in with the anniversary of the official designation of the Cornwall AONB back in November 1959. Booking essential, delegates will be charged £10 per head to help cover costs of holding the event (reduced rate for young people, to encourage greater audience and engagement of young people).

9. Kerdroya Project update

C Coldwell provided an update on the progress of the Kerdroya 60th anniversary Cornish hedge project being undertaken by Golden Tree Productions. The first component of the project - the Community Hedge Heritage project took place during the summer with taster days held with community members and schools, where a section of Cornish hedge restoration took place in the each of the 12 areas of the AONB. Ann Reynolds provided community talks about the humble Cornish hedge in each of the 12 AONB areas, the talks were very well received and the AONB Unit thanked Ann for her support in providing the talks.

The second component of the project is the creation of a large landscape scale Cornish hedge labyrinth at Colliford Lake. The project is progressing with significant funding being secured to date. Planning application has been submitted and if successful, work will commence in Spring 2020.

10. Management Plan actions – all partners to provide progress update

Partners were asked to each provide an update on progress towards the list of A-Z actions in the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-2021.

Visit Cornwall - has been involved with a European project known as Wild Sea and WAOAH. The project is along the Atlantic coast to promote sustainable and responsible sea activities, diving, boating etc.

ERCCIS – there is an ELMs trial that will be taking place across several Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserves and farms. The Ecologist is looking at monitoring of hedge condition. A portal for monitoring species habitat is due to be launched soon which will be a useful resource for planning consultants etc.

Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement project – A Preston-Jones thanked C Coldwell for his work on this successful project and it is hoped that the NHLF funding bid for stage 2 of the project will be successful.

FWAG South West – ELMs trial is waiting to commence. NFU carbon net zero report – FWAG will work with farmers on how they can contribute to this Net Zero commitment by 2040.

Historic Environment Service, Cornwall Council - A Reynolds updated that the Distinctiveness Study is not yet launched but it has been circulated at a consultation stage and workshops are to be held. Cornwall Council is keen to arrange a Hedge Summit in the New Year.

11. AONB Unit work programme update on projects and activities – the agenda paper provided full details of projects and activities the AONB Unit team have been involved in over the past few months.

12. Any Other Business

NFU Report – Achieving Net Zero: Farming’s 2040 goal – a copy of the NFU’s new report was circulated in advance of the meeting and copies were available at the meeting. Patrick Aubrey-Fletcher was unable to attend the meeting but his comments had been circulated to the Partnership in advance of the meeting. This is an ambitious goal and will only be achieved by everyone working together. The report sets out 3 pillars of activity that will help the agricultural industry to reach its targets:

1. **Improving farming’s productive efficiency** – reducing emissions, using a wide variety of techniques to enhance productivity and deliver the same output or more from every farm and working smarter to use fewer inputs
2. **Improving land management and changing land use to capture more carbon** – increasing farming’s ability to capture more carbon through bigger hedgerows, more trees and woodland, enhancing soil organic matter and conserving existing carbon stores in grassland and pasture
3. **Boosting renewable energy and wider bio-economy** – displacing greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through bioenergy and bio-based materials such as hemp fibre and sheep’s wool

Partners suggested that P Aubrey Fletcher be invited to provide a focus on this in more detail at the next meeting, to enable the Partnership to have greater discussion on this.

AONB Unit/
P Aubrey-Fletcher

AONB Unit team – The Chairperson noted her thanks to the AONB Unit team for their great work whilst there has been no Partnership Manager in post.

Cornwall Community Flood Forum – M Alvey said the Forum is being held on 4th November if anyone is interested in attending.

Cornwall Council Planning Service restructure – M Plummer reported an update on the changes taking place to the Planning Service. There are now 8 smaller area teams which now link to the communities. This has been a proven exercise and fundamental changes made to the way the planning service works.

13. Date of Next Meeting – there is a Full Council meeting on 10th December when the next meeting was due to be held. Partners AGREED the next meeting should be held on Thursday 12th December 2019 – commencing at 1pm. Venue to be arranged.

AONB Unit

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