

# North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty PARTNERSHIP

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

In-person at Caddsdon, Bideford and online: 10.00 - 12.45

## MINUTES

### Meeting Attendees

Dr Eirene Williams (Chair)  
Paul Green (Community Rep.)  
Cllr Malcolm Wilkinson (North Devon Council)  
Shaun Harrington (Torridge District Council)  
Hugh Bone (Torridge Parishes Rep.)  
Brian Butler (NFU)  
Kevin Cook (Community Rep.)  
Rose Roberts (Community Rep.)  
Richard Prowse (Tarka Country Trust)  
Dominic Elson (Exmoor NPA) {DEL}

### Online Attendees

Martin Batt (Community – Vice Chair) {MB}  
Rob Joules (National Trust)  
Pete Burgess (DWT)  
Claire Moodie (Community Rep.)  
Richard Berridge (Community Rep.)  
Jane Young (Community Rep.)  
Ian Crawford (TTEF)  
Chris Preece (Voluntary Sector – NDAS)  
Penny Mills (CPRE)  
Kate Hind (Devon CC)  
**(20 voting members)**

### Officers at Meeting

Maria Bailey (North Devon Council) {MBY}  
Jenny Carey-Wood (AONB Manager)  
Dave Edgcombe (Projects Officer) {DE}  
Jess Giblett (AONB Internship/Comms)

### Apologies

John Rous (CLA)  
Lewis Andrews (Community Rep.)  
Christine Goodall (NE)  
Mel Austen (Biosphere Partnership)  
Paula Ferris (Coastwise ND)  
Sarah Jennings (DCC)  
Laura Carolan (Communications Officer)

- 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies - Chair Dr Eirene Williams** welcomed Partnership members to the in-person and Zoom meeting and reported apologies.
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and matters arising. Minutes agreed.**  
**Matters arising not on the agenda:**
  - **Rockham Steps** – KH reported that DCC have received engineers report looking at 4 options all costing over £500k and at risk of storm damage. MW asked if a priority for funding, KH reported not on list for funding in next 3 years but would make further enquiries and share report with AONB team.
  - **Briefing of planning teams** – SH and MBY welcomed briefing of planning committees and officers given recent staff and councillor changes **Action DE**.
  - Consultation on recreational watercraft – no update received
- 3. Governance**
  - **Election of Vice-Chair** – (JCW advised that this should have happened at last meeting but usually happens at the meeting after a new Chair is elected). **Nomination of Martin Batt** by

Eirene Williams and seconded by Richard Prowse. This was unanimously supported by those present and online. **MB** thanked the Partnership, agreeing to a further two-year term.

- **Election of new Planning Representatives** – 2 candidates standing. **EW** proposed and **MW** seconded the nominations of Jane Young and Kevin Cook. This was unanimously supported by those present and online.
- **N.B.** there will be elections to the **SDF Grant Panel** at the next meeting – any interested persons to contact **JCW**

#### 4. Consultation on Government Response to (Glover) Landscapes Review

- **JCW** referred to the document circulated and focussed on five key issues for discussion with the following points being raised:
- **Purposes** – support for two purposes if resourced, and strong support for nature recovery, natural capital and cultural heritage within first purpose. Second purpose that included access and nature connection could help build relationships with landowners and farmers.
- **Powers – Statutory Consultee Status** – many people felt this would not really change anything and risks of costs at Appeal; would need to be properly resourced; as team hosted by LPA could have conflicts of interest; policy input by AONB critical and need to elevate standing of AONB Management Plan in local decisions. **JCW** commented that in areas with considerable tension between AONB and planning authorities this is seen as important to strengthen duty of regard. **SH** advised that planning reforms and case law would be more significant influence on what happens locally. It is anticipated that the Levelling Up White Paper may water down planning in future. **Permitted Development** – need for more constraints within protected landscapes.
- **Change Name to National Landscape** – mixed views on this proposal, awaiting results in March of Mori Poll commissioned nationally by NAAONB.
- **Governance** – reported proposals, but timing important to feed into Plan review.
- **Resourcing** – needs to match responsibilities and purposes
- **RP** thanked **JCW** for summary paper and presentation to clearly cover the issues
- **Action – All by 10 March** - Partners are invited to feed back to **JCW** on any of these issues or other issues within the consultation to include in draft to be circulated in the next week for final comments before submission on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

#### 5. Landscape Report and Planning Update

- **Local Plan Review** – **SH** presentation on behalf of two district councils: Existing plan is for period 2011 to 2031, adopted in 2018 with 5 year reviews. TDC and NDC have set up a Joint Planning Policy Committee (only second in country) for this Review and working closely together under brand of ‘people and place’. Timetable: 2022 - evidence gathering and engagement; 2023 – detailed policy development and planning products; 2024 – draft plan; 2025 – adoption and examination. Lots of opportunities for Partnership members to input and share their skills, knowledge and experience. Review will take into account potential Glover recommendations implemented and ongoing planning reforms. Environment, nature and landscape are significant in the local context and need to ensure a balance between them, development policies and anticipated AONB Management Plan review in this period too.

- **Questions:** RP asked how many neighbourhood plans developed as his community started but gave up as so onerous. (Georgeham has completed a plan, Braunton has started). HB said parish level priority was small properties for local people not the 5 bed properties proposed by developers. MBY responded that big challenges related to second homes which needed national level intervention, plus the impact of airBnB type lettings with staycation pressure on the rental market that is essential for local people. EW thanked SH and MB for update.
- **North Devon Council Update** – MBY introduced herself and started as development manager in June 2021 but now overseeing policy too, following passing of Andrew Austen. The planning department is facing considerable pressures following retirement of several senior officers, Covid and challenges across whole country in recruiting planners. There has been increase in applications but now managing to meet validation deadlines and strengthened enforcement team. She welcomed close working with AONB team and looking to improve communications with wider communities.
- **AONB Planning Report** noted. DE reported planning continued to be very busy despite slightly lower numbers and thanked the Panel for their very professional support. New trend affecting AONB from selling off small plots now putting pressure on team and planning officers. DEL reported similar issues in National Park with potential for both fragmentation and for consolidation into bigger landholdings, this needs to be recognised and responded to as change will happen.
- **Landscape Report** - Despite delays to Morteheo line removal, pleased to report removal of last transformer pole at Baggy Point carpark. Ongoing work on **Landscape Character Assessments** review with public consultation this summer, to be adopted in Autumn. Natural England conducting **review of Heritage Coasts** and survey out now, particularly relevant as key elements of the North Devon heritage coast is not in the AONB – like Braunton Marsh and Great Field or Lundy; they included offshore areas important for AONB setting and included second purpose of access. **Action DE to share survey link with KC & MW.**

#### 6. AONB Manager's Report – additional points:

- Nature Recovery Plans** – KH clarified that the **Devon Nature Recovery Network** is a mapping of habitats and opportunities on the Devon Environment Viewer, commissioned by the Local Nature Partnership whilst the **Devon Nature Recovery Strategy** will focus on policy and actions covering Devon, Torbay and Plymouth but awaiting final government guidance and funding. MB reported ongoing delivery and monitoring against the Biosphere/AONB plan. KH added that report on Devon State of the Seas is due end of March covering marine.
- Projects** – Lottery bid submission in March, Nature's Tonic project being revised again.
- Health and Wellbeing** – KH reminded people that Naturally Healthy May run by the Local Nature Partnership with Active Devon would again be happening and invited partners to add activities they are running to calendar and activation grants available from - [Naturally Healthy initiative - Devon Local Nature Partnership \(devonlnp.org.uk\)](https://www.naturallyhealthy.org.uk/)
- Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)** – DE reported that the programme had been challenging but with hard work from team and Panel it has been successful, bias to North Devon farmers rather than Torridge probably reflecting variation in type but also officers' local contacts, tended to be smaller farms so far, need to address in Year 2. JCW reported

still awaiting RPA data for landowner contacts. Claims for Year 1 now coming in, full report at next meeting.

- e) **Sustainable Development Fund** – allocated additional funds to support 20 projects with total value of £75,000, North Devon bias too. Two more awaiting sign off to deliver in March.
- f) **Communications Reports** – JCW introduced **Jessica Giblett** who is on a University of Exeter internship with the team for 6 months backfilling some of Laura's role. JG presented the key points from the Communications Reports and shared work she has delivered during the internship including a review of the AONB's website and social media; new content for social media including very short films and more images; reviewing walks leaflets; a feasibility on setting up a young environment group and making new nature recovery videos.
- g) **NAAONB** – considerable focus on Glover Review response through workshops.
- h) **Cultural Strategy** – being conducted by North Devon and Torridge will include natural heritage – DE meeting consultants at Braunton Burrows.

#### 7. Updates from Partners: –

- **Tarka Country Trust** – RP reported several grants allocated in round 1 of their biodiversity awards for small nature projects, to restore real Devon primroses and commissioned photographs of significant ash trees with forthcoming exhibition at Museum. Second round of grants to become available, see details at [Biodiversity Awards - Tarka Country Trust](#)
- **NDAS** – CP reported completion of survey at Clovelly Dykes and interesting results to be reported at next meeting
- **National Trust** – April Braund (Visitor Experience Operations Manager) joined meeting to update on the Spring Classic, Wavelength Festival at Woolacombe Down on 27-29 May. As well as core events surfing/van life and music they plan to showcase nature recovery with a range of nature activities and inviting partners to get involved. Safety Management plan for festival licence now approved. Contact [April.Braund@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:April.Braund@nationaltrust.org.uk)
- **KC** expressed thanks on behalf of Mortehoe parish for AONB grant support for several projects including the North Devon Surf Reserve Scoping Study – meeting with local stakeholders next week and progress on developing pilot scheme for surf reserves.

**9. Date of Next Meeting - Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10-12.30 (location TBC)** – thanks expressed to Kate Hind for very effectively 'driving' the online meeting.