

Fyne Court
Broomfield
Bridgwater
TA5 2EQ

Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 24th April 2018

at

2.15pm

in the

Spaxton Village Hall, Spaxton, TA5 1BS

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer, Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on the last page.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item No.	
1.	Apologies for absence
2.	Declarations of interest – an opportunity for members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting.
3.	Accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2018 (copy appended) and to consider any matters arising.
4.	Public question time – The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting, or present a petition on any matter within the Committee’s remit.
5.	Paper A - Team and Partnership Report – Chris Edwards
6.	Paper B – Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme Update – Iain Porter and Bill Jenman
7.	Paper C – Volunteering Update – Sammy Fraser
8.	Paper D - Rangers Report – Owen Jones and Andy Stevenson
9.	Paper E – Management Plan Review – Chris Edwards
10.	Paper F – Finance report to be tabled on the 24th by Iain Porter
11.	Any other business of urgency – Next Meeting 31st July 2018 – West Bagborough Popham Hall
	Note : Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Tel No 01823 451884 or e-mail : quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk

THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

2. Notes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer, Katy Coate: tel 01823 451884, email klcoate@somerset.gov.uk.

3. Public Question Time

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Katy Coate, the committee administrator, **before the meeting**.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

4. Substitutions

Committee members are able to appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held at Crowcombe Hall on Tuesday 13th February.

Present

West Somerset Council	Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (Chairman) Cllr Stuart Dowding
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Cllr Gwilym Wren
Parish Representatives	Brian Sellick (in replacement of Julian Taylor)
Friends of Quantock	Mr Alan Hughes
CLA	Mr Hugh Warmington

Also Present

Philip Comer (Quantock Eco and Friends of Quantock), Steve Dury (Somerset County Council Officer), Keith Edwards (Quantock Hills Volunteer), Laetitia Kelly (Friends of Quantock), Chris Edwards (AONB Manager), Iain Porter (AONB Development Officer)

- 1. Apologies** Hugh Davies (SCC), Mandy Chilcott (SCC), Natasha Bradshaw (Parish Rep), Nick Salter (Forestry Commission), Nick Townsend (TDBC), Mike Caswell (Vice Chair SDC), Jo Chesworth (Natural England), Stuart Riggs (National Trust Ranger), Tim Burton (TDBC and WSC Officer)

- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Anthony Trollope-Bellew declared being a member of Friends of Quantock, Quantock Eco, Crowcombe Parish Council and a Quantock Landowner. Also with regard to Paper D – the facilitation fund, he has been approached regarding this.

Gwilym Wren also stated he had been involved in discussion of the Agri Environment Group Scheme discussed in paper D.

- 3. Minutes of the last meeting – signed off as a true representation of the meeting**

Matters Arising – The Quantock views project being launched today was introduced by Iain – The idea came from Keith Edwards (AONB Volunteer) who has led the development of the project and website. It is an online archive of pictures, postcards and historic landscape images, volunteers have been recruited to collect and upload images donated by the public. Currently there are 502 images archived with 290 available to view. Iain invited comments and suggestions and thanked Keith for his initial idea, resource and patience - really good to see this volunteer-led project come to life. Steve Dury asked how this will

be advertised – Keith answered links from village websites, attendance at coffee mornings and events, links to and from AONB website and social media. Philip Comer asked if people can put own things on? – No they need to make contact via the website and request a volunteer to come and collect and scan images. Stuart Dowding suggested looking for current images to compare. There have been lots of ideas such as opening up competitions to photo club etc to get current images from the same viewpoints - lots of possibilities, the scope enormous.

4. Public Question Time – none

5. Quantock team and partnership update

5.1 Danielle Wrench is settling in as Nature and wellbeing assistant and Kristen has had a baby girl called Nell, we all wish her well. Katy has dropped her hours to 2 days a week, the AONB service is in the process of looking for a job share within SCC. In the April meeting there will be a ranger report and Sammy Fraser will also do a volunteer report.

5.2 Chris introduced the Safeguarding Policy that Sammy has put together and the JAC approved the recommendation to adopt the Safeguarding Policy for the Quantock Hills AONB.

5.3 The AONB has received a South West Tourism Award along with the other south west AONBs and National Parks. – awarded with sensitivity to our aims it has been given for the contribution to tourism that the protection of these special landscapes gives, recognising that without which these areas the sw would not be tourist destination. This is strong evidence of the economic benefit protected landscapes provide.

5.4 Government review of NP and AONB's "A Green Future" announced – emphasis to enhance (not just protect) this feels like a positive approach, not much detail.

5.5 Alan Hughes – asked if there is room in review to look at the borders of the AONB include LCA areas which have been identified. CE said it was interesting wording from Govt - 'view to expansion' - but unsure of exact meaning. The change of a protected landscape boundary can be very long and bureaucratic. Could be a rationalisation of the boundary, have to balance whether it dilutes resource, if the area is made bigger there isn't necessarily a funding increase.

5.6 Gwil Wren - heartening to receive an award, can be a perception that the environment may not be important, crucial to realise people come just to experience the beauty. Hugh Warmington added that local people are the pressure on these hills. The Chairman added that the Quantock Greenway was developed to draw people away from the top of the hills and succeeded to a degree.

5.7 The JAC noted the report and supported the recommendation to adopt the safeguarding policy.

6. Management Plan Review

6.1 The timetable has been slightly redrawn

6.2 Initial consultation today looking at the themes from previous current and previous management plans and the proposed new themes.

6.3 There was discussion around these themes with the following comments.

1 Landscape Quality

2 Land management: farming and forestry - Hugh Warmington suggested Water management better under land management: farming and forestry agreed

3 Biodiversity: Wildlife and Habitats

4 Historic Environment and Cultural Influences

5 Geology and Climate (water management moving to 2 – broader meaning of water man now, slow the flow, Somerset catchment partnership, recognise role of managing water on the hills. Carbon retentive land management)

6 Development Planning and Infrastructure Alan Hughes thought planning should be included? CE could be planning and infra?

7 Local Economy and Visitors– A lot of visitors local and therefore don't spend, agree to add in visitors

8 Access and wellbeing – include recreation

Note - Loss of traffic and country lanes covered by infrastructure

9 Community and Volunteering

10 Understanding and interpretation – ATB add public back in, possibly 'Public understanding and Communication' – Chris will think about this one.

6.4 Progress on current objectives and actions – some actions came from NE targets and have not been completed. Gwil added that only way to return area to heathland would be to cut conifers, biodiversity 2020 targets were distributed to protected landscapes. 9 hec so far at St Audries have been converted at the end of project this will total 31hec. Wood pasture could be converted by knocking out Rhodo under woodland. There should be a convocation with NE about what is now expected.

6.5 Of 72 actions 55 have been identified to take forward to the new plan and 9 more may be taken forward. Over the past 25 years honing of the Management Plan means fewer changes need to take place, actions taken forward may have their wording amended or updated.

6.6 Steve Dury wanted to make Chris aware of Somerset and Devon Local Nature Partnership combining to create a natural capital document – Contact Sarah Jennings.

6.7 Discussion about future/new issues took place. The issue of Hinkley and light pollution was discussed the chairman added that at least once hinkley C is built this should reduce.

6.8 Hugh Warmington was sure drones would be a new topic, useful for rangers checking on livestock, benefits and disadvantages as so cheap. Iain Porter added that drone spraying was a possibility, there are lots of opportunities.

6.9 Discussion took place about Ash Dieback, Hugh reported he has small ash dying of it, not as fast as maybe thought, afraid it could be another Dutch Elm disease. Up to a third of Cothelstone Hill woodland is ash. Often small trees so not noticing so much, they are

regenerating quickly. Chairman said complicated by the fact that some Ash trees are resilient so not advisable to just cut all down.

6.10 Hugh Warmington - after Brexit more money may go into grants for buildings rather than subsidies, concern over this impact on Quantocks.

6.11 Chris will be issuing a wider consultation through survey monkey asking for broad-scale feedback. Alongside this will be a deeper one for more involved partners including JAC members/organisations, asking for detailed usable information, tailored so use can complete what is relevant to them.

6.12 The JAC supported all recommendations

7. Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme 'Reimagining the Manor'

7.1 Development Officer – recruited last week, should be started by 3rd April.

7.2 It is anticipated the board will meet monthly or 6 weekly. Formal permission to start the scheme development is has been received.

7.3 HLF are cutting a lot of funding. Between April 2018 and March 2019 they aim to reduce £360m to £190m, cutting all specialised programmes. We are one of the last 8 to get through, this means Stage 2 applications are now 'slightly competitive'. It is important that match funding is in place to secure this HLF project funding. HLF from 2019 is going into a new funding framework; the national lottery income has dropped in last few years - therefore a reduction in grants.

7.4 Steer on a few key elements, HLF role into the future – Iain distributed hand out consultation page and asked for views and feedback on HLF's new framework which he will submit. Members can submit their own fuller responses to the online survey; it is open until 22nd March.

7.5 The JAC noted the report.

8. 2017/18 Budget Highlight Report

8.1 New staff has meant higher training costs, new lease costs also higher than anticipated, literature and publication so high due to code swaps with SCC budget lines, using RIA to cover overspend this year. Budget projections indicate the impact will be felt most strongly year after next 2019/20.

9. Land management Scheme Proposal

9.1 Sec of state getting bombarded with pilot scheme offers at the moment. Ours may be included in the NAAONB submission which was brought together after ours was already underway.

9.2 If successful the Quantock scheme we develop would be seen as part of the business plan for each farming unit rather than an add-on scheme. Quantocks are a good size to pilot a scheme.

9.3 The JAC noted the report.

10. Landscape Planning Officer report

10.1 Hugh Warmington felt guidance advice for actual people rather than planners would be useful. Chris answered that guidance in Management Plan can be statutory for planners and drawn out of the management plan by the public too. Hugh also felt guidance; design statement for new buildings would be useful. CE – bite size guidance is currently being discussed, usability is the key.

10.2 Gwil pointed out that supplementary guidance, in order to give it weight, must be based on evidence etc Neighbourhood plans can be more influential.

10.3 AONB's not exempt from permitted development rights. Importance of the Article 4 which would take us to same level as national parks was discussed.

10.4 Hugh added that liaising with local planning authorities the key, Chris agreed but added that there was a lack of time available on EJ's part.

11. AOB

Hugh Warmington felt fly tipping on the increase and was a serious issue. Chris responded that cameras hard for local authority to place but less so for landowners – could be an area to discuss. Chairman added there seems to be less fly tipping in west Somerset as population lower. It will be highlighted to rangers for the next meeting.

Dates printed wrong on last papers **31st July** is summer JAC not the 17th, Katy to email out.

Meeting closed at 4.30pm

Paper A

To: Quantock Hills JAC
Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager
Subject: Team and Partnership Report

Date: 24/4/17

AONB Team and Partnership Report

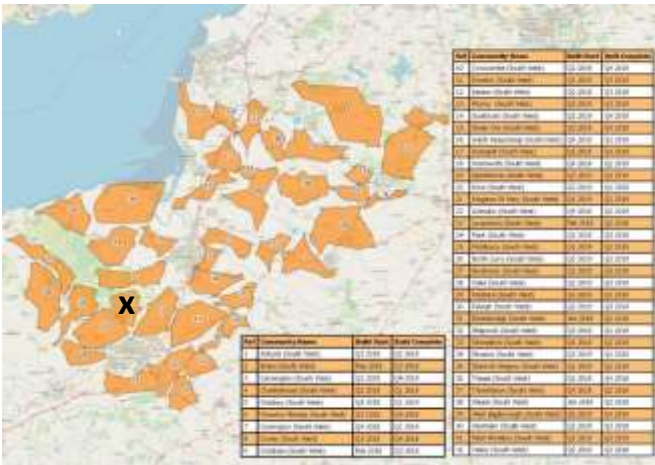
1. Team and Office

1.1. We have successfully recruited a job-share Communication and Support Officer to work alongside Katy, Amanda Sampson started earlier this month. Iain has recruited a Landscape Partnership Development Officer in response to our stage 2 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.2. The difficult weather conditions in early March triggered our business continuity measures – office based staff worked from home using laptops, and any unnecessary site visits were cancelled/postponed. The Rangers delivered an important role during the Red warning period on the 2nd March, using the 4x4s transporting NHS patients to hospital for critical treatment including dialysis.

1.3. The National Trust has completed their upgrade of the toilets at Fyne Court, and the portaloos have now been removed.

1.4. Gigaclear have published maps showing broadband delivery under the Connecting Devon & Somerset initiative, the area below includes the whole of the Quantocks. Fyne Court is included in section 21 (Kingston St Mary), to be available by the middle of next year.



→ Kingston St Mary Complete Q2 2019

2. Partnership

2.1 This year we have again run a Quantock Hills photo competition with the Duke of Edinburgh Award team from County Hall, prizes provided by Taunton Leisure. We were knocked back a little in our judging thanks to the 'Beast from the East' but on Wednesday the 21st March Katy and I were joined at Fyne Court by Jeff Brown from DoE and Matt Bowen from Taunton Leisure to judge the submissions. This year we had 4 categories, 2 with straight winners and 2 that had so many entries of such quality that we chose winners and two runners up for each.

Best Landscape Image was won by Sally Pryde with her image Sunset at Bicknoller Post, runners up were Ian Sherlock with his view over the Quantock Vale towards the Brendons and Dawn Mahoney with her image taken at Kilve called 'Time to Reflect'. **Best Expedition Image** was won by Robert Blake School. **Best image in the 'Loving the Great Outdoors'** category went to Dawn Mahoney for her 'Quantock Fling' image, runners up were Marcin Jankowski's mountain biking image from Wills Neck and Kimberly Gray's pony and toddler image. **Best Film** was won by James Marshall with his atmospheric film talking about the Quantock Hills and their importance to him.

Winners have received prizes from Taunton Leisure and a copy of their winning image printed on canvas, runners also received their image on a canvas. All the images were included in a public exhibition in the Fyne Court Music Room which opened Friday 30th March.

2.2 Under the guidance of Danielle Wrench the Nature and Wellbeing Project continues to deliver a very valuable range of innovative and beneficial activities for a range of groups and individuals from across Somerset based on the three largest AONB areas in the County. Before she left on maternity leave Kristen arranged the filming of a series of short videos about the project featuring people who have taken part in them. There is a short overview video and a series of individual clips where people talk about their experience of the project and the AONBs.

These gentle but inspirational and sometimes touching clips are being released through social media from the three AONBs as a lead in to Naturally Healthy Month in May and the new Somerset Festival of Nature events also taking place in May. The clips are intended for wide usage across Somerset including Doctors' waiting rooms as an encouragement to others to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of activity in Somerset's natural environment.

The outstanding success of this project so far has led the three AONBs (Blackdown, Mendip and Quantock Hills) to start discussions on a follow-on project taking advantages of learning from this one. I have drawn up a very basic possible project approach and costing, based on conversations and info from Kristen and the other AONBs and we are currently considering this as a basis for identifying external funding. The current project ends in early 2019.

2.3 On Wed 4th April I attended the launch of the Quantock Hills Facilitation Fund at the Carew Arms in Crowcombe. We are a supporting partner to FWAG in coordinating this Stewardship-based initiative bringing farmers/landowners together to achieve landscape-scale improvements in the natural environment of the Quantocks. The project runs for the next 3 years and will be driven by the ideas and requests of its farmer/landowner membership to

deliver site visits, demonstrations, workshops and trials relevant to the Quantock landscape and conditions.

This was a launch event with little detail but it was good to see key Quantock landowners, farmers and commoners present to get this initiative off the ground.

2.4 I have received the following response from Defra in respect of a Quantock Land Management Scheme:

From: correspondence.section@defra.gsi.gov.uk on behalf of Ministerial Contact Unit
[<mailto:correspondence.section@defra.gsi.gov.uk>]
Sent: 11 April 2018 16:36
To: Chris Edwards
Subject: Request for information - Ref: TO2018/00339

Dear Mr Edwards

Thank you for your email of 5 January to the Secretary of State enclosing your land management scheme proposal for the Quantock Hills AONB. I have been asked to reply and I apologise for the long delay in doing so.

Your land management scheme proposal has been passed to the relevant officials in Defra.

We understand that you and other AONB partners are collaborating with The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Beauty (NAAONB) to refine the AONB partnerships' offer to help shape future farming and environmental land management policy. Defra officials will continue to liaise with The NAAONB to make sure that AONBs are fully engaged as we develop policy for the future

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hill

Defra - Ministerial Contact Unit

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC supports investigation of a possible follow-on Nature and Wellbeing Project**
- 2. The JAC notes the report**

Chris Edwards

April 2018

Paper B

Highlight Report – 16 April 2018.

Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme (Development Phase)			
Scheme Status. Stage 1 application to HLF has been approved. Permission to start has been granted. Scheme start up underway with Development Officer recruited and first set of commissioned works being tendered. Reporting has been agreed with HLF scheme monitor which will change format of future reports.			
Key Workstreams	Planned Work	BRAG* (& DoT)	RAG Last Month
Activity 2: Project Team	1. LPS Development Officer – interviews & appointment	😊	😊
	2. Project team – Assign admin resource	😊	😐
	3. Project team – Assign consultation / engagement resource	😐	😐
	4. Revised development phase project team costs inline with new Employer Pay Agreements	😊	
Activity 3: Promotion	1. Send info sheet to parish councils / community groups in wider partnership	😊	😊
	2. Letter to all signed up landowners	😊	😊
	3. Contact local media for coverage of LPS	😊	
	4. Continue SM / media feeds	😊	
	5. Organise launch event with stakeholders	😊	
Activity 4: Engagement	1. Meeting with Knightstone	😊	😐
	2. Meet with major landowners	😊	
	3. Meeting with Friends of Quantock	😊	😊
	4. Meeting with SWHT	😊	😊
	5. Meeting with other stakeholders – SERC / NT / FC / Halsway Manor / SPEADA	😊	
	6. Run Partners workshop on Engagement Training (30 th April)	😊	
	7. Gap analysis on partner / stakeholder engaged. Undertake pro-active targeting of missing / under represented sectors	😐	
Activity 5: Partnership	1. Review partnership board membership	😊	😊
	2. Set up meeting dates for partnership board	😐	😐
Activity 6: Contracts	1. Review LCA Contract	😐	😐
	2. Review Visitor Survey contract brief	😊	😊
	3. Review Habitat Suitability Survey contract brief	😊	😊



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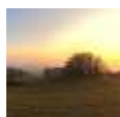
	4. Put call out to partners for relevant consultants / contractors to send tenders	😊	😊
	5. Release RfQ – Visitor Survey	😊	
	6. Release RfQ – Habitat Suitability Survey	😐	
Activity 7: Landscape Character Action Plan development	1. Source examples of Audience Development Plans from other LPS's.	😊	😊
	2. Source examples of JD's from other LPS's, especially for engagement type roles.	😊	

Issues

Description of the Issue	What is being done about the Issue	RAG
Reduction of Communication and Support Officer resource within the AONB Service from 0.8 to 0.4 FTE	Re-alignment of budgets to allow for 0.2FTE additional resource allocated to LPS, new Communication & Support Officer starting mid-April.	😐
Nature & Wellbeing Project Officer starting maternity leave January 2018	AONB Development Officer resource (0.2FTE) allocated to LPS. Nature & Wellbeing Project Officer resource will be available when officer returns from maternity leave.	😊
HLF National announcement on changes to programmes from April 2018	Engagement with NAAONB response to HLF on changes. Further clarification sought from HLF grants officer on Stage 2.	😐

Risks (Scheme)

Ref	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG
M1	Lack of relevant skills within AONB team need to successfully develop scheme	●	●	Recruit relevant skilled staff. Bring together staff and people from wider partnership to ensure that relevant knowledge, skills and expertise is drawn to compliment the range of skills of AONB Team	😐
P1	Delivery partners or community groups leave scheme	●	●	Ensure partnership is reviewed regularly to benefit from a strong and diverse membership. Ensure all partners responsible for project delivery sign Partnership Agreement. <i>First Partnership Board membership review undertaken</i>	😊
P2	Board expansion through review risks diverging aims of partnership	●	●	Ensure sufficient feedback from board to all key partners and visa-versa.	😊
M2	LCAP inadequately developed / timetable slippage	●	●	LPDO keeps track of LCAP timetable with clear reporting back to board & DO. Regular reporting to highlight any potential issues	😐
M3	Budget inadequate to develop LCAP	●	●	LCAP development to be fully scoped. Where estimates can only be sought ensure contingency built into budget. <i>Budgets reviewed.</i>	😊
M4	Non-delivery of match funding, both cash and in-kind	●	●	Match funding secured prior to submission. <i>Match funding tj into ring-fenced LPS budget code.</i>	😊



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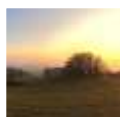


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M5	HLF change in priority during development phase meaning unsuccessful stage 2 application	●	●	Ensure frequent contact with HLF grants officer and adapt application accordingly. Ensure prompt communication with partnership to update on progress.	☹
D1	Slippage in recruitment of LPDO due to SCC recruitment freeze & new recruitment system, means timescale to achieve LCAP is shortened.	●	●	Recruitment timeline did slip, expected submission date moved. Assessment of any other items which could delay progress.	☹
Risks (Projects – risks where mitigation should be actioned during development phase)					
Ref	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG
A1	Insufficient funding to meet outputs	●	●	Ensure early and thorough project costing process and adapt outputs and external funding strategy accordingly.	☺
1.1.1	Local authorities will not engage with process and Guidance document will not be adopted.	●	●	Early engagement with local authorities to ensure guidance will be relevant.	☺
1.1.2	Parish councils / communities will not engage with process	●	●	Parish Councils / community groups already engaged through JAC and AONB communications.	☺
1.5.1	Match funding is not released within project timescales	●	●	Regular communication with National Trust to ensure match funding is available to project.	☺
1.5.2	Renovation of buildings delayed	●	●	During development phase ensure lead partner keeps LPS board appraised of project timelines	☺
1.5.3	Space for archive is not appropriate after detailed planning phase of project	●	●	Undertake options appraisal looking at other potential locations and partners	☺
1.6.3	Farmers / landowners do not come forward to offer visits	●	●	Use experience and contacts from N&W Project, engage during development phase to set up programme of visits	☺
1.10.1	Lack of engagement by community into concept of 're-wilding'.	●	●	Ensure language used at national level is used throughout project, Start regular communications through newsletter etc to introduce concept to local communities	☺
2.2.1	Removal of ERDP funding stream reducing project output	●	●	Identify and apply for other funding sources	☺
2.3.1	Lack of engagement by landowners	●	●	Approach landowners during development phase.	☺
2.10.1	Match funding and / or access opportunities from development delayed	●	●	Use existing feasibility study to explore alternate routes.	☺
3.4.1	Lack of linkage to curriculum means schools will not engage with project	●	●	Work with relevant partners to develop flexible and adaptable outputs allowing linkage to changing curriculum	☺



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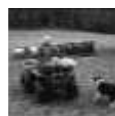
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Measures			
Measure	Performance	Comments	RAG
£ / % - (PF)LCA Development	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - (PF) Visitor Survey	£0 / 0%	RfQ released.	😊
£ / % - (PF)Habitat Suitability Survey	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - Recruitment	£540 / 60%	Completed	😊
£ / % - New Staff	£9 / 0%	figures revised inline with 2% pay award (announced 06 Dec 2017). LPDO started 3 rd April.	😊
£ / % - (OC) Aerial Photos	£0 / 0%	New PSMA agreement for provision of aerial photographs. £0 cost to partnership	😊
£ / % - (OC) LiDAR	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - (OC) Legal fees	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - (OC) Website domain	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - (OC) Venue hire / Hospitality	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % Development Phase Expenditure	£0 / 0%		😊
£ / % - Income (match)	-£10,000 / 100%	Tj from RIA into ring-fenced budget	😊
£ / % - Income (HLF)	-£0 / 0%	£50k June 2018 / £37k Dec 2018 / £4.3k Oct 2019	😊

*Blue – Done, no further action required as part of this project



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Paper C

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Sammy Fraser, Volunteer Coordinator

Date: 24th April 2018

Subject: Update on volunteering

Volunteer Rangers

- We have 16 active volunteer rangers
- Act as an 'eyes and ears' role for us, taking part in patrols on the Hills through walking on key sites such as Lydeard Hill and Cothelstone Hill and reporting back any issues such as fly tipping and damage to visitor infrastructure. These are then fed back to back Andy and Owen who are then able to deal with the issues. This is very valuable as it means that more issues can be spotted!
- The volunteer rangers also play an active role in our public engagement work-leading guided walks, helping run community events and acting as ambassadors.

Heritage Monument Volunteers

- 51 scheduled monuments throughout the AONB- for example well known Quantock landmarks such as Trendle Ring, Dowsborough Hill Fort and Dead Woman's Ditch. A scheduled monument is an archaeological feature that is considered to be of national importance by the government. The surveys will feed into Historic England 'Heritage At Risk' programme.
- Joint project with Historic England
- These monuments are being monitored twice a year by our AONB volunteers- usually in the summer and winter- The information collected from the project helps to inform Historic England about the condition of our monuments and highlight any monuments that may need restoring or managing in a different way.
- 33 volunteers
- Have recently recruited new volunteers to fill in gaps in monitoring- I am in the process of organising a training session in May with Historic England to get the new volunteers trained up.

Estates team and swaling

- Swaling – working with the National Trust and the 15 trained volunteers we managed 7 burns across the northern hills and 1 area of cut and collect. The burns we achieved were successful and thorough but due to the weather conditions the potential days available were limited. The cut and collect site was at Frog Hill where previous attempts to burn had failed; the cuttings will be spread around Black Hill to provide a seed source for bare patches of ground.
- Estates team carry out habitat management work usually every Tuesday with one of the AONB staff Rangers- because of their training they are able to undertake a different range of work to other volunteer groups such as QCV.

Quantock Countryside Volunteers

- This is a joint volunteering project between the National Trust and the AONB- approximately 27 active volunteers. The volunteers undertake a task once a week for National Trust and once a month for the AONB. Tasks are very varied and have included fencing, hedge laying and vegetation clearance.

Wildlife surveys

- Volunteers also assist with a range of wildlife surveys throughout the AONBs, this includes:
 1. Butterfly monitoring transects at Fyne Court and Cothelstone Hill- new volunteers have joined some of the existing volunteers to form a new group to make sure both sites are monitored in accordance with UKBMS.
 2. Bat surveys:
Running since 2013 the AONB Service in partnership with the National Trust and Forestry Commission have undertaken field survey transects at 3 locations in the AONB. The results of these feed into the National Bat Monitoring Programme, run by the Bat Conservation Trust on behalf of Natural England. In 2015 the AONB Service also took over the monitoring of the SAC woodlands as part of the NBMP. These surveys are specifically looking for the presence of Barbastelle bats, a rare woodland specialist. While it is too early to glean any trend data the variety of species found has been encouraging with Barbastelles found in woodlands in the south of the AONB and Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats also found on all transects.
 3. Dormice surveys- Surveys are undertaken by two volunteers at Cothelstone Hill in the woodland. 2017 results showed an increase in the total number of dormice found in the boxes.
 4. Heathland Bird Survey volunteers: Approx 10 volunteers- mixture of existing AONB volunteers, Somerset Ornithological Society volunteers and RSPB volunteers. This survey is a one off and doesn't happen every year.
 5. Deer Count- The volunteers involved in this survey include AONB volunteers (for example the Volunteer Rangers) as well as those who don't usually volunteer in any other way including farmers, landowners and those associated with the hunts.

Nature and Wellbeing Project

- There are a team of community engagement volunteers who have been working to support this project by attending and supporting the project officer to run these sessions- providing extra support for those participating. This has included work with the 'Working Well' group at Cothelstone, supporting school sessions at Fyne Court and the Taunton Symphonies project.

Working and volunteering across the three AONBs:

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator and the Nature and Wellbeing Project Officer has led to a crossover of work and volunteering opportunities across the 3 AONBs- for

example many of our community engagement volunteers have worked in both the Quantock and Blackdown Hills through the project. There are also Mendip volunteers that are assisting with some of our wildlife surveys.

Training provided

1. Quantock Hills
 - Mental Health Training provided for some community engagement volunteers
 - People Engagement Training for Vol Rangers
 - Plantlife Lichen ID training for Vol Rangers
 - Fungi ID training for Vol Rangers and QCV
 - IT based training for some Vol Rangers
 - Emergency 1st Aid (outdoor) for Volunteer Rangers
 - Brushcutter ATV for estates team
 - Walk leaders training for some Vol Rangers
 - Butterfly and bat ID training for monitoring volunteers

What has been achieved...

(Please note that many of our volunteers undertake multiple roles)

End of March 2017 to end of March 2018

Quantock Hills		
Volunteer Role	Number of volunteers	Hours
Work Experience Placements	2	1004
Estates Team	4	417
QCV	7	380 (NT hours 1772)
Butterfly Monitoring	14	120
Bat monitoring	18	157
Doormice monitoring	2	0
Heathland bird surveys	10	0
Heritage Monitoring Volunteers	16	110
Volunteer Rangers	17	1,644 training, socials, eve meets etc (estimated approx 12 volunteers attending each one) Patrols (estimated patrol to take 4 hours on average per volunteer- including driving time to destination, writing a report etc).
Swaling	15	57
'Working Well' group	7	210
Community engagement volunteers	6	70
Total: 4,169		

Beginning of April 2018 to 16.04.2018

Quantock Hills		
Volunteer Role	Number of volunteers	Hours
Work Experience Placements	0	0
Estates Team	4	0
QCV	27	0 (NT hours 143)
Butterfly Monitoring	11	20
Bat monitoring	18	0
Doormice monitoring	2	0
Heathland bird surveys	10	0
Heritage Monitoring Volunteers	30	0
Volunteer Rangers	18	220
Swaling	15	0
'Working Well' group	18	0
Community engagement volunteers	14	10
Total: 250		

Paper D

To: Quantock Hills JAC
Author: Owen Jones, Partnership Ranger & Andy Stevenson, Ranger
Date: 12/04/2018
Subject: Rangers Report

INTRODUCTION

The Rangers continue to carry out a very diverse range of activities across the hills by leading public events, doing practical work, supervising volunteers and contractors, and being a general point of contact. The challenging weather conditions over the winter period but significantly over the last 3 months has made our roles more reactive and restricted the programme of work. During the major period of snow the Rangers and their 4 x 4 vehicles were commandeered by SCC Civil Contingencies to aid transporting people requiring dialysis to and from Taunton.

1.0 Habitat Management

- 1.1 Hedgelaying – the Rangers have attended the Somerset Hedge Group meetings and helped secure funding for more training courses and competitions over the next two years. Over this winter we held one training day with support from FWAG at Cothelstone Manor and carried out a section of hedgelaying of 75 metres with volunteers above West Bagborough.
- 1.2 Cothelstone Hill – a significant belt of Sycamore has been felled and the stumps treated to open up the hill for the ponies to graze and allow the ground flora to re-establish itself. Volunteers have helped through various groups by cutting and burning gorse where it had become dominant and thinning areas of hawthorn scrub. In addition the Rangers have flailed compartments where the bramble and bracken had taken hold, planted more Scots pine as a nurse crop for the memorial trees and removed some more of the replacement beech around the pillow mound.
- 1.3 Swaling – working with the National Trust and the 15 trained volunteers we managed 7 burns across the northern hills and 1 area of cut and collect. The burns we achieved were successful and thorough but due to the weather conditions the potential days available were limited. The cut and collect site was at Frog Hill where previous attempts to burn had failed; the cuttings will be spread around Black Hill to provide a seed source for bare patches of ground.
- 1.4 General work has included felling trees opposite the Millennium bench in Holford to open up the view point, repairing the gate and vehicle bollards at car parks around Crowcombe Park gate and repairs to path furniture and signs along the route of the Quantock Greenway.

- 1.5 Funding has been obtained from the Somerset Rivers Authority to trial the second year of work under the Slow the Flow scheme. A range of practical methods have been implemented to prevent fast water run-off from the steep slopes of Wills Neck and Aisholt Common; these have included building woody dams and hurdles using silver birch, installing coir matting to encourage vegetation to re-establish itself and constructing and repairing stone grips to drain water into less steep areas.

2.0 Visitor Management

- 2.1 The Rangers and volunteers continue to carry out weekend patrols, monitoring events and reporting back on any issues. Regular communication with additional organisations including the police and Natural England continues to ensure appropriate information is shared amongst interested parties.
- 2.2 The Volunteer Rangers “manned” a series of information points at the more popular car parks during the autumn. These continue to be a key method of interaction especially with day visitor.
- 2.3 Quantock Hills AONB Service continued to hold events over the autumn, winter and spring seasons which were well received by the public. The annual deer rut walk continues to be a favourite of the public and the series of Volunteer Ranger led winter walks continues to grow in popularity. These walks have been of great use, allowing the QH AONB to engage with members of the public, help spread key messages and ensure engagement with the community.
- 2.4 Over the winter/spring period organised events on the hills have been limited. Communication continues to be an issue with some organisers and possible solutions are being looked into. Rangers have now established a link with key organisers from the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme. We are looking to work in partnership to ensure areas aren't over used and to develop a notification system that benefits everyone.
- 2.5 As mentioned in a previous report the discussions with Natural England over the ability to give consent for potentially damaging activities with reference to events notifications has progressed. We are awaiting a final proposal from Natural England which will hopefully lead to a less paperwork heavy system.
- 2.6 From these discussions has come the drive from Natural England to re-establish the Hunt Supporters vehicle Permissions. Working with Natural England the Rangers will look to help re-implement this for the coming season.
- 2.7 Communications with the Police and PSCO's continues to occur and a change in a large percentage of individuals has meant relationships need to be developed over the coming months.
- 2.8 There were 19 cases of fly-tipping reported to the AONB Service. The areas that seem to be where the problem occurs tend to be near roads or main junctions.

Reporting to the relevant District Council has resulted in relatively swift removal of the litter. Larger deposits away from roads and car parks such as at Muchcare Woods and Great Bear have been removed by the Rangers.

3.0 Wildlife Monitoring

- 3.1 Over the winter months Rangers, along with specialist volunteers have been out and inspected the nest boxes for the Pied fly catchers. These important African migrants have a monitoring line in Hodder's Combe, Holford Combe, Slaughterhouse Combe and on Over Stowey Custom Common.
- 3.2 Replacement boxes have been erected along the aforementioned lines and the scheme continues to be supported by Andy Harris, members from the BTO, Natural England and the AONB.
- 3.3 The winter months have also seen the organisation of the Summer Heathland Bird Survey. This important 6 yearly survey will take place during May, June & July over the 44 sq km covering the Quantocks.
- 3.4 Volunteers will be working alongside RSPB and BTO members to feedback current trends in key heathland bird species. Once collated this report will help influence how the Quantocks including the Common may be managed and form an important dataset for future projects.
- 3.5 Early March saw the annual Deer Count across the hills, co-ordinated by members of the Deer Management Group and the Rangers. Despite being postponed once due to the snow the count was a success in terms of the numbers of volunteers involved and the areas covered. We were also accompanied by 4 members of the Police who were keen to participate and learn about the activity. The attached report shows the results for the year. A stalwart leader of the deer count Jochen Langbein has now stepped down after 25 years.

Paper E

To: Quantock Hills JAC

Author: Chris Edwards, AONB Manager

Date: 24/4/17

Subject: Management Plan Review

1. Thanks to the Officers Working Group who have agreed at the request of this Committee to function as the Management Plan Review Group with oversight of the production of the revised 2019-2024 Plan. Vice-Chairman of Friends of Quantock Phillip Comer has taken up the FoQ position in that group.
2. While the weather conditions in Feb/Mar were disruptive they did allow some undisturbed time to consider revisions to the plan based on relevant changes since 2014. This is valuable work and will lead to an initial (very rough) draft of the new plan to work with from the end of this month.
3. In February the JAC agreed the following timeline for the review which I will continue to update as elements are achieved.

Timing	Action	Who	Status
Aug/Sept 2017	Local Authorities confirm AONB Partnership to undertake Review and indicate requirements/expectations; Natural England/Defra notified of review	Local Authorities, Natural England	Done
Aug-Dec 2017	Review of existing plan: gap analysis, relevance, impacts and new trends	AONB Manager	Done
Oct/Jan 2017/18	AONB Team undertake initial appraisal of scope of Review		Done
Nov/Feb 2017/18	Consult Partnership on scope of the Review	JAC	Done MP Review Group (OWG) 30 th Jan, JAC papers and meeting 13 Feb 2018
Jan – May 2018	Review	AONB Manager /Comms Officer (engagement/surveys)	

April 2018	Initial Draft of Review	AONB Manager	
May – July 2018	Produce Consultation Draft	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer (design, publishing), JAC/ MP Review Group (OWG)	JAC 17 th July 2018, MP Review Group 3 rd July 2018
July 2018	Scope requirement to amend SEA and EIA	AONB Manager	
Sept – Nov 2018	Six week Public Consultation on revised Plan	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer	
Nov 2018	Local Authority Comments	Local Authorities	
Nov – Jan	Final Draft prepared taking account of consultation comments	AONB Manager/ Comms Officer, JAC, MP Review Group (OWG)	
Jan 2019	Consult Natural England final draft	Natural England	
Jan-Mar 2019	Local Authorities Adopt Plan	LAs, AONB Manager	
March 2019	Plan Adopted and published	AONB Manager. Comms Officer	

4. We also agreed updated Themes for the 2019-2024 Plan:

- **Landscape Quality**
- **Land Management: Farming, Forestry and Catchment**
- **Biodiversity: Wildlife and Habitats**
- **Historic Environment and Cultural Influences**
- **Geology and Climate**
- **Development, Planning and Infrastructure**
- **Local Economy and Visitors**
- **Access, Recreation and Wellbeing**
- **Community and Volunteering**
- **Public Understanding and Interpretation**

5. In February The Stakeholder Consultation was sent to over 150 involved individuals, organisations and agencies and I am looking forward to receiving responses that will really guide the content and detail of the plan. A simpler, wider public survey has been designed to stand alongside this one and cater for different levels of response and engagement. Responses to the stakeholder survey have been invited from everyone at this meeting I hope – if for any reason you have not received it this is the link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QHManplan2018>

6. There was a discussion at the Management Plan Review Group about headings/terminology in the revised Management Plan. In the current plan the hierarchy of headings under each **Theme** is:

- **Aim** – *the difference the AONB Partnership wants to make for the AONB*
- Significance – background information
- Opportunities and Threats – background information
- **Objectives** - *what we want to achieve*
- **Actions** – *what we will actually do to deliver the policy*

In the interests of meeting Natural England Guidance and having quotable policies this could be amended to:

- **Aim** – *the difference the AONB Partnership wants to make for the AONB*
- Significance – background information
- Opportunities and Threats – background information
- **Objectives** - *what we want to achieve*
- (Management) **Policies** – *broadly how we will achieve the objectives*
- **Actions** – *what we will actually do to deliver the policy*

English AONB Management Plans current Objectives/Policies

AONB	Objectives	Policies
Arnside and Silverdale	✓	
Blackdown Hills	✓	✓
Cannock Chase		✓ (management policies)
Chichester Harbour		✓
Chilterns		✓
Cornwall		✓
Cotswolds		✓
Cranborne Chase	✓	✓
Deham Vale		✓
Dorset	✓	✓ (management policies)
East Devon	✓	✓
Forest of Bowland	✓	
High Wield	✓	
Howardian Hills	✓	
Isle of Wight		✓
Kent Downs		✓
Lincolnshire Wolds	✓	✓
Malvern Hills	✓	✓
Mendip Hills	✓	
Nidderdale	✓	✓
Norfolk Coast	✓	✓
North Devon		✓
North Pennines	✓	
North Wessex Downs	✓	✓

Quantock Hills	✓	
Shropshire Hills		✓
Solway Coast	✓	
South Devon	✓	✓
Suffolk Coast and Heaths	✓	
Surrey Hills		✓ (management policies)
Tamar Valley	✓	✓
TOTALS (out of 31 AONBs)	20	22

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC advises on the sub-headings for the agreed Management Plan Themes**
- 2. The JAC supports the Management Plan Review progress described in the report**

Chris Edwards
 April 2018