

Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 22nd October 2019

at

2.15pm

in the


Holford Village Hall, A39 Holford, TA5 1SD

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, Amanda Sampson: telephone 01823 451884 or email asampson@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 – Hugh Warmington (Country Land & Business - CLA), Gwil Wren, Kristina Luxton (National Trust - NT), Nigel Garnsworthy (National Trust - NT), Jonathan Doyle (Somerset County Council - SCC), Jo Chesworth (Natural England), Jo Pearson (Holford Parish Council), Michael King (Kings Estate)
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 previous minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th August 2019 (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 Update (Chris Edwards)
6.	Paper B - Ranger Report & Presentation (Andy Stevenson/Owen Jones)
7.	Paper C - Management Plan Delivery Plan (Iain Porter)
8.	Paper D - Quantock Hills AONB Finance Update (Iain Porter)
9.	National Lottery Landscape Partnership Verbal Update (Iain Porter)
10.	Paper E - The Glover Report (Chris Edwards)
11.	AOB
12.	Future meeting dates: JAC meetings: (all start at 2.15pm locations TBC) Tuesday 21 st January 2020 Tuesday 21 st April 2020 Tuesday 21 st July 2020 Officer Working Group meetings: (all start at 10.00am at Fyne Court, Broomfield) Tuesday 7 th January 2020 Tuesday 31 st March 2020 Tuesday 7 th July 2020
	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, TA5 2EQ. Tel: 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 Amanda Sampson: telephone 01823 451884 or email asampson@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 Amanda Sampson: telephone 01823 451884 or email asampson@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 Amanda Sampson, 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 can 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:
Enmore Village Hall on **Tuesday 6th August 2019** at 2.15pm

Present:

Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (Chairman) (SWT)	- Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cllr Mike Caswell (Vice Chairman)	- Sedgemoor District Council (SDC)
Chris Edwards (AONB Manager)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
Alan Bradford	- Sedgemoor District Council (SDC)
Hugh Davies	- Somerset West & Taunton Council/SCC
Alan Hughes	- Friends of Quantock (FOQ)
Hugh Warmington	- Country Land & Business (CLA)
Julian Taylor	- North Petherton Town Council
Stuart Parkman	- West Bagborough Parish Council

Also present:

Amanda Sampson (AONB Comms & Admin, notetaker), Alex Meletiou (AONB Planning Officer), Richard Curtis (Over Stowey Parish Council), Barry Whitehead (Kilve Parish Council), Paul Trolley (Broomfield Parish Council), Colin Falla (Netherstowey Parish Council), Richard Snelling (National Trust), Tina Luxton (National Trust), Philip Comer (Friends of Quantock) and Laetitia Kelly (Friends of Quantock).

Mike Caswell welcomed everyone to the meeting and started the meeting with the procedure for new elections for the positions of chair and vice chair. Mike asked for any nominations or the position of chairperson, to which there were none and Mike nominated Anthony to remain as chair, and a vote from the members was agreed unanimously.

As the newly elected chair, Anthony then asked for any nominations for the position of vice chair to which there were none, and Anthony nominated Mike to be re-elected which the members also voted unanimously on and both were agreed.

1. Apologies:

Iain Porter (Quantock Hills AONB), Josh Schwieso (Spaxton Parish Council), Michael King (Landowner), Nick Salter (Forestry England), Jo Chesworth (Natural England), Jo Pearson (Cheddon Parish Council), Helen Philips (Somerset West and Taunton Council), David Westbrook (Natural England), Lucinda Spelman-Ives (North Petherton Council) Dixie Darch (Somerset West & Taunton Council), John Doyle (Somerset County Council).

Out of office replies (on leave):

Richard Brunning (South West Heritage), Alex Machin (DEFRA), Hattie Winter (Somerset West & Taunton Council), Matthew Heard (Natural England)

2. Declarations of Interest:

Anthony Trollope-Bellew declared himself to be a member of Quantock Eco, Friends of Quantock, Quantock Deer Management Conservation Group, the President of the Quantock Stag Hounds and a Quantock Landowner.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (4th June 2019):

Julian Taylor wanted it to be noted that North Petherton is a town and not a parish and that Lucinda Spelman-Ives was at the previous meeting representing Julian in his absence. These amendments were made on the minutes and then signed off as a true representation of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising:

- 4.1 Chris confirmed that he had spoken to Alex about the Bicknoller planning issue and the understanding was that the application was for a certificate of lawful development and not open to comment.
- 4.2 Anthony confirmed Iain has talked to the emergency services and has sent them an access map to the common.
- 4.3 Question on mountain biking: Chris confirmed that this is an ongoing process, with Rangers constantly talking to cyclists when they are patrolling the hills mixed responses. Anthony added that mountain bikes tend to scare horses as they make no noise and so horse riders have very little notice. Julian also commented that the horse riders can cope with walkers as they see them approaching, but cyclists give very little notice and quite often travel in large groups and very fast. Could we write to the cyclist Touring Club, and put signs up to make people more aware? A discussion was had about the Cyclist Touring Club and possible approaches to this. Hugh commented that he has mountain bikers using his land and most are quite amenable.

5. Public Question Time:

- 5.1 Paul Trolley - would like a plug for the volunteers, who do a great deal of work on the hills and a lot of people who bike on the hills are quite often not from our area but come to the Quantocks because they like the hills. When spoken to responses from cyclist can vary but reminders now and again are very helpful.
- 5.2 Paul - Broomfield Common and the possible Lottery money, can parishes have a think about and promote volunteering within their parishes as if successful the Landscape Partnership will create many volunteering opportunities.
- 5.3 Paul - Can the JAC help Broomfield with regards to the roads - getting the county council to do anything with the roads is difficult. Cars that are travelling through Broomfield lately do not seem to have any 'Lane' sense. Alan - all roads are getting so bad, soon all roads will have to be redone this needs to be addressed. Mandy - larger schemes are being funded for jobs and homes ect and that highways generally in this area are quite good.
- 5.4 Paul - Broadband is a nightmare in Broomfield, Gigaclear have a statement that says we should have broadband in Broomfield by now, but we do not. Do the JAC have any means to help at with this?
Mike Caswell (SDC) advised the group that there will be an announcement tomorrow (7th August) from the county council to their board and that the company Gigaclear have not held up their part of the contract. It could possibly be that it goes air bound or possibly using power lines via Western Power instead of having to go underground.

6. Paper A - Quantock Hills Team and Partnership Update (Chris Edwards):

Team:

- 6.1 Hannah Worthington has started with the team as our Volunteer Coordinator and is settling in very well, she is working 50/50 with the Quantock Hills and the Blackdown Hills.
- 6.2 Public health has agreed to fund the Nature and Wellbeing Project until the end of the financial year 19/20, which means that we keep Kristen Lambert our Nature & Wellbeing Officer working on the project for a bit longer. Since returning from her maternity leave, Kristen has set up a new group for baby carrying walks which are very popular with over 30 people attending the most recent one. The National Lottery bid for the new follow on Nature and Wellbeing project, if we are successful, should start at the beginning of the new financial year. Public health has also agreed to fund Kristen in the current project for an extra 3 days per month.
- 6.3 By invitation, on July 17th Chris attended National Parks Big Picnic at Simonsbath in a water meadow at the heart of Exmoor. This event was a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 which established National Parks and AONBs. The Act, described at the time as a “recreational gift to Britain’s returning Second World War service men and women”, set out to recognise, conserve and enhance access to landscapes deemed to be of national importance and quality. Speakers included chairpersons from National Parks England and National Parks UK, Defra Minister Lord Gardiner of Kimble along with Sarah Bryan, Exmoor NP Chief Executive, who spoke eloquently of the significance and beauty of Exmoor.
- 6.4 The National AONBs Conference took place based at Colchester in Essex during the week of the 8th July. Chris attended the main business day on Wed 10th, Iain attended the whole conference and Bill gave a presentation on the first day. Over 130 delegates from Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty across England and Wales attended and the final day of the conference saw the signing of the Colchester Declaration - a pledge of collective ambition and intent to do more for nature #Declaration4Nature.

Mandy Chilcott – it’s really challenging that figures have already gone in when funding is unknown at this stage. Chris – agreed, the association was encouraged to do this by government.

Hugh - regards to carbon - you need to know where you are and need to have some kind of accounting system. Quantocks would be doing well, possibly ahead of the game.

Julian Taylor - farmers are generally very good at making good use of the land that they cannot use very well for wildlife ect.

Julian Taylor - we need a baseline to know where to start from, so we know how to move forward.

Partnership:

6.5 Chris - as agreed at the 27th November meeting last year, the Statement of Intent (Sol see Appendix 1) has been extended by a year to allow time for a review of contributions and representation from our Local Authorities. It is the intention of the JAC to have a new agreement in place from April 1st 2020 and Chris recommends a 4-year agreement to run in line with the Management Plan reviews. Standing behind the Sol we have a constitution (see Appendix 2) last amended by the JAC in February 2013.

Mandy - can we have an amendment updating the county council statement of intent and the constitution and bring them to the next JAC (Chris to do a draft and take to the next OWG meeting and bring to the next JAC meeting for signing off).

6.6 Chris - in the constitution, each local authority usually has 2 attending members to the JAC with the combination of Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils, although now Somerset West & Taunton now have 4.

Mike - Sedgemoor will continue to give £11,500.

Chris - The JAC representation of four members for Parish Councils has a current vacancy and the constitution indicates that these elections are managed by the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC). Having explored this briefly with SALC I've been advised that in the current financial climate they would need to charge us for this service and with the 5-yearly JAC parish rep elections due this year I will be discussing the potential cost of this with them (when discussing a single replacement £250 was mentioned). If the cost is reasonable, Chris will take this forward with SALC.

Amanda to make sure all Parish Councils are on the mailing list for JAC meetings.

Julian - has been the representative for North Petherton and wasn't aware he was representing other Parish Councils. Chris – only a sample of Parish Councils are needed to attend the JAC meetings not every Parish Council. Anthony – anyone can attend the meetings as a member of the public and join in with the public question time.

Hugh – currently Holford Parish Council are one member short.

6.7 Environmental Land Management Scheme Tests and Trials – A range of workshops and discussions, Chris added that the Quantock Hills AONB have agreed to carry out a trial on the Quantock Hills which is being funded by Defra. Defra are going to produce a single national scheme. Approximately 9 months to get all of the conversation, information and findings together, certainly by October 2020. Defra are providing funding for farmers to allow them time out to come to workshops to work with us.

7. Paper C – Planning Report (Alex Meletiou)

(Paper C was discussed before Paper B as Alex Meletiou needed to leave)

7.1 Alex to provide stats for Parish Councils planning.

7.2 Anthony would like to see a comment in general even if there is not a comment to make if the planning is just outside of the AONB area. Something in writing or an email is better than just no comment as it gets logged against the planning

application. Paul Trolley added that his Parish have been told that both positive and negative comments should be made against every planning application. Anthony added that Alex's comments are on behalf of the JAC, not the Parish Councils. The Parish Councils must make their own comments on planning. Chris has found over the years that we cannot comment outside of our remit which is Landscapes particularly. Anthony added that typically most Parish Councils meet every other month and do site visits if needed for planning applications.

8. Paper B – Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Update (Chris Edwards on behalf of Bill Jenman)

8.1 Chris did an update on behalf of Bill, everything is on track for the 20th August for submission. A couple of things had changed from the National Lottery end, but we are on track for a submission on 20th August 2019. We should hear back around the end of November early December 2019.

Alan Hughes – has concerns about the hedge banks keeping in mind the importance of the natural landscape. A discussion was had about the planting of new trees and Deer not eating the self-sown trees. Chris to talk to Bill about the beech head banks and the process as the beech head banks are a vital part of the Quantocks heritage. Anthony asked for more of an update at the next meeting.

9. Paper D – Finance Report (Chris Edwards on behalf of Iain Porter)

9.1 Budget looking balanced for next year. Anthony said that things may need to be changed for the following year. If savings are going to be made it has to be in place by April otherwise you risk not getting the saving. A discussion was had about the amendments that have been made between Mandy and Iain.

9.2 Anthony requested that when amendments are made to any financial papers, can the amendments be made visible?

10. Paper E – Glover Review of NP's and AONB's (Chris Edwards)

A discussion was had about bullet points 1 – 12 and the manager's report on Julian Glovers findings.

Anthony: a new national landscape service is an absolute No as far as he is concerned. Localised solutions are better than national solutions. AONB's vary considerably and are totally different in all areas and the Quantocks are very different from a lot of other AONB's and what be good in one area, may not work well in another. National Parks in the United States are predominantly not lived in and is Federally owned, whereas the Quantocks are predominantly privately owned and has a special relationship with its local population.

Anthony suggested that Chris writes to the new Secretary of State Theresa Villers and copies in Julian Glover, because Sarah Mukherjee is coming down for a visit. She is a member of Julian Glovers panel, and both Chris and Anthony will be with her on her visit.

A whole group discussion was had about the Glover Review in general and worked through all the bullet points.

11.AOB –

A discussion was had about the closure of fire stations recently. Alan asked if a letter could be sent out from the JAC about the closure of fire stations? It was noted that Nether Stowey is not one of the stations to close but is having problems with recruitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The JAC supports the Colchester Declaration in section 1.3 above, adopted by the NAAONBs at the annual conference in July 2019 - *Agreed***
- 2. The JAC agrees the Statement of Intent shows District Councils contributing equal amounts and the County Council double that amount - *Agreed***
- 3. The JAC agrees that SALC is requested to hold JAC Parish Council representative's election as the current representatives have completed their current term, and that the current term be changed from 5 years to 4 years in the JAC Constitution. - *Agreed***
- 4. The JAC Supports the final submission of our "Tests and Trials" proposals as described in section 2.2 - *Agreed***
- 5. The JAC notes the report - *Agreed***

Next meeting date and location:

Tuesday 22nd October 2019, Holford Village Hall at 2pm.

Meeting was closed at 16.17pm

**Joint Advisory Committee Meeting
22nd October 2019**

AONB Team and Partnership Report

1. Team

- 1.1** Bill Jenman's contract as Development Officer for the LPS ended in September 2019. Since this time Bill has moved to a short-term 3 month project officer role and is tasked with working on the Landscape Development Fund. In particular Bill will be looking at the outcomes from the fund and the legacy in terms of landscape enhancement. There is the possibility that Bill may apply for the LPS Programme Manager role which, if we are successful, will be an open recruitment at the beginning of 2020.
- 1.2** Hannah Worthington, our Volunteer Coordinator, has unfortunately resigned her post after 3 months. It soon became apparent to Hannah that the significant commute from home to work was adversely affecting her health and she reluctantly tendered her resignation in mid-September. SCC HR have fast-tracked the recruitment process and the post is now live with a closing date of 20th October.

2. Partnership

- 2.1** As agreed at the last JAC I have contacted SALC to arrange the election of Parish Council members subject to agreement of costs.

Discussions at the last OWG and JAC indicated that the current constitutional arrangement of 2 representatives per local authority should be maintained with equal financial contributions from District Councils and a contribution of twice that amount from the County Council.

Subsequent discussions at Somerset West and Taunton Council resulted in agreement that Cllrs Anthony Trollope-Bellew and Dixy Darch would continue as JAC members Cllr Hugh Davies remains on the JAC representing the County Council and Cllr Gwil Wren has stood down from the JAC. I would like to thank Gwil for his work on the JAC, particularly in respect of nature conservation and the coming ELMS project which he has offered to continue supporting. I will draft a revised constitution for the winter JAC alongside preparing the revised Statement of Intent for agreement by JAC Councils.

- 2.2 Environmental Land Management Tests and Trials**

We are still waiting for Defra to sign the "Farming for the Nation" contract with the National Association of AONBs (who are the umbrella organisation for this project), however this should happen very soon and there is a kick-off meeting for the 12 involved AONB Lead Officers and their facilitators to attend on October 31st.

Objectives of the Project:

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is the umbrella charity for the AONBs in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and works to develop a

*network of ambitious AONB partnerships with a strong collective voice, working collaboratively to deliver shared objectives. We have the principles of sustainable development at our core, and this is reflected in everything we do. The NAAONB, along with a group of AONBs, has successfully bid to Defra to deliver a project, **Farming for the Nation**, under the Tests and Trials programme. The initial proposal can be found on the NAAONB website [here](#). Farming for the Nation will deliver a programme of projects involving 12 AONB Partnerships that will test new ideas and trial new approaches in the delivery of a future environmental land management system designed to fit local conditions while reflecting national priorities.*

The proposal comprises 6 co-dependent Strategic Objectives.

- 1. AONB MANAGEMENT PLANS AS STRATEGIC SPATIAL FRAMEWORKS. To trial, with stakeholders, the role of AONB Management Plans as strategic spatial frameworks for informing and targeting the delivery of public goods through ELMs, by March 2021.*
- 2. INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS. To co-design, with land managers, integrated ELMs Land Management Plans that work at the land holding and farm cluster scale, derived from AONB Management Plans, by March 2021.*
- 3. INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS. To co-develop a series of self-assessed indicators of success for schemes that farmers understand and can use, by March 2021.*
- 4. MONITORING, VERIFICATION AND PAYMENT TRIGGER. To co-develop and test a monitoring and verification payment system, by March 2021.*
- 5. TESTING GUIDANCE. To test with stakeholders the scope and ability for the new ELM system to deliver broad and innovative multiple environmental, social and economic objectives as identified in the 25 Year Environment Plan, by March 2021.*
- 6. EVALUATING COLLABORATION. To test the efficacy of collaborative working across and between protected landscapes, by March 2021*

We are looking at Objectives 1, 2 and 3 from this list and I have identified the time requirement for local farmer/land manager time, a project manager/ facilitator (probably FWAG SW), and for specialist consultant support. It is likely that this work will need to be done and dusted with a final report in about 12 months so we will need to crack on once the starting pistol fires. In respect of local farmers I feel we should be working with the Quantock Farmer Cluster <https://www.farmerclusters.com/profiles/south-west/csff110012-quantock-hills/> but we will need to avoid double funding as this project funding is also Defra supported. We will need to go beyond the membership of that cluster to get a comprehensive Quantock farming voice, which will of course produce a lasting network benefit for all. The project includes payment for farmers' time at £200 a day for attending workshops and co-developing the farm land management plans

Finally I want to highlight what an excellent opportunity this is to get to know Quantock farmers a lot better and ensure they have a strong voice in helping develop the next agri-environment scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6. The JAC endorses the staff management items in 1.1 and 1.2**
- 7. The JAC supports the ELMs Progress described in 2.1**
- 8. The JAC notes the report**

Chris Edwards
October 2019

To: Quantock Hills JAC
Author: Owen Jones, Partnership Ranger & Andy Stevenson, Ranger
Date: 30/09/2019
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. During the hot summer months the Rangers were out patrolling the Hills at different times of the day and week. Luckily there were no reports of fires of any consequence being started naturally or by people.

1. Habitat Management

- 1.1 Hedgelaying – the Rangers with the Somerset Hedge Group held the first training event of the autumn/winter at Perry Farm at the end of September. A further training day and the annual competition are coming up in the next few months. In addition the various volunteer groups will be carrying out some hedgelaying across the AONB.
- 1.2 Cothelstone Hill – volunteers have helped with the annual ragwort pulling task and keeping the replacement seven sisters trees watered. Contractors have carried out rosebay willowherb and bracken cutting. The Rangers have kept the car parks and trails cut and continued to cut and spray the sycamore regrowth. Several deer exclosure plots have been created within the woodland to act as a control area to assess what amount of damage is done by deer browsing regrowth in areas where we intend to coppice or thin the trees.
- 1.3 General work with the volunteers has included litter picking, clearing regrowth of Western Hemlock in Great Wood, patrolling and several sessions of dry stone walling.
- 1.4 The Working Well group evolves each month with new members – their projects have included dry stone walling, weeding around trees and coppicing along the ride edges to open up the routes. We have had a number of individual success stories with attendees going on to gain employment.
- 1.5 Swaling – after the last swaling season the Rangers have been carrying out a thorough review of the processes involved in the health and safety of the activity and the overriding policies. New safer equipment including radios have been purchased. Meetings with the Devon and Somerset Fire Service have led to an Emergency Plan and Fire Plan being drafted.
- 1.6 Slow the Flow – the next winters' program of projects is being put together with landowners and FWAG SW. There will also be scope to help in the north west of the Quantocks with flood management work that affects the Donniford stream.

- 1.7 Further practical tasks allowed the Rangers to work with the Greendays day centre, school Duke of Edinburgh groups and corporate teams from a range of organisations. Examples being a recent Somerset County Council corporate day with 12 staff and a 6 week program with students from Taunton School coppicing at Cothelstone Hill.

2.0 Visitor Management

- 2.1 The second year of the family beach day in early summer proved a huge success. The two geology/fossil walks led by experts were very popular as usual with a number of people returning again. Alongside the walks we held some rock pooling activities with help from the Somerset Wildlife Trust and our Volunteer Rangers and a small scale beach clean.
- 2.2 Rangers attended the Quantock Show and Nether Stowey Party in the park resulting in some excellent discussions with locals and visitors to the area.
- 2.3 It was a busy summer with large and small scale events organised on the Hills including the Quantock Quake, orienteering events and horse rides. The Rangers have made progress with organisers of events such as school Duke of Edinburgh groups, the Sea Cadets and 40 Commando to ensure there is as little conflict as possible.
- 2.4 There were several cases of fly-tipping reported to or by the AONB Service since June. Reporting to the relevant District Council has resulted in relatively swift removal of the litter but this is still an area of concern.
- 2.5 Rangers attended the second day promoting a Quantock mammal ID session at Fire Beacon with half children of the Crowcombe and Stogumber Primary School.
- 2.6 The Rangers are also involved in a number of steering groups to ensure the interests of the Quantocks are maintained - high quality access combined with protection from overuse. These include the Coleridge Way, the newly formed England Coast Path steering group, Stowey Walkers and the Quantock Walking festival. Also further links between trails are being discussed to link local communities and businesses.

3.0 Wildlife Monitoring

- 3.1 The Rangers and volunteers from Somerset Ornithological Society have continued the annual surveys of the pied flycatcher boxes in the combs around the Quantocks. Occupancy rate was high with roughly 40% of the boxes out being utilised by Pied Flycatchers. Total successful fledging's did however fall below last year's success rate. Long-term plans to discuss the future of this project and ensuring it continues to feed into a National scheme have also been taken with a variety of option put forward.
- 3.2 The Rangers and volunteers have helped to carry out a nightjar survey across the Hills. This is hopefully a survey that will be repeated annually to get an understanding of the population trends. The survey picked up, over the km squares surveyed, an average of 2.4 males calling at Dusk and 2.6 males at dawn.
- 3.3 Our teams of butterfly and bat survey volunteers have been out weekly throughout the summer monitoring the species and distribution. Early indications are that despite a slow start the number of butterflies has been high across the transects at Fyne Court and Cothelstone Hill.

- 3.4 The Rangers have hosted the second meeting between the Police and relevant conservation organisations on the Quantocks to discuss current issues. Training opportunities and joint patrols will be an ongoing priority.
- 3.5 The Rangers with help from the Commoners and landowners have been promoting through various media the issue of dog worrying livestock and overnight camping in car parks and on the commons. Some progress has been made but this will need to be followed up in future years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. The JAC notes the report

**Owen Jones & Andy Stevenson
October 2019**

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee
From: Iain Porter, Development Officer
Date: 22/10/2019

Quantock Hills AONB – AONB Management Plan- Delivery Plan.

1. Introduction

- a. This report details the consultation process undertaken to develop the Quantock Hills AONB Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan sits under the Statutory AONB Management Plan and sets the aspirations for delivery of the AONB Management Policies for the period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2024.

2. Consultation & Engagement

- a. The table below summarises the consultation and engagement with stakeholders during the development of the Delivery Plan. A full consultation log can be requested from Iain Porter, Development Officer.

Version	Date	Comments	Response
1.0.0	Oct 18	Initial consultation with AONB Manager	Minor changes to policy wording reflected in delivery plan
1.0.1	13/11/18	Initial consultation with AONB staff (group).	New objective LM2, minor amendment to policy wording in DPI theme
1.1.1	05/02/19	Consultation with Wider JAC / AONB Partnership. Prioritisation of Management Policies. New priority of PRoW / promoted route signing and waymarking	Prioritisation in line with Delivery Plan. New priority (PRoW / Waymarking) included.
	Mar 19	AONB Staff (individual). Need to provide clarity of LPS in delivery. Minor amends to actions	Separate column for LPS role. Inclusion of amends to actions
		Stakeholders (NE / FE). Need to increase biodiversity actions. FE – in line with FE strategy	Look at potential for additional actions in relation to biodiversity
1.1.2	04/06/19	JAC & wider partnership. Climate change, need to understand issue	Updated actions on climate change assessment
	20/08/19	Natural England. Number of minor comments and amendments	Considered and amendments made where reasonable.
1.1.3	22/08/19	JAC & Wider partnership. Final draft sent. No comments received	N/a

3. Delivery & Review

- a. The Delivery Plan is available online and can be viewed or downloaded at <https://www.quantockhills.com/gh-aonb-management-plan> .
- b. Assessment on the delivery of actions will occur through the existing reporting mechanism of the AONB Staff unit (OWG reports, JAC reports, Defra delivery assessments). The Delivery Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and amended as required to realise opportunities or respond to issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

5. The JAC adopts the Quantock Hills AONB Delivery Plan 2019-24 (v1.1.3)

Iain Porter
October 2019

Summary (year to date): AONB Budgets are on track. Core budget is showing some minor variances which are to be managed within budget. Project budget has increased due to notice of further £10,000 from Public Health for the Nature & Wellbeing Project. The expenditure has been increased to reflect the increase costs of delivery.

Reserves are expected to decrease by £2,300 to cover over spend in the core budget during 2019/20. Funding scenarios based on known commitments and best guess assumptions (see JAC Report 04/06/2019) have identified that by year end of 2020/21 (31st March 2021) the AONB Service overall balance will be at £0 (no surplus or deficit). With the current level of core expenditure this will mean that the AONB Service will be running a deficit budget in 2021/22.

There are many uncertainties facing England's AONBs (Glover Review, Defra funding settlement etc) however it is recommended by the OWG that a small T&F group is set up to look at the financial model that will allow the AONB Service to run sustainably into the future. The T&F Group will:

- Be a small group of between 4-6 members. The core members will be the AONB Manager, Development Officer, OWG representatives, JAC representatives.
- Be virtual based to minimise time commitments.
- Begin in November 2019 and will present initial recommendations in November 2020. This timeline is based on knowing the national funding direction from Defra in spring 2020.
- Explore finance / funding options that may include reducing costs, increasing grant and / or income and a mixture of both.
- Take into consideration the Glover Review and government response (when received), Defra's 25 year Environment Plan,
- Be aware of previous working (e.g. Quantock Futures, NAAONB Trusts and Funding) to ensure no duplication of effort.

RECOMMENDATION – The JAC support the setting up of a T&F group, as outlined above.

	Budget	Budget (expenditure)	Income	Balance (exp – income)	
SUMMARY	Core	£295,686	£272,144	-£23,542	Using £23,540 of reserves to cover shortfall in income, though this likely to decrease as cost recovery for some contracts higher than budgeted in April.
	Projects	£24,995	£25,695	£700	
	Landscape Ptn Scheme	£27,216	£47,590	£20,374	2018/19 year end was £23.858 overspent as accrual did not go through due to uncertainty of HLF payment date. This has the effect of this year's budget appearing to underspend. Budget will be £3,484 overspent at end of project. This will be met from reserves.
	Projects [HPC]	£75,000	£75,000	£0	Income claimed retrospectively from SCC under S106 / DCO agreement
	Amenity Land	£14,750	£14,858	£108	Ring-fenced fund to manage Cothelstone Hill on behalf of SWHT / SCC.
	Total	£437,647	£435,287	-£2,360	
	<i>Reserves (b/f 2018/19)</i>		£51,827	£51,827	
	<i>Earmarked Reserves</i>	£24,000		£24,000	<i>To cover whole team redundancy as agreed in the core funding partners Statement of Intent.</i>
	<i>Reserves</i>			£25,467	<i>Budget is in surplus.</i>

	Measure	Budget	Performance (Qu 2)	Comments	RAG
CORE / REVENUE	£ / % Budget line	£	£ / %		😊
	£/% [salaries, NI, SA]	£243,826	£120,514 / 49%	The budget includes a pension deficit amount and an apprentice levy. This is apportioned by SCC (host authority) and will be funded at year end.	😊
	£/% [training]	£1,500	£794 / 53%		😊
	£/% [rent, rates, electricity, water, premise insurance]	£13,250	£9,033 / 68%		😊
	£/% [stationary, post, phones, printing]	£3,000	£751 / 25%	Expenditure low as printing costs come out of budget in March	😊
	£/% [travel, vehicle costs]	£18,300	£15,628 / 85%	Looks high due to ranger vehicle lease (£10.5k) which came out of budget in July	😊
	£/% [Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform]	£3,500	£1,705 / 49%		😊
	£/% [Literature, publications, publicity]	£0	£1,643 / 1,643%	Design and print costs associated with AONB Management Plan	😐
	£/% [Meeting costs, hospitality]	£800	£629 / 79%	High expenditure. Look to move budget from stationary budget line.	😐
	£/% [Management fee, insurance]	£8,700	£857 / 10%	SCC management / hosting fee. Insurances include property, terrorism & computer / Employer Liability & Public Liability.	😊
	£/% [Memberships]	£2,500	£90 / 4%	Membership of National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) and Europarc Atlantic Isles. NAAONB increased membership has not come out yet	😐
	£/% [Research & Development]	£300	£868 / 289%	Research undertaken for joint Nature & Wellbeing bid.	😐
CORE / REVENUE INCOME	£ / % Grant – Defra	£163,944	£0 / 0%	Defra Grant Agreement being finalised. This has delayed advance payment of grant	😊
	£ / % Contributions – Local Authorities	£42,900	£22,500 / 52%	SWT and SDC contributions received.	😊
	£ / % Contributions – Friends of Quantock	£1,000	£1,000 / 100%		😊
	£ / % Contributions – Other landowners	£1,000	£0 / 0%	Still be received.	😊
	£ / % Cost Recovery - Contracts	£10,000	£5,867 / 59%	On target as does not include any HPC contract CR.	😊
	£ / % Recharge – Contributions to staff posts	£32,900	£0 / 0%	These are received in October and January	😊
	£ / % Recharge – SCC Pen Def & AL	£19,900	£0 / 0%	To be received at end of financial year.	😊

	£ / % Income – AONB led events	£500	£173 / 35%	Further income to be vied across from holding account	😊
PROJECTS	Project (in-year budget / spend only)	Budget	Performance	Comments	RAG
	£ / % [Nature & Wellbeing Project]	£23,995	£9,903 / 41%	Yr 4 of 4. Budget carried forward from 2018/19 and includes £10k allocation July 2019.	😊
	£ / % spend to date [Access]	£1,000	£548 / 55%		😊
LPS	£ / % spend to date [Landscape Partnership]	£28,746	£27,841 / 97%	Last invoices to be processed. Considering committed expenditure requirement to find additional £3k	😊
HPC	£ / % spend to date [HPC - GQLDF]	£50,000	£3,807 / 8%	Anticipated full allocation of fund by March 2020. Claims to be finalised by March 2022. Estimated budget from projects in pipeline and applications received to date	😊
	£ / % spend to date [HPC - LIS]	£25,000	£0 / 0%	One contract released for Ramscombe 1 work, one contract to be released.	😊
Amenity	£ / % Contractors	£11,000	£290 / 3%	Majority of contract work undertaken in late summer and winter. Contracts currently being released	😊
	£ / % Materials / equipment	£3,500	£468 / 13%	Miscoding to other budget codes shows this line as underspent	😊
	£ / % Travel / fuel	£250	£107 / 43%		
	£ / % Income (carry forward 2018/19)	£6,858	£6,858 / 100%		😊
	£ / % Income (Agri-environment schemes)	£8,000	£6,387 / 80%		😊



**Joint Advisory Committee Meeting
22nd October 2019**

Glover Review Final Report

- 1.3** The final report of the Review of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) was published on Saturday 21 September. Over a year in the making, writer and Government Advisor Julian Glover has led a 'once in a generation' appraisal of how these iconic landscapes can be better protected to reverse the decline in nature and benefit more people.
- 1.4** The review warns that new challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and a changing, urban society mean that new approaches are needed to enhance England's most-loved landscapes. The central proposition for AONBs is that they are strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, and renamed as National Landscapes.
- 1.5** The review argues that looking ahead there is a need for big ambitions - much more must be done for nature/natural beauty and for people who live in and visit our nationally protected landscapes. National landscape bodies themselves should do much more to reach out and invite people in (page 16, page 66). There is recognition that conservation and farming are partners, and that there should be farming for nature as well as food (page 145).
- 1.6** The report identifies 5 key proposals (Proposal 23 to Proposal 27) focused on "New Ways of Working":
Proposal 23 calls for a stronger purpose in law for our national landscapes, the review makes a case for the purposes for National Parks and AONBs to be updated and to apply equally to both types of designation. Subject to further debate and legal discussion the review recommends the following three purposes: (i) *Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage.* (ii) *Actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation's health and wellbeing.* (iii) *Foster the economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.*
The review makes it clear that where there is conflict between any of the three purposes, then as applied through an updated 'Sandford Principle' (page 136) greater weight must be given to the first purpose (page 135).
Proposal 24 recommends that AONBs should be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources and renamed as National Landscapes.
Proposals 25-27 make the case for a new National Landscapes Service, further reformed governance to inspire ambition across our national landscapes and to better reflect wider society, and a new financial model with crucially more funding, greater security and increased focus on entrepreneurial approaches.
- 1.7** The review proposes that the original funding formulas are revisited for all of our protected landscapes and carefully re-calibrated across a range of criteria (page 143) and phased in over time. In the more immediate period, it is proposed that AONBs need an uplift in their funding and that the current £6.7m (several million less than the South Downs N. Park receives - page 132) is raised to £13.4m. The review clarifies that the local authority funding element for AONBs should continue.

Conclusions:

- 1.8** The review argues that looking ahead there is a need for big ambitions - much more must be done for nature and natural beauty. There is recognition that conservation and farming are partners, and that there should be farming for nature as well as food (page 145). Much more must be done for people who live in and visit our nationally protected landscapes. National landscape bodies themselves should do much more to reach out and invite people in (page 16, page 66). The panel stress that our national landscapes should be alive for people, and places where everyone is actively welcomed and where there are unrivalled opportunities to enjoy their natural beauty - in essence landscapes for all (page 82).
- 1.9** The review panel were appreciative of all involved and recognised the excitement and optimism of what can be achieved in the future. "This moment matters – aspiring to protect and enhance what we have will make England's special places even better" (page 145).
- 1.10** Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers has commented on the review; "We think it's an excellent report and we're going to be carefully considering its recommendations. There are a lot of great ideas which are consistent with our determination to remedy the disastrous loss of biodiversity and nature habits we've experienced in this country over recent years." Ms Villiers also said that Mr Glover's idea to have school visits to protected landscapes echoes the government's aims.
- 1.11** A full copy of the Landscapes Review is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6. The JAC notes the report**

Chris Edwards
October 2019

