

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL, TRINITY ROAD, CIRENCESTER

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024

Present:

Brendan McCarthy (Chair)
Alastair Adams
Martin Brown
Katherine Chesson
Paul Crossley
Amanda Davis
Sue Crawford
Ben Dent
Ellie Fujioka
Graham Hopkins
Martin Horwood
Liz Hodges
Doug Hulyer
Emma Sims
Sarah Whalley-Hoggins

Rebecca Charley (Vice-Chair)
Liz Reason
Paul Hodgkinson
Andrea Graham
Jo Barker
Cate Le Grice Mack
Martin Mitchell
Rosie Pearson
Chris Brant
Margaret Reid
Ray Sanderson
Ben Stokes
Isabel Ross
Martin Smith

Also in Attendance:

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
Rebecca Waite (CEO Designate)
Magda Glanowska (Head of Finance)
Mark Connelly (Land Management Lead)
Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead)
Nina Stubbington (Grants and Access Officer)
John Mills (Planning Lead)
Rebecca Jones (Access and Volunteers Lead)
Fred Constantine-Smith (Climate Action Lead)
James Webb (Partnerships Lead)
Helen Komor (Outdoor Learning Officer)
Alice Whitehead (Graduate Climate Action Co-ordinator)
Della Morris (Team Support Officer)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- **Apologies** - apologies were received from Nigel Adcock, David Broad, Brendan Costelloe, Matt Darby, Andy Graham, Juliet Layton, David Powell, John Swanton.
- **Introductions and announcements** – the Chair welcomed the Members, including new Board members: Andrea Graham and Doug Hulyer (co-opted), Chris Brant (Cherwell District Council), Martin Smith (Wiltshire Council), Liz Reason (Parish Group 2). He also welcomed the recently appointed new Chief Executive, Rebecca Waite, who introduced herself to Members. Other introductions were given to Nina Stubbington (who presented at the meeting), along with new employees Helen Komor (Outdoor Learning Officer) and Alice Whitehead (Graduate Climate Action Co-ordinator).

- Declarations of interest – there were no declarations of interest.
- Public questions - there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 16 JULY 2024

- Decision – Amanda Davis corrected a typo on Item 2, Page 2 where ‘Great’ should replace ‘Big’.
- Actions arising from the meeting – all actions have been completed. The Chair thanked Juliet Layton for liaising with Officers at Cotswold DC to agree a recommendation for an increase to their contribution to the CNL Board. This recommendation will be going to the Council in February 2025. He also encouraged similar conversations to take place at BaNES, Wiltshire Council and Worcestershire County Council.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Board noted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2024.

4. PRESENTATION 1: NEW TO NATURE AND REMOVING BARRIERS

Nina Stubbington gave an inspiring and uplifting presentation which focused on the two funded roles that she has held since joining the Board in April 2023. She informed Members that her experience with the CNL has been life changing, after previously feeling that these types of opportunities would never present themselves to her due to health issues.

- Comments – Board Members thanked Nina for her talk. The Chief Executive stated that the organisation has benefitted in many ways by having Nina in the team.
- Decision – on behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Nina for her presentation.
- Actions Arising – none.

5. PRESENTATION 2: DARK SKIES

Mark Connelly gave a thoughtful and interesting presentation on the current Dark Skies project, funded by National Highways’ Designated Funds, giving some historical context and informing everyone of the Board’s more recent involvement in Dark Skies. This has included the adoption of a Dark Skies Position Statement in 2019. The current project is seeking to achieve two things: (1) produce CNL-wide guidance and (2) reduce light pollution along the A417 corridor.

- Comments – the level and amount of discussion amongst Board Members served to underline the importance of this particular special quality of the CNL. It became clear that there is significant inconsistency in local authorities’ approach to managing and enhancing dark skies. It was also noted how the relationship between lighting and perceived safety can also lead to more lighting than may be reasonably required.
- Decision – The Board welcomed the team’s current work in this area and encouraged a focus on even greater levels of dark skies related work in the future.
- Actions Arising – none.

6. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive updated the Board on recent activity since the last full Board meeting in July 2024, including Defra funding; new team members; Secretary of State Board Member recruitment; and property matters.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – The Board noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

7. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The Chief Executive introduced the paper on the Work Programme progress and KPIs at the end of Q2.

- Comments – Jo Barker expressed how pleased she was with the progress during the year. Rosie Pearson asked for clarification on the term ‘stakeholder’ as it related to a climate change action in the work programme. Isabel Ross urged officers to keep the working group momentum going, as Board Members are motivated to help support the work of the team.
- Decision – the Board noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

8. PLANS, STRATEGIES AND POLICIES FOR BOARD APPROVAL /ADOPTION

8a. MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-30

Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead) presented Ver2 of the Plan which, if approved by the Board, will be circulated for consultation. He also informed the Board that 15 out of 15 local authorities have now endorsed the current 2023-25 Plan.

- Comments – the Chair stated how much he admired Simon’s approach and keen eye for detail, which is very much needed in this work. Other Board Member comments covered a range of topics, including: the National Planning Policy Framework consultation; the ‘seek to further’ duty; the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework; the use of the term ‘housing need’; how to better communicate the importance of health and wellbeing; and the potential lack of clarity regarding views and setting.
- Decision – the Board approved Ver2 of the Plan to be circulated to a wider stakeholder base for further consultation.
- Actions Arising – start the next stage of consultation.

8b. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND ACTIVITY

The Chief Executive presented the updated Health and Safety Policy (which needs to be reviewed and adopted by the Board annually), the H&S Process and key H&S Activity during the previous 12 months.

- Comments – Graham Hopkins made a positive suggestion to use the term ‘good spots’ rather than ‘near misses’.
- Decision – the Board adopted the updated Policy.
- Actions Arising – none.

8c. THE MANAGEMENT OF WILD DEER POSITION STATEMENT

Mark Connelly (Land Management Lead) gave an overview of the updated Position Statement (last revised in 2017), which has included consultation with relevant stakeholders across and beyond the CNL.

- Comments – discussion included: the venison market; food banks; deer stalking; FiPL funding; ensuring the Board has careful and sympathetic messaging; and rewilding;
- Decision – after a thought provoking and positive debate the Board adopted the revised Position Statement.
- Actions Arising – (1) ensure we have a reactive communications plan to help counter any negative commentary, (2) give consideration to how this may turn into delivery.

9. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

9a. Minutes of the previous meetings and update on the key areas under discussion

On behalf of David Powell the Chair updated the Board with points of note from the last Committee meeting (6 August 2024) which covered management accounts; reforecast 1; treasury management; internal audit; cyber security; and policy review.

- Comments – it was unanimously agreed by Members that the Committee provides excellent reassurance, on behalf of the Board, on matters relating to finance, audit, risk and governance.
- Decision – the Board noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

9b. Process and priorities for setting the 2025/25 budget

Magda Glanowska gave an excellent overview of the timeline, process and priorities for setting the 2025/26 budget. The Chief Executive gave further insight, urging the Board to think longer term as it is clear that the next 12 months will be difficult but retaining skilled and motivated team members should be a priority for the longer term, wherever possible.

- Comments – Emma Sims and Doug Hulyer asked about the potential of the National Lottery Heritage Fund bids. James Webb (Partnerships Lead) provided a substantive response, indicating that 'Landscape Connections' has the potential to fund up to £10m over 8-10 years. James is liaising closely with both Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and the National Trust as key partners in our bid.
- Decision – The Board noted and supported the paper.
- Actions Arising – none.

9c. Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy

The Chief Executive informed the Board that the Policy, accompanied by the Confidential Reporting Procedure are presented to the Board every three years for adoption. He also confirmed that the Finance and Governance Committee have reviewed, and made suggestions on, the Policy.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – The Board adopted the revised policy.
- Actions Arising – none.

9d. Virements and Contracts (for information)

Magda Glanowska summarised the Virements and Contracts paper.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – the Board noted the update.
- Actions Arising – none.

10. FORWARD PLANNING

The Board noted the draft agenda for the February 2025 meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- The Chief Executive informed the Board that Alana Hopkins (Communications Lead) is working with a consultancy to design and launch a new website for the organisation. Board Members will be informed ahead of 'go live'.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 25 February 2025, 10:00am-1:00pm, at Council Chambers, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX.

The Board Meeting commenced at 10:00am and closed at 1:02pm.

CHAIR

ENDS