

FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL, CIRENCESTER

THURSDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2017

Present:

|                  |   |                     |
|------------------|---|---------------------|
| Chairman         | - | Liz Eyre            |
| Vice-Chairman    | - | Nick Holliday       |
| Harry Acland     |   | George Lambrick     |
| Ken Atack        |   | Ed Macalister-Smith |
| David Broad      |   | Will Manley         |
| Jo Burgon        |   | Charles Mathew      |
| Rebecca Charley  |   | John Matthews       |
| Nigel Colston    |   | Tony Merry          |
| Diane Crone      |   | Peter Jones         |
| Matt Darby       |   | Mark O'Sullivan     |
| Mike Dean        |   | Hedley Ringrose     |
| Stephen Gray     |   | Christopher Saint   |
| Mollie Groom     |   | David Thackray      |
| Adrian Hardman   |   | Martin Veal         |
| Elizabeth Hodges |   | Richard Wakeford    |
| Ann Holland      |   | Simon Wheeler       |
| Nick Hurst       |   | Penny Williamson    |
| Val Kirby        |   | Roger Wilson        |

Also in attendance:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Chris Brant    | Communications Officer                               |
| Mark Connelly  | Land Management Officer                              |
| Raphael Koenig | Finance & Administration Officer                     |
| Martin Lane    | Director   |
| Sandy Marcal   | Administrative Assistant                             |
| Ally Rood      | Planning Officer                                     |
| Simon Smith    | Project Development and Business<br>Planning Officer |
| James Webb     | Leader Programme Manager                             |

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

|              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Andrew Clark | Mark MacKenzie-Charrington |
| Sue Hope     |                            |

**B 5.1**      INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Sandy Marcal, Administrative Assistant, and James Webb, Leader Programme Manager, to their first Board Meeting.

The Chairman reported that three candidates had been nominated for the Secretary of State vacancy.

**B 5.2**      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the Meeting.

**B 5.3**      PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been submitted in accordance with the Board's Constitution.

**B 5.4**      MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

**RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of a reference within Minute B 4.9 to the need for the Board to have a coherent influencing plan, especially with regard to land managers and local authorities, and whether as part of the communications strategy or in some other document, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cotswolds Conservation Board held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be approved as a correct record.**

Arising thereon:-

(i)      A417 Improvements (B 4.6 (a)(i))

Mr Lane reminded the Board of meetings held, and planned, in connection with the A417 improvements; and advised that Highways England and its contractors had now undertaken analysis of around 30 route options, based on route corridors rather than specific routes, which would be presented at the next value management workshop in April. A more detailed update would be presented to the next Executive Committee meeting.

(ii)      Dark Skies (B 4.6 (a)(i))

Mr Connelly reported that he had recently met with a local astronomical society which was keen to be involved in the project, and had provided information regarding a similar project undertaken in Ireland.

**B 5.5**      MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 had yet to be finalised.

## B 5.6 REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

The Board received activity reports and copies of the Action Points arising from recent Sub-Committee Meetings.

(a) Conserving & Managing Sub-Committee

(i) Action Points/Update

Mr Connelly gave an update on recent Conserving & Managing Sub-Committee activity and 'action points', and drew attention to the review undertaken of what had been achieved in the previous year together with a potential work programme for the coming year.

Mr Connelly also explained that the Farming Forum was now likely to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The event would look at farming and the Cotswolds landscape after Brexit with presentations from three different perspectives - the farmer/landowner, the food retailer and the Cotswolds Conservation Board. Potential external speakers included Mark Tufnell, of Calmsden Farms, on behalf of landowners; a National Trust representative; and Rebecca Wilson from Jolly Nice, providing the retail perspective. Lord Bathurst had agreed to chair the event, and formal invitations would be sent out as soon as speaker details had been confirmed.

(b) Enjoying & Appreciating Sub-Committee

(i) Action Points/Update

Mr Brant presented the 'action points' from the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, and an oral update in relation to the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017. In so doing, he drew particular attention to the Board's involvement in the expression of interest submitted for round two of the Visit Britain Discover England Fund.

Dr Kirby provided an update on National Trails funding, and the continued push by the unofficial National Trails alliance, who had let a short contract to a consultancy versed in communications with government agencies and/or representatives. In so doing, she asked Board Members to notify her of the names of any influencers who could be approached to seek to influence the funding bid.

Dr Kirby also confirmed that (i) the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cotswold Way would be marked via a number of celebration events throughout the year; (ii) with particular regard to promoting the AONB as the walking/exploring capital of England, the definition would be expanded to include cycling and horse riding, and possible funding was being investigated through the Local Enterprise Partnership; and (iii) a very simple Draft Events Policy had been presented to the Sub-Committee, for onward recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Mr Wakeford reiterated his offers of assistance in publicising the Cotswold Way 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and promoting a Cotswold Cycle Way.

(c) The Cotswolds Discovery Centre, Northleach

The Board received an update on the Cotswolds Discovery Centre, which covered Partnership Board activity; work being undertaken to explore funding streams to improve the interpretation offer; visits undertaken to other museum/collection venues to see what could be learned in terms of the visitor experience; remedial works undertaken and planned; the outcomes of the Post Office and Leyhill Prison working party initiatives; and activity/event details.

In response to a question, Mr Lane reminded Members of the agreed performance and finance reporting arrangements, including monthly monitoring by Officers.

**RESOLVED that the latest progress report be noted.**

(d) Cotswolds LEADER Programme

Mr Webb had circulated, for information and consideration, an update on the progress of the Cotswolds LEADER Programme.

Mr Webb amplified various aspects; highlighted details of the applications received - with seven contracted projects and over half of contracted sums having been paid; confirmed that the Cotswold LAG was performing well when compared nationally; the current emphasis was on overall spend rather than job targets; and drew attention to the increased promotion being undertaken and planned, with targeted information using the investment themes.

In terms of Programme timing, Mr Webb reported advice that all projects should be approved and contracted by March 2019, with all monies to be paid by March 2020 - although this remained subject to final confirmation.

In summary, he was pleased with investment leverage so far; and he confirmed that more in-depth analysis would be carried out in respect of projects as they developed over the coming months, particularly as projects neared conclusion and delivered employment numbers.

**RESOLVED that the update report be noted.**

B 5.7 BUSINESS PLAN 2017-20

The Board was requested to consider and adopt, subject to any appropriate changes, draft 4 of the Business Plan for 2016/19.

In presenting the report, Mr Smith explained the work undertaken on the document since the Board's last Meeting, including the insertion of references to heritage within natural capital, and the provision of an illustration to provide clarity between the business plan and the business planning process (and the

associated links to the management plan and detailed operation planning and reporting).

It was noted that the draft document had been submitted to Defra; and had also been the subject of consultation with local authorities and other key stakeholders, with an approximate 50% response rate having been achieved. Mr Smith confirmed that the consultation responses had been varied, with no key issue having come forward.

**RESOLVED that the fourth draft of the 2016/19 Business Plan be adopted.**

B 5.8 COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2017-2020

The Board received a draft of the proposed new Communications Strategy, for consideration of approval.

In introducing the report, Mr Brant explained that the document focussed on influencing and public engagement/awareness. The document also included an evaluation process which, in turn, would assist further work.

The revised strategy, and its focus, was welcomed by the Board. It was felt that the clarity and content had been greatly improved, and that the document provided an excellent framework on which to build. However, it was suggested that there was scope for the document to provide an even more coherent view on how to influence, what messages the Board should seek to get across, and how.

In general, simple and short messages were considered to be vital; as was the desire to engage with young people, given their role as the influencers of the future. Influencing and working in partnership were reiterated as exceptionally important themes.

**RESOLVED that the final draft of the Strategy be approved and implemented.**

B 5.9 COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW 2018-2023

The Board received a progress update in respect of the Management Plan review process.

It was noted that eight workshops had been completed, and that the one outstanding session, for the Defra 'family' of agencies, had been scheduled for the following day. Thus far, over 330 people had attended the workshops.

In addition, there had been an Officer workshop to look at the structure of Management Plan, when the following three 'big ideas' had been suggested, as central to the Plan:-

- The Cotswolds being the walking and exploring capital of England

- The local delivery of a Cotswolds menu for agri environment post-Brexit
- Every village/parish/business celebrating being part of the AONB.

The inclusion of such ideas would be developed further.

Key emerging issues included a desire for an aspirational Cotswold-specific vision; the need for a more user friendly document; and the use of a variety of publication methods.

Officers would write up the outputs, for incorporation within a draft version of the Plan, alongside which the consultants would continue work on natural capital and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

It was hoped that the draft Plan would be available for public consultation in May. The overall aspiration was to secure Defra agency collaboration to achieve one vision for one protected landscape, with the output being a robust Plan to which all the agencies could commit, and promote.

**RESOLVED that progress to date be noted.**

B 5.10 SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2017/18

The Board was requested to consider a Scheme of Members Allowances for 2017/18.

The Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that the Board retain allowances at their present levels.

**RESOLVED that Members' Allowances for 2017/18 be retained at their existing levels.**

B 5.11 FRIENDS OF THE COTSWOLDS

In his role as the Board's nominated Trustee to the Friends of the Cotswolds, Mr Lambrick presented that organisation's Annual Report for 2016.

In presenting the report, Mr Lambrick drew attention to the associated implications of the establishment of the Partnership Board, with a wider remit than the previous Project Board; the rebranding work undertaken; the financial data; and project work to secure the future of the Old Prison site.

In response to questions, it was explained that a membership scheme was being developed; and that the Trustees would continue to seek to secure financial contributions/assistance from those who benefitted from the AONB.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

B 5.12 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS, REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND TRUSREE LIABILITY DECLARATIONS

Board Members were reminded of the requirements to (i) identify and disclose related party transactions; (ii) keep their Register of Interests Forms up-to-date; and (iii) complete the Trustee Liability Declaration.

**RESOLVED that all Board Members (i) complete a Related Party Transaction declaration for 2016/17, including nil returns; (ii) complete a Trustee Liability Declaration; and (iii) ensure that all relevant interests have been declared, either by completing a new form or an update form.**

**B 5.13**     MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

The Board received a report on Members' attendance, and was advised that no Board Member was at risk of automatic disqualification for non-attendance within a period of six months.

**RESOLVED that the position be noted.**

**B 5.14**     DRAFT AGENDA FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017 AND FORWARD PLAN FOR 2017/18 TO 2018/19

The Board noted the draft Agenda for the next Meeting of the Executive Committee, to be held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017, and the Forward Plan for 2017/18 to 2018/19.

**B 5.15**     DATE OF NEXT CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING

It was noted that the next Board Meeting would be held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

**B 5.16**     OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, was urgent.

**B 5.17**     THANKS TO RETIRING MEMBERS JO BURGON AND WILL MANLEY; AND DEPARTING OFFICERS DAVID MOLLOY AND RAPHAEL KOENIG

The Chairman stated that this would be the last Board Meeting to be attended by Jo Burgon and Will Manley, and expressed thanks to both for their support to, and work on behalf of, the Board for the previous ten years.

The Chairman also reported that David Molloy was leaving to go to Malawi on VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas); and that Raphael Koenig was leaving to join an environmental charity. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked David and Raphael for their contributions to the Board and wished them every success for the future.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and closed at 11.52 p.m.

Chairman

Unconfirmed