

TASK AND FINISH AND WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Summary: A progress update on the Board's Task and Finish and Working Groups.

Recommendation: To note the progress updates.

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Background

1. The report below provides a summary of the work of the task and finish and working groups from July until early September.

Caring for the Cotswolds Task and Finish group

- New members of scheme since March 2018: Cotswolds Distillery, Dormy House, StayCotswold, Sheepscombe Byre/Tour the Cotswolds.
- New interest from Lygon Arms, Cotswold Lavender, Batsford Arboretum.
- Dan Szor currently talking to Hook Norton Brewery.
- Cotswolds Distillery raised £232 in their first month.
- Next launch style event aimed at new members planned for 10th October, to be hosted by Cotswolds Distillery, 5 – 7pm.
- Good response to call for contributions from existing members: £11k from Manor Cottages, £788 from Action Challenge Cotswolds (ringfenced for Cotswold Way), £180 from Cotswold Running (ringfenced for Cotswold Way), £200 from Cotswold and Oxford Tours.
- Applications currently being accepted for grant funding. Applications close on 31st October.
- Looking to host an event around New Year, as a way of thanking existing members, as well as encouraging new members.
- Date of next meeting: tba.

Rural Skills Task & Finish Group

- Two meetings held to-date, which have conducted the following analyses of the existing Rural Skills programme:
- Meeting 1: Number and range of courses delivered; Rural Skills income and expenditure; Comparison of a) existing programme and b) revised programme to improve financial sustainability; Cranfield University Consultancy and Recommendations summary.
- Meeting 2: Market analysis and pricing, with recommendations of fee increases for selected courses; Recruitment of volunteer for additional staffing resource; Online booking programme for courses, options for circulating course material, database of leads, development opportunities; Ecosystem services: with expansion of coppicing linked to charcoal for woods throughout the AONB; Review of newly introduced training school programme.

- The above-mentioned fee increases are as follows:
 - i. Lantra Level 1 dry-stone walling to £320 per trainee, with a proportionate fee increase for Lantra Level 2 dry-stone walling advised, following market research.
 - ii. Hedge-laying to £130 per trainee
 - iii. Blacksmithing to £120 per trainee
 - iv. Lime mortar to £120 per trainee
- Date of next meeting: 7th November 2018.

A417 Task & Finish Group

- Successful set of site visits to see land bridges and tunnels along M25, HS1 and A21 on 26 June.
- Meeting and site visit with Peter Guthrie, an independent engineer, to discuss route options on 27 July.
- Series of letters sent to Highways England;
 - i. Requesting detailed information on route options (15th Aug)
 - ii. Providing comments on land bridge options (23rd Aug)
 - iii. Suggesting improvements to the Option 30 proposal (3rd Sept).
- Date of next meeting: tba

Dark Skies Task & Finish Group

- Concluded that Dark Sky Reserve is the most appropriate for the Cotswolds.
- Agreed that the Board needs a separate dark Skies Position Statement. (Darks skies currently part of the Tranquillity Position Statement).
- Host an autumn meeting with local authorities to test the idea and follow up with a public stargazing event. Test idea with Parish councils via the e-newsletter.
- Date of next meeting: 28th September 2018.

Walking & Exploring Working Group

- Initial meeting held June 14, Second full meeting of the group held July 30th
- Project commitments for Communications Officer and Cotswolds Trails and Access Officer reviewed and updates provided by officers on the following; 'Explore the Cotswolds', Discoverer Pass, Cotswold Map and Guide, Gateways, Visit England, Bathscapes, Princes Trust pilot scheme.
- The group will focus on the funding and resourcing of projects at the next meeting.
- Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd October 2.30pm

Planning & Infrastructure Working

- Group not scheduled to meet in this period.
- Work schedule to be reviewed and updated at next meeting.
- Date of next meeting: 17th October 2018.

External Funding Working Group

- Met on 4th September. Discussed and noted the external bids paper. Considered match funding in particular. Inviting a professional fundraiser to their next meeting. Fundraising activity discussed included:
 - i. The adoption of things; lengths of PRoW, trees, walls etc.
 - ii. A landscape memorial, book of acknowledgement/remembrance to encourage donations & legacies.
 - iii. Corporate approaches, the group is refreshing earlier work undertaken by officers.
- Will be discussing a challenge with the Planning and Infrastructure Working group and intend to bring a challenge paper for all Board members to the February Executive and then the full Board in March.
- The group will be exploring not for profit/charitable mechanisms and structures and also models for developing entrepreneurial activity, initially around countryside management/consultancy.
- Date of next meeting: 23rd October 2018

Supporting paper(s):

None