**Cotswolds Conservation Board**

**Initial summary of responses from the review of Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups, February 2019**

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| Board member response rate: 12 responses or 34% response rate |
| What works well with the Task & Finish and Working Groups? * Using the range of skills and backgrounds of Board members.
* Clearer focus on outcomes/ outputs and making a difference.
* Fewer, more focussed meetings overall.
* Improved communication.
* Less formal than sub committees, more discussion.
* Less paperwork.
* Leads to a better understanding of issues.
* Short/ concise notes of meetings.
* Involvement of non Board member / previous Board member expertise.
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| What doesn’t work well?* Lack of time / knowledge to consider planning consultations/ responses.
* Keeping everyone up to speed and aware of what each group is doing.
* Groups not driving agendas, too much time spent on updating.
* Knowledge of how project budgets are costed and reflect any internal recharges.
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| Is the group delivering against its remit: Yes or No?* Members thought the groups were delivering their remits.
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| What could Board members have done to make the group more effective or efficient?* Preparation for meetings.
* Reading papers issued in advance thoroughly.
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| What could the Board do to make the group more effective or efficient?* Appoint Board members to groups based on their skills base, don’t appoint to simply fill a seat on a group.
* Consider each Board member being on at least one group.
* Issue automatic diary reminders to members that a meeting is imminent.
* Consider if groups should have their own budgets and powers to drive forward agendas.
* Ensure some secretary of State appointees have planning experience.
* Consider use of interns / apprentices to strengthen staff resource.
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| Are the task and finish groups and working groups more or less effective and efficient than the previous sub committees?If yes, why? * Clearer focus on results, better use of officer time.

If no, why? * Sub committees had more status and weren’t seen as short term or temporary.
* Concern that some previous Grants Sub Committee decisions, which are now with the Executive Committee, are lost from sight.
* Concern that some previous Conserving & Managing Sub Committee work streams were not being pursued.
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| Should we go back to a formal sub committee structure: * Overwhelming majority did not want to return to a sub committee structure.
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| Should we establish new task and finish or working groups? If so, which ones?* Yes, but only as we shut down old groups.
* Shorter term focussed task and finish groups seen as being most effective.
* Potential new groups:
	+ Natural capital of the AONB.
	+ Social, financial and health and wellbeing benefits of the AONB.
	+ Cultural capital of the AONB.
	+ Agi-environment.
	+ National Park planning.
	+ Governance & Finance.
	+ Relations with local authorities and other stakeholders.
	+ Tourism.
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Notes:

Some new appointees to the Board were understandably not able to compare the Task and Finish or Working groups with the previous Sub Committee structure – and admitted that they were still learning about the AONB and Board’s work.

The Board has two vacancies at present: 1 parish appointee and 1 SoS appointee, so 35 Board members, not 37.

18.02.19