

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

HELD AT COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL, TRINITY ROAD, CIRENCESTER, GL7 1PX

TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2022

Present:

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| Brendan McCarthy (Chair) | |
| David Broad | Martin Brown |
| Nick Bumford | Cate Le Grice-Mack |
| Phil Chapman | Katherine Chesson |
| Brendan Costelloe | Sue Crawford |
| Amanda Davis | Clive Webster |
| Graham Hopkins | Jane Hull |
| Ed Macalister-Smith | Dom Morris |
| Rosie Pearson | Isabel Ross |
| Ben Stokes | Jo Barker |
| Paul Crossley | Matt Darby |
| Paul Hodgkinson | Tony Merry |
| Ellie Fujioka | Martin Horwood |

Also in Attendance:

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
Mike Elliott (Climate Action Lead)
John Mills (Planning and Landscape Lead)
Simon Joyce (Planning Officer)
Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead)
Della Morris (Finance and Admin Assistant)
Alana Hopkins (Communications Lead)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- **Apologies** - apologies were received from Rebecca Charley, Steve Bucknell, Andy Graham, Ben Dent, Liz Hodges, Emma Kearsey, Brendan McCarron, Martin Mitchell, John Swanton and Sarah Whalley-Hoggins. No apologies were received from Mike Dean.
- **Introductions and announcements** – the Chair informed the Board that Garry King (Secretary of State Board Member) has resigned with immediate effect due to personal circumstances. He also welcomed Ellie Fujioka (Secretary of State) and Martin Horwood (local authority) to their first meeting as new Members.
- **Declarations of interest** – none.
- **Public questions** - there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 21 JUNE 2022

- **Decision** - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Meeting held on 21 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

- Matters Arising – all actions from the previous meeting have been completed. The EDI training will be re-issued to Board Members who have yet to complete it.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Board noted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 September 2022.

4. PRESENTATION 1: CLIMATE ACTION

Mike Elliott gave a thought provoking and thoroughly engaging presentation on the Board's climate action work. Areas of focus for Mike include: collaboration and networking; colleague conversations; the Small World Consulting report; identifying major challenges and opportunities; becoming a net zero organisation; turning words into action. Mike thanked the newly formed Climate Action Working Group for their advice, guidance and expertise in supporting this priority area of the Board's work.

- Comments – GH emphasised the risk of not taking action now, the journey to net zero (based on the SWC report) is already 2052 and further delays will continue to be exponential. SC asked if 700 hectares of woodland creation each year is practical without destroying CNL's natural beauty. Mike felt that it should be the aim but landscape character is a really challenging issue. JH reminded the Board that land use (and land use change) decisions aren't ours to make, it's a landowner decision – we can only inform and influence. BC congratulated Mike on facing the difficult questions, and wanted reassurance that the report avoids double counting. JB and MD both made the case for grasslands as (1) a significantly important habitat for the CNL and (2) its ability to sequester carbon. Mike agreed but made the point that it isn't as effective as trees. MD offered to share some of his farm's findings with Mike to support her work. MH was surprised that food and drink had such a significant impact on the area's carbon baseline, this was followed by a discussion on farming and food production. The Chair made the point that if the Board is to really firm up its position on climate action it needs to have confidence in the SWC report and findings. Mike replied that there were, as with most technical reports, assumptions in some of the data but this must not be a reason to delay, stating "we will never regret doing too much, but we will regret doing too little". The Chair also said that we need to be able to explain the challenge and our position in very simple terms and we need to think very carefully about positioning our message. RP said that the key action is to encourage people to think and to make connections. CLGM stated that we need to be extremely careful about land use change, it's not as simple as planting trees and getting rid of livestock. NB raised the point that, for the vast majority of farmers, it's about the economics and sustainability of the farm operation. On his farm a recent carbon study found that fertilizer use accounted for over 50% of carbon emissions, but its use is critical to crop production and financial viability. NB offered to share his farm's natural capital assessment and carbon audit with Mike. EMS thanked Mike for an impactful presentation. GH asked the Board the fundamental question of 'is the Board committed?' BC captured the Board's dilemma by stating that the tension is between landscape and woodland. The Chair closed the discussion by thanking Mike for the excellent presentation and confirmed that how we respond to the climate emergency is the key issue for the CNL.
- Decision – Members congratulated Mike's work to date and for providing passion and expertise to the Board's work on climate action.

- Actions Arising – (1) circulate the SWC report to all Board Members when it is finalised, (2) produce a non-technical version of the report to help engage a wider audience, (3) liaise with Matt Darby and Nick Bumford to better understand their farm’s work in this area, (4) develop a clear and concise statement which underpins the Board’s position on climate action and seek endorsement by all Members, (5) work with the Comms Lead to develop an engagement strategy to support the public launch of our position.

5. PRESENTATION 2: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

John Mills and Simon Joyce delivered a superb presentation giving Board Members a thorough appreciation of the scope, depth and breadth of their work. They also informed the Board of current and future priorities and challenges, including the government’s Growth Plan; implementation of Landscape Review recommendations; nature recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain; the climate emergency; and two Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (A417 road scheme and the Severn-Thames water transfer scheme).

- Comments – PCh raised his concerns about the flaws within the current planning system which means that outcomes such as the Oakley Farm appeal are not surprising. MH echoed these concerns, wondering how much weight the Inspector gave to policy SD7. CLGM thanked John and Simon for their excellent work and for bringing silos together. MB asked about the relationships between County Councils and Unitary/Districts with the proposed Investment Zones – this remains unclear. BC asked that we keep a close eye on why some planning decisions are made against our recommendations. AD thanked the team for their expert work with regard to the north Cotswolds quarry cluster, particularly their concerns over cumulative impacts. GH encouraged the team to use the ‘5 Whys’ when trying to understand the reasons behind some of the planning decisions within the CNL.
- Decision – all Board Members applauded the work of the team and thanked them for their insightful presentation.
- Actions Arising – none.

6. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive updated the Board on key activity since the last meeting, giving updates on team and Board Member changes. He also informed the Board that he was liaising with the Chair, Vice-Chair and all Local Authority Members about future partnerships and strategies for working together even more productively. When this work has been completed there will be a detailed report for the wider Board membership to review. Subject to Ministerial endorsement, there will be two Secretary of State vacancies to be recruited for 2023. A priority skill set that the Board is seeking during the next round of recruitment is finance and accountancy; Defra are aware of this requirement. The National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) has written a ‘big ideas’ prospectus that will be shared with Ministers and officials this week. Defra has provided funding for the NAAONB to roll-out the rebrand to ‘National Landscapes’ across the whole family.

- Comments – CLGM requested that a more social/informal gathering for Board Members be arranged.
- Decision – the Board noted the report.

- Actions Arising – arrange an informal gathering of all Board Members.

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

The Chair assumed that all Board Members had read the reports and, on the basis that there were no questions, the meeting should move on to the next item.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – The reports were noted.
- Actions Arising – none.

8. PLANS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR APPROVAL/ ADOPTION

8(a) Business Plan Framework 2023-26

The Chief Executive introduced the item, giving a detailed background to the process that the team has gone through to date. It has been a whole team effort. The new outcome statement is bold and ambitious, reflecting the culture of the organisation today.

- Comments – EMS asked for the Cotswold Way National Trail to have a specific mention. AD wondered if the green prescriptions initiative could come earlier in the period. SC asked for climate change to have more presence in the framework.
- Decision – the Board adopted the outcome statement and six key outputs.
- Actions Arising – (1) make the changes as requested by Board Members at the meeting, (2) Board Members to email the Chief Executive by the end of October with any final comments on the detail of the framework.

8(b) Management Plan

Simon Smith introduced the item informing the Board that the interim review has, to date, focused on the policies and outcomes. Better links have been formed between the draft Management Plan and the Business Plan Framework. A standalone Executive Summary will also be written to engage with a wider audience. He underlined the importance of local authority endorsement and this will form part of the upcoming consultation period. Finally, he took on board the various comments relating to climate change and will ensure they are reflected in the next draft.

- Comments – the Chair supported the importance of local authority endorsement. SC wondered how we could use the ambition for strengthening the Management Plan (as proposed out in the Landscapes Review) to our advantage. IR said that the Climate Action Working Group would be keen to help with the climate-related revisions to the Plan, and said that the Board needs to be known for its position on climate change. IR also asked if there needs to be a policy on air/air quality in addition to soils and water. AD made the suggestion to re-order the ‘Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment’ outcomes so that Access & Recreation and Health & Wellbeing come before Sustainable Tourism. GH asked if the climate change outcome should explicitly mention the 2050 net zero target. Various comments were made about the stakeholder commitments including how we ensure partners fulfil their elements of the plan and making sure our language is stronger and less passive. JH asked if there’s anything we can do to help local authorities with their climate change solutions. BM summarised the discussion, including the clear message from Members that climate change must be the over-charging policy, and central to the Board’s future work. Mike Elliott finished the discussion by expressing her delight with the Board’s

enthusiasm around climate action but reminded them that she only works part-time and so capacity is an issue that needs to be considered. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Simon for his excellent work to date.

- Decision – the Board approved the draft for external consultation (subject to the minor amendments being made as a result of the Board Member discussion).
- Actions Arising – (1) update the draft plan based on the Board Members feedback, (2) consider making climate change outcome 1, (3) consider re-ordering the three outcomes under ‘Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment’, (4) think about the language used in Appendix 5-Stakeholder Commitments, (5) Board Members feed back any further comments to Simon Smith by 19 October.

8(c) Health and Safety Policy

The Chief Executive presented the updated policy, along with the processes document and a summary of key health and safety related activity during the previous year.

- Comments – none.
- Decision –The Board adopted the updated Health and Safety policy.
- Actions Arising – none.

9. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE (including minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2022)

EMS, as Chair of the Sub-Committee, informed the Board of the current activity. The two priorities being (1) preparing a 3-year financial forecast for Board adoption in February 2023 and (2) reviewing and updating the Board’s corporate risk register.

- Comments – GH requested that the Sub-Committee put a timescale against the review of ethical banking and investments.
- Decision - the Board noted the report and minutes.
- Actions Arising – the F&G Sub-Committee to agree a timescale for the ethical banking and investments review, and inform the Board at the next meeting.

10. FORWARD PLANNING

The Board Members noted the draft agenda for the February 2023 Board Meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- The Chief Executive informed Board Members that, as part of a National Highways Designated Funds bid on dark skies, they will shortly be receiving a short survey to complete. All Board Members are encouraged to complete the survey.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21 February 2023, 10.00am to 1.00pm, at Cotswold District Council, Cirencester.

The Board Meeting commenced at 10:05am and closed at 1:07pm.

Chair