

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

HELD AT STRATTON HOUSE HOTEL, STRATTON, CIRENCESTER

TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2021

Present:

Brendan McCarthy (Chairman)	Rebecca Charley (Vice-Chair)
David Broad	Nick Bumford
Phil Chapman	Sue Crawford
Paul Crossley	Matt Darby
Amanda Davis	Ben Dent
Andy Graham	Nick Hare
Paul Hodgkinson	Graham Hopkins
Jane Hull	Garry King
Cate Le Grice-Mack	Ed Macalister-Smith
Tony Merry	Martin Mitchell
Dom Morris	Isabel Ross
Ben Stokes	John Swanton
Clive Webster	Sarah Whalley-Hoggins

Also in Attendance:

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
Diane Bassett (Head of Finance – Maternity Cover)
James Webb (Partnerships and Fundraising Lead)
Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead)
Mark Connelly (Land Management Lead)
John Mills (Planning and Landscape Lead)

Observing:

Paul Mains (Chair of the Chilterns Conservation Board)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- **Apologies** - apologies were received from Jo Barker, Steve Bucknell, Brendan Costelloe, Mike Dean, Adrian Hardman, Norman Kay, Jo Stafford. No apologies were received from Liz Eyre, Steve Good, Liz Hodges.
- **Introductions and announcements** – the Chairman asked all new Members to introduce themselves.
- **Declarations of interest** – none.
- **Public questions** - there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 24 MARCH 2021

- **Decision** - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Meeting held on 22 June 2021 be approved as a correct record.
- **Matters Arising** – new Members have been sent the Skills Audit Questionnaire to ensure the analysis continues to be up-to-date.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board noted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 September 2021.

4. PRESENTATION 1: KINGFISHER TRAIL

James Webb gave a fantastic presentation on the Kingfisher Trail 2021, from initial idea through to planning for the final auction event later this month. The financial picture is positive and the level of engagement via digital channels has been excellent.

- Comments – Clive Webster reminded Members how sceptical the Board was 12-18 months, saying that James has delivered beyond expectation. He also reminded everyone of the 'Arts in the Landscape' national AONB strategy and how the Cotswolds is already delivering. Ben Stokes, as a member of the Cotswolds Champions Steering Group, was delighted to have supported the project. Ed Macalister-Smith was pleased that the trail reached beyond the boundary and focused on rivers. Graham Hopkins and Dom Morris both asked the same question around how we measure the wider value of the project that can't be measured financially.
- Decision – resolved that the Board notes the presentation and that congratulations is passed on to all involved.
Actions Arising – (1) redistribute the auction comms and catalogue to all Members. All Members should circulate the auction invitation as widely as possible prior to the event to encourage people to participate, (2) prepare an end of project report, which will consider measures on evaluating the non-financial benefits of the project, as well as a clear idea of what may come next.

5. PRESENTATION 2: INCREASING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COTSWOLDS

Simon Smith gave an excellent and detailed presentation of three separate research projects that have helped the team to gain a better understanding of the Cotswolds, primarily focusing on natural capital atlas; woodland creation, biodiversity and carbon capture; natural capital evaluation / dashboard.

- Comments – The Chief Executive asked that the discussion on this presentation be included within the wider discussion about the Nature Recovery Plan (Item 8b). Jane Hull suggested that a simple 'how to' guide for the natural capital dashboard could be created to help users. Rebecca Charley said that we must ensure that the data available within these reports is widely known about because it makes them, and our organisation, very relevant to farmers and landowners. It was considered that this is a very useful set of data to help farm management decisions be taken.
- Decision – resolved that the Board notes the presentation.
- Actions Arising – give consideration to writing a 'how to' guide for the dashboard.

6. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive gave an update on the key activity that has happened since the last meeting in June, with the most significant being the launch of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

- Comments – the Chairman informed the Board of the Ministerial visit in August and the recent meeting with the Friends of the Cotswolds (our landlord at the Old Prison). John Swanton also mentioned our attendance at the Moreton Show (which wasn't

mentioned in the report). Amanda Davis remains concerned that we aren't giving enough focus to social inclusion – understanding that things are happening on-the-ground but it needs a more joined up/ strategic approach. Sarah Whalley-Hoggins (who Chairs the Member-led Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Working Group) acknowledged that the Group needs to get together very soon, as it has a target of reporting to the January Executive Committee with a recommendation on how this important area of our work is taken forward in a structured way. This led to further discussion with input from various Board Members, covering topics such as: having a more focused KPI; needing greater resources; looking at the diversity of our Members, Employees and Volunteers (and to start thinking about how greater diversity can be encouraged within the organisation).

- Decision – resolved that the Board notes the report.
- Actions Arising – the Member-led Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Working Group to meet and discuss ideas, supported by the Chief Executive as required.

7. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Chairman encouraged Members to take the papers as read and invited questions.

- Comments – Dom Morris asked whether there is a concern around the performance of the 'statutory consultee' KPI. The Chief Executive and John Mills replied, informing the Board that this KPI was established to help calculate the resources required should the Board become a statutory consultee for planning and development (a Glover Review recommendation). The KPI is providing sound information in this regard.
- Decision - resolved that the Board notes the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

8. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR ADOPTION

8(a) Health and Safety Policy

The Chief Executive reminded Members that a full review and refresh of the Health and Safety Policy was undertaken in 2020, therefore minimal changes have been made to the version presented at this meeting.

- Comments – John Swanton suggested an additional bullet point to refer to the Board's Safeguarding Policy.
- Decision – resolved that the Board adopts the Policy.
- Actions Arising – add in a reference to the Safeguarding Policy in the final version.

8(b) Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan

Simon Smith introduced the plan, estimating that over 60 people had been involved in its preparation and that a lot of credit must go to the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Forum (formerly the Cotswolds Ecological Forum).

- Comments – the Chairman referenced the 2019 Colchester Declaration as being the catalyst for our significant progress in this area. A positive and extensive discussion followed with contributions from many Members, topics covered: the plan being iterative over time; how the plan had captured previous work, e.g. Nature Improvement Areas; how the plan cleverly suggests making the best of all 'nature', rather than choosing one habitat over another; how to best engage farmers and land managers – who hold the key to making

this happen; the importance of having an adopted plan ahead of the new Local Nature Recovery Strategies coming into being (a chance to influence); how to engage private householders with regard to private gardens; the role of the Board in helping to co-ordinate and improve on the current 'un-strategic thinking'; challenging the team to get in front of decision-makers. Overall, the Board Members were hugely impressed with the Plan and commended Simon Smith for leading its production.

- Decision – resolved that the Board adopts the Plan as guidance.
- Actions Arising – review the comments made at the meeting and incorporate into the final version, e.g. showing health and wellbeing as a commitment rather than an opportunity.

8(c) Climate Change Commitment

Ben Dent introduced this paper, reminding Members that the Board has been involved in climate change strategy for over a decade but the pace is accelerating (and will continue to do so). The key message from the Commitment is that the organisation needs to have a clear and robust baseline from which we can make sound judgments around actions and ambitions. We are not yet at the stage of discussing the 'ways and means' of climate change mitigation and adaptation, but that will follow the initial exercise of becoming more 'carbon literate'. He reinforced that the Board should have a clear commitment to reach net zero (or better) by 2050 (or sooner). Ben finished by thanking Mark Connelly, Scott Brown and the Chief Executive for their involvement and collaboration.

- Comments – Members, including David Broad and Nick Bumford, remain concerned about food production and the risk of simply off-shoring carbon. Andy Graham strongly advised that the Commitment is shared with all local authorities so that levels of engagement continue (and increase) in the shorter term. Sue Crawford felt it important to gain momentum by getting the timing right with COP26. Amanda Davis asked how all Members could help in spreading the word.
- Decision – resolved that the Board supports the Commitment.
- Actions Arising – (1) agree a launch/ comms plan for the Commitment ahead of COP26 and share with all Members, (2) communicate with relevant Officers and Members of all local authorities to encourage ongoing dialogue, (3) secure the funding to recruit a Net Zero Landscape Officer, who will lead on the implementation detailed within the paper.

9. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Ed Macalister-Smith (Chair of the newly formed Sub-Committee) introduced the Item, outlining three key messages: ensuring the Board are happy with the Terms of Reference (ToR); the subsequent need for the Executive Committee to review and amend its own ToR; the need for an independent expert to serve on the Sub-Committee. Diane Bassett then gave an overview of the first meeting and asked Members to contact her should they think of potential candidates for the independent role. Diane Bassett then presented the Internal Audit Plan for adoption. Finally, the Chief Executive gave an overview of the key budget assumptions and priorities for 2022/23, ahead of seeking full budget approval at the next meeting in February.

- Comments – Amanda Davis and Sue Crawford both asked for clarity over the role of the Sub-Committee. Ed Macalister-Smith clarified that it is there to recommend actions for the Board to formally adopt. It is not an ‘approving’ body on its own.
- Decision - resolved that the Board adopts (1) the Terms of Reference and (2) the Internal Audit Plan.
- Actions Arising – Board Members to contact the Head of Finance if they identify potential independent members of the Sub-Committee.

10. FORWARD PLANNING

The Board Members noted the draft agenda for the February 2022 Board Meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- Paul Mains, Chair of the Chilterns Conservation Board, used three words to describe his thoughts on the meeting:
 - Impressed
 - Reassured
 - Daunted
- Phil Chapman encouraged the team to start thinking about an active engagement programme/ contact strategy to build on the relationships and partnerships that have been built during the Kingfisher Trail project.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 22 February 2022, 10.00am to 1.00pm, at Cotswold District Council, Council Chambers, Trinity Road, Cirencester (to be confirmed)

The Board Meeting commenced at 10.04am and closed at 13:06pm.

Chairman