

MEETING OF
THE COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM MEETINGS

TUESDAY 27 MAY 2020

Present:

Brendan McCarthy (Chairman)	Rebecca Charley (Vice-Chair)
David Broad	Nigel Colston
Paul Crossley	Amanda Davis
Mike Dean	Cate Le Grice Mack
Graham Hopkins	Norman Kay
Ed Macalister-Smith	Charles Mathew
Clive Webster	

Also in Attendance:

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
David Shelmerdine (Finance Officer)
James Webb (Partnerships and Fundraising Officer)
Simon Smith (Development and Special Projects Officer)
Alana Hopkins (Communications Officer)
Mark Connelly (Land Management Officer)
John Mills (Planning and Landscape Officer)
Ann Wyatt (observing)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- Apologies - there were no apologies
- Introductions and announcements - the Chairman welcomed Members to the Meeting and thanked them for their support following his election to the position of Chairman at the Board AGM Meeting in March. He also extended a welcome to Ann Wyatt, the Board's Head of Finance, who would be starting officially on 22 June 2020.
The Chairman explained that he would be varying the order of business on the Meeting's Agenda and would take Items 13 and 14 after Item 8.
- Declarations of interest - Rebecca Charley declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item (10) - Landscape Enhancement Initiative - Lodge Park Proposal, as she was employed by the National Trust.
- Public questions – there were no public questions

2. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2020

- Decision - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 25 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- Matters Arising - the Chief Executive explained that the draft 2020/21 Board Budget had been prepared by the Executive Committee and had been presented to the Board in March 2020, but would now be affected by the

Covid-19 Virus outbreak. He also confirmed he was still meeting with Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives where possible.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING - 24 MARCH 2020

The Exec received the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 March 2020.

- Matters Arising - the Chief Executive highlighted that the three year term for Executive Committee Members had been approved by the Board. A specific Covid-19 Risk Register was now being prepared in addition to the Board Risk Register and would be presented to Members in due course.

4. MINUTES OF THE BOARD AGM - 24 MARCH 2020

The Exec received the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 March 2020.

- Matters Arising - the Chairman explained that plans were currently being prepared for the Schedule of Meetings for 2021/22 and the date of the September Executive Committee would be changed from 16 September as he was unable to attend on that date.

5. PROCUREMENT WAIVERS

The Finance Officer presented a summary of any procurements which had not been processed strictly in accordance with the Board's Financial Regulations in 2019/20.

- Comments - none
- Decision - resolved that the paper was noted by the Executive Committee and no concerns were raised.
- Actions Arising - none

6. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Finance Officer presented the Internal Audit Report for 2019/20, completed by the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC).

- Comments - none
- Decision – resolved that the paper was noted by the Executive Committee
- Actions Arising - the Finance Officer to write to GAPTC to request that the evaluation of the pension fund represents the position as stated in the Annual Accounts.

7. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Finance Officer presented the annual review of the Board's Corporate Governance Framework and the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20.

- Comments - various Committee Members, including Ed Macalister-Smith, expressed support for publishing Board Members' Register of Interests. He highlighted that there was a need to ensure that Members took the required action should they have an interest in any particular matters in regard to removing themselves from meetings, discussions or voting if necessary. In response to a question from Ed Macalister-Smith in relation to the review of the Employee Handbook, the Chief Executive confirmed that it would be finalised by the end of 2020.

- Decision - the Corporate Governance Review and Annual Governance Statement be approved and taken forward to the Board for adoption.
- Actions Arising - (a) the Board Members' Register of Interests to be published on the Board's website, (b) reference to an Annual Forum be removed.

8. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Finance Officer presented the Bank Reconciliation (as at 31 March 2020), AGAR Accounting Statements and Statement of Accounts for 2019/20.

- Comments - the Committee discussed the variation in the gross income and total other receipts and the previous investment received from Network Rail and, in addition, the option of allocating funds as 'ear-marked' reserves, which would be assigned to a specific project, rather than 'free' reserves.
- Decision - resolved that the Bank Reconciliation, Section 2 of the Annual Return and the Statement of Accounts be noted by the Committee.
- Actions Arising - none

13. BUSINESS PLANNING - IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

The Chief Executive led discussions on how the Covid-19 (C-19) pandemic has impacted on the Board's operations and finances. A C-19 financial reforecast and revised work programme was reviewed by the Exec Committee. The financial position has worsened by £3,000.

- Comments - the Committee recognised that the current situation would continue to change in the coming months and agreed that further discussions would be required to ensure Members were kept informed of the Board's position.
- Decision - resolved that the impacts of C-19 be noted.
- Actions Arising - the Chief Executive, Chairman and Vice-Chair meet to discuss financial matters further prior to the next Exec Committee meeting.

14. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Chief Executive presented the Board's new key performance indicators (KPIs) to be introduced during 2020/21.

- Comments - Members would, in particular, like to see more recording of how the Board is engaging with people of BAME and/ or low incomes. Ed Macalister-Smith suggested the use of Natural England's MENE data to inform the Board of who was accessing the natural environment.
- Decision - resolved that the new KPIs be noted.
- Actions Arising - that the Members' ideas for potential future improvements are recorded in the 'notes' section of the KPI measure definitions.

9. KINGFISHER SCULPTURE TRAIL 2021

The Partnerships and Fundraising Officer presented the plan for an AONB-wide Kingfisher Trail in 2021. This included the Art of Fundraising proposal and a cash-flow forecast.

- Comments - the Committee record their approval of the principle of the Trail and the work undertaken thus far by the Officers and encouraged the Officers to continue working on it. The Committee was mindful of the current financial climate and the potential risk to the reserves position of the Board. The year-

end reserves position must not be negatively affected by this project. The Committee was also mindful that deferring a decision on the Trail to the September 2020 Committee Meeting would not enable Officers sufficient time to prepare for the Trail and seek the required funding.

- Decision - the proposal be presented to the Board at its June 2020 meeting, with the recommendation to delegate authority to the Exec Committee to make the final approval decision.
- Actions Arising - (a) Officers to continue to seek commitment from potential sponsors, (b) request a draft contract from the Art of Fundraising for a detailed review, (c) prepare a revised paper to be taken forward to the June Board.

10. LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE - LODGE PARK PROPOSAL

The Development and Special Projects Officer presented an Expression of Interest (EOI) from the National Trust (Lodge Park) to be taken forward for submission as a Landscape Enhancement initiative.

- Comments - Ed Macalister-Smith highlighted he wished for there to be a clearer connection to walking and cycling within the proposal template. There was a general concern that the LEI funding programme doesn't allow for the Board to recover its management and overhead costs.
- Decision - resolved that the proposal be approved.
- Actions Arising - none

11. ANNUAL REVIEW 2019/20

The Communications Officer presented the content plan for the production of the Annual Review 2019/20.

- Comments - none
- Decision - resolved that the content plan for the production of the Review be approved by the Committee.
- Actions Arising - none

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Executive presented the new health and safety policy and process for the Board.

- Comments - Graham Hopkins agreed to provide further minor comments with the Chief Executive. The Committee were satisfied that the work of the Chief Executive involved all Officers and volunteers during the Policy's draft stage.
- Decision - resolved that the new policy and process be approved by the Committee and recommend it be taken forward to the June 2020 Board meeting for adoption.
- Actions Arising - none

15. A417 MISSING LINK

The Chief Executive provided an update to the Executive Committee on the progress and activity since the Board's formal consultation response to Option 30 in November 2019.

- Comments - none

- Decision - resolved that the Board's continued involvement in the process and indicative timeline going forward be noted by the Board.
- Actions Arising - the Steering Group, via the Chief Executive, continue to keep the Board updated as to the progress of the scheme.

16. ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT SCHEME - ELMS

The Land Management Officer presented the results of the ELM test and to consider whether a separate response to the ELM Policy discussion document should be submitted.

- Comments - the Committee considered the test to be a quality piece of work and congratulated the Land Management Officer for his national-level input into ELM.
- Decision - resolved that (a) the results of the ELM test are noted and (b) the Board supports the NAAONB's response to the ELM Policy discussion document currently being drafted.
- Actions Arising - (a) at the appropriate time circulate the NAAONB response to the Committee and (b) make an informed decision on whether the Board submits its own response.

17. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS (APPRAISALS)

The Committee discussed the new employee performance review system that has been implemented from April 2019/20.

- Comments - the Committee were very supportive of this new approach.
- Decision - resolved that the Board's approach to employee development through introducing the new system be noted by the Committee.
- Actions Arising - none

18. THE GLOVER REVIEW

A presentation outlining DEFRA's early thinking/ response to the Review.

- Comments - none
- Decision - due to the time pressures during the meeting the Chairman asked the Chief Executive to circulate the presentation following the meeting.
- Actions Arising - the Chief Executive to circulate the presentation to the Committee.

19. HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIVITY

The Office Manager prepared a paper summarising the Health and Safety activity during 2019/20.

- Comments - none
- Decision - resolved that the report be noted.
- Actions Arising - none

20. INFORMATION PAPERS

The Committee noted the current priorities and progress updates detailed in the following papers:

- (a) External Bids Update

- (b) Walking and Exploring Working Group
- (c) Planning and Infrastructure Working Group
- (d) Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands Steering Group

21. FORWARD PLANNING

- (a) Executive Committee and Board Meeting Dates
 - Meeting calendar for 2020/21
 - Review of changes being considered from 2021/22
- (b) Draft Agenda - June 2020 Board Meeting
- (c) Draft Agenda - September 2020 Executive Committee Meeting

22. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 16 September 2020 - 10.00am to 1.00pm at Guiting Manor Farm, Guiting Power, Nr Cheltenham, GL54 5UX. 01451 850320. Subject to Covid-19 situation.

The Meeting commenced at 10.00am, adjourned between 11.25am and 11.35am, and closed at 1.20 p.m.

Chairman