

Summary: Annual summary of the Task & Finish and Working Groups

Recommendation: To note the progress made during 2019/20

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Background

The report below provides a summary of the work of the task and finish and working groups over the year 2019/20

A417 Working Group

- The most significant output from 2019 was the Board’s response to the A417 Missing Link consultation, submitted in November.
- Following a recent period of inactivity there are a number of meetings scheduled in February:
 - 18th – Designated Funds Landscape Partnership Vision workshop
 - 25th – ‘Statement of Common Ground’ meeting with Highways England and Arup.
 - 26th – Strategic Stakeholder Panel meeting
- Date of next meeting: 19 March 2020
- Lead officer: Andy Parsons (supported by John Mills and Mark Connelly)

Walking & Exploring Working Group

- Last meeting held January 31 2020
- Wardens Conference was held on 11 October and themed on ‘*access from a different perspective*’. It was attended by 150 people, including Rights of Way officers from Glos, Wilts, South Glos, BANES and Worcestershire. Speakers included:
 - John Cuthbertson, Disabled Ramblers
 - Pippa Langford, Natural England
 - Mark Weston, British Horse Society
 - Robert Killen, CLA.
- Ongoing projects for 2019/20 have included:
 - Cotswold Gateways Project – Practical route improvement work by voluntary wardens and design work for the panels has been ongoing throughout the year. The project is currently on hold by RPA awaiting decision on variations to the project for board materials, cycleway signage.
 - Women’s walks - A number of very successful women’s walks have been led in the north Cotswolds by Cotswold wardens, in association with the Gloucester Friendship café, the latest on 7 September. Further walks are planned in 2020.
 - Discoverer Pass - Despite agreements between parties, no financial settlement has taken place from GWR so the scheme is likely to end.
 - Off road mobility route - A 12 mile route for off route mobility scooters was completed by Wardens and launched in June

2019, followed by media coverage including television coverage on Points West on 10 October.

- Bathscapes – The Board has won the tender for the access element of the project but detailed discussions are ongoing before a contract can be signed.
- Cotswold Trails and Access Partnership CTAP – CTAP is seen by the Working Group as the principal partnering group for CCB on access issues. Ed Macalister-Smith was elected to Chairman in October and has attended the first national meeting of Trail Chairs. Natural England confirmed 2020/21 budget as roll-forwards of this year @ £63k with 25% match funding required. Preparations for the 50th anniversary of the Cotswold Way have been on-going this year in readiness for the official launch on Sunday 17 May in Chipping Campden. Excellent working relationships have been created with The Cotswold Way Association, Robert Welch and John Lewis as part of these preparations.
- A review of the working group remit began at the January meeting. Priorities will focus on inclusivity to access in the Cotswolds.
- Alana is creating a draft scoping for inclusive access to the Cotswolds utilising existing and new bus services, with options for a funded post.
- Lead officers: Becky Jones and Alana Hopkins
- Date of next meeting – Friday 17 April 2020

Planning & Infrastructure Working Group (PIWG)

- PIWG has met three times during 2019/20 (29th April and 11th September 2019 and 8th January 2020).
- The main work areas of the group have included:
 - developing consultation criteria and planning guidance proposals, which have subsequently been presented to the Executive Committee and the full Board;
 - providing input to a number of local plan and planning application consultation responses;
 - reviewing planning decisions from 2018/19 for planning applications that the Board had objected to.
- Date of next meeting: TBC
- Lead officer: John Mills

External Funding Working Group

- Met on 17 December. Main part of the meeting was developing content for the Corporate Partnerships and Fundraising Officer's job description.
- Draft of the National Association of AONBs Income and Funding Toolkit shared. This is an outcome of an NAAONB lottery funded 'Taking the Lead' programme with an Officer attending a cross AONB External Funding Topic Group.
- Date of next meeting: 2pm 21 April 2020. Meeting Room, Northleach.
- Lead officer: Simon Smith changing to Partnerships and Fundraising Officer subject to Executive and Board approval.

Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands Working Group

- Meeting held on 3 February in Tetbury.
- Mark Smith, FWAG Southwest has joined the Working Group.
- Tender document for business plan and advice agreed by the Working Group.
- Fortnightly volunteer work parties have been taking place over the winter months. Between 6 and 16 volunteers have worked on four sites.
- Project branding and identity has moved on since the last meeting with business cards, fliers and promotional material produced in the new style.
- Annual report for Esmée Fairbairn is being written. This will also release the funding for 2020/21.
- Date of next meeting: 11 May 2020, Tetbury.
- Lead officer: Mark Connelly.

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