

MEETING OF
THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HELD AT GUITING MANOR FARM, GUITING POWER

TUESDAY 24 MAY 2022, 10:00am

Present

Brendan McCarthy (BM) (Chair)
David Broad (DB)
Ed Macalister-Smith (EMS)

Rebecca Charley (RC) (Vice-Chair)
Clive Webster (CW)
Cate Le Grice Mack (CGM)

Also in Attendance

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
Mark Connelly (Land Management Lead)
Scott Brown (Farming Engagement Lead)
Rebecca Jones (Access and Volunteers Lead)
Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead)
James Webb (Partnerships and Fundraising Lead)
Mike Elliott (Net Zero Landscape Lead)
John Mills (Planning and Landscape Lead)

Presenting (Item 8): Dmitry Yumashev, Small World Consulting

Ben Dent (BD) (Board Member – observing)
Nick Bumford (NB) (Board Member – observing Item 8)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- **Apologies** – apologies were received from Graham Hopkins, Phil Chapman, Andy Graham, Paul Crossley.
- **Introductions and announcements** – the Chair welcomed the Board’s new Net Zero Landscape Lead, Mike Elliott, to the meeting.
- **Declarations of interest** – no interests were declared.
- **Public questions** – there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – 25 JANUARY 2022

- **Decision** - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 22 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.
- **Actions Arising** – the actions were reviewed, with two still in progress (1) access routes mapping exercise, (2) A417 induced traffic data.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY 2022

- The Executive Committee noted the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22 February.

4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The CEO gave a verbal update to update the Executive Committee on key activity since the last meeting, with main points being:

- Following the May elections, there are now five local authority vacancies – Cheltenham, Stroud, West Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Wychavon. Della Morris is liaising with the respective Democratic Services team at each authority.
- Andy Graham, Executive Committee and Board Member, is the new Leader at West Oxfordshire District Council.
- Liaison continues with the Friends of the Cotswolds, ahead of leaving the Old Prison in July 2023. Consideration is being given potential location/s post move. The CEO will provide a written report to the Board in June.
- The Defra core has been agreed and signed, with a 14.7% increase in 2022/23 (then fixed for the next two years). The CEO has recently been informed that there is also an opportunity for £50,000 of capital funding (per annum) for the next three years.
- The Board submitted its response to Defra's Landscapes Review consultation.
- The CEO has held sessions with each of the teams to gauge opportunities and challenges ahead of starting the process for developing the next 3-Year Business Plan Framework (2023-26), a draft of which will be presented at the September Executive Committee meeting.
- The Rural Skills programme has ended, with just three dry stone walling courses to be completed at the time of this meeting.
- The CEO stated that the priorities for this meeting were (1) endorsement of the new Management Plan timetable and (2) the Small World Consulting presentation on the Cotswolds' carbon footprint and journey to net zero.

5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The CEO gave an overview of the financial and operational performance of the organisation at year end.

- Comments – the CEO explained that an overspend on the Voluntary Warden budget and the cessation of the Rural Skills programme meant that the year-end General Fund was less than the reforecast. EMS gave an overview of the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee (F&G) meeting that took place on 23 May. He stressed the need for the Chair to consider financial qualifications when recruiting future Members, especially Secretary of State. The F&G will be considering the Board's investment strategy at their next meeting in August. CW suggested that Cotswold District Council's new Climate Investment Fund could be considered as an option by the Board. The recommended Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2022/23 were also discussed.
- Decision – The 2022/23 KPIs were approved.
- Actions Arising – none.

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

Simon Smith gave an overview of the current national activity that will have an impact on future Management Plans (MPs), e.g. Natural England's review of MPs and a new national strategy for all protected landscapes. None of these activities will be complete until well into 2023, by which time, on our current timetable, the Cotswolds' new MP

(2023-28) should have been completed. Simon recommended a lighter touch review of the current plan (including consultation) to have a valid interim 2023-25 plan in place, followed by the production of a new, full plan for the period 2025-30 – once the emerging national strategies and policies are published and fully understood.

- Comments – the Chair stated that this revised approach was the only sensible and logical way forward, this was unanimously supported by all of the Executive Committee.
- Decision – produce an Interim 2023-25 Plan, followed by a new Plan for 2025-30.
- Actions Arising – recommend this decision to the full Board in June.

7. FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Mark Connelly introduced the paper and recapped on an exceptionally successful first year, with a strong pipeline of potential future projects.

- Comments – consideration is currently being given to reduce the size of the Assessment Panel from 12 to 10, which will help with ensuring meetings are quorate – which has proved to be difficult at times during the year. BD mentioned that he had recently met with a grant recipient, who commented on how smooth the process had been. The Chair thanked NB for chairing the Panel so well.
- Decision – the Executive Committee supported the proposal to reduce the Panel size from 12 to 10.
- Actions Arising – none.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE

Mike Elliott introduced Dmitry Yumashev from Small World Consulting (SWC), who has just completed a “Carbon Footprint Assessment and Proposed Pathway to Net Zero in the Cotswolds National Landscape”. Dmitry gave a full and detailed presentation to the Executive Committee. As with all assessments of this type, the Committee were made aware that some of the data was based on assumptions. However, Dmitry stated that the data was robust enough to invest in/ act upon. Mike Elliott supported that by saying that this shouldn't be an excuse for inactivity.

- Comments – the presentation generated a lot of discussion and debate amongst all the Members. Key areas include: public transport and EV charging points; woodland creation and management; the wider programme involving National Parks and AONBs; challenges that will be imposed on food production; consumer behaviours – especially around diet and flights; consideration to the Board's statutory purposes; engaging with partners and using this report to generate consensus and action.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the SWC report, acknowledging that there was a lot of information to digest. They thanked Dmitry and Mike for their work to date and looked forward to seeing how the Net Zero work is taken forward from here.
- Actions Arising – (1) share the presentation with the Executive Committee, (2) once the final full report is complete, write a shorter version to help engage a wide range of audiences, (3) present to the October Board on potential ways forward and seek support for those actions.

9. FUNDRAISING

James Webb gave a brief overview of the current fundraising and external bids activity.

- Comments – the Everyone’s Evenlode project (funded by Thames Water) has started at an impressive pace with regular education and community outreach sessions being delivered. CGM asked if the team could give some consideration to the linear walks created as part of the Bathscape programme, as there is a lack of public transport on some of them.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – Consider the issues of public transport with the Bathscape linear walks.

10. PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

John Mills introduced the paper, mentioning the positive difference that Simon Joyce has made to this area of work. John briefed the Committee about the significant time commitment of being involved in the Oakley Farm appeal, and suggested that involvement in future appeals must be carefully considered given the existing resources. John is looking to schedule regular meetings with LPA planning officers to continue building trusting and positive relationships. During this current year new position statements will be written for Renewable Energy (in liaison with Mike Elliott and the Climate Change Working Group) and Neighbourhood Planning (potentially led by Simon Joyce).

- Comments – CGM stated that the location of wind turbines in the Cotswolds landscape is possible but requires consideration to setting, etc. CW required further clarity on the brief of the Planning roles and the Working Group, asking for clear terms of reference for each group. AP explained that this was presented to the Board in February and the priorities for the groups were approved. DB suggested that there wasn’t enough clarity on lines of reporting between the various groups, the Executive Committee and the Board. The CEO explained the relationships and inter-dependencies. The Chair asked John Mills to consider how the Board can engage more publicly with planning related matters – perhaps through a regular webinar and an annual Planning forum.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – give consideration to how the Board can engage more publicly with its planning related work.

11. HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The CEO gave an overview of the paper, including the results of the recent public survey.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

12. A417 MISSING LINK

The CEO gave an introduction to the paper, stating that the DCO Examination was complete and a decision from the DfT can be expected in November. He also gave an update on the various Designated Fund projects that the Board is involved in.

- Comments – none.

- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

13. GLORIOUS COTSWOLDS GRASSLANDS

The paper was taken as read.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

14. TRAILS, ACCESS AND VOLUNTEERING

Becky Jones gave an overview of the recent activity, including the Cotswold Way National Trail, the Bourton walks and the developing partnership with the Cotswold Way Association. She also informed the Committee of the upcoming Volunteers Conference taking place at the RAU in June.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – the Executive Committee noted the report.
- Actions Arising – none.

15. FORWARD PLANNING

- Draft Agendas – the agendas for the June Board Meeting and AGM were reviewed.

16. OTHER BUSINESS

- None.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13 September 2022 2022, 10am-1pm at The Bear of Rodborough, Rodborough Common, Stroud, Glos, GL5 5DE.

The Meeting commenced at 10:00am and closed at 1:04pm

Chair