

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

HELD AT CIRENCESTER BAPTIST CHURCH, CHESTERTON LANE, CIRENCESTER

TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2022

Present:

Brendan McCarthy (Chair)	Rebecca Charley (Vice-Chair)
David Broad	Martin Brown
Steve Bucknell	Nick Bumford
Phil Chapman	Katherine Chesson
Brendan Costelloe	Sue Crawford
Amanda Davis	Ben Dent
Andy Graham	Liz Hodges
Graham Hopkins	Jane Hull
Garry King	Cate Le Grice-Mack
Ed Macalister-Smith	Dom Morris
Rosie Pearson	Isabel Ross
Ben Stokes	

Also in Attendance:

Andy Parsons (Chief Executive)
 Diane Bassett (Head of Finance – Maternity Cover)
 James Webb (Partnerships and Fundraising Lead)
 Rosalind Marsden (Everyone’s Evenlode – Education)
 Rowan Wynne-Jones (Everyone’s Evenlode – Education and Community Outreach)
 Rebecca Jones (Access and Volunteers Lead)
 Margaret Reid (Head Warden)
 Simon Smith (Nature Recovery Lead)
 Mark Connelly (Land Management Lead)
 Della Morris (Finance and Admin Assistant)
 Alana Hopkins (Communications Lead)
 Mike Elliott (Climate Action Lead)

Ben Smith – National Grid
 Stuart Fox – Camargue / National Grid

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- **Apologies** - apologies were received from Jo Barker, Paul Crossley, Matt Darby, Mike Dean, Adrian Hardman, Paul Hodgkinson, Emma Kearsey, Brendan McCarron, Tony Merry, Martin Mitchell, John Swanton, Clive Webster and Sarah Whalley-Hoggins.
- **Introductions and announcements** – the Chair reflected on Rebecca Jones’ recent MBE award, informing the Board of how she has developed and shaped the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens over many years, working tirelessly and selflessly in the process. The Board stood and gave a round of applause to Rebecca. The Chair also welcomed new Board Members: Katherine Chesson (SoS), Ellie Fujioka (SoS) – both officially

starting on 1 July; Emma Kearsey (Wychavon DC); Rosie Pearson (West Oxfordshire DC) and Martin Brown (Stroud DC).

- Declarations of interest – none.
- Public questions - there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY

- Decision - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Meeting held on 22 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.
- Matters Arising – the action arising from the meeting was completed.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 24 MAY 2022

The Board noted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 May 2022.

4. PRESENTATION 1: EVERYONE'S EVENLODE

Rosalind Marsden and Rowan Wynne-Jones gave a fantastic and inspirational presentation on the first six months of their project (part of Thames Water's 'Smarter Water Catchments' programme). Ruth Rudwick was unable to attend. They outlined the key outputs on education and community engagement and outreach – which were exceptional, demonstrating how the organisation is making a difference on the ground.

- Comments – Board Members were very encouraged to see the work that the team are doing, really enhancing the profile and credibility of the organisation. Board Members were asked to think about any key contacts, e.g. schools, within (or immediately surrounding) the Evenlode catchment. There was also discussion on how DoE students could be given more information about how they might enter a career in conservation, etc.
- Decision – resolved that the Board notes the presentation and that consideration should be given to how their work is extended.
Actions Arising – Board Members to contact the Everyone's Evenlode team with any useful contacts to support the project.

5. PRESENTATION 2: NATIONAL GRID: VISUAL IMPACT PROVISION IN THE COTSWOLDS

Ben Smith and Stuart Fox were invited to the meeting to give the Board Members a greater understanding of the potential Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project in the Cotswolds National Landscape. The project will involve undergrounding c.18 pylons over 8 kms to significantly enhance the landscape between Winchcombe and Dowdeswell Reservoir (closely following the Cotswold Way National Trail).

- Comments – Board Members supported the project and acknowledged the longer term benefits of the scheme, albeit fully understanding the short to mid-term landscape impacts during (and immediately after) the construction phase. Members also felt that there was further scope to carry out future schemes in the Cotswolds (as there are currently 98kms over overhead pylons in the landscape).
- Decision – resolved that the Board notes the presentation.
- Actions Arising – none.

6. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive outlined three key items – (1) revised Management Plan scheduling, (2) property matters and (3) our climate change work and priorities.

- Comments – Board Members fully supported the proposal to write an interim Management Plan (2023-25), followed by a full re-write for the period 2025-30 (once the various national and local strategies/ priorities are fully understood). Members also endorsed the approach upcoming property matters, i.e. (1) continue close liaison with the Friends of the Cotswolds and (2) have a flexible approach to future office location/s and requirements.
- Decision – the Board supported the proposal to produce an interim Management Plan for the period 2023-25.
- Actions Arising – keep the Board regularly updated on property matters.

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

The Chief Executive presented the final Work Programme and KPIs for 2021/22. He also outlined the new proposed KPIs for 2022/23.

- Comments – Ben Dent requested that the improvement in the volume and quality of social media posting and engagement over the past 12 months should be recorded.
- Decision – The new KPIs for 2022/23 were approved.
- Actions Arising – none.

8. PLANS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR APPROVAL/ ADOPTION

8(a) Volunteer Policy

Rebecca Jones presented the new (and first) Volunteer Policy for the organisation, having previously relied on the Voluntary Warden's Constitution.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – the Board unanimously adopted the policy.
- Actions Arising – share the Volunteer Handbook with Board Members, when it is finalised.

8(b) Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy

The Chief Executive presented the updated policy and the summary of comments, complaints and compliments for 2021/22.

- Comments – this led to two discussions: (1) the number of rural skills compliments and the potentially negative impact of ceasing the programme and (2) the issue of the section of the Cotswold Way National Trail where there is longstanding and persistent anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that the cessation of rural skills was the correct decision – both from a financial and core operation viewpoint.
- Decision – The Board adopted the revised policy.
- Actions Arising – ensure Ben Stokes is well briefed with regard to the anti-social behaviour issue on the section of the Cotswold Way National Trail.

9. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

9(a) Minutes of the previous meeting on 23 May

The Board noted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 May 2022.

9(b) Year-End Financial Results 2021/22

Diane Bassett gave a detailed overview of the year-end position of the organisation, including the reserves, income and expenditure, and balance sheet. Ed Macalister-Smith briefed the Board on the role of the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee in providing appropriate scrutiny, giving a special mention to the independent advisor, David Powell. The Chairman thanked Diane for her expertise and support throughout the Head of Finance's maternity cover (working just one day per week).

9(c) Treasury Management Strategy

Diane Bassett introduced the revised strategy, requesting the Board's approval for the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee to undertake a review of the Board's banking and investment options.

- Comments – Both Isabel Ross and Graham Hopkins urged the Sub-Committee to look at ethical banking and investment options. Graham Hopkins also requested that 'ethical' should be explicitly mentioned in the strategy.
- Decision – the Board approved (1) the revised strategy [subject to agreed changes] and (2) the proposal for the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee to review the Board's banking and investment options.
- Actions Arising – the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee to report to the Board once the banking and investments review is completed.

9(d) Board Member Allowances

The Chief Executive introduced and explained the recommendation to change the way Board Member allowances are calculated.

- Comments – none.
- Decision – Board Members approved the recommendation.
- Actions Arising – implement the changes to how Board Member allowances are calculated going forward.

10. FORWARD PLANNING

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

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- The CEO informed all Board Members that they would soon be receiving an email with instructions on how to complete online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. Board Members should download their certificate and email it to the info@ address.
- The CEO informed new Board Members that he would soon be contacting them to complete their inductions, supported by the Chair and Vice-Chair.

- The Chair thanked Dom Morris, who was attending his last meeting as a Secretary of State Board Member.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11 October 2022, 10.00am to 1.00pm, at Cotswold District Council, Cirencester.

The Board Meeting commenced at 10:00am and closed at 12:32pm.

Chair

DRAFT