

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Summary:** To (1) provide a high level summary of activity since the last Board Meeting in December 2020; (2) report on any new or emerging risks; (3) outline the key decisions/discussions required from this Meeting.

**Recommendation:** That the Board notes the report.

**Reviewed by the Executive Committee:** Yes / No

**If yes, the Committee's comments:** N/A

**Report by:** Andy Parsons - Chief Executive

**PRIORITY ACTIVITY SINCE THE LAST MEETING** (not recorded in other papers)

## 1. General

- The **Vision Group** has met three times in the period, progress has been excellent and the first round of consultation ends on 19 March.
- The **Kingfisher Trail** will launch on 31 May and will run across the summer, culminating in the auction during w/c 18 October. There will be an online launch in mid-May, which will be focused around a short video with social media attention. The Trail App is currently in development and will include a map and lots of other information. Over the last couple of months the team has steadily increased the number of host locations (sponsorship) and project partners. There has also been significant effort to promote the trail with press releases, a building social media presence and additions to the website. The sculptures will be delivered to the artists in the next fortnight. Examples of the artist's work and biographies are largely complete and can be viewed on the official website – [www.kingfishertrail.org](http://www.kingfishertrail.org). The March issue of Cotswold Life (released on the 24<sup>th</sup>) will feature an artist special. The four full artist portraits and interviews will then be available on the official kingfisher website from that date – one released each day to coincide with the magazine.
- Following a successful recruitment process we have offered the role of **Trails and Access Officer** (0.6fte), the preferred candidate has subsequently accepted. The role-holder will (1) lead on the access element of the Bathscapes project (National Lottery Heritage Fund) and (2) support Becky Jones, Access and Volunteer Lead, on Cotswold Way National Trail and other access/ trails issues.
- The **Voluntary Wardens'** activity is restarting in line with government guidance.
- Currently in negotiation with our landlord, Relish and Cotswolds Radio to **sub-lease** the two downstairs rooms when the current licence expires on 31 March.

## 2. Engagements (Chief Executive)

- 16 Dec – held the first 'Vision for the Cotswolds' Task and Finish Group meeting.
- 18 Jan – with Clive Webster, met with representatives of Moreton-in-Marsh Town Council to discuss various issues.
- 19 Jan – with Cate Le Grice-Mack, Mark Connelly and Simon Smith, met with the CEO and Chair of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.
- 21 Jan and 2 Mar – attended Glos Local Nature Partnership Board meetings.

- 27 Jan – met with representatives of CPRE Sussex and Kent to discuss Conservation Board status, as they are liaising with High Weald AONB about the potential of them becoming a Conservation Board.
- 11 Feb - attended the GFirst LEP ‘Visitor Economy and Tourism Business Group’ meeting. During the period also attended a number of workshops to support the development of a Visit Gloucestershire county-wide strategy.
- 17 Feb – with Graham Hopkins, attended the A417 Strategic Stakeholder Panel meeting.
- 25 Feb – attended the Cotswold Canal Partnership Board meeting.
- 26 Feb – introductory meeting with Robert Weaver, the new Chief Executive at Cotswold District Council.
- 26 Feb – attended the ‘England’s Great Walking Trails’ Partnership Board meeting (a Discover England Fund project).
- 26 Feb – attended the South-East England Protected Landscapes meeting.
- 4 Mar – with James Webb, met with Philippa Lowe (Business Manager-Localities at Publica) and Cotswold Tourism to discuss sustainable tourism strategies.
- 11 Mar – attended the National Association of AONB’s Lead Officer meeting, which focused on climate change and the role of national landscapes.

### **CORPORATE RISK**

3. The updated Risk Management Framework and Key Risk Register will be presented for adoption at the June Board.
4. The Covid-19 Risk Register is also being monitored as required.
5. Although there are no significant risks (new or emerging), there are some risks that are worth noting:
  - At the time of writing this report, the core Defra budget for 2021/22 remains unknown. In our budgeting, see Item 6, we have assumed that the grant figure will remain unchanged from 2020/21.
  - Possible/ likely impacts of the pandemic:
    - Capacity of partner organisations to deliver projects on time
    - Endowment ‘grant giving’ trusts and foundations seeing investment portfolio underperforming and therefore reducing grants they award
    - Viability of subtenants at the Old Prison – annual income from leases now in the region of £15,000
    - Reduction in disposable income leading to a reduction in donations

### **OVERVIEW OF THIS BOARD MEETING – 24 February**

6. The key items of focus at this meeting are:
  - Item 5 – to review our financial position at the end of Q3 and how this has impacted on the forecasted year-end position.
  - Item 6 – to review the Work Programme and Budget for 2021/22.
  - Item 8 – after a lot of discussion over the past months, the new Employee Handbook is ready for adoption.
  - Items 9 & 10 – John Mills will be seeking adoption for two Position Statements: Landscape-Led Development and Housing.

- Item 13 – a summary of the results of the recent Board Effectiveness Questionnaire.
- Item 14 – a presentation from Ed Bonn on the new 3-Year Business Plan Framework for Rural Skills.

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None

MARCH 2021