

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Summary:** To (1) provide a high level summary of activity since the last Executive Committee in May 2020 and (2) outline the key decisions/ discussions required from this Meeting.

**Recommendation:** That the Executive Committee notes the report

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

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

## 1. Team

- The team have completed a huge clear out of the office to improve the working environment. The two downstairs rooms have been emptied and Relish (the café operator) are renting them from us, generating new income of £550 per month.
- We are looking ahead to potentially returning to the office later in the year, but considering smaller teams occupying the office on a rota basis.
- Everyone has continued to be effective in remote working. We have maintained regular contact through weekly team meetings and 1-1s.
- Rural skills courses have resumed and the voluntary wardens have restarted their work party maintenance and improvement programme.

## 2. External Engagement (Chief Executive)

*A417 revised road scheme*

- The key focus during the period has been the A417. Graham Hopkins, John Mills, Mark Connelly and I have represented the Board at various meetings.
- We have been involved in a series of collaborative sessions, with Highways England, National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to review the changes to the scheme – looking at ways to mitigate the adverse impacts and maximise the potential of the positive changes.
- I have been really pleased with this new approach, Highways England are working with us and sharing information in an open and trusting way.
- The level of information that we are now receiving is helpful in better understanding their decision-making.
- With consultation approaching later in the year, these sessions should ensure that there are no ‘nasty surprises’ in our respective consultation responses as we have been given the opportunity to air our concerns in a collaborative environment.

*Other activity*

- 25 June & 2 September – with Mark Connelly, continued to develop the relationship with Ground Control who have agreed to fund the materials required for the Ourboretum project.
- 1 July – attended the SW National Landscapes forum and presented the work we have completed on our new name and brand.
- 2 July – participated in Cotswold District Council’s leisure strategy consultation.

- 3 July – with James Webb and Ed Bonn, met with representatives of FarmEd (a LEADER funding beneficiary) to discuss potential opportunities to work together in the future.
- 3 July – met with Wessex Water’s Head of Community Engagement to discuss how we could support their ‘Water Rangers’ initiative by involving the Voluntary Wardens.
- 13 July – attended the GFirst-led Visitor Economy and Tourism Business Group meeting.
- 16 July – attended a Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership Board meeting.
- 14 August – introductory meeting with Alex Chalk MP for Cheltenham.
- 24 August – introductory meeting with Christine Gore, Interim Chief Executive at Cotswold District Council.
- 25 August – met with Publica to start planning the updated Employee Handbook.

### **OVERVIEW OF THIS BOARD MEETING – 9 September**

3. The key items of focus at this meeting are:
- Item 6 - under the direction of Ann Wyatt, financial reporting to the Executive Committee will be different. It is important that the Committee have a full understanding of our financial position, especially in the current climate. Time should be taken to ensure the Committee are happy with these changes and to consider further improvements to future reporting.
  - Item 7 – a new Covid-19 specific risk register has been drafted by the team. It is 90% complete and, as would be expected, changing regularly. Any feedback from the Committee would be welcome.
  - Item 8 - the new Communications Strategy is now more closely aligned to the Business Plan Framework 2020-23. It has been written in extraordinary times but Alana Hopkins has clearly outlined the Board’s priorities, including a central focus on maximising the benefits of our digital channels. The Year 1 activity plan really highlights the huge amount of work, planning and expertise required to deliver the strategy.

### **SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None

SEPTEMBER 2020