

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Summary: To (1) provide a high level summary of activity since the last Board meeting in October 2022, (2) to update the Board on national activity and strategy and (3) outline the key decisions/ discussions required from this meeting.

Recommendation: That the Board notes the report.

Report by: Andy Parsons - Chief Executive

KEY ACTIVITY (not included in other papers)**1. National Activity and Strategy**

- Please see *Appendix A* for a summary of current activity and strategy.

2. Members, Team and Volunteers**Team**

- In November, Becky Jones was officially awarded her MBE by the King at Windsor Castle.
- Ann Wyatt, Head of Finance, left the Board earlier this month. Following a thorough recruitment campaign we have appointed Magdalena Glanowska to the role. Ahead of Magdalena starting in February, Michele Holden is providing interim cover.
- A new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Programme Officer will be joining the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands team in March, to lead the Designated Funds BNG work, funded by National Highways.
- Applications for the New to Nature 12-month placement ends on 17 February. James Webb and Becky Jones will be conducting the interviews.
- Consultations (1-1) ahead of the office move have taken place and all team members have nominated their preferred base. This will be reflected in their contract in due course.
- I will be on annual leave from 24 March to 16 April (just over three weeks). James Webb, Partnerships and Fundraising Lead, will deputise during the period and will act as first point of contact for the Chair, Vice-Chair and Board Members. He will join the Board Member WhatsApp group.

Board

- Alastair Adams joined the Board as our new member for Worcestershire County Council.
- Mike Dean (Tewkesbury Borough Council) has left the Board after serving for more than ten years. We are hoping to confirm his replacement very soon.
- The deadline for candidates to apply for the two Secretary of State Board vacancies is 20 February.

Volunteers

- After three years as Head Warden, Margaret Reid will be stepping down from the role on 31 March. On behalf of everyone involved with the Cotswolds National Landscape I thank Margaret for everything that she has achieved, I have thoroughly enjoyed working closely with her and I very much hope that she continues to be involved in our work. Mike Cripps, who is currently Deputy, will take on the role of Head Warden from April.

3. Property Matters

- *The Old Prison* – in respect of paying for the Schedule of Works (as identified in the survey), there is a difference of £15,000 between the full and final offer we have made to our landlords and the figure that they have been given from their surveyor. We aim to leave the Old Prison at the end of April.
- *New office space* – agreements are being finalised for the two Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust locations (Robinswood Hill and Greystones) and the additional space at Cotswold Business Centre in Upper Rissington.

KEY ENGAGEMENTS (Chief Executive)

- A417 Missing Link:
 - 11 Oct - site meeting at Crickley Hill, with National Highways, Kier (main contractor) and environmental stakeholders.
 - 21 Oct – Designated Funds (Biodiversity Net Gain) meeting and site visits with National Highways (plus contractors) and the National Trust.
 - 9 & 17 Nov – pre and post decision meetings, with a comms focus.
 - 17 Jan – PDP Collaborative Session, led by Kier and National Highways.
 - 14 Feb - PDP Collaborative Session, led by Kier and National Highways.
- 12 Oct – took part in a climate-focused peer review with Cotswold District Council.
- 20 Oct – attended the launch of the new Bourton-on-the-Water walks.
- 31 Oct – Severn Thames water transfer update meeting.
- 1 Nov – convened a meeting with all local authority partners involved with the Rural England Prosperity Fund, passing on knowledge gained from LEADER and FiPL.
- 4 Nov – attended a National Trust reception at the Bath Assembly Rooms (ahead of their AGM the following day).
- 16 Nov – attended the Gloucestershire CPRE Awards event in Newent.
- 17 Nov – National Association of AONBs Chairs Conference and AGM.
- 24 Nov & 15 Dec – meetings with the Friends of the Cotswolds to discuss the Will of Niel Curwen (the first Chairman of the Cotswolds Conservation Board).
- 7 Dec – met with Farms for City Children at their Wick Court (Stroud DC) location.
- 13 Dec – local authority future strategy review meeting.
- 11 Jan – NAAONB rebrand workshop in Cheltenham.
- 23 Jan – Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership Board meeting.

OVERVIEW OF THIS BOARD MEETING – 21 FEBRUARY

The key items of focus at this meeting are:

- **Items 4 and 5** – presentations about two key important areas of our work:
 - *Glorious Cotswold Grasslands* - to hear from Harvey Sherwood and Anna Field on how the programme is evolving and growing
 - *Farming in Protected Landscapes* – to hear from Scott Brown, Heidi Gibbs and Caroline Regan on the grant programme – successes, impacts, challenges and next steps
- **Item 8(a)** – review and, if in agreement, adopt the Management Plan (2023-25).
- **Item 8(b)** – review and, if in agreement, adopt the Work Programme (2023/24).
- **Item 8(c)** – review and, if in agreement, approve the proposed Committee, Working and Steering Groups (2023/24).

- Item 9(b) – review and, if in agreement, adopt the Budget (2023/24).
- Item 9(c) – review and, if in agreement, adopt the updated Risk Management Framework (including the Key Risk Register)

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- Appendix A – National Activity and Strategy

FEBRUARY 2023