

WORKING AND STEERING GROUPS

Summary: (1) to provide a summary of the key outputs of the Working and Steering Groups during 2020/21 and (2) to propose the Groups for 2021/22.

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee approves the proposal and recommends that it is taken forward to the March Board for adoption.

Report by: Andy Parsons - Chief Executive

WORKING GROUPS – key outputs of 2020/21

1. Climate Change

- Group established in June 2020.
- The working group has met five times to date and worked on Soils and Water, Woodland and Trees, Heritage, Biodiversity, Energy.
- Discussions have taken place on nature based solutions, community resilience and nature recovery plans, the latter following a presentation Simon Smith.
- Aiming for draft strategy to be presented at the May Executive meeting and adoption by the Board in June.

2. Fundraising

- Group established in May 2020 with additional members joining in October.
- The full working group (five members) met in October, December and January. The group has provided valuable input into the Kingfisher Trail, Caring for the Cotswolds and other income generating areas of interest.
- Three members of the Group formed the Caring for the Cotswolds Grants Panel, alongside two external non-Board members. In January, the Grants Panel approved 14 new applications worth £25,000.

3. Planning and Infrastructure

- Three meetings held in 2020/21: 13 May, 27 October, 12 January.
- The group has provided valuable input into:
 - planning policy and development management consultation responses including our responses to the Government's proposed planning reforms;
 - how we address relevant Glover Review proposals, including putting systems in place to perform as a statutory consultee;
 - how we should address our duty to further the social and economic wellbeing of local communities within the Cotswolds National Landscape;
 - the draft Planning & Development and Housing Position Statements (including delegated authority to review the final drafts that will be presented to the Board in March 2021);
 - how the group should engage with the organisation's work on climate change, nature recovery networks and biodiversity net-gain.

4. Walking and Exploring

- A recommendation has been taken by the Board to formally close this Working Group. Some of the groups remit will be carried on by the Cotswold Trails and Access Partnership (CTAP), with the new Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Working Group also continuing some of its work and focus.

STEERING GROUPS – key outputs of 2020/21

5. A417 Missing Link

- The Steering Group met on 25 September, 6 October, 9 November and is scheduled to meet again on 2 March.
- Other A417 meetings during the period included:
 - Collaboration Workshop (4) – 17 September
 - Common Land and SSSI Strategy – 28 September
 - Strategic Stakeholder Panel – 7 October, 11 December and 17 February
 - Landscape Connectivity Around Structures – 12 October
 - Biodiversity Net Gain – 28 October
 - LVIA Technical Review – 21 December
 - Barrow Wake Car Park – 13 January
 - Statement of Common Ground – 2 February
- The Board submitted its consultation response on 11 November. The consultation response was unanimously supported by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Board.
- It should be recorded that not all members of the Steering Group supported the approach that was adopted in 2020 – specifically, the collaborative approach with other organisations.

6. Cotswolds Champions

- Group established in June 2020 to support programme development, provide oversight and make funding decisions (to allocate £408,000).
- Meetings are quarterly - three to date: June, Sept and Dec 2020.
- Group approved Collaborative Agreement with FWAGSW to act as co-delivery partners (with CNL) for £200,000 Rail Corridor Enhancement Project (RCEP), which will deliver a suite of outputs designed to support long-term environmental conservation and enhancement in the area (including mitigation planting).
- Group allocated £118,000 to additional projects: Caring for the Cotswolds (CNL - £25,000); Kingfisher Trail (CNL - £25,000); Headwaters of the Little Avon (BART - £48,000); Insect Communities of the Golden Valleys (GWT - £20,000).
- Focus for the coming year is to finalise the allocation of all remaining funds and supervise planning for the programme's legacy.

7. Glorious Cotswold Grasslands

- The Steering group has met three times to date.
- The main areas of work discussed have been the GCG Business Plan, the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and income generation.
- The Steering group advised on the business plan tender applications and commented on draft plans.
- The approach to income generation has been discussed and endorsed.

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant revisions to the work programme discussed and endorsed
- The Steering group also discussed the Small Grants Scheme and following amendments endorsed the scheme. The scheme has now been launched and three awards granted to date.

RECOMMENDATION FOR 2021/22

8. It is proposed that, following the agreement to cease the Walking and Exploring and launch the new Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Working Group at the December 2020 Board meeting, all other Working Groups and Steering Groups continue into 2021/22.
9. Membership of the Working Groups will follow the normal process of nomination and, if required, voting at the Annual General Meeting in June.
10. Membership of Steering Groups is at the discretion of the Lead Officer and Chair of the Group.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- None

FEBRUARY 2021