

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Summary: To (1) provide a high level summary of activity since the last Executive Committee in February 2021 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 LAST MEETING (not recorded in other papers)

1. Team

- Ann Wyatt and I met with Patrick Arran, to discuss the role of Monitoring Officer for the Cotswolds Conservation Board. We will be seeking formal Board adoption to appoint Patrick at the AGM in June.
- John Mills was invited to join the Planning Advisory Group, a national group made up of representatives from Defra, Natural England, National Parks and AONBs. Their remit includes advising on the planning related proposals from the Landscapes Review and reviewing how national planning policies will impact national landscapes in England.
- Media attention and public engagement with the Kingfisher Trail has been excellent, ahead of its launch at the end of May. Visit Gloucestershire is the trail's headline sponsor.
- The Rural Skills programme has restarted with participation numbers and feedback being very positive. Courses are now bookable via our main website.
- The Voluntary Wardens are restarting guided walks over the next two months, the first time since the start of the pandemic began.
- The team will have a phased return to some office-based working from July.

2. Engagements (Chief Executive)

- 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 and 19 Mar – 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 and 24 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.
- 17 Mar – filming with Countryfile.
- 18 Mar – attended the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership Board meeting.
- 18 Mar- with John Mills, attended a meeting called by Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP on the expansion of quarry operations in the north Cotswolds.
- 30 Mar, 12 Apr and 27 Apr – attended Highways England's 'Designated Funds' meetings.

- 31 Mar and 12 May – with Graham Hopkins, John Mills and Mark Connelly, attended Highways England’s ‘Statement of Common Ground’ meetings.
- 16 Apr – the ‘Vision’ group met to review the consultation feedback and to draft the new vision.
- 20 Apr – with Cate Le Grice-Mack, met with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust to discuss opportunities to work together and promote the Cotswolds Lion.
- 28 Apr and 30 Apr – attended two Defra meetings for all Lead Officers to review (1) how the government intend to respond to the Glover Review and (2) Farming in Protected Landscapes.
- 4 May – with Becky Jones, attended an A417 meeting to discuss the impacts (both during construction and after) on the Cotswold Way National Trail.
- 5 May – with Graham Hopkins, attended Highways England’s ‘Strategic Stakeholder Panel’ meeting.
- 10 May – attended a meeting with Highways England to review the timelines and detail of the Development Consent Order for the A417 road scheme.

OVERVIEW OF THIS BOARD MEETING – 25 MAY

3. The key items of focus at this meeting are:
- Items 4-8 – to review all relevant documentation relating to the Board’s year-end requirements.
 - Item 11 – to review and discuss “A Cotswolds Vision: a national landscape for everyone”, ahead of seeking formal Board adoption in June.
 - Item 13 and 18c – to better understand the remits and priorities of the various Working Groups, Steering Groups and the new Finance & Governance Sub-Committee, ahead of the June AGM (Item 13). A new agenda format for Executive Committee meetings will be trialled from September 2021 (Item 18c) to ensure a clearer focus on the relationship, and decision-making accountability, between the Executive Committee and these groups.
 - Item 15 – to review the progress-to-date in writing the new Climate Change Strategy, ahead of seeking formal Board adoption in June.
 - Item 16 – on the assumption that Defra will have issued more information and guidance, a verbal update on Farming in Protected Landscapes will be given.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- None

MAY 2021