

MEETING OF
THE COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICES, NORTHLEACH

THURSDAY 25TH JANUARY 2018

Present:

Chairman	-	Liz Eyre
David Broad		Brendan McCarthy
Mike Dean		Mark O'Sullivan
Nick Holliday		Martin Veal
Sue Hope		Richard Wakeford
Ed Macalister-Smith		

Apologies:

Nigel Colston	Tony Merry
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Also in Attendance:

Mark MacKenzie-Charrington	Board Member
Charles Mathew	Board Member
Mark Connelly	Land Management Officer
Martin Lane	Director
Ally Rood	Planning Officer

E 6.1 INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Board Members, Mark MacKenzie-Charrington and Charles Mathew to the Meeting.

E 6.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

E 6.3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

E 6.4 MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee held on 9th November 2017 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:-

- deletion of the following words in Minute E 3.8:-

‘Mr O’Sullivan expressed concern at the speed of which the Future Landscapes was progressing and asked if there were any ambitions to bringing it to a close. He expressed he wished to see previous work properly integrated and how and when the output of the project had been achieved.’

and their substitution by the words - ‘Mr O’Sullivan considered that the Cotswolds @50 still had not been fully integrated on the issue of climate change.’

Matters Arising:

Mr Lane reported that the Business Plan was due from the Friends at the end of February 2018 and that the last Meeting of the Partnership Board had taken place on 12th January 2018. Mr Lane stated that a report would be presented at the February 2018 Meeting of the Executive Committee.

Mr Lane informed Members that Board Member Penny Williamson had resigned in December 2017 and the deadline for nominations for a replacement Group 6 Parish Member would close at 5.p.m. on 25th January 2018.

The Chairman explained that consultancy being undertaken regarding works to the Discovery Centre at Northleach was being funded by the Friends and apprised the Committee that Alanna Hopkins would be replacing Chris Berrens as of 12th March 2018. Chris had left the Board in early 2018, transferring to working on a National Park programme in the South of England.

Mr Macalister-Smith enquired as to the well-being of Board staff, given the recent turnaround of staff. The Chairman and Mr Lane jointly responded that the Board offered an opportunity for a challenging and rewarding role, with a high level of workload but, in comparison to larger organisations, was restricted by the inability to offer career progression. Mr Lane also reminded the Committee of the small number of staff and voluntary wardens in comparison to the large number of Board Members, and the complications this could present.

In response to a further question, Mr Lane confirmed that the any work relating to National Parks had not meant that other Officer work had been jeopardised.

Mr O’Sullivan informed Members that a Meeting of the Living and Working Sub-Committee had taken place on 23rd January 2018 and had discussed the Draft Management Plan. Mr O’Sullivan enquired how this review would be incorporated into the discussion, given that the Plan had been presented prior to the Meeting. The Chairman responded that, as there were a number of Executive Committee Members and Officers present at the Living and Working Sub-Committee Meeting on 23rd January 2018 also in attendance at the Executive Committee Meeting, those present would be invited to contribute into the discussion later, raising any matters from the Sub-Committee Meeting.

Mrs Hope questioned if the role previously undertaken by Richard Watson would be continued, given the reduction in National Trail funding. Mr Lane responded that this was now a part-time role in conjunction with another part-time role undertaken by one Officer.

E 6.5 MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD

The Executive Committee received the unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 7th December 2017.

E 6.6 DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-2023 PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the item and reminded Members that, as the document was a partnership plan, the Board would not be expected to deliver the outcomes on its own. The Chairman also expressed her desire that the document should 'speak' in a logical and easily understandable format, which contained all of the relevant policies.

Ms Rood invited Members to comment and raise questions on the draft Plan, and reminded the Committee that, since its publication, the government had released the 25 Year Environmental Plan. Ms Rood also explained that a review of the Plan, which had been led by the Living and Working Sub-Committee, had highlighted one area relating to waste and litter which had not been mentioned in the Management Plan, but was contained within the 25 Year Environmental Plan. In addition, Members were also reminded of the high number of policies that existed and the issue of adding more policies to the Plan was explained.

Having regard to the comments of the Living and Working Sub-Committee, the Committee put forward the following suggestions/observations:-

- (i) the introduction required more reference to Section 85 duties and should be written in the format of a National Park; with the statutory duties to include the word 'must' in reference to the legal obligation of Local Authority Members;
- (ii) the word 'enhancement' be used in pages 3 to 4; the vision be listed as a 'rolling vision' as it continued to deliver; the Plan should make reference to 'partnership working'; the 2038 Vision should contain 'even more treasured' in reference to the landscape;
- (iii) page 5 required reference to Medieval wool churches and to the Cotswolds becoming the 'Walking Capital'; but other visions should be withdrawn or combined as it was considered there were too many at present;
- (iv) on page 6, references to 'climate change' and 'natural capital' should be removed;
- (v) on pages 7 to 10; the 'Spatial Portrait' should be divided into sub-headings and refer to the current challenges (public transport; climate change; development; landscape) via the format of a list; the 'Cotswolds' ambitions' should be changed to the 'Board's ambitions'; 'spatial' should be removed from 'spatial portrait'; no reference should be made in paragraph 4 under Ambitions to the

AONB being 'designated' as a National Park but, instead, the paragraph should quote that 'arguments both for and against the case were being explored'; a footnote should be included in relation to 'effective partnerships', stating that the Board would engage with a number of parties and warning that some changes would occur throughout the period;

(v) within pages 11 to 28, all policies and key issues were considered suitable; Policy 2 required reference to the 'Board working to improve mechanisms to monitor Section 85'; page 25 should include reference to adaption in connection to Climate Change; Health and Wellbeing did not include a young people theme and this was considered to require a separate heading and policies; additionally, volunteering was also considered to require more information;

(vi) with reference to page 29, whilst the number of Monitoring Indicators had been reduced, the number was still considered too high and could not be confirmed until the second round of consultation had been completed.

Two Board Members, who did not serve on the Executive Committee but were present at the Meeting, were then invited to express their thoughts on the Plan to the Committee. Those Members considered the Policy to be readable, but both expressed concern at the omission of income generation and explained their issue with residents working in co-operation with the Plan, particularly farmers.

Mr Wakeford informed the Committee that he considered the need for other further involvement in addition to the National Park Authority, as a result of their poor reputation. Mr Wakeford also suggested that the introduction section of the Plan should contain reference to the Board's Partners who would be working in conjunction with the Board on the Plan's delivery. The Chairman agreed this would be easier than inserting the information later in the document.

RESOLVED that, subject to the incorporation of changes identified, the consultation document be signed off by mid-February 2018 and the Committee consequently delegate authority to with the Director, in consultation with the Chairman, being given delegated authority to make any necessary changes prior to the sign-off date.

Note: The Committee wished to thank Ally Rood for all the work she had undertaken on behalf of the Committee and wished to record its best wishes to her for the future.

E 6.7 A417 MISSING LINK

Mr Lane provided an oral update to the Committee in relation to this item.

E 6.8 COTSWOLDS NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL

Mr Lane provided an oral update to the Committee in relation to this item.

E 6.9 AGRI-ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POST-BREXIT

Mr Holliday reported on recent DEFRA conversations with pilots of the scheme (Yorkshire Dales and Dartmoor). Mr Holliday explained that a paper had been produced inviting submissions, but the time opportunity for doing so was limited; and added that all discussions would have to take place through Natural England.

Mr Connelly then provided an update to Members and asked for suitable contacts known to the Board to be invited to be involved.

Mr Wakeford commented that the scheme had been prepared prior to the speech made by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP and the 25 Year Environment Plan, but was still an agri-environment scheme. Mr Wakeford added that the scheme related to how the value could be put to farmers to ensure they were willing to sell their land to the public.

Mr O'Sullivan expressed concern regarding the costings of the scheme and suggested that, as the total cost of benefits might be very large, a cap be placed on the fees being paid to farmers.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

E 6.10 FORWARD PLAN 2017/18-2018/19

The Committee received the updated Forward Plan for 2017/18-2018/19.

RESOLVED that the updated Forward Plan be noted.

E 6.11 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and closed at 1.12 p.m.

Chairman