

Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Friday, 29 April 2016,

Minutes

Present:

Prof J W Raine (Chairman), Mr S Bosley, Mr J Fryman, Mr J Hervey-Bathurst, Ms E Holton, Mrs C O'Donnell, Mrs G Rees, Mr J Payne, Mr C Williams and Mr R Williams

Also attended:

Mr D Armitage, Mr D Bridges, Mr J Burgin, Mr P Esrich Mrs K Griffiths and Mrs S Jones.

Available papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the meeting of the Malvern Hills AONB held on 20 November 2015 (previously circulated).

594 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Mike Ashton, Wayne Barnes, Dick Bryant, Sarah Faulkner, Dawn Griffiths, Arthur Lee, Ken Pollock, Neil Rimmington and Paul Tuthill.

595 Declaration of Interests

James Hervey-Bathurst declared an interest in that he lives, works and owns land within the AONB.

596 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2015 were agreed to be an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

597 Film of the Malvern Hills AONB

David Armitage introduced a film which gave details about the history and points of interest in the AONB. The film was around 15 minutes long but had been designed so that it could be split into separate parts and shorter sequences which could be shown to different audiences. Committee members were asked for their views.

Members were generally very impressed, with many saying that they felt the film was excellent. Suggestions for improvements and modifications included:

- more about wildlife,
- more on the northern and western parts of the AONB;
- footage of the AONB in Spring and/or Summer;

- and
- the introduction of a timeline to help people understand the timing of events; and
- A number of members particularly felt that the film could be used in local schools for children in years 4 and above.

RESOLVED that the Committee commended the AONB Unit on the production of the film.

598 Colour Study of the AONB

Paul Esrich reminded members that the AONB Partnership produced various guidance documents - available on its website - in order to raise the standard of management and development in the AONB. He explained that colour plays an important role in local distinctiveness and that guidance was needed on this subject. Jem Waygood of Waygood Colour had been commissioned to produce this. Jem explained that a colour was never seen in isolation. He explained his approach which involved using a swatch of 2000 colours to identify and code the colours which exist in the landscape, as perceived by the human eye. From this work, palettes of colours appropriate for development in the different landscapes of the AONB had been generated.

These 'developed palettes' cover the main groups of building materials available including steel sheets, brick, timber and masonry paints and renders. They include integration colours for roofs and principal elevations and accent colours to work alongside them. The guidance was not designed to be restrictive but to help developers to have confidence in using colours that complement the landscape.

Jem explained that the recladding of the large sheds (Wye Hall) at the Three Counties Showground and the current proposals for building a new primary school in Colwall had both been informed by the process of Environmental Colour Assessment.

JAC members were impressed with the presentation and in the ensuing discussion a number of comments were made:

- It was difficult to address colours that had already been used in developments which were regarded as unsympathetic to the surroundings, however, now there was a process to support the use of more appropriate colours it was hoped that this

599 AONB Budget and Work Programme 2016/17

- would be less of a problem in future,
- Existing sheds which were deemed to be unsympathetic could possibly be painted a more acceptable colour but this was likely to require extensive preparation and may be expensive,
 - One member wondered if shapes could be used to soften buildings as well as colours. That was beyond the scope of this project but different colours could be used to help disguise shape,
 - Research was needed into the possibility of disguising poly-tunnels – perhaps with materials that could let light through but would not be light and reflective on the outside,
 - It was suggested that Jem be invited to attend district planning meetings or provide planning committee members with training. The AONB Manager stated that planners were already interested in the colour work and those working on Neighbourhood development plans were also considering how the work could be used,
 - The Chairman felt the project was a good example of how the AONB Unit provided 'added value' to the work of other partners.

The guidance would now go out to public consultation before being finalised.

RESOLVED that the Malvern Hills AONB JAC:

- 1) thank Jem Waygood for his presentation and**
- 2) supported the colour work and recognised that it was useful to the AONB and surrounding area.**

The AONB Manager was pleased to announce that the budget, with its grant from Defra, had increased slightly from the previous year. This is a result of the Minister - Rory Stewart – having agreed to protect the grant to AONBs in real terms.

Rory Stewart was a supporter of AONBs and AONB Partnerships but the National Association of AONBs had also been working hard to promote and protect the status of AONBs.

The funding from Local Authorities had remained level, with the following contributions being made in 2016/17:

Herefordshire Council	£16,334
Worcestershire County Council	£13,268
Malvern Hills District Council	£11,000

Forest of Dean Council	£872
Gloucestershire County Council	£600

There had also been some important voluntary contributions made by Parish Councils.

Members suggested that someone from the AONB Unit could visit Parish Conferences to promote the work of the AONB which may lead to further contributions.

It was observed that neither Colwall nor Ledbury Parish Councils had made a contribution to the work of the AONB in the last financial year. Paul Esrich explained that it was for each Parish Council to decide whether it wished to support the work of the AONB Partnership in this way. He stressed that the voluntary contributions were very important to the Partnership's work. The Chair suggested that it may be appropriate to write to some Parish Councils again to ask whether they wish to contribute.

It was not thought that the vote on EU membership would directly affect the AONB Partnership's funding. However, it was recognized that much of the funding for farmers was from European funds.

The Unit work programme, based on the 5 year Management plan, was included in the agenda. It was pointed out that as there were c.75 policies in the AONB Management Plan it was not possible to deliver against each one of these in every year. Members felt that the film could be used to address some policies such as IP7 'Develop a Malvern area education resource in conjunction with local schools and/ or other interested parties'.

In response to a question, Paul Esrich explained that the project to create a cycle path between Malvern town and the Three Counties Showground would now not proceed as one of the landowners did not wish to go ahead.

The map and guide of the AONB was currently being updated with current links and contacts. Much of the funding for reprinting this guide had come from the private sector.

RESOLVED that the committee noted:

- 1. the budget for 2016/17, and**
- 2. the overall direction and work priorities for the year ahead.**

**600 Malvern Hills
Car Clubs**

David Armitage explained that the Sustainable Development Fund along with grants from other sources had contributed to a car club which now had 12 vehicles and covered Colwall, West Malvern, Malvern Wells and Ledbury.

The aim was to reduce the number of cars on the road and was aimed at people who didn't want to pay for a second car or who did under 6,000 miles a year. Once bought the cars become self-financing but insurance costs had risen greatly in the last year.

The car club also has electric bikes for hire. The car and bike club was helping reduce the number of cars on the road as well as helping people exercise in an area which would otherwise be challenging for cyclists.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted this report.

**601 The Future of
Castlemorton
Commons**

As reported at the last JAC meeting in November 2015, options were being considered regarding reversing the decline in grazing over the Castlemorton Commons. A report had now been completed and was being considered by the Malvern Hills Conservators.

The Conservators owned part of the Common but Birtsmorton Court owned Coombgreen Common and the AONB Unit staff had visited the owner at Birtsmorton Court to discuss the options.

A public meeting was arranged in association with Birtsmorton Parish Council and ideas on roadside fences and off-highway cattle-grids were discussed. 'Listeners' around the room recorded the issues which were raised by individuals. A list of frequently asked questions had been prepared so that everyone could access the available information. There was no single answer to future management that would be right for everyone and there was also uncertainty over agricultural grants following a Brexit.

Duncan Bridges confirmed that the Malvern Hills Conservators were looking at the report prepared by Footprint Ecology and the AONB Unit to see how the Commons could best be secured from a practical and legal perspective.

RESOLVED that the committee:

- 1. Noted and commented on the report,**

2. **Supported continued attempts to secure a sustainable approach to the management of the Castlemorton Commons, and**
3. **Supported attempts to engage with the Highway Authority to find a solution to livestock containment on all the Commons.**

602 Sustainable Development Fund

Details of the Sustainable Development Fund were given in the agenda but a couple of projects were highlighted by David Armitage.

The Malvern Munch was a local Food Walk around the Malverns organised by Malvern Hills District Council. The Beacon Trampler was a vehicle which allowed disabled people access to the hills and could be booked from the H2O café at the Innovation Centre. Arthur Lee had sent thanks to David Armitage and the AONB Unit, on behalf of the Disabled Ramblers, for helping to set up the Trampler.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. **Noted this report and**
2. **Agreed to contact David Armitage with any projects that might be suitable for this fund.**

603 Information Items

Details of projects which addressed policies in the management plan were listed in the agenda. Attention was drawn to the Traditional Orchard project was going well and the photo competition which would help replenish the stock of images of the AONB as well as raise awareness of the area.

604 Verbal Reports from Partners

James Hervey-Bathurst explained that a visitor building was being proposed at the entrance to Eastnor Park, using a grant from the Rural Development Programme for England. The work would also help to improve parking and provide an educational resource.

Jerry Fryman mentioned that the restoration of Eastnor Post Office had been done very well.

Jim Burgin explained that he was currently Interim Heritage Manager for Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils and that this covered both built and natural conservation. He explained that a Conservation Officer Post had recently been secured.

Paul Esrich reported that the National Association for AONBs was responding to the Rural Planning Review to state that they wanted applications for poly-tunnels etc.

605 Dates of Future Meetings

within protected areas to still go through planning.

The national AONB conference was to be held in Shropshire this year and the MHAONB Unit would be holding a field trip.

The next meeting of the AONB JAC would take place on 18 November 2016.

The Study tour would take place on 23 September.

The meeting ended at 12.05pm

Chairman