

NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
COUNCIL OF PARTNERS

**MINUTES of a meeting held at
Ashmansworth Village Hall, Ashmansworth, Hampshire
Tuesday 8th March 2016**

Present

Mr T Hiscocks
Cllr A Bennett
Cllr D Sherlock
Cllr P Giddings
Cllr C Mathew
Mr A Smith

Representing

Chairman
Swindon Borough Council / Vice Chairman
Basingstoke & Deane District Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Natural England – Thames Valley Area Manager

Community & Parish Interest Group Members

Mr B Castle
Mr N Titchen
Mrs P Brookman
Mr J Sharp

Farming & Rural Business Interest Group Members

Ms A Witcombe

Historic Environment Interest Group Members

Mr P Lemon

Recreation and Tourism Interest Group Members

Mr M Crane
Mr R Clarke

Nature and Conservation Interest Group Members

Mrs A Ingham

In attendance

Mr N Mottram	Oxfordshire County Council
Mr J Wilshaw	Swindon Borough Council
Mr R Broadhead	North Wessex Downs AONB MWG Chairman & Wiltshire Council
Mr P Hendry	West Berkshire Council
Mr E Rowsell	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Mr H Oliver	Director, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mr O Cripps	Projects & Development Manager, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs R Davies	Planning Advisor, North Wessex Downs AONB
Mrs J Baldwin	Partnership Co-ordinator, North Wessex Downs AONB (minutes)
Miss S Simmonds	Avebury World Heritage Site

1. **Apologies.** Apologies for absence were received from:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Mr D Bibby	Test Valley Borough Council
Mr D Lamb	South & Vale District Councils
Mr I Brown	Wiltshire Council
Cllr H Cole	West Berkshire Council
Cllr F de Rhe-Philippe	Wiltshire Council
Cllr A McNair Scott	Hampshire County Council
Cllr E Gillespie	South & Vale District Councils
Mrs L Philipps	Interest Group
Mr G King	Hampshire County Council
Mr C Musgrave	CLA / Interest Group
Mrs M Chambers	Interest Group

No Apologies received

Ms V Heal English Heritage

The welcome was given by the Chairman and to new members Mr John Sharp, Mrs Penny Brookman and Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie and returning member Cllr Hilary Cole.

2. **Constitutional Items** (*papers 1-4*)

All papers noted and agreed.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (*paper 5*)

It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2015 be confirmed and signed.

4. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

Action points from last meeting: **Para 13 – HO to send LEP submission to CM**

ACTION: HO as above

5. **Presentation by Sarah Simmonds, Avebury World Heritage Site(WHS) Officer**

S Simmonds gave a presentation on the Stonehenge & Avebury World Heritage Site. After the presentation members were invited to ask questions. One member enquired on the relationship between the World Heritage Site and National Trust, what is their involvement. **SS** advised the member that the National Trust own 1/3 of the whole site. She also advised members that the chairman of the WHS steering group lives in Avebury village and all three parishes have members on the steering committee. One member asked how they were combating the badger problem undermining the stones. **SS** advised that National England as the lead partner would have to be involved in any discussions on badger control and currently Steff Paine and Dawn Enright from Natural England are in favour of a badger strategy. **AS** asked **SS** to keep him informed of the findings. One member asked how Avebury WHS were dealing with burying overhead power cables. **SS** advised that SSE (Southern & Scottish Electric) have to dig very deep and need to work in conjunction with Historic England and the National Trust before any works can begin. **TH** thanked **SS** for attending the meeting. He asked the members for their approval and endorsement on the Stonehenge & Avebury and Associated Sites Heritage Site Management Plan, which had been submitted to members in 2015 for viewing. Further copies were made available. It was unanimously approved.

6. Chairman's remarks

Item removed from the agenda.

7. Partnership Round Table

TH wishes for members to use this item to mention general events/happenings and if there is a major issue or topic that a member wishes to discuss in future, that they contact either the Director or Partnership Coordinator to raise a paper for the next meeting.

BC - Housing in the AONB is now in high demand, stretching parish boundaries. **PG** - Test Valley Local Plan now approved and in force. **JS** - 1/3 of the Harwell housing development proposed is in East Hendred Parish, the main issue being how large the developments are. **MC** - advised that Visit Wiltshire are heading up the Hungerford to Bath route project. **AS** - advised that at the recent VWH local plan meeting, the Inspectorate took good notes on the meeting and on housing in Harwell. He would like to report further at the next Council of Partners meeting in July. **AB** - Planning application at Berkley Farm went to judicial review as the Inspector did not take note of some of the recent finds. He advised also that SBC are now transferring more local issues back to parish councils. **RC** - MADT highlighting the community wi-fi initiative giving good coverage, developers of the wi-fi network for Marlborough area are happy to extend it further into the villages. **DS** - BDBC plan still waiting for the Inspectorates blessings. It is proposed to move through BDBC on 26 May 2016.

8. Budget Update 2015-2016 – for information (paper 6)

HO introduced the paper and advised that the AONB were on track to a full budget spend. **PH** asked if any remaining funds could be carried over. **HO** advised that only income and Local Authority contributions can be carried over. Any remaining DEFRA money would be returned to them. A reprint of our visitor guide was brought forward as we had some underspend. **CM** asked what efforts are being made for income generation. **HO** advised that beyond what we already bring in, there are a number of bids in development, subletting of parts of the offices, events, Icon print sales and postcard sales. We are currently looking further into subletting for another tenant. There was a proposal to host West Berkshire Council LNP member, but that has fallen through. **CM** concerned that the AONB are still relying on LA's and Government funding and they need to look at further sources. **TH** advised members that the MWG will be holding a workshop on Monday 11 April which will include income generation and members of the Council of Partners are welcome to attend. Anyone wishing to attend, is to advise **HO** or **TH** after the meeting today. One member asked how the 'Friends' group is progressing. A report will be sourced from the chairman of the group for the next meeting. **RC** wished to draw the Partners attention to the recent letter received from Rory Stewart advising of the secured funding to all AONB's for the next 4 years.

9. Proposed Budget 2016-17 – approval (paper 7)

HO introduced the report and is aware that it is not a good time to ask LA's for an increase in their contributions to the AONB, but now that DEFRA have listened to the NAAONB and accepted and endorsed the value of the AONB's and NP's, the result is that DEFRA have given the AONB an increase not a cut in funding as was expected. The 4 year funding settlement is with a 1.72% increase year on year, which makes it clear that DEFRA want us to maintain and raise our aim. With the increase in superannuation and NI contributions, there is still a need to raid other budget lines to accommodate these increases. To maintain the 25% contribution from LA's as stipulated by DEFRA, £4,500.00 will need to be taken from our unrestricted funds to top up the LA's contributions. For 2016-17, the proposed combined AONB core, SDF and projects budget is

£9,602.47 higher than last year. Of this proposed increase, 46.9% comes from AONB-generated income, 41.6% from DEFRA and 11.5% from LA partners. Since preparing the paper for today's meeting, HO has contacted all officers for an immediate reaction and so far there has been no knock backs to the proposal. There is just Wiltshire Council and South & Vale DC's to respond. The biggest increase is to salaries, covering 1% increase in superannuation and NI contributions. SDF will be reduced yet again, to £15,000.00. Planning and Landscape budgets have been split as per the request of the Council of Partners. One member asked whether the AONB Planning Advisor currently charges for advice. HO informed the members that this was being looked at by the Planning Advisor, but when this was last discussed, LA's didn't think it was right that we should charge local authorities for advice as they already contribute to the funding of the AONB. There is a thought to charge large developers for consultation visits and meetings. Cranborne Chase has instigated a new charging system and we will watch with interest how they get on. MC asked whether there is capacity for charging. HO advised that as long as it is within the Planners workload. RC advised that with changes to Natural England's' approach to planning and with the reduction of staff dedicated to Planning; there is a recommendation that where a development is within an AONB, the developer will be redirected to that particular AONB for advice. PH asked why there was an increase in Superannuation and NI contributions. HO advised that this was from Government and not a local increase. RB advised the chairman that as far as he was aware, Wiltshire Council has budgeted for all 3 AONB's within their remit, to receive the same amount of funding as in 2015-16. The value that WC gives to the AONB as host, is not covered by the other LA's. HO asked members for their approval to the budget for 2016-17, with no rejections.

10. Review of 2015-16 Work Programme and proposed 2016-17 Work Programme – for approval (paper 8)

Item moved further down the meeting to item 12

11. Planning Update – for information (paper 9)

RD introduced the report and herself to the Partnership. She provided further updates to the report. VWH Local Plan is now closed, results will be due around May 16, 2016. **Para 4** – there has been a redesign and subsequently now delayed. **Para 5** – there has now been a reduction in house numbers to the plan, which has now been approved by WC. We are currently trying to encourage lower roof heights on the higher ground. **Para 7** – we have objected to this application and be it noted that this development was not in the WBC DPD. **Para 8** – WBC have approved the second application in Pangbourne. **Para 10** - The 'Greensands' application at East Hendred had been refused but has since been resubmitted. We are currently waiting for Local Plans from BDBC, WBC and WC to be approved. CM asked if we had made an approach to receive any CIL 106 payments. RD advised the member that it is not set in stone that AONB's receive any of this money. BC asked for an update on the Goring Gap project. RD advised that she has had several meeting with all parties with an emphasis on landscape work. She is working in conjunction with the Chilterns Conservation Board to get more landscape work and discuss the redesign of the gantries, similar to those of a recent project in Bath. She advised members that currently Network Rail is not on the list of 'duty of regard' and that the NAAONB are working nationally on the section of 'duty of regard'.

12. (previously item 10) Review of 2015-16 Work Programme and proposed 2016-17 Work Programme – for approval (paper 8)

HO introduced the report and gave an overview on the projects for 2016-17. Some projects are rolling forward from 2015-16. SDF update: we are going to seek further sources of commercial funding and John Sharp is helping with that. MC asked whether there was any further update from Highways Agency on signage on the M4. TH responded that this was on the list for the new project manager once they are in situ for the project. HO advised that nothing has changed on

signage since last year. **AB** commented that 17 projects for 2016-17 appear too many and should be scaled down. **HO** advised that each project is different in character and a lot of them are part of the team's core functions eg. General Awareness. **TH** suggested that the MWG re-look at the projects at their next meeting in June. Approval was sought with no objections.

13. (previously item 12) Director's Report – for information (paper 10)

HO introduced the report and reported that a lot of work has been going on at national level (NAAONB). There were no further comments from the Partners.

14. Any Other Business

A presentation of one of the Icon pictures was given to Cllr Andrew Bennett on behalf of the whole Partnership, to show their appreciation for all his support and hard work over the many years he has been on both the Council of Partners and Management Working Group. They all wished him well in his retirement and new ventures.

15. Date and Place of Next Meeting

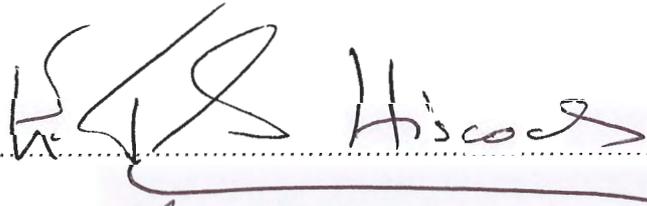
Tuesday 12th July 2016, The Chutes Village Hall, Chute Standen, Wilts. SP11 9EE

16. Date and venue for final meeting of 2016

Tuesday 8th November 2016, Woodlands St Mary Village Hall, RG17 7SL

(Meeting closed at 12.28pm)

Signed.....



Date.....

12 July 2016