



NIDDERDALE AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATELEY BRIDGE,

HELD ON THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2006

Members Present

- Harrogate Borough Councillors: Cllr M Atkinson, Cllr S Beer, Cllr R Grange, Cllr E Hinchcliffe, Cllr N Simms.
- North Yorkshire County Councillors: Cllr H Garnett, Cllr B Hoult
- Mr Foulger (Yorkshire Water)
- Mr R Beecroft, Mrs E Stead (Parish Councils)
- Mr A Craven (English Nature)
- Mr M Lowsley (Ramblers Association)
- Mr C Fowler (National Trust)
- Ms L Potter (Council for the Protection of Rural England)
- Ms S Schultz (Countryside Agency)
- Mr A Smith (National Farmers' Union)
- Mr M Stanton (Country Land and Business Association)
- Mr T M Wheelwright (Moorland Association)

Officers Present

- D C Allenby (Harrogate Borough Council)
- J Edwards, C Jones (North Yorkshire County Council)
- P Burgess, S Kettlewell, M Pearson (Nidderdale AONB)

Cllr L.T Ellington in the Chair

1. ATTENDANCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Neil Redfern (English Heritage), Bob Baxter (Yorkshire Water), Chris Henderson (Nidderdale Chamber of Trade), Mick Hoban (Forestry Commission), Roger Martin (Environment Agency).

Mr D Adamson attended as substitute for Lesley Emin Chair of Friends of Nidderdale AONB. Cllr J Fort attended as substitute for Cllr P Richardson.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 Cllr B Hoult declared an interest in items to be discussed under Planning Matters and at the relevant point would take no part in the discussion.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15th July 2005

- 3.1 The minutes were approved as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1 Sarah Kettlewell reported that the Education Project has proven to be very successful with over 30 schools booking visits by the Roadshow. 300 copies of the pack have been printed and the inclusion of links to Countryside Stewardship Scheme sites has enabled it to be used on farm visits.
- 4.2 Doug Adamson (substitute for the Chair of the Friends of Nidderdale AONB) and Andy Hague, Policy Manager for Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly were welcomed by the committee.
- 4.3 John Edwards updated the committee on the progress of the creation of a Countryside Officer post to jointly cover the AONB and Craven district. Due to a shortfall in funding the creation of the post has been delayed, however the possibility of using existing resources to move the project forward is being explored.

5.0 JAC CONSTITUTION

- 5.1 Cllr Grange expressed his concern that the County Council is represented on the JAC by a Councillor from Knaresborough and commented that representatives of the districts within the AONB should be elected members for the wards and therefore represent the people living in the AONB.
- 5.2 Cllr Hoult pointed out that local authorities are often represented on National Park Authorities by Members whose Wards do not coincide with Park boundaries. He argued that it is valuable for the JAC to include Members who can bring a wider dimension to debates. This view was also supported by Michael Lowsley. Cllr Hoult argued the Constitution should remain as it is.
- 5.3 Dave Allenby informed the Committee that he needed to seek legal advice and would produce a report for the next meeting. He also advised that any amendments made to the Constitution at the AGM could not be implemented before ratification by the local authorities.

6.0 JAC QUESTIONNAIRE

- 6.1 Paul Burgess thanked members for responding to the questionnaire and reported that the feedback was in general positive. Comments to be taken forward by Paul Burgess were the provision of lunch after JAC meetings for members, Summer JAC meeting to be split into two to ease time constraints – business meeting followed at a later date by the site visit and the development of small working groups to tackle specific issues.

7.0 REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

- 7.1 Andy Hague of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly gave a presentation on the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Copies of his presentation are available on request.
- 7.2 Andy Hague was followed by Dave Allenby who explained that the AONB is covered by 3 sub areas within the RSS, each with separate strategies but with similar messages coming out. For the Harrogate District this means lower levels of development in rural areas and a more focussed growth to meet affordable housing needs and encourage greater economic diversity.
He argued that the RSS contains many references to the AONB and new policy will strengthen its protection.
- 7.3 A range of issues were raised by JAC Members in the debate that followed:

- Mike Lowsley expressed concern that some areas of the AONB are covered by RSS policies for the Leeds City regions. He would like to see the whole of the AONB covered by the Remoter Rural Areas sub-region. He also commented that he would like to see the RSS give more leadership on renewable energy within the AONB.
- Several Members commented on renewable energy. Micro generation and hydropower are both regarded as options that should be explored further. Miles Foulger reported on research by Yorkshire Water on hydroelectric project feasibility but that the Company does not currently see hydro as cost-effective. Andrew Craven requested that energy saving policy be given more prominence. Other Members raised the issue of biomass and cautioned against short rotation coppice planting in the AONB.
- Cllr Atkinson expressed concern about the lack affordable rural housing.
- Cllr Garnett asked about how RSS policy is going to respond to changes in the countryside as a result of CAP reform which is leading to surplus agricultural buildings. Mike Stanton reported that the Single Farm Payment is already having an impact in the AONB with some farmers giving up. He expressed concern that all development is being focussed on Harrogate and Ripon and that development to facilitate new rural enterprise will be required in the countryside.
- On transport, Mike Stanton expressed his concern that year-on-year inconsistencies in service provision dissuade people from using them.
- On minerals, Cllr Fort requested that 'reduce, re-use and recycle' principle should be at the heart of RSS policy.
- Several Members expressed dissatisfaction with the agriculture section of the draft RSS and argued that more information should be included.
- Many Members commented on the importance of dry stone walls in the landscape. Cllr Beer requested that the protection of dry stonewalls be put on the next agenda.

7.4 It was agreed that Members should forward any additional comments on the draft RSS by the middle of March.

8.0 AONB PARISH CARETAKER SCHEME

- 8.1 Chris Jones reported that 5 Parishes have been involved in the pilot AONB Caretaker project with two caretakers covering all Parishes. Caretakers are self-employed and are responsible for their own insurance and tools. The scheme is now being rolled out to all parishes within the AONB and 9 applications have been received and it is proposed to fund all bids.
- 8.2 Cllr Fort commended the scheme which has been very successful and popular with local people.
- 8.3 Elaine Stead questioned how secure the funding is.
- 8.4 Paul Burgess responded that it isn't secure long-term.

9.0 FRIENDS OF NIDDERDALE AONB

- 9.1 Douglas Adamson reported that 275 members have been recruited to the Friends organisation with 2/3 living in the AONB. The funds that have been raised are going towards environmental projects such as Picking Gill. The Friends events have been very popular and the first AGM is on 20th March at Sawley Village Hall from 7.30pm, with guest speaker Alison Owen of the Sustainable Development Commission talking about Carbon Footprints.

10.0 PLANNING MATTERS

- 10.1 Outcomes of consultations at previous JAC meeting.
- Timble Inn (Ref. 6.117.43.FUL) - application was withdrawn.

- Holiday Cottages at Middleton (Ref. 6.129.40.FUL) – application was approved.
- Denton Estate (Ref.6.130.7.R.FULMAJ) – application was approved with green travel plan included in conditions.
- Barn Conversion at Felliscliffe (Ref. 6.99.20.C.FUL) – application approved.
- Retrospective Application for livery at Warsill (Ref. 6.60.28.F.FULMAJ) – application refused.

10.2 Current Applications

- Application from Denton Hall for the development of livery stables. No objection but JAC comments raised a number of issues such as lighting.
- Application from Menwith Hill for a 53ft high 'raydome'. Recommend that the application is refused.

10.3 Cllr Fort stated that the AONB should be getting something in return from Menwith.

10.4 Dave Allenby responded that Menwith will no longer have Crown immunity and HBC will determine applications in future.

- Application for Community Broadband Mast at Thruscross – no objection.
- Residential Conversions of Yorkshire Water barns – Considering response.

11.0 REPORTS FROM PARTNERS

11.1 Sarah Schultz (*Countryside Agency*). The Countryside Agency will award grants of 100% towards core costs and 80% of SDF funding and will attempt to secure the remaining 20%. Most of the projects have been approved however some cuts have had to be made.

11.2 The JAC thanked Sarah for securing the funding.

11.3 Andrew Smith (*National Farmers Union*). Farmers in the AONB will shortly be receiving information about the Single Payment. (Paul Burgess to pass information on the Entry and Higher Level Schemes to Mike Lowsley).

11.4 Tom Wheelwright expressed his reservations about grip-blocking as care needs to be taken not to forbid maintenance of some grips.

11.5 Andrew Craven (*English Nature*). English Nature will give consents for the maintenance of some grips and have taken the issue into consideration. Much research has been done and EN will be encouraging grip blocking. English Nature are also commissioning a Special Protected Areas bird survey.

11.6 Cllr Fort reported that some farmers are using recycled waste to plug grips in the York Moors.

11.7 Mile Foulger (*Yorkshire Water*). The access works around Swinsty are progressing well. Car park improvements are being undertaken, information boards now include AONB messages.

11.7 Chris Fowler (*National Trust*). Visitor numbers are up 3% with 310, 000 visitors at Fountains Abbey. There has also been a 22% increase in visitors to Ripon.

11.8 Dave Allenby (*Harrogate Borough Council*). A housing needs survey will shortly be commissioned down to a Parish level. BE initiative – due to cuts £20,000 of funding has been lost.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 23rd March, Venue to be decided.