



NIDDERDALE AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT KETTLESING MILLENNIUM VILLAGE HALL

ON 19 JULY 2004

Members Present

- North Yorkshire County Councillors R T Thomas & W J Fort BEM
- Harrogate Borough Councillors R Grange, S Beer, E A Hinchcliffe, Mrs M E Atkinson & L T Ellington
- Mrs M E Stead, Mr R Beecroft, Mr S H Vaughan (Parish Councils)
- Mr M Feist & Ms S Schultz (Countryside Agency)
- Mr A Craven (English Nature)
- Mr M N Lowsley (Ramblers Association)
- Mr C Fowler (National Trust)
- Mr A Smith (National Farmers' Union)
- Ms S Fowler (Council for the Protection of Rural England)
- Mr R Baxter (Yorkshire Water)
- Mr T Wheelwright (Moorland Association)
- Mr M Hoban (Forestry Commission)
- Mr W B Watson (National Gamekeepers Organisation Moorland Branch)

Officers Present

- J E Edwards (North Yorkshire County Council)
- D C Allenby & D Barker (Harrogate Borough Council)
- P Burgess, S Kettlewell, C Jones, C Slator, B Slaymaker, J Martin (Nidderdale AONB)

Cllr L T Ellington in the Chair.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Harrogate Borough Councillor LT Ellington was re-elected as Chairman and North Yorkshire County Councillor R T Thomas as Vice-Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Cllr N Simms (Harrogate Borough Council), Cllr D A Webster (Hambleton District Council), Mr M Stanton (Country Land and Business Association), Mr K Emerick (English Heritage) Mrs S Rigby (British Horse Society) and the Environment Agency. Ms S Fowler was attending as substitute for Ms L Potter (Council for the Protection of Rural England).
- 2.2 It was reported that the election for Parish representation on the JAC was to take place in August. Three people had been nominated to fill two posts on the JAC. It was agreed that the person coming third in the election would be a substitute if either of the two representatives could not attend.

3. RSPB REPRESENTATION ON THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A letter from Tim Youngs of the RSPB, asking to be represented on the JAC, had been received. After discussion it was agreed that the Committee had already expanded to a large size and that should the RSPB be added, other single interest groups could follow. He would be kept informed and sent all papers, rather than becoming a full member.

4. JAC REPRESENTATION ON HARROGATE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

It was reported that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had agreed to include a representative from the JAC, and a substitute would also be required to cover absences. Following discussion it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the LSP thanking them for including the JAC and notifying them that a member from the Parish Councils would stand. Following the Parish Council elections the representative and substitute would be chosen and the LSP informed.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2004

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Paul Burgess updated the Committee on item 3.1, the launch of the Management Plan. In conjunction with the Howardian Hills AONB and the Countryside Agency, the Plan had been launched at the Yorkshire Show with the Minister for AONBs, Ben Bradshaw, in attendance. The Plan would next be launched to a wider audience at the Nidderdale Show and the autumn Standing Conference. Members were invited to contact Paul Burgess should they need any further copies of the Plan.

6.2 Ms Schultz advised that a meeting to launch the Management Plan to key partners is planned, and it is hoped that this will further engage their support for the AONB's objectives.

7. KNABS RIDGE WIND FARM – RECOMMENDATION TO HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL

7.1 Members of Harrogate Borough Council Cllr LT Ellington, Cllr Mrs Atkinson, Cllr R Grange and Cllr S Beer declared an interest in the Knabs Ridge proposal and took no part in the debate.

7.2 Paul Burgess referred the Committee to the report and noted that the proposal was the most significant planning application considered by the Committee to date, in terms of size and scale, and also in the context of climate change and the contribution that all areas of the country must make to meet renewable energy targets.

7.3 Dave Allenby reviewed the policy context, but noted that the JAC is not a planning committee and should therefore be more concerned with the effect of the proposal on the AONB.

7.4 David Barker presented a series of slides provided by the applicant summarising the proposals and in particular the visual impact of the turbines. He stated that short-range (5-10Km) views would be affected by the movements of the turbine blades. Longer views would be less affected because of the turbines' slender construction and the proximity of the Menwith Hill base, and would vary according to atmospheric conditions. David Barker agreed to check on the software used to create the photomontages and in particular their accuracy in terms of brightness.

7.5 Cllr Thomas reported that Parish Councils have made a strong objection, and also highlighted that a draft North Yorkshire County Council report is in opposition to the application. Parish Councillor Vaughan, chair of Felliscliffe Parish Council, noted that National Wind Power proposed to bury all cables on the site, but the connection to the National Grid has to be made, possibly resulting in an increase in pylons in the area.

7.6 Queries were raised as to the suitability of other sites and the extent of the commitment to renewable energy in the Harrogate District. Dave Allenby reported that each district in the country will be required to site between two and four wind farms, but if there were no suitable sites found in the district this could be fed back as part of the process.

7.7 Recommendation 7.1 was amended to read as follows:

It is recommended that the JAC:
Strongly objects to the proposal to construct a wind farm at Knabs Ridge due to the significant and adverse visual impact on Nidderdale AONB.

7.8 With reference to recommendation 7.2, Paul Burgess reminded the Committee of the domestic wind turbine application which was rejected by Harrogate Borough Council. He suggested that there was a need to agree appropriate locations for renewable energy. Secondly, a seminar should be convened to discuss how regional targets translate locally. He agreed to look at any work on this issue undertaken by other protected areas.

7.9 Mr Fowler reported on work undertaken by the National Trust to promote energy efficiency and alternative energy products. There was a need to explore options and encourage projects which could be reversible.

7.10 Following discussion it was agreed that recommendation 7.2 should be deferred, and a briefing paper should be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

8. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

It was reported that the Local Development Framework consultation period ends in September. Responses can be made via the internet. Paul Burgess agreed to e-mail a draft JAC response to members for comment. Any AONB issues should be indicated to him so they could be included in the response.

9. PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

Paul Burgess reported on planning issues since the last meeting:

9.1 Equipment added to Telecoms Mast, Blubberhouses
This small application was considered to have no impact on the AONB, and no objection was raised.

9.2 Additional wooden cabin at Old Spring Wood, Summerbridge
An ecological survey and Environmental Impact Assessment showed that there would be no impact on the woodland and the AONB did not object to the proposal.

9.3 Footbridge over Nidd at Pateley Bridge
A new proposal had been put forward by the County Council, and a plan was available for inspection by Committee members. Cllr Thomas declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Comments were invited from members, and the consensus was that this third proposal represented the best design and was of benefit to the Millennium Green and the footpath network around Pateley Bridge.

10. REPORTS FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

10.1 *Countryside Agency* Mike Feist reported on the recent launch of the Countryside Code. Leaflets would be circulated to members with the minutes. Sara Schultz had attended the National AONB Conference, and it had been agreed that next year it would be held in Durham, representing an opportunity for Nidderdale.

10.2 *Ramblers Association* Mike Lowsley raised a question about the AONB's involvement with the proposed bridge crossing the Wharfe at Burley in Wharfedale.

10.3 *National Trust* Chris Fowler reported that visitor numbers were down by 8%, due to the poor weather during the visitor season.

- 10.4 *Forestry Commission* Mick Hoban, the new AONB representative, reported that the Regional Forestry Strategy was progressing well towards completion at the end of December. Paul Burgess would be managing final responses from the AONB. A new woodland grant scheme is to be launched in April 2005, with an emphasis on managing existing woodland rather than woodland creation. He also expressed a willingness to work with the AONB team on wood fuel renewable energy.
- 10.5 *North Yorkshire County Council* John Edwards reported on a successful launch to the new Countryside Service.
- 10.6 Paul Burgess reported on progress with the joint bid by Nidderdale and Howardian Hills AONBs and the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks to create a Sustainable Development Fund. An application had been submitted to Yorkshire Forward.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was to take place on Wednesday 6 October 2004.