



NIDDERDALE AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT NORWOOD SOCIAL HALL
ON WEDNESDAY 21ST MARCH 2007

Members Present

- Harrogate Borough Councillors: Cllr L T Ellington, Cllr S Beer, Cllr E Hinchcliffe, Cllr M Atkinson, Cllr N Simms, Cllr R Grange
- North Yorkshire County Councillors: Cllr H Garnett, Cllr K Barnes
- Ms S Schultz (Natural England)
- Mr A Smith (National Farmers' Union)
- Mrs L Potter (CPRE)
- Mr M Lowsley (Ramblers Association)
- Mrs L Emin (Friends of Nidderdale AONB)
- Mr T Wheelwright (Moorland Association)

Officers Present

- K Brown, P Burgess, M Pearson (Nidderdale AONB)
- D Allenby (Harrogate Borough Council)
- G Megson (North Yorkshire County Council)

Cllr H Garnett in the Chair

1. ATTENDANCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr C Henderson (Nidderdale Chamber of Trade), Ms S Pacey (Environment Agency), Mr M Stanton (Country Land and Business Association), Mr C Fowler (National Trust), Mrs E Stead (Parish Councils).

Cllr K Barnes attended as substitute for Cllr B Hault (North Yorkshire County Council), Mr G Megson attended as substitute for Mr J Edwards (North Yorkshire County Council).

2.0 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 No declarations of interest.

3.0 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2006

- 3.1 The minutes were approved as a true record.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1 Cllr Garnett reported that Vice Chair Richard Beecroft had resigned from the JAC leaving the position open and vacancies on the Business Plan Working Review Party, the JAC Planning Panel. It was agreed that an election to find a replacement would be postponed until the July 2007 meeting. It was further agreed that, subject to consultation with Elaine Stead, Richard

Beecroft's role as Parish representative will be taken by Mr Dave Dickinson of Darley who was runner-up in the 2004 Parish elections for a JAC delegate.

4.2 Dry Stone Walls (6.1)

Paul Burgess reported that Natural England are currently not in a position to release information/figures on Dry Stone Walls in Stewardship Agreements but will do in the future. The number of farms in Entry Level Stewardship Schemes has risen from 68 to 109 and the Higher Level Scheme from 3 to 5. This is due to the efforts of Marian Wilby, Farm Conservation Advisor.

4.3 Business Plan Review Working Party (BPRWP) (7.2)

Paul Burgess reported that the Working Party which consists of Cllr Garnett as Chair, Brian Wood, Stan Beer, Tom Wheelwright, Graham Megson, Sara Schultz and Dave Allenby have met three times and a report of their progress will be included in the Members Bulletin. 2 very successful workshops were held on 9/3/07. A questionnaire seeking views of the JAC has been included in the Residents Newsletter, which will be distributed at the end of April. The questionnaire has also been circulated to the 1000 members of the Harrogate District Residents Group and 850 responses have been received so far. The results will be presented at the July meeting.

5.0 SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

5.1 Paul Burgess outlined the previously circulated report and reported that the Management Plan is due to end in 2009. A report on proposals for review will be presented at the October JAC meeting.

5.2 Paul Burgess welcomed comments on the Delivery Plan

5.3 Cllr Beer expressed his concern that there was not enough input from the AONB on planning applications and their impact on the surrounding area. Dave Allenby responded that he had been alerted to the issue, was seeking advice and monitoring the impact of the development in question. Policy C1 offers a high level of protection to the area but the way it is applied is important. Cllr Hinchcliffe reiterated Cllr Beer's statement that more input from the AONB is required.

Tom Wheelwright reported that the BPWRP had discussed the issue in depth and recommended that the threshold, which determines the type and frequency of consultation, should be reviewed. Cllr Hinchcliffe requested that AONB input in planning applications be included on a future agenda for discussion in isolation. Cllr Garnett will take discussions forward with HBC.

5.4 Paul Burgess reported that the continued sensitive management of Heather moorland was a priority to ensure that the Carbon Dioxide that is locked in the peat is not mobilised. Cllr Garnett requested an explanation of the process. Paul responded that the anaerobic conditions present in peaty soils ensures that organic matter held in the soil does not decay and therefore does not release the carbon that is locked inside it. When peat soils are degraded or dried out the organic matter is exposed to aerobic conditions and the process of decay and subsequent release of Carbon is activated.

5.5 Mike Lowsley enquired if any consultation had been undertaken prior to the loss of the Open Access Officers position. Graham Megson responded that the loss was due to internal restructuring of Countryside Services and that no consultation had taken place. Tom Wheelwright reported that the Access Forum had been advised that the Access Position would be replaced in the future.

5.6 Recommendation: The JAC agreed the report.

6.0 DEFRA CONSULTATION ON COMMON LAND

- 6.1 Paul Burgess outlined the previously circulated report and circulated maps of Common Land within the AONB although these were thought to be somewhat inaccurate. The Moorland Association is pushing for Moorland management to be excluded from consents for work and exemption charges from DEFRA.
- 6.2 Paul Burgess requested comments or JAC representations by the 9th April 2007.
- 6.3 Mike Lowsley expressed his concern that charges from work could stop essential works from taking place.
- 6.4 Andrew Smith asked if the local graziers had been informed of the consultation. Paul responded that this was unlikely and requested that Andrew pass on the information.

7.0 PROCEEDINGS OF THE NORTH YORKSHIRE ACCESS FORUM

- 7.1 Tom Wheelwright presented his report. The Access Forum is a consultative Committee looking at access and rights of way matters. It is a statutory requirement for all access Authorities to convene an Access Forum. 3 County Councillors, 3 owners/occupiers, 6 users and 3 others make up the Committee, which meets quarterly. The committee have a wide remit that covers: fire closures, Rights of Way improvement plans, disabled access, vehicular use and TRO's, trunk road improvement schemes, the expansion of Catterick Garrison and open access.
- 7.2 Cllr Garnett thanked Tom for his presentation.
- 7.3 Keir Brown reported that the forthcoming residents newsletter contains an article about illegal use of rights of way aimed at encouraging reporting of incidents to the police in Pateley Bridge.

8.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

- 8.1 David Sharrod, Director Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust outlined the previously circulated report. 8 projects were supported by £75,000 of funding. In 2007 more effort will be focussed on the PR side to publicise the good work and projects. YDMT is an independent charity that works to support the Dales area between the A6 and M1 and is non-political and non-campaigning. The main aim of the organisation is to raise money for projects in the target area but they also manage funds for other bodies and run their own projects such as Learning in Limestone Country and the Haytime Project. YDMT is also running the Dales Woodland Restoration Scheme which is now in its' second year and are actively looking for possible woodland sites in Nidderdale for a donor woodland. David requested that JAC members contact the Trust if they know of any possible sites.

YDMT are proposing that some funds from the 07/08 SDF be ring fenced for Farm Energy Projects and asked for comments from the Committee.

- 8.2 Cllr Garnett thanked Mr Sharrod for his presentation.
- 8.3 A number of members were not in favour of ring fencing fund and it was agreed that Farm Energy projects should be given priority.
- 8.4 Paul Burgess reported that the Biomass boiler for the Little Red Bus company, is currently being fired by wood pellets that have been imported from Argentina and that there is a clear need for a local source to be developed.

9.0 FRIENDS OF NIDDERDALE AONB

- 9.1 Lesley Emin, Chair of the Friends Group update the Committee on the progress of the group.

The Friends Farm Award was presented to Robert Greensit of Ellingstring and funded by Carter Jonas. The purpose of the award is to recognise and encourage 'full time' farmers who employ innovative and sustainable practices.

Over 300 people attended Friends events in 2006, with over 50 people turning out on the 6th of January to plant trees at Thruscross. There are now 349 members and donations total £4,730. To date, 3 projects have been supported by the Friends: improvement works at Picking Gill in Sawley, tree planting and Fellbeck Archaeology Group. Lesley Emin welcomed any project ideas from Committee members.

The Friends have just achieved Charitable status which will allow the group to seek external funding for projects. The aims of the Charity are:

- i. To promote, enhance and conserve the physical and natural environment and its natural beauty for the public benefit within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- ii. To advance the knowledge and understanding of the public in the physical and natural environment including but not limited to the management of natural resources and local economic development that is environmentally sustainable.

6 events have been organised for 2007 and possible projects include the protection of semi-natural woodland at Dallowgill, wildflower meadow restoration and woodland development.

9.2 Cllr Garnett thanked Lesley and commended the progress made by the group.

10.0 REPORTS FROM PARTNERS

10.1 Sara Schultz (*Natural England*) reported that Natural England were still not in a position to confirm funding but were working to get it resolved in the near future. It is hoped that confirmation of core funding will be announced during the week commencing 26th March.

10.2 Linda Potter (*CPRE*) reported that a Planning Document had been produced in conjunction with the NFU detailing the financial contribution to the countryside made by farmers. The Wildlife and Countryside Link Spatial Planning Document has also been published.

10.3 Tom Wheelwright (*Moorland Association*) Suggested that members substitutes be encouraged to attend future meetings.

10.4.1 Dave Allenby (*Harrogate Borough Council*) reported that the Middleton Hospital planning application had been refused but had gone to appeal and that the submittal of Core Strategy had been delayed until September.

11.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 19th July 2007 at 10am, venue to be decided.