



## **NIDDERDALE AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT FOUNTAINS HALL**

**ON 06 OCTOBER 2004**

#### Members Present

- North Yorkshire County Councillors W J Fort BEM & P Richardson
- Harrogate Borough Councillors R Grange, S Beer, E A Hinchcliffe, Mrs M E Atkinson, N Simms & L T Ellington
- Mrs M E Stead, Mr R Beecroft (Parish Councils)
- Mr M Feist (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 L Potter (Council for the Protection of Rural England)
- Mr R Baxter (Yorkshire Water)
- Mr T M Wheelwright (Moorland Association)
- Mr W B Watson (National Gamekeepers Organisation Moorland Branch)
- Mr C Henderson (Nidderdale Chamber of Trade)
- Mr C Thorn (Forestry Commission)

#### Officers Present

- D C Allenby (Harrogate Borough Council)
- P Burgess, S Kettlewell, C Jones (Nidderdale AONB)

Cllr L T Ellington in the Chair.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr R T Thomas (North Yorkshire County Council), Cllr D A Webster (Hambleton District Council), Mr M Stanton (Country Land and Business Association), Mrs S Rigby (British Horse Society) and J Edwards (North Yorkshire County Council).  
Mr C Thorn was attending as substitute for Mr M Hoban (Forestry Commission).

#### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY ELECTED MEMBERS**

Harrogate Borough Councillors R Grange, S Beer, E A Hinchcliffe, Mrs M E Atkinson, N Simms and L T Ellington and North Yorkshire County Councillor W J Fort declared an interest in items to be discussed under Planning Matters. At the relevant points members would take no part in the discussion.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2004**

Mr B Watson was present at the meeting but this was not recorded on the minutes. It was noted that Mr Vaughan, the Parish Councillor for Felliscliffe was included as an attending Parish Council member, but is not in fact a member of the Committee. The minutes were then agreed as a true record.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **4.1 Knabs Ridge**

Dave Allenby reported that an appeal had been lodged by the applicants for non-determination by Harrogate Borough Council. Council Officers were preparing a report for consideration by the District Development Committee, possibly at the 4 November meeting. Approximately 300 letters of objection and 100 letters of support had been received. Leeds/Bradford airport had objected on safety grounds. The county archaeologist had objected as insufficient information had been given regarding archaeological work on the site.

Paul Burgess noted that at the last meeting AONB officers had been asked to prepare a report upon alternative sites for renewable energy in the AONB. However, a County-wide study was now taking place and it was planned that the AONB would link into that study.

#### **4.2 Parish Councils and Communication**

Mrs Stead reported that the newly-elected Parish Council JAC representatives had met to discuss improvements to communication with the AONB team. It had been agreed that key contacts would be identified in each parish to volunteer to collect and distribute information to local residents.

#### **4.3 Harrogate Strategic Partnership**

The Partnership had been notified that Mrs Stead would attend as the JAC's representative, and Mr Beecroft would be her substitute.

#### **4.4 Local Development Framework**

Paul Burgess reported that the draft JAC response had been distributed to members as agreed in item 8 of the minutes.

#### **4.5 Sustainable Development Fund**

Paul Burgess reported that there had been no response from Yorkshire Forward regarding the joint bid for funding. A decision had been requested to enable the group to report back to the annual meeting of RDAs and protected landscapes which was to be held in late October.

### **5. OUTLINE BUDGET FOR 2005/06 FINANCIAL YEAR**

5.1 Paul Burgess referred the Committee to the report and summarised the key points. Harrogate Borough Council's finance officer responsible for AONB budget was currently absent from work following an accident and the circulated budget sheet was incomplete.

5.2 The Countryside Agency have indicated that there is no additional funding available for increases to core grant, and the only increase shown is a 3% inflationary rise. Savings in other areas are shown in the report.

5.3 Regarding the project budget, further work was needed to complete next year's work programme and secure external funding. The Countryside Agency had requested that AONB grant applications must be submitted by the end of November, but in previous years the work programme had not been approved by the JAC until the spring meeting. Approval was therefore sought to delegate authority to the JAC Chairman to approve the detailed budget for submission to the Countryside Agency in November.

5.4 Following discussion of the detail of the report, recommendation 4.2 was approved.

### **6. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT GRANT SCHEME**

6.1 Sarah Kettlewell referred the Committee to the report, and summarised the benefits of the scheme and the changes that had recently taken place to brand it more strongly as an AONB

grant. She explained that some projects had recently stalled due to the inflexibility of the percentages and maximum grant amounts allowable under the current rules of the scheme. The Committee was asked to approve a change to the rules for grant amounts and percentages to allow more flexibility in special cases, subject to the approval of the JAC chairman.

- 6.2 Following discussion, the recommendation 4.1 was approved, subject to the production of guidelines outlining categories of project that could be considered special cases. A report summarising the projects funded was also requested for Members' information.

## **7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY FROM SPRING 2005**

- 7.1 Chris Jones referred Members to the report and summarised the key points including work undertaken to date and the next steps, including production of the Access Management Plan, recruitment and training of Access Rangers and application to the Countryside Agency for further funding.
- 7.2 Paul Burgess reported that 40 Access Ranger places were to be filled, and there had been 6 enquiries to date. It was confirmed that the AONB newsletter would be used to help recruit the Rangers needed and to reinforce the messages in the Moorland Visitors' Code and Countryside Code. Mr Baxter noted that Yorkshire Water were keen to offer help and funding for work in the AONB.
- 7.3 It was noted that the new Moorland Code appended to the report was not being widely distributed, and it was suggested that it could be distributed by the Access Rangers and TICs, and displayed at the new Access Points. A publicity strategy could be included in the Access Management Plan. Educating children in safe enjoyment of the countryside was suggested as a useful way to promote the message to adults.
- 7.4 Chris Jones reported on the training being provided for the new Rangers which was being devised jointly with BTCV, to include health and safety, communication and map and compass skills, and practical scenarios would be included. A session with a landowner or manager would be included. A number of possible solutions were offered to the problem of communication in remote areas.
- 7.5 Cllr Fort raised the issue of the delay in determining appeals, and it was agreed that a letter from the Committee would be sent to express concern.

## **8. PLANNING MATTERS**

- 8.1 Paul Burgess referred the Committee to the report, and asked for members' views on two current planning applications.
- 8.2 Footbridge at Greenholme Farm, Burley in Wharfedale  
Paul Burgess summarised the key factors which should be considered by the JAC before giving a response. He suggested that as the finance and support for the scheme were not in place, and also given the objections of the landowner, if the Committee were to support the scheme it could divert resources from other important work of the AONB team which had the potential to benefit more people, such as Open Access.

After discussion, recommendation 2.4.1 was approved, and recommendation 2.4.2 amended to read that the JAC:

Supports the principle of establishing a *bridge* crossing in the vicinity of Burley in Wharfedale provided a solution can be found that commands widespread support from all sections of the community and has adequate funding for construction and subsequent maintenance, but does not actively support the campaign for a river crossing at Greenholme Farm.

- 8.3 Ice cream preparation and retail unit, Birchfield Farm, Summerbridge  
Following discussion, the recommendations were approved, subject to clarification in point 3.3.1 as to why the proposal was supported in principle and the reasons for refusal.

8.4 The Committee was referred to item 4 of the report for other consultations received since July 2004.

## **9. REPORTS FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

9.1 *Countryside Agency* Mike Feist reported that Margaret Beckett has published the Government's Rural Strategy. The draft of the Rural Delivery Framework is due in the new year.

9.2 *Forestry Commission* Crispin Thorn reported that the new regional Woodland Strategy was out to consultation until 15 October.

9.3 County Councillor Richardson raised the issue of BT's proposed removal of payphones in remote areas of the AONB. It was agreed that a letter would be sent from the Committee asking BT to reconsider their policy in isolated areas.

9.4 Harrogate Borough Councillor Grange highlighted that former willow plantations on Yorkshire Water land have not been returned to pasture. Mr Baxter agreed to look into the situation and report back to the AONB team.

## **10. DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2005**

Meetings were set for Wednesday 16 March, Friday 15 July and Wednesday 12 October 2005.