

**Cranborne Chase  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



**Partnership Board Meeting  
21st January 2021**

14.30 Virtual Meeting Start

**MINUTES**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Mike Short	Vice Chairman	√	
Cllr Francis Hayden	Mendip District Council		
Robert Palmer	Mendip DC Officer		
Cllr David Tooke	Dorset Council	√	
Cllr Spencer Flower	Dorset Council	√	
Cllr Piers Brown	Dorset Council	√	
Matthew Reeks	Dorset Council Officer	√	
Ed Gerry	Dorset Council Officer		
Cllr Ann Bellows	New Forest District Council	√	
Martin Peacock	New Forest District Council Officer		
Cllr Lucy Wallace	South Somerset District Council		
Rachael Whaites	South Somerset DC Officer		
Cllr Bridget Wayman	Wiltshire Council	√	
Cllr Jose Green	Wiltshire Council	√	
Richard Broadhead	Wiltshire Council Officer	√	
Cllr Edward Heron	Hampshire County Council	√	
Garry King	Hampshire CC Officer		√
Cllr William Wallace	Somerset County Council		
Vacant	Somerset CC Officer		
Charles Routh	Natural England	√	
Zac Sibthorpe	Forestry Commission	√	
Alistair Fitzgerald	Independent		√
Vacant	Wiltshire Association of Town & Parish Councils		

<b>Mike Jones</b>		<b>Dorset Association of Town &amp; Parish Councils (DATPC)</b>	√	
<b>Francis Taylor</b>		<b>Campaign to Protect Rural England</b>	√	
<b>Andi Whitcombe</b>		<b>National Farmers Union</b>		√
<b>Louise Stratton</b>		<b>National Farmers Union</b>		
<b>William Kenealy</b>		<b>Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust</b>		
<b>AONB Team</b>		<b>Position</b>		
<b>Linda Nunn</b>	<b>FT</b>	<b>AONB Director</b>	√	
<b>Richard Burden</b>	<b>PT</b>	<b>Principal Landscape and Planning Officer</b>	√	
<b>Shirley Merrick</b>	<b>PT</b>	<b>Team Support Officer</b>	√	

### **Leavers and New Members**

Nick Gosse, Chairman, has resigned for personal reasons.

Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe MBE, Wilthire Council, has retired.

Anne Carney, AONB Team, has joined the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site as Partnership Manager.

Jon Woolcott, Communications Officer for the LP Scheme, has left the AONB team.

Becky Butland was standing in for Andi Whitcombe, who re-joins the Board

Zac Sibthorpe replaces Ian Briscoe as the Board representative for the Forestry Commission.

Charles Routh replaces Roger Griffen as the representative for Natural England.

Councillors Spencer Flower and Piers Brown attended their first meeting.

#### **1. Welcome from Acting Chairman, Mike Short**

Members present for this Zoom meeting introduced themselves.

The Acting Chairman explained that the Chairman, Nick Gosse, has decided not to stand for another two-year term. For the record he wished to thank Nick Gosse for the work he did over his two years as Chairman and that he would be missed.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and any matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were checked, and the actions reported on.

##### *Action Item 3 Report*

*RB, on behalf of the Partnership, to continue with the objection to the Draft Decision of Dorset Council to find the (Blandford Plus) Neighbourhood Plan sound and move it to a Local Referendum and to join with Pimperne Parish Council and CPRE to challenge the Examiner's Report and Dorset Council's proposed course of action.*

Legal advice was sought and sent to Dorset Council. A hybrid planning application has been submitted for 600 units at Blandford St Mary, P/OUT/2020/00026, as a direct result of this Neighbourhood Plan. This conflicts with the neighbouring parish of Pimperne, and their Neighbourhood Plan. Dorset Council have yet to respond

##### **Actions Item 2**

The Minutes of the meeting were signed as a true record and can now be placed on the AONB website.

### 3. Report A – AONB Partner Agreement and Chairman Vacancy

**Purpose:** To inform the Board on the current situation regarding the AONB Partner Agreement 2020-21

#### Partner Agreement

The current Partner Agreement will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Last year the Board agreed to extend the Agreement for a further year. The Defra funding for next year is currently unknown, but it is possible it will be the same as this year and be set for three years. The Partner Agreement could be signed for just next year and once the funding has been announced the Board could sign an amended Partner Agreement.

#### Chairman Vacancy

Nicholas Gosse has been unable to continue as Chairman. Mike Short, as Vice Chairman, will stand in until Wiltshire Council agree a process to fill the role. Members can nominate suitable candidates.

Recommendations
1. The Board agreed to an extension of the current Partner Agreement until 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
2. The Board to assist Wiltshire Council by identifying and submitting recommendations for a new Chairman

Actions Item 3
LN to amend the partner Agreement and once the DEFRA funding is known to communicate this to the Board.
Richard Broadhead (Wiltshire Council) to discuss with the nominated WC Board members the way forward to find a replacement for a Chairman. This to be communicated to Members by email. Members to send nominations in of suitable candidates.

### 4. Report B – AONB Budgets 2020-21 and 2021-22

**Purpose:** To inform the Panel of the situation regarding budget expenditure up to the end of December 2020 and the budget forecast (grant bid) for 2021-22 normally due to be sent to Defra by the end of January.

#### AONB budget update to end of December 2020

LN took Members through the financial reports. The DEFRA and Local Authority contributions totalled £287,409. The underspend of salaries was due to a member of staff starting at a later date than anticipated and another member of staff leaving in November. The final claim 2019-2020 was completed with some mis-coding of invoices to account for, then final spreadsheets can be agreed. The interim claim was submitted in September. This year's expenditure has been impacted by team changes and Covid, with the team working from home. Business rate criteria for reimbursement was not met. LN hopes to be able to employ a FT officer to focus on the Nature Recovery Plan / Climate Change work in 2021/2022.

The uses of remaining core monies will be a mix of:

- Salaries until the end March £44,000.
- assistance for Richard Burden in responding to planning applications.
- habitat permeability work (c £10-£15,000).
- woodland mapping and Right Tree, Right Place advice (c £4-£5,000)
- additional GIS mapping.
- Diversity and inclusion research (£6,000).
- Professional photography of specific subjects (£500).

### Project budgets 2020-21

The project budgets will be fully spent by the end of March. The Project budgets and Sustainable Development Fund are 100% Defra grant. The error in the list was corrected.

### International Dark Sky Reserve bid – £2,000

- StarFest in February.
- The lighting accreditation scheme.
- update the AONB lighting guidance for the public, businesses and planners.
- Tisbury train station received new, compliant outside lighting.

### Grants for improved external lighting (SDF) - £3,000

- Identifying farms and businesses to improve external lighting.

### National Lottery Heritage Fund, Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) – £7,000

- AONB match funding as determined in the Scheme plan.

### Discover Cranborne Chase – £5,462

- A redesign of the web site has been completed with an updated AONB logo.
- Update of 'Encouraging a Sustainable Approach to the Visitor Economy of the AONB'
- Production of more walks and cycle routes

### Defra Grant Aid 2021-22

- Going onto the Wiltshire IT system has been delayed. Once this happens the savings will be used to fund at least 50% of a full-time post.

### Externally Funded Projects 2021-22

- Years 2 and 3 of the LPS (National Lottery Heritage Fund)
- Environmental Land Management Test work (DEFRA), due to finish in June 2021
- Facilitation of the Nadder Farmer Group (Natural England)
- £7,202 additional grant to assist in promoting the ELM scheme to farmers.

### Local Authority Contributions 2020-2021

These are likely to remain the same for 2021-22.

Local Authority Contributions	£	% contributions
Wiltshire Council	39,259.00	61.38%
Dorset Council	18,856.00	29.48%
Hampshire County Council	2,187.48	3.42%
Somerset County Council	735.55	1.15%
New Forest District Council	2,187.48	3.42%
Mendip District Council	434.94	0.68%
South Somerset District Council	300.62	0.47%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63,961.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Recommendations Item 4

1. The Board noted that expenditure in core, project and SDF budgets for 2020-21 is currently less than usually expected at this time in the financial year and endorses current planned expenditure 2020-21 to fully expend budgets
2. The Board noted predicted Local Authority contributions for 2021-22
3. The Board endorsed the ongoing search for funds to support the PT Farm Conservation Advisor and a further FT post to focus on nature recovery work

#### **Actions Item 4**

Members to note the contributions to the AONB from their Local Authorities and to ensure their officers are informed and prepared to raise the required PO number. These amounts are subject to change, but will be confirmed after the DEFRA grant aid is confirmed.

#### **5. Report C – Team Work Update**

*Purpose: To update the Board on the work of the team since June 2020.*

LN praised the team for the way they have continued to work at home during the Covid restrictions. Below is listed the work for each member of the team.

#### **Richard Burden – Principal Landscape and Planning Officer (PT 3 days a week)**

- Formally responded to 147 planning applications since the last meeting.
- Bellway Inquiry at Blandford for 600 houses and associated development.
- N and NE of Blandford bypass with Pimperne Parish and CPRE.
- Lighting strategies for Phase 2 of Cranborne Road, Wimborne.
- Contribution to an appeal [dismissed] at Corsley.
- telecommunications masts and equipment.
- Littledown, Shaftesbury variation of conditions.
- Government changes to Permitted Development Rights.
- 'Prior Notification' proposals to take agricultural buildings into alternative uses.
- Longleat - pre-meeting on future plans for Longleat.
- Supporting Damerham residents on unauthorised camping / events.
- Hindon Neighbourhood Plan (NP) report of Examiner accepted by Wiltshire Council
- Blandford + NP2: legal opinion sought by AONB, Pimperne Parish Council & CPRE
- Basecamp - various planning and Dark Night Sky matters
- EIA screening responses: three solar farm proposals.
- A303: supported the need for significant and substantial landscape works
- Dinah's Hollow: continuing debate on the remedial works.
- Tony Harris is helping RB with planning application response work.
- Forestry Commission - Woodland Management consultations.
- Dark Night Skies national group of DNS areas and officers.
- Wimborne 1<sup>st</sup> School Award from Commission for Dark Skies.
- MONeH: working with them on conflicting planning proposals.
- Site visit with Tracy for potential wildlife lake on the West Wiltshire Downs
- Government's 'Changes to the Planning System' and 'Planning for the Future'
- All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Dark Night Skies and policies.
- 'England Tree Strategy' consultation.
- Woodland Trust / Forestry Commission webinar to encourage tree planting.

Richard expanded on some of those points above including the Bellway Homes appeal for the refusal of the reserved matters. A possible appeal of the decision is being considered by the Council.

A legal challenge to the Blandford + NP by the AONB, CPRE and Pimperne Parish Council. The external lighting challenges of major developments and dark night skies criteria. The wording of planning decisions and informatives regarding lighting.

#### **Tracy Adams – Farm Conservation Advisor (PT 3 days a week)**

- Unsuccessful Wessex Water - Biodiversity Partners Programme application.
- DEFRA's Facilitation Fund - one day a week to run the Nadder Valley Farmer Group.
- The Wylve Valley Farmer Group are undertaking a juniper restoration project and a NE funded Biodiversity Credits Scheme Pilot is underway.
- General on-site farm advice continues where possible.
- A meeting of farmer groups interested in working to offset carbon emissions.

- The Agriculture Bill has gone through parliament.
- The Environmental Land Management scheme will begin in late 2024.
- A new funding stream 'Farming in Protected Landscapes'.

### **Anne Carney – Funding and Partnerships Officer (PT 4 days a week)**

Anne has now left the team after eleven years. In that time, she brought in several million pounds of funding, including from the Sowing SEEDS programme and the Landscape Partnership Scheme bid.

Anne worked on the briefs for consultants for

- Nuturing Nature: to recruit, train and support biological recorders.
- Crystal Clear Ebble: to inspire action to protect the river.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the LPS and its projects.
- Researched the background for the 25 Year Environment Plan; the Colchester Declaration; and Nature Recovery Plan known as 'Big Chalk'.
- a piece of work on hedgerows and their benefits.
- the unsuccessful bid made to Wessex Water.
- listed funding opportunities/potential funders for future use.

### **Mel Capper – Communications Officer (PT 3 days a week; now 4 days)**

- Launched the new AONB / LP website in May 2020 - [www.cranbornechase.org.uk](http://www.cranbornechase.org.uk)
- The Cranborne Chase logo has been refreshed and a new colour palette introduced.
- a sample copy of The Hart magazine printed to attract sponsors.
- interpretative material to promote Tisbury Station as a Dark Sky Friendly station
- promotion of StarFest and the Dark Sky Accreditation scheme.
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts maintained.
- The Cranborne Chase photography project has been delayed. Charlie Waite hopes to have the book ready for this year's AONB's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- DEFRA Tests project 'Farming for the Nation' ensuring consistency of messaging. Two blogs reporting on progress have been posted on the AONB web site.
- Wiltshire Council, Defra and Natural England advice - promoting relevant messages.
- Taken over communications for the LPS team one day per week.
- Written a communications Strategy for the LPS.
- Instrumental on the press coverage by the Telegraph.  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cars/features/great-drives-starry-night-tour-wiltshire-dorset-hampshire-somerset/>

### **Shirley Merrick – Support Officer (PT 3 days a week)**

- Shirley supports the work of all the team members.
- Handles the day-to-day finance requirements and checks the monthly period reports.
- Supports Richard in his responses to planning applications.

### **Steve Tonkin – Dark Sky Advisor (PT 3 days a week)**

Steve joined the team in late September 2020.

- Prepared and organised the online StarFest 15<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 with over 100 booked on the 'Beginners Astronomy' session and other sessions proving popular.  
<https://cranbornechase.org.uk/events/>
- Filmed and delivered several 'podcasts' on various astronomy topics with Mel Capper
- The Dark Sky Accreditation paperwork and Scheme reviewed and ready to launch
- A member of the UK 'chapter' of the International Dark Sky Association.
- Getting familiar with lighting issues within the planning process.

**Jonathan Monteith – Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager (FT externally funded)**

- Jonathan started work in October 2020, taking charge of the £2.7m LPS, 20 new projects and the existing team of five officers.
- A Power Point Presentation was sent to members to show progress of the projects.
- Alternative ways have had to be found to deliver some of the projects.

**Linda Nunn – Director (FT)**

LN has been involved with most of the work outlined at the meeting.

The Annual Report from the NAAONBs has been sent to Board members.

The online workshop for the Delivery Plan is on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. With the initial help of Bridget Wayman (Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste), Jessica Gibbons, (Director Communities and Neighbourhoods), Maria Clarke (Dorset Local Nature Partnership Manager) and Paul Tory (CLA), three themes of activity were chosen. The primary aim of the workshop is to share priorities with potential partners, determine priorities for the team and which areas of work to progress.

- Work for a Diversity and Inclusion study in line with the Glover Review.
- An online AONB Annual Forum on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> April is being considered.
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) project bid was unsuccessful.
- The New Forest National Park and Cycling England bid was unsuccessful.
- Responded to NAAONBs regarding the 27 recommendations of the Glover Review.
- The formation of a National Landscape Service; form and functions as yet undetermined.
- The Arts Development Company - arts-based celebration Autumn 2021; possibly part of the AONB's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.
- A major Public Art Trail for the AONB's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - postponed until 2023.
- The Cranborne Chase Environmental Land Management Test is working co-creating land management plans with six selected farmers. Jodie Case of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust was the facilitator but she has recently resigned.
- DEFRA has funded each AONB with total of £7,202 for advocacy work amongst farmers and landowners both inside and outside the Protected Area regarding ELMS.
- ELM Convenor Partnership for Hampshire – Merrick Denton-Thompson has invited this AONB to play its part in the above test and trial for DEFRA.

<b>Recommendations Item 5</b>
1. The Board noted the work of the team since June 2020 on the wide variety of core and project work, particularly whilst during difficulties transpiring through Covid restrictions
2. The Board noted the positive work being undertaken by the two very new members of the team under difficult circumstances, Jonathan Monteith and Steve Tonkin.
3. The Board recognises the importance of including relevant lighting conditions in planning permissions to the retention of the AONB's International Dark Sky Reserve status and supports co-operation between the AONB and local planning authorities to re-introduce these conditions as a matter of priority
4. The Board recognises that securing long term funding for additional staff is a critical priority, particularly as the workload on the team is likely to greatly increase from April onwards with additional requirements from DEFRA and the launch of the Environmental Land Management scheme.

<b>Actions Item 5</b>
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Jonathan Monteith to report on progress of the Landscape Partnership Scheme at the next meeting.
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Opportunities for funding bids to be reported to LN.
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Members to spread the word of the ELMs work being carried out by the AONB team.
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## 6. Report D – A Brief Look Ahead

*Purpose: To update the Board on priorities for nature recovery work for 2021 onwards and likely allocations from DEFRA together with implications for Cranborne Chase AONB team.*

### Summary of work underway or soon to begin

- To commission a Nature Recovery Plan and appoint a FT Nature Recovery post.
- 'Farming for the Nation' bid to be put forward via the NAAONBs.
- 'Big Chalk' pilot area aiming to create connectivity of protected landscapes. There are four pilots being developed by AONBs nationally.
- Environmental Land Management Tests due for completion June 2021.
- £7,202 to deliver ELM advocacy, promoting the scheme by end of March 2021.

<b>Recommendations Item 6</b>
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1 The Board remains very cognisant of the work expected from this AONB 2021 onwards and supports, in any way it can, any initiative to increase team capacity to deliver effectively
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2 The Board strongly endorses, encourages and enables partnership and collaborative working amongst this Partnership, and any additional partners, to enable the AONB team to implement the work expected of it from DEFRA over the next three years
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## 7. Any Other Business

Mike Jones thanked LN and her team for the work that has been carried out in these difficult circumstances.

Richard Burden reminded members that the AONB Management Plan policies have been adopted by the LPA partners.

Mike Short, for the record, wished to thank Fleur de Rhe-Philippe for her valuable contributions she has made towards the work of the AONB in the many years she has been a representative of Wiltshire Council. The team sent her their thanks with a card from the staff.

## 8. Date of next meeting

To be arranged with a Doodle Poll.

<b>Actions Item 8</b>
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LN to send out a Doodle Poll for the date of the next meeting.
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**The meeting ended at 16.00**

Signed as a true record of the meeting on .....2021.



**By Mike Short (Standing in for the Chairman)**

**ACTIONS**

**Actions Item 2**

The Minutes of the meeting were signed as a true record and can now be placed on the AONB website.

**Actions Item 3**

LN to amend the partner Agreement and once the DEFRA funding is known to communicate this to the Board.

Richard Broadhead (Wiltshire Council) to discuss with the nominated WC Board members the way forward to find a replacement for a Chairman. This to be communicated to Members by email. Members to send nominations in of suitable candidates.

**Actions Item 4**

Members to note the contributions to the AONB from their Local Authorities and to ensure their officers are informed and prepared to raise the required PO number. ***These amounts are subject to change*** but will be confirmed after the DEFRA grant aid is confirmed.

**Actions Item 5**

Jonathan Monteith to report on progress of the Landscape Partnership Scheme at the next meeting.

**Actions Item 8**

LN to send out a Doodle Poll for the date of the next meeting.