



**Cranborne
Chase
National
Landscape**

Cranborne Chase National Landscape

Minutes for the

Partnership Board Meeting

24th January 2024

14.00pm Online

Representative	Organisation	Present	Apologies
Fleur de Rhe-Philippe MBE	Chair / Independent	Y	
Vacant	Vice Chair		
Cllr Piers Brown	Dorset Council		Apologies
Giles Nicholson	Dorset Council Officer	Y	
Graham Stanley	Senior Ranger-Dorset Council		Apologies
Cllr Janet Richards	New Forest District Council	Y	
Vacant	NFDC Officer		
Jonathan Doyle	Somerset Council Officer		Apologies
Cllr Bridget Wayman	Wiltshire Council	Y	
Cllr Nabil Najjar	Wiltshire Council		
Lynn Trigwell	Wiltshire Officer	Y	
Cllr Edward Heron	Hampshire County Council	Y	
Garry King MCIEEM CBiol MSB FLS	Hampshire County Council Officer		Apologies
Charles Routh	Natural England	Y	
James Fry	Forestry Commission		
Alistair Fitzgerald	Independent		Apologies
	Wiltshire Association of Town & Parish Councils		
Stuart Waite	Dorset Association of Town & Parish Councils (DATPC)		
Paul Tory	Country Land and Business Association		Apologies
Mark Burton	Country Land and Business Association	Y	
Francis Taylor	Commission to Protect Rural England		
Katie Davies	National Farmers Union	Y	
CCNL Team	Position		
Linda Nunn FT	AONB Director	Y	
Richard Burden PT	Principal Landscape and Planning Officer	Y	
Sarah Newland PT	Team Support Officer	Y	

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from: Gary King, Graham Stanley, Jonathan Doyle, Alistair Fitzgerald, Paul Tory and Piers Brown.

Cllr Lynn Trigwell advised her new role which is now Head of Climate and Environment.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes from the Board Meeting on 20th January 2023 and the Extraordinary Board Meeting on 16th October 2023 were approved. With the exception of the confidential items, these will be published on the website.

3. Report A – Update on National Landscape Budget 2023-24

LN reported that with barely three months left we anticipate spending the full National Landscape budget and can claim the full grant from Defra.

We are finally hoping to acquire some road signage on entering the National Landscape, funded by the National Landscapes Association. If the Board agrees to the signs, approximately £3k will be spent on signage on the main roads into the area with 'Welcome to Cranborne Chase National Landscape – an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' or very similar.

The Board approved.

Last year we received an additional £97k towards 'Access For All' from a different part of Defra to improve access for the less able. We returned most of it as due to its late arrival we did not have the capacity or ready-made projects ready to deliver. We did use £10,000 on 15 easy access gates to replace stiles.

This National Landscape is due to receive a further £107,000 to make additional improvements for the less able visitor 2024-25.

The team redundancy discussed at the last meeting will be taken from the National Landscapes small 'reserve' pot. The reserve stands at approximately £30,000 before this is taken out.

Grant aid from Defra for 2024-25 will remain the same as this year. Therefore, contributions from the five Local Authorities will also remain the same as this year.

FdeRP asked for questions:

BW – Suggested an electric tuk tuk for the Access All expenditure and asked when next years budget will be prepared.

LN: Defra require it by the end of February, but preparation can start next week.

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

- 1 That the Board notes core and project expenditure is on track for 2023-24; allowing the full Defra grant to be claimed
- 2 That there will be additional capital monies coming to this National Landscape for 2024-25; details to be circulated once known

- 3 That the redundancy payment at point 10, will need to be made from National Landscape Reserves

4. Report B – Changes Impacting National Landscapes

LN advised the Board of forthcoming changes occurring regards to National Landscapes, specifically relating to the duties of relevant authorities and then the progress of the logo redesign within the rebranding exercise.

RB: It is understood that the Government originally intended to introduce new legislation for National Parks & AONBs in 2020 but due to the Covid pandemic and changes in Government ministers, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) became the legislative opportunity to improve the duties and powers relating to designated landscapes. A series of amendments were submitted in the House of Lords enhancing the ‘duty of regard’ and increasing the responsibilities around National Park and AONB Management Plans.

The Government announced they were adopting these amendments on 13th September at the Third Reading in the Lords, requiring relevant authorities in England to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, whilst the Secretary of State will also make provision to require relevant authorities in England to contribute to furthering Management Plan targets and actions. The definition of who or what a relevant authority is in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act remains the same.

Amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA), announced in September 2023, now strengthen the duty on relevant authorities towards conserving and enhancing natural beauty and enhances AONB Management Plans by enabling a stronger link to national targets and a requirement on partners to contribute to their delivery.

LURA Sept 2023:

- Any relevant authority exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England **must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.**

The “must seek to further” duty is a significant strengthening of the original “have regard” CRoW Act Section 85 duty, (which remains in Wales). The existing ‘duty of regard’ can allow a public body to acknowledge that the AONB (or National Park) will be affected but without an explanation of how they have factored this into their decision, especially what weight was given to the designation in reaching their decision. This was sufficient to comply with the duty. Consequently ‘having regard’ may be a general consideration based on assumptions, rather than an analysis of the evidence about the impact of the action or proposal.

This would help public bodies, like local authorities or Natural England, to fully understand why, for example, if a scheme or proposal does not further AONB purposes what other actions, adaptations or mitigations are implemented instead. It should also help Planning Inspectors in their role.

National Landscape Management Plans

The LURA amendments also allow the Secretary of State to make provision to require relevant authorities in England “to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review” of a National

Landscape Management Plan and for that Plan to contribute to meeting targets set out under the Environment Act 2021.

Currently, under the CRoW Act Section 89, local authorities are required to produce a National Landscape Management Plan and review it every 5 years. But there is no requirement to implement the Plan. This provision amends that oversight.

It is worth noting that the Secretary of State will also be covered by the new duty 'to further the purpose' of AONBs, which would be progressed by making these new provisions.

The Government's formal response on the implementation of the Glover Landscapes Review is expected to be published shortly and a new Outcomes Framework. These measures will set out a plan of action for Protected Landscapes and define the contribution that they should make to national environmental targets.

Protected Landscapes Partnership

The Government has also supported the creation of a new partnership between the National Association for AONBs (now the National Landscapes Association), National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England to deliver a range of projects and programmes on nature recovery and widening access to nature. The partnership will also boost opportunities for private sector investment in our Protected Landscapes. It will be backed by over £2m of Defra funding.

Rebrand of AONBs to National Landscapes

LN then reported further on the re-brand and proposed updated logo. Further iterations of the image have been produced and the last version is shown in the report. AW did really well to stick to our ideals, and other National Landscapes now wish they had pushed harder for changes too. The deer image in the proposed logo is very similar to the original, which was our main concern.

FdeRP summarised by thanking AW for all her determination to get a 'good enough to approve' logo; suggesting we have secured a reasonable proposal for a new logo and asks if anyone disapproves?

BW states that it will be interesting to see what transpires from the strengthening of the original Sec 85 duty. Maybe, when responding to planning applications there should be a specific section where compliance with the new requirement is clearly set out.

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

1. That the Board acknowledges the forthcoming strengthening of the original Sec 85 duties with the LURA s.245 requirement and the additional requirement for Local Authorities to be more directly involved in the preparation and implementation of Management Plans.
2. That the Board acknowledges the formation of a Protected Landscapes Partnership
3. That the Board considers it is able to endorse and accept the new proposed logo for Cranborne Chase National Landscape as part of the national re-branding.

5. Report C – Management Plan Review

LN explains the proposed timetable for the review of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan.

In January 2023 the Board agreed to the delay, and the Chair can now sign the 'Statement on the delay of review 2024-25' set out on page 3 of the report.

The Natural England Management Plan Guidance document sets out that there are certain reports required in advance of producing the revised Management Plan. LN suggests we should be able to produce the majority of these from documents already held but some will need preparation.

The second issue is the Targets and Outcomes Framework from Defra. Targets for nature recovery are set out and will need to be proportionately set down in the plan to be achieved.

One further issue is that the plan structure should change to reflect Nature, Climate, People and Place. Consultant Paul Tiplady, who will be assisting with the Plan, has suggested that if the current structure works well and the Board is content with that, then the structure does not have to change.

Additional comments:

FdeRP: Re the Plan update – a short plan is more likely to be read than a long one, hence suggest to keep it succinct.

CR: in light of the new duties there is more of an onus on Local Authorities to further this Plan; in that context the content has a very different level of traction. Now it is a little bit more nuanced.

KD: nothing more than already mentioned.

LT – the changes outline in the previous report in particular puts emphasis on consultation with relevant LA management teams about making it more useable and user friendly.

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

1. That the Board confirmed the Chair should sign the 'Statement on the Delay of the Management Plan Review' statement for use by Local Authority Officers if needed
2. That the Board acknowledges the Management Plan Review process has begun and that input to that process will be necessary

6. Report D – Statement on Climate Change

LN has summarised this report. There are endless occasions when actions suggested in this Climate Change Statement, Framework and Toolkit are duly covered in the current plan, hence we are already working on climate change.

It seems that the section on renewable energy is causing the most disquiet, however it is now too late to change the wording in the original documents. LN suggests we could sign the statement with a very strong caveat about the siting of renewable energy facilities within and near to our borders and it is important that we also address this strongly in the revised Management Plan.

FdeRP: suggests that should be an honourable compromise.

BW: Agrees the National Landscape Management Plan is a legally required document so any policies within it should 'trump' any documents from the National Landscapes Association.

CR: what if we don't sign?

FdeRP: we could upset the National Landscapes Association, and possibly Defra, for no particular gain.

CR: the logic seems sound that our Management Plan should trump this, especially with the caveat included. Do we keep them happy without committing to anything?

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

1. That the Cranborne Chase NL Partnership signs the Statement on Climate Change with the caveat that it will retain its right, and intention, to resist any plans, nationally or locally, that seek to lessen the constraints on siting renewable energy facilities within the designated area or its setting.

LN: Action: Draft the caveat and circulate to the board before sending.

7. Report E – National Landscape Team Work Update

LN – highlights the number of changes of staff and the level of disruption and knock on delays this has caused. In all there have been 11 changes (leaving and joining) over the past year or so.

Richard Burden – Principal Landscape and Planning Officer

RB – One large issue was obviously the forestry planting at Bonham and subsequent repercussions. Other work included pre-submission consultation on The Wiltshire Local Plan, suggestions on the structure of the Plan, the main thrust being to move the environmental emphasis for the Plan to the front to stress how difficult it is to address housing etc as well as environmental considerations.

Working with ST to ensure we retain IDSR (International Dark Sky Reserve status). There was a degree of success with planning authorities mentioning and explaining the Dark Sky status in Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. Ensuring new or agency staff in Local Authorities are up to speed is always a challenge.

RB has been trying to get some kind of compensation payment for development within and near to the CCNL; for example, the impact that substantial housing, such as the developments in Fordingbridge, will have on this area.

RB has been involved in putting in our own view to the Department of Levelling Up and Regeneration. There seems to be a loosening of the belt with regards to permitted development. BW had brought some large farm developments to our attention. They have big visual impacts but can be classified as 'permitted development'.

The original Integrated Landscape Assessment of the Ebbles River Valley Character Area 2003 is being updated, with some elements having new or different classification ie, there is a need to separate the Chalk Valley sides from the Chalke Valley Bottom. Similarly, 'Wooded Downland' would be applied to the wooded part of the West Wiltshire Downs landscape character area.

The Secretary of State has been invited to call-in the N and NE Blandford hybrid application as the disregard for AONB / NL matters and the recently made Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan have national planning implications.

FdeRP: RB fought the good fight along with LN re Bonham. Many trees have now already been planted.

Angela Willis – Communications Officer

LN – AW was thrown into the rebrand on joining the team and has also compiled lots of regular e-bulletins and website updating. She is currently working on a hard copy edition of The Hart. She has helped HD to create super films – please do watch them to appreciate what FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) has achieved this year.

LN stated that the team cannot go through another process like the rebrand; the lack of collaboration and tone of messages/conversations was not acceptable.

FdeRP – The Board send their appreciation to AW

BW - liked the film and as the signatory to all the legal agreements on behalf of Wiltshire Council sees all the varied and diverse FiPL Grants. Is it possible to show the Board the breadth of this diverse/incredible work?

LN – there is a lot of FiPL information on the website ([Farming in Protected Landscapes - Cranborne Chase National Landscape](#)), but yes perhaps the Board can visit a project when we next have an in-person meeting.

CR – The Scheme has really low bureaucracy, is easy to administer and is flexible with regard to what can be included.

KD reiterated the good work of FiPL as she also sits on the Local Assessment Panel (LAP) and concurs with LN, there have been some excellent site visits as part of the work to see projects that are so interesting and varied. It's great to be a part of it.

Steve Tonkin – Dark Sky Advisor

LN – ST's work, who is part-time like most staff here, is detailed in the report. He is out and about across the National Landscape; his work is very broad ranging and he has spoken to groups totalling over 4000 people.

Tracy Adams – Farm Conservation Advisor

TA has continued to facilitate the Nadder Valley Farmer Group and earlier today presented a FiPL project to the FiPL Local Assessment Panel on behalf of the Nadder Valley Farmer Group.

Gemma Worswick – Nature Recovery Officer

GW only stayed for 8 months. She was excellent with GIS and produced the online Story Map. The Woodland Trust and we will be going back out to recruitment. The position needs filling to continue work on the Nature Recovery Plan.

Helena Darragh – Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer

HD has also been tempted away to an eNGO. Wiltshire Council recruitment team have done us proud and we do have a new FiPL officer, Robert Hall from Natural England, starting from 12th February 2024. He has already been in to complete a few hours with HD before then.

It will be a sad goodbye to HD who has been undertaking brilliant work.

Celine Mills – Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme Support Officer

Another new team member is Celine Mills, our new FiPL Programme Support officer. We will now have a brand new FiPL team with a £840,00 budget to grant aid effective projects in less than a year. As far as we know, after March 2025 there is no news yet of FiPL continuing.

Sarah Newland – Team Support Officer

SN has done a grand job getting to grips with the new finance system, Oracle and is a boon to the team keeping everything in order.

FdeRP – what LN achieves with the tiny team is miraculous. How about an in-person meeting and a chance to see FiPL projects

A face-to-face Board Meeting is a good idea.

FdeRP: Yes, a good idea to meet maybe when the ground is dry?

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

1. That the Board recognises the achievements of individual team members since January 2023 and wish those that are leaving us, the very best for the future
2. That Board members take every and any opportunity to impress on Defra officials, the critical need for an increase in revenue funding for National Landscapes as set out in the recommendations of the Glover Review

8. Report F – ‘Chase & Chalke’ Landscape Partnership Scheme

This £2.7M scheme is coming to an end this year. The team are working together to achieve some tough targets that have not yet been attained. The majority of staff finish 30th September 2024, (it was originally 31st March); the extension has allowed us to review our targets and put in renewed efforts to achieve them. The original manager is now working from Ireland for family reasons. We have Robert Lloyd from Natural England on secondment for one year alongside the original manager who will remain for around 2 days per week to assist. The main aim back in 2016, was to develop a large volunteer force and promote engagement with the landscape.

Back in November LN had a conversation with a senior investment manager at the National Lottery Heritage Fund. She is now hoping to see a new bid, to extend the project.

Highlighted in yellow, in the accompanying report, are all the most important pieces of work that have been taken forward over the past quarter.

FdeRP – the Board have all seen the recommendations, the Team Report shows the immense amount of work that this small team gets through.

FdeRP: The following recommendations were approved:

1. That the Board congratulates the immense amount of work already undertaken by the Chase & Chalke team up until end September this year.
2. That the Board welcomes Robert Lloyd to the role of Chase & Chalke manager
3. That the Board supports a further bid to the NLHF, and potentially elsewhere, to ensure the goodwill, training and commitment of the 500+ volunteers can continue to be supported into the future both for their benefit and that of this National Landscape

9. AOB and date of next meeting

LN: AOB – We need to mention The Annual Forum, which will be at Dinton Hall on 28th February 2024. There has been a strong response to this so cost may be proportionately slightly higher.

An in-person Board meeting is popular; date to be finalised.

FdeRP: Thank you to everyone

GN left at 15.00

EH left at 15.20

The meeting finished at 15.40

Meeting minutes signed as correct

By Chair, Fleur de Rhé-Philippe

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fleur de Rhé-Philippe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Date: 8th February 2024