1. Apologies 10.00
2. Introduction of new members 10.00 – 10.05
3. Declarations of Interest 10.05 – 10.06
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting 10.06 - 10.11
5. Matters Arising 10.11 - 10.15
6. Public Question Time 10.15 - 10.18
7. Election of Parish Council member to Planning Committee 10.18 – 10.28
8. Annual Audit 2013-14 10.28 - 10.38
9. Report from the Executive Committee 10.38 - 10.48
10. Report from the Planning Committee 10.48 - 10.58
11. Report on Box Woodland Project 10.58 - 11.18
13. Presentation on NELMs and Farming 11.38 - 12.08
14. Report on HS2 Community and Environment Fund 12.08 - 12.28
16. Work Programme Update 12.38 -12.48
17. Presentations 12.48 – 1.00
18. Lunch 1.00 p.m.
Pitstone Memorial Hall
Vicarage Road
Pitstone
Beds LU7 9EY

Thursday 16th October 2014

CCB Board Meeting

B489 to Tring
B489 to Ivinghoe
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 26th June 2014 at Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford OX10 6LZ

COMMENCING AT 10.45 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Appointing Body</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appointed by Local Authorities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr David Collins</td>
<td>Dacorum Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Roger Metcalfe</td>
<td>Wycombe District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr David Nimmo Smith</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Brian Norman</td>
<td>Three Rivers District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Ian Reay (Chairman)</td>
<td>Hertfordshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Jeremy Ryman</td>
<td>Chiltern District Council</td>
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<td><strong>Appointed by the Secretary of State</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<td>Alison Doggett</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<td>Gill Gowing</td>
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<td>Dr. Simon Mortimer</td>
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<td>Ray Payne</td>
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<td>Helen Tuffs</td>
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<td>Ian Waller</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Wilson</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
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<td><strong>Elected by Parish Councils</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr John Griffin</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Margaret Jarrett</td>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Barbara Wallis</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Julia Wells</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Officers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deirdre Hansen</td>
<td>Clerk to the Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Rodrick</td>
<td>CCB Chief Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Smith</td>
<td>CCB Finance Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette Venters</td>
<td>CCB Access Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colin White</td>
<td>CCB Planning Officer</td>
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14/15 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mary Goldsmith, Bedfordshire Parish Councils, Cllr Lynn Lloyd, South Oxfordshire District Council, Cllr David Barnard, North Herts District Council, Cllr Marion Mustoe, Central Bedfordshire Council, Cllr Chris Richards, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Cllr Alan Walters, South Buckinghamshire District Council and Cllr Shirley Judges, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils.

14/15.2. Introduction of new members.

The Chairman had invited the new Secretary of State appointed members to introduce themselves to the Board at the Board’s AGM preceding the Board meeting.

14/15.3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

14/15.4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 25th March 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made: 13/14.63. item 3 a ‘t’ was added to ‘he’ to read the and item 4.a capital ‘T’ replaced ‘t’ in tuffs and item 13/14.65 ‘March’ was removed.

14/15.5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not on the agenda.

14/15.6. Public Question time

No public questions.

14/15.7. Report from the Executive Committee

The Chief Officer reported the matters discussed and decisions taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

At its meeting on 22nd May 2014 the Executive Committee:

1. Received the provisional financial statement for 2013-14 and approved a report on the Board’s provisional outturn for 2013-14.
2. Received the Internal Auditor’s Report for 2013-14.
3. Reviewed the budget for 2014-15
4. Received a Personnel Report and approved amendments to the Board’s personnel policies.
5. Approved a proposal, to be presented for consideration by the Board (covered in detail under item 14/15.14), to create an alumni style of membership for ex Board members, who wish to keep in touch and continue contributing to the Board’s work.
6. Received a report on HS2.

The Chief Officer thanked all the Local Authorities for ensuring contributions to the Board had not fallen as had been anticipated.
1. The Board NOTED the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on the 22nd May and the decisions made under delegated authority.


Members received the report from the Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee on 14th May 2014 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following items were discussed:

1. Election of interim Chairman
2. High Speed 2 update
3. AONB Management Plan Review
4. Events
6. Development Plan Responses
7. Planning applications update

The Planning Officer gave some guidance on the matters discussed and members commented.

1. The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee.

14/15.9. Statement of Accounts 2013-14

The Finance Officer presented the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Audit Return for the Finance Year 2013-14. The year-end position showed an overall net surplus from all activity of £21,352.

1. £573 has been applied from the Budget Equalisation. £4,996 has been added to the Chalk Streams Reserve and £17,699 to the Development Reserve.
2. At its May meeting the Executive Committee considered and approved a proposal of a reduction to the General Reserve of £35,000. This has been transferred to the Development Reserve. The Reserves now stand as follows:
   - General: £100,000
   - Budget Equalisation: £137,772
   - Development: £293,744
   - Chalk Streams project: £24,693
   - Friends of Red Kites: £5,859
   - Total: £562,068
3. The Pensions Liability has reduced by £4,000 to £573,000. This represents the liability to the Board if every employee had retired on 31 March 2014 and collected their pension entitlement.
4. The reduction reflects the impact of the valuation methodology and the derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 17.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer and the Chief Officer for their careful financial stewardship.

1. The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts and Annual Audit Return 2013-14, including the Annual Governance Statement and they were signed by the Chairman.
14/15.10 Report on the Ridgeway National Trail.

The Access Officer gave a presentation to update the Board on the Ridgeway National Trail Review and other Ridgeway initiatives with the view of seeking agreement from the Board on the extent of its involvement and financial contribution to these initiatives.

The Board had jointly commissioned consultants to identify options for a new Trail Partnership and a draft report had been presented on 16th June, which is expected to be signed off at the Ridgeway and Thames Path Management Group meeting in July. The report's key findings are as follows:

1. There is evidence that there is support and enthusiasm for the Ridgeway.
2. The current R&TP Management Group is not working effectively.
3. The management of volunteers requires a disproportionate amount of staff time.
4. There is no long term development plan.
5. Separate delivery arrangements for the two trails with collaboration and joint working arrangements would be more beneficial.
6. There must be greater emphasis on development and marketing.
7. Four options were set out, with a strong steer for the Board to become the lead organisation hosting the Trail Partnership and employing staff.
8. Whichever option is chosen, there is a need for a dedicated Trail Development Manager to provide a single point of contact. This post should be fully funded from the Ridgeway funds.

A discussion covered the following issues:

a. Becoming an active member of the Trail Partnership at officer and member level.
b. To commit 1 day per week of the Access Officer's time for the next 12 months
c. To contribute £2,500 per annum to core funding of the Partnership from 2015-16.
d. Taking a lead role for co-ordinating the activities of the Trails Partnership in the Chilterns AONB.
e. Continuation in establishing the Chilterns Ridgeway Forum
f. Continuation of the preparation of a Chilterns Ridgeway Development Plan.
g. Enhancing the promotion of the Ridgeway through the Board's website and publication.
h. The development of a plan for a network of promoted routes based on the two National Trails- the Ridgeway Trail and the Thames Path.

1. The Board AGREED to make a commitment to the future of the Ridgeway National Trail based on the proposals a-h listed above.

14/15.11. Report on Hillforts

The Chief Officer gave a brief introduction on the project and the Vice Chairman gave a progress report on the work to date including an outline of a proposed Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

1. The working party is preparing a bid to the HLF for a £500,000-£1 million grant. An expression of interest was submitted to the HLF, which provided positive feedback. An HLF officer visited in April to provide further guidance. To increase chances of securing funding, he encouraged scaling down the application to nearer £500,000. Phase 1 of the application is being prepared in-house. Other partners will be sought to provide funding in a variety of ways.
2. Applications for funding from HLF are considered quarterly with the next deadline being 25th August 2014.
3. If the Board is successful with a phase 1 HLF bid then additional resources will be required to prepare a detailed phase 2 bid. This would require funding of up to £5,000 p.a.. There is no specific budget for this, but allocation could be made from the Special Project Support budget.
4. The popularity of the conference held in November 2013 provides encouragement to hold another conference in autumn 2014. A further conference will also keep the momentum going during the protracted process of the application to the HLF. The conference will be self-funding and the Board's contribution will be staff and member time to organise the event and speakers.
1. The Board APPROVED the outline of the proposed submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2. The Board APPROVED the allocation of up to £5,000 p.a. from the Special Project Support budget (2014-15 and 2015-16) for the preparation of a stage 2 bid to the HLF.

3. The Board APPROVED the holding of a self-funding conference on Hillforts on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 2014.

**14/15.12 Chilterns Building Design Awards**

The Planning Officer gave a presentation informing the Board about the entries and winners of this year’s Chilterns Building Design Award.

This is the 16\textsuperscript{th} year of the awards and there were 15 widely varied entries. 7 entries were visited in April and the winners were announced at the awards ceremony on 18\textsuperscript{th} June.

The overall winner was 5 Windsor End, Beaconsfield, a restoration, conversion and extension of a derelict listed cottage.

12.15 Annette Venters left.

The Planning Officer was thanked by the members for his efforts and contributions to the scheme.

1. The Board NOTED the winners of this year’s Chilterns Building Design Awards

**14/15. 13 Report on HS2**

The Chief Officer gave members an update on matters pertaining to HS2 (the topic had been covered at the Executive Committee meeting 22 May).

1. The House of Commons passed the Second Reading of the Bill on the 28\textsuperscript{th} April.
2. David Lidington MP had issued a statement that he would resign from Government if the Chilterns did not get a full length tunnel.
3. The HS2 Select Committee has been appointed and has begun work
4. It is difficult to predict when the Board will be called to the Select Committee; all petitioners will receive at least 4 weeks’ notice.
5. On the 1\textsuperscript{st} May the Board had attended a meeting organised by Cheryl Gillan MP with Sir David Higgins, the Chairman of HS2 Ltd.
6. In May officers met with three members of HS2 Ltd petitioning team. They were not able to engage in any depth on issues of concern to the Board.
7. The Board is also petitioning for the creation of a Community and Environment Fund to be created by HS2 Ltd/ DfT. So far any attempt for the creation of such a fund had been rejected by HS2 Ltd and ministers.
8. It was suggested to create a small working group to develop a more detailed proposal for a Community and Environment Fund, which is shared with others including local authorities. The aim being that the Board and local authorities supported by local communities present a same case to the Select Committee. A volunteer has already undertaken a significant amount of research on comparable schemes. Members were invited to join the working group.

1. The Board NOTED the report on HS2 Ltd.
2. The Board AGREED to develop a detailed proposal for a Community and Environment Fund (in partnership with local authorities and community groups) for presentation to the Select Committee.
1. The Board AGREED that a group should be created for retiring members. A name to be decided at a later date.

2. The Board AGREED that the Executive Committee should work up terms of reference for recommendation at a future Board meeting.

14/15.15. Report on Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Board and the 50th Anniversary of the AONB Designation.

The Chief Officer reported that the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the Board falls this year, the Board was officially launched December 2004 and the 50th Anniversary of the AONB next year, the designation date being 16th December 1965. A programme of celebrations was tabled and discussed, a joint celebration with the Chilterns Society for the 50th Anniversary would be appropriate.

1. The Board AGREED to a programme of celebratory events and activities for the 10th Anniversary of the Conservation Board and the 50th Anniversary of the designation of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2. The Board AGREED to work with the Chiltern Society to jointly celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the AONB designation and the Society.

14/15.16. Re-tiring Board Members

The Chairman made a presentation to the retiring members of the Board. Parish Councillors Shirley Judges, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils (not present), Margaret Jarrett, Hertfordshire Parish Councils and Three Rivers District Councillor Brian Norman all retired at the elections in May and were presented with a small token of appreciation. The Chairman thanked them for their valuable contributions and dedication to the Board during their time serving the Board.

Margaret Jarrett and Brian Norman thanked the Board for their gifts and for the enjoyable experience of serving the Board. They praised the dedication, interest and enthusiasm of the officers and members.

The Chairman announced with great sadness that the Chief Officer had informed him that he would be retiring at the end of the year. The difficult process would now be started to recruit a replacement.
14/15.17. Date of next meeting: Thursday 16th October 2014 location TBC.

The meeting closed 13.00

The Chairman……………………………………….  Date……………….
Item 7  Election of Parish Councillor to the Planning Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick    Chief Officer

Summary: Following the AGM in June a vacancy remained on the Planning Committee which can only be filled by a parish councillor. Since that time two new parish council members (Tony Penn and Simon Deacon) have been appointed to the Board. The Board should now appoint a parish councillor to the Planning Committee for the period October 2014- June 2015.

Purpose of Paper: To advise the Board that it should make an appointment to the Planning Committee.

Background

1. The Board’s Parliamentary Establishment Order requires that any sub-committee of the Board should reflect the proportions of the full Board in terms of those members appointed by the local authorities, Secretary of State and parish councils. For the Planning Committee this split is 5:2:2.

2. At the AGM in June there were only 4 parish council members due to the resignations of two members appointed by the parish councils of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Cllr. Barbara Wallis was elected to the Planning Committee but there remained a vacancy for the period to June 2015.

3. Since the last meeting elections have taken place and Cllr.Tony Penn and Cllr.Simon Deacon have been elected to the Board.

4. There will be an election to fill the outstanding vacancy. Only those members appointed to the Board by parish council are eligible to stand.

5. The members of the Planning Committee are entitled to claim an annual allowance of £545 plus travelling expenses. The Committee meets quarterly, in Chinnor, and meetings usually last from 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. In addition there are occasional site meetings usually as part of consideration of planning applications; and a number of relevant events which members of the Committee are encouraged to attend including the Planning Conference and Building Design Awards.

Recommendation

1. To appoint a Parish Councillor member of the Board to the Planning Committee with immediate effect until the AGM in June 2015.
Item 8  Annual Audit Return

Author: Chris Smith  Finance Officer

Summary: The Audit Commission have completed their audit of the Board's accounts for 2013-14 and have drawn to the attention of the Board two matters arising.

Purpose of the Report: To inform members of the completion of the external audit for 2013-14.

Background:

1 The Board is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control.

2 The Board prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:

   - Summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2014; and,

   - Confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to the auditor’s responsibilities.

3 The auditor appointed by the Audit Commission, BDO, is required to conduct an audit and, on the basis of the review of the annual return and supporting information, to report whether any matters give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Audit Conclusion:

4 On the basis of their review, in the opinion of the auditor the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

5 The auditor has drawn two matters to the attention of the Board. These are detailed in the “Issues Arising Report” attached.
Responses and Action:

6 The following responses are offered to the issues raised:

(i) Cash banking

This issue was raised by the Board’s internal auditor and has already been addressed.

(ii) Fidelity guarantee

The change to the Board’s insurers resulted in a significantly lower premium but a reduced amount of cover for fidelity guarantee. This was discussed with the insurer who indicated that any increase would be subject to a substantial additional premium. The Executive Committee decided that the increase in premium was disproportionate to the risk but will review the position annually.

Recommendation:

1. To approve and accept the audited annual return and issues arising report for 2013-14 and agree to the responses and action set out above.
Section 3 – External auditor certificate and opinion 2013/14

Certificate
We certify that we have completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2014 of:

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor
The body is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The body prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2014; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to our audit responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission and, on the basis of our review of the annual return and supporting information, to report whether any matters that come to our attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

External auditor report

(Except for the matters reported below)\(^*\) on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.\(^*\) delete as appropriate.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the body:

Please see enclosed report

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

External auditor signature

External auditor name: BDO LLP Southampton United Kingdom

Date: 11/4/14

Note: The auditor signing this page has been appointed by the Audit Commission and is reporting to you that they have carried out and completed all the work that is required of them by law. For further information please refer to the Audit Commission’s publication entitled Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Small Bodies.
ISSUES ARISING REPORT FOR
Chilterns Conservation Board
Audit for the year ended 31 March 2014
Introduction

The following matters have been raised to draw items to the attention of Chiltern Conservation Board. These matters came to the attention of BDO LLP during the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2014.

The audit of the annual return may not disclose all shortcomings of the systems as some matters may not have come to the attention of the auditor. For this reason, the matters raised may not be the only ones that exist.

The matters listed below are explained in further detail on the page(s) that follow;

- Fidelity Guarantee
- Cash bankings
The following issue(s) have been raised as there are minor errors on the annual return which we wish to draw to the attention of the council so they do not occur again in future years.

Cash bankings

*What Is the issue?*

The internal auditor has raised concerns over the bankings of cash, as the current procedure is to hold cash until it becomes significant and then it is banked.

*Why has this issue been raised?*

This delay in banking presents an opportunity for cash to be mislaid or misappropriated.

*What do we recommend you do?*

We would recommend that action is taken as soon as possible to introduce tighter controls over the banking of cash received.

Further guidance on this matter can be obtained from the following source(s):

Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England - A Practitioners' Guide, NALC/SLCC
The following issue(s) have been raised to assist the body. The body is recommended to take action on the following issue(s) to ensure that the body acts within its statutory and regulatory framework.

Fidelity Guarantee

What is the issue?
The body has fidelity guarantee cover, however this appears to be insufficient in light of the bank balances held at 31 March 2014.

Why has this issue been raised?
A body, under S114 of the Local Government Act 1972, must take security as it considers sufficient in the case of any of its officers likely to handle its money. The body may decide that insurance is not 'sufficient' for them, but in order to come to this opinion it must have reviewed the requirement annually and have objective grounds for such a conclusion.

What do we recommend you do?
The body should consider the level of insurance cover and set it to a level that will protect the body against potential loss. The body should review the level of cover at least annually as circumstances may change throughout the year.

The amount should be sufficient to cover the maximum amount of money the body holds at any one time during the year. A body does not have to have fidelity guarantee insurance if it considers that no security is 'sufficient' but there must be objective grounds for such a conclusion.

Further guidance on this matter can be obtained from the following source(s):
Local Council Administration, 8th Edition, Charles Arnold-Baker, Chapter 9.8
Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England - A Practitioners Guide, NALC/SLCC

No other matters came to our attention.

For and on behalf of
BDO LLP

Date: 11 August 2014
Item 9

Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary:
The Committee met on 27th September and:

1. Received a Finance Report for April - August 2014. There were no exceptional items reported.

2. Reviewed the Risk Register- the impending retirement of the Chief Officer was the major changed risk.

3. Approved the annual Treasury Management Report - returns for 2013-14 were close to estimate.

4. Reviewed the Financial Regulations and updated expenditure authority levels as advised by the auditor.

5. Adopted new Discretionary Pension Policies as required by the recent changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

6. Discussed the programme for recruiting a Chief Officer.

7. Was advised of recent Board member appointments. It was agreed to prepare a clearer specification for the role of a Board member.

8. Discussed and agreed the principles for a High Speed 2-Community and Environment Fund.

9. Agreed that the proposed alumni of former Board members should be referred to as a Fellowship and open to members who have served for at least three years.

Purpose of Report:
To inform members of the Board of the matters considered and decisions taken by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

Finance Report (April – August 2014)

1. To the end of August 2014 the expenditure against the core budget was 0.7% below profile and income 2.1% above profile. Ongoing activity, funded by earned income and the Development Reserve, was progressing satisfactorily as was externally funded project activity. Special projects expenditure and income is below profile.

Review of the Risk Register

2. The Risk Register was first adopted by the Committee on 27th February 2008 and has been reviewed biannually since. The latest review showed that most
notable new risks were the potential impacts of the retirement of the Chief Officer.

3. It was agreed that in future the Risk Register would be reviewed quarterly by the Executive Committee.


4. The review of the Treasury Management strategy for 2013-2014 showed that income was £1,474 below forecast (£6,591 rather than £8,065, a reduction of 18%). In the context of the Board’s overall budget this shortfall was not considered to be significant. It was largely a consequence of only making deposits with High Street clearing banks which offered rates almost entirely determined by the Base Rate which remained at 0.5%.

**Review of Financial Regulations**

5. Following a recommendation by the auditor, the Committee decided to adjust, upwards, the expenditure authority levels which have been in place since 2004. The Committee gave authority for the Board’s standing Financial Regulations to be adjusted accordingly.

**Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)- Discretionary Policies**

6. As a consequence of national changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme all members have been required to adopt new discretionary pension policies. On behalf of the Board the Executive Committee adopted a number of policies - Appendix 1.

**Recruitment of a Chief Officer**

7. The Committee discussed progress to date. Since then Kath Daly has been appointed as Acting Chief Officer for 6 months from January- June 2015.

**Appointment of new Board Members**

8. The Committee was advised that, following elections, the parish councils of Buckinghamshire had appointed Tony Penn of Buckland PC (between Wendover and Tring) and Simon Deacon of Markyate PC (north of Hemel Hempstead) by the parish councils of Hertfordshire.

9. The Committee was advised that DEFRA would be advertising (25th Sept- 23rd October) and interviewing (18th November) for a replacement for Dr. Simon Mortimer. The successful appointee would not take up their role until 1st April 2015.

**Creation of a Community and Environment Fund for High Speed 2**

10. This is covered in Item 14.
Board Member Fellowship

11. The Committee resolved to call what had been previously referred to as an alumni, as the Conservation Board Fellowship. It would be open to former members who had an unblemished record of service for at least three years. It was confirmed that the Fellowship would have no executive function.

Recommendation

1. To note the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 17th September and decisions made under delegated authority.
Appendix 1

Chilterns Conservation Board

Compliance with LGPS 2014 Regulation
Additional Employer Discretions

The Chilterns Conservation has in place the following discretionary polices to 31st March 2015. These will be reviewed annually.

1) The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) will not grant extra annual pension of up to £6,500 to an active Scheme member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency;

2) The CCB will not contribute towards the cost of purchasing an extra pension via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC) where an active Scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension of up to £6,500 by making Additional Pension Contributions (APCs), to (voluntarily).

3) The CCB will consider whether to permit flexible retirement for staff aged 55 or over who wish to reduce their working hours or grade.

4) The CCB will not switch the 85-year rule back on for members for whom the 85 year rule does not (other than on flexible retirement) automatically apply and who would otherwise be subject to it and who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60, to; and

5) The CCB will not consider whether to waive any actuarial reductions
Item 10  Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 10\textsuperscript{th} September 2014. The following items were discussed:
1. Election of Chairman
2. Highlands Farm, Henley
3. High Speed 2 update
4. AONB Management Plan Review
5. Events
6. Development Plans responses
7. Planning applications update

Purpose of Report: To inform the Board about the items considered by the Planning Committee.

Election of Chairman

1. Helen Tuffs was nominated and unanimously elected as Chairman of the Committee until the Board’s next AGM in June 2015.

Highlands Farm, Henley

2. This site is identified in the joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Committee received a presentation about it from agents acting on behalf of the owners. A number of questions were asked and the Committee was told that the Board will be kept informed about progress.

High Speed 2 update

3. The Committee was informed that: the HS2AA case submitted to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee had been found to be admissible; the Information Commissioner had been granted permission to proceed with a Judicial Review in connection with the Major Projects Authority’s Report; the Board’s petition against the HS2 Hybrid Bill was accepted and the Board has “Locus Standi” in this case and officers have met with HS2 staff on two recent occasions, though no issues have been resolved.

AONB Management Plan Review

4. Following adoption of the AONB Management Plan earlier in the year the Committee was told that the Board would be seeking its adoption as a material consideration in connection with each local authority’s planning powers. This has already taken place at Chiltern District Council.
Events

5. The Planning Forum was held in May 2014 and attended by 5 of the Chilterns local planning authorities as well as other organisations. The Forum discussed: the endorsement of the AONB Management Plan; latest developments with regard to HS2; Board position statements; the latest position with regard to a possible AONB boundary review and an update on local authority development plans. The next forum will take place in November and will discuss updates of those items discussed in May as well as development pressures on the AONB and the National Grid Visual Impact Provision proposals.

6. The Building Design Awards ceremony was held in June in Amersham, it was attended by 60 people and three awards were made.

7. Parish and Town Council planning training had been booked to take place in June and July, but due to lack of interest the events were cancelled. The Committee felt that it would be more appropriate to hold such training events every 4 years in the year after the majority of Parish and Town Council elections.

8. Due to lack of interest the Planning Tour was also cancelled. The Committee felt that it might be beneficial to organise visits when matters arise, rather than be confined to a set Tour date.

9. By the time of the Board meeting the annual Planning Conference will have taken place (8th October). Brief feedback will be given.

Development Plans responses

Oxfordshire County Council’s LTP4 SEA Scoping Report

10. The Board: welcomed the recognition given to AONBs; suggested that low noise surfacing should be used wherever possible when highways are maintained or constructed, and suggested changes to text to more properly reflect the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

11. The Board: suggested that clearer plans should be used in the future; suggested changes to more properly reflect the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; objected to text that referred to encroachment into the AONB where no justification had been given for such an approach, and stated that it looked forward to commenting on background material when it had been produced.
Aylesbury Vale DC Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan scope of the new plan

12. The Board: welcomed the likely inclusion of policies on design, which the Board considered should address local distinctiveness and include reference to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on local building materials; suggested the inclusion of a specific policy dealing with the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns AONB whilst ensuring references were made to the AONB Management Plan and other advice, and considered that the plan should include specific policies which deal with the protection of other environmental and heritage assets.

Buckland Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan

13. The Board: suggested that the Plan should reflect the fact that a significant part of the Plan area is within the AONB by inclusion of a policy and reference being made to the AONB Management Plan and other published advice, and suggested alterations to provide clarity and to ensure consistency within the Plan.

Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission consultation version

14. The Board: welcomed a number of policies and suggested minor amendments to more properly reflect the fact that much of the Plan area is within the AONB; suggested that there ought to be more explicit references to the AONB, and made some detailed comments about the proposed allocation at Highlands Farm.

London Luton Airport Airspace Change Proposal RNAV1 Procedures

15. The Board: objected to the fact that it had not been included as a stakeholder and objected to the change that was proposed as it would lead to an increase in the area of the AONB affected by noise.

South Oxfordshire DC Local Plan 2031 Issues and Scope consultation

16. The Board: commented on the housing forecasts; suggested that the Local Plan should place great emphasis on design; suggested that the Plan should lead to employment provision across the District; commented on the level of growth that ought to be planned for; suggested that the AONBs in the District should be identified and recognised as constraints and addressed by a specific policy; commented about settlement sustainability; commented on some of the suggested options for growth and objected to some of these based on the implications for the AONB.

Chiltern District Council’s Heritage Strategy
17. The Board welcomed the fact that the Council had taken on many of its previous comments and suggested a series of minor amendments to the document.

Luton BC Draft Luton Local Plan 2011-2031

18. The Board commented that the AONB should be recognised within the strategic objectives; suggested that the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes should be referred to, and suggested minor amendments to ensure compliance with the NPPF, National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Central Bedfordshire Council’s revised pre-submission Development Strategy

19. The Board made specific and detailed comments about the need to make full references to the AONB as part of the vision and objectives; suggested that the purpose of the AONB should be addressed as part of policies; supported a number of policies as drafted; made detailed comments about the proposed north of Luton strategic allocation, the Framework Plan and Master Plan that accompany this and the associated northern bypass road; suggested various amendments to text that would meet the Board’s objections, and made detailed comments about the proposed Sundon Quarry rail freight interchange.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at the following link: Planning_cttee_papers_100914.pdf

Planning applications update

20. The Committee was informed about the various responses that had been made and approval was given for these. The updates to various cases were noted. The Committee noted that for 2013/14 the number of cases decided in line with the Board’s comments was 62%, with four cases still to be decided.

Recommendation

1. The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.
Item 11  

Report on Box Woodland Project

Author:  
Sarah Wright  
Box Woodland Project Officer

Summary:  
The Chilterns Box Woodland Project has been operating since January 2013 with a grant of £78,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This report summaries progress to date

Purpose of Report:  
To inform the Board of project progress and future aspirations.

Sarah will give a presentation to the Board regarding project highlights and aspirations for the future.

Introduction

1. Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) is a native tree species and it is adapted to growing on steep chalk slopes. Following centuries of clearance, there are now only three surviving native woodlands in the UK of any size and the largest is Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI near Wendover. Field survey and historic research by the project is revealing a rich national and local cultural heritage and fragments of box woodland and ancient box trees across the Chilterns. Remaining areas of box in the Chilterns have been largely neglected in the recent past and owners are indicating that information about management techniques and inspiration about its uses will bring box back into management and motivate new plantings.

2. A project plan was agreed between the Board and the Heritage Lottery Fund, starting in January 2013 and ending in May 2015. There are numerous activities including field survey and historic research, training volunteers, producing an education pack, delivering an events programme and practical conservation at box sites in the Chilterns.

Project highlights Jan 2013 to Sept 2014

3. The highlights include:

1. **Eighteen events** have been delivered, attracting 475 attendees.

2. **The project launch event** was held at the Tring Natural History Museum in June 2013, highlighting Charles Rothschild’s role in conserving the Chilterns’ box woods near Wendover.

3. **History of Box Wood event was held** in October 2013 took people into the Buckinghamshire Local Records Office to see old maps and deeds and learn about the history of box in the Chilterns.
4. A box-themed art event, was held in June 2014 at Wycombe Museum as part of Buckinghamshire Open Studios.

5. A hands on boxwood block engraving workshop was held in September 2014, by renowned artist Chris Daunt who taught a small group how to engrave and print at the Paper Trail, near Hemel Hempstead.

6. Six Guided walks have been held.

7. National Demonstration Site; the project officer is working with the Forestry Commission at Wendover Woods to establish the site as a national demonstration area for box management. Visits have been made to country’s other two key box woods at Box Hill, Surrey and Boxwell, Gloucestershire. Trials of management and propagation techniques have involved over 20 volunteers from the Chiltern Society Wendover Woods group. The project officer has been training the volunteers and Forestry Commission staff and also gathering learning from practical tasks to inform the management guidance to be published by the project.

8. Nearly 15,000 box seeds have been sent to the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst, Sussex (part of Kew Gardens) as another measure to conserve the box population. Cuttings from various sites across the Chilterns are being grown at the National Trust Plant Conservation Centre in Devon, with the aim of producing at least 300 box plants to restore and re-create box woodlands in the Chilterns and elsewhere.

9. Interested Landowners: a list is being compiled of Chiltern landowners interested in planting new areas of box, e.g. Chinnor Hill (BBOWT), Whipsnade.

10. Volunteers: Over one hundred people have provided help to the project in some way, with 67 volunteers making significant contributions. Organisations such as the Forestry Commission, Royal Horticultural Society, European Box and Topiary Society, Kew, Chiltern Society, Society of Wood Engravers, Buckinghamshire County Council and National Trust have provided in-kind resources. Local and national experts including Keith Kirby (Oxford University), Beatrice Henricot (RHS), Andy McVeigh (retired county ecologist) and Chris Daunt (Society of Wood Engravers) have provided advice.

11. Surveys: volunteers are compiling reports for box woodland owners which set out the current and historic extent and condition of box on their land and describe its historic uses. Particularly detailed reports are being produced for Wendover Woods/Halton estate,
Ellesborough and Great Kimble SSSI and Shirburn Hill as case study examples.

12. **Box wood timber**; the Project Officer is working with users and buyers of boxwood to identify potential income streams and motivation to encourage sustainable management of boxwoodlands. Chris Daunt, the country’s only maker of boxwoodblocks for engraving, has offered to launch a Chilterns brand block.

4. The highlight was when the Project’s work was broadcast on [BBC Countryfile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/countryfile), aired in June 2014. John Craven interviewed the project officer and filmed on location in Wendover Woods. There are now seven project webpages covering subjects such as places to visit to see box, volunteering, shaping a future for box, education and history.

**Future aspirations**

5. Much of what is being learnt in the Chilterns about box could be applied elsewhere, potentially on a national or European scale. The legacy of the HLF project provides real opportunity to take the work further and retain the assistance of numerous enthusiastic volunteers.

6. The skills and knowledge regarding the harvesting and seasoning of boxwood have been lost from the Chilterns. The HLF project can only scrape the surface of this particular work area. There is potential to establish a study project to learn from others where the industry is still active, in France for example, and to restore the industry on a sustainable scale in the Chilterns. Numerous partners involved in the HLF project have shown an interest in pursuing this avenue.

7. The public have shown interest in events and information about the artistic uses of boxwood. The Chilterns could become a national centre for box cultural heritage. It has been suggested to the Society of Wood Engravers that a Chilterns venue could be incorporated into their programme for their annual show which moves around the country. Forestry Commission staff at Wendover Woods have also indicated that they could promote box cultural heritage at their events.

8. The project is compiling a list of owners who have shown an interest in planting new areas of box, restoring box woods and improving the condition of existing areas of box. The tree stock being grown by the HLF project cannot meet all future demands and alternative sources of stock present uncertainties around provenance and certainly little hope for plants of Chiltern provenance. The project has carried out some preliminary research through engagement with several nurseries. There is some challenging work to be done to help the nursery industry in this country and in Europe establish UK native box into their stocks.
9. The use of box in the planting schemes of the Chilterns’ historic parks and gardens is an interesting topic and has attracted the attention of horticulturalists and historians alike. Building on the HLF project, further work could be done to add to our understanding of what is a key feature of the historic landscape.

**Recommendation**

1. To note and help promote the successes of this project, the project webpages and volunteer opportunities.

2. To provide feedback on future aspirations set out in this paper to inform plans for the future and the legacy of the project.
Appendix 1

Chilterns Box Wood Project

Aims of the Project

1. To identify and record all significant surviving box woodland in the Chilterns and publicise this information.

2. To improve the management and understanding of the ecology of box woodlands in the Chilterns, drawing together professionals, site owners and volunteers.

3. To conserve and restore areas of box woodland in the Chilterns while identifying habitat requirements for extending box woodland where appropriate.

4. To enhance public understanding and enjoyment of box woodlands within the wider historic setting of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5. To raise awareness of the historical uses and cultural significance of box wood.

Resources

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant of £79,400 towards the total cost of £90,000; £6,000 will be provided by the Chilterns Conservation Board. A partner is being sought to contribute the balance over the period January 2013 – June 2015.

A project officer, Sarah Wright, has been employed on an 18 hours per week contract.

A primary role of the project officer is to recruit train and supervise a team of volunteers who will undertake most of the survey work.
Item 12  Report on Chilterns Chalk Streams Project

Author: Allen Beechey  Project Officer

Allen will give a presentation to the Board

Summary  Led by the Board, the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project is a partnership, which was set up in 1997 to protect and conserve all major chalk streams in the AONB. The Project is funded through a combination of partner contributions and income generated through project management work for external organisations. For thirteen years it has had its own Project Officer, currently Allen Beechey

Purpose of Report: To report on the Project’s achievements so far this year and objectives for the remainder of the year.

Background

1. The Project was initially set up due to persistent problem of low flows, over-abstraction and unsympathetic riparian management. The rarity of chalk streams was not widely recognised nor their special qualities.

Project Aims

2. The Project's aims are:
   
   - **Raise awareness** of the importance of chalk streams and the need to conserve them
   - **Provide advice** to landowners and managers on riverside management
   - **Practical conservation** of chalk stream habitats and associated wildlife, locate and protect rare species.
   - **Provide education** resources to schools, universities and local communities to improve understanding of the chalk streams
   - **Improving physical access** to the streams where appropriate, and providing information about their special qualities

Partners

3. The Board’s partners in this project are currently: the Environment Agency, Thames Water, Affinity Water, Bucks County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Chiltern District Council, Chiltern Society, the Wildlife Trusts and Herts Countryside Management Service
Resources

4. The Project Officer is employed by the Board; Allen Beechey has been in post since July 2005. The contract is for 4 days per week but additional Project Officer time has been funded through management of additional schemes such as the co-hosting of the Colne Catchment-based approach initiative.

5. The Project’s budget in 2014-15 is £37,000. The Board is the primary funder (£14,500) with support from the Environment Agency, the water companies, Chiltern Society and local authorities. The Project has also earned additional income from managing projects on behalf of partners.

Achievements in 2014-15 so far

6. The achievements in the current year include:

1. **Annual Forum** held at Box Moor Trust Centre. 40 delegates attended. Annual report published and added to website.

2. **7 advisory visits** on 4 rivers completed.

3. **Five habitat enhancement training workshops** were held on Chilterns chalk streams in April. 70 volunteers received training and 400m river enhanced. The workshops were funded by the Environment Agency.

4. **Restoration of the R. Wye at Desborough Park Recreation Ground**, H. Wycombe was completed in July. 420m of chalk stream was enhanced. Total cost of the scheme was £80,000. The CCSP provided support to Wycombe District Council on project design and fundraising.

5. **An enhancement scheme on the R. Ver at Riverside Way** near Colney Street was completed in April. Led by Herts Countryside Management Services and volunteers from the Ver Valley the scheme enhanced 1.5km of river. The Project provided advice and funding support.

6. **Training Courses**: Working in partnership with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trusts Living Rivers Project and the Riverfly Partnership, the Project set up riverfly hub for the Chilterns, Herts and Middlesex area. £12,000 funding was secured this year to kick start the initiative. To date four locally-based tutors have been accredited, four courses have been held and 44 volunteers trained. New riverfly groups for rivers Wye, Gade and Colne have been set up.
7. **Colne Catchment Plan**: The Project is the co-host of the catchment-based approach in the Colne catchment, working alongside co-hosts Groundwork South. £18,500 secured to support catchment work in 2014/15. A website has been developed and was launched on 6th October this year.

8. **Thames and South Chilterns catchment partnership**: The Project continues to support the as a key stakeholder. Hosted by the Foundation for Water Research, the catchment has been split into four sub groups. The Project continues to support catchment work through attendance of Wye and Hamble and Ewelme catchment subgroups.


**Work in Progress**

7. Work in progress or planned incluces:

1. **R. Bulbourne** - Working with Box Moor Trust to develop a detailed design to narrow and realign the Bulbourne at Station Moor, near Hemel Hempstead.


3. **Sarratt Meadows Project** – CCSP continues to develop this project in partnership with the Environment Agency

4. **River Chess Association** ;The CCSP has provided advice to the River Chess Association enabling them to secure grants from the Rivers & Wetlands Community Fund for two enhancement projects on the R. Chess. These projects will be carried out this autumn.

5. **Education website** – complete and launch website and promote to schools throughout Chilterns

**Recommendation**

1. To provide feedback on achievements to date and the planned programme for the remainder of the year.
**Item 13  Report on NELMS and the Farm Advice Project**

**Author:** Neil Jackson  Conservation and Landscape Officer

**Summary**  
The Government is combining former agri-environment and forestry grant schemes to create, the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS), to come into effect in Jan 2016.

The Chiltern Farm Advice Project is a 3 year partnership between the Conservation Board and the Environment Agency to improve soil and water quality of farmland.

**Purpose of Report:**  
To report developments with national agri-environment and the local farm advice initiative.

To seek suggestions from Board members on working with the farming sector.

**New Environmental Land Management Scheme - NELMS**

1. Jointly funded by the UK Government and EU, the agri-environment and forestry grant schemes are by far the most important sources of funding to support environmentally friendly land management. Following the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and due to cuts in UK government funding existing schemes are being rationalised and will be re-launched shortly as the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS). It will be delivered jointly by Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

2. The scheme is to be launched in January 2016 many details are still vague. It has resulted in a considerable hiatus as existing schemes have more or less closed.

3. CAP budgets are allocated under:
   - Pillar 1: direct support payments to farmers;
   - Pillar 2: rural development programmes which include diversification, agri-environment and woodland grant schemes, LEADER.

4. A number of member states, including the UK, have been pushing for a ‘greening’ of Pillar 1 payments – linking direct support to environmental protection through cross-compliance. Proposals to transfer up to 15% of the Pillar 1 funds to Pillar 2 have sparked heated debate between the UK government, conservation and farming organisations. The biggest change to Pillar 2 arrangements will, however, result in significantly reduced budgets.
5. The previous national target for agri-environment coverage of 70% will be cut to 35% of eligible agricultural land. As a result, NELMS will need to be far more targeted. In the summer, Natural England organised a number of workshops to discuss targeting with government’s stated priorities being biodiversity and water quality.

6. Due to greening of Pillar 1, concerns have arisen over double funding. Existing Environmental Stewardship Schemes that started after January 2012 will see payments reduced, though farmers are being given options of adding further measures to maintain scheme payments or withdraw from schemes without penalty.

7. New funds are unlikely to be available for new agri-environment schemes within the Chilterns for the next few years – until most existing agreements have expired or additional funds become available.

8. Historically much of the Board’s interaction with the farmers has been by giving advice and assistance with agri-environment schemes – there are likely to be few opportunities in this area for the foreseeable future.

9. Woodland grant schemes formerly offered by the Forestry Commission, will be subsumed within NELMS and, in future, be administered by the Rural Payment Agency (RPA). However, currently Forestry Commission work is moving along a different track to the agri-environment schemes. The existing grant scheme has closed but new grants under the NELMS banner should be available from early 2015 (grants will include woodland creation and other capital items). FC will invite landowners to apply for grants, particularly where there are plans to manage ancient and native woodland. John Morris of the Chiltern Woodland Project, continues to work closely with owners and the FC to secure favourable woodland management and utilise available grants as appropriate.

The Chilterns Farm Advice Project

10. In 2011 the Environment Agency asked the Board to deliver a 3 year Farm Advice Project to address issues of diffuse pollution and sedimentation of water bodies on farmland. The total budget is £54,000, of which the Environment Agency is providing £50,000. The Board’s contribution is £4,000 and staff time.

11. The first year (2012/13) was devoted to site visits by contractors appointed directly by the Environment Agency, to identify sources of pollution and sedimentation. Results were limited; most issues being hydromorphological, urban drainage or sewage outfall related.

12. The Board’s involvement commenced in the second year of the project with 2 well attended workshops (70 in total) for farmers, landowners and advisers held at Thrales Farm, Harpenden and Hambleden, near Henley. Agricultural advice specialists, ADAS, were contracted by the
Board to undertake farm advice visits and prepare advisory reports. As a result of the workshops and further outreach work there were visits to 11 farms covering over 1,000 hectares of farmland.

13. A competitive tendering process for the advice contract has led to the selection of Rural Development Services (UK) Ltd to deliver advice and reports for the third year.

14. It is hoped that further workshops, mail outs and the inclusion of a small grant scheme will encourage more farmers to engage with the programme. A full monitoring report will be prepared at the end of the project.

**Working with the Farming Sector**

15. In recent years, a primary focus on the Board’s efforts in working with the farming sector has been to promote the agri-environment (generally known as Environmental Stewardship) and forestry grants. Uptake and the area covered are included in the Board’s State of the Environment Report for the AONB. To date nearly all of the AONB has been eligible for grant aid and uptake has been high.

16. The changes, reduction of grant available and proposed targeting will mean a significant reduction in the area of land covered by these schemes, the number of individual landowners applying and, inevitably, the work that is undertaken. The Board is liaising closely with Natural England to advise them of potential impacts and to seek a broadening of the proposed target areas.

17. With the diminished significance in importance of the grant schemes the Board will need to re-think how it encourages environmentally friendly land management and its working relationship with the farming and forestry sectors. It is proposed to organise a working group of Board members and officers to give this consideration.

**Recommendations**

1. To note CAP reform and agri-environment scheme developments impacting Chilterns Farmers.

2. To set up a working group to investigate the promotion of environmentally friendly land management in partnership with the farming and forestry sectors.
Item 14  **HS2- Community and Environment Fund**

(Based on a paper approved by the Executive Committee -17th September 2014)

**Authors:**
Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer  
Kath Daly   Countryside Officer  
Nicola Thomas  Volunteer/consultant  

**Summary:** It is proposed that Parliament be requested to provide monies for an HS2 Community and Environment Fund to be used and allocated by local communities to projects they deem to be a local priority, in recognition of the burden of hosting national infrastructure.

Such a fund, in excess of £100 million (for the route between London and Birmingham) would be administered by a specially created local body. The priority for expenditure would be projects which benefit affected communities and enhance the local environment. It would be entirely separate from formal compensation schemes and mitigation measures included in the design, construction and operation of HS2.

Local authority leaders have written to the Prime Minster seeking assurance such a fund will be created.

**Purpose of Paper** To refine and approve the principles for the proposed scheme.

**Background**

1. It is commonly accepted that those communities affected by the burden of hosting national infrastructure should benefit in some way in addition to formal compensation schemes; i.e. for property blight.

Recent examples include:

- High Speed 1  
- Nuclear Power stations – Hinckley Point and Sizewell C  
- Fracking Drilling Sites  
- Luton and Dunstable busway  
- Wind Farms

2. A fund of £2m was created for High Speed 1 to support local community and environmental initiatives along the length of the line as it passed through Kent. Local politicians and those involved in managing the fund have advised that they should have asked for more – we should not under pitch our case.
3. Despite repeatedly raising the issue directly with HS2 Ltd, their managers, including the Chief Executive, have consistently said there was no budget provision to create such a fund for HS2. However, more recently informal comments suggest that such a fund is now being considered although it may be more a matter for Parliament or the government than HS2 Ltd.

4. The Board and local authorities in Buckinghamshire together with the National Trust and Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust have formed a group to develop a proposal.

5. As any scheme needs to be applicable to the entire route, the alliance of local authorities (known as 51M) is being asked to support a single proposal. The leaders the 51M councils wrote to the Prime Minister seeking his re-assurance that such a fund will be created – along the lines of that he, personally, announced for communities affected by drilling for fracking wells.

6. Buckinghamshire CC has been nominated the lead local authority amongst the 51M group of local authorities in developing a community benefit fund. At their instigation, leaders of all local authorities along the line have now written to the Prime Minister.

7. The Board has benefited from the assistance of Nicola Thomas, a volunteer on a career break from the National Audit office, who has undertaken the background research and helped to develop the proposal. (Appendix 1)

8. This is an important area of work as it may ultimately deliver millions of pounds to local communities and for environmental conservation and enhancement. The working group now intends to create a working budget to buy the time and advice necessary to develop the proposal. The Board is contributing staff will make a financial contribution, in the order of £2,000.

9. In view of the scale, impact and expenditure on HS2 is would seem, to many, wholly unjust if a fund of this type was not to be made available. It is essential that if, and when, it is offered it is created and managed in such a way as to maximise both the influence of local people on how it is spent and the local benefits that accrue from such investment.

10. The proposal (at least the principles on which it might be based) is close to being sufficiently well developed to present to local MPs to seek their support, which will be vital. The run up to the election could be a fruitful time to pursue this.

11. The basic principles underpinning the proposed Community and Environment Fund:

   1. A fund of a significant size is voted by Parliament in recognition of the negative effects on local communities of hosting this national infrastructure that is not compensated for in other ways - this will be additional.
2. The size of the fund should be considerable to reflect the scale and long term nature of the impacts.

3. Provision of funds should be calculated using a simple formula to reflect impact i.e. length of route.

4. It should be a national scheme but delivered locally, almost certainly via specially established local bodies or arrangements.

5. Local schemes (possibly based on counties) are all set up on a similar basis to cover the entire route.

6. The local arrangement should cover all of the Chilterns.

7. Local communities should be able to identify and allocate the funds – within nationally set parameters.

8. The funds voted by Parliament/government are increased if, and when, the frequency of services, and thus impact, is increased.

9. It should not be time limited- the provision of funds may eventually cease but the Fund should continue whilst it has funds remaining and local communities feel it is worth retaining.

12. The draft attached, initially prepared by the Board, has now been developed and adopted by a working group of officers from: Bucks CC; Chilterns DC; Aylesbury Vale DC; National Trust and the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. It should be regarded as work in progress and, in due course, will be adopted formally by each of them to cover all of Buckinghamshire. It is hoped that it can, eventually be adopted for the entire route.

Conclusions

13. The creation of a Community and Environment Fund should be an integral part of the HS2 programme and recognition of the negative impacts of hosting High Speed 2 for which no formal compensation or mitigation arrangements are in place.

14. This provision of these funds from Parliament would be consistent with similar community benefit schemes being set up for other national infrastructure projects

15. The Board should continue to play a central role in helping to develop this proposal and, should it be established, should offer its full support including direct assistance.

Recommendations

1. To refine and approve the principles for an HS2 Community and Environment Fund.
HS2 Community and Environment Fund

Draft Proposal

October 2014

The Chilterns Conservation Board and local authorities in Buckinghamshire believe that the Government/HS2 Ltd should create a Community and Environment Fund to be used for the benefit of the communities and environment affected by High Speed 2, in recognition of the burden imposed by hosting national infrastructure.

This working paper identifies some of the issues, features and characteristics which need to be considered in the creation of such a Fund. The proposal has not yet been submitted to the Conservation Board itself for consideration and approval. It should, therefore, be regarded as work in progress to facilitate joint working with partners with a view to establishing a proposal which will receive collective support of relevant bodies in Buckinghamshire, in the first instance, with a view to gaining route-wide support. Any proposal must be capable of being adopted by others and applied to the entire length of the route and will, therefore, necessitate early liaison and agreement with partners along all sections.

The LEADER Programme provides many useful lessons and comparisons on how national funds can be administered locally to meet local priorities within a nationally set operating context.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>HS2 Community and Environment Fund</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>For the avoidance of doubt, such a Fund is in addition to any formal compensation arrangements and mitigation incorporated within the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme. It is also separate from any mitigation fund in recognition of the wider adverse impacts on the economy of the area. Monies to be provided by Government and / or the developer for a Community and Environment Fund which would award grants (of up to 100%) on an ongoing basis to community and environmental projects along the HS2 route in recognition of the disturbance and inconvenience caused - the burden of hosting national infrastructure. The fund would be for purposes in addition to those in the statutory and proposed mitigation and compensatory packages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance Structure</td>
<td>There are number of options including: 1. National fund administered by government or government agency. 2. Grant Scheme operated by HS2 Ltd or successor operating</td>
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body.
3. Funding allocation direct to local authorities (with or without community based steering group).
4. Specially created independent body accountable to Parliament with local and national representation (e.g. Chilterns Conservation Board model)
5. Independent Charitable Trust (or similar)
6. Administered by Community Foundations (subject to sufficient and appropriate controls over transparency, representation, accountability, similarity along the route, etc.)

The Chilterns Conservation Board’s preference is for a locally controlled (there may be some national representation) independent body based on local authority boundaries, probably county. Identical bodies would be established along the entire length of the HS2 route.

The operating structure of the fund must be transparent, representative, accountable, controlled and replicable along the route.

n.b. The possibility of a single entity (HS2 Fund) which disburses national funds to specially created local grant awarding panels/bodies with delegated authority, should be given full consideration; this may prove more appealing to Government.

What might a local HS2 Trust Fund look like?
1. An independent charitable trust with trustees appointed by public bodies including local communities. There may be value in appointing national representatives.

2. It would cover a defined geographical corridor, usually, but not exclusively, within a few kms of the line, within an area with local resonance - probably a county. Counties with a small section can be amalgamated e.g. Bucks and Oxon.

3. It receives an allocation of funds which covers its full operating costs (limited to a fixed percentage).

4. It decides how to disburse funds subject to nationally set parameters; funding priorities would be community-led and locally-controlled, with nationally-agreed criteria.

5. The fund would cover all administrative and support costs including post-project monitoring.

6. There could be a host body to provide the administrative and secretarial support e.g. a local authority.
7. The Trust can offer grants of up to 100% and would identify local priorities including scope to exercise discretion to support applications from outside an agreed core area.

**Funds**

1. A fund of several hundred million pounds.

2. To be provided entirely by Government/Parliament/HS2 Ltd.

3. To meet in full all operating costs - possibly with fixed upper percentage.

4. To be available following Third Reading of the Hybrid Bill.

5. It is proposed that a simple formula be devised based on the length of route.

6. For Buckinghamshire this could be £1 million per kilometre, potentially reduced to £500,000 where the route is in a tunnel.

7. To be increased when the number of trains per hour is increased above initial operating levels.

8. There should be no requirement to justify the scale of the Fund based on identified and valued impacts. This has not been a requirement of similar funds.

9. All payments to be adjusted for inflation.

10. The accounts of the Trust Fund would be subject to normal public accounting procedures and a nominated local authority would be appointed as the Internal Auditor.

**Timing**

1. The fund should be a long term scheme.

2. Monies to be made available and front-loaded from the very start of construction and on an ongoing basis throughout operation of HS2. This recognises both the initial and ongoing pattern of disruption to communities and the environment caused by HS2.

3. In addition to the main funding amount, an annual amount of funding will be provided linked to operating levels on the line. So funds are increased as and when frequency of services is increased. This pattern of funding matches the likely nature and scale of burden placed on local communities and the environment.

4. The fund should be of a sufficient size that any annual grants offered can be met mostly from earnings with some use of the capital plus any interest accrued. This would help to insulate the
5. Every effort should be made to avoid restricting grant awards on a financial year basis as this is rarely helpful for community or environmental based projects. There must be flexibility to allow projects to operate over financial years.

### Geographical scope

Priority for funding would be given to projects meeting agreed criteria in the area of greatest harm / delivering the greatest benefit. These are more likely to be located within a few kms of the route, although not exclusively (for example some environmental projects might operate at the habitat or landscape scale). Fund could operate at county-sized scale.

### Type of projects

1. The fund is recognition of the negative effects on communities and environment, in the widest sense, that arise from hosting national infrastructure. Most of the direct impacts on property/ the route should be identified and included in the formal mitigation and compensation schemes and incorporated in the construction and operation of HS2. This fund is recognition of the negative effects not covered by these other provisions.

2. Some of the impacts will not be known for some time and it should be at the discretion of the local grant awarding body to decide which proposals it supports, subject to nationally agreed parameters put in place from the outset.

3. It would, therefore, be unwise to be overly prescriptive to state the type of project which would be supported.

4. The fund would support projects that would enhance the quality of life of local communities and the quality of and enjoyment of the natural and historic environment. Possible include:
   
i) Projects to provide communities with a positive lasting legacy and in recognition of real social costs. For example (and where not more appropriately mitigated/compensated as part of the scheme) outdoor amenities, community events, village halls, open spaces, heritage, etc.

   ii) Enhancement to the character, quality and setting of cultural and natural heritage. For example (and where not more appropriately mitigated/compensated as part of the scheme) scheduled monuments, significant earthworks, ancient woodland, parks and gardens, hedgerows, historic landscapes, archaeological remains, severance or disruption of landscape elements.
iii) Projects to enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the wider area through which the railway passes.

iv) Projects to improve public accessibility, enjoyment and interpretation of the countryside through which the railway passes.

v) The fund would not provide grants to make up for lost business revenues or profitability but it some of the initiatives it supports may enhance the business environment e.g. in the tourism and leisure sector.
Item 15  **Report on Chilterns LEADER Programme 2015-2020**

**Author:** Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

**Summary:** The Chilterns LEADER programme will restart in January 2015 for 5 years. It is likely to have a UK govt/EU grant in the order of £1.7-£2.0 million, over 85% of which will be distributed as grants of up to £50,000 to support rural development projects. The geographic definition of the Chilterns has changed since the last programme. The Board has always been represented on the Local Action Group and should continue its involvement with the new programme.

**Purpose of Paper:** For information; to ensure the Board is represented on the new Local Action Group: to help promote awareness of the new programme.

**Background**

1. The LEADER Programme is jointly funded by the UK government and European Union to support rural economic development. There was a LEADER programme covering the Chilterns for the period 2008-2013 during which time it provided grant totalling over £1.5 million.

2. The Conservation Board was closely involved in the bidding process, preparing the strategy and by serving on the Local Action Group (Chief Officer and chairman).

3. The programme itself was managed by Nick Phillips who was employed by NGage Solutions Ltd which acted as the host and administrators of the local programme.

4. There has been a hiatus during 2014 due to a delay in the re-negotiation of the Common Agricultural Policy. During this time interim funding was provided by DEFRA which enabled Nick Philips to continue in post to help prepare, along with Jim Sims of Bucks Business First, the bidding documents and strategy for the next programme. Whilst final confirmation is not expected until November 2014, it is high likely there will be a Chilterns LEADER programme with funding of between £1.7m - £2.0m.

5. Due to change is criteria used to determine the eligible area the geography of the Chilterns LEADER programme has changed (Map attached). As some the area is now defined as urban (entirely due to population density) parts of area previously area are no longer. This has been balanced by some new areas being included- as this is based partly on parish boundaries there are some anomalies whereby part of the Vale of Aylesbury now become part of the Chilterns programme area.
6. The Local Development Strategy is being distributed by e-mail only. It shows that for the next programme the priorities will be to support:

- Productivity of farming
- Small and Medium sized enterprises
- Farm diversification
- Rural tourism
- Culture and Heritage Activity
- Provision of rural services
- Productivity of forestry.

7. High weighting will be given to those projects which create employment and add economic value. The target is to create 80 fte new jobs.

**Local Action Group (LAG)**

8. There will be a Local Action Group of 15 people representing a range of sectors and covering the geography of the Chilterns. (Page 8 of the Local Development Strategy). There will be a bias in favour of those sectors to be given priority. The Chief Officer has served on the LAG before and is named to do so again. Whilst no organisations are offered representation, as all serve as individuals, it would be desirable if a member of the Board or Chief Officer could continue as a member of the Chilterns LAG. Mike Fox, who previously served whilst chairman of the Board, is expected to continue but representing the voluntary sector in his capacity as member of the Chiltern Society.

**Applications for Grant-aid**

9. In anticipation of confirmation of the programme, expressions of interest (EoI) are already being accepted. As many applications take several months to be made ready for consideration there is much benefit to both applicants and the LAG if early contact is made with the Programme Manager who can advise on the proposal and the application process.

10. The Board has been an applicant for grant in the past; for the Chilterns Cycle Way and Tourism Business Network.

**Recommendation**

1. A member of the Board with relevant expertise or Chief Officer, is put forward as a member of the Local Action Group in place of the retiring Chief Officer.