1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Changes to Board Membership
7. Statement of Accounts for 2012-13
8. Report from the Executive Committee
9. Report from the Planning Committee
11. Report on Small Grants Scheme
12. Report on High Speed 2
   - incl. HS2 Environmental statement
15. Presentation on Hillforts
16. Dates of Future Meetings
17. Re-introduction of the Pine Marten
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27TH MARCH 2013 AT RESTORE HOPE DAIRY,
LATIMER HP5 1TU AT 10.00AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.50 PM.

PRESENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Appointing Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Marion Mustoe</td>
<td>Central Bedfordshire Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr David Nimmo-Smith</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Brian Norman</td>
<td>Three Rivers District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Richard Pushman</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Ian Reay</td>
<td>Dacorum Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Chris Richards</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Jeremy Ryman</td>
<td>Chiltern District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Dave Taylor</td>
<td>Luton Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Alan Walters</td>
<td>South Buckinghamshire District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointed by the Secretary of State</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Fox (Chairman)</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Simon Mortimer</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Payne</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Tuffs</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Willson</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected by Parish Councils</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Mary Goldsmith</td>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr John Griffin</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Margaret Jarrett</td>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Shirley Judges</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Barbara Wallis</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Julia Wells</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deirdre Hansen</td>
<td>Clerk to the Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Rodrick</td>
<td>CCB Chief Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Smith</td>
<td>CCB Finance Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin White</td>
<td>CCB Planning Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 member of the public was present: Alison Doggett

12/13.52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Anna Babcock, Cllr. David Barnard, Cllr. Roger Emmett, Bettina Kirkham and Cllr. Bill Storey.

12/13.53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were made.

12/13.54. Minutes of the previous meeting
The minutes of the meeting held 24th January 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

12/13.55. Matters Arising
There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

12/13.56. Public Question time
The Chairman welcomed Alison Doggett, whose appointment to the Board will commence 1st April 2013.

12/13.57. 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 5th March 2013 the Executive Committee:
1. Received and approved a finance report for the period April-Jan 2013.
2. Approved discretions to the Pension Policies.
4. Discussed the Medium Term Financial Plan.
5. Reviewed and approved the Treasury Management Strategy.
6. Received and discussed the review of Members’ allowances.
7. Reviewed and approved the Risk Register.
8. Discussed the report on High Speed 2.

1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.

12/13.58 Report from the Planning Committee.

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 February 2013 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:
1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Feedback from events
4. Strategic Growth Plans and LEPs
5. Development Plan Responses
6. Planning applications update.

Some discussion took place on the matters reported.
The Planning Officer also reported that he had made two applications to Scottish and Southern Electricity plc for the undergrounding of electrical cabling. The application for undergrounding at Cobstone Mill, above Turville, had been successful.

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


The Finance Officer presented the draft budget 2013-14 as approved by the Executive Committee for consideration and adoption by the board.

1. Core expenditure of £539,310 will be covered for 80% by the Defra grant, the balance coming from local authorities, town and parish councils and a proportion of the Board’s earned income (£3,107).
2. Ongoing activity of £38,860 is covered by the balance of earned income £31,428 and earmarked reserves.
3. Project activity of £208,715 will mainly be met by various HLF and other grant funds (£205,362), the balance of the Defra grant, Chalk Streams project externally generated funds and earmarked reserves.
4. Small Grants Fund of £20,000 is proposed to be funded from earmarked and restricted reserves.

The total impact on the reserves is a reduction of £30,785.
   a. £7,432 for ongoing activity
   b. £3,353 for projects
   c. £20,000 for a small grants fund.

10.30 Richard Pushman joined the meeting.

The draft budget subject to decisions to be made on members allowances was discussed and the members posed questions to the Finance Officer.

1. The Board CONSIDERED and ADOPTED the Draft Budget for 2013-14.

12/13.60. Review of Members Allowances:

The Chief Officer advised the Board that the Executive Committee had considered the Review Panel’s Report on members’ allowances and accepted several of the recommendations, but not all. The financial implications of the review have not yet been incorporated in the draft budget for 2013-14. The report was circulated with the agenda.

The Executive Committee had considered all the Panel’s recommendations, but it is not recommending that the Board accept all the panel’s recommendations. It advised the Board to make a number of amendments.
The Review Panel made 9 recommendations:

1. There should be no link between attendance rates and payment of allowances. Accepted
2. Allowance rates for both the Executive Committee and Planning Committee remain on a par. Accepted
3. The Chairman of the Board’s special responsibility allowance should cover the role of being a member of the Executive Committee, but an additional special responsibility payment should be offered if they also chair the Executive Committee. Accepted
4. There should not be a link between the annual cost of living award given to staff and the allowances paid to Board members. The Committee did not accept this recommendation and advised that the default arrangement should be that the link is retained.
5. The Board should decide annually whether, and by how much, to adjust allowances. Accepted in the context of the amendment to Recommendation 4. The starting point for such consideration is the cost of living award offered to staff.
6. The Board foregoes an increase in all allowances in 2013-14. The Committee did not accept this recommendation.
7. The Board considers a reduction of £30 to the basic Board members allowances for the full Board, Executive and Planning Committee in 2013-14. The Committee did not accept this recommendation.
8. Consideration should be given to capping the total costs of the Board members allowance scheme as a maximum percentage of the Board’s budget. The Committee accepted this recommendation, but further work is needed to identify the baseline for a cap.
9. The Board commits to undertaking a full review of the Allowances Scheme every 5 years, but decides annually whether this is an appropriate cycle. Accepted.

Additional general recommendations were:

1. All members to be invited to confirm before the beginning of the financial year whether they intend to take up part, all or none of their entitlement to allowances. This will assist budget planning.
2. Identifying ways of assessing collective performance of the Board.

The Board ACCEPTED the proposed amendments, as suggested by the Review Panel and amended by the Executive Committee, to be made to the Members’ Allowance Scheme in time to be incorporated in the budget for 2013-14 and implementation at the AGM in June.

The Board ACCEPTED the additional recommendations on the notification of intent to claim allowances and possible means for improvement of collective performance of Board members.

12/13.61. Small Grants Scheme
The Chief Officer presented a short slide presentation of projects funded by the Sustainable Development Fund since 2005/06. He outlined a proposal to create a Small Grants Fund from reserves which would offer grants of up to £2,000.

1. The Sustainable Development Fund has been funded by grant aid provided by Natural England specifically for this purpose. Following the transfer of funding provision from Natural England to Defra, the sum the Board has chosen to allocate to the SDF was reduced to £40,000 and in 2012-13 to £30,000.

2. The Defra grant is no longer sufficient to provide support for a SDF. It was proposed that a sum of £20,000 was allocated from the Development reserve for a small grant scheme. It was proposed to consider annually whether the scheme would be affordable.

3. Small grants of £500-£1,000 would be the norm, but exceptionally larger grants may be considered.

4. It was proposed that a new Small Grants Panel be formed of members to replace the formally constituted SDF panel. Due to the size of the fund the panel would not need to meet on the same basis as the SDF to administer the fund.

5. Administration costs including promotion, site visits and monitoring should cost no more than a few hundred pounds. Panel members would not be entitled to an allowance, but could claim travel expenses.

6. The grant application would be managed by the Countryside Officer with the Panel meeting once or twice a year to provide oversight. The panel would receive the application by email. A quick turnaround is planned.

7. The application process and forms would be similar to that currently in use.

1. The Board AGREED to create a Small Grants Scheme to replace the Sustainable Development Fund with effect from 1st April 2013.

2. The Board DECIDED to allocate an initial sum of £20,000 from the Development Reserve to create the SGS.

3. The Board AGREED to create a grants panel of Board members.

4. The Board AGREED that panel members would not receive an allowance, but would be eligible to claim travel and subsistence expenses.

5. The Board AGREED that the Countryside Officer is delegated with authority to approve grants of up to £500.


The Chief Officer presented the Board with the draft business plan and work plan for 2013-14. He outlined that the priority with diminishing resources, is to maintain the scale and breadth of the current work programme with a number of new initiatives when external funding can be secured.
Several important grants schemes have been closed or are suspended. The discretionary spending by Natural England and the Forestry Commission has virtually disappeared; several key grant schemes based on EU funds are ending and following the unusual weather conditions landowners and farmers are not undertaking significant environmental work. The long running decline in availability of funds and staff from local authorities is now acute. In this challenging operating environment the Board is well placed to making a little go a long way and promoting voluntary activity.

The Board does have funds to continue nearly the entire existing work programme and there is scope to develop some new projects.

1. The Board APPROVED the business plan including the work programme.

12/13.63 Effectiveness of the System of Internal control.

The Finance Officer presented a review of the system of internal control for the Board to consider. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 requires this review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk, financial control systems and the provision of an effective internal audit system, to be approved by the full Board annually.

The Executive Committee had reviewed, on 5th March 2013; the risks faced by the Board and had concluded that the risks faced by the Board are controlled effectively. A review of the Board’s insurance arrangements conducted in 2012 has ensured that the risks are covered appropriately and value for money is secured.

1. The Board REVIEWED and APPROVED the arrangements in place to ensure an effective system of internal control, including the management of risk.

12/13.64 Report on HS2

The Chief Officer advised members of recent HS2 developments and anticipated activity in the next few months.

Most recent activity includes:

1. Judicial Reviews
2. Longer tunnels.
3. Bucks Blueprint
7. Communication with the Secretary of State.

A full report of most the activities and recommendations regarding HS2 were presented to and approved by the Executive Committee on 5th March 2013.

Ad 1.

The rulings on the Judicial Reviews were announced 15th March 2013. The judge had ruled that the consultation on compensation was unfair and illegal and must be re-run. The Government has decided not to appeal. The judge had ruled that neither the Strategic Assessment or Habitat Regulations applied, but leave to appeal has been granted. The other JR's had failed, however it is believed that at least two further appeals are being lodged. The timetable has slipped and it is no longer believed that Royal Assent will be achieved during this parliament.

The next major element of work will be the assessment of the Draft Environmental Statement which is expected in May 2013. It will be imperative that the Board scrutinises all relevant parts closely. It was proposed to engage additional expertise to help with the process as well as setting up a special sub group of the Board to prepare its response.

It was proposed that due to the ineffectiveness of the community forum process and HS2 Ltd apparent unwillingness to engage with the Board, that the Board write to the Secretary of State for Transport to express its concerns and support the case for an extended tunnel. A meeting should also be sought with the Secretary of State or the Minister of State, who is taking the lead on HS2.

The Board discussed the issues, as well as “the evaluation of non-markets effects” and offered the Chief Officer additional assistance with this important unprecedented work that will need to be carried out. The Chief Officer thanked the members for their support and would refer back to the Board as the work progressed.

1. The Board APPROVED the engagement of technical expertise to assess the draft Environmental Statement at a cost not exceeding £5,000, initially and offered the Chief Officer assistance with this additional work load.

2. The Board AGREED to set up a sub group of the Board to oversee the Board’s response to the Environment Statement.

3. The Board AGREED to write to the Secretary of State expressing concern over the effectiveness of the process of engagement conducted by HS 2 Ltd and to seek a meeting.


The Planning Officer reported that the review of the AONB Management Plan is ongoing. Various discussions have taken place; work has started on a work plan and the SEA scoping report. Wide ranging discussions have taken place and the outcome of these has led to the conclusion that the nature and the scale of the likely amendments is such that it would be expedient to publish a revised Management Plan rather than a report on the review
specifying any amendments as required under the CRoW Act 2000, s89(10)(c). The consultation programme has been developed. A small Members sub group is being set up and a time table has been produced. Members were updated on the progress.

1. The Board NOTED the current position in connection with the AONB Management Plan Review.

2. The Board APPROVED the publication of a revised Management Plan rather than a report on the review specifying any amendments.

3. The Board APPROVED the formation of a Management Plan Review Member sub group and identified participants for this.

The Chief Officer provided the members with an update on the works programme 2012-13. All detail had been provided with the agenda.

12/13.67. AOB:
There was no other business.

12/13.68. Date of next meeting:
Monday 24th June 2013 at Kempster Hall, Christchurch Centre, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AG.


The meeting closed 12.50

The Chairman………………………………………. Date……………….
Item 6  Changes to Board Membership

Author: Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary: There have been a number of changes to the membership of the Board since the last meeting (March 2013). Some members did not seek re-election at the county council elections, but their replacements have not yet been appointed.

Purpose of Report: For information

Background

1. Since the last meeting on March 23rd there have been a number of changes to the membership of the Board. They are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Appointing Body</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Doggett</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>To fill vacancy created by Kevin Mayne’s resignation in February 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Bill Storey</td>
<td>Hertfordshire CC</td>
<td>Bill did not seek re-election as a county councillor at the election in May. Herts CC have not yet made their appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Richard Pushman</td>
<td>Bucks CC</td>
<td>Richard did not seek re-election as a county councillor at the election in May. Bucks CC have not yet made their appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Anna Badcock</td>
<td>South Oxfordshire CC</td>
<td>Anna has been replaced by Cllr Lynn Lloyd (Chinnor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. For information, three members of the Board appointed by the Secretary of State will complete their terms on 31st March 2014. DEFRA will begin the recruitment process for their replacements in September 2013. The retiring members are:

- Mike Fox
- Bettina Kirkham
- John Willson

Recommendation

1. To note recent and programme changes to Board membership.
Item 7  Statement of Accounts 2011-12

Author: Chris Smith  Finance Officer

Summary: The year end position shows an overall net deficit from all activity of £57,046.

£4,922 has been applied to the shortfall on Sustainable Development Fund from the Budget Equalisation Reserve.

£43,447 has been added to the Development Reserve, representing the surplus on core activity. This surplus was largely due to higher than anticipated income.

Other reserves are reduced by a net £95,571.

The Executive Committee has approved an interim re-structuring of reserves pending a full review of reserve holdings later in the year.

Purpose of Report: To present the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2012-13.

Final results

1. The formal Statement of Accounts and associated Annual Audit Return are attached.

2. The figures show that an overall net deficit of expenditure over income of £57,046 was recorded, funded by withdrawals from earmarked and restricted reserves.

3. At its meeting in May the Executive Committee considered and approved a proposal to consolidate a number of separate reserves and transfer them to the Development Reserve, resulting in the following remaining reserves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>£135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Equalisation</td>
<td>£138,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>£241,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk Streams Project</td>
<td>£ 19,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Red Kites</td>
<td>£   6,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£540,716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The Pensions Liability has reduced by £59,000 to £577,000. This represents the liability to the Board if every employee had retired on 31 March 2013 and collected their pension entitlements.

5. The reduction reflects the impact of the valuation methodology and the derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 17.

6. It is expected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will announce the results of a Comprehensive Spending Review later this month. In the light of the outcome the Executive Committee will examine a new Medium Terms Financial Plan and at the same time consider whether any further changes should be made to the reserves structure.

**Recommendation**

Statement of Accounts 2012-13

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<th>Page No</th>
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<td>2 Consolidated Revenue Account</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Balance Sheet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Statement of Movement in Reserves</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

This Statement of Accounts details the Board’s activities for the period 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2012 to 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2012, and has been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as modified by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 and 2011.


The Board operates to a budget based on the agreed grant aid from the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and local authorities, including parish and town councils. Additionally, the Board either takes the lead role or actively participates in a range of partnership schemes to secure external funding for additional project work. Income is also raised through sales of merchandise, donations and consultancy fees.

The Statements included in these accounts are:

\textbf{Income and Expenditure Account (pages 3-4)}

This shows the costs of providing services across the various activities and projects that the Board has supported during the year and how these projects were supported from grants and income. Gross revenue expenditure for the year was £750,098, whilst income was £693,052. Taken together, these items show a net deficit for the year of £57,046. Net withdrawals of £57,046 were made from restricted and earmarked reserves.

\textbf{Statement of Balances (page 5)}

This details the Board’s financial position as at 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2013 listing the value of assets and liabilities.

\textbf{Statement of Movements in Reserves (page 6)}

This sets out the movements during the year for the reserves held by the Board, including a re-structure of earmarked reserves approved during the year.
## CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD

### CONSOLIDATED REVENUE ACCOUNT 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: Core</td>
<td>437,111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: SDF</td>
<td>20,279</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: Chalk Streams</td>
<td>17,800</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>105,291</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town and Parish Councils</td>
<td>3,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merchandise sales</td>
<td>3,753</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other earned income</td>
<td>46,126</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalk Streams external income - core</td>
<td>17,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalk Streams external income - projects</td>
<td>8,990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commons Project external income</td>
<td>10,172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism Network</td>
<td>18,313</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box Woods Project</td>
<td>3,874</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>693,052</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion and Awareness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>95,338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>16,539</td>
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<tr>
<td>Countryside Festival</td>
<td>5,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>1,048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Forum</td>
<td>772</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalk and Trees</td>
<td>11,820</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>833</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Close to Nature</td>
<td>3,345</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying Woodlands</td>
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<td>Environmental Tourism</td>
<td>237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic Environment</td>
<td>1,011</td>
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<tr>
<td>People and Places Booklet</td>
<td>5,005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>145,482</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Countryside Management</strong></td>
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<td>Office costs</td>
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<td>Management support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commons</td>
<td>4,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalk Grassland Group</td>
<td>995</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Management Survey</td>
<td>3,578</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Environment Report</td>
<td>1,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for Trees and Woods Management</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<td>Small Works</td>
<td>4,852</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Courses</td>
<td>995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving the Chilterns Chalk Streams - core</td>
<td>37,196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving the Chilterns Chalk Streams - projects</td>
<td>16,010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development Fund</td>
<td>25,201</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Woodland Survey</td>
<td>19,281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons Project</td>
<td>77,446</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Network</td>
<td>22,341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Woods Project</td>
<td>3,874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>308,154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Development</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>62,610</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>16,539</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Committee</td>
<td>502</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Conference</td>
<td>722</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Guidance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Design Awards</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance / Training</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed 2</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>84,133</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation and Access</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>27,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>11,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Publications</td>
<td>2,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Conference</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access for all Improvements</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling in the Chilterns</td>
<td>3,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,339</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Services</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>127,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Allowances and costs</td>
<td>36,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Landscapes Coordinator</td>
<td>2,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise purchases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>750,098</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficit for Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Restricted Reserves</td>
<td>- 57,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Earmarked Reserves</td>
<td>- 9,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO General Reserve</td>
<td>- 48,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCB Board Meeting 24th June 2013
## CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD
### STATEMENT OF BALANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As at 31st March 2012</th>
<th>As at 31 March 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>£</strong></td>
<td><strong>£</strong></td>
<td><strong>£</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocks in hand</td>
<td>3,024</td>
<td>2,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors &amp; accrued income</td>
<td>37,779</td>
<td>60,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank &amp; cash</td>
<td>657,852</td>
<td>690,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>698,655</td>
<td>753,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors and receipts in advance</td>
<td>(100,893)</td>
<td>(212,616)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LESSE CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>597,762</td>
<td>540,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LONG TERM LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td>(636,000)</td>
<td>(577,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined benefits Pension Scheme</td>
<td>(577,000)</td>
<td>(577,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS LESS TOTAL LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td>(38,238)</td>
<td>(36,284)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REPRESENTED BY:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions Reserve</td>
<td>(636,000)</td>
<td>(577,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves - Restricted</td>
<td>22,977</td>
<td>26,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves - Earmarked</td>
<td>439,785</td>
<td>379,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves - General</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(38,238)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(36,284)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD

### STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT IN RESERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends of Red Kites</th>
<th>Chalk Streams</th>
<th>Countryside Festival</th>
<th>Getting Close to Nature</th>
<th>Woodland Research</th>
<th>High Speed 2 Commons</th>
<th>Chilterns Cycleway</th>
<th>Access Projects</th>
<th>Development Reserve</th>
<th>Budget Equalisation</th>
<th>General Reserve</th>
<th>Pensions Reserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As at 1st April 2012</td>
<td>7,079</td>
<td>65,283</td>
<td>1,758</td>
<td>15,898</td>
<td>29,345</td>
<td>6,789</td>
<td>30,253</td>
<td>5,025</td>
<td>8,691</td>
<td>149,374</td>
<td>143,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements in the year</td>
<td>(450)</td>
<td>(45,586)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(19,282)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(30,253)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43,447</td>
<td>(4,922)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve re-structure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(1,758)</td>
<td>(15,898)</td>
<td>(10,063)</td>
<td>(6,789)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(5,025)</td>
<td>(8,691)</td>
<td>48,224</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As at 31st March 2013</td>
<td>6,629</td>
<td>19,697</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>241,045</td>
<td>138,345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Bodies in England
Annual return for the year ended
31 March 2013

Small relevant bodies in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an annual return in accordance with proper practices summarising their annual activities at the end of each financial year.

The annual return on pages 2 to 5 is made up of four sections:
- **Sections 1 and 2** are completed by the person nominated by the body.
- **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission.
- **Section 4** is completed by the body's internal audit provider.

Each body must approve this annual return no later than 30 June 2013.

Completing your annual return
Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Complete all sections highlighted in red. Do **not** leave any red box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional external audit work and may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2013, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to your external auditor by the due date.

Your auditor will identify and ask for any additional documents needed for audit. Therefore, unless requested, do **not** send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Audited and certified annual returns will be returned to the body for publication or public display of sections 1, 2 and 3. You must publish or display the audited annual return by 30 September 2013.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor or the Audit Commission directly for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return is available in the Practitioners' Guides for either local councils or internal drainage boards. These publications may be downloaded from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) or Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) websites (www.nalc.gov.uk or www.slcc.co.uk) or from the members area of the Association of Drainage Authorities website (www.ada.org.uk).
# Section 1 – Accounting statements 2012/13 for: Chilterns Conservation Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending</th>
<th>Notes and guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 March 2012</td>
<td>31 March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Balances brought forward</td>
<td>£522,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> (+) Income from local taxation and/or levy</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> (+) Total other receipts</td>
<td>£817,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> (-) Staff costs</td>
<td>£414,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> (-) Loan interest/capital repayments</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> (-) All other payments</td>
<td>£327,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> (=) Balances carried forward</td>
<td>£597,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> Total cash and short term investments</td>
<td>£657,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Total fixed assets plus other long term investments and assets</td>
<td>£77,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> Total borrowings</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2013 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of the body and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer: [Signature]

Date: 24/06/2013

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the body on: 24/06/2013

and recorded as minute reference: 13/07/2013

Signed by Chair of meeting approving these accounting statements: [Signature]

Date: 24/06/2013
Section 2 – Annual governance statement 2012/13

We acknowledge as the members of Chiltems Conservation Board our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2013, that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreed –</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No*</th>
<th>‘Yes’ means that the body:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>We taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>during the year has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the body’s accounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the body and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the body’s accounting records and control systems.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the body and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This annual governance statement is approved by the body and recorded as minute reference [13/14.7]
dated 24/06/2013

Signed by:

Chair [SIGNATURE REQUIRED]
dated 24/06/2013

Signed by:

Clerk [SIGNATURE REQUIRED]
dated 24/06/2013

*Note: Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each ‘No’ response. Describe how the body will address the weaknesses identified.
Item 8  Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary: At its meeting on 23rd May 2013 the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved a report on the provisional financial outturn for 2012-13.
2. Agreed a re-categorisation of the Board’s reserves.
3. Received a report on the Internal Auditor’s Report.
4. Approved a Cycle to Work Scheme.
5. Approved a request for continuing recognition of the AONB by the International Union for the conservation of Nature (IUCN).
6. Discussed the report on High Speed 2

Purpose of Report  For information.

Finance Report


2. Subject to any final adjustments core expenditure totalled £546,389, £11,876 or 2% below the original estimate for the year. Core income was £25,164 or 4.4% above the original estimate at £596,274.

3. The Executive approved the rationalisation of the number of earmarked reserves. Those relating to Getting Close to Nature: Countryside Festival: Woodland: HS2, Commons: Chilterns Cycleway and Access Issues will be transferred to the Development Reserve. This will leave a General Reserve, Budget Equalisation Reserve, Development Reserve and the Red Kites restricted Reserve.

4. These changes will result in reserve levels as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Reserve</td>
<td>£135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Equalisation Reserve</td>
<td>£137,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Reserve</td>
<td>£245,027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chalk Streams Reserve  £  19,697  
Red Kites Reserve  £  6,629  
Total  £543,673

**Internal Auditor’s Report**

5. The Board’s internal auditor, the Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service, have completed their annual review and submitted their report.

6. The auditor conducted a high level review of important and current risks and concluded that **Substantial Assurance** on effective management has been provided.

7. Two recommendations have been made, both of which have been accepted. One was very minor and the other was to conduct a test of the Business Continuity Plan.

**Cycle to Work Scheme**

8. In order to help employers and employees promote cycling to work the Government introduced a tax efficient (Salary Sacrifice) scheme to help buy bikes and safety equipment. It is cost neutral for the employer and beneficial to the employee. The Committee approved the adoption of the scheme.

9. The Board’s Personnel Policies now include the provision of the scheme for eligible employees.

**International Union for the Conservation of Nature**

10. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN - http://www.iucn.org/) provides international recognition for the AONB designation, which it places in its Category V - Protected Landscapes and Seascapes. The IUCN is seeking renewed commitment to nature conservation in these areas and is requesting evidence of that commitment. The National Association for AONBs has prepared and had accepted, a Statement of Compliance for all AONBs but this needs to be supported by an individual statement from each AONB.

11. The Executive Committee approved the submission of the request and supporting information which has now been forwarded by the National Association for AONBs together with similar requests from every AONB in England and Wales.

**Recommendation**

1. To note the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.
Item 9  Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 9th May. The following items were discussed:
1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Forthcoming events
4. Planning Policy Guidance
5. Planning applications update
7. Development Plans responses

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee.

High Speed 2 update

1. The Committee was informed about: the suspension of Community Forum meetings; the likely publication of the Draft Environmental Statement; the lack of engagement by HS2 Ltd and the lack of positive results emanating from discussions; the holding of a local authority summit in March to discuss legal proceedings leading up to the Hybrid Bill; the publication of “Buckinghamshire’s Blueprint for Mitigating HS2”; the holding of a second noise forum; the latest wider Chilterns HS2 group meeting and ongoing work on the production of a document that will deal with the non-market effects of the construction of HS2, and the results of the various Judicial Reviews.

AONB Management Plan Review

2. The Committee was informed that the Management Plan’s draft SEA Scoping report was published for comment (from 8th May to 19th June 2013) alongside the draft Project Plan. A timetable for production of the draft Plan was also provided. The consultation documents are available on the Board’s web site. Members were encouraged to feedback any comments and were invited to complete the recently launched Survey Monkey survey. The Committee was informed that preparation of the draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement is ongoing and will continue with involvement of the sub group of the Board with the drafting of the documents being complete by August 2013.

Forthcoming events

3. The Committee was informed about arrangements for the Planning Forum which took place on 21st May (the findings from the first year of the NPPF were the key issues discussed). The Committee agreed that its annual Tour should visit the area to the south of the A505 and east
of Luton to gain some familiarity with the landscape in this area. The Committee agreed that the next AONB Planning Conference should take place on Wednesday 9th October 2013 and that issues around the NPPF should be discussed.

Planning Policy Guidance

4. The Committee noted previous work done on a series of planning policies and approved the production of a series of topic based statements similar to the position statement previously produced in connection with developments affecting the setting of the AONB. It was agreed that the first statement (on renewable energy) would be prepared in draft for the next Planning Committee, with a programme in place for producing drafts of subsequent topics for future meetings.

Planning applications update

5. The Committee were 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 2012/13 the number of cases decided in line with the Board’s comments had risen to 47% (from 40% previously) and that information would be collated on this issue by a student and reported to a later meeting.

Natural England Protocol

6. The Committee was informed that the current protocol with Natural England for planning matters in the AONB is out of date and needs to be refreshed following discussion with Natural England. It was noted that concerns have been expressed nationally about the wording of Natural England’s standard letter for responses on planning applications as this could potentially undermine the local AONB response. It was agreed that changes should be sought (at both local and national levels) and concerns should be addressed with Natural England. Natural England now also has a charging regime principally for pre-application planning advice. The Committee agreed that the Board would not wish Natural England to comment on major development proposals in the Chilterns AONB without seeking the Board’s advice first and that this should be addressed in any revised protocol.

Development Plans responses

Central Bedfordshire Council’s Renewable Energy Guidance Note 1 Wind Energy

7. The Board welcomed the prominence given to the sensitivity and lack of capacity for wind energy development within the AONB and its setting.

DCLG’s Review of Planning Practice Guidance
8. The Board considered that the right planning practice guidance should be in place to support effective implementation of the NPPF. The Board agreed that a reduced set of essential planning practice guidance should be readily available, up to date and free to access. The Board suggested retention of some rural and natural environment elements of current guidance that should be retained. The Board sought involvement in the production of any future guidance, particularly that applicable to the rural and natural environment and suggested that new guidance should be prepared, particularly in connection with sustainable landscape management and the S85 Duty from the CRoW Act 2000 and the assessment of the impacts of developments within the settings of protected landscapes.

Central Bedfordshire Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Plan long list of sites

9. The Board made comments about the likely implications of identifying two sites at Barton-le-Clay (just outside the AONB) and Watling Street (south of Dunstable inside the AONB) and the need to have regard to the purpose of the AONB. The need for thorough landscape and visual impact assessments was also stressed.

Central Bedfordshire Council’s Development Strategy pre-submission document

10. The Board made specific and detailed comments about the need to make full references to the AONB as part of visions and objectives and to the purpose of the AONB as part of policies. Detailed comments were made about the proposed north of Luton strategic allocation, the Master Plan that accompanies this and the associated northern bypass road. Various amendments to text were also suggested that would meet the Board’s objections. Detailed comments were also made about the proposed Sundon Quarry rail freight interchange.

Wycombe Air Park’s draft Noise Action Plan

11. The Board welcomed the production of the Noise Action Plan. The Board highlighted that the noise arising from activities at Booker also affects visitors to the area. The Board also welcomed the reconstitution of the Joint Consultative Committee and the proposal to develop a programme to phase out older and noisier aircraft. The proposal to fit a silencer to one aircraft to work out the effects was also welcomed as was the Air Park’s acceptance, should trials prove to be positive, of a stakeholder offer to fund silencers across much of the training fleet. The possible alternation of circuit directions was welcomed. The Board suggested that it would be appropriate for it to be represented on the JCC.

North Hertfordshire District Council’s Housing Options – growth levels and directions

12. The Board expressed concern about the possible strategic site to the west and south west of Hitchin as no account has been taken of the AONB and its setting. It was suggested that a full landscape character and visual impact assessment should be undertaken. Similar comments were made about the possible strategic sites to the east of
Luton, at Rush Green and west of Stevenage and the non-strategic sites at King’s Walden, Offley, Pirton and Whitwell.

Scottish and Southern Energy’s “Innovating for a greener, more efficient future” (RIIO-ED1 second report)

13. The Board expressed its gratitude for the work that SSE is doing to lessen the impacts of its electricity distribution network by seeking to underground overhead powerlines in protected landscapes. The Board considered that SSE’s stakeholder-led approach to addressing concerns around visual amenity was proportionate and appropriate and hoped that this will continue.

Department for Transport’s Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, Stage 1 Consultation

14. The Board expressed its strong belief that growth in aviation is not an option until properly regulated environmental measures are satisfactorily put in place to mitigate impacts (particularly applicable for night flights and where airports and operators seek expansion). Much greater account should be taken of the multiple and sophisticated ways of virtual meeting and communicating. The priority should be to make the UK’s airports better, not bigger, for all and not just users of the airports themselves. The Board considered that the night time operations at Luton Airport should be subject to the same parameters as all other London airports. The Board expressed its concern about the DfT not taking account of the cumulative impact of overflying from a number of different airports. The Board considered that all airports (regardless of size) should be required to operate to the same environmental standards.

Chiltern District Council’s Draft Residential Extensions and Householder Development SPD

15. The Board welcomed the production of the SPD and the prominence given to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and the Supplementary Technical Notes on Flint, Brick and Roofing Materials.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at:

Recommendation

1. The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.
Item 10  

**Report on AONB Management Plan review**

**Author:**  
Steve Rodrick  
Chief Officer  
Colin White  
Planning Officer  
Kath Daly  
Countryside officer

**Summary:**  
The review of the AONB Management Plan is ongoing; the draft Work Plan and SEA Scoping Report are being consulted on; work is ongoing on reviewing the policies; the consultation programme has been developed, and a small Members sub-group has been set up.

**Purpose of Report:**  
To update Members on progress of reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

**Background**

1. Members are aware that the review of the AONB Management Plan has commenced and for some months broad ranging discussions have been taking place both within the Board and with external partners. The outcome of these discussions is continuing to feed into the review process.

2. Most recently the draft Work Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report have been published for a public consultation period which ends on 19th June. The consultation exercise has been promoted electronically and comments have been received which will be reviewed and reported to the Board at a later date (a brief verbal update on comments received will be given to the Board at this meeting). All relevant statutory and other consultees have been consulted and have been encouraged to respond.

3. An electronic survey has also been promoted electronically, the results of which will also be reported to the Board at a later date.

4. Work is now ongoing on producing the policies for inclusion in the draft Management Plan and these will be discussed by the small Members sub-group in July, alongside comments received in connection with the draft Work Plan and SEA Scoping Report. The draft Environmental Statement will also be discussed.

5. The likely future programme for production of the Management Plan is detailed in the table shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with partners</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of SEA consultation feedback</td>
<td>June to July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of draft Management Plan and</td>
<td>By September 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Members are asked to maintain the dialogue that has commenced and to continue to keep officers informed about key issues and principles that ought to be considered as part of the Review. The Management Plan Review sub-group will continue to meet on a regular basis in the lead up to the formal consultation periods.

**Recommendations**

1. **The Board notes the current position in connection with the AONB Management Plan Review.**

2. **The Board continues to keep officers informed about key issues for consideration as part of the Review.**
**Item 11**  
**Small Grants Fund**

**Author:** Kath Daly  
Countryside Officer

**Summary**  
A Small Grants Fund has now been set up and is open to new applications. This scheme replaces the Sustainable Development Fund as agreed at the March 2013 Board meeting.

**Purpose of Paper:**  
For information, and to seek the support of Board Members in promoting the scheme.

**Background**

1. At the March 2013 Board Meeting it was agreed that an initial sum of £20,000 should be allocated from the Development Reserve for a small grants scheme, initially on a one year basis.

2. As the funds are being drawn from the Board’s own reserves there is no need to restrict the fund to a single financial year. It can be committed as quickly or slowly as the Board wishes and any under-spend can be carried forward. The Board can top it up at any time.

**Operation of the scheme**

3. A meeting of interested Board Members was held in May to discuss administration of the fund and priorities for the first year.

4. Seven Board Members have expressed an interest in being involved in the Small Grants panel - Mike Fox, Roger Emmett, Mary Goldsmith, Helen Tuffs, Alan Walters, Julia Wells and John Willson.

5. Delegated authority has been given to the Countryside Officer to award grants of up to £500.

6. The panel will make the decision on whether to award larger grants. To enable rapid processing panel members will be invited to respond (usually by E mail so there is a record) within 5 working days. At least three panel members need to respond to enable a decision to be made. The award will be made on the basis of a majority. Occasionally the panel members may need to alter the amount requested or place conditions. Normally the Countryside Officer would alert members to these possibilities when sending out details of the application.

7. Grants will not normally exceed £2,000. Exceptionally, if applications are received for more, which are deemed worthy of support, the
Executive Committee will be asked to consider using reserves to top up the Fund.

8. Deadlines for project completion and receipt of the claim will be agreed at the outset and only extended in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Countryside Officer. Where appropriate there will be flexibility to agree deadlines which extend into the next financial year.

9. Projects must demonstrate that they will help to deliver the Board’s statutory purposes, with projects relating to the following themes particularly encouraged in the current year:
   - Local food and drink
   - Children and young people
   - First World War commemorative projects

10. Details of the scheme are now available on the website and will be promoted through a range of networks, flyers, electronic information and social media.

11. The panel will only meet twice a year - in October and January - to provide oversight, and a tour of selected projects will be held in September.

Recommendation

1. Members note that the new Small Grants Scheme is now operational and help to promote it.
Item 12  Report on HS2

Author  Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary:  Following a relatively quiet period in the wake of HS2 Ltd’s unilateral suspension of the community forum meetings in February, there is now a period of intense activity during the consultation on the draft Environmental Statement.

A sub group, led by Ray Payne, is preparing an assessment of the non market benefits of a longer tunnel from Hyde Heath to north of Wendover to demonstrate that the costs to society are minimised by a full length bored tunnel under the Chilterns.

The Queen’s speech included provision for an HS2 Bill (a preparation or so called paving bill) to enable the Government to commit the necessary funds to plan the railway including elements of property compensation.

Purpose of Report:  To consider the impacts identified in the draft Environment Statement

Background

Community Forum Meetings

1. In late February HS2 Ltd unilaterally suspended the Community Forum meetings claiming that they had received legal advice that, as a government body they could not hold public meetings in the purdah period prior to the county council elections. Despite that not being the case, HS2 Ltd refused requests to continue to hold forum meetings on a two monthly cycle and, especially, during the period that the draft Environment Statement is being consulted on.

2. The community decided it wanted to continue to hold forum meetings and to invite HS2 Ltd to attend - there are many outstanding actions which HS2 Ltd should have reported on. A meeting was held on 14th May and HS2 Ltd was invited to attend - but they did not.

Draft Environment Statement

3. The Environment Statement (ES) was published on 16th May and the consultation period will be for 8 weeks (11th July). A number of one day road shows have been organised by HS2 Ltd and two have been held in Chalfont St. Giles and Gt. Missenden; another is planned for Wendover on 29th June.

4. As trailed, this draft ES is a “light” version with much missing and little of the detail such a document should include. There are over a hundred
references to information which is still to be collected or further work to be done but which will appear in the final Environmental Statement. It is very clear that HS2 Ltd was not ready to publish this document but, because of the timetable it is committed to, could not delay it any longer without it affecting its ability to lay the Hybrid Bill before Parliament in an attempt to secure Royal Assent before May 2015. It might better be called a partial draft of a partial Environmental Statement as so much is missing.

5. HS2 Ltd has been at pains to emphasise that it is not a requirement to consult on a draft ES or for it to provide avoidance or mitigation solutions to all identified environmental impacts. It will be possible to comment on the final draft, which will be presented as a supporting document to the Hybrid Bill which HS2 Ltd/DfT still intend to lay before Parliament before the end of 2013.

6. A Board member sub group scrutinised the document on the 20th May. In general were no surprises but it did contain 29 reservoirs and balancing ponds of which there had been no mention before. They would be, of course, alien features in a chalk landscape and the draft ES should have contained an assessment of their environmental impacts - it does not.

7. HS2 Ltd intends to minimise the amount of spoil (called surplus material) by making the cuttings shallower. As far as is possible they intend to dispose of it along the route in the Chilterns either for use as noise bunds, or what they call landscaping. In practice there is far too much so a great deal will be simply spread across adjacent fields, thus significantly reducing their agricultural and biodiversity value - these impacts should be assessed - but have not been. The spoil from the tunnel will be removed from the southern portal near the M25, but the Environmental Statement does not say what will then happen to it - the ES should assess the impact of this activity but doesn't - yet.

8. The assessment of vehicle movements shows there will be considerable numbers using local roads for the construction itself and large numbers of worker, sub contractors and suppliers. The impact of this is not assessed in any depth and excludes those vehicles involved in moving spoil - on the grounds they don’t know what they will be doing with it.

9. The assessment of noise is minimal and misleading. They have referred only to average noise, and not peak noise levels. This is an attempt to disguise the likely level of nuisance.

10. It seems that the hours of working will be long during Monday to Friday with considerable working also on Saturdays. Major works are also likely to take place, frequently on Sundays. Tunnelling will be 24 hours a day for 364 days per year. Local people are unlikely to get little or no respite from the disturbance caused by construction activity except on occasional Sundays.
11. It is now clear that much of this detail was withheld from the community forums so has neither been discussed with them nor feedback sought. This is consistent with the strictly controlled release of information that has typified HS2 Ltd approach to working with local communities from the outset. It has only served to further inflame local opinion. The general consensus is that the road shows are not helpful or illuminating.

12. The Board had provisionally allocated up to £5,000 to engage the help of technical expertise for its response. In the event this will not be needed as that level of detail need not be included in any response. In any event the draft Environmental Statement is of such poor quality that it merits less effort than was originally envisaged.

13. Board staff have provided briefings to both David Lidington MP and Cheryl Gillan MP.

Judicial Reviews

14. The Judicial Review challenging the legality of the compensation arrangements was successful and the Government has stated it will not appeal. Most of the consultation on compensation will now need to re-run, complicated by the recent announcement on the route of phase 2.

15. The judge gave leave to appeal the ruling on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment. HS2AA managed to raise the £100,000 necessary to meet the legal costs and the hearing began on 10th June.

External Benefits of a Tunnel

16. In January 2012 the Secretary of State announced the current route proclaiming that the Chilterns would be protected by having a longer tunnel leaving only 1.4 miles of the route visible in the Chilterns. That longer tunnel now emerges at Mantles Wood near Hyde Heath at an elevation of 500 feet in the centre of the AONB and middle of ancient woodland, leaving claims of protecting the AONB looking unconvincing. According to the Board’s own calculations the length of visible route remains nearly 4 miles (i.e. that on embankment, viaduct surface and cuttings less than 8 metres deep).

18. A request to HS2 Ltd for confirmation of the length of visible route under the Freedom of Information Act was refused as was the appeal. Plainly HS2 Ltd must have the data as it has prepared briefing notes for ministers. It is recommended that a formal complaint be made to the Information Commissioner.

19. It is the view of the Board and others that, far from protecting the Chilterns AONB, the environmental and social impacts of the length of railway not in tunnel is considerable, including the effects of constructing a so called green tunnel. Therefore, a full length bored tunnel is the best solution.
20. To support this case campaign groups paid for consultants to prepare a, technical feasibility report and cost estimate of a longer tunnel (with a 500 metre intervention gap) which demonstrated that the construction cost of such a tunnel would not be significantly more than the current proposal. HS2 Ltd analysed the case but rejected it claiming that it would cost approximately £400 million more. This is strongly disputed but HS2 Ltd refuse to disclose their calculations and attempts to discuss the details have proved fruitless thus far.

21. Another sub group, led by Ray Payne, is now preparing the case for a full length bored tunnel based on calculating the cost to society, and not just the construction cost to the Department for Transport. Such a costing exercise will take into account; the value of compensation saved; uncompensated blight; cost of health impacts; and the possible a value of landscape impact, but that may prove too difficult or contentious. An initial and very rough estimate is that the benefits might be in the order of £400 million, sufficient to make the full length bored tunnel the best option for minimising the cost to society.

22. To develop this approach it will be necessary to engage independent consultants. The task of securing support for this brief has begun which may cost in the order £40,000. To be useful it has to be ready before the Hybrid Bill is laid. The Executive Committee approved the re-allocation of the £5,000 intended to be used to help prepare the response to the draft Environmental Statement, to this study.

23. The Queen’s speech to parliament included provision for a High Speed Rail (Preparation) Bill. Essentially this will enable the treasury to release the funds that the Dept. for Transport needs to develop the railway. It is believed this is being done for two main reasons. Firstly, expenditure is already over budget and is now likely to be close to £1.1 billion by May 2015. Secondly, it will require Parliament to vote for this Bill, thus securing a form of endorsement for HS2 earlier than the Hybrid Bill, which may well not, now, secure Royal Assent during this Parliament as originally intended. Some might interpret this as a sign of unease that political support is not as strong as once thought. The Board needs to bear in mind that HS2 still has cross party support, even if that is expressed rather more softly than it once was. In effect this Paving Bill will enable unlimited expenditure to develop HS2 Ltd using public funds with surprisingly little monitoring or accountability for how it is spent.

**Recommendation**

1. **To provide feedback on the main impacts identified in the draft Environmental Statement**
Item 13  Report on Management of the Ridgeway National Trail

Author: Annette Venters, Access Officer

Summary: Natural England has published its review of the management of national trails. Both the Ridgeway and Thames Path face another transitional year with major re-organisation. New management partnerships need to be created which will formally involve the Board for the first time.

It is likely that there will be limited marketing by the local Trails Unit for at least 18 months. The Board should consider developing its own promotional programme; development programme for the Ridgeway only in the first instance; and a volunteer programme.

Purpose of the Report:
1. To inform the Board on the current situation regarding the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails Unit.

2. To seek members’ views on whether the Board should carry out a programme of local marketing of the Ridgeway National Trail in the next two years and prepare a development plan for the Chilterns section of the Ridgeway.

Background

1. There are two national trails passing through the Chilterns AONB, the Ridgeway and the Thames Path. They are for helping to promote the Chilterns and attracting walkers who stay overnight.


Key Points arising from NE’s Report

3. Natural England’s vision for National Trails is that “they are a family of the highest quality recreational routes connecting our finest landscapes for extensive off road journeys. National Trails provide public enjoyment and bring local economic benefit through tourism as well as opportunities for improving the environment and for getting local communities involved in caring for them".
4. A Trail Partnership must be established to manage each national trail, with one lead agent receiving a single grant offer from Natural England. Trail quality standards will be an integral part of the new model (they are supposed to be managed to a higher standard than a normal right of way), operating alongside a series of funding outputs and outcomes agreed with Trail Partnerships.

6. One grant offer will be made per trail giving partnerships greater flexibility in how funds are used over longer timescales. Funding will consist of a grant from NE grant for 75% of the costs and the remainder funded by the Highways Authorities (as previously).

7. Trails will be integrated more fully into the wider landscape and users should be more involved in Trail management.

**The Ridgeway and the Thames Path National Trails**

**Current situation**

8. The National Trails team is currently hosted by Oxfordshire County Council and based in Eynsham, but works over the length of both Trails (but not the Thames Path in London). New trail partnerships need to be established for the Ridgeway and Thames Path over the next few months (probably one Partnership for each trail, the management of the trails is currently combined). This may have implications for the future hosting and management of the trails.

9. Until recently the Ridgeway and Thames Path management group was predominantly made up of Highways Authority rights of way officers and there was little opportunity for input from others. However membership has now been extended to include the AONBs (North Wessex Downs and Chilterns) and the Friends of the Ridgeway.

10. Current staffing for the national trails unit is in a state of flux. The National Trails Manager responsible for marketing left in April (Jos Joslin, had been in post for over 20 years) and the other Trails Manager responsible for route management is vacant. The recruitment of a new post, for one year, is underway. The role of this post will be specifically to establish a new Trail Partnership and arrangements for management and promotion of the trails. This means another transitional year and although the maintenance of the route will continue (much of it by volunteers), there will be limited staff time for marketing, improving visitor information or a programme of events.

11. From January 2013 Natural England has awarded a contract to a company called Walk England to promote national trails. This has included taking over the management of the national trails website from Natural England and carrying out a social media campaign. So far their involvement has not made a visible difference to the look and feel of
the website, it looks dated. It is clear also that the national website is no substitute for local promotion.

**How could CCB assist with local marketing of the Ridgeway?**

12. There is much synergy between the promotion of the national trails and the work of the Board to promote the Chilterns. There are a number of ways the Board might promote the Chilterns section of the Ridgeway and improve the route for walkers.

13. The Board could produce a map showing how the national trial is part of network of promoted routes together with information on the main visitor attractions and facilities along the way. These could feature QR codes with a link to further information on the Chilterns AONB website.

14. The Board could assist with promoting a guided walks programme, to include a wide range of walks so there is something for everyone (i.e. short stile-free walks to longer walks, different themes, covering the length of the Chilterns Ridgeway).

15. The National Trails website is now very dated in look and feel and although the trails can now be viewed in Google maps, this does not show connecting rights of way or other promoted routes. The Ridgeway and Thames Path are featured on the Chilterns AONB website interactive map which does show rights of way and countryside sites, as well as places to visit, places to stay and other visitor facilities all on the same map.

16. Investigate use of QR codes on way marker posts and leaflets to provide information about the route. There also needs to be investment in new technologies to draw in broader (and younger) audiences, for example developing an App for National Trails.

17. Further promotion of specific itineraries and short breaks through the Visit Chilterns website. Better links with OxTrails, Visit Chilterns and other tourism initiatives.

18. Signposting – replace the recycled plastic signs with wooden ones, more in keeping with an AONB. Update some of the information boards – need decent maps, inspiring photos, use of QR codes.

19. Get the Ridgeway Link (Ivinghoe Beacon to Dunstable Downs) formally designated as part of the Ridgeway National Trail and promote it.

**Recommendations**

1. To seek better promotion of the Chilterns part of the Ridgeway National Trail.

2. To form a working group to develop a Chilterns Ridgeway Plan.
Item 14  Report on Cycle Chilterns Project

Author: Annette Venters, Access Officer

Summary: The Chilterns Sustainable Gateways Project (now called Cycle Chilterns) is progressing well following the appointment of a development officer in January 2013. The creation of an Electric Bike hire network will be a key milestone in 2013-14

Purpose of the Report: To provide an update on the project and opportunity for comment.

Background

1. In July 2012 the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded a grant of £868,000 from its Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to promote tourism in the Chilterns based on cycling. The CTC (used to be known as the Cycle Touring Club) is the lead partner for the project, responsible for employing project staff and delivering the programme. Wokingham BC is the lead local authority for the project; it has the contractual agreement with DfT and is responsible for receiving and distributing funds.

2. The CCB is a key partner, and member of the steering group which includes the National Trust, rail companies, local authorities, the Chiltern Society, Sustrans, parish councils, tourism and business partnerships and the Electric Bike Network.

3. A cycling development officer (Sara Randle) was appointed in January 2013 to deliver the work programme which runs to March 2015. In addition the CTC has allocated some of its own staff to deliver specific elements of the work programme.

About the Project

4. The project encourages more visitors to travel to the Chilterns by rail and bike, and cycling in general in the Chilterns as an alternative to the car. This is being done through 5 packages:

   1) Integrating rail and bike. Working with rail companies to provide cycle/travel information and special offers. Investment at stations in signs, cycle parking, bike hire and links to town centres.

   2) Tourism and Leisure. Promoting the electric bike network. Encourage sustainable travel, participation in Cyclists are Welcome, provide small grants and promotional support.

   3) Encouraging new users. Working with businesses, local authorities, community groups, countryside sites and others to run cycling activities and led rides aimed at getting people to try short easy cycling experiences.
4) Providing information to commuters

5) General awareness campaign

5. The project is focused on three gateways to the Chilterns selected because they contain good train and bus links; are on the Chilterns Cycleway route; and have a good number of tourism businesses and visitor attractions. The three areas are:
   • Henley-on-Thames and Tywford
   • Great Missenden, Chesham and Amersham
   • Tring and Berkhamsted

6. Princes Risborough and Wendover were not included in the original bid because these gateway towns were already included in a separate LSTF bid led by Bucks CC, which was unsuccessful. However, given their importance as gateway towns in the Chilterns, the project will include them in promotional activities.

Progress on delivery of the programme

7. It took six months before the Chilterns Cycling development officer was in post and the project delivery could begin in earnest. However CTC staff were contracted in the early months to carry out the background work so that the work programme did not slip behind schedule.

8. The delivery of the work programme is progressing well, a summary is shown below. The elements which have been most difficult to deliver are the physical works at railway stations and in the gateway towns where there needs to be agreement from various partners (i.e. capital spend on additional cycle parking and better cycle links). However these are progressing too, albeit at a slower pace.

9. Appendix 1 gives an update on the work programme

Summary

10. The Cycle Chilterns project has been very positive for the Chilterns AONB, doing much to promote cycling, attract new audiences and raise awareness. Cycling in the Chilterns has received lots of coverage, on the CTC website, through magazine features, newsletters, led rides and attendance at events. The Chilterns Cycleway is also benefiting from better signage of link routes and more intensive promotion. The capital projects are slower to get off the ground, but progress is being made and the next few months are likely to see some tangible results.

Recommendation

1. To note progress
## Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A user-friendly name and logo has been developed for the project- Cycle Chilterns instead of the Sustainable Chilterns Gateways Project!</td>
<td>Cycle Chilterns logo in use, on website, printed materials and gazebos used at events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing <em>on-line information</em> about the project</td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.cycle-chilterns.co.uk">www.cycle-chilterns.co.uk</a></strong> is the URL used to promote the project. The bulk of information about Cycle Chilterns is held on the CTC website or the Chilterns AONB website. A monthly Cycle Chilterns electronic newsletter is circulated widely which gives an update of the project news and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme of <strong>Led Rides</strong></td>
<td>A programme of weekly led rides will be starting at the end of June, these will rotate between each of the gateway towns. The rides are promoted on <a href="http://www.cycle-chilterns.co.uk">www.cycle-chilterns.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing an <strong>Electric Bike Network</strong></td>
<td>The focus this year is on establishing the network in the Henley area, a further network will be set up in the central Chilterns in 2013/14. So far 3 business are signed up as hire points and are expecting delivery of 6 bikes towards end of June (Swiss Farm Campsite, the Chiltern Valley Winery and Henley Cycles). Many more businesses will be involved as re-charging points. Publicity material is being produced and a promotional launch will take place on 8th July at the Chiltern Valley Winery.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cycle routes and itineraries</strong></td>
<td>More circular routes and itineraries from gateway towns are in production and will be added to the Chilterns AONB website (promoted via Cycle Chilterns).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chilterns Cycleway Signage for Link Routes</strong></td>
<td>An audit has been carried out of additional signage needed to link railway stations at the 7 gateway towns with the Chilterns Cycleway. The audit has been completed and signage should be installed shortly.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance at Shows and Events</strong></td>
<td>Cycle Chilterns have attended a number of county shows and events to promote the project and there is a programme of further events. A Shoretrax track circuit is set up at the larger events giving people the opportunity to have a go for free, great fun and very popular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CTC Cyclists Welcome</strong></td>
<td>The project is encouraging tourism businesses to sign up to the CTC Cyclists Welcome scheme, as an incentive membership is free in the first year. A few businesses have signed up but this has been a hard sell and requires further effort. Further contact will be made with businesses offering grants for bike racks, information boards or other cycle facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cycle Monitoring:</strong> Cycle Counters are due to be installed in Oxfordshire, Bucks and Herts, at locations on the Chilterns Cycleway (total 5 locations). Data will be collected monthly showing numbers of cyclists and direction of travel.</td>
<td>Locations have been approved by Bucks CC and Herts CC, awaiting installation of counters. There has been no reply from Oxfordshire Highways, Sara is chasing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Railway stations and gateway towns**

On-going dialogue with station managers and gateway towns regarding improvements.

- Great Missenden: Dr Bike sessions have been agreed. Possibility of electric bike hire next year. Workshop is being organised to discuss options in more detail.
- Amersham – liaising with TfL regarding additional bike parking.
- Henley-on-Thames – electric bike hire from Henley Cycles close to rail station.
Item 15  Hillforts of the Chilterns

Author: Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary: The Chilterns is important, regionally and nationally, for the number of hill forts and other defensive structures. Relatively little is known about them so a project is proposed that both raises awareness and initiates a more active programme of site conservation. Both elements of the programme would provide many opportunities for the involvement of volunteers.

Purpose of Report: To prompt discussion and consideration of the proposal to develop a project on hillforts.

n.b. a presentation will be given by Shirley Judges and Alison Doggett. This supporting paper provides the background. If the Board wishes to develop this area of work a more comprehensive proposal will be brought to the next Board meeting in October.

Background

1. There are a significant number of hillforts and other defensive structures in the Chilterns, along the ridge of the escarpment on the dip slope and along the Thames Valley (Map1). This is unsurprising since the ridge and the Thames have been established routes for thousands of years and the hillforts would have been very prominent and visible from a considerable distance.
2. Many of the most prominent and popular locations in the Chilterns today are, in fact, ancient defensive sites commonly known as Hill Forts. Such sites include; Ivinghoe Beacon, Totternhoe near Dunstable; Boddington Hillfort in Wendover Woods; Danesfield near Marlow, Pulpit Hill near Prince s Risborough and West Wycombe Hill overlooking the Bradenham and Wye Valleys. Their prominent locations made them obvious places to oversee and control surrounding land and key transport routes. Other structures are called hill forts but may have had civilian rather than military function, possibly to keep people and animals secure and out of sight during troubled times. This, for example, may be why the massive Cholesbury hill fort is, in fact, so difficult to see.

3. Perhaps it is a surprise to many who may associate hill forts with the more open downland of Wessex, to discover that the Chilterns has amongst the highest concentration of hill forts and other defensive structures in the country, but remarkably little is known about them. For example the Ravensburgh hillfort in the Barton Hills, north east of Luton, is one of the largest structures in the south of England and yet is virtually unknown.

4. Only two Chilterns hillforts have been researched in any detail – Ivinghoe Beacon near Dunstable, which was excavated from 1963 – 65 but significantly reassessed in 2000; and Ravensburgh, was excavated in the 1990s but the report is yet to be published. Other studies of the Chilterns hillforts are very limited. This is in contrast with the Wessex hillforts, the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge hillforts and others which have been studied in detail.

5. The role of hillforts and the people they are associated with is central to the evolution of the settlement patterns we have today. Those living at the foot of the escarpment near a spring and close to transport corridors, would have recourse to a defensive site on the top of the hillside nearby.(a lack of water meant they were unsuited for prolonged occupation) There is a close relationship between nearly all of our scarp foot towns and nearby hillforts. Much of today’s network of roads and paths was created when these structures were being built and in use.

6. In view of the importance of hillforts to the Chilterns; and the national importance of the Chilterns for hillforts, it is difficult to explain why they are not more prominent in the AONB management plan or the work programme of the Board and others. It is indicative of our low level of awareness and understanding of these special places.

7. The Board is invited to rectify to this apparent oversight and give the subject greater emphasis in the revised Management Plan. In order to promote this higher priority the Board should also take a lead by initiating a Chilterns Hillforts Project. It will be more than a project,
which typically have a defined beginning and end, as it should be an
opened end area of activity given a degree of priority.

Next Steps

8. Appendix 1 gives more detail on what such a project might look like. It
is suggested the Board takes the following steps.

1. Gives greater prominence to hillforts in the revised management
plan for the Chilterns AONB.

2. Reconvenes the Historic Environment group to consider the
detail of this proposal with a view to securing multi-agency
support for a special initiative.

3. Convene a seminar in late 2013 to bring together experts and
other interested parties to establish the current level of
understanding and management activity.

4. Prepare a more detailed strategy and accompanying work
programme over which the Board provides oversight, but
delivers with the involvement of many partners.

5. Investigate the scope for securing a grant from the Heritage
Lottery Fund for elements of the programme.

6. Develops a campaign to raise public awareness in order to
generate more volunteer input.

7. If, and when, an HLF grant is secured to then focus the Board’s
hillforts’ work on that project.

8. In the meantime to generate interest from volunteers (to whom
training would be provided) to help with the collection of data for
the National Hillforts Atlas.

9. Create special web pages for the Chilterns AONB site on hillforts.

Resources

9. Initially this may not need much expenditure. The input to the AONB
Management Plan is simply a matter of staff and Board member time.
A seminar later in the year need not cost much (possibly not more than
room hire). Investigation into securing HLF support is again primarily a
call on staff and Board member time. Some external assistance may be
needed to prepare the initial bid. Training of volunteers to help with the
national survey and inventory would not be an expensive exercise and
could be met from existing budgets.
10. A major long term initiative would require significant external funding and that is most likely to come from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is not realistic to expect any significant funding from private landowners. However, most sites are in public ownership but other than routine maintenance dedicated budgets for research and conservation work are very small. English Heritage is likely to be supportive but its small, and declining, budget is likely to limit its involvement or provision of funding.

11. An initiative along the lines of the Commons Project is envisaged - a budget of several hundred thousands pounds with a full time dedicated officer on a 3 or 4 year contract, supported by a large number of enthusiastic, often, skilled volunteers. The budget would be sufficient to undertake conservation work on a small number of sites.

12. The major challenge in developing this area of work at this time is the limited availability of staff time. Work on hillforts does not currently feature in any of the staff’s staffs work programmes or performance plans includes, so any additional work they might undertake in the next months will inevitably be relatively minor. However, if the Board wishes such work to have a higher priority this would be reflected in work programmes for 2014 onwards.

13. Fortunately a number of Board members are both enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and are willing to lead the Board’s work. The availability of staff is subject to the demands of HS2 in particular, but it is hoped that diversion will lessen over the next few months.

Conclusion

14. The hillforts of the Chilterns are significant features and important elements in the historical development and settlement of the Chilterns. Their importance has not been fully recognised. An important opportunity now exists to raise awareness of this importance in the next Chilterns AONB Management plan and the Board’s own work programme. This would ensure they receive more attention in the years ahead and a larger share of the Board’s own resources.

Recommendations

1. A sub group of the Board develops a strategy and work programme to enhance awareness and management of hillforts.

2. The importance of hillforts and similar structures is given a higher profile in the next management plan for the AONB.
Appendix 1

Chiltern Hillforts Project

Prepared by Shirley Judges and Alison Doggett
24th June 2013

Aims

To increase understanding and awareness of the Chiltern Hillforts and ensure recognition of their local and national importance.

Objectives

Mapping

1. Identify and map all the known and possible Hillforts in the Chilterns
2. Produce accurate maps of every Hillfort
3. Map the surrounding area of each Hillfort to identify associated features

Understanding

4. Produce a summary of what is already known about each Hillfort – location, estimated date(s) of construction, size, condition, features, and accessibility; if researched how/when/anything published? and if so title and date.
5. Carry out a geophysical survey of every Hillfort to identify internal features and increase understanding of its functions
6. Study the Chilterns Hillforts in terms of, eg their geographical proximity and compare them in terms of factors such as size, date, construction to assess their relationships and relative functions;

Conservation and maintenance

7. Using appropriate agencies and volunteers, set up programmes for the conservation and maintenance of each hillfort

Public awareness and access

8. Where needed, enhance public access to all Chiltern Hillforts.
9. Provide information at a local level about each Hillforts
10. To raise wider awareness of the Chilterns Hillforts produce a Guide to the Chiltern Hillforts
11. Produce educational materials for use in schools and a pack for use with adult groups

**Methods**

**Preliminary work**

- Make contact with people/places such as Fiona Gale of the Denbighshire Hillforts Project to discuss how they approached the study of their Hillforts.

**Mapping and surveying**

- Desk surveys, LIDAR survey, geophysical surveys, field walking

**Understanding**

- Make contact with County Archaeologists, English Heritage and the National Trust as sources of local knowledge and universities to provide in-depth analysis and interpretation.

**Conservation and maintenance**

- Identify owners, local partners such as archaeological groups and volunteers using *Chilternsetna, Chalk and Trees* and organisations such as the Chilterns Society

**Public awareness and access**

- Develop web-pages on the Chilterns Conservation Board website; provide local information via leaflets at Tourist Offices, museums etc and through smart-phone technology; published *Guide to the Chilterns Hillforts*; educational materials

**Resources:**

External grant aid will be needed and plenty of willing volunteers
**Item 17  Re-introduction of the Pine Marten**

**Summary:** A national plan is being developed to re-introduce the pine marten to parts of England from which it has been absent for hundreds of years. A lowland trial area is being considered and the Chilterns could be a suitable candidate.

**Purpose of Paper:** For decision on whether to request that the Chilterns be considered a trial area.

**Background**

1. The Pine Marten is indigenous to the UK but due to hunting and persecution is largely absent from England, with populations surviving mainly in the Scottish highlands and in the Republic of Ireland. It is thought a small population may exist in north west England and, in recent years following a re-introduction, a thriving population has become established in Galloway.

2. The proposal to undertake a national re-introduction programme is being led by the Vincent Wildlife Trust. Recently the Forestry Commission has approved and endorsed such this programme which would include several of its own estates. Most of the likely sites are in northern upland areas dominated by conifers. It is believed a more lowland area dominated by hardwoods is being sought together with high proportion of privately owned woods. The Chilterns potentially provides the required characteristics.

3. At the recent Chilterns Woodland Forum, Jonathan Spencer, senior Ecologist for the Forestry Commission gave a presentation enquiring whether the Chilterns might be put forward as a trial area. In general the audience was supportive. Following that event (7th June) two estate owners and the National Trust at Ashridge have indicated their willingness to become involved.

4. One of the reasons for interest is that research in Ireland has show that the presence of the Pine Marten significantly reduces the presence of Grey Squirrels which become highly stressed and their re-production rate falls dramatically. In view of the problem of controlling grey squirrels (a recent survey of foresters for the AONB Mangmnet Plan review, showed that control of grey squirrels was regarded as the top priority for forestry) a more natural approach may ultimately be more successful.
5. As grey squirrel also predate many woodland birds the presence of Pine Marten may help re-establish a more natural woodland ecology. In areas with red squirrels the Pine Marten suppression of the grey is helping the recovery of Red squirrels. That too should be an ambition for the Chilterns.

6. There are many potential problems with re-introduction programmes (although that for the Red Kite shows how successful they can be). The Pine Marten is likely to take game birds and probably domestic fowl too. It does, however, have a natural predator, the Fox, which may provide some control over its numbers.

7. The main purpose of a trial area is to study likely effects before a full scale re-introduction programme can take place. The Chilterns may provide ideal conditions and, if it help suppress the population of the grey squirrel, has many obvious advantages. The potential impact on game birds would need considerable monitoring before widespread acceptance in the Chilterns amongst landowners could be assured.

8. As this stage it is not known what the resource requirement would be. In the short term, other than a modest amount of staff time to generate support for the proposal, there is unlikely to be a financial implication.

9. It is suggested that the Vincent Wildlife Trust and national steering group be approached and the Chilterns put forward as a candidate area for a trial for the re-introduction of the Pine Marten.

Recommendation

1. The Board supports a proposal to put forward the Chilterns as a trial area for the re-introduction of the Pine Marten