Members of the Chilterns Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to a meeting of the full Chilterns Conservation Board on

17th October 2018 at 10.00 am

Naphill Village Hall, Main Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4SX

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 20 June + AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Board Review October 2018
7. Board Members for Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project
8. Chalkscapes - North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative
9. Review of National Parks and AONBs
10. AONB Management Plan 2019-24
11. External Annual Audit Report
12. Any other business

Presentation: Beacons of the Past Hillforts Project by Wendy Morrison

Lunch

Visit: West Wycombe Hillfort (meet 1.45pm St Lawrence car park)

Future Meetings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Board</td>
<td>20th February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26th June (and AGM) 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16th October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>23rd January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22nd May 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18th September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Committee</td>
<td>21st November 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Board Meeting Venue**

Naphill Village Hall

Main Road

High Wycombe

HP14 4SX
Route from Naphill Village Hall to the site visit. If using a SatNav please type in Church of St Lawrence, Church Lane, HP14 3AP

*The postcode alone will not take you to the church*
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs
CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 21ST June 2018 at Crowmarsh Battle Farm, 84 Preston Crowmarsh,
Wallingford OX10 6SL commencing at 10.05 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities
Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown
Cllr. David Collins
Cllr Heather Kenison
Cllr. Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Ian Reay

Appointing Body
Buckinghamshire County Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Hertfordshire County Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State
Colin Courtney
John Nicholls
Ray Payne
Helen Tuffs
Ian Waller
Elizabeth Wilson

Appointing Body
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils
Cllr Susan Biggs
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Clive Thomas

Appointing Body
Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers
Sue Holden
Graham Hurst
Lucy Murfett
Annette Venters
Donna Webb

Appointing Body
Chief Officer
Finance Officer
Planning Officer
People & Society Officer
Administrations Officer

Other:
Deirdre Hansen

The Chief Officer opened the meeting and welcomed all present. She thanked Philip Chamberlain for hosting the CCB at his farm.

1. Apologies for absence
   Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr David Barnard, North Hertfordshire District Council, Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn, Hertfordshire Parish Councils,
Alison Doggett, Secretary of State Appointee, Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council, Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council and Cllr Luisa Sullivan, South Buckinghamshire District Council.

2. Election of Chairman

The Board RESOLVED that IAN REAY be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

IAN REAY took the CHAIR.
He thanked the members for appointing him.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

The Board RESOLVED that Helen Tuffs be elected Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.
She thanked the members for electing her.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

5. Minutes of the meeting 21st June 2017.

The minutes of the meeting of 21st June 2017 were signed by the Chairman as a true record.


There was no public present

7. Election of Members to the Executive Committee

The Chairman mentioned that we will now follow the new Standing Orders for the makeup of Committees.

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Executive Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives (3)
Alison Doggett
John Nicholls
Ray Payne
Helen Tuffs

Parish Council Representatives (2)
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey

Local Authority Representatives (4)
Cllr David Collins
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Nick Rose
10.11 Cllr Heather Kenison Arrived.
As there was one more volunteer from the Secretary of State appointees and one fewer from Local Authority and Parish Council representatives. One of those vacancies was filled by a SoS appointee.

8. Election of members to the Planning Committee

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Planning Committee:

Parish Council Representatives (2)
Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn
Cllr Susan Biggs

Secretary of State Representatives (3)
Colin Courtney
Helen Tuffs
Elizabeth Wilson

Local Authority Representatives (4)
Cllr David Barnard
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Hugh McCarthy
Cllr Nick Rose

9. Date of next meeting.

The Board DECIDED that the date of the next Annual General meeting would be 26th June 2019 location TBC.

The Chairman……………………………….. Date………
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 21ST June 2018 at Crowmarsh Battle Farm, 84 Preston Crowmarsh, Wallingford
OX10 6SL commencing at 10.20 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities
Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown
Cllr David Collins
Cllr Heather Kenison
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Ian Reay
Cllr Nick Rose

Appointing Body
Buckinghamshire County Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Three Rivers District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Chiltern District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State
Colin Courtney
John Nicholls
Ray Payne
Helen Tuffs
Ian Waller
Elizabeth Wilson

Appointing Body
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils
Cllr Susan Biggs
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Clive Thomas

Appointing Body
Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers (for part)
Kathy Daly
Sue Holden
Graham Hurst
Neil Jackson
Lucy Murfett
Vicky Pearce
Annette Venters
Donna Webb

Appointing Body
Countryside Officer
Chief Officer
Finance Officer
Conservation and Landscape Officer
Planning Officer
Communications Officer
People & Society Officer
Administrations Officer

Other:
Deirdre Hansen

Appointing Body
Clerk to the Board

18/19.1 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr David Barnard, North Hertfordshire District Council, Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn, Hertfordshire Parish Councils, Alison Doggett, Secretary of State Appointee, Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council, Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council and Cllr Luisa Sullivan, South Buckinghamshire District Council.
18/19.2 Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest were declared.

18/19.3 Minutes of the meeting 21st February 2018.
The minutes of the meeting of 21st February 2018 were signed by the Chairman as a true record after the following amendments were made:
1. 17/18.31 item 6 3rd bullet point Governments was amended to “Government’s”
2. 17/18.35 item 9 1st paragraph- prosed was changed to proposed.

18/19.4 Matters Arising.
None

18/19.5 Public Question Time.
No public present.

18/19.6 Board Review
a. The Chief Officer highlighted the new staff members to the Board.

b. The Chief Officer invited questions on the Board Review.
   • The success of the third Chilterns Walking Festival and the different forms of media that had been used to advertise the event, reaching out to different audiences from those that is usually reached were noted.
   • A second Food and Drink Festival will take place if an application being made to LEADER is successful.
   • The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project is still short of match funding and every effort is being made to secure the required funding. The meeting briefly discussed the situation.

c. Reports from the Executive Committee, the Planning Committee, Landscape and Conservation, Chalk, Cherries and Chairs HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS), North Chilterns Landscape Initiative, High Speed 2, People and Society and Development and Communications had been received.

10.26 Cllr Nick Rose, the Countryside Officer, Conservation and Landscape Officer and the Communications Officer joined the meeting.

1. The Board NOTED the review June 2018.

18/19.7 Statement of Accounts 2017-18
The Finance Officer presented the year end position at 31st March 2018, showing an overall surplus of £27,550.

1. The year showed a surplus of £27,550, this will be offset the following two years by an anticipated deficit. As reported the timing of projects can be uncertain, leaving income and expenditure out of line.
2. The Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 was approved and signed in the appropriate places by the Chairman and the Clerk.
3. The Accounting Statement 2017/18 was approved and signed in the appropriate places by the Chairman and the S151 Officer.
4. The Finance Officer brought the internal audit report to the Members attention noting that they had given good assurances, there were no recommendations and they had not issued any management actions.
5. Questions were raised about the pension deficit showing on the balance sheet, members were reassured that this is a statistical figure, provided by actuaries, not an actual one.
6. A minor adding up error was noted, which will be corrected.
7. It was noted that the way the business is now run means that larger cash balances are required.

1. The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts 2017-18 subject to a minor adjustment.
2. The Board APPROVED the Annual Governance Statement included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18.
3. The Board APPROVED the Accounting Statement included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18.

18/19.8 Review of National Parks and AONBs
The Chief Officer reported that the terms of reference of this review have now been published. The Chairman has been invited to attend a meeting with Howard Davies, CEO, NAAONB and 6 Chief Officers of AONBs including our Chief Officer to discuss.

The Designated Landscapes Review is being chaired by Julian Glover.

The meeting discussed the matter.

1. The Board NOTED the terms of reference of the Review and CONTRIBUTED comments.

18/19.9 National Park Status
The Chief Officer had reported that Cheryl Gillan MP had been seeking support for the Chilterns to become a National Park.

A request for consideration has to be made to Natural England and it would have to be included in the Management Plan 2019, with consultation starting through the Draft Management Plan's consultation process. A request will have to make a compelling case for a change of status. The Chief Officer had outlined the case and how the Chilterns AONB meets the criteria for National Park Status.

The Members discussed the proposal and expressed their views. Local Authority Members were reminded that they needed to take the Boards view, not their Local Authority’s view on the proposal.

A vote took place and the Board unanimously voted giving approval for a request for National Park Status and that the proposal be included in the Draft Management Plan for consultation.

1. The Board APPROVED that a request be made to Natural England for National Park Status.
2. The Board APPROVED that the proposal goes into the Draft Management Plan for consultation with partners and the public.

18/19.10 AONB Management Plan 2019-2024
The Chief Officer had reported an update on the Management Review. A lot of work has taken place and a first draft is being finalised for partner consultation this summer.

Members discussed their visions and top-level goals on which to build the plan and commented on the summary Draft Plan. The Chief Officer noted the comments and took them away for consideration.
Members were asked to look at the first draft in more detail and where appropriate discuss with their Local Authorities and Members.

1. The Board GAVE their views on the vision, principles and strategic objectives for the Management Plan.

18/19.11 Meeting Dates 2018-19

The Board NOTED the following meeting dates

**Full Board:**
- 17th October 2018
- 20th February 2019
- 26th June 2019 (and AGM)
- 16th October 2019

**Executive Committee:**
- 19th September 2018
- 22nd January 2019
- 22nd May 2019
- 18th September 2019

18/19.12 Any other business.

1. The meeting to note that the Executive Committee will review the Code of Governance at its next meeting and will bring their review to the next Board meeting.
2. Secretary of State Appointment: there had been a strong field of applicants and the three appointable candidates have been put forward to the Secretary of State, a decision is expected by the end of June.
3. It was mentioned that with South Oxfordshire’s local Plan it has been decided to reassess their sites and concern is now being raised about the setting concerning the area on the edge of Reading.

The Chairman…………………………………..date…………………………
1. **Highlights**

1.1 Both the Chalk Cherries and Chair project and a new North Chilterns project were submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in August, the culmination in both cases of creative development work and strong partnership working, a huge effort by staff and partners, so thank you to everyone involved.

1.2 The Autumn Chilterns Walking Festival, 6th to 21st October, has launched with great numbers of bookings. And, it was featured in the well-read inews.co.uk as one of the 13 best walking festivals, up there with the long-established festivals such as Crickhowell and the New Forest.

2. **Report from Executive Committee, 19th September 2018**

2.1 The Committee discussed the Finance Report which highlighted a pro rata budget deficit for the four months to July of £8,584 with an actual deficit of £3,339. Timing as ever has an impact on the published figures. Core income is expected to meet budget for the year and core expenditure is forecast to be below budget for the year.

2.2 Following a recommendation from the Finance Officer, the Executive Committee agreed to maintain its strategy of using UK deposit accounts, maximising return with a low risk approach. The Finance Officer will maintain his search for higher returns without risking capital.

2.3 The Committee discussed the Review of AONBs and National Parks and gave feedback on an initial draft of a paper which is on the Board Meeting agenda.

3. **Report from Planning Committee, 18th July 2018**

3.1 Planning Committee looked at wording and policies in the development chapter of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan first draft. A debate was held on the scale and tenure of housing appropriate in the AONB and a number of edits suggested.

3.2 Committee approved the planning application responses made since the last meeting. Some larger schemes included housing proposals at Tring, Woodcote and Kimble.

3.3 A number of very major infrastructure proposals were raised, and Committee discussed the Oxford-Cambridge expressway, the Heathrow third runway (implications for flightpaths affecting the Chilterns) as well as the examinations of various local plans. Also the newly released revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its coverage of AONBs, showing some positive changes
since the draft version.

4. **Landscape and Conservation**

4.1 Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme development has been completed and the final Stage 2 bid for a £2.8m Scheme was submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund in August. We are expecting an HLF Trustee visit in early November and to hear the outcome of the bid in December. If successful we will be recruiting in the new year with a view to the project commencing April 2019.

Jacky Akam, who led the development work has now left the Board, along with Sarah Close the Scheme trainee. Nick Marriner, Development Officer, is continuing to work on land owner engagement and fundraising until end of December.

Jacky, Nick and project partners developed an excellent set of supporting documents including the ‘Landscape Conservation Action Plan’ which has been complimented by our HLF mentor.


The match funding strategy, led by the Development Team with support from Claire Readey, has been highly successful with contributions pledged from more than 20 organisations/ funders including Wycombe District Council (Community Infrastructure Levy) and Bucks County Council.

4.2 North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative – see separate agenda item.

4.3 Allen Beechey, Chalk Streams Project Officer has been successful in securing £50,000 from Thames Water to fund a chalk streams and water efficiency awareness programme. The majority of the funding will be used to employ a part time Education and Engagement Officer on an 18 month contract. Recruitment will be underway shortly. The post will be managed by the Allen.

4.4 Undergrounding of power lines – stage 1 approval has been secured from the Steering Group, chaired by Natural England, for the undergrounding of a total of over 16 km of powerlines at a cost of £4m at two locations in the Chilterns: Dunstable Downs and Latimer. This work is led by Neil Jackson, our Landscape and Conservation Officer.

4.5 Beacons of the Past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape HLF Project is now well underway with a series of first year benchmarks achieved.

- Contract Awarded to Cyient Europe Ltd for the LiDAR survey; flights will commence in November
- HLF-approved re-allocation of LiDAR underspend to make Landscape Heritage Officer fulltime
- Launch event held in High Wycombe, with over 100 attendees, including local
politicians; social media impact of the Project went up by 731%

- First edition of e-Newsletter sent out
- Suite of training events booked for volunteers, from fieldwork to digital training
- Teacher Workshop (to explore Heritage School schemes and how the project can support National Curriculum delivery of the prehistory criterion) booked
- First primary school assemblies organised
- 118 new volunteers recruited since June 2018 for a total of 315 volunteers in our contacts database.

5. **People and Society**

5.1 The Chilterns Walking Festivals are going from strength to strength, with advance bookings for the fourth Festival (6th to 21st October) already exceeding the numbers achieved for last autumn’s Festival. There are over 300 direct bookings to date, plus many more through partners.

The autumn programme features 59 walks and we have collaborated with Active Luton and Path Hill Outdoors to put on some walks and events specifically aimed at Luton and Reading urban audiences.

We have recently introduced a new online donation system whereby customers can donate £3 towards the Festival when booking. So far 18% of customers have donated. We are looking at the sustainability of the Festivals and options for its future funding as Leader funding comes to an end October 2019.

5.2 The CCB has submitted a bid to the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund for a £241,349 project ‘Open for Business’ which will focus on expanding the visitor economy in the central Chilterns through a 3 year programme. If successful, it is hoped that a project manager would be recruited and the delivery of the programme would commence in June 2019.

5.3 A £2,500 grant has been secured from the Radcliffe Trust towards promoting Chilterns crafts. This will entail the delivery of 10 ‘meet the maker’ craft walks, a promotional video featuring local makers and new web content.

5.4 We have been researching the potential for public engagement activity targeting Reading audiences and will be trialling some events with Path Hill Outdoors, an outdoor education provider in a woodland setting near Reading. This is with a view to developing a larger-scale funding bid if there is potential.

5.5 We held a volunteer event in September to say thank you to the volunteers who have given so much of their time and expertise. Twelve volunteers attended including volunteer walk leaders, Chilterns Walking Festival ambassadors who help promote events and help with marketing, social media and office support. The CCB gave updates on the latest projects including the Chilterns Hillforts project.
6. **Development and Communications**

6.1 Since the previous update we have published Outstanding Magazine, the Annual Report and revamped the monthly e-newsletter creating a fresh new template and alternative content. The rollout of the new logo and colour scheme is largely complete and has been met with a very positive response.

6.2 We co-ordinated the first consultation of the Management Plan and captured the online responses received. We have approached graphic design companies to give quotations for the overall design of the Management Plan.

6.3 We have refreshed the existing website to incorporate the new logo design and colour palette and have also started to create new and interesting content via the “news” and “what’s on” sections of the website. By creating this additional content, it has enabled us to direct users to our website via our online social platforms. We’ve gained 311 new followers on twitter and 82 new page likes on Facebook since June.

6.4 We have moved forward our plans for a new website researching platforms and drawing up deliverables. We have started writing the tender proposal for the new site. We have agreed with the Chilterns Tourism Network to merge the VisitChilterns.co.uk and Chilternsaonb.org websites in order to create a seamless user experience for visitors to the Chilterns. We are now working together to draw up an agreement for how the sites will be managed moving forwards.

6.5 We have introduced a photography competition that is running throughout October with support from local businesses who have donated prizes. We are busy creating a buzz around the competition sharing with local media, posting on social media and sending to over 200 local Primary and Secondary schools. The theme is “What does the Chilterns mean to you” and the competition is intended to highlight the importance of getting out and about and to encourage participants to celebrate the beauty and enjoyment of the area.

6.6 We have been working with the Hillforts team to help develop and realise their communications strategy. Following a press release about the project we secured a radio interview with BBC 3 counties.

6.7 Work to ensure the CCB is GDPR compliant is now complete. We have introduced a new free software package, Hubspot, to manage CCB contacts and mailing lists in the future and we will be conducting short training sessions with staff members to ensure they can benefit fully from the system.

6.8 Fundraising has seen some positive achievements in the past 6 months, including a £10,000 donation from the Banister Charitable Trust for the Chalk, Cherries & Chairs project, and several smaller donations from Parish Councils. We await the outcome of a number of other different Trusts and Foundations including the Shanly Foundation, the Ernest Cook Trust and The Rothschild Foundation, and are looking.
to access further funding by creating extensions to existing projects.

6.9 We are working to develop relationships with potential corporate supporters and have developed a corporate support flyer to summarise opportunities for companies to support us. We recently had a positive meeting with Hypnos, the Princes Risborough bed manufacturer, and are exploring a number of different trial projects as an initial test of working together. If any Board Members have corporate links and would be willing to help advocate the work of the CCB, we would welcome any leads or introductions.

6.10 Our work to engage with and seek support from Parish Councils continues to develop. We have just sent our annual Parish Council ask, which builds on approaches made for the Hillforts project earlier in the year, and continues to reinforce the value to parishes of the AONB and Conservation Board. We included complementary Design Guides with the mailout, along with the new corporate support brochure for circulation. Our engagement with Parishes will improve again over the next few months with the introduction of a quarterly parish council e-newsletter, which will both highlight the work we do for parish communities, whilst giving multiple opportunities for parishes to get involved and support our projects.

6.11 We are exploring the development of new projects which will help deliver objectives for the CCB and AONB and will use the new Management Plan to help inform the ongoing development of a pipeline of projects. We are working with Annette to establish a pilot Dementia Walk at Lane End, working with Bucks Simply Walks and local care homes. We are hoping this will evolve into a wider pilot project which will help test and provide the evidence needed for the Big Lottery Fund for a larger health and wellbeing project. In the meantime, our social media will continue to promote the benefits to health and wellbeing that landscape and being outdoors in the environment can bring.

6.12 We are working with Kath to shape and support match fundraising for the North Chilterns Community Initiative and Annette regarding the potential public engagement project targeting urban communities in Reading.

6.13 The ‘Chilterns Champions’ concept continues to develop. The offer is on our website and will continue to be promoted by social media. We now have a small group of core volunteers who assist with administration, social media, written articles and website work.

6.14 We have looked at new funding opportunities, including Natural England Funding for children and the outdoors which will help deliver the 25 Year Environment Plan, and are discussing with the National Association to explore opportunities for consortium bids to access these types of larger funding pots in the future.
Item 7  

**Board Members for Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project**

**Author:** Sue Holden, Chief Officer

**Summary:** The Chiltns Conservation Board can place board members on the Chiltern Woodlands Project Board and the Chiltns Chalk Streams Project Steering Group. We are seeking board members to sit on both committees.

**Purpose of Report:** To seek CCB nominations for the above board and steering committee.

**The Chiltern Woodlands Project**

1. The Chiltern Woodlands Project is a registered charity founded in April 1989 by the Chiltn Society and partners. John Morris is currently the only employee and is based in the Chiltns Conservation Board’s offices in Chinnor. An Accord with the CCB was agreed in 2007, it agreed joint working on a wide range of woodland issues affecting the Chiltns. Examples of this was the Ancient Woodland Inventory for the Chiltns, Special Trees & Woods Project, The Commons Project, The Box Woods Project and now the Hillforts Project.

2. The Chiltns AONB is heavily wooded with over 23% woodland cover, 60% of these woods are ancient. It is famous for its beech woods. Sadly, the health of trees and woods across the Chiltns continues to deteriorate due to diseases, pests and climate change including ash dieback, acute oak decline, deer and squirrels.

3. The Chiltern Woodlands Project’s aim is to achieve a cherished and thriving woodland resource across the Chiltns and surrounding areas. We promote effective and sympathetic woodland management, so protecting the landscape, conserving nature and promoting a sustainable woodland economy, which is also of value for recreation and tourism.

4. Work is across five linked themes:
   A. **Landscape**: to protect and enhance the wooded landscape of the Chiltns.
   B. **Biodiversity**: to maintain and enhance nature in the Chiltns.
   C. **Economy**: to promote a sustainable woodland economy in the Chiltns; including the use of timber and wood fuel.
   D. **Historic Environment**: to raise awareness and interest in the history
and archaeology of woods across the Chilterns

E. Community: to increase awareness, understanding, and enjoyment of Chiltern woodland.

5. The Chiltern Woodlands Project offers an advisory service to help bring woods into management, working in partnership with others including the land owners, contractors and volunteer groups. It charges fees for its assistance to woodland owners. It also organises training events and woodland conferences. It is working with the Chiltern Society to manage their sites, including Bottom Wood, and also with the Royal Forestry Society at Hockeridge & Pancake Woods.

6. The work of the charity is overseen by a small Board of Directors / Trustees who agree policy, budgets and offer financial and other support. They meet 3 or 4 times a year on a weekday morning in Chinnor.


Chilterns Chalk Streams Project

7. Chalk streams are a characteristic and much valued feature of the Chilterns landscape. They are also a globally rare habitat, confined to north west Europe and to the UK in particular. More than 85% of all the chalk streams in the world, are found in England.

8. Chalk streams are important habitats for wildlife and support a massive range of plants and animals. They are home to some of our most threatened plants and animals, such as the water vole and brown trout. They also have a fascinating history and supported many thriving industries in the past.

9. The Chilterns Chalk Streams Project is a successful, long running partnership initiative established over 20 years ago. The Project Officer, Allen Beechey, is employed by the CCB. The Project works with local people across the Chilterns to improve river habitats, improve access and enjoyment and promote the sustainable use of water.

10. The Project has a small steering group with stakeholder representatives including the Environment Agency, Water Companies, Chiltern Society, BBOWT, and Bucks County Council.

11. Since the departure of Gill Gowing (former Secretary of State CCB member) the group has been without a Board Member representative. There are many challenges and opportunities ahead for the Project, including around the future business and organisational model, and CCB input to the Steering Group would be very welcome at this important time.
Item 8  
Chalkscapes - North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative

Author: Kath Daly, Countryside Officer

Summary: A stage 1 bid has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a major new partnership initiative in the North Chilterns.

Purpose of Report: To update the Board on proposals to develop a major community and landscape initiative in the North of the Chilterns.

Background

1. Ambitious proposals for a £2.4m North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative have been submitted to HLF. The Initiative focuses on the chalk landscapes, wildlife and heritage around Luton and Dunstable – see map in project summary at Appendix 1.

2. The proposals were developed and submitted by a partnership led by the CCB.

3. The North Chilterns is characterised by a stunning diversity of chalk specialist plant and animal species; it is for example, considered one of the top 3 areas for chalk flora in the country.

This is a landscape where fragile habitats and ancient landscape features sit alongside densely populated and rapidly growing urban areas.

At least 22,100 new homes are planned in the scheme area by 2035 in addition to major growth in transport infrastructure – including the proposed expansion of Luton Airport.

These pressures combine with underlying environmental change for example in land management and farming practices, climate change and pollution and as a consequence the area is rapid declines in biodiversity.

4. Luton has one of the highest rates of population turnover in the country. Estimates suggest that between 50% and 75% of the population would not have lived in Luton/ not have been born at the time of the 2001 Census. The transitory nature of the population creates a particular challenge in getting local communities to engage.

Yet this is an area where there is a huge need and opportunity to increase positive engagement between local people and the Chilterns countryside and heritage, and to secure the benefits for people and environment that can come from this increased engagement.
Developing strong links with local community partners who already work within these communities will be essential for a successful outcome, and we have started to make headway on this, though there is far more to do.

5. The proposal includes 5 distinct but connected projects as outlined in the attached project summary.

6. The Stage 1 bid submitted to Heritage Lottery is for a 5 year, £2.4m initiative. We will learn the outcome of the bid in December. If approved, HLF will provide a £199k grant to support the detailed project development.

7. The development grant would be used to employ a Development Manager (Community) and Development Officer (Conservation) for 18 months to further develop the partnership and lead the detailed project development. The officers would be employed by the Board but based locally within the project area (hosted by Central Beds Council).

Recommendation

1. That the Board notes the progress towards development of a major community and conservation initiative for the North Chilterns.
About this Initiative

A new partnership of conservation and community groups in the North Chilterns has created an ambitious community, wildlife and heritage initiative for the Luton and Dunstable area.

Faced with unprecedented levels of housing, infrastructure growth and environmental pressures, we believe there is an urgent need for a joined-up, strategic response to support wildlife, heritage and communities in this area.

We have submitted a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid for a £2.4m scheme of 5 complementary projects which will encourage communities to work together in response to the challenges and opportunities.

Why is this Initiative needed now?

The chalk hills of the North Chilterns are under enormous pressure. Record levels of housing and transport infrastructure growth are having an irrevocable impact on landscape. Rare and threatened species which depend on the chalk geology, in steady decline since World War II, are declining faster than ever before. Rapidly growing urban communities have little connection with the surrounding countryside, yet there is a real need an opportunity for local communities to get involved in caring for the wildlife and heritage of the area.

Chalkscapes is a unique partnership initiative designed to address the most pressing challenges facing the natural environment and cultural heritage of the North Chilterns. A suite of projects – from practical conservation work to community engagement – will help improve habitats and connectivity, whilst innovative volunteering and community initiatives will help inspire a new generation of people to understand and care for the landscape on their doorstep.

Based on the Lawton principles of bigger, more joined-up, diverse and better-managed habitats, this Initiative will help meet the ambitions of the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. Locally, it will contribute to the delivery of Luton’s Investment Framework’s vision of developing skills, improving health and wellbeing and supporting cohesive communities. Overall, the Initiative will be pivotal in developing mutually-beneficial relationships between the landscape and the urban communities which it surrounds.

NEXT STEPS

We will hear the outcome of our Stage 1 HLF application in December 2018. Meanwhile, we are keen to hear from any local community organisations or environmental groups to explore how they might like to be involved.

Please contact Kath Daly for more info: 01844 355524 e: kdaly@chilternsaonb.org

PROJECT TIMELINE

Dec 2018  
Outcome of Stage 1 bid

Jan – Mar 2019  
Recruit Development Team*

Apr 2019 – Sept 2020  
Detailed project development*

Apr 2021 - Sept 2025*  
Project delivery

*Subject to successful bid
The Projects

CHALKSCAPES CHAMPIONS
People and communities are placed firmly at the heart of the Chilterns landscape with Chalkscapes Champions, our volunteering project. Local people will be encouraged to design and lead projects which care for the landscape, wildlife and heritage whilst helping to inspire and involve others.

ROUTEWAYS AND WAYSIDES
A network of ancient trackways – including the Icknield Way, connecting Luton and Dunstable to the Chilterns – were once the lifeblood of the North Chilterns. This project will focus on understanding and promoting the significance of these prehistoric routeways for both people and wildlife and will carry out practical enhancements on key routes.

TALES OF THE CHALK
Inspired by the North Chilterns past, present and future, stories of the landscape will be brought to life in this exciting arts-based project. Working with a range of arts, heritage and community organisations including the National Trust, Luton Community Activity Network and Town and Parish councils, local people across all generations will be encouraged to get involved in a programme of creative arts activities, from audible histories to 3D arts installations and events.

CHALKSCAPES FESTIVAL
The focal point for community engagement over the four-year project period, the Chalkscapes Festival will be a two-week, annual celebration of North Chilterns’ landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. The Festivals will feature a wide variety of planned activities and events from food tasting, cooking and crafts to farm visits, conservation work, treasure hunts and waymarking, and will be carefully designed to help engage and inspire new audiences.

WILD CHALK
This ambitious, landscape-scale project will be at the heart of the Initiative. Practical delivery will be carried out on 5 ‘Focus Areas’ offering the greatest opportunity for biodiversity improvements. The project will work with landowners and managers to deliver practical habitat management, species conservation work, and participate in survey and monitoring tasks. The result will be bigger, more joined-up, diverse and better-managed habitats which enable wildlife to flourish.
About the initiative area

Chalkscapes focuses on the natural and cultural heritage of the chalk landscapes in the Luton and Dunstable area.

The area supports a stunning range of and animal species and is considered one of the three most important chalk areas in the country for wild flowers.

This is an intricate landscape where chalk downland, farmland, scrub, woodland, quarries, chalk streams and springs are found alongside ancient earthworks and trackways, closely interwoven with urban areas.

The juxtaposition between one of the finest landscapes in the country and some of the most densely populated urban communities is a key driver for this exciting conservation and community-based partnership.

Partners include:

- Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire and Northants Wildlife Trust
- Bedfordshire Natural History Society
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Chiltern Society
- Groundwork (Luton and Beds)
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Luton Borough Council
- Natural England
- National Trust
- Plantlife
- Team Beds & Luton
Item 9  Review of National Parks and AONBs

Author:  Sue Holden, Chief Officer

Summary:  The Review Group has started work and we are expecting a call for evidence in October to which the CCB will respond. There is no formal response to the CCB request for a Chilterns Review, but various partner organisations and councils have offered initial views.

Purpose of Report:  To update the Board on the Review of National Parks and AONBs, and the Chilterns Review, and share proposed subjects for the CCB’s response to the call for evidence

Background

The Review of National Parks and AONBs was a commitment in the government’s 25 year Environment Plan and the objectives were given in a paper to the CCB’s June board meeting. The review should report Autumn 2019.

I joined four other AONB Lead Officers and the National Association for the first AONB meeting with the Chair of the Review, Julian Glover. He stressed the positive purposes of the review and that he is keen the Review considers the further potential and impact of designated landscapes (DLs).

We discussed what national means in our context and how AONBs might better deliver for the nation. We explained that, unlike National Parks, AONBs are not always understood as ‘special’ and not recognised as a brand, despite equivalence in landscape status. We discussed the role of AONBs in setting a framework for any future land management scheme, and how we might develop work around natural capital and ecosystem services to provide priorities for a new scheme. We talked about the impact of development pressure, particularly in the South East, and our ability (or lack of) to influence this.

The Review Chair came to the annual AONB conference and took part in two briefing sessions. Cheryl Gillan MP and I have a meeting with him in October.

The NAAONB has contracted Ruth Chambers, previously Head of Policy at the Council for National Parks, to help develop an advocacy strategy for the Review.

The Call for Evidence

It is expected that there will be a call for evidence from the Review Group in October. We do not yet know the scope, format or timetable for the call but it would be my intention to include the following general points and CCB specific points if agreed with Board Members.
General Points

1. The AONB designation, especially in the south-east of England, needs strengthening. There needs to be a single description of landscapes of national importance with clarification that the status of AONB and NP designations is equal. Consideration should be given to use of a single landscape name.

2. AONB Management Plans should have a clearer status in the planning system and should always be taken into account when making development decisions in the AONB.

3. Public bodies should have their responsibilities for the AONB formalised and should have a duty to implement the AONB Management Plan.

4. Confirmation is needed that the natural beauty, natural capital and special qualities of AONBs in the south-east of England (35% of land area) should not be compromised due to development pressure.

5. A framework for assessing landscape quality and for assessing environmental limits is needed. More data is required to measure change in designated landscapes and to assess whether the purposes of the designations are being fulfilled. A method for quantifying landscape capacity and for valuing natural capital is needed to ensure damage/loss is understood and net gain can be achieved.

6. A faster process is needed for reviewing boundaries especially where landscape of equal value to that within the AONB boundary has been excluded.

7. Additional powers are needed to allow the creation of AONB-wide strategic development plans, placing special qualities and communities at the heart of a landscape-scale plan.

8. The responsibility 'to have due regard' in Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000 needs to be strengthened.

9. Permitted development rights should be more limited in designated landscapes especially for major infrastructure such as railways.

10. Recognition must be given to the enormous contribution the Heritage Lottery Fund have made to the work of designated landscape teams to conserving landscapes, restoring nature, caring for cultural heritage and engaging people. There are very few other sources of funding available for DL work.

11. DLs can play a critical role at the heart of a new Environmental Land Management Scheme to deliver across all ecosystem services, using our management plans to direct and prioritise future support.
12. DLs and other designated sites should be at the heart of a national network for nature’s recovery

13. AONBs are for the nation and resources should be dedicated to enabling increased engagement with a far greater number of people. AONBs with the potential to engage and benefit large nearby populations especially urban areas should have dedicated resources for access, recreation and health and well-being.

14. A Landscape Commission or agency is needed to facilitate collaboration and delivery across landscape organisations, provide a single strong voice for designated landscapes and provide central services and expertise in a more effective way. Facilitation capacity is needed to ensure AONBs and National Parks work collaboratively together. There should be more joint initiatives such as a programme of fundraising.

15. New National Parks should be created to fully protect landscapes of the highest quality and to ensure more people benefit from the strategic conservation and enhancement achieved by national parks.

**Specific to the Chilterns Conservation Board**

16. Planning powers for the CCB need to be strengthened including making the CCB a statutory consultee on planning matters (we are a statutory consultee on minerals and waste plans only)

17. Core public funding (central and local government) must be maintained for the CCB to fulfil its core purposes. External funding can be raised for delivery of projects, but alternative funding is not available for core functions.

18. More flexibility is needed in the governance model for the Conservation Board – a clearer relationship with local authorities is needed

19. The CCB needs the ability to create single strategic policies which apply across the AONB and are included in local authority plans.

20. Parish Councils should be given a duty to flag significant planning matters to the Conservation Board

21. The status of the Chilterns should be reviewed and considered for National Park status or for a new model to be created with the branding and powers of a National Park (though not necessarily all the functions).

22. The CCB needs the ability to create a strategic unit across the Chilterns which brings together some of the remaining expertise (landscape, ecology, archaeology etc) from local authorities and agencies.

23. The boundary of the AONB needs to be reviewed because landscape is a high quality (equal to that within the current boundary) was excluded.
The Chilterns Review

We have not had a response from Natural England to our request for a review of the Chilterns designation though we have had a positive first conversation with regional Natural England colleagues. I assume that consideration of requests is on hold whilst the Review of National Parks and AONBs takes place. The Review is not considering individual requests, but it will ask the generic question ‘should there be more national parks’.

The National Association of AONBs has discussed requests for a change of designation and decided to support them. The Council for National Parks have said they are not against new parks, as long as new resources are given. National Parks are concerned that new parks will weaken the brand, that the criteria for NP status might be lowered and that funding for parks will be spread too thinly.

I have had initial conversations with partner organisations such as BBOWT, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and Chiltern Society about the question and have positive comments from most. I have also been discussing it with local authority officers as I meet them to discuss the draft management plan.

Most local authorities have not considered the question of national park status formally, but a couple have had initial discussions. Hertfordshire County Council approved a recommendation that Council agree ‘to explore the opportunity of the Chilterns AONB becoming a national park’. South Oxfordshire District Council councillors discussed a recommendation to support the government’s Review of National Parks and AONBs, and “expressed views that designation as a National Park would offer greater protection for the district’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty against development and expansion from neighbouring areas as well as serving to conserve and enhance the natural environment.”

Next Steps

The National Association convened a September meeting of AONB Lead Officers to start the process of creating a collective response from all AONBs. The National Parks and AONBs of the South-East and East of England (SEEPL) also met in September and will submit a regional response to the Review. We will work on both through October.

I will hopefully be able to update the Board verbally as to the scope and timetable of the Review’s call for evidence.

Recommendation

1. The Board are asked to discuss and give advice on the CCB’s response to the Review of AONBs and National Parks.
Item 10  AONB Management Plan 2019-24

Author: Sue Holden, Chief Officer

Summary: The authors of the Management Plan have summarised the key issues raised during the informal consultation and summarised where changes have been made. Following the board discussion, we will finalise draft two and publish it for formal consultation at the end of October.

Purpose of Report: To update the board on the results of the informal consultation on the first draft of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 and to seek views on the second draft prior to formal consultation being launched.

1. Background

1.1 Over the summer the first draft of the AONB Management Plan 2019-24 was sent to key partners and database contacts for informal consultation. We had around 50 responses and some very helpful and insightful feedback. We have considered the feedback carefully and have created draft two of the plan.

1.2 Subject to Board feedback, we will publish the second draft for formal consultation by the end of October. Given the 1500 responses to our original survey, we will try to get a wide response from the public and we hope that many more partners will respond this time.

1.3 A PDF version of draft two of the Management Plan will be emailed to Board Members separately.

2. Introduction, Vision and General Policies

2.1 Issues raised

- A number of respondents asked questions about whether the plan should be ambitious or realistic. We believe the plan should state what is needed to conserve and enhance the AONB and therefore, in the face of significant change, its policies have to be ambitious. Future action planning will of course have to be realistic.

- The majority of respondents said they supported the proposed policies calling for National Park status and for greater partnership working. Some respondents were unwilling to answer the National Park question until more discussion has
taken place.

2.2 Changes proposed

- It is proposed to change the National Park policy (GP1) to one calling for a review and consideration of enhanced status which we feel most partners would be able to support.
- We have added a policy (GP2) on the boundary review already requested from Natural England.
- We have added a policy (GP4) on ecosystem services which covers the broad range of environmental issues, from climate change to air and light pollution, which reflect the natural capital context being promoted by the government’s 25 year Environment Plan and other major policies.

3. Nature

3.1 Issues raised

- Need for greater acknowledgement of the environmental benefits delivered by farmers and land managers.
- Need to make more reference to policy context
- Need for more explicit reference to net biodiversity gain.
- Need for more focus on the water environment as a whole and not only on biodiversity
- Need for more consistent approach to different habitats within the policies

3.2 Changes proposed

- The wording regarding the role of farmers and landowners in conserving the AONB has been strengthened.
- References to policy context and legislative framework have been added.
- Water environment policies and actions have been added to a revised ‘Land and Water’ chapter.
- Some of the context and policies have been reworded to ensure a more consistent approach to different habitats, and to expand the habitats referred to.
4. **Historic Environment**

4.1 Issues raised

- Of the comments received from the public, several made suggestions beyond the current remit and powers of CCB (particularly with respect to planning control, e.g. "planning controls have to be much stricter").

- Several suggestions were made about greater communication with the public regarding heritage events and resources.

- Comments received from Local Government partners were on the whole very positive about both the text and policies. Points of concern lay with policies regarding encouraging landowners of sites with heritage assets to protect them better, and work with planning departments and developers to encourage more sensitive development. This partly reflects a lack of clarity over the fact that these are policies to be put into action with partners, i.e. local planning authorities and Historic England. Response to this feedback must also consider the broad question of whether the Plan is to be ambitious or realistic in its aims.

- The frequent use of the word "encourage" was criticised in the policies for not being strong enough. The key actions set out the areas where more concrete action is possible and planned.

4.2 Changes proposed

- Whilst increased research, communication, and development of heritage resources were aspects already covered by the Strategic Objectives/Policies/Key Partnership Actions, these were clarified further.

- Several Objective/Policies/Actions were rewritten to make clearer that these were to be carried out in partnership with other authorities and groups.

- The finite nature of the archaeological record was made a more visible statement in the 'Key Issues' section.

- It was acknowledged that the setting of heritage assets may well go beyond the boundaries of the AONB.

5. **Land, Woodland and Water**

5.1 Issues Raised

- Need greater emphasis on woodland management rather than forestry;

- Is ‘no loss’ of woodland achievable – should we aim for ‘no net loss’;

- Strategic level vs detail of ‘how’ – some require much more detail including
recommendations for tree species in different locations;

- Some (including CLA) still understand this to be the CCB’s plan with an expectation that the CCB will deliver all the outcomes – rather than that the plan is for all stakeholders;
- Increased collaborative working has been welcomed;
- Key stakeholder feedback (including EA) that a lot more needs to be done for the water environment.

5.2 Changes Proposed

- Change of section title to include woodland and water;
- several new strategic objectives and policies added to improve coverage of water environment – question whether some of these are better suited to ‘nature’ or ‘planning’ and whether water environment should be a separate section;
- maintain a strategic/ambitious approach as a more ‘realistic’ stance (e.g. no net loss of woodland) might weaken protection for certain habitats such as ancient woodland.

6. Understanding and Enjoyment

6.1 Issues raised

- Key stakeholder feedback questioned the impacts on the landscape of attracting more countryside users. More data or evidence needed to underpin and support the aim of ‘attracting more people to the Chilterns’ and clarity required on what we mean by ‘many more’ (how many is ‘many more’, what is the carrying capacity of the landscape etc).
- More focus and stronger policies needed on non-car-based transport, with particular mention of safer cycle routes, transport options for local communities and recreational routes.
- People engagement was welcomed, but there was a desire for more focus on educating young people, including outreach activities with schools.

6.2 Changes proposed

- We do not currently have the data required on visitor numbers, impacts and carrying capacity. A new policy and key action have been added in around securing commitment to undertake this research and the development of a visitor management strategy.
- The policy on non-car-based travel (EP7) has been expanded and strengthened.
• The relevant policy (EP5) has been re-worded and strengthened to include giving young people opportunities to learn and experience the Chilterns through formal education as well as informally.

7. Economic and Social

7.1 Issues raised

• Insufficient focus on the communities of the Chilterns – those living and working in the AONB – and the specific issues they face, for example poor rural transport provision.

7.2 Changes proposed

• An additional section ‘Supporting Communities of the Chilterns’ has been added in to the Context and several policies have been strengthened in particular policy SP5 on retaining community facilities and services.

8. Development

8.1 Issues raised

• Nearly all the members of the public who responded either expressed support for these policies or wanted them stronger eg. stop development/ stop HS2/ prevent inappropriate development/ change planning laws

• Some local authorities liked the approach, others wanted weaker policies or no policies in this section, because of compatibility with local plans

• Whether to support small-scale housebuilding in the AONB or restrict to small-scale affordable housing

• Suggestions made for extra subjects to cover eg what is major development, or projects eg HS2, Oxford-Cambridge expressway

• Add green infrastructure

8.2 Changes proposed

• New policy wording on green infrastructure and net gain

• Added policy for major infrastructure proposals to avoid, mitigate and compensate to achieve a net gain for the AONB

• Added wording on Oxford-Cambridge expressway and HS2 design

• Added research on house price premium in the Chilterns AONB and adjusted
policy wording on affordable housing

- Added advice on major development
- Explained that the setting of the AONB is not a geographic area that can be mapped
- Added wording on pressures faced by local authorities
- New policy wording on light pollution, no additional water abstraction from chalk streams, public transport

9. **Implementation and Monitoring**

A number of respondents questioned whose responsibility it is to delivery the Management Plan. It is for those with a duty of care for the AONB to consider how to deliver the plan and the CCB will play a lead role in this. It is also advice for all those who have a role in caring for the AONB.

An explanation of the ingredients required for successful implementation of the Management Plan and a proposed monitoring framework has been added to draft two for formal consultation.

**Recommendation**

1. The Board are asked to note the results of the informal consultation phase and to propose additional amendments to draft two.
**Item 11  External Annual Audit Return**

**Author:** Graham Hurst, Finance Officer

**Summary:** The external auditor has completed their review of the Annual Governance and Accounting Return 2017-18 and have raised three matters.

**Purpose of the Report:** To inform members of the completion of the external audit for 2017-18 and matters raised by the auditors.

**Background**

1. The Board prepares an Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR) which:
   - Summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2018; and,
   - Confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to the auditor’s responsibilities.
   - The Annual Return was presented to, and approved by, the Board at its meeting on 20 June 2018.

2. The auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, is required to conduct an assurance review and issue an external audit report and certificate.

**Audit Conclusion**

3. The notice of conclusion accompanies this paper. The auditor has certified that they have completed their review of the annual return and discharged their responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2018.

**Audit Report**

4. The auditor’s report accompanies this paper. The auditor notes that the AGAR was not accurately completed as follows:
   - One of the figures in section 2 of the return was incorrect, this reflects the £600 error noted at the Board meeting 21 June. This was unfortunate but the return, having already been completed and signed by the internal auditor on 7 June 2018, could not be amended.
• The AGAR does not permit income to be deferred and must be completed on a received basis. The CCB has consistently prepared its accounts and AGAR on an “accruals” basis, simply, this matches income over the period that it is earned rather than received. The external auditor has commented in correspondence that this may be acceptable for our internal documents but is not permitted in the AGAR.

• The auditor has noted that the balances shown on the year end bank statements do not agree with the balance shown in the AGAR and noted that the explanation of accrued interest was not adequate. The reason for this discrepancy is that the CCB has funds on term deposit with several banks. These deposits mature at different times, typically 90 days – one year. Interest is added on maturity so if maturity does not occur on 31 March 2018 then the CCB estimates and accrues the interest earned to date.

**Action required**

5. The 2018/19 AGAR comparative figures will be amended to reflect the auditor’s comments.

6. Both the notice of conclusion of the audit together with the auditor’s report are required to be published on the CCB website.

**Recommendation**

1. To approve and accept the auditor’s report and approve the actions noted.
Chilterns Conservation Board

Notice of conclusion of audit
Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2018

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The audit of accounts for <strong>Chilterns Conservation Board</strong> for the year ended 31 March 2018 has been completed and the accounts have been published.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The Annual Governance &amp; Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of <strong>Chilterns Conservation Board</strong> on application to:</td>
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|   | (a) The Finance Officer  
|   | Chilterns Conservation Board  
|   | The Lodge, 90 Station Road  
|   | Chinnor OX39 4HA  
|   | (b) 9am - 5.30 pm  
|   |   |
| 3. | Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £1 (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. |
|   | Announcement made by: (d)  
|   | Graham Hurst : Finance Officer  
|   | Date of announcement: (e)  
|   | 17 October 2018  

**Notes**
This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website.

(a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR

(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised

(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs

(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice

(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice

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Graham Hurst : Finance Officer
17 October 2018
Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18 in respect of Chilteins Conservation Board – OT0011

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor
This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:
- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2018; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

External auditor report 2017/18
On 28 September 2018 we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority’s Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2018. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review.

The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year’s AGAR:
- Section 2, Box 7 for the current year does not agree to Boxes 1+2+3-(4+5+6); the authority confirmed that it should be £569,809.
- Information received from the smaller authority indicates that deferred income has been held as a reconciling item between Boxes 7 & 8. This income should be included in Box 3 in the year it is received, and then carried forward in earmarked reserves shown in Boxes 1 and 7 in subsequent years.

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

Section 2, Box 8 does not agree to the balances shown on the year-end bank statements. A year end bank reconciliation to the statement amounts (£729,500 in total) was not provided. The authority’s explanation that the discrepancy was due to accrued interest is not adequate. In future years, a detailed bank reconciliation should be submitted for review.

External auditor certificate 2017/18
We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2018.

PKF Littlejohn LLP 29/09/2018