



Board Meeting

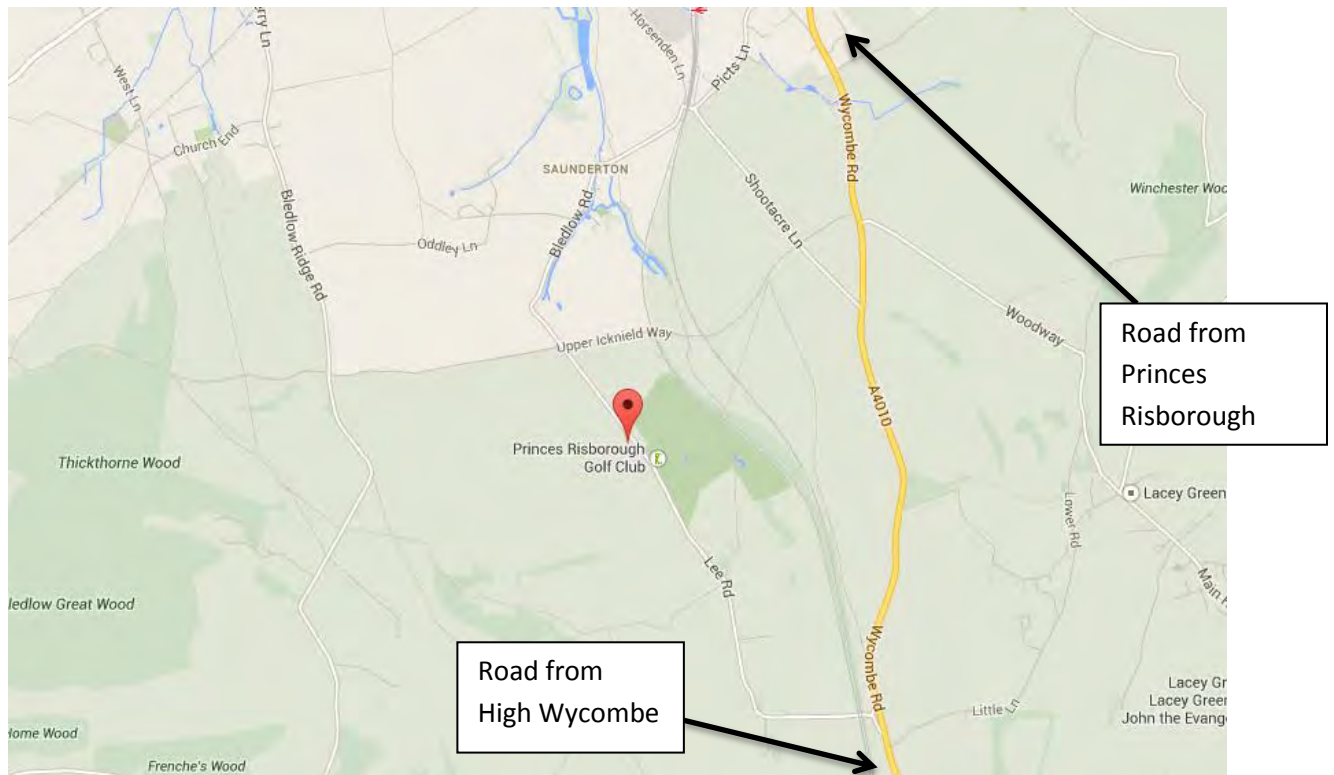
10.00 .a.m. 25th March 2014
Princes Risborough Golf Club,
Saunderton Lee, HP27 9NX

Agenda

| | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | Apologies | 10.00 |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | 10.01 |
| 3. | Minutes of Previous Meeting | 10.02 - 10.07 |
| 4. | Matters Arising | 10.07 - 10.10 |
| 5. | Public Question Time | 10.10 - 10.13 |
| 6. | Report from the Executive Committee | 10.13 - 10.18 |
| 7. | Report from the Planning Committee | 10.18 - 10.23 |
| 8. | AONB Management Plan Review | 10.23 - 11.03 |
| 9. | Draft Business Plan and budget 2014-15 | 11.03 - 11.23 |
| 10. | Report on High Speed 2 | 11.23 - 11.38 |
| 11. | Report on Commons | 11.38 - 12.03 |
| 12. | Word War I Centenary Programme | 12.03 - 12.23 |
| 13. | Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman (1.4.2014 – 26.6.2014) | 12.23 – 12.30 |
| 14. | Presentation to departing members | 12.30- 12.35 |
| | Lunch | 12.45- 2.00 |

Location Map for Princes Risborough Golf Club

Princes Risborough Golf Club
 Lee Road, Saunderton Lee
 Princes Risborough
 Bucks, HP27 9NX



Directions from the South:

From High Wycombe (A40) or Junction 4 of the M40, follow the signs for Aylesbury (A4010) which will take you towards Princes Risborough. From the Pedestal Roundabout (Texaco Garage) turn right towards Aylesbury on the A4010, under the railway bridge and proceed for approximately 3 miles. You will pass the Red Lion public house on your right hand side followed by the Golden Cross pub on your left. Finally, you will reach on your left, the Rose & Crown Hotel - immediately take the next left which is Lee Road and is signposted to the Golf Club. We are situated one mile along Lee Road on the right hand side. Approx journey time from M40, junction 4 is 15 minutes.

Directions from the North:

From Aylesbury town centre take the A4010 towards Princes Risborough. Pass through the town heading towards High Wycombe. After approximately 3 miles you will enter the village of Saunderton. The next right hand turn is Lee Road and is signposted towards the Golf Club. We are situated one mile along Lee Road on the right hand side. Approx journey time 20 minutes. OR From the M40 leave @ Jct 5 and follow the signs for High Wycombe. Travel through Stokenchurch an Studley Green and after another 2 Miles you will pass through the village of West Wycombe and then at the Pedestal Roundabout, turn left onto the A4010 towards Aylesbury and then refer to the direction from the South as above



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22ND JANUARY 2014 at Chiltern District Council
Offices, Amersham HP6 5AW**

COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.55 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

| Member | Appointing Body |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Appointed by Local Authorities | |
| Cllr David Barnard | North Herts District Council |
| Cllr David Collins | Dacorum Borough Council |
| Cllr Bill Bendyshe -Brown | Buckinghamshire County Council |
| Cllr Lynn Lloyd | South Oxfordshire District Council |
| Cllr Roger Metcalfe | Wycombe District Council |
| Cllr Marion Mustoe | Central Bedfordshire Council |
| Cllr David Nimmo Smith | Oxfordshire County Council |
| Cllr Brian Norman | Three Rivers District Council |
| Cllr Ian Reay | Hertfordshire County Council |
| Cllr Chris Richards | Aylesbury Vale District Council |
| Cllr Jeremy Ryman | Chiltern District Council |
| Cllr David Taylor | Luton Borough Council |
| Cllr Alan Walters | South Buckinghamshire District Council |

| Appointed by the Secretary of State | |
|--|--------------------|
| Dr Heather Barrett-Mold | Secretary of State |
| Alison Doggett | Secretary of State |
| Mike Fox (Chairman) | Secretary of State |
| Bettina Kirkham | Secretary of State |
| Dr Simon Mortimer | Secretary of State |
| Ray Payne | Secretary of State |
| Helen Tuffs | Secretary of State |
| John Willson | Secretary of State |

| Elected by Parish Councils | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Cllr Mary Goldsmith | Bedfordshire |
| Cllr John Griffin | Oxfordshire |
| Cllr Margaret Jarrett | Hertfordshire |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Cllr Shirley Judges | Buckinghamshire |
| Cllr Barbara Wallis | Buckinghamshire |
| Cllr Julia Wells | Oxfordshire |

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Officers | |
| Deirdre Hansen | Clerk to the Board |
| Steve Rodrick | CCB Chief Officer |
| Chris Smith | CCB Finance Officer |
| Annette Venters | CCB Access Officer |
| Colin White | CCB Planning Officer |

Chiltern District Councillor Jeremy Ryman welcomed the Board to the Chiltern Council chambers.

The Chairman welcomed Wycombe District Councillor Roger Metcalfe and Buckinghamshire County Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown to their first Board meeting.

13/14.35. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mary Goldsmith and Cllr Margaret Jarrett.

13/14.36. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

13/14.37. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 17th October 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments:

- 13/14.20- 13/14.14 Cyclist was amended to Cyclists'
- 13/14.21.a. thank changed to thanked
- 13/14.23 'e' removed from Dacorum
- 13/14.28 last paragraph: 3rd but last sentence 'side' added to Misbourne Valley

13/14.38. Matters Arising

- a. Item 13/14.30 HS2: it was noted that the volume of spoil mentioned in the final Environmental Statement is much greater than previously stated **in the draft**.

13/14.39. Public Question time

No public questions.

13/14.40. 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 12th December 2013 the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved the finance report for the period April-November 2013
2. Discussed a report on the medium financial forecast for 2014-16 and approved provisional budgets.

3. Approved a proposal to create four bursaries of £250 for projects that would be relevant to the Boards aims and would benefit the AONB.
4. Received a report on the satisfactory progress in reviewing the AONB Management Plan.
5. Received and approved a report on a proposed new constitution for the Chiltern Tourism Network.

The proposal was warmly supported and it was agreed to keep the programme under review and to consider expanding it next year subject to affordability. It was also agreed to write to universities offering to help with student research but not financially.

- 1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the creation of a Bursary Fund of £1,000 and the award of four bursaries of up to £250, to be awarded annually.**

13/14.41. 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 27th November 2013 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Events
4. Conservation Board Position Statements
5. Solar Farms
6. Development Plan Responses
7. Planning Applications update.

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

10.20 Shirley Judges arrived.

Dave Taylor answered a number of questions regarding the plans for Luton airport and impact of overflying aircrafts, which is the responsibility of NATS.

It was noted that Aylesbury Vale DC had been invited to withdraw their Local Plan and that Wycombe DC was taking AVDC comments into consideration in drawing up their own Local Plan.

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

13/14.42. Medium Term Financial Plan 2014-2016

The Chief Officer reported that the specially formed sub-committee of the Executive Committee had prepared a provisional Medium term forecast for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16, which shows anticipated operating deficits based on reduced costs, increased income and the use of reserves. Approval for and adoption of the Medium Term financial forecast was sought.

The report had been circulated to members. The recommendations considered had already been considered by the Executive Committee in detail.

Since the last Executive Committee meeting, DEFRA has announced its funding settlement, which is better than anticipated for 2015-16 and the Board's unchanged employer contribution to the pension fund has also been announced. Both outcomes help reduce the budget deficit over the next two years.

As well as cost savings, increased income, restructuring of the budget has eradicated the operating deficit for 2014/15. The Board's current operating structure can be supported in the medium term.

Staff salary increases and members allowances were discussed. The Executive Committee recommended that the staff should be offered a cost of living rise of 2% or the Consumer Price Index, whichever is lower.

The overall expenditure on allowances should be adjusted annually by the percentage change in Government Grant (-7.5% in 2014-15 and 0% in 2015-16) and then in line with existing policy, the allowances should be increased by the cost of living award offered to staff (+2% in 2014-15).

Small Grants Scheme: the budget currently does not include provision for a small grant scheme. In 2013-14 £20,000 had been allocated from Reserves. Demand has been weak. It was proposed that in 2014-15 the Board allocate up to £20,000 from Reserves for Special Projects. This fund would be offered on flexible terms to partners who propose work which the Board wishes to support. The PR value of the Sustainable Development Fund has been considerable and ways of maintaining this need to be found.

The members discussed the report.

- 1. The Board APPROVED a cost of living award of CPI or 2% whichever is lower as at 1st March 2014 for officers and members. The maximum to be based on affordability.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED adjusting members' allowances in line with the annual change to the DEFRA grant aid: - 7.5% in 2014-15 and 0% in 2015-16.**
- 3. The Board AGREED to adopt the Medium Term Financial Forecast for 2014-15 including the annual budgets for 2014-15 and 2015-16.**
- 4. The Board AGREED to allocate £20,000 for a Special Projects Fund to replace the Small Grants Scheme.**

13/14.43. Report on the AONB Management Plan Review.

The Chief Officer reported that the consultation had ended December 2013. Over 530 comments were submitted by 48 respondents on the Management Plan and over 40 comments by 15 respondents on the Environmental Report.

The full schedule of consultation responses had been circulated to the Board. Members were asked to consider responses meriting detailed consideration at a special meeting. Following that stage the revised plan will be presented to the Board for adoption, subject to any final changes, on 25th March.

The following schedule for publication was considered:

- a. Print a small number of full colour copies of final plan(100) and a summary(2000)

- b. Plan to be loaded on the website as pdf.
- c. A copy of the summary to be sent to every councillor, MP, parish council and all key partners.
- d. A special e-bulletin to promote the publication of the plan.
- e. Total cost approx. £4,000. To date £2,000 has been spent. 2013-14 budget has £10,000 set aside. There is no provision in the 2014-15 budget.
- f. It was proposed to hold a small stock of the full printed plan which will be sold for £25 plus p&p.

1. **The Board provided initial feedback of key issues raised during the consultation.**
2. **The Board DECIDED to hold a special workshop to consider in detail any changes to the plan.**
3. **The Board APPROVED the proposed publication as outlined above.**

13/14.44. Report on HS2

The Chief Officer advised members that the Hybrid Bill had been lodged and the accompanying Environmental Statement was published on 25 November 2013. The major difference compared to the draft ES is the disappointing proposal to **release dump** 12 million tonnes of spoil in the AONB.

It was noted that the Supreme Court had dismissed the appeal on whether an SEA should have been carried out.

The Bill had its first reading 25th November and the deadline for comments on the ES, after a number of changes, has now been set as 27th February 2014. The Chief Officer outlined the legislative time table to the Board.

Arguably The increase in spoil that will be dumped ~~may~~ shows that the Government has failed to comply with the duty in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The size of the Environmental statement, it runs to 55,000 pages and is available on-line only to due to excessive costs, makes it impossible to adequately read and digest the document in the time available. It was proposed to concentrate on those issues on which the Board decided to petition a Select Committee on:

1. The case for a longer bored tunnel.
2. The dumping of spoil in the AONB
3. The impact on the Public Right of Way network.
4. The impact on the landscape, wildlife and the historic environment.
5. The impact on the aquifer and hydrology.
6. S47; the right to exploit economic opportunity.

The Chief Officer proposed that the Board appoint a Parliamentary Agent to advise on how to maximise its effectiveness on petitioning the HS2 Select Committee for changes to route alignment and design following the Second Reading. There would be advantages to appoint the same agent as all the local authorities- Sharpe Pritchard, as much of the work would be the

same as already done for the local authorities and therefore costs would not be excessive. A £2,000 budget was suggested.

Chiltern District Council is commissioning a report, with cost estimates on a full length tunnel along an ~~idealised~~ preferred alignment. The Board had agreed to contribute £5,000 plus staff and member time as appropriate. This option would be the basis for petitioning the Select Committee.

The sums required for the work proposed would be met from Reserves.

The Board discussed the next steps forward.

- 1. The Board AGREED that its response to the Environmental Statement should concentrate on those issues identified in 1-6 above.**
- 2. The Board AGREED that the responses should include the assertion that the Government is failing to comply with the duty in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.**
- 3. The Board AGREED that those same issues should be those for which a petition should be prepared.**
- 4. The Board AGREED to appoint a Parliamentary Agent to assist the Board to develop its petitioning strategy, with an initial budget of up to £2,000.**
- 5. The Board AGREED to contribute up to £5,000 to the tunnel report being commissioned by Chiltern District Council.**

13/14.45. Renewable Energy Position Statement.

The Planning Officer reported on the responses received to the consultation on the draft Renewable Energy Position statement. The responses had been analysed and consequent changes were proposed.

Key issues arising from the Public Consultation were:

1. Definitions of scale of developments caused worry
2. Greater references were sought to address the need to ensure impacts on biodiversity are minimised and opportunities taken to provide net gain where possible.
3. The need to ensure local sourcing of material for wood fuel schemes was sought.
4. The additional benefits for woodland through appropriate management to be highlighted.
5. The need for reinstatement of sites to their former condition was highlighted.

Members discussed the report.

The Planning Officer also gave a brief presentation on three proposals brought to the Boards attention for Solar Panel developments outside the AONB, but with impact on the AONB.

- 1. The Board NOTED the feedback from the consultation and APPROVED the proposed responses.**

2. The Board APPROVED the Renewable Energy Position Statement.

12.30 David Nimmo Smith left the meeting.

Ray Payne left the meeting

Bill Bendyshe Brown left the meeting

12.31 Chris Richards left the meeting.

13/14.46. Report on Cycle Chilterns and The Ridgeway and Thames National Trail.

The Access Officer gave a presentation and a report on the Chiltern Cycle Project following the delivery of the first year programme. She also gave a report and short presentation on the current situation regarding the Ridgeway and the Thames Path National Trails Unit. Members' views were sought on the proposed development programme for the Chiltern Ridgeway.

The Chiltern Cycle project is progressing well and capitalising on the Tour of Britain 2014, coming through the Chilterns in September, is a key objective.

A development plan for the Ridgeway Projects is being compiled and a costed action plan will be presented at the next Board meeting.

12.35 Heather Barrett-Mold left the meeting.

The Members provided feedback and were encouraged to contact the Access Officer for further information.

12.45 Brian Norman left the meeting

12.47 Simon Mortimer left the meeting.

1. The Board PROVIDED feedback on the Chilterns Ridgeway development plan and identified projects to be taken forward.

13/14.47. Works Programme Progress Report.

The Chief Officer provided a report on the Works Programme Progress.

1. The Board NOTED the work programme 2013-14.

13/14.48. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25th March 2014 location TBC.

Dates of future meetings:

Thursday 26th June 2014(the AGM will precede the Board meeting)

Thursday 16th October 2014

The meeting closed 12.55

The Chairman..... Date.....

Item 6 **Report from the Executive Committee**

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: At its meeting on 4th March 2014 the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved the finance report for the period April 2013– Jan 2014.
2. Discussed the medium financial forecast for 2014-16 and approved the provisional budget for 2014-15..
3. Approved the draft Business Plan for 2014-15.
4. Received a report on the progress in reviewing the AONB Management Plan 2014-19.
5. Reviewed the level of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance.
6. Reviewed the level of the General Reserve.
7. Approved the Treasury Management Report.
8. Undertook a biannual review of the Risk Register.
9. Received a report on High Speed 2 related activity.
10. Received a report on changes to the Board's membership.

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

Finance Report April 2013- Jan 2014

1. The Committee received and approved a report on the Board's financial position to the end of January 2014. Expenditure against the core budget was 1% below profile and income almost exactly in line with the profile. Ongoing activity, funded by earned income and the Development Reserve, was progressing satisfactorily, as was externally funded project activity. The take up of the Small Grants Scheme was not been as great as anticipated. By the end of the financial year it was forecast that reserves will have increased by £15,367 largely due to under spend of the small grant fund

Medium term financial forecast 2014-2016, incl. Budget for 2014-15

2. The Committee considered the medium term financial plan for 2014-16 including the detailed budget for 2014-15, which it resolved to approve for presentation to the Board with a recommendation that it be approved.

This is covered in more detail under Item 9.

Fidelity Guarantee Insurance

3. The Audit Commission's auditors made two recommendations in 2013 one of which related to Fidelity Guarantee Insurance. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance is cover to protect the Board's cash holdings against misappropriation. At any one time the Board's cash holdings amount to about £600,000, whereas the cover provided is for £100,000. This was reduced when the cover was re-negotiated a year ago.
4. The auditors' report said that the Board may decide that no security is "sufficient" for them, but in order to come to this opinion it must have reviewed the requirement annually and have objective grounds for such a conclusion. Smaller bodies may decide that the cost of this insurance is disproportionate to the risk involved. Insurers have offered to increase the cover to £250,000 at an additional premium of £175 plus 6% tax. (£10.50).
5. It was decided, in view of the low risk and robust procedures in place, to continue with the current level of cover.

General Reserve

6. A recommendation from the sub group of the Executive Committee, which reviewed the Board's finances, was that the current level of the General Reserve be reviewed.
7. The General Reserve minimum level is currently £135,000 and held primarily to meet the cost of winding up the Board should such an eventuality arise. It is also held as a contingency in the event the Board has to meet a major unforeseen cost. The primary cost of winding up the Board would be the cost of redundancy payments.
8. The Committee decided that, whilst it should always ensure the Board had access to sufficient funds to meet all the costs of winding up, it did not necessarily need to maintain the General Reserve at £135,00 for this purpose. It decided that the level of funds held in the General Reserve should be reduced to £100,000 and this should be reviewed annually.

Treasury Management Report

9. The Committee received and approved the draft Treasury Management Strategy. It felt that no change was needed to the current strategy of low level risk investment in high street clearing banks and major building societies. It

recognised that the returns (approx. 1.3%) would be low and likely to be lower in 2014-15 than in the previous years.

Risk Register

10. The Committee reviews the Board's Risk Register biannually. Recently the only high risk was the potential impact of significantly reduced funding from Government and local authorities. The Committee downgraded this risk (to medium – Amber) as it has taken reasonable steps to ensure the Board's finances are on a sound footing and in light of the notification by DEFRA that its grant would not be cut in 2015-16.

High Speed 2

11. The Committee received the Chief Officer's report on recent HS2 related activity. A response to the consultation on the Environmental Statement had been submitted. Chiltern DC had commissioned work on an "idealised" Chilterns tunnel to which the Board was contributing up to £5,000. The next stage was to prepare petitions for improvements if the HS2 Hybrid Bill passes its Second Reading. The Board had instructed Sharpe Pritchard, Parliamentary Agents, to act on its behalf including lodging of the Petitions.

This is covered in more detail under Item 10.

Board Membership

12. There will be a number of changes in Board membership during the next few months. This paper is attached as Appendix 1, as it is likely to be helpful for the Board meeting itself.

Recommendation

1. **To note the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 4th March and decisions made under delegated authority.**

Item 14 **Report on Board Membership**

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: There will be number of changes in Board membership during the next few months. This paper summaries what they will be.

Purpose of Paper: To ensure the Committee is aware of the forthcoming changes to the membership of the Board

Background

Secretary of State Appointed Members

1. Mike Fox, Bettina Kirkham and John Willson have to stand down on 31st March having served three terms as Secretary of State appointed members. The Board meeting on 2th March will be their last.
2. The vacancies were advertised in November and there 19 applications - the largest number for any AONB Conservation Board or National Park authority.
3. Mike and Ian Reay were involved in the short listing and, as Mike was away, Ian joined the interview panel which met on 12th and 13th February in the Board's offices in Chinnor.
4. The interview panel was made up of Catherine Graham-Harrison (Board member of Natural England) and Max Caller (chairman of the Local Government Boundary Commission). Natural England provided the secretariat.
5. Nine candidates were interviewed (one by phone). The panel agreed to recommend three candidates to the Secretary of Ste for appointment. It is understood this process will take several weeks and the successful applicants may not hear until early April.

Local Authority Appointed Member

6. Brian Norman (Three Rivers DC) has decided that he will not seek re-election when the district council election takes place in May this year. Based on past experience it is unlikely that the council will appoint a replacement until June at the earliest. In such circumstances the Board's Establishment Order provides for the possibility that those members standing down can continue on the Board for up to three months until such time as a replacement is appointed. Brian has agreed that if this happens he will continue to serve as a Board member. His last meeting is, therefore, likely to on 26th June.

Parish Council Appointed Member

7. Margaret Jarrett has indicated that she will not seek re-election to Chorleywood Parish Council in May. This will trigger an election amongst parish councillors in eligible parish and town councils in Hertfordshire (i.e. those which lie wholly or partly within the AONB).
8. The election process involves notifying all councils that serving councillors are eligible to be appointed to the Board. The process allows parish and town councils nominating candidates, if they wish to do so. There is then a ballot of those candidates with each council having one vote.
9. The process is overseen by the Board and likely to take several months as allowance has to be made for the summer recess. The aim will be to have completed the process by October.
10. The Board's Establishment Order again allows for this by making provision for retiring members to remain on the Board until a replacement has been appointed or for up to three months. Margaret has agreed to continue during this period and her last meeting will, therefore, be June 26th. Her replacement should have been appointed in time for the October meeting.

What happens from April to June 2014?

11. As the AGM does not take place until 26th June the Board needs to appoint a replacement for Mike Fox, as chairman, from the meeting on 25th March. The Board's Establishment Order does not make specific provision for this eventuality, but it is reasonable that Ian Reay, as Vice Chairman, should take over as chairman until the AGM. In practice this does not any involve full meetings of the Board but it will include one meeting of the Executive Committee (22nd May).
12. During this same period the Board should appoint a vice chairman. Mike Fox has already invited anyone who is interested to contact him. The Board's election processes are simple. You don't need to be nominated, you can declare your interest at any time including the meeting itself. If there is more than one candidate an election takes place amongst those present.
13. With Mike's retirement there will be a vacancy on the Executive Committee. The Board can either choose to hold an election to fill this vacancy from amongst its remaining Secretary of State members or carry the vacancy until the AGM. The chairmanship of the Executive Committee will automatically pass to Ian Reay as the new chairman of the Board.
14. A similar situation will arise with the Planning Committee currently chaired by Bettina Kirkham. The Board can either elect a member from its remaining Secretary of State appointed members, or carry the vacancy until the AGM. The chairman is appointed by the members of the Committee. A Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 14th May. It makes sense for the

remaining members of the Planning Committee to appoint a new chairman on 26th March rather than wait until the Planning Committee meets in May.

AGM on 26th June

15. The chairman and vice chairman of the Board will be appointed for a term of one year at the AGM. All members of the Executive and Planning Committees will also be appointed for a term of one year at the AGM.
16. Both the Executive Committee and Planning committee can co-opt up to 4 members in a non-voting capacity. These appointments do not have to take place at the AGM.

Continuing Involvement of Retiring Members

17. It is to be hoped that those members retiring won't want to sever all their connections with the Board and its work. Outside of formal involvement there is plenty of scope to participate in the various work streams and projects, and retiring members should be encouraged to continue in this capacity, e.g. Commons Project, Chilterns Ridgeway Forum and the Hillforts Project Steering Group.

Recommendation

1. **To note the forthcoming changes to Board membership**

Item 7 **Report from the Planning Committee**

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 12th February. The following items were discussed:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Events
4. Conservation Board Position Statements
5. Development Plans responses
6. Planning applications update

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

High Speed 2 update

1. The Committee was informed about the: rejection of the Supreme Court appeal; likelihood of an appeal to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee and a complaint to the European Commission and probably the European Court of Justice; ongoing work on the Board's response to the Environmental Statement; possible timetable for the parliamentary process; likelihood of the Board submitting a petition that would deal primarily with a fully bored tunnel, and recent blocking of the Major Project Authority report rating HS2 as amber/red. Members were encouraged to write to their MP's requesting the report to be published in full.

AONB Management Plan Review

2. The Planning Officer informed the Committee that the Management Plan is nearing completion following a period of public consultation. Final changes are being made and were to be discussed at a Member working group on 26th February. The Board meeting in January had received a summary of the key issues and likely changes that would ensue. It was noted that final approval of the Plan would be considered at the Board meeting on 25th March and the reviewed Management Plan would be published in April 2014.

Events

3. Feedback was given about the AONB Planning Forum held in December which had been attended by seven of the Chilterns Planning Authorities, the Chiltern Society, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Forum discussed the Management Plan review, the HS2 Environmental Statement and Hybrid Bill, the Board's draft position statement on renewable energy and the possible AONB boundary

review. Comments made on the topics discussed were fed into the Management Plan review and the renewable energy position statement. The next Forum will take place in May and discuss similar, updated, topics.

4. Parish and Town Council planning training will take place on the following dates: 23rd June, 1st and 3rd July. As part of the training, settlement sustainability and the loss of local facilities (e.g. shops and pubs) will be discussed. A questionnaire has been devised which will be circulated to Town and Parish councils prior to the training sessions.

Conservation Board Position Statements

5. The Committee noted the progress made on the Renewable Energy position statement and agreed the key issues that would need to be addressed in the next position statement on Telecommunications. Details of the key issues can be found by looking at Item 9 in the Planning Committee papers via the following [link](#).

Development Plans responses

Central Bedfordshire Council's Draft Design Guide

6. The Board welcomed the production of the Design Guide and references to the need to take account of the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. The Board sought references to the need to take account of the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide in connection with developments that are within the setting of the AONB. The Board thought it would be useful if mention was made of the need to allow sufficient space for trees to grow to maturity.

Chalfont St Peter Parish Council's Draft Neighbourhood Plan

7. The Board sought references to the fact that part of the area covered by the plan is also within the AONB and that certain policies would therefore apply. The Board suggested that certain parts be reworded to reflect the purpose of the AONB (conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area) and the need to comply with relevant documents. The Plan had much in it that the Board supported.

Henley Town and Harpsden Parish Councils' Joint Neighbourhood Plan sustainability scoping report

8. The Board suggested that various additional documents that the Board produced should also be scoped. The Board suggested that the report should be re-worded to reflect the purpose of the AONB and that a section should be added to deal with this. Though specific housing sites were not proposed at this stage it was noted that a number of possible sites are within or on the edge of the AONB and therefore

likely to affect the AONB. The Board requested that it should be involved in later stages.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at the following: [link](#)

Planning applications update

9. The Committee was informed about the various responses that had been made and approval was given for these. The updates to various cases were noted. The Committee noted that for 2012/13 the number of cases decided in line with the Board's comments was 59% (at one time this had been less than 40%) and for 2013/14 this is currently 70%.

Recommendation

1. **The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.**

Item 8 **Review of the AONB Management Plan**

Authors: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: A sub group meeting was held at the end of February to consider in detail the need for changes following the consultation late last year; the changes have been made with key issues highlighted here, a revised and final draft is now presented to the Board for adoption and subsequent to this the Plan should be sent to the Secretary of State.

Purpose of the Report: To inform members of the key changes made to the draft plan, and to seek adoption of the revised draft and authorisation to send the adopted Plan to the Secretary of State.

Background

1. At the last Board meeting Members considered the responses that had been submitted and key issues that had arisen in connection with the consultation on the draft Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-19. It was agreed that a meeting of a sub group should take place in February to consider in detail what changes should be made to the Plan. This meeting principally dealt with the policies in the Plan.

The Key Changes and Adoption of the Management Plan

2. The key issues that had been discussed at the last Board meeting have been addressed by the addition of policies or text and changes to text where necessary.
3. The key changes arising from the sub group meeting are detailed in Table 1 below.
4. Many previous policies have been reworded to read as policies rather than actions. A number of new policies have been added to deal with:
 - HS2;
 - grazing (of both ecologically important grasslands and on those sites which need it to achieve good conservation status);
 - the Sandford principle (where there is conflict, priority will be given to conservation of the environment rather than its use);
 - Biodiversity Offsetting;
 - raising awareness of how actions can affect the water environment;
 - long-term sustainable management of rivers and their catchments;
 - using the planning process to protect and enhance the rights of way network, and

- facilitating young people's exploration and understanding of the habitats and species of the Chilterns.
5. The changes which to the text proposed by members have been made.
 6. Once adopted, the Management Plan will then be published, distributed and promoted. The adopted Plan must be sent to the Secretary of State - but his approval is not required.
 7. A Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Report have also been prepared and updated following consultation. In addition, an Appropriate Assessment (relating to the Habitats Regulations) and an Equalities Assessment have also been prepared. Finally, Section 89(10) of the CRoW Act requires the Board, on adoption of a new Management Plan, to 'publish a report on the review specifying any amendments made'. The report will be prepared for publication following adoption. All of these documents will be published alongside the Management Plan on the Board's website.

Publication

8. It is proposed to print a small number (100 no.) of full colour copies of the final plan and a summary (approx. 2,000 no.). The plan will be loaded onto the web site as a pdf with each chapter also available as a separate pdf. There will also be low resolution and printer friendly versions. A copy of the summary will be sent to every councillor, MP, parish council and all key partners. There will also be a special E bulletin to promote the publication of the plan.
9. The total cost, including the design printing and distribution, will be approx. £4,000. Thus far £2,000 has been spent. The provision in the current year's budget is up to £10,000. No provision has been made in 2014-15.
10. It is proposed to hold a small stock of the full, printed plan which will be sold for £25 plus p&p. Experience suggests that demand will be low and a reprint unlikely to be needed.

Recommendations

1. **To approve and adopt the revised draft of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-19.**
2. **To delegate to the Chairman and Chief Officer the power to undertake any final minor amendments to the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-19.**
3. **To authorise the Chief Officer to send the adopted version of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-19 to the Secretary of State.**

| Table 1 - Key changes arising from the Review meeting on 26th February 2014 |
|---|
| 1. Many of the policies have been amended to read as policies and not actions. |
| 2. A number of new actions have been added to the engagement plan to reflect the new policies that have been included. |
| 3. Policies L6 and L7 have been combined (both dealt with mitigation of detrimental impacts in slightly different ways). |
| 4. A new policy dealing with HS2 has been added. This is in 3 parts which cover; opposition to the project as proposed at the present time; the desire for a full-length bored tunnel, and if such a tunnel is not provided then full mitigation should be provided. |
| 5. A number of policies have been slightly reworded to make them clearer without affecting the basis or detail of the policy (affects L1, L2, NC2, NC7, WE2, WE9, HE1, HE2, HE11, UE6 and SE7). |
| 6. Policy FF6 has been amended to ensure that the AONB should predominantly remain an actively farmed landscape. |
| 7. A new policy has been added to encourage initiatives that secure sensitive grazing on ecologically important grasslands. |
| 8. A new policy has been added to reflect the Sandford principle – where there is conflict, priority will be given to conservation of the environment rather than its use. |
| 9. A new policy has been added which supports and promotes grazing on those sites which need it to achieve good conservation status. |
| 10. A new two-part policy has been added which deals with Biodiversity Offsetting. The first part stresses that Biodiversity Offsetting should only be used to secure net biodiversity gain where harm cannot be avoided or mitigated and should not be used to justify destruction of irreplaceable habitat. The second part tries to ensure any offset is close to where the initial loss occurs. |
| 11. A new policy has been added to try and increase the awareness of how the actions of owners and occupiers can affect the quality of the water environment. |
| 12. A new policy has been added which supports long-term sustainable management of rivers and their catchments in order to reduce flooding and secure aquifer recharge. |
| 13. Policy HE11 has been amended to more closely reflect the Sandford principle. In this case where there is conflict, priority will be given to conservation of the historic environment rather than its use. |
| 14. Policy UE10 has been reworded to encourage visits to the AONB by environmentally sensitive modes of transport (rather than sustainable visits being encouraged). In addition, reference has been added to the new provision of such modes of transport being encouraged. This had previously been suggested as part of an additional new policy but would have led to repetition. |
| 15. A new policy has been added which encourages the planning process to protect and enhance the public rights of way and access networks for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. |
| 16. A new policy has been added which encourages young people's exploration and understanding of habitats and species in the Chilterns. |

Item 9 **Draft Business Plan and Budget 2014-15**

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: The draft Business Plan gives details of what the Board plans to do in 2014-2015 together with an indication of the resources it has at its disposal and its modus operandi. It combines the work programme and budget for the year ahead. The draft was approved by the Executive Committee on 4th March

Purpose of Paper: For Board approval of the Business Plan incorporating the work programme and budget for 2014-15.

Work Programme

1. The Business Plan (Appendix 1) is both an internal working document to provide structure to its activities and a link to the AONB Management Plan. It also serves as a promotional document to those who wish to know more about the work of the Board. The Plan incorporates the proposed work programme and the budget for 2014-15.
2. The Work Programme contains little that is new to members in the sense that it is an iterative programme constantly evolving rather than being changed just once a year. In 2014-15 the proposed changes of emphasis are as follows:
 1. Promotion of the newly published AONB Management Plan 2014-19.
 2. The development of new areas of activity connected with Hill Forts.
 3. Development of the Historic Farmsteads Survey.
 4. More work with famers and landowners on good management practice.
 5. Continuing emphasis on chalk streams and greater weight given to flooding and water management.
 6. More work on promoting understanding and enjoyment including the special events programme.
 7. Commemoration of the First World War.
 8. More involvement in the Thames Path and, especially, the Ridgeway National Trails.
 9. Development of proposals for projects to succeed the HLF supported Commons and Box Woodland Projects (which will end in summer 2015).

10. Changed emphasis of High Speed 2 related activity.
3. Each of these addresses both of the Boards statutory purposes to some extent. Most of what is proposed can be undertaken with existing level of resources including external funding already secured. The two areas where new funding has to be found is for the Hill Fort programme and the Traditional Farmsteads Survey.
 4. For both it is intended to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Whilst a good start can be made on the Hill Fort programme using staff and volunteers a major injection of funds is needed to enhance significantly the level of activity. A bid to the HLF for funds (up to £1 million) will be a two stage process and it is hoped to secure a Development Stage grant later this year.
 5. The Farmstead Survey would be smaller project (up to £100,000) which only involves a one phase bid to the HLF. It is planned to submit the bid by early summer and hopefully, secure a grant by the autumn.
 6. With a change of emphasis on the HS2 work and the time now available following the completion of the new AONB Management Plan staff time will be released to develop the news areas of work and enhance ongoing activities.

Budget 2014-15

7. The draft Budget was considered by the Board at its last meeting when discussing the medium term financial plan. It has been revised further by the Executive Committee and is now presented for approval (Appendix 2).
8. It has been prepared assuming further reduction from local authorities and a 7,5% reduction in grant from DEFRA compared to 2013-14 (n.b. DEFRA will not be cutting its condition in 2015-16).
9. As the format of the budget has been re-structured it is not possible to show a direct comparison with previous years. The main change is that the DEFRA grant is entirely allocated to meet core costs with none left to support a grant scheme or projects.
10. The budget comprises four parts.

| Budget | Expenditure | Income | Reserves |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Core | 530,915 | 526,723 | 4,192 |
| Ongoing Activity | 58,385 | 46,190 | 12,195 |
| Projects | 198,260 | 200,025 | (1,765) |
| Special Project Support | 20,000 | 0 | 20,000 |
| TOTAL | 807,560 | 772,938 | 34,622 |

11. The core budget, now including Chalk Streams is 78% funded by Defra grant, with the balance coming from local authorities, town and parish councils, chalk streams sponsorship, investment income and the chalk streams reserve.
12. The budget includes a cost of living award to staff and members of up to 2% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is the lower. The CPI for January was 1.8%.
13. The ongoing activity budget of £58,385 is funded by earned income (53%), special events income (25%) and the Development Reserve (23%)
14. Project expenditure is fully funded by external sponsorship, and may grow during the year as further bids are made.
15. The special projects budget of £20,000 replaces the small grants budget and will be funded from the Development Reserve.
16. The net effect of this budget will be to draw down £34,622 from reserves (6.5% of total reserves at 1.4.2014).
17. The main risk is failing to earn insufficient income. However, the sums are not large and a short fall would not require a significant additional drawdown of reserves. An alternative, to balance the budget, would be to reduce the size of the Project Support Fund.

Recommendations

- 1. To approve the draft Business Plan and work programme for 2014-15**
- 2. To approve the draft budget for 2014-15**

| Description | Annual Budget | Notes |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| Promotion and Awareness | | |
| Information Officer & E&A Officer | (95,040) | |
| Travel and subsistence | (1,700) | |
| Web site | (300) | |
| Printing & distribution costs | (900) | |
| Events and exhibitions | (700) | |
| Miscellaneous | (200) | |
| Annual Report | (750) | |
| Annual Forum | (800) | |
| Sub total | (100,390) | |
| Countryside Management | | |
| Countryside & FLU Officer | (109,515) | |
| Travel and subsistence | (900) | |
| Subscriptions: organisations | (90) | |
| Miscellaneous | (85) | |
| State of Environment Report | (500) | Data gathering |
| Con'bn to Chiltern Woodlands Projects | (6,500) | |
| Sub total | (117,590) | |
| Planning and development | | |
| Planning Officer | (64,315) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (1,180) | |
| Miscellaneous | (150) | |
| Planning Committee | (520) | |
| Sub total | (66,165) | |
| Recreation and Access | | |

| Description | Annual | Notes |
|---|------------------|-------|
| | Budget | |
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| Access Officer | (27,905) | |
| Travel and subsistence | (500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (150) | |
| | | |
| Sub total | (28,555) | |
| | | |
| Corporate Services | | |
| | | |
| Chief Officer / Admin Officer | (104,190) | |
| Travel and subsistence | (1,750) | |
| Staff training | (2,000) | |
| Premises | (28,535) | |
| Office costs | (7,625) | |
| IT (incl telephone & voicemail support) | (5,785) | |
| Subscriptions to organisations | (100) | |
| Meetings & events | (435) | |
| Finance | (19,605) | |
| Personnel | (2,730) | |
| Legal and Clerk services | (1,500) | |
| Insurance | (4,800) | |
| Miscellaneous | (250) | |
| | | |
| Sub total | (179,305) | |
| | | |
| Member Services | | |
| | | |

| Description | Annual Budget | Notes |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| <i>Core expenditure:</i> | | |
| Members' allowances | (30,840) | |
| Board member training | (750) | |
| Board meetings | (1,000) | |
| Miscellaneous | (50) | |
| Executive Committee | (150) | |
| | | |
| Sub total | (32,790) | |
| | | |
| Global increment provision | (3,620) | to cover cost of living award |
| | | |
| TOTAL CORE EXPENDITURE | (528,415) | |
| | | |
| National Association for AONBs | (2,500) | |

| Description | Annual Budget | Notes |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| <i>Core Income</i> | | |
| Defra: Core | 412,868 | 78% of core expenditure |
| Local Authorities | 94,255 | |
| Environment Agency | 5,000 | |
| Water Companies | 6,600 | |
| Town and Parish Councils | 3,000 | |
| Investment income | 5,000 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL CORE INCOME | 526,723 | |
| NET CORE INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) | (4,192) | |
| FUNDED BY:- | | |
| Development Reserve: | | |
| - Core surplus | 1,808 | |
| Budget Equalisation Reserve: | | |
| - Core deficit | - | |
| Chalk Streams Reserve: | | |
| - Contribution | (6,000) | |
| | | |
| TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) | (4,192) | |
| RESERVES | | |
| ONGOING ACTIVITY | | |
| Promotion and Awareness | | |
| Countryside Festival | (5,185) | |
| Chalk and Trees 1st edition | (5,975) | |
| Chalk and Trees 2nd edition | (5,975) | |
| Educational Events | (2,250) | |
| Chilternsaetna (newsletter) | (1,100) | |
| | | |
| Sub total | (20,485) | |
| Countryside Management | | |
| Site Management (small works) | (2,000) | Incl. commons & chalk grassland |
| Local Nature Partnerships | (2,000) | |
| Chilterns Farm Advice Project | (2,000) | Annual contribution |
| Commons Project Contribution | (4,000) | |
| Hillforts | (2,000) | To prepare bid |
| Events/exhibitions | (250) | |
| Farmers' Forum | (500) | |
| Box Project Contribution | (1,250) | |
| | | |
| Sub total | (14,000) | |

| Description | Annual | Notes |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| | Budget | |
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| Planning and development | | |
| Planning conference | (900) | |
| Building design awards | (1,500) | |
| High Speed Two | (5,000) | |
| Sub total | (7,400) | |
| Recreation and Access | | |
| Access public'ns incl. Country Walks | (1,000) | |
| National Trail Projects | (1,500) | |
| Access improvements | (1,000) | |
| Sub total | (3,500) | |
| Corporate Services | | |
| Bursaries | (1,000) | |
| IT Replacements & Upgrades | (2,000) | |
| Sub total | (3,000) | |
| Special Events expenditure | (10,000) | |
| TOTAL ONGOING ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE | (58,385) | |

| Description | Annual | Notes |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | Budget | |
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| <i>Ongoing Activity Income</i> | | |
| Earned income | 31,190 | |
| Special Events income | 15,000 | |
| TOTAL ONGOING ACTIVITY INCOME | 46,190 | |
| NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) | (12,195) | |
| FUNDED BY:- | | |
| Development Reserve: | | |
| Contributions | (12,195) | |
| TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) | (12,195) | |
| RESERVES | | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Notes |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| PROJECTS | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| Promotion and Awareness | | |
| Chilterns Commons Project | (112,610) | |
| Box Woods Project | (53,800) | |
| Farm Advice Project | (27,000) | Year 2 subject to confirmation |
| Historic Farmsteads Survey | - | Subject to successful bid, then £3k p.a. |
| Hillforts | - | Subject to successful bid. 2k allocated for bid. Then £5k p.a. |
| Sub total | (198,260) | |
| Planning and development | | |

| Description | Annual | Notes |
|--|----------------|--------------------------------|
| | Budget | |
| | £ | |
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| | | |
| Expenditure | | |
| Chalk Streams external income (projects) | 6,000 | |
| Chilterns Commons Project: HLF | 103,725 | |
| Chilterns Commons Project: other | 9,500 | |
| Box Woods Project: HLF | 50,050 | |
| Box Woods Project: Other | 3,750 | |
| Farm Advice Project | 27,000 | Year 2 subject to confirmation |
| Historic Farmsteads Survey | - | |
| Hillforts | - | |
| | | |
| TOTAL PROJECT INCOME | 200,025 | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Notes |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| CORE ACTIVITY | | |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | |
| NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) | 1,765 | |
| FUNDED BY:- | | |
| Chalk Streams Reserve | 1,765 | |
| TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES | 1,765 | |
| TOTAL SPECIAL PROJECTS EXP. | 20,000 | |
| FUNDED BY:- | | |
| Development Reserve | (20,000) | |
| TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES | (20,000) | |
| RESERVES MOVEMENTS | | |
| General | - | |
| Budget Equalisation | - | |
| Development | (30,387) | |
| Chalk Stream earmarked reserve | (4,235) | |
| TOTAL RESERVES MOVEMENTS | (34,622) | |

Item 10 Report on High Speed Two

(Based on a paper presented to the Executive Committee 4.3.2014)

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief officer

Summary: A response to the consultation on the Environmental Statement was submitted. Chiltern DC is commissioning work on an “idealised” Chilterns tunnel to which the Board is contributing up to £5,000. The next stage will be to petition for improvements if the HS2 Hybrid Bill passes its Second Reading. The Board has instructed Sharpe Pritchard, Parliamentary Agents, to act on its behalf. A submission was made to the Environmental Audit Committee

Purpose of Paper: To ensure the Board is aware of recent and programmed work on HS2.

Environmental Statement (ES)

1. The ES was published for consultation on 25th November initially for 8 weeks but, following failure by DfT/HS2Ltd, to comply with House of Parliament Standing Orders this was extended to 27th February. As reported to the Board on 22nd January the report was vast but in many respects poorly written and in others lacking necessary information. Given the scale and complexity of the High Speed Two proposal it was never realistic to expect a thorough, robust and credible ES to be prepared in the timetable Government set for itself.
2. By common consensus the ES failed in many important respects. The refusal to publish profile maps, for example, makes it impossible to judge some important environmental impacts. It is one of the more obvious examples to obstruct the consultation process by HS2 Ltd and DfT. The general conclusion of the ES, that there would not be significant adverse impacts on the Chilterns AONB, lacked justification, even credibility. It is not a view that Natural England, the government’s advisor on landscape, agrees with.
3. A full submission running to over 100 pages was submitted. In many respects it echoed the comments made on the draft ES published last summer. Almost none of those comments or suggested improvements had been accepted. It is clear that the final ES was, in large measure, completed even before the deadline passed for comments on the draft ES, which would explain why so few changes were made- it also rendered that consultation process largely irrelevant, a fear many have for the recent consultation on the final ES.
4. The main thrust of the Board’s response was that there would be many significant adverse impacts ranging from: landscape intrusion; loss of ancient woodland and hedgerows; noise, severance of rights of way; urbanisation; threats to the aquifer and hydrology; and disturbance to wildlife. The plan to

dump 12 million tonnes of spoil, not even mentioned in the draft ES, suggests the Government placed little weight on the duty in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

5. Virtually all of the severe adverse impacts would be avoided if the bored tunnel was to be extended from Mantles wood near Hyde Heath to Wendover.

Study into an “idealised” tunnel

6. Chiltern DC, with the support of the Conservation Board, Bucks CC and Aylesbury Vale DC, has commissioned engineering consultants to investigate and cost what an idealised tunnel alignment might be. To date all consideration of an extended tunnel has been based on the existing surface alignment. It is unlikely the same alignment would be selected for its entirety through Chilterns if it was designed as a full length bored tunnel from the outset. That study is due to be completed in time for it to inform the preparation and submission of petitions. Ray Payne has been engaged directly by Chiltern DC to oversee the contract and will represent the Board.

Environmental Audit Committee

7. On 7th February the Environmental Audit Committee announced that it intended to hold an inquiry into some of the route-wide environmental impacts. The closing date for submissions was 7th March. Unfortunately the inquiry will exclude Chilterns specific impacts and consideration of impacts on the landscape. The Board called for the Committee to hold another inquiry to ensure it covers the full range of environmental impacts. The timing was unfortunate in that the window to make submissions was so short and for three weeks overlapped the consultation on the Environmental Statement itself. Inevitably this will have limited the number of submissions, most of which would not have been given the attention authors would have liked to give it.
8. The Board echoed the main points it had made on the ES itself and, in general, was critical of the thoroughness and robustness of the approach taken and disagreed with many of the conclusions and assessments of the severity of impacts.

The Hybrid Bill and Petitioning

9. As agreed at the most recent Board meeting the following will form the basis of the Board’s petitions:
 1. The case for a longer bored tunnel.
 2. The dumping of spoil in the AONB.
 3. The impact on the Public Rights of Way network.
 4. The impact on the landscape, wildlife and the historic environment.

10. If the Hybrid Bill passes its Second Reading it will be followed by a petitioning stage. This is now expected in very late April or, more likely, May. It will then be possible to lodge petitions during a two to three week period for consideration by the Select Committee which will then be appointed. That Committee is likely to sit for at a least a year, possibly two, to consider all petitions of which thousands can be expected. It is a reasonable assumption that the Board will be invited to present its petitions directly to the Committee.
11. This stage will almost certainly take the process beyond the next election. Advice from Parliamentary Agents is that is near impossible for Royal Assent to be secured by May 2015, in which case all party support is needed to allow the Bill to be carried forward into the next Parliament. It should be assumed this will happen.

Recommendations

1. **To note recent and planned HS2 related activity**
2. **That several petitions should be submitted to seek enhancements to current proposals, the primary one will be for a longer bored tunnel from the M25 to Wendover.**

Item 11 **Report on Chilterns Commons**

Author: John Willson Board Member
 Kath Daly Countryside Officer
 Rachel Sanderson Project Officer

Summary Commons are an important environmental and cultural asset of the Chilterns. The Board set up the Chilterns Commons Forum a number of years ago to bring together all interested parties. In recent years its activity has been channelled through the HLF funded project led by Rachel Sanderson. That project will end in June 2015 and the Board needs to decide how it will continue its work to promote the management and enjoyment of common land involving local people.

In June 2011 the Heritage Lottery Fund approved a grant of £403,000 for a project to enhance the conservation, understanding and enjoyment of common land in the Chilterns which runs from July 2011 – June 2015.

Purpose of Report: To report progress of the Commons Project and to stimulate consideration of how the Board should continue its work on commons.

A presentation will be given by Rachel Sanderson and discussion will be led by John Willson.

Background

The Chilterns Commons

1. There are 192 areas of registered common land across the Chilterns AONB covering 2,100 hectares. These commons are important, not only for their extensive coverage of the AONB, but because they often have high quality wildlife habitats and historic features. Most of them have either a local or national nature conservation designation (81% of the common land by area), and all are 'open access' areas as defined by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Commons have suffered from under management, neglect or mismanagement for many years. There is no grazing of any note resulting in most formerly open commons becoming scrubbed over, and now most support relatively large areas of secondary woodland.

As their economic decline progressed, their social value as a local amenity increased, but usually in an unmanaged way. More recently, local community groups have taken an interest but, almost without exception, they have been groups of volunteers with access to limited manpower and funding.

The Chilterns Commons Forum

2. Many commons have local groups which are dedicated to looking after them or as part of their wider environmental interest. For many years the Board has fostered expansion of these groups and co-operation between them and has, since 1999, hosted the (unconstituted) Chilterns Commons Network.
3. The Board created the Network to provide a forum of all these groups. Initially the network concentrated on provision of training and information, site visits to encourage collaboration and learning and published a regular newsletter and web pages. However, such was the scale of the task and enthusiasm of local group and several landowners that an application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for major funding.

The Chilterns Commons Project

4. By 2009 it was recognised that the Board did not have the resources to develop the network any further and yet there was much more that the Board and local groups wanted to do. An application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund which initially awarded a grant of £34,600 to prepare a development plan and application for the full project. That application was successful and the HLF awarded a grant of £403,000 in June 2011. Rachel Sanderson, who had prepared the development plan, was then successful in her application to become the project manager for August 2011- July 2015.
5. The main aims of the Commons Project are:
 - To enhance the environment and heritage of commons.
 - To promote improved arrangements for the management of common land.
 - To enhance the understanding, enjoyment and involvement by local communities with their common.
6. Since the Project was launched in September 2011, the following has been achieved:
 - Over 1,400 people have attended 35 talks and guided walks

- Over 1,400 people attended the 'Bricks, Bodgers & Broomsticks' event held at the Chiltern Open Air Museum in June 2013 – online film subsequently produced by volunteers
- Over 670 recorded days of volunteer time, worth more than £72,000
- Over 460 people (volunteers) have attended 24 training workshops
- Practical work undertaken on 19 commons – including repairs to two Scheduled Monuments
- 12 surveys undertaken – 9 ecological surveys, 2 archaeological surveys and 1 geological survey
- 150 people attended Our Common History seminar in January 2012
- Film made by Year 4 from West Wycombe Combined School in summer 2013
- 9 local groups have bought new tools and equipment for practical work on their common
- New web pages, project leaflets and display banner produced

7. Key elements of the remaining programme include:

- Further practical conservation and habitat improvement work, including restoration work on two more Scheduled Monuments
- New interpretation boards on 14 different commons
- Art project by Year 4 from Chorleywood School
- Imagine... art competition – 3 age groups and 4 categories will hopefully attract a large number of entries inspired by local commons
- Imagine... art exhibition in the autumn
- Volunteer research projects will be presented at the Common History seminar on 24 January 2015
- The role of commons now out of agricultural management will be explored at a conference on 23 April 2015
- A series of reports will be produced on the research projects presented at these two conferences
- Finale event – as many picnics on as many commons as we can manage on 21 June 2015!

Where Next?

8. With 16 months of delivery remaining, work has started internally to evaluate the project and investigate how the Board can continue to work with Friends Groups, associated with commons and other accessible natural areas, at the end of the Commons Project. The Board needs to consider how to maintain the progress made in recent years and the physical improvements of the commons themselves. Above all, it has to find ways of assisting and enhancing the degree of local stewardship by local people.

Recommendations

- 1. To provide feedback on achievements to date and the planned programme.**
- 2. To identify ways of continuing to promote the management and enjoyment of common land**

Item 12

World War I Centenary Programme

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: To commemorate the First War it is proposed the Board develops a programme of activity and support for relevant projects.

Purpose of Paper To seek approval of a WWI programme; and to seek ideas for activities which might be undertaken or supported.

Background

1. The Board may wish to consider developing a programme of activities and support to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First War. The two aspects which probably justify such a programme are; to highlight those places which have a particular connection; and secondly to highlight how the war affected the Chilterns countryside and communities.

2. **Examples of Places connected with WWI**

- Practice Trenches at Berkhamsted, Whiteleaf and Marlow
- War Memorials
- Training Grounds - Berkhamsted
- Tylers Green Commemorative Trees
- The Whipnade Tree Cathedral
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- Then and now photographs

3. **People**

- War Poets
 - Wilfred Owen - Dunsden, near Caversham
 - Rupert Brook - Pink and Lily nr.Lacey Green
- Impact on local villages

What can the Board do?

4. The following could be considered:

1. **Provision of funding to support site management.**

This has already happened as the Commons Project has supported the mapping and management of the practice trenches at Berkhamsted The Special Trees Project helped plant replacement commemorative trees for those servicemen from Tyler's Green who did not return.

2. **Support for conservation of war memorials** -Using the sustainable Development Fund the Board supported the conservation of the unusual wooden memorial at Wheeler End near Lane End.
 3. **Provision of interpretation** – on site signs, leaflets, web pages
It is suggested the Board creates a WWI section on the AONB web site.
 4. **Celebration of the war poets with a Chilterns connection** - Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brook. They already have profiles as part of the People and Places project.
 5. **A photographic “then and now” project** of places with a WWI connection
 6. **Award of Bursaries** for relevant proposals
5. There is no specific budget available but it is possible to favour WWI projects to be supported by the Special Project Support budget and Bursaries.

Recommendation

1. **The Board develops a small WWI commemoration programme**