



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Russell's Water Village Hall, Russell's Water, Oxon RG9 6ER COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.20 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Body</b>
<b>Appointed by Local Authorities</b>	
Cllr. David Collins	Dacorum Borough 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 Ian Reay ( Chairman)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council

<b>Appointed by the Secretary of State</b>	
Dr Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Alison Doggett	Secretary of State
Gill Gowing	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
Elizabeth Wilson	Secretary of State

<b>Elected by Parish Councils</b>	
Cllr Simon Deacon	Hertfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Anthony Penn	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

<b>Officers</b>	
Kath Daly	CCB Acting Chief Officer
Claire Forrest	CCB Information and Interpretation Officer
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Donna Webb	CCB Administration Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

And also present Sue Holden.

The Chairman welcomed Sue Holden to the meeting. She will take up her new Secretary of State appointment on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The Chairman invited Sue to introduce herself.

**14/15 37. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr David Barnard, North Herts District Council, Cllr Bill Bendyshe-Brown, Buckinghamshire County Council, Cllr Mary Goldsmith Bedfordshire Parish Councils, Cllr Wendy Jordan, Three Rivers District Council, Cllr Chris Richards, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Cllr Alan Walters, South Buckinghamshire District Council.

#### **14/15.38 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

#### **14/15.39. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **14/15.40. Matters Arising**

The Acting Chief Officer informed the Board that:

1. 14/15.31- A working group, under the Chairmanship of Ian Waller, has been established to investigate the promotion of environmentally friendly land management in partnership with the farming and forestry sectors.
2. 14/015.33- Chilterns LEADER programme 2015-2020. This bid has not been successful. The Local Action Group (LAG) has launched an appeal to DEFRA in a bid to reverse the decision.
3. 14/15.22- The Ridgeway Trail new partnership; a development group has now been formed and have met in November. A small shortfall in the funding for a Project Officer has occurred. A one year post from April 2015, for a Project Officer for the partnership, is vital for the success of the project. A request for the limited shortfall will be made to the Executive Committee. Financial assistance would provide the Board with a measure of influence over the direction of the project. Members made some comments.

#### **14/15.41. Public Question time**

No public questions.

#### **14/15.42. Report from the Executive Committee**

The Acting Chief Officer reported the matters considered and decisions taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

The Executive Committee had:

1. Received a Finance Report April to November 2014. There were no exceptional items to report. Income was 1.9% above profile and expenditure against core budget was 0.4% below profile.
2. Agreed to replace Steve Rodrick with Kath Daly as a bank signatory with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.
3. Reviewed the policy on fidelity guarantee insurance and decided to leave the amount of cover unchanged.
4. Reviewed and approved the latest version of the Risk Register and agreed to review the risk process currently in use at its next meeting with a view to ensuring that the process is fit for purpose.
5. Agreed the approach to the preparation of the 2015-16 budget and the budget restructuring.

6. Approved the proposed scope and terms of reference for the Management Review (subject to further refinement that may be proposed by the Working Group) and approved an initial budget of up to £4000.
7. Approved the proposed approach to covering the Landscape and Conservation Officer's role over the 6 months to June 2015. This included making provision in the budget to buy-in specific work.
8. Approved a draft Board Member role specification subject to a number of changes, which will be presented to the Board at its March meeting.
9. Noted the proposed programme of events and activities to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the designation of the Chilterns AONB and approved a budget of up to £3,000. The Board is meeting with the Chiltern Society, who is also celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year to consider the scope for closer joint working including a joint 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. The Information and Interpretation Officer will take the lead.

The Board discussed the proposals and contributed suggestions.

- 1. The Board NOTED the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> December and the decisions made under delegated authority.**

#### **14/15.43. 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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following items were discussed:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Events
4. Development Plans responses.
5. Planning applications update
6. DCMS Mobile Infrastructure Project.

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

The final documents that accompany the adopted AONB Management Plan have been circulated and local authorities have been asked to endorse the Management Plan as a material consideration. The Planning Officer asked Members for their support in seeking the endorsement.

It was noted that fracking would not be permitted in National Parks or AONB's.

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

#### **14/15.44. Budget 2015-16**

The Finance Officer provided the Board with a detailed paper on the draft budget 2015-16 and sought approval for the assumptions applied in preparing the budget 2015-16.

He reminded members that this 2015-16 budget will be the last one in the Government's 4-year plan. The detailed work on the budget will be carried out by the Executive Committee for Board approval in March.

Major assumptions:

1. The main element of operating costs is employment cost which will be affected by the cost of living award (also paid to members). A cost of living award of CPI or 2% whichever is lower, but no less than 0% at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 to be awarded.
2. Members allowances to be adjusted in line with the annual change to the DEFRA grant aid.
3. Other operating costs except IT are expected to remain unchanged.
4. A more structured and larger investment programme in IT is anticipated.
5. Income from DEFRA for 2014-15 was not reduced and will be the same for 2015-16.
6. Local Authority income is expected to decrease, but they will be asked to adjust their contribution by inflation.
7. Events are expected to provide an increasing income.
8. Major projects are largely funded by external funding.
9. In the event of an overall deficit the Board Reserves will be applied.

- 1. The Board ADOPTED the principles and outline budget as presented.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED a cost of living award of CPI or 2% whichever is lower, but no less than 0%.**
- 3. The Board APPROVED adjusting the Members' allowances in line with the annual change to the DEFRA grant aid; 0% in 2015-16.**

#### **14/15.45. Report from HS2 Working Group.**

The Acting Chief Officer reported that the HS2 Working Group had reconvened to provide guidance in preparation for the Hybrid Bill Select Committee hearings, visits and other matters. The Working Group had met on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

1. The Acting Chief Officer invited Board Members, who are currently not members of the HS2 Working Group, but who would wish to take part to advise her.
2. The Board is working closely with Local Authorities concerning the Select Committee visit to Buckinghamshire.
3. Ray Payne updated the Board on the current position and on the work underway and planned in preparation for the Select Committee, including the Chilterns Long Tunnel.
4. Ray Payne informed the Board that following reports commissioned by Chiltern District Council (CDC), changes in EU safety requirements and a Draft EU Commission Regulation which contains a number of features relevant to the proposed tunnel, CDC had commissioned another study. This latest study (January 2015) has identified an alternative route- referred to as the Chilterns Long Tunnel (CLT).
5. The study concluded that the CLT would comply with the new draft EU Regulation, has far less impact on the Misbourne Valley than other schemes and would be better operationally.
6. A partnership has been formed by the Board, Chiltern District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. Ray Payne has been engaged in managing the numerous reports since 2011 and has accepted the request to represent the partnership at the Select Committee.

7. The partnership is working on a group of work packages, which will be completed by the end of February.
8. The Board has appointed the same parliamentary agent as the Local Authorities, Sharpe Pritchard (agreed January 2014).
9. The Board has benefitted from joint discussions with Counsel. It was proposed to make further financial contributions to a forthcoming conference with Counsel jointly with other statutory bodies. The current £5,000 in the budget is fully committed and a further £6,000, increasing the total budget in the current year to £11,000 was requested.
10. The agreed Position Statement on Mitigation regarding HS2, which the Board had agreed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 was reconfirmed.

The Chairman thanked Ray Payne for his continued enormous contribution to the work on the HS2 project.

- 1. The Board NOTED the update from the working group.**
- 2. The Board AGREED that an additional £6,000 should be allocated from Reserves to HS2 related work in the current year.**
- 3. The Board RECONFIRMED its Position Statement on HS2 Mitigation.**

#### **14/15.46. Hillforts Project Update.**

The Planning Officer provided a progress report on the proposal to submit a Heritage Grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1. He explained that the Hillforts' working group had been advised by the HLF Development Officer that a bid in the region of £500,000 would have more chance of being successful. It would be a two stage bid.
2. At a recent meeting the HLF Development Officer had provided helpful and detailed guidance on what a bid should contain.
3. On examining the bid deadlines, it was proposed to work to a June 2015 deadline for submission.
4. The bid document is being drafted and checked the two professionals (Stewart Bryant and Emma Rouse), who will also provide technical guidance and advice.
5. The Board was provided with an action timetable.
6. The total cost is estimated at £600,000 of which HLF will be asked to provide £500,000. Other partners are being asked to provide funding.
7. If the bid is successful a specific annual budget allocation of £5,000-£10,000 a year from 2015-16 would be required for the duration of the project of 4-5 years.

The Planning Officer was thanked for taking the lead on this project.

- 1. The Board NOTED the progress in connection with the HLF bid thus far and the deadlines for submission.**
  - 2. The Board NOTED the recruitment of two professionals to assist in the submission of the HLF bid.**
  - 3. The Board NOTED the advice provided by the HLF Development Officer.**
- 14/15.47 Management Review.**

The Acting Chief Officer welcomed Nicola Thomas who, as external facilitator, will lead the Board Member Workshop following the Board meeting.

The Acting Chief Officer advised the Board of the terms and conditions for the proposed review of the Board's management structure and modus operandi as approved by the Executive Committee at its 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 meeting and amended by the Review Working Group on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

The objective of the review is to ensure effective management and organisational structures are in place to enable the Board in achieving its statutory purpose over the next 5 years and beyond.

The Acting chief Officer gave a brief update on progress:

1. A working group has been formed
2. A Board member workshop is being held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015
3. A staff workshop will be held.
4. Stakeholder views will be sought.
5. Members of the Review Group and the Acting Chief Officer will visit the Cotswold Conservation Board on 10<sup>th</sup> February as part of the review process.
6. It is intended that significant elements will be completed in the period Jan-April 2015 and the main process completed by June 2015.
7. It is likely that work packages will be identified to be developed over a longer time frame.
8. Reporting is from the Review Group to the Executive Committee, who in turn will make a report with conclusions and recommendations to the full Board.
9. Final reporting should be to the June Board meeting, with issues being presented for decision making at the AGM in June.

Members discussed the review update and took the opportunity to seek some clarification prior to the workshop.

**1. The Board NOTED the Terms of Reference and the update on progress.**

**14/15.48. Urgent Business.**

1. Board Members commended Rachel Sanderson on all the work she has done on the Commons Project. It was noted that she is leaving a memorable legacy.
2. It was noted that Our Common Heritage Conference had been an excellent day and thanks were expressed.

**14/15.49. Date of next meeting:** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 10.00am location TBC.

Dates of future meetings: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015

The meeting closed 11.20

The Chairman

Date