



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 26th June 2014 at Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford OX10 6LZ

COMMENCING AT 10.45 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr David Collins	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Roger Metcalfe	Wycombe District Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Ian Reay (Chairman)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State	
Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Alison Doggett	Secretary of State
Gill Gowing	Secretary of State
Dr.Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
Ian Waller	Secretary of State
Elizabeth Wilson	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils	
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
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

14/15 1. Apologies for absence

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

14/15.2. Introduction of new members.

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

14/15.3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

14/15.4. Minutes of the previous meeting

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

14/15.5. Matters Arising

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

14/15.6. Public Question time

No public questions.

14/15.7. Report from the Executive Committee

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

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

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

The Chief Officer thanked all the Local Authorities for ensuring contributions to the Board had not fallen as had been anticipated.

- 1. The Board NOTED the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on the 22nd May and the decisions made under delegated authority.**

14/15.8. Report from the Planning Committee.

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

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

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

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

14/15.9. Statement of Accounts 2013-14

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

1. £573 has been applied from the Budget Equalisation. £4,996 has been added to the Chalk Streams Reserve and £17,699 to the Development Reserve.
2. At its May meeting the Executive Committee considered and approved a proposal of a reduction to the General Reserve of £35,000. This has been transferred to the Development Reserve. The Reserves now stand as follows:

General	£100,000
Budget Equalisation	£137,772
Development	£293,744
Chalk Streams project	£ 24,693
Friends of Red Kites	£ 5,859
Total	£562,068
3. The Pensions Liability has reduced by £ 4,000 to £573,000. This represents the liability to the Board if every employee had retired on 31 March 2014 and collected their pension entitlement.
4. The reduction reflects the impact of the valuation methodology and the derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 17.

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

- 1. The Board APPROVED the Statement of Accounts and Annual Audit Return 2013-14, including the Annual Governance Statement and they were signed by the Chairman.**

14/15.10 Report on the Ridgeway National Trail.

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

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

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

A discussion covered the following issues::

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

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

14/15.11. Report on Hillforts

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

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

protracted process of the application to the HLF. The conference will be self-funding and the Board's contribution will be staff and member time to organise the event and speakers.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the outline of the proposed submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the allocation of up to £5,000 p.a. from the Special Project Support budget (2014-15 and 2015-16) for the preparation of a stage 2 bid to the HLF.**
- 3. The Board APPROVED the holding of a self-funding conference on Hillforts on 2nd October 2014.**

14/15.12 Chilterns Building Design Awards

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

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

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

12.15 Annette Venters left.

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

- 1. The Board NOTED the winners of this year's Chilterns Building Design Awards**

14/15. 13 Report on HS2

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

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

- 1. The Board NOTED the report on HS2 Ltd.**

- 2. The Board AGREED to develop a detailed proposal for a Community and Environment Fund (in partnership with local authorities and community groups) for presentation to the Select Committee.**

12.30 Ian Waller left the meeting.

14/15.14. Creating an Ex Board Members Alumni Group

The Chief Officer reported, as he had at the Executive Committee meeting 22nd May, that since the establishment of the Board in 2004 there has been a limited turnover of Board Members. The last two years had seen an increase in members standing down largely because their term of office as Secretary of State member has ended. 2015 will likely see more local authority and parish council members standing down from their positions in local government.

The meeting discussed the creation of an Alumni style group of ex Board Members who wished to keep in touch and continue contributing to the Board's work. A lot of (background) knowledge is with these members and the loss would be keenly felt.

The annual cost plus staff time of maintaining an Alumni group would be in the order of £1,000.

- 1. The Board AGREED that a group should be created for retiring members. A name to be decided at a later date.**
- 2. The Board AGREED that the Executive Committee should work up terms of reference for recommendation at a future Board meeting.**

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

The Chief Officer reported that the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the Board falls this year, the Board was officially launched December 2004 and the 50th Anniversary of the AONB next year, the designation date being 16th December 1965.

A programme of celebrations was tabled and discussed, a joint celebration with the Chilterns Society for the 50th Anniversary would be appropriate.

- 1. The Board AGREED to a programme of celebratory events and activities for the 10th Anniversary of the Conservation Board and the 50th Anniversary of the designation of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**
- 2. The Board AGREED to work with the Chiltern Society to jointly celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the AONB designation and the Society.**

14/15.16. Re-tiring Board Members

The Chairman made a presentation to the retiring members of the Board.

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

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

The Chairman announced with great sadness that the Chief Officer had informed him that he would be retiring at the end of the year. The difficult process would now be started to recruit a replacement.

14/15.17. Date of next meeting: Thursday 16th October 2014 location TBC.

The meeting closed 13.00

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