

**Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory  
Committee  
Barton Grange Garden Centre  
3 November 2009, 2:15pm**

**Minutes**

**Present**

**Chair and Vice Chair**

County Councillor Albert Atkinson  
Councillor Colin Price

Lancashire County Council  
Yorkshire Local Councils Association

**Members**

County Councillor Susie Charles  
County Councillor David Smith  
Councillor Rosemary Elms  
Councillor Anthony Gornall  
Councillor James Starkie

Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Preston City Council  
Pendle Borough Council

Henry Bainbridge

Landowning and Farming Advisory  
Group

Andrew Gouldstone  
Ian Grindy  
Jon Hickling  
David Kelly

RSPB  
United Utilities  
Natural England  
Ramblers Association

**Officers**

Alison Boden  
Duncan Byrne  
Hetty Byrne  
Martin Charlesworth  
Holly Gregson  
Cathy Hopley  
Susan MacDonald  
Don McKay  
Nigel Pilling  
Mike Pugh  
Martin Putsey  
John Rhodes  
Greg Robinson  
Grant Sellars  
Sandra Silk  
Tarja Wilson

Wyre Borough Council  
Wyre Borough Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council (minutes)  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council;  
United Utilities  
Lancashire County Council  
Preston City Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Wyre Borough Council  
Wyre Borough Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire County Council

## **1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

County Councillor Albert Atkinson was elected as the Chair to the committee and Councillor Colin Price as Vice Chair.

## **2. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

County Councillor Richard Welch	North Yorkshire County Council
Councillor Lin Barington	Craven District Council
Councillor Roger Brooks	Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Stuart Langhorn	Lancaster City Council
Adam Walsh	Environment Agency
Laura Kennedy	Craven District Council
Samantha Marsden	Natural England
Graham Megson	North Yorkshire County Council

## **3. Constitution and Terms of Reference**

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **4. Minutes of the Last meeting**

The minutes were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

## **5. Matters Arising**

### ***Draft Memorandum of Understanding***

Don McKay noted that the draft Memorandum had been returned to Natural England in relation to a redundancy clause; this would shortly be resolved and would be signed when Natural England amends the document.

### ***Forest of Bowland Signs***

Councillor James Starkie enquired if any progress has been made with replacing or repainting the Forest of Bowland signs. It was noted that signs would be replaced in focused areas and that it was likely that the signs would be replaced rather than repaired.

## **6. Overview of the Committee's Work**

Don McKay referred Members to the report enclosed with the agenda which highlighted the context in which the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee operates and the pressures faced for development in the AONB.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **7. Revised Estimates 2009/10 and Revenue Budget 2010/11**

John Rhodes referred Members to Appendix 'A' of the report enclosed with the agenda. He noted that since the 2009/10 budget was approved at the April 2009 (Appendix 'A', column 2) meeting officers had been successful in obtaining contributions from Barrowford and Western Parish Councils (£1,900) and from Ribble Valley Borough Council (£7,000). These changes are illustrated in the 2009/10 Revised Estimates at Appendix 'A', column 3.

John added that the Revenue Budget 2010/11 illustrated in Appendix 'A', Column 4, sets out the cost associated with the committee's projects and management service with estimated pay and rise increases. He noted that the core contributions requested from funding authorities would be the same as last year with a 0.7% provision for inflation. Income with respect to grant support from Natural England has been included on the basis that they will maintain grant support at the level offered in 2009/10.

John also referred Members to Appendix 'A2' which highlights resources that have been obtained from local authorities, individuals and other bodies for projects in Bowland. It should be noted that these are over and above the Joint Advisory Committee budget provision. It was noted that the Lancashire Green Tourism Project funds was just that which has been brought into Bowland.

## **Resolved**

That the Committee:

- i) noted the 2009/10 revised estimates;
- ii) approved the 2010/11 Revenue Budget as set out in the report; and
- iii) request that the funding authorities make appropriate provision in their Revenue Budgets.

### **8. Strategic Decisions: Planning Application Pending for the Claughton Moor Wind Farm**

Don McKay noted that Community Windpower Ltd proposes to submit a planning application for 20 turbine wind farm on Claughton Moor. This would sit along side the existing wind farm on Caton Moor. In order to meet the statutory purposes of AONB designation it is necessary to conserve and maintain the Natural Beauty of the Forest of Bowland and as such that it would not be appropriate to locate a wind farm within its boundaries. Don added that meetings have been held with Community Windpower Ltd, Lancaster City Council and Natural England to try and dissuade the application. He sought the views of the committee.

For information County Councillor Charles noted that she sat on the planning committee at Lancaster City Council when the planning application for the Caton Moor Wind Farm was submitted and that the application was only approved through the appeal process. Councillor Starkie asked if the Caton Moor Wind Farm was approved considering the environmental impact and has anything changed which would stop this one being approved. Don McKay noted that it would have a negative effect on the aims and objectives of the Management Plan and the Forest of Bowland as a whole and reminded Members that the accompanying infrastructure, such as roads, would also impact on the area.

Henry Bainbridge added that when the wind farm on Caton Moor was approved he was in favour of it and felt that if opposing the proposed wind farm on Claughton Moor the Committee would need to have strong rationale and reasons for the objections. He also felt it would be appropriate to consider alternative sites and suggest these when making the objections.

Members noted the strong opposition the proposals have received from local residents and businesses.

### **Resolved**

That a letter be wrote to Lancaster City Council to ask for clarity on their position regarding the likelihood of approval should a planning application on Claughton Moor be submitted and that a special meeting be called to discuss the proposals in greater detail on submission of a planning application.

## **9. Staffing and Accommodation Update**

Don McKay noted that the AONB Unit has now successfully relocated to the Root Hill Estate Yard, Dunsop Bridge. He noted that the office accommodates all the AONB Unit and can also accommodate the County Council Countryside Officers and retains the advantages of a local office whilst being more central the AONB as a whole and to local authority partners. Members felt that moving the office into the AONB had been very advantageous.

Don added that it had been felt appropriate to seek funding for a Landscape and Biodiversity Officer within the AONB Unit and although funding had not yet been secured for a full time post a number of alternatives have been investigated. One which proved feasible and has been started following the agreement of Lancashire County Council's Countryside service is that the Countryside Officer North and West Bowland would take the lead on Landscape and Biodiversity for a trial period of one year.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **10. Policy and Strategy**

### **a. Draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy**

Cathy Hopley referred members to the report and noted that original Sustainable Tourism Strategy was completed 5 years ago to accompany the application for the Europarc Charter Mark for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas accreditation. The Charter Mark is now due to be renewed and as such the AONB unit have prepared a draft Strategy for Sustainable Tourism which was out for consultation until 30 October 2009.

Cathy added that the Strategy needed to be completed by Christmas; this would be followed by a Europarc visit in spring and hopefully accreditation in Autumn 2010.

### **b. Landscape Character Assessment**

Cathy noted that the Management Plan identified a need to carry out a detailed assessment of the Landscape Character of the AONB. The results of this study were published in October 2009 which identified 14 landscape character types and 82 landscape character areas. The results of the study will be used to map out landscape types and identify how these can be managed and conserved in the future.

## **11. Partner Presentation: The RSPB in Bowland – Working with Birds, Habitats and Partners**

Andrew Gouldstone from RSPB gave a presentation highlighting the following points.

- Bowland is an important and diverse area for important key species such as the Hen Harrier, Lapwing and Curlew.
- Vast habitat diversity, such as moorland, blanket bogs, high ground, which they are working with landowners to see how best they can be managed, for example rewetting bogs, planting native broad leaf woodland and managing grazing.
- Hen Harrier nesting camera is set up transmitting images to the Beacon Fell Visitor Centre. 60-70% of the nesting population of Hen Harriers in England nest in the Bowland Area. In 2009 8 pairs successfully nested.
- Promotion of the importance of habitat management is promoted at local agricultural shows, for example.
- Bowland Wader Project is ongoing.
- Educational work with local schools has undertaken and will continue into 2009/10 school year.
- RSPB has input into the Bowland Festival.
- Partnership working is being undertaken very successfully with Lancashire Constabulary, AONB Unit, Natural England and Local Councils, amongst lots of others.

## **12. Theme Group Reports**

### **a. Sustainable Tourism: Bowland Experience and BTEF, Green Tourism in Bowland and District Tourism Initiatives in Bowland**

Mike Pugh and Hetty Byrne updated the committee noting the following:

- Green Tourism is a 3 year project which started in 2008 and aims to assist 50 businesses gain a Green Tourism Accreditation. In 2008 15 business were accredited of which 15 were in the Forest of Bowland area, in addition to this in 2009/10 a further 15 businesses are going through the process of which 8 are in the ANOB. A network has been set up ([bowlandwildlife.org.uk](http://bowlandwildlife.org.uk)) on which accredited business can comment on wildlife sightings. Responding to queries it was confirmed that this would be monitored to ensure nothing inappropriate was posted.
- The Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF) was formed as a company in June 2009 to support the Green Tourism initiative. The company has applied for a £3,000 North West Innovation Voucher Grant to carry a feasibility study for the collection of trade waste and would apply for a £20,000 grant to trial a collection.
- The Bowland Experience has been established as a company limited by guarantee (£1 per member) in August 2009. BTEF will retain a 51% share of the company all profits which are made by the company will go to BTEF.

### **b. Education and Working with Schools**

Susan McDonald noted that this task group aims to continue the education project in conjunction with the RSPB and develop the Europarc Junior Ranger project.

Susan added that the 'Taste of Bowland', 'Discover Bowland' and the general Bowland leaflet are all being reprinted. She added the Annual Report and Management Plan are now on the Forest of Bowland website. The Management Plan is interactive and partners would be able to add updates against actions to allow better progress monitoring.

### **c. Sustainable Development Fund**

Cathy Hopley noted that the Sustainable Development Fund is progressing well and that 15 projects totalling £82,217 have had funding approved during 2009/10.

Cathy added that she would also be developing a climate change task group. The first meeting would be on 19 November 2009 and would aim at looking to develop a Climate Change Adoption Plan, undertake a study into the potential of using hydro energy, and create a renewable energy position statement for the AONB. She invited interested parties to attend.

#### **d. Heritage: Landscape Stories**

Sandra silk noted that she is currently drawing together a number of landscape heritage stories including dairy and cheese making at Chipping and limestone extraction at Slaidburn. She was working in conjunction with a number of professionals who are training volunteers with the skills they need to research the topics fully.

#### **e. Landscape and Biodiversity**

Tarja Wilson noted that the committee would still undertake all the usual work such as traditional boundaries, maintenance work and small scale habitat management but would combine this with new areas such as seed collecting and propagation. She added further work would be carried out in relation to Stewardship Schemes and the Landscape Character Assessment.

#### **f. Land Management**

Don Mckay firstly thanked Henry Bainbridge and Rod Banks for their involvement with the committee and wished them both well for the future.

Don noted a number of initiatives this group would be involved with including the SCAMP Project, undergrounding of electric cables and Vital Uplands Vision 2060 which would be launched on 12 November 2009.

#### **g. Access and Recreation**

Greg Robinson updated the committee with the progress that has been made with the Greenhalgh Castle Interpretation Board, noting that path upgrades have been undertaken and an open day was held to promote the route and castle.

Duncan Byrne updated Members on the Garstang Walking Festival noting that half the walks were within the Forest of Bowland boundary and the event had been very successful. He added that they had worked closely with partners and volunteers and that work was underway to plan for the 2010 walking festival.

Susan MacDonald highlighted that the 2010 Festival Bowland calendar is currently being produced and asked members to have any potential events to her by the end of November 2009.

#### **h. Communities and Volunteering: Delivering the Jointly Funded Programme of Projects and Developing Community Volunteering**

Martin Charlesworth highlighted some of the activities / schemes that have been complete with assistance from volunteers, including:

- Drystone walls

- Painting white rails
- Balsam removal at Garstang
- Bike Trails at Gisburn Forest
- BTCV stone carving

In addition, Martin explained that 25 people who worked in Agriculture and Forestry from Hordaland County, Norway, had visited the AONB for 4 days to understand how the interrelationship between business and tourism in the protected area was managed.

### **13. Any Other Business**

#### **United Utilities: SCAMP Project**

Nigel Pilling gave a presentation on the SCAMP project and the progress that has been made. He noted that the project is 93% complete and should be complete in approximately 5 months. He added as part of the project the following has been undertaken:

- 104km new fencing installed and 15km of redundant fencing removed;
- 273ha new native woodland planting;
- 9ha of bare peat restoration at Langden Head;
- 7000ha moorland entered into Higher Level Stewardship Schemes including all SSSI land;
- 106ha species rich grassland improved;
- 137ha rushes removed;
- 50km of grip blocking;
- 1100km of drip edge re-profiling;
- 1033m<sup>2</sup> dry stone wall restoration and introduction;
- 7.6km of new and restored hedgerows;
- 5000m of farm track improvements, including 4 cattle grids;
- 15 new and refurbished buildings to improve infrastructure.

David Kelly asked if any farms had been merged as a result of this work; Nigel confirmed that the number of farms remains the same.

Ian Grindy added that the work undertaken so far is to such an extent that it has already exceeded biodiversity targets for Lancashire.

#### **Pendle Hill and Witches**

Councillor Jim Starkie noted that in 2012 it would be the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pendle Witch Trial and highlighted that meetings are taking place to discuss how best to promote this event. Members supported this celebration but noted the need for well organised events to minimise damage.

### **14. Proposed Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 27 April 2010, 2p at a venue to be confirmed.