



## HIGH WEALD AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26 March 2014 Meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee held at Hendall Manors Barn, Nr Herons Ghyll.

### Present:

Cllr B Kentfield	Rother District Council, Chair
Cllr Mrs J Davison	Sevenoaks District Council, Deputy Chair
Cllr M Balfour	Kent County Council
Cllr Mrs S Murray	Tonbridge & Malling District Council
Cllr Mrs J Soyke	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Cllr R Street	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr R Taylor CBE	Ashford Borough Council
Cllr Mrs S Tidy	East Sussex County Council
Mrs Alison Field	Forestry Commission
Tim Broomhead	CLA
Mr J Seymour	Natural England
Cllr Mrs R Moore	Wealden District Council

### Officers:

Mr T Alty	Finance Manager, East Sussex County Council
Mr I Bailey	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Mr T Cookson	Hastings Borough Council
Ms R Childs	Kent County Council
Mr A Fowler	Finance Manager, East Sussex County Council
Mr D Greenwood	Surrey County Council
Mr D Scully	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Mr J Lavender	AONB Director (job share)
Ms S Marsh	AONB Director (job share)
Mr G Mee	Assistant Director CET, East Sussex County Council
Mr A Shaw	Planning Officer, AONB
Mr C Winchester	Research Officer, AONB
Mr P D'Aguilar	Communications Officer, AONB

## 1. APOLOGIES

### 1.1 Apologies were received from the following Members and officers:

Councillor Hersey, Councillor Sydney, Councillor Mrs Kitchen, Ms K Johnson,, Mr P Newdick, Councillor Blake, Mr D Marlow.

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

2.1 It was noted that there were no declarations of interest raised by the Members.

3. URGENT MATTERS

3.1 It was noted that no urgent matters were raised by the Members.

4. MINUTES OF THE JAC MEETING – 8 November 2013

4.1 RESOLVED to agree the Minutes of the meeting of 8 November 2013 as a correct record.

4.2 It was reported that under tourism item A3 of the minutes, the funding allocated by Defra for the Our Land programme have been reallocated to fund flood relief works elsewhere in the country. It was confirmed that a few AONBs are looking to fund the extension of the Our Land programme but this would be a smaller scale scheme. Responsible Travel and Surrey Hills AONB partnership have committed to support the website for a further two years.

5. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD – 5 March 2014

5.1 RESOLVED to note the Minutes of the Management Board held on 5 March 2014.

6. MINUTES OF THE OFFICER STEERING GROUP – 11 February 2014

6.1 RESOLVED to note the Minutes of the Officer Steering Group held on 11 February 2014.

7. MATTERS ARISING

7.1 It was noted that there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

8. REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

8.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Treasurer which presented the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 and the Financial Issues 2015/16 and beyond.

8.2 The Finance Manager highlighted changes in the figures:

- item 2.3, it should read ‘other income of £2,200 has been required to achieve a balanced budget.’
- Item 5.1, it should read ‘...and an additional income of £2,200 has been secured.’

8.4 It was explained that a balanced budget had been achieved with savings of £5,900 and an increase of Other Incomes of £2,200. The budget assumes that Defra contribution will be £255,588 for 2014/15.

8.5 Points to note:

- Budget 2013/14 for the current financial year showed a small surplus of £2,900.
- Within core expenditure costs of £18,800, arising from East Sussex County Councils pricing policy has been removed from the budget presented to the JAC in November 2013. The removal has been balanced by contribution to the budget by ESCC; however, their removal has reduced the JAC's gross expenditure budget.
- Savings have been made on office accommodation and equipment provision. Plumpton College and Woodland Enterprise Limited were thanked for agreeing to temporarily reducing the annual rent for office accommodation.
- Based on 2014/15 assumptions it is forecast that the contributions from Defra and Local authorities will result in a deficit of £8,700 in 2015/16.

8.2 RESOLVED to note the report and:

(1) approve the Revenue Budget for 2014/15;

(2) thank local authorities and DEFRA for their contributions towards core costs and High Weald Heroes and;

(3) thank Plumpton College and Woodland Enterprise Ltd for the temporary reduction in office accommodation costs.

## 9. HIGH WEALD AONB JAC PROJECTS

The JAC considered a report by Jason Lavender, AONB Co-Director, which set out the projects currently underway.

10.1 Samantha Nicholas presented an update on the Community Landscape Fund, (CLF) to the Members. The Fund was formerly known as the Sustainable Development Fund. The presentation explained the current CLF structure and highlighted the wide range of community projects that the Fund has supported in 2013/14. Presentation appended

10.2 Samantha Nicholas thanked the Panel Members for their support over the 7 years the Fund has been running and highlighted the fact that without their flexibility and responsive attitude CLF would not be able to operate so efficiently.

10.3 Samantha also asked for the Members to inform her of any suitable projects for 2014/15. In response to the presentation David Scully requested that the Unit inform each local authority if any projects were in their particular area so that they can give additional support if required.

10.2 Cllr Mrs J Davison thanked Sally Marsh and Samantha Nicholas for the on-going management of the fund.

10.3 Charles Winchester presented an outline of the Dark Skies project that is currently being developed by the Unit. Presentation and handout appended.

10.4 Charles Winchester was thanked for the presentation and in response the following was noted:

- Kent County Council has been reducing the hours street lamps are used across the county for and this has made a saving of £70,000. There is a longer term plan to replace lights with LED technology.
- East Sussex County Council is introducing a similar lighting scheme with a potential payback period of 10 years.
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has recently been involved with a wider project which encompasses developing new light schemes which have new technology to reduce light pollution.
- Forestry Commission have set up a dark skies observatory in Kielder Forest in Northumberland.

10.5 It was discussed that more information could be made available to inform commercial businesses and building developers on the importance of new light technology to support reduction in light pollution.

10.6 RESOLVED to note the report and:

(i) To update the Members of the Unit's progress towards achieving Dark Skies designation.

## 11. HIGH WEALD AONB UNIT STAFFING UPDATE

The JAC considered a report on staff by the Jason Lavender, AONB Co-Director.

11.1 RESOLVED to note the report

## 12. RISK MANAGEMENT

The JAC considered a report by Jason Lavender, AONB Co-Director on risk management and the associated risk management matrix.

12.1 RESOLVED to note the report.

## 13. AOB

13.1 Sally Marsh brought two meetings to the attention of the Members:

- The National Association of AONBs conference to be held in Penrith from 8-10 July 2014. There is a place available for a JAC Member to attend. Please inform the Clerk if you wish to attend.

- The Kent Farmsteads Guidance meeting is to be held on Wednesday 20 May. The venue location will be in the Low Weald.
- 13.2 Cllr Mrs J Soyke congratulated the Unit on the 'saving of the High Weald Farms' article in South East Farmers magazine.
- 13.2 The AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dates for 2014/15 to be organised via doodle poll.
14. LAUNCH OF HIGH WEALD AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019
- 14.1 Sally Marsh and Cllr Kentfield officially launched the High Weald Joint Advisory Management Plan for 2014-2019.
- 14.2 The Launch was followed by a 'walk and talk' presentation on the heritage of Hendall Manor buildings and site from David Martin. David is an expert in medieval and early post-medieval building construction in the South East of England.