

BLACKDOWN HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP

**Minutes of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership Management Group held on
Thursday, 22nd March 2018 at Buckland St Mary Village Hall**

Present:

Cllr Paul Diviani (chairman)	East Devon District Council
Bruce Payne (vice-chairman)	Special Appointee
Cllr Dave Durdan	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Cllr John Thorne	Somerset County Council
Cllr Frank Rosamond	Mid Devon District Council
Heather Stallard	Blackdown Hills Business Association
Graham Long	Blackdown Hills Parish Network
Penny Mills	CPRE, East Devon & Exeter
Elaine Hayes	Special Appointee
Martin Turner	Blackdown Hills Hedge Association
Jocelyn Pritchard	Blackdown Hills Parish Network

Also present:

Blackdown Hills AONB staff team: Tim Youngs (**TY**), Jackie Vaughan (**JV**), Lisa Turner (**LT**), Clare Groom (**CG**),

Members of the public: One member of the public was present

Apologies: Cllr Martin Wale (South Somerset District Council); Cllr John Berry (Devon County Council); Rachel Williams (Natural England); Mark Pope (National Farmers Union); John Greenshields (Blackdown & East Devon Woodland Association); Simon Larkins (National Trust); Gordon Field (Blackdown Hills Artist & Makers); David Northcote-Wright (Somerset Wildlife Trust); Bob Nelson (Blackdown Hills Parish Network); Peter Chamberlain (Devon County Council)

ITEM 1 Welcome, introductions and apologies	
The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were carried out.	
Workshop A – 18/19 Business Plan – Sponsors	
Report circulated prior to the meeting	
Discussion based on the 60 actions within the 18/19 Business Plan and the suggestion that a sponsor should be sought for each of the topics under the three themes of the Plan. For that area of work, the sponsor would become the ‘champion/ critical friend/ sounding board’ and support the AONB unit. Penny Mills suggested that as landscape & planning are CPRE objectives she would act as a sponsor for this section. Heather Stallard (HS) suggested that the BHBA could help with getting the AONB to support communities rather than communities supporting the AONB. Elaine Hayes (EH) and Bruce Payne (BP) are happy to sponsor any elements that are remaining.	
ACTION: All management group members to look at the business plan and decide which specific areas they could support and contact Tim Youngs to volunteer as a sponsor.	ALL

Workshop B – Blackdown Hills State of Report	
Paper circulated prior to the meeting	
<p>The State of the Blackdown Hills report has been drafted that reports back and shows trends against the 31 Measuring Progress Indicators in the current Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>Management Group members commented that the report should prove very useful once completed and agreed that health checks and caveats were required for some of the results, in order to sense-check them and avoid misleading results. For example, although headline figures might indicate a sub-optimal ‘health’ of a heritage feature, underlying data might show a ‘recovering’ picture.</p> <p>ACTION: TY to circulate the State of Report in the next two months, once complete.</p>	TY
ITEM 2 Questions from the public	
No questions were raised.	
ITEM 3 Minutes and matters arising from 2nd November 2017	
Minutes circulated prior to the meeting	
Amendments	
EH: Name spelt incorrectly Hayes not Haynes.	
The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.	
ITEM 4 Presentation – New AONB website	
<p>Finalising the content for the website has taken longer than planned but is coming to an end and the site will be launched shortly. Once launched the site will continue to be developed and content added in line with the editorial plan. Local people and partners will be encouraged to have a voice by contributing to the news and social section (blog).</p> <p>ACTION: Members were asked to contact Clare Groom (CG) at the AONB office if they would like to write articles for the website.</p> <p>Penny Mills (PM), Elaine Hayes (EH) & Cllr Diviani (PD) volunteered to write articles for the blog, (CG) to contact in due course to arrange this.</p> <p>A dummy copy of the website is available and a link to this will be sent to all members after the meeting.</p> <p>A newsletter will be sent out in April to launch the website; testing and feedback will continue throughout the month. Throughout the summer there will be a media campaign to promote the new website.</p> <p>Currently working with a designer to launch a new suite of leaflets which will send all traffic to the website.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>CG</p> <p>CG</p>

ITEM 5 AONB Team	
Report circulated prior to the meeting	
5.1 AONB team report, SDF and finances	
<p>5.1.1 Historic England – Valuing Heritage grant</p> <p>ACTION: EH to provide details to TY on contractors who are able to take images from above to show field boundaries.</p> <p>5.1.2 Connecting the Culm – Interreg bid EH suggested that TY should allow money in the budget to buy capacity from Devon County Council to check that application forms are filled in correctly as they have lots of experience in this area of grants. TY asked for ideas on match funding for the project and EH suggested contacting the South West Flood Defence Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: TY</p> <p>5.1.3 AONB Management Plan workshop (January 2018) The workshop focussed on the effectiveness of the current 2014-19 plan and elements to change for the 2019-2024 plan. A copy of all the information collected from the workshop is available from Lisa Turner (LT) at the AONB office in Hemyock.</p> <p>5.1.4 Planning National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) The government are now consulting on the NPPF which includes streamlining the guidelines for National Parks and AONBs. LT would welcome individual responses from partners if appropriate before the 10th May deadline, see www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework. The National Association of AONBs will be writing a response and any feedback would be helpful.</p> <p>ACTION: Contact LT at the AONB office Hemyock with any appropriate responses on the NPPF.</p> <p>Permitted Development Rights (PDR) From 6th April 2018 new PDR will be introduced that more than doubles the size of agricultural buildings that can be developed through the prior notification process.</p>	<p>EH</p> <p>TY</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
5.2 Finance	
<p>AGREED: The budget for 2018-19 was approved by all members present at the meeting.</p>	

ITEM 6 AONB Partnership	
6.1 Making it Local (MiL) programme update	
Report circulated prior to the meeting	
£84,000 still available in the MiL budget and there will be one final round of funding for those who are already in receipt of an invitation to proceed to full application (approx. 21 projects).	
6.2 Briefings from partners	
<p>Cllr Paul Diviani: Cllr Diviani will be standing down as leader of East Devon District Council in May 2018.</p> <p>Cllr Dave Durdan: Taunton Deane BC and West Somerset Council have agreed to give their consent to the start of the legal process that would create a single new council called Somerset West and Taunton.</p> <p>Heather Stallard: Blackdown Hills Business Association (BHBA) has a new co-ordinator Gemma Sparks, who has herself been a member of BHBA for over five years. An amazing film, A Country Calendar, made by a local lady called Jenny Parsons will be shown in the Healthy Living Centre, Hemyock for the next two nights and is well worth a look if you get the opportunity. 23rd October 2020 will be the centenary of the Hemyock Calf Club (which later became the Young Farmers Club) and Heather is looking for funding to celebrate the anniversary.</p> <p>Penny Mills: CPRE newsletter handed out to members.</p> <p>CPRE are challenging the statistics for housing needs that have been forced upon them and will be pushing for the right houses in the right places.</p> <p>CPRE Devon has launched a new competition for 2018 to determine ‘Devon’s Best Churchyard’. The competition aims to recognise and reward Devon’s churchyards which are well managed to provide both a peaceful haven for people and wildlife.</p> <p>CPRE Devon’s new countryside ambassador Barney the Bull is helping to promote activities for primary school children in KS1 and KS2. They are also running a spring writing competition or summer painting competition whereby children can earn themselves a Devon countryside ambassador badge</p> <p>FWAG SW (sponsored by CPRE) are running a Kingfisher scheme with schools in and around the Exeter and Crediton area.</p> <p>Elaine Hayes: EH thanked JM for his support on their recent HLF bid for a dragonfly project. Ferne Animal Sanctuary (FAS) has been approved by Natural England to carry out Great Crested Newt surveys.</p> <p>ACTION: EH to pass details about this scheme to TY.</p> <p>‘Finding Sanctuary’ project at FAS gives access to animals without touching them for sensory purposes.</p> <p>Somerset Beekeepers have been in contact with EH about a pollinator’s exhibition to help people understand the issues.</p>	
	EH

<p>FAS will be one of the venues for Somerset Arts week.</p> <p>Graham Long: Graham expressed his concerns as to the accuracy of the Devon County Council scrutiny report on the 'Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme'.</p> <p>Martin Turner: Blackdown Hills Hedge Association annual hedge laying event will be held on Saturday 7th April at Cotley Farm in Wambrook.</p> <p>Mark Pope (by email): The main issue affecting agriculture at present is Brexit and its potential implications. The NFU is trying to urge farmers to reply to the government's consultation paper. www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment</p> <p>The other big issue is lack of payments from the Rural Payments Agency for agri environment schemes to farmers/landowners. Linked to this is the movement of agri environment from Natural England to Rural Payments Agency.</p>	
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ITEM 7 Any Other Business	
Trisha Comrie reminded members that the first Blackdown Hills Repair Café would be run on Saturday 24 th March in Hemyock Parish Hall from 10am to 12.30pm and has 12-14 specialists committed to looking at items such as computers, bikes, furniture, textiles, mechanical and electrical.	
Date of the next meeting	
Next meeting will be held on Thursday, 5th July 2018 from 10am – 1.30pm at the Blackdown Healthy Living Centre, Hemyock . This meeting will involve looking at the work of the Crayfish project and it is advisable to bring wellingtons if you wish to be involved.	

Signed as a true record:

Chairman.....

Date.....