

LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 24/06/15

Present:

Councillor Gruffydd Williams (Chairman)
T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council) – Vice-chairman

Committee Members: Councillors W. Gareth Roberts, Angela Russell and R. H. Wyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Emily Bateman (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust), John Gosling (Abersoch and Llŷn Tourism Partnership), Arfon Hughes (Nefyn Town Council), Laura Hughes (National Trust), William I. Hughes (Farmers' Union of Wales), Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council) and Alun Price (Natural Resources Wales).

Officers: Bleddyn P. Jones (Llŷn AONB Service Manager), Wyn Williams (Countryside and Access Manager) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

1. WELCOME

Alun Price, Natural Resources Wales, was welcomed to his first meeting.

2. CHAIRMAN

It was reported that the constitution of the Joint Advisory Committee had been amended under delegated powers of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory so that any member of the Joint-committee could act as Chairman.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Gruffydd Williams as Chairman for the year 2015/16.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect T. Victor Jones as Vice-chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

3. APOLOGIES: Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Access Forum), Hedd Rhys (NFU Cymru), Gillian Walker (Botwnnog Community Council), John Eric Williams (Cyfeillion Llŷn), Wenda Williams (Aberdaron Community Council) and John Lloyd Jones (Welsh Designated Landscapes Review Panel).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

5. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 25 March, 2015, as a true record, subject to amending the name of Arfon Jones (Nefyn Town Council) to Arfon *Hughes* under the list of apologies.

6. URGENT ITEM

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that the Llŷn AONB Unit was being considered as part of possible cuts by the Council. The support of members was requested for the Unit as part of the public consultation on cuts.

7. REVIEW OF WELSH DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES –STAGE 2

Submitted – the report of the Llŷn AONB Service Manager, noting the latest situation in terms of the Welsh Government's review of Designated Landscapes.

It was reported that the response to Stage 2 of the review had been sent to the review Panel by Gwynedd Council as an organisation.

Attention was drawn to a letter received from Professor Terry Marsden, Chairman of the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, introducing Stage 2 of the review and was giving organisations an opportunity to submit evidence in writing regarding designated landscape governance arrangements. The specific questions posed were highlighted to assist the Review in identifying and gathering the necessary evidence to come to a conclusion on Stage 2.

Members were given an opportunity to offer observations. During the discussion the following main points were noted:

- In the current financial climate, it would be more cost-effective to have one body to decide on planning applications, namely Gwynedd Council;
- There was a lack of awareness of the AONB and there was a need to ensure stronger planning arrangements to safeguard the AONB when deciding on planning applications;
- There was need for a better balance between beauty and the economy as so many young people were leaving the area;
- Tourists visited the area because of its beauty and there was a need to balance the value of economic development with conservation. This meant that developments which were not in-keeping with the natural beauty had to be refused, especially because of the duty to secure/protect the beauty of the area under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- Raising awareness of the AONB to a similar level as the National Parks would encourage more people to come to the AONB;
- A member expressed her concern that if the National Parks and AONBs were governed under the same system, the AONB would be swallowed by the Park;
- There was a lack of resources and a low profile within the Council and Gwynedd as a whole;
- The AONB should receive resources/support that was similar to the level of National Parks and keep its local independence.

A member noted that the Crown Estate received a substantial amount of money from Wales on an annual basis and this was inequitable.

A member drew attention to a local quality assurance plan in the Lake District where an additional fee was charged on visitors and the money was used for marketing and maintaining the area and the member was in contact with the Council with a view to establishing a similar system in Gwynedd. He noted that establishing a pilot scheme would take some time but it would be of considerable value to the area.

In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he had been in contact with the Tourism, Marketing and Customer Care Unit and they were looking into establishing a similar system. The Countryside and Access Manager added that it was a complicated matter and there was a need for resources to establish and administrate such a system and it would have to be independent from the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to accept the report;**
- (ii) that the Llŷn AONB Service Manager summarises the discussion and sends it to the Panel.**

8. UPDATE ON PROJECTS

Submitted – a report on the work of the AONB Unit, noting that Catrin Glyn, Llŷn AONB Project Officer – temporary, had received a new post and she was wished well.

Llŷn Conservation Areas Projects

It was noted that the final report had been received and the next step of the work, if resources permitted, would be trying to achieve the recommendations of the report and improve the condition of the Conservation Areas in the AONB by collaboration and securing funding.

In response to an observation by a member, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that the owners of buildings in Conservation Areas were encouraged to safeguard and improve the appearance and character of the areas.

A member expressed concern regarding street furniture (by private businesses) that were not in-keeping.

A member expressed an opinion that the observations of Community Councils on planning applications did not receive a fair consideration.

A member noted that Conservation Officers of the Snowdonia National Park Authority had succeeded in attracting grants for maintaining conservation in Dolgellau and more consideration should be given to Conservation Areas when determining planning applications in Gwynedd.

World Wars Project

It was noted that Elfed Gruffydd had completed his research work into the First World War in terms of the impact and influence of the World Wars on the environment and on society in the area and that he was now examining the Second World War. Attention was drawn to a summary of the work and it was noted that a complete report would be brought before the Joint-committee.

A member expressed his gratitude to Elfed Gruffydd for the work and hoped the information would be published. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he would convey the appreciation of the member to Elfed Gruffydd. It was added that it was proposed to publish the report on the internet.

Llŷn Coastal Festival and Walking Tours

It was reported that the Coastal Festival would be held during the summer and walking tours had been arranged by the Llŷn AONB Unit for September.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

9. ESTABLISHING A PLANNING MATTERS SUB-GROUP

Submitted – the report of the Llŷn AONB Service Manager, weighing up and measuring the situation in terms of establishing a Planning Matters Sub-group in accordance with the decision of the Joint-committee at its meeting on 22 October 2014.

It was noted that observations were submitted on relevant planning applications by the Llŷn AONB Service Manager, along with the Joint-committee's statement when applications on wind turbines arose.

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A member noted that establishing a sub-group would enable members to prepare more comprehensive observations when it was considered that a planning application would have a detrimental effect on the AONB.

RESOLVED that the Llŷn AONB Service Manager submits a report at the next meeting regarding establishing a Planning Matters Sub-group.

10. PLANNING APPEAL - WIND TURBINE, CRUGERAN, SARN

Submitted – report of the Llŷn AONB Service Manager regarding the Planning Appeal lodged following the refusal of planning permission to erect an additional wind turbine on land near Crugeran, Sarn Mellteyrn (Planning Application Reference C14/0974/32/LL), following a request by a member of the Joint-committee to consider the matter.

It was reported that observations had been made on the application by the Llŷn AONB Service Manager which included the Joint-committee's statement in relation to wind turbines.

Members were given an opportunity to produce detailed observations on the Appeal.

Following a request by a member, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager agreed to send a copy of the observations that will be sent to the Inspector on behalf of the Joint-committee to her by e-mail.

RESOLVED to authorise the Llŷn AONB Service Manager to submit observations based on the information below on the appeal to the Inspector on behalf of the Joint-committee:

- **The Joint-committee considers that approving the application would have a substantial detrimental effect on the Llŷn AONB. It is considered that the proposal is contrary to the Joint-committee's duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.**
- **Applications for wind turbines in the locality had been refused and the appeal should be dismissed.**
- **The Joint-committee disagreed with the observations of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) which noted that it was not considered that there would be a substantial detrimental impact. The Inspector is asked to take into account the specialist local opinion of the Joint-committee which is contrary to the opinion of NRW's desk-top exercise. It was felt that there was inconsistency in NRW's observations on planning matters.**
- **The consultation document of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Draft Deposit Local Development Plan 2011-26 noted that wind turbines of more than 15 metres were not permitted in Llŷn to prevent substantial detrimental impact on the AONB and this has been supported by several bodies, including the Joint-committee.**
- **It is believed that the economic need does not outweigh the damage caused to the AONB.**

11. LOCAL MEMBERS ON THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Submitted – the report of the Llŷn AONB Service Manager regarding consideration of changing the constitution of the Joint Advisory Committee in relation to the number of

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Local Members (Councillors) on the Joint Advisory Committee following a request by a member for the Joint Advisory Committee to consider the matter.

It was noted that in the current system, local members were changed following each electoral period with five Local Members serving on the Joint Advisory Committee at the same time.

A member noted that the electoral boundaries would be changing following the Local Council elections in May 2017 and the current system should be retained until the boundaries were changed.

RESOLVED to keep to the present arrangement for the time being but arrangements to be made to amend the constitution to enable every Local Member to be a member of the Joint Advisory Committee by May 2017.

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and concluded at 6.35 pm

CHAIRMAN