

LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 17/7/18

Present:

Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Local Access Forum) (Chairman)
Councillor Gareth Williams (Gwynedd Council) (Vice-chairman)

Members: Councillors Anwen Davies, Aled Wyn Jones and John Brynmor Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), Jina Gwyrfai (Llanaelhaearn Community Council), Laura Hughes (National Trust), T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council), Gruffydd Williams (Nefyn Town Council) and Wenda Williams (Aberdaron Community Council).

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

Others invited: Alan Jones (SP Energy Networks)

Apologies: John Gosling (Abersoch and Llŷn Tourism Partnership), Sianelen Fleming (Pistyll Community Council), Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council), Alun Price (Natural Resources Wales) and Gillian Walker (Cyfeillion Llŷn).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Morgan Jones-Parry as Chairman for 2018/19.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Gareth Williams as Vice-chairman for 2018/19.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. URGENT ITEMS

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that in error he had not included the following item on the agenda.

Under-grounding electricity cables

Alan Jones (SP Energy Networks) was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a presentation on the scheme to under-ground electricity cables within the AONB and noted that updating meetings were conducted with AONB officers every six months. He gave details of the work that was completed during the period 2010-15 at Aberdesach, Rhiw and Llithfaen and the work that had been completed and was on-going since 2015 at Mynydd Cilan, Mynytho Common, Sarn Bach, Dwyros and Bryncynan. It was noted that a budget of £8 million had been earmarked for the 3 AONB's and National Parks in North Wales for the period 2015-22 and that it was necessary to identify future projects.

In response to members' comments regarding the landslip as a result of water erosion following the completion of under grounding work at Nant Gwrtheyrn, and the safety of the restoration work, the representative from SP Energy Networks noted that he would look into the matter.

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager enquired about the under grounding work on Mynytho Common. In response, the representative from SP Energy Networks noted that the work would progress once the landowner had given permission.

In response to a question from a member regarding who decided on the sites where under grounding of electricity cables was to be undertaken, the SP Energy Networks representative explained that the AONB officers suggested potential sites and he considered the practicalities of under grounding electricity cables at those sites. He elaborated that operating on the sites where it was practically possible to undertake the work was dependent on receiving permission from the landowner. He explained that a landowner received a way-leave payment for electricity cables above ground due to their impact on day to day agricultural work with a smaller payment for under-grounded electricity cables. He further explained that a landowner could give notice to terminate permission if there was no easement operational on the land. He noted that the use of an easement on land was rare as it was a more difficult process.

A member asked what was the total length of overhead electricity cables in the AONB. In response, the representative from SP Energy Networks noted that only a small portion of the whole network was overhead. He added that they focused on the most practical areas for under-grounding electricity cables.

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager drew attention to an article in the 'Llygad Llŷn' magazine on the work completed at Cilan.

A member referred to an electricity transformer that was no longer in operation near the former Nefyn sewerage works and asked could it be removed. The representative from SP Energy Networks noted that he would look into the matter.

The Chair thanked the representative from SP Energy Works for his presentation.

The representative from SP Energy Networks noted that he would contact the Llŷn AONB Service Manager regarding potential sites for under-grounding electricity cables.

Countryside Champion

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that Councillor Angela Russell had been appointed as Countryside Champion by Gwynedd Council. He expanded that her role would be to promote countryside matters. He explained that the Champion received an invitation to Joint Committee meetings as an observer, however, there was an option to amend the constitution to include the Countryside Champion as a full member of the Joint Committee.

In response to a question by a member regarding the appointment process, the Countryside and Access Manager noted that the Environment Cabinet Member was responsible for the appointment and the Councillor had been chosen as she was previously the Biodiversity Champion.

RESOLVED to amend the Joint Committee's constitution to include Gwynedd Council's Countryside Champion as a full member of the Joint Committee.

5. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint Committee, that took place on 20 December 2017, as a true record.

6. AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager submitted the report and he noted that the AONB Management Plan had been formally adopted by the Council via the delegated procedure of the Environment Cabinet Member.

He referred to the next review of the Management Plan, and noted that Natural Resources Wales, who were coordinating the national work on the AONB, had started to prepare new guidance for the next review. He noted that it appeared that as a result of recent developments regarding the The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Environment Act (Wales) 2016 and with the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, that there would be some changes to the process and it was likely that the status of the plans would be higher.

In response to a member's question regarding the status of the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Wales following leaving the European Union, the Countryside and Access Manager noted that they had been designated under statute.

A member enquired about the publication of the Management Plan. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that the Plan had been sent to the print-room, and he explained that hard copies would be available soon and an electronic version would be published on the internet.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

7. NATIONAL MATTERS

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager submitted the report providing an update on the review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONB) in Wales.

He noted that Hannah Blythyn AM, had been appointed as Minister for the Environment in November 2017, and that she now had responsibility for designated landscapes in Wales. He reported that the Minister had confirmed in a statement to the Senedd on 13 March 2018, that the Welsh Government was committed to designated landscapes. He added that she had noted that there was equality for the AONB with the National Parks in terms of planning policy, however, this was not true in terms of status, profile and resources. A further announcement was expected at the Royal Welsh Show.

In response to a question by a member in the context of further funding for the AONB, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that there was no reference to further funding but the minister's comments were positive and it was hoped that there would be more status to the AONB.

A member noted that it would be difficult to achieve without further funding. A member asked if consideration should be given to giving the Welsh Government a figure regarding how much funding was required to achieve this. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that if the status of the AONB was maximised to be of the same status as the National Parks, it was expected that the Welsh Government would outline the procedures and would then look at the resources to achieve this. He added that discussions were ongoing between the five AONB, Natural Resources

Wales and the AONB Association in order to submit a proposal to the Welsh Government in the near future.

A Member noted that the Minister's statement was exciting, prior to the statement it was very unclear as to the status and aims of the AONB. He added that he had concerns that the recommendations of Professor Terry Marsden in his report 'National Landscapes - Realising their Potential' would not be achieved. In response to the above observations, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that Professor Terry Marsden's report had 69 recommendations, he hoped that the most important recommendations would be implemented.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

8. PLANNING RELATED MATTERS

A report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Service Manager informing members of three planning appeals for developments within the AONB, namely:

- The Shanty, Abersoch (Planning Application no. C17/1024/39/LL) - the appeal was approved;
- Adjacent to Glynllifon, Llanbedrog (Planning Application no. C17/0725/38/AM - the appeal was refused;
- Trees near Gorse Bank, Abersoch (Planning Application no. C17/1185/39/CC – the appeal was refused.

A member referred to Policy TWR2 'Holiday Accommodation' in the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP), stating his concern about the increase in the number of applications to convert buildings into holiday accommodation. He noted that it was part of the policy to approve such applications as part of extending existing holiday accommodation establishments. He elaborated that it was difficult to undertake research in terms of over provision of self-catering accommodation in the area and the policy was open-ended as it did not state a percentage. He noted that he had requested for the policy to be reviewed.

In response to the above observations, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager stated that he shared the concern as the previous policy which referred to traditional buildings had been weakened.

A member referred to the 'Trees near Gorse Bank, Abersoch' appeal, and noted that similar trees had been removed over the road to Whitehouse, Abersoch and trees had been trimmed near the golf course. He stressed that it was necessary to keep an eye on such cases.

In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he would mention the above to the Biodiversity Unit, however, if the trees had no tree preservation order it was not possible to prevent this.

A member noted that the planning policies let down the area's young people with planning applications to re-construct stone buildings being refused. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he would convey the observations to the Joint Planning Policy Unit. A member noted that the matter had been raised at a meeting of Joint Planning Policy Committee.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

9. PROJECTS

The Llŷn AONB Projects Officer submitted her report on the work of the AONB Service. An update was given on the following projects:

- Common land survey
- Invasive species
- Rural skills training
- Improve access
- Dark sky

A member enquired if it was permitted to take a motorbike over common land. A member noted that it was Natural Resources Wales who were responsible for managing them. In response to the above observations, the Countryside and Access Manager explained that only access on foot was allowed on open land, however, there were other rights in some places.

A member referred to Moel Saethon where there was an Iron Age hill fort. It was noted that it was open land and there was no public footpath. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he had sought permission for Mynydd Ystum, however, the landowner was not very supportive. He noted that he would try to identify and contact the landowner in this case.

A member asked why footpath 12 in Cilan had been chosen to improve access. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that the path had been chosen in consultation with the Senior Public Rights of Way Officer (Dwyfor).

A member noted that Anglesey Council had received grant funding to treat the invasive plant, Himalayan Balsam. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he had spoken with the AONB Officer in Anglesey Council, and it had been mentioned that they would meet to discuss this. It was explained that work to eradicate Japanese Knotweed in the AONB was funded by the Natural Resources Wales block grant and there was considerable mapping work to be done prior to commencing the work.

A member referred to the path that started at Cefn Morfa and went from Plas yng Ngheidio to Ceidio, noting that it was overgrown. The member noted that she had contacted the Senior Rights of Way Officer (Dwyfor). In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Manager noted that he would contact the Senior Rights of Way Officer (Dwyfor) regarding this matter.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

The meeting commenced at 4.35pm and concluded at 5.50pm.

CHAIR