
LLŶN A.O.N.B JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 4/12/19

Present: Councillor Glyn Roberts (Botwnnog Community Council) (Chair)

Members: Councillors Anwen Davies, Aled Wyn Jones and Gareth Williams (Gwynedd Council); also Molly Lovatt (Natural Resources Wales), Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), Brett Garner (Llŷn Fishermen's Association); Councillors Eirian Allport (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), Jina Gwyrfai (Llanaelhaearn Community Council), T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council), Sian Parri (Cyngor Cymuned Tudweiliog), Sianelen Plemming (Cyngor Cymuned Pistyll) and Gruffydd Williams (Nefyn Town Council).

Officers: Bleddyn P. Jones (Llŷn AONB Officer), Elin Wyn Hughes (Llŷn AONB Projects Officer) and Eirian Roberts (Democratic Services Officer).

Molly Lovatt was welcomed to the meeting, and it was noted that she had taken over from Alun Price as Natural Resources Wales' representative on the Joint Committee.

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Glyn Roberts as Chair of this joint-committee for the year 2019/20.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor T. Victor Jones as vice-chair of this joint-committee for the year 2019/20.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillors Simon Glyn and John Brynmor Hughes (Gwynedd Council) and Councillor Angela Russell (Gwynedd Council Rural Champion), also Andy Godber (National Trust), Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Local Access Forum), John Gosling (Abersoch and Llŷn Tourism Partnership) and Andrew Davidson (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

5. URGENT ITEMS

Redevelopment of beach huts

The Llŷn AONB Officer noted that the Abersoch and Llŷn Tourism Partnership's representative, who was unable to attend the meeting, had asked him to raise a matter on his behalf in relation to the redevelopment of a beach hut in Abersoch. It was explained that the member had expressed concern that the new hut was larger than the one that had been demolished, and had asked officers to visit the site. However, it was noted that although planning permission to redevelop the hut had originally been refused, the application had subsequently been granted at an appeal. The representative had been informed that procedure had been followed in this case, but it was acknowledged that planning permission was being granted fairly routinely for such developments.

In response to an enquiry, the Llŷn AONB Officer explained that as the appeal had been granted in this case, there was nothing that could be done about the situation.

A member noted that this problem was not restricted to beach huts, and that a number of substantially sized houses were being granted permission across the communities.

A member noted that comparatively few applications came before Gwynedd Council Planning Committee as officers now had more extensive delegation powers to make decisions on planning applications. He noted that applications for houses from local people were being refused on the grounds that they were not affordable, but the situation of the housing market in places such as Abersoch and Llanengan meant that there were no affordable houses there. He emphasised that pressure must be brought on the planning system, as otherwise there would be no Welsh people living in these areas.

A member noted that the scaffolding that formed the foundations of the beach huts in Nefyn was being left there throughout the year, and was unsightly.

The Llŷn AONB Officer noted that these matters would receive attention when the management plan was reviewed.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint-committee, held on 11 July 2019, as a true record.

7. NATIONAL ISSUES

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager submitted the report, which included further information about the national situation in relation to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wales.

An update was provided on the following developments:-

- Objectives and priority themes in the document 'Valued and Resilient – The Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks'.
- Proposal for increasing equality with the National Parks in terms of status, profile and resources.
- Proposals to establish a National Welsh Landscape Partnership.
- Appointment of a Wales Development Manager to support AONB Partnerships in implementing the priorities set out in Welsh Government's 'Valued and Resilient' document.
- The proposals derived from the review of designated areas in England ("Glover Review") and its main finding that Designated Areas had the potential to achieve more by working together as a family under a new organisation: "National Landscapes".

It was also noted that AONB Units had been given an opportunity over recent years to submit proposals for direct funding from Welsh Government to fund projects, and that information about some of the projects funded by this method had been included in the report on the AONB Unit's Projects.

Following on from the discussion on item 6 above, the Llŷn AONB Officer noted that the proposal in the review of designated landscapes in England referred to giving AONBs more influence in planning matters. He would keep an eye on the situation and report back at the next meeting.

In relation to funding, it was noted that £59,000 had been allocated to the Llŷn AONB out of the £4m for designated areas, while Anglesey had received £350,000. A question was asked about the criteria, and how Anglesey had succeeded in attracting such a substantially higher sum, and how the Government decided on the allocation.

In response, the AONB Officer explained that the Unit had received a last-minute request to submit proposals. Very little guidance had been received, with the exception of noting that the funding was solely for capital projects. This had restricted the Unit in terms of the plans, and also its capacity to spend the funding by the end of March 2020. Therefore, the proposals had been submitted on what was practical to achieve within the available time. It was explained that Anglesey had submitted an application for more funding. It was not clear how they would succeed to spend the funding by the end of March next year.

In response to a member's observation, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to have some plans ready beforehand so that it would be possible to bid for more funding when the opportunity arose.

A question was asked whether it would be possible to transfer some Interreg funding for these plans, but it was noted that this would not be possible, as only revenue projects were permitted.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

8. AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Llŷn AONB Service Manager submitted the report, which highlighted that work on revising the AONB Management Plan and the associated environmental assessments should begin soon, as the implementation period of the current plan would end in 2020.

Details were provided of the progress to date and the draft timetable.

It was suggested that the intention to review the plan in a year's time was extremely ambitious, especially considering the fact that the last review had taken four years.

In response, the Llŷn AONB Officer explained that there would be fewer changes this time. The plan had been significantly amended last time, and work had been sent to external consultants. It was also hoped that the closer collaboration with the Clwydian Range and Anglesey AONBs would help to move things forward more quickly.

A member suggested that holding a review every five years placed a burden on the AONB's resources. In response, the Llŷn AONB Officer explained that the Countryside Act noted that a review of the plan must be held every five years, and that it would be difficult to change the situation without amending the Act.

As a result of the research commissioned by the Government on the impact of second homes on the local housing supply in rural areas, a question was asked whether there was an opportunity to contribute in relation to the second homes situation in the AONB.

In response, the Llŷn AONB Officer said that this could be considered as part of the review as this would form background evidence for the plan.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

9. AONB UNIT PROJECTS

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

- Rural Skills Training
- Marine Litter
- Invasive species
- Under-grounding electricity lines
- Sustaining Assets - Volunteering Opportunities
- AONB Photography Competition
- Capital Projects – Welsh Government Funding, namely:-
 - Carnguwch Church - repairing and replacing gates and installing directional signs from the direction of the Church at Llwyndyrys
 - Repair work to Cae'r Nant boundary wall and creation of a vehicle passing place
 - Pathway improvements at Cilan
 - Improve Access to Access Land at Bwlch Mawr, Gyrn Ddu, Gyrn Goch

Copies of a leaflet by the National Trust was distributed, relating to the 'Payment for Outcomes' agricultural project at Porth Gwylan. The Llŷn AONB Projects Officer said that she had more copies in the offices if anyone required some.

During the discussion the following matters were raised:-

- Referring to the intention to install a public water tap near the toilets in Abersoch, Natural Resources Wales' representative noted that panels could be provided near to the refill points explaining why it was necessary to reduce the use of plastic. It was suggested that the Llŷn AONB Officer should discuss this further with the representative.
- A member noted that Himalayan Balsam was more problematic than Japanese Knotweed as it spread far quicker. In response, the Llŷn AONB Service Officer said that the Unit would continue to pursue the issue, but Himalayan Balsam was a significant problem by now in the area. He noted that the plant had spread from the mountain in Nefyn down to the beach, and that this might be a suitable project to bid for Welsh Government funding. He added that Anglesey had undertaken considerable work on this, and that the 'Himalayan Balsam' partnership had mapped out the areas where the plant grew. A suggestion was made to contact the Anglesey Partnership to see whether the mapping work could be extended to include Llŷn.
- A local member noted that there was nothing on the AONB website about the Dark Skies Project, although it was referred to regularly on the social media sites. It was hoped that several events would take place once the Project Officer returned to work.
- A member asked whether it would be possible to establish a project to remove the willow trees at Garn Boduan, as there was a risk that they could spread and affect the remains there. The Llŷn AONB Officer suggested that this could be incorporated in the management plan. The member noted that he would provide the officer with the owner's contact details.
- A member noted that Scottish Power had upgraded one of its lines at Sarn Bach, and it was enquired whether discussions could be held beforehand to see whether it could be placed underground. In response, the Llŷn AONB Officer explained that Scottish Power were more eager to place lines underground in some locations than others, and he referred to three lines that were intended to be placed underground next year. It was suggested to ask Scottish Power to provide OS maps showing the locations.

- A member noted that the rhododendron near the waterfall on the approach to Gyrn Goch needed to be cut.
- A member noted that the steps leading up to Tyddyn Hywel Quarry had been built by former workers and that it was worth ascending to the top to see the work.
- A member noted that he was very pleased with the repair work to Cae'r Nant boundary wall and that widening the road had made a great difference. However, another member expressed concern about speeding on the road.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

10. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Submitted - the report of the Llŷn AONB Projects Officer detailing the position of the Sustainable Development Fund. It was noted that £55,000 was available to the Fund at the beginning of the 2019/20 financial year, and all of this had already been earmarked.

It was noted that the Wells – Keep Wales Tidy project had been withdrawn due to a lack of match funding, and that the underspend had been used to fund the following projects:-

- Bryncroes Local History Lectures
- New Signs for Bro Madryn Churches
- St David's Parade, Pwllheli
- Be Nawn Ni Heddiw?

RESOLVED to accept the information.

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm and concluded at 5.35 pm

CHAIRMAN