
LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 27/06/2022

Present:

T. Victor Jones (Chair) (Llanbedrog Community Council)

Members: Councillors Gareth Williams, John Brynmor Hughes, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gruffydd Williams, Dafydd Davies and Angella Russell (Cyngor Gwynedd Rural Champion) and also Andy Godber (National Trust), Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), Jina Gwyrfai (Llanaelhaearn Community Council), Brett Garner (Llŷn Fishermen Association), Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Local Access Forum), Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council), Sianelen Plemming (Pistyll Community Council), Gillian Walker (Cyfeillion Llŷn) and Wenda Williams (Aberdaron Community Council).

Officers: Bleddyn P. Jones (Llŷn AONB Officer), Morus Llwyd Dafydd (Llŷn AONB Projects Officer), Wyn Williams (Countryside Manager) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor T. Victor Jones as Chairman of the Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee for the year 2022/23.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Sian Parri as Vice-chair of the Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee for the year 2022/23.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Andrew Davidson (Principal Archaeologist - Gwynedd Archaeologist Trust), Eirian Allport (Clynnog Fawr Community Council) and Molly Lovatt (Natural Resources Wales).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint-committee held on 16 March 2022, as a true record.

7. AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report on the AONB Management Plan was presented noting that the Joint-committee had a role to play in the process of preparing, coordinating and reviewing the Plan. It was noted that the current Management Plan was dated and needed reviewing. It was reported that background work had already been completed as well as commissioning an update of the Report on the Condition of the AONB. A summary of the main findings had been included with the report as appendix 1.

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Information on the next steps was provided that would include reviewing notes, aims and the policies of the present Management Plan and suggestions to change some aspects. The timetable and what is proposed to complete was discussed including the period of consulting and considering the responses in 2023. The aim was to adopt and implement the revised Management Plan before the end of 2023.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- An observation was made on the agricultural information in the report on the condition of the AONB which showed a reduction of 17% in the use of land for growing crops between 2008-2012. It was questioned how reliable the information was.
- The importance of tightening the protection for traditional buildings was expressed and reference was made to planning applications for extensions that were contrary to the character of traditional houses. It was believed that the procedure and observations received from the AONB on planning applications should be strengthened.
- Reference was made to the current work the Llŷn Landscape Partnership were undertaking with the Connectivity Strategy to try and improve the Llŷn landscape following the nature emergency and climate change. It would be appreciated if the AONB Unit was part of this process.
- It was believed that the significant decline that had taken place over the years in the appearance of the AONB and in the Welsh language needed to be recognised and it was important to note this in the report.
- It was recognised that habitats and protecting nature was important, but it was highlighted that food production was the main aim of the landscape, and it should be ensured that enough land was earmarked for this purpose.

In response, it was noted:

- That the information in the report on the condition of the AONB was dated. It was noted that it had been challenging for the consultants to find recent information. The AONB Officer would try and follow up with the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales in order to receive recent information for the plan.
- That the AONB Unit was an advisor and provided observations on planning applications. It was believed that there would be an opportunity when the Local Development Plan was updated.
- The AONB Unit would contact the National Trust regarding connectivity along the coast when reviewing the plan.
- It was explained that the full report did exist but only a summary was presented to the Joint-committee. It was noted that observations on culture and language were identified and would be included in the plan.

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report on the AONB Management Plan.

8. LLŷN AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Information on the membership of the Joint Committee was provided noting that there were arrangements in place to exchange the Members from Cyngor Gwynedd following the local elections. The Members that would receive a seat on the Joint-committee as well as the Countryside Champion were confirmed.

The empty seats that existed were mentioned. The AONB Officer would try and re-contact some agencies to see if they were going to send a representative; it was recognised that some hadn't attended for years. The report on the attendance in meetings of the Joint-committee since 2019 was provided as requested at the last meeting of the Joint-committee.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

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- It was noted that there were fewer Councillors since the local elections in May following boundary changes that had led to larger wards. It was questioned if it was possible to re-visit the membership to give more Councillors an offer to attend.
- There was concern that some Members with an interest in attending were missing out due to the rotation system that existed whilst others with a seat weren't attending.
- It was questioned why the Councillors for Llanystumdwy ward weren't included within the membership as part of the ward was now within the boundaries and territory of the AONB.

In response, it was noted:

- That the AONB Officer had received legal advice that it would not be possible to invite more Cyngor Gwynedd Councillors to become members of the Joint-committee as it was important to keep the balance between Cyngor Gwynedd Councillors and other members and representatives. It was deemed that the current arrangement of 6 Cyngor Gwynedd Councillors and the Countryside Champion worked well.
- The AONB Officer would look into the matter of the Llanystumdwy ward and the AONB boundaries by the next meeting.

DECISION

To accept the report on the Membership of the Consultative Joint-committee.

9. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The report on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was provided to members of the Joint-committee to inform the Joint-committee of the intention regarding the Plan. It was explained that it was a strategic document that set the direction and priorities for the work of maintaining and developing the rights of way network and other access assets in Gwynedd.

It was explained that a new ROWIP had been prepared; the original Plan was adopted in 2007. The new Plan reflects the changes in resources and legislation since that period.

It was noted that the new ROWIP was now live on the Council's website and that it was possible to provide observations on the Plan during the public consultation period which would continue until mid-September 2022. It was added that a message had been sent to the Community and Town Council Clerks regarding the consultation and Members would also receive a message soon. It was hoped that the responses to the consultation could be looked at in the Autumn before moving forward to adopt the Plan.

Members did not have any observations or questions.

DECISION

To accept the information noted in the report.

10. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

An update was provided to the Joint-committee on the position of the Sustainable Development Fund thus far and developments in the pipeline. Reference was made to the expenditure of the 2021/22 financial year, and it was reported that there was £100,000 in the Fund and it had all been allocated.

It was confirmed that funding had been confirmed for the next three years. This meant that there was £100,000 in the fund for 2022/23 and a budget of £100,000 was available for 2023/24 and 2024/25. It was explained that this provided the opportunity for projects to be funded over a period of two or three years if needed.

It was added that the Welsh Government had changed the Fund's Regulations by placing more emphasis on the Well-being Act as well as prioritising projects that correspond with the themes of Nature Recovery and De-carbonisation. It was noted that the work of promoting the Fund had already started and members were encouraged to share information on the opportunity to apply for grants from the fund.

To conclude it was explained that new members needed to be elected to the Grants Panel. It was explained that there was space for 8 members of the Consultative Joint-committee to serve as members of the Grants Panel. Following guidance, it was suggested that four of the previous members continue and for four new members to be chosen. It was noted that the intention in the future was to exchange two members of the Grants Panel every two years. The Joint-committee were asked to accept the information and elect new members to the Grants Panel.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- An enquiry was made on having a quorum. In addition, it was asked why all members of the Consultative Joint-committee could not be members of the Grants Panel.
- The existing members of the Grants Panel wanted to continue as members, and there was no desire from anyone to stand down.
- A proposal was made by the Members to keep the Grants Panel membership as it was and to offer a space for one new member to fill the empty seat. It was asked whether this was acceptable by the AONB Officer.
- An observation was made that many small projects needed funding in Llŷn and it was asked if it would be possible to keep a specific amount for projects that ask for £1,000 or less. It was felt that small projects were more likely to miss out as they ask for fairly low amounts.

In response, it was noted:

- That 1/3 was a quorum therefore at least a third of the members of the Grants Panel needed to be present at every meeting.
- It was explained that 8 members on the Grants Panel was already a high number compared to other AONB e.g. Anglesey which had 3 members. Members were reminded that 6 members used to represent the Grants Panel but the number of members was raised to 8 and it was believed that this number worked well.
- The AONB Officer explained that there was 1 empty seat on the Grants Panel. There was a need for 3 present members of the Panel to step down and to then elect 4 new representatives.
- The AONB Officer noted that the restrictions of the Welsh Government suggest rotating the members of the Grants Panel but if everyone was in agreement, that it would be possible to implement the wish of existing members to continue by adding one new member to fill the empty seat. It was emphasised that this was acceptable for the time being but in two years two members would need to be removed and replaced with two new ones.
- It was confirmed that the members of the Grants Panel would be: Councillors Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Angela Russell and also Eirian Allport, Noel Davey, T. Victor Jones, Morgan Jones-Parry and Sian Parri.
- It was explained that it was a challenge to spend £100,000 in a year and it was recognised that many projects in Llŷn were small ones. It was believed that there would be more flexibility in the next three years to fund smaller projects as confirmation had been received of the £100,000 for the next three years for the fund.

DECISION

- a) To accept the report on the position of the Sustainable Development Fund.**
- b) Councillor Angela Russell was elected to take the empty seat on the Panel.**

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The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 4.55pm

CHAIR