

LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 27/06/2024

Present:

Members: Councillors: **Gareth Williams, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gruffydd Williams** and **Angela Russell** (Cyngor Gwynedd's Countryside Champion) along with **Noel Davey** (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), **Jina Gwyrfai** (Llanaelhaern Community Council), **Sianelen Plemming** (Pistyll Community Council), **T. Victor Jones** (Chair) (Llanbedrog Community Council), **Robert Parkinson** (National Trust), **Morgan Jones-Parry** (Arfon and Dwyfor Access Forum), **Linda Ashton** (Natural Resources Wales), **Sian Parri** (Tudweiliog Community Council) and **Jenny Emmett** (Gwynedd Archaeology).

Officers: **Bleddyn P. Jones** (Llŷn AONB Officer), **Morus Llwyd Dafydd** (Llŷn AONB Projects Officer), **Heledd Fflur Jones** (Planning Policy Team Leader) and **Sioned Mai Jones** (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 7: Mr John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was resolved to elect **T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council)** as Chair for 2024/25.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved to elect **Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council)** as Vice-chair for 2024/25.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor **John Brynmor Hughes, Einir Wyn** (Llanengan Community Council), **Rhian Sanson** (Nefyn Town Council), **Dewi Evans** (Aberdaron Community Council), **Eirian Allport** (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), **Gillian Walker** (Cyfeillion Llŷn) and **Andrew Davidson** who had just retired from Gwynedd Archaeology (Jenny Emmett will now represent Gwynedd Archaeology on the Committee).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint Committee, that took place on 22 November 2023, as a true record.

7. A NEW IMAGE FOR THE AONB

John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association, was welcomed to the meeting and the Joint Advisory Committee was reminded of the discussion back in November 2023 about creating a new brand and image for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation. Reference was made to the recommendation to change the operational name from 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' to 'National Landscapes'. It was reported that the name 'National Landscapes' was being used in England and Wales, noting that the Welsh Government had expressed support to this change.

The Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association stated that this change had been in the making for seven years following a period of intensive review and research. He noted that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations were supposed to be as good as the National Parks in terms of their quality (albeit a different designation) and reported that this change to the brand and name was an attempt to raise awareness nationally of the importance of these landscapes. It was believed that this would assist in attracting resources to the designations, and he reminded all that they were national designations being managed locally.

He noted that all the landscapes in England and many in Wales were now using the new name and brand, which respected how unique the individual landscapes were but recognised that they were part of a wider family. Support was expressed to what the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were trying to achieve. It was believed that it was important for local decisions and considerations to appear as part of a national family and that this would be beneficial in expanding their profile. To conclude, he reported on the input he had received on the new branding, noting that he had received very positive comments.

The following observations were made by members: -

- It was noted that the National Landscapes website was in English and that the Welsh Government logo was on the website. The member expressed strong dissatisfaction that the website was not bilingual.
- They argued that we needed to protect the Welsh language and expressed that the Welsh language would not be treated fairly by the National Landscapes Association.
- Keen to highlight that Wales was a separate nation, and it was believed that rejecting this change would achieve this.
- A member expressed a view that it might be worth adopting the new name and brand if doing so would strengthen the profile of the AONB here in Llŷn. It was recognised that the Welsh language was very important – would it be possible to translate the National Landscapes website so that it was bilingual?
- It was believed that the current Llŷn AONB name and logo were memorable and attractive, and that the name 'National Landscapes' suggested England and Wales. It was expressed that 'Wales Landscapes' would be a better name if it had to change.
- It was noted that everyone was familiar with the name Llŷn AONB and it was not believed that there was any desire to change it.
- The Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association was thanked for his comments and his argument, but the members expressed their support to stick with the original decision not to adopt the new national title and logo.

In response, the Chief Executive of the National Landscape Association noted: -

- That he acknowledged the point that the website was in English only.
- He would not accept the point that the Association undermined the Welsh language and emphasised that there was no element of enforcement at all.
- He was very supportive of how the designation in Llŷn was being operated and did not believe that the proposed change threatened the Welsh language or the constitution locally.

- The reviews had been independent in England, and the review in Wales was also an independent review and separate from the review in England.

The Llŷn AONB Officer indicated that he saw both sides. He felt that considerable awareness of the name Llŷn AONB had been established over the years and that the new logo was unknown, and many were fed up with change. Despite this it was thought that there was an opportunity to create a new image and create a concept of being part of a family, but concerns existed.

The Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association thanked the Joint Advisory Committee for their time and stressed that this change would not be pushed and that it was the decision of the Joint Committee. He wished the Joint Advisory Committee well.

DECISION

- To accept the report and note the observations received.**
- To reiterate the decision made at the previous meeting of the Joint Committee on 22 November 2023 not to adopt the new national title and logo 'National Landscapes'.**

8. UPDATE ON LLŶN AONB CAPITAL PROJECTS

The report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Projects Officer for information to the members, to update them on Llŷn AONB's capital projects. It was explained that Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places (SLSP) was a grant scheme by the Welsh Government to support capital projects in the National Parks and the AONB.

It was confirmed that the projects covered a three-year period (2022-25). The officer reported on the themes of the capital projects that had been set by the Welsh Government, namely Biodiversity and nature recovery, Decarbonisation, Resilient and green communities and Sustainable Tourism.

Updates on the Llŷn SLSP capital projects were provided in the report, projects such as:

- Renewing the stairway at Porth Ysgo
- Mynytho, Horeb and Rhos Botwnnog Common Lands
- Native Trees
- Alien invasive species
- Canolfan Llithfaen
- Car park at Llanbedrog Quarry
- Joint Projects – Traditional Boundaries, the Dark Sky and an Education Pack.

A member enquired about the Alien invasive species project, noting that alien plants could be seen in locations such as Garn Boduan and Tre'r Ceiri. Reference was made to the Native Trees project, and it was asked whether the AONB officers held discussions with Cadw before planting trees. There was concern that the planting was taking place in archaeologically sensitive areas. It was confirmed that the AONB Unit planned to carry out archaeology reviews soon before planting trees. It was suggested that there may be grants available from Cadw, and the Officers were asked to share updates about the planting with the Gwynedd Archaeology representative so that she could contribute.

The members enquired further about the areas of tree planting, and the scale of planting. It was noted that they intended to look further at the sites within lands that were owned by Cyngor Gwynedd, but the Ysgol Botwnnog site looked very promising. They did not intend to plant on all the sites. It was confirmed that grants could be provided to caravan site

owners to plant trees through the Sustainable Development Fund. It was hoped to be able to consider projects similar to this in the next financial year.

A member asked whether it would be possible to receive a summary or list of capital projects over the last three years to see what the projects were, in what area and how much capital had been provided in order to see the variety. This information was also requested about the Sustainable Development Fund. The Llŷn AONB Projects Officer would share the information.

Members gave thanks for all the work and noted that very positive feedback had been received regarding the renewal of the Porth Ysgo steps. They also thanked the AONB Officers for the work on the centre at Llithfaen and noted that everyone was looking forward to the centre opening. A member enquired about the hall in Llanbedrog, reporting that the condition of the hall was poor and that the roof was weak. They asked if assistance was available as the hall required some expenditure. It was confirmed that the AONB Officers would discuss further with the member outside of this meeting.

DECISION

To accept the report and note the observations received.

9. THE "PERTHYN" (BELONGING) PROJECT

It was reported that this item had been included on the Agenda at the request of the Tudweiliog Community Council member. It was noted that three Community Councils in Llŷn had decided to designate their areas as Areas of Linguistic Significance in December 2023, with a view to sustaining and strengthening the Welsh language in Llŷn following concerns about the influences of second homes, holiday homes and tourism. It was reported that other Community Councils had now joined the project.

It was explained that it might be possible to vary public policy and action in favour of the Welsh language in the areas that had been designated as Areas of Linguistic Significance. This was mentioned in the Welsh Communities Commission's position paper.

A verbal report was given on the work of the Perthyn project by the representative of Tudweiliog Community Council, and members agreed to accept the information. After a lengthy discussion, it was proposed to re-include the item on the Agenda of the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee when the report would be ready and had been shared with all members of the Joint Committee.

DECISION

- a) To accept the information.**
- b) To hold another meeting to discuss the matter.**

10. AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

We ran out of time before reaching this item. The item will be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 6.00pm.

CHAIR