
LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 16/03/2022

Present:

Cllr. Gruffydd Williams (Chair)

Members: Councillor Gareth Williams, Eirian Allport (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), Jina Gwyrfai (Llanaelhaearn Community Council), Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Local Access Forum), T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council), Molly Lovatt (Natural Resources Wales), Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council) and Wenda Williams (Aberdaron Community Council).

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

Present for item 5: Ann Williams (Biodiversity Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Anwen J. Davies, John Brynmor Hughes, Aled Wyn Jones and Angela Russell (Gwynedd Council's Countryside Champion) as well as Andrew Davidson (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust), Gillian Walker (Cyfeillion Llŷn) and Wyn Williams (Countryside Manager).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint Committee held on 17 November 2021, as a true record.

There was a request for an update regarding the decision for the AONB Service Officer to organise a virtual meeting with the Community and Town Councils within the AONB to provide further information on the IDA application to appoint a Dark Sky Park status for the area.

It was reported that the AONB Officer had sent an email to Community and Town Councils to provide further information and was going to be in touch over the next weeks to organise a meeting; hope to organise one for the end of April or May.

5. NATURE RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

The Biodiversity Officer Ann Williams was welcomed to the meeting. The report was presented noting that the recent years had been a turning point for recognising the nature emergency and making progress with the actions.

Background on the National Nature Recovery Action Plan was provided which detailed how every area should get to grips with nature recovery and creating their own Action Plan. It was explained that the Biodiversity Officer will be leading on this plan which would be a joint plan between Gwynedd and Llŷn. The intention of this plan would be to get to grips with six national aims whilst also addressing challenges, worries and environmental needs locally.

It was recognised that the environment was extremely important to Gwynedd and Llŷn residents; the plan would ensure that these communities could continue to benefit and enjoy the natural world. The document and its aims would be aimed at a wide variety of people. The Gwynedd and Llŷn Nature Recovery Action Plan was intended to be a statutory policy document that would have four parts.

It was reported that consultations would be held before the summer as part of the process of creating the document; this Joint Committee would be included in these consultation sessions. It was noted in the meantime that a draft of the first part of the Action Plan had been prepared, the Joint Committee's feedback and observations were requested on this draft. More information would follow on how to present observations and the Biodiversity officer would send the draft to members of the Joint Committee. Also, the Biodiversity Officer would appreciate if the Joint Committee would take part and contribute in the consultations before they started to form the rest of the document.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters: -

- A request was made for further clarification on what part of the document would be the subject of consultation.
- A query was raised regarding what would happen after the document would be created and who would be implementing the content of the document.
- It was questioned why the Joint Committee had not received a copy of the part one draft plan beforehand. There was concern that members of the Joint Committee were not aware what the content of this draft would be.

In response, the following was noted:

- That the consultations would be regarding forming the second and third parts of the plan that would highlight how the general population could help nature recovery as well as the action steps and local priorities. These would be the most important parts of the plan and the subject for the consultations where there would be an opportunity to contribute.
- It was noted that part one was only the background of the plan which was prepared in draft form where observations were requested.
- That there was an intention for the document to be a live document so it would be possible to add to it. It was added that Welsh Government had prioritised nature recovery and biodiversity over the last few years, which meant that financial funds became available more often. It was explained that the document would be available if other projects would want to refer to the plan and use it as a resource to support applications for money.
- It was added that this plan would tie in with the AONB management plan; both plans would run alongside each other and were sources to attract funding in order to implement projects.

DECISION

To accept the information about the Nature Recovery Action Plan received from the Biodiversity Officer.

6. LLŶN AONB CAPITAL PROJECTS

Information was provided about the Llŷn AONB capital projects, providing an update on TCLC Capital Projects for the current financial year (2021/22). It was noted that more information about the Llŷn AONB projects over the past year could be seen in the recent edition of Llygaid Llŷn that would be available at the end of April. It was reported that the Porth Meudwy Track Repair project was completed and work had nearly finished on the three other projects.

It was noted that no confirmation was received so far on the grant total in the future or for how many years; it was reported that there was a chance it would be over a period of three years. It was confirmed that the themes for the capital projects would remain the same as for the current year.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters: -

- A query was raised regarding when the money had to be spent on 2021/22 projects. The work on the project of refurbishing the toilets at Lôn Gam, Nefyn was a little behind the original schedule due to the recent landslide.
- It was questioned if the Sustainable Tourism themes referred to the footpaths and if the AONB Officer anticipated further applications under this theme next year.
- It was suggested that the Sustainable Tourism themes could refer to a pilot project to trial something new that would be used by tourists.

In response, the following was noted:

- That an extension was received until the end of April or start of May 2022 if needed for spending the grant money in the 2021/22 financial year.
- The AONB Service Officer was unsure if there would be as much emphasis on grants to improve footpaths next year from this fund. It was added that another grant was available to improve the paths, there was a desire for this to be used instead. It was explained that the Sustainable Tourism themes dealt with broad projects e.g. improving facilities for visitors such as public toilets.
- That the themes are fairly flexible and that money was available for other projects under similar themes to those noted.

DECISION

To note and accept the information in the report on the Llŷn AONB Capital Projects.

7. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Information on the membership of the Joint Advisory Committee and the arrangements in the pipeline were provided in accordance with the Constitution of the Joint Committee to change Gwynedd Council Members. Details were provided about the background and relevant considerations that could be seen in the report including the boundaries review.

Members were thanked for their time and effort in supporting the AONB over the last five years. It was reported that the term for some would come to an end and there would be an invitation for other County Councillors within the AONB to attend the Joint Committee following the election. Other organisations that had a place on the Joint Advisory Committee were also mentioned, but there was no change here.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters: -

- Attention was drawn that some Community / Town Councils did not send a representative to the meetings.
- It was questioned if it was possible to change the arrangements of electing Members from certain wards to serve on the Joint Committee for the next period and instead ask which Members wanted to be a part of the Joint Committee and were interested in attending.
- The question on the possibility of receiving data on who had been attending the Joint Advisory Committee meetings was raised. It was added that it was important that the representatives attended and that contact was made with those who had not attended in a while.

In response, the following was noted:

- The suggestion of inviting Members with interest to attend was not possible. It was noted that legal opinion was received in the past that noted that this was not possible due to the Constitution and matters regarding political balance.
- It would not be possible to change the constitution so that Councillors from the 8 wards within the AONB (which had reduced from 11 following the boundary review) received invitations. It was believed that this would lead to too much emphasis on Gwynedd Council within the Joint Committee as well as Constitutional matters which would prevent this.
- It would be possible to provide information on the attendance of all members of the Joint Committee by the next meeting.
- That the AONB Service Officer would correspond with the Institutions and Organisations that had a place on the Joint Committee to inform them of the new term and to try and get representatives to fill vacant seats or when nobody had attended for some time.

DECISION

- a) **To accept the report on the Membership of the Joint Advisory Committee and the arrangements in the pipeline to change the Gwynedd Council Members.**
- b) **It was agreed for the Llŷn AONB Officer to provide data on the attendance of all Joint Committee members at the next meeting.**

8. AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Joint Committee was guided through the AONB Officer's report which noted that there was a need to review the AONB Management Plan every five years. It was noted that the current Management Plan that was implemented from 2015-2020 was now dated and a review should have been held already. It was explained that various reasons had affected the timetable e.g. the pandemic and capacity matters.

It was reported that some background work had been completed and that there was an intention to bring the report before the next meeting of the Joint Committee with more information and a timetable for reviewing the Management Plan as soon as possible.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters: -

- The reports prepared by external companies was mentioned and a query was raised regarding the possibility of sharing these with the members of the joint committee. The AONB Officer noted that those reports were currently in English but could organise for them to be translated and distributed
- It was asked if it was possible to strengthen the policies that protected the AONB and the traditional buildings within the border when reviewing the Plan.
- Concern was expressed regarding the review period noting that it was a shorter period this time compared with the previous plan and it was questioned how this would work.
- It was noted that many reviews and consultations were held recently regarding houses and it was expressed that we should be ready to act quickly so we could assist and support any plans if changes derived from the Government.

In response, the following was noted:

- The review of the management plan provided an opportunity to review the policies and a chance to see if they needed amending and updating. It was noted that there were guidelines from the Countryside Council for Wales that would need to be followed roughly and that the current structure needed to be followed to some extent. The plan could not be fully changed but there was definitely room for amendments if needed.
- There was hope that much of the work could be completed on the plan in a year. It was hoped there was a possibility to review the plan quicker than the three years it had taken in the previous period. It was noted that it was hard to anticipate when the plan would be finally completed as there were many other considerations e.g. documents including the National Planning Policy and the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan. Another report would be submitted to the committee soon.
- That officers were in the process of being appointed in this area to undertake the work on the Dwyfor Pilot Scheme; it was suggested that the AONB Officer could contact them to see if there was anything the Joint Committee could do to facilitate their work.

DECISION

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

At the end of the meeting it was noted that a new Chair would be elected at the next meeting and the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Members for their service on the Joint Committee.

The meeting commenced at 4.05pm and concluded at 4.55pm.

CHAIR