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# LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 22/11/2023

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## Present:

**Members:** Councillors **Gareth Williams, John Brynmor Hughes, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gruffydd Williams** and **Angela Russell** (Cyngor Gwynedd Countryside Champion) as well as **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** (National Resources Wales), **Sian Parri** (Tudweiliog Community Council), **Brett Garner** (Llŷn Fishermen Community) and **Dewi Evans** (Aberdaron Community Council).

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

## 1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was resolved to elect **Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council)** as Chair for the 2023/24 period.

## 2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved to elect **T. Victor Jones** as Vice-chair for the 2023/24 period.

## 3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from **Einir Wyn** (Llanengan Community Council), **Euros Jones** (FWAG Cymru), Councillor **Dafydd Davies, Eirian Allport** (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), **Gillian Walker** (Cyfeillion Llŷn) and **Kevin Roberts** (Countryside Warden – Llŷn AONB)

## 4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest were received from Morgan Jones-Parry and Sianelen Plemming for Item 9 as Canolfan Llithfaen was being discussed. They were not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest and they did not leave the meeting during the item.

A declaration of personal interest was received from Councillor Gareth Tudor Jones for Item 8 as he was one of the directors of 'O Ddrws i Ddrws', that had received money from the Sustainable Development Fund. He was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest and he did not leave the meeting during the item.

## 5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

## 6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous minutes of this Joint committee held on 29 March 2023, as a true record.

## **7. THE DARK SKY**

The report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Officer for information to the Members, drawing attention to the following main points:

Members were reminded that discussions had arisen at the 29 March 2023 meeting of this Committee regarding an application for a 'Dark Skies' designation for the AONB area, following the success of Ynys Enlli recently being awarded a 'Dark Sky Sanctuary' designation. It was noted that the outcome of those discussions was to consider applying for a designation for the Aberdaron area of the AONB if the community supported that.

The members were updated that officers had held discussions with Aberdaron Community Council during their meeting in July. It was confirmed that the community was keen to apply for the 'Dark Sky' designation, therefore the preparation work for the application had started. It was emphasised that the application for a Dark Sky designation only applied to the borders of the Aberdaron Community Council area.

It was confirmed that officers were collaborating with Project NOS to collect data to build an application for Dark Sky designation. It was estimated that this work would take between 1 to 2 years to complete before receiving a designation. It was detailed that officers had also been measuring the darkness of the sky recently, using a 'Sky Quality Meter' on clear nights when the moon was not visible. It was confirmed that they planned to do this in different parts of the designation area twice a year.

It was explained that officers were collaborating with other AONBs as well as the National Park throughout the process. It was detailed that officers had been collaborating with the company Ridge to identify regions within the Llŷn AONB area where there was a lot of light pollution to try and find solutions to that pollution with organisations. It was explained that the company had looked at around 20 organisations within the AONB where there is light pollution, and it was noted that the main organisations that have been prioritised are:

- Nant Gwrtheyrn
- Nefyn Golf Club
- Sarn Mellteyrn Hall
- Ysgol Crud y Werin, Aberdaron

It was explained that the locations that had been included by the company Ridge did not include residential dwellings, second homes or holiday homes because the Council does not have authority to manage them. However, it was noted that officers were in discussions with the planning department to consider placing conditions on new homes to try and solve the problem of light pollution.

### **DECISION**

**To accept the report and note the observations received.**

## **8. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND**

The report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Projects Officer for Members' information, and the following main points were highlighted briefly:

Members were reminded that £100,000 was available for the Sustainable Development Fund at the beginning of the current financial year. It was confirmed that the following projects had received the Fund's support to date this year:

- Llŷn Maritime Museum
- Llŷn Flexi Bus
- Balchder a Chelf Llŷn
- Storws Enlli
- Protecting the names of Llanengan
- Llŷn Library of Things
- R S Thomas Festival
- Llŷn Woollen Mills Exhibition
- Berwyn Jones Exhibition
- Rhydyclafdy Playground
- Menter Raber

It was explained that there was £4,833 left of the Fund. It was noted that it was possible to receive applications for this money, but any project that receives the funding must use it before the end of March 2024. It was noted that similar future reports would include projects that had received the Fund's support in the current financial year and the previous two years in order to get a full picture of the types of projects applying for an allocation of the budget.

Attention was given specifically to the 'Storws Enlli' and 'Flexi Bus' projects as they had received £30,000 each of the Fund's allocation. An update was provided on the projects, noting that they had been a huge success, with Storws restored to an excellent standard and the Flexi Bus having transported more passengers this year.

It was ensured that a budget of £100,000 had been confirmed for the 2024/25 financial year and members were encouraged to inform Llŷn communities of the opportunities that the Fund provides. Members were reminded that additional information about the Fund was available to the public on the AONB website.

It was noted that the latest Welsh Government guidelines placed emphasis on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and gave priority to projects that related to the 'Nature Recovery' and 'De-carbonisation' themes.

The committee was reminded that there were currently nine Members on the Fund's Panel. It was noted that the Member for Clynnog Fawr Community Council had expressed an interest in stepping down from the Panel. Councillor John Brynmor Hughes was elected as a Panel Member in her place.

Following the discussion on this item, attention was drawn to the difficulties arising from the lack of evening buses that currently existed in the AONB rural areas. It was

considered whether it was possible to consider the Flexi Bus as part of a solution to the situation, but it was acknowledged that this would be difficult as it was a seasonal service with limited hours on some weekdays. It was agreed that the AONB Officer would contact the Public Transport Manager noting that Members had stated their concern regarding the current situation.

## **DECISION**

- 1. To accept the report and to note the observations received.**
- 2. Councillor John Brynmor Hughes was elected as a member of the Sustainable Development Fund Panel, after the Clynnog Community Council Member stepped down.**

## **9. LLŶN AONB CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Officer for Members' information, and the following main points were highlighted briefly:

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 three years (2022-25).

It was explained that the report elaborated on the 2022/23 updates on Llŷn SLSP capital projects namely:

- Porth Ysgo steps renewal
- Mynytho, Horeb and Rhos Botwnnog Common Lands
- Native Trees
- Alien invasive species
- Canolfan Llithfaen

It was confirmed that the AONB received approximately £200,000 annually from the Government within the SLSP to spend on these projects in 2023/4. It was mentioned that approximately £160,000 of this money had been spent on capital work (£60,000 on Canolfan Llithfaen, £50,000 on Porth Ysgo, £30,000 on the common lands and £20,000 on native trees). It was ensured that the expenditure of these projects was flexible to the area's needs and that officers regularly discussed the matters with the Government to provide updates. It was noted that future updates for the Joint committee would include information about the projects' expenditure within the reports.

It was discussed that there were rhododendron problems on Mynydd Tir y Cwmwd common land, Llanbedrog, but it was explained that National Resources Wales were dealing with this situation, therefore there was no need for the AONB to act here.

## **DECISION**

**To accept the report and note the observations received.**

## **10. NATIONAL ISSUES**

The report was submitted by the Llŷn AONB Officer for Members' information. Reference was made to the following main points:

It was mentioned that a letter from the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS had reached Local Authorities and National Parks Leaders as well as the Chairs of the Parks and AONB Joint Committees recently. It was detailed that the letter noted that the Government had developed an on-line training package for the relevant bodies to ensure that the organisations' leaders and members had the correct information and skills.

It was explained that there were two training sessions relevant to the Llŷn AONB Joint Committee members, including:

- Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Getting to grips with the nature and climate emergencies

It was confirmed that attending the training sessions was not mandatory, but all members were strongly encouraged to attend the sessions. It was explained that the sessions were two hours each and would be held on 2 February and 16 February 2024 between 2-4pm. It was noted that the intention was to arrange a meeting of the Joint Committee in order to host the training.

It was explained that the term 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' derived from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and that it had been in use since then. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that discussions regarding the name had been held over the last few years, because it was too descriptive and long and it was considered that the AONBs were not of the same status as the Parks because the name did not include the word 'national'.

It was elaborated that a review of the National Parks and AONBs in England had been undertaken under the guidance of journalist Julian Glover and one of the recommendations was to change the operational name from 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' to 'National Landscapes'. It was noted that many regions in England were in favour of this change and information packages, branding and new logos had been distributed to correspond with this. It was also explained that the National Association for AONBs was also supportive and was going to change its name to the National Landscapes Association.

It was ensured that the matter had also been discussed in Wales. It was explained, generally, that other AONBs seemed to support the proposal and that the Welsh Government was also supportive. It was emphasised that there was no enforcement to use the new title, the branding or the logo that had been developed. It was confirmed that the official name of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would remain.

Many concerns were shared by Members about changing the name and the current logo to the new versions. It was considered that the current use was clear, appropriate to the purpose and was an opportunity to showcase the Welsh language. It was acknowledged that it was not possible to create a separate association for Wales, because there were only 5 areas in Wales and 37 in England, but it was noted that officers would contact other AONB areas to voice their concerns.

## **DECISION**

### **1. To accept the report and note the observations received.**

- 2. It was agreed not to adopt the new national title and logo 'National Landscapes' and to continue with 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and the current logo.**

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 5.30pm

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**CHAIR**