



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Gower AONB Advisory Group**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 26 February 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

Councillors

P R Hood-Williams
N L Matthews

L James

S E Keeton

Steering Group Members

Judith Doyle
Alan Kearsley-Evans
Barbara Parry

Howard Evans
Peter Lanfear
Clive Scott

Stephen Heard
Hamish Osborn
Paul Tucker

Officer(s)

Jake Cosgrove
Evelyn Gruchala
Ursula Jones
Paul Meller
Jeremy Parkhouse
Mike Scott

Communities and Nature Project Officer
Natural Environment Volunteer Co-ordinator
Communities and Nature Project Officer
Natural Environment Section Manager
Democratic Services Officer
Gower AONB Officer

Also present

Jill Burgess (Observer) Gower Society

Apologies for Absence

Councillors: A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Carrie Townsend Jones

18 **Declarations of Interest.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

19 **To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.**

Resolved that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Advisory Group Meeting held on 25 September 2023 and 29 January 2024, be approved and signed as correct records.

20 Project Reports and Updates.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented a 'for information' update report on progress made by the Gower AONB Team since the previous meeting, on the following areas: -

- Gower AONB Management Plan.
- Social Media.
- Hedgerow Projects.
- Gower Dark Skies Community Status.
- Dark Skies – retro-fit projects.
- Port Eynon Dunes.
- St Marys Church, Knelston.
- Backingstone Chapel.
- Parking Issues.
- Pennard Castle.
- Gower Nature Recovery Programme.
- Gower Places of Worship.
- Clyne Valley Country Park.
- Grant Funding.

21 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Panel Financial Summary report 'for information'.

It was outlined that the SDF budget of £100,000 for 2023/24 had been confirmed by Welsh Government. So far, 20 projects had funding committed, with a further application in progress at present. One project had reported that they were unable to proceed, and funds had been returned, with a further two withdrawn at the application stage.

The Committed Funds figure included the CCS Management Fee of £10,000.

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£96,282
Uncommitted Funds	£3,718
Applications in progress	£2,000

It was added that the next meeting of the SDF Grants Panel was scheduled for 15 March 2024.

The SDF budget of £100,000 for 2024/25 had been confirmed by Welsh Government, and was already heavily committed, with £3,000 currently uncommitted.

22 Food and Communities.

Josh Pike, Summit Good provided a detailed and informative presentation regarding Summit Good, which is a Swansea based Social Enterprise that was set up as a Community Interest Company. It was explained that it is basically a group of mates that were looking to get their hands dirty for the greater good. The following details were provided: -

- Facilities available at the Killan Road site, including the men's / women's sheds.
- Methods used for growing and items being grown at the site.
- The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme being run from the site and how it is organised.
- The groups / individuals / children using the facilities.
- Purchase and use of additional land near the site.
- Ensuring the projects were not profit focussed and were there for engaging with horticulture and the local community.

The Advisory Group asked a number of questions, which were responded to by the Summit Good representative and the Chair thanked him for providing his presentation.

23 AONB Rebrand Proposals.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented a report which sought the view of the Advisory Group in relation to the AONB Rebrand Proposals.

It was outlined that in England, the National Landscapes Association (formally the National Association of AONB's) had been working with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to develop proposals to reinforce the commitment to protecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Heritage – their natural and cultural heritage, and to launch ambitious targets addressing the aims of the AONB family. The intention was to raise the profile of these landscapes, to protect them for the future, and to make sure that everyone can enjoy them. The proposals, which had already been adopted in England, included: -

- For the AONBs to be known as National Landscapes.
- To recommit ourselves to protecting these precious landscapes – their natural and cultural heritage.
- To ensure that everyone can enjoy these landscapes.

It was added that in Wales, the AONB's had the opportunity to adopt the proposals ahead of a celebratory event in the Senedd in April, which would mark the 75th anniversary of the milestone legislation, which marked the establishment of the AONBs – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

It was further outlined that because of the work carried out by the English National Landscapes, the costs of adopting the changes would be minimal – a draft logo was included in the design work funded by DEFRA, should the proposals be adopted.

Although the proposals were originally focused on the English AONB's, adopting them in Wales would have benefits for the 4 Welsh AONB's as follows: -

- Helping to raise their public profile.
- Emphasising their part in a national family of protected landscapes, whilst retaining their individual identities.
- Emphasising their importance in responding to the nature and climate emergencies.
- Helping to build strong, inclusive partnerships.

The proposals support both Welsh Government and Swansea Council corporate priorities, ensuring that Gower AONB remained relevant and central to future action on nature and climate emergencies, and the needs of both our landscapes and our communities. The rebranding proposals were supported by Brand Guidelines, setting out a visual identity and tone of voice, ensuring that all the National Landscapes were recognised as part of a strong national family, who share the same values.

The Gower AONB Advisory Group was briefed on the proposals by John Watkins (Chief Executive of NLA) on 29 January 2024, with a discussion following the presentation.

The members of the Advisory Group were asked to submit written responses to the proposals, and these were provided at Appendix A.

Lengthy discussions followed regarding the contents of the report, the options available for the AONB, collaborative working, Welsh Government preferences, the implications for the AONB of not becoming a National Landscape and the benefits of becoming a National Landscape.

Resolved that the Gower AONB Advisory Group recommends that AONB Rebrand Proposals be approved by the Council.

24 Celebratory Event - National Parks & Access To The Countryside Act 1949.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer reported 'for information' that the National Landscapes Association were holding a celebratory event at the Senedd on 24 April 2024, hosted by Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change.

This would mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, which created the National Parks and AONB's. Gower AONB had been invited to attend, and to include project partners, to demonstrate the impact that we have on our landscapes and our communities, as part of the celebrations.

25 EDI and Nature & Climate Emergencies.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer referred to the recent Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Nature & Climate Emergency training provided by Welsh Government. He added that a link had been circulated to the training recordings which was available on the Welsh Government website.

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Cont'd

He added that the Advisory Group required further discussions on both topics.

Resolved that a face to face only workshop session be arranged to discuss both topics.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chair