



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Gower AONB Advisory Group

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams  
**On:** Monday, 26 February 2024  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Chair:** Councillor Paul Lloyd

#### Membership:

Councillors: P R Hood-Williams, L James, S E Keeton, N L Matthews and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Howard Evans, Stephen Heard, Carrie Townsend Jones, Alan Kearsley-Evans, Peter Lanfear, Philip Ogleby, Hamish Osborn, Barbara Parry, Clive Scott and Paul Tucker

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### Agenda

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*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Tuesday, 20 February 2024**

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**Contact: Democratic Services: - 636016**

# Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Gower AONB Advisory Group**

**Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS**

**Teams**

**Monday, 25 September 2023 at 6.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

### **Councillors**

P R Hood-Williams

L James

S E Keeton

N L Matthews

### **Steering Group Members**

Judith Doyle

Carrie Townsend Jones

Barbara Parry

Clive Scott

### **Officer(s)**

Ursula Jones

Communities and Nature Project Officer

Paul Meller

Natural Environment Section Manager

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

Mike Scott

Gower AONB Officer

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors: A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Howard Evans, Alan Kearsley-Evans, Hamish Osborn and Paul Tucker

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## **7 Declarations of Interest.**

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

## **8 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 26 June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **9 NAAONB Annual National Conference.**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer and Clive Scott provided the Group with a verbal report regarding the NAAONB Annual National Conference they attended recently at Bath University.

It was highlighted that the Conference was an excellent, well organised event which offered a great variety of lectures / meetings, including outside groups and was very informative.

It was added that the event is annual and members of the Group were encouraged to attend in future.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report be noted.

## **10 NAAONB Branding.**

The Gower AONB Officer verbally informed the Group that the National Association of AONB's (NAAONB) was discussing a significant rebrand to address some of the issues raised in the Glover Review. These were mainly around inclusion and working with under-represented communities, better communications, providing a more unified image, seeking to achieve a higher profile, and greater recognition of their contribution to nature recovery and climate change agendas.

He added that the English AONB's were slightly ahead of Wales and a statement from the Welsh Minister was expected in November 2023. In addition, it was also regarding communications / public face, explaining about the role of AONB's.

A more detailed update would be provided at the next meeting.

**Resolved** that the contents of the update be noted.

## **11 Replacement Local Development Plan.**

The Gower AONB Officer informed the Group regarding the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP). It was explained that the process would be lengthy and in order to update the Group, provided a presentation on the Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) Review and Replacement.

It was explained that the Swansea LDP, which was adopted in 2019, required a statutory formal review every 4 years and the LDP Replacement was now commencing. Progress and the key stages in the process were highlighted and it was noted that the period for submitting candidate sites for development was currently open until 31 October 2023.

It was queried whether the Group could comment as a body on any candidate sites within the AONB. It was confirmed that individuals were able to comment upon sites and the officer would clarify if the Group could comment.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) the contents of the report be noted.
- 2) clarification be sought from the Strategic Planning Team regarding whether the Group could comment upon sites within the AONB.

## 12 Gower AONB Team Report.

Paul Meller, Natural Environment Manager, Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer and Ursula Jones, Communities and Nature Project Officer presented a 'for information' update report on progress made by the Gower AONB Team since the previous meeting, on the following areas: -

- Gower Show
- Gower Dark Sky Community Application
- Gower Dark Sky – Retro Fit Projects Port Eynon Bay Dunes
- Built Heritage
- Fairwood Common
- Pennard Castle
- Gower Places of Worship
- Clyne Valley Country Park
- Parkmill Japanese Knotweed
- SDF Panel
- AONB Advisory Group
- NAAONB Rebrand
- AONB Team Staffing

It was noted that an "AONB Nature and Communities Officer" would be starting in October 2023, as a third member of staff within the AONB team, enabling more project work to be carried out. Work on restructuring the Natural Environment Section was continuing.

It was also noted that Julie James, Minister for Climate Change would be visiting Clyne Valley Country Park on 9 October 2023. The Chair, Paul Meller, Mike Scott, Ursula Jones and Barbara Parry would meet the Minister to outline the work completed at the Park and funding opportunities.

## 13 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, 18 projects had funding committed, with a further 4 applications in progress at present. One project had reported that they were unable to go ahead, and funds had been returned, with a second unlikely to proceed.

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

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£79,932.10
Uncommitted Funds	£23,067.90
Applications in progress	£20,100

**14 Gower AONB Advisory Group - Changes to Membership.**

The Gower AONB Officer presented a report which outlined that since the previous meeting, Anthony Thomas has resigned from the group, leaving a vacancy on the AONB Advisory Group.

It was added that the Advisory Group did not have an archaeological voice and for the past 6 months, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) had an observer sitting on the group, Judith Doyle, who is the Stewardship Officer, as well as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

It was proposed that Judith Doyle be elected onto the Group as a GGAT / archaeological / heritage representative.

**Resolved** that Judith Doyle, GGAT be elected as a member of the Advisory Group.

**15 Future Meeting Format - Discussion of format of future meetings.**

The Gower AONB Officer highlighted the need to ensure the productivity and usefulness of future meetings and for the Group to be aware of what was happening in the AONB.

He added that in recent meetings, only the AONB Team had provided reports and it was proposed that Group members provide update reports to future meetings, on behalf of the body they represent or as individuals.

In addition, he proposed that each meeting receives a presentation on a relevant topic in order to raise awareness.

Barbara Parry proposed that a presentation be provided to the next scheduled meeting on food production / diversity on Gower.

It was further added that training opportunities were expected from the Welsh Government in relation to inclusivity and nature recovery. Details would be circulated once received.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the report be noted.
- 2) A presentation be provided to the next scheduled meeting on food production / diversity on Gower.
- 3) Group members provide update reports to future meetings.
- 4) Details of training opportunities be circulated once received from Welsh Government.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

**Chair**



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Gower AONB Advisory Group**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 29 January 2024 at 6.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

### **Councillors**

P R Hood-Williams                      A H Stevens

### **Steering Group Members**

Judith Doyle	Howard Evans	Stephen Heard
Alan Kearsley-Evans	Peter Lanfear	Hamish Osborn
Clive Scott	Paul Tucker	

### **Officer(s)**

Jake Cosgrove	Communities and Nature Project Officer
Eveleyn Gruchala	Natural Environment Volunteer Co-ordinator
Ursula Jones	Communities and Nature Project Officer
Paul Meller	Natural Environment Section Manager
Jeremy Parkhouse	Democratic Services Officer
Mike Scott	Gower AONB Officer
Kathryn Thomas	Community Greenspace Officer

### **Also present**

John Watkins                      National Landscapes Association

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors: L James, S E Keeton and N L Matthews

Steering Group Members: Carrie Townsend Jones and Barbara Parry

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## **16      Declarations of Interest.**

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

## **17      Presentation - National Landscapes Association - Rebranding of the AONB's in Wales.**

John Watkins, National Landscapes Association provided the Advisory Group with a detailed and informative presentation regarding the Rebranding of AONB's in Wales. Details provided in the presentation included the following:

- Why now? What we are hoping to achieve.
- A critical moment for nature and climate.
- Extending a warm welcome to everyone.
- Our vision – beautiful, thriving landscapes that we all feel part of.
- Our mission – protect and regenerate our landscapes and make sure everyone can enjoy them.
- Our brand principles – bring people together; keep moving forward; embrace the journey; and listen and amplify.
- Having a more unified identity across the network will better show our collective size, ambition, impact and generate on the ground recognition for visitors.
- Awareness of AONB's is less than half of National Park's within certain age groups.
- An opportunity to build a consistent family of brands.
- Branding – icons for AONB's to communicate on social media, giving a visual identity.

He also referred positively to the relaunch of AONB's to National Landscapes in England last year and to his recent visit to Gower, where he met Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change.

Lengthy discussions followed regarding the contents of the presentation, 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.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer, stated that a report summarising the comments and responses of the Advisory Group members would be presented to the Advisory Group on 26 February 2024. He added that based on those comments and further discussion at that meeting, a report and recommendations would be made to Swansea Council.

The Chair thanked the National Landscapes representative for his presentation.

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm

**Chair**



# Agenda Item 4



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Advisory Group – 26 February 2024

### Project Reports and Updates

For Information

Project Update – January 2024

Issue	Update	Lead Contact
Gower AONB Management Plan	Formal review process to be started – 2023/24	MS
Social Media	<p>Social media page: This is Gower: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/thisisgower/">https://www.facebook.com/thisisgower/</a> On average, minimum of 3 social media posts a week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotion of upcoming opportunities created by the Gower AONB Team</li><li>• Posts outlining outcomes of any recent activities and events, any feedback provided by participants, pictures from the event etc.</li><li>• Sharing other suitable free nature opportunities as advertised on social media</li></ul> <p>The last 28 days had post reach of 12,951 (the number of people who saw any of the posts at least once), 37 new page likes and 74 new followers. Post reach within the last 90 days is 21.7K.</p> <p>The latest post (15th February) following up on the hedgerow workshop (10-11th February) had 1,412 impressions. Video post (14th February) about free rocket workshop organised the Gower AONB, held at Swansea Museum by AstroCymru to celebrate Welsh Dark Skies Week reached over 1.7k plays.</p>	EG
Hedgerow Projects	Hedgerow workshops delivered by Mr Malcolm Edwards (award-winning hedge layer with over 25 years of experience) and 2 staff members of the Gower AONB.	EG, KT

	<p>First day: introduction to hedge laying, including different regional styles, plants found in hedges as well as pleach, plesh and plash cuts and safe use of tools and maintenance. Followed by laying the hedge.</p> <p>Second day: recap and carry on with hedge laying, finessing the techniques.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autumn 2023 – 1, 2-day hedgerow workshop attended by 12 members of the public from across Swansea/Gower. The workshop was supported by the West Glamorgan Guide Centre (Parkmill), kindly providing indoor facilities to attendees.</li> <li>• January- end of February 2024 – total of 5, 2-day workshops (10 days in total) – ongoing. This round of workshops is expected to end on 29th February 2024.</li> </ul> <p>Total expected attendance across 10 days – over 60 participants with 16 individuals on the waiting list. The workshop is supported by The Upper Killay Community Council, kindly providing indoor facilities (community centre) to attendees. The hedge is situated along the Gower Road (A4118) outside Upper Killay Community Centre.</p>	
Gower Dark Skies Community Status	<p>Draft application submitted to IDA for comment – comments received, showing further work needed (mostly around planning processes and examples of good practice as well as arranging more community engagement events?).</p> <p>Dark sky monitoring at 48 locations across and adjacent to Gower was undertaken on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024, with excellent results.</p> <p>We have a week of free activities and events planned for Welsh Dark Sky week to raise the profile of this work.</p>	MS
Dark Skies – retro-fit projects	<p>Work on all-Wales project is progressing – Ridge Consultants have provided advice on 33 Gower sites, and detailed lighting retrofit specifications for three sites on Gower.</p> <p>‘Before’ retrofitting monitoring of bat activity has been undertaken on three of the sites. An ‘after’ snapshot will be undertaken in April/May.</p>	UJ

	The remaining 30 sites will be formed into a list of priority and engagement will be undertaken with landowners/occupiers to address lighting improvements.	
Port Eynon Dunes	Community Councils have been advised of the forthcoming works along the dune front, to remove the partially buried wire and posts. Suitable contractor to be taken on during the spring.	MS
St Marys Church, Knelston	Scheduled Monument Consent is being sought to carry out stabilisation works.	MS
Backingstone Chapel	On 15-16 January the scrub was carefully removed by contractors. Next steps are for Cadw to assess the stability of the structure and mortar holding it together, check for surviving agricultural features and update the management plan.	JC
Parking Issues	Residents at Pennard have raised issue of parking on Pennard Common. Discussions with residents, golf club and commoners. Parking at Cwm Ivy is causing problems – working with residents to find solutions.	MS
Pennard Castle	Trial works on two areas of the western curtain wall have been completed. The results have been used to generate a specification for a tender document to undertake the full ivy removal works, reporting and rare plant reintroduction. Tender is live on Sell2Wales. A contractor will be appointed by mid-February and works will commence in March.	UJ
Gower Nature Recovery Programme	Continuation of Japanese Knotweed survey and clearance works planned for Ilston and Clyne valleys. A dormouse survey has been completed on Fairwood Common, no presence was confirmed.  A meeting is due with Fairwood Commoners and NRW to discuss purchase of GPS cattle collars, and some scrub clearance to aid grazing.  Several hedge-laying workshops are being run (Parkmill, Upper Killay and Bishopston), with SLSP funding.  Dark Skies retrofit will begin to address lighting improvements at 22 sites on Gower as per the report from Ridge – this will include engagement with landowners/occupiers, detailed survey of lighting retrofit and installation.	UJ MS JC

	Four free-to-attend Welsh Dark Skies Week events have been organised for half-term week in February.	
Gower Places of Worship	Bat doors installed in two church towers. Fourteen swift boxes installed at one church, and boxes will be installed in at least two more churches. Loft hatch and ladders replaced to aid access for inspections and keep bats from becoming trapped inside the church and perishing. Site-specific management plans have been produced for nine churches. Bat survey data has enabled a detailed mitigation strategy for Llanrhidian church to be produced. Have been approached by three new churches to make improvements - bird boxes and hedgerow creation. Will be engaging with the newly formed Gower Ministerial Area Ecology Committee at their first meeting Jan 2024.	UJ
Clyne Valley Country Park	Signage installed at Blackpill and Killay Station – similar signage is planned at Dunvant. Heritage interpretation will be installed throughout the Park Feb/March. Consultation of the initial stages of the draft management plan has been completed. The full document is being produced and will undergo internal consultation later this year, followed by stakeholder consultation towards the end of the year. Work to make the buildings at New Mill Farm safe is now complete, with a hard standing surface in front of the barn. This will provide an informal venue for events in the future, and we plan to install a picnic bench and interpretation. Contractors are being invited to bid for the official mountain bike trail refurbishment works; works are likely to be undertaken April 2024 – March 2025. CVCP are continuing with their work in the Valley, including permissive path maintenance, creation of areas to relax (Brickworks) and guided walks.	UJ
Grant Funding	Grant claims are being drafted for 2023/24, for NRW and WG. NRW grant funding (2024-27) has been applied for, with an offer expected in February, and WG funding in place until 2024/25.	MS

# Agenda Item 5



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Advisory Group – 26 February 2024

### **Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary**

#### **For Information**

#### **Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary**

The SDF budget of £100,000 for 2023/24 has been confirmed by Welsh Government.

So far 20 projects have funding committed, with a further application in progress at present. One project has reported that they are unable to go ahead, and funds have been returned, with a further two withdrawn at the application stage.

The Committed Funds figure includes 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

The next meeting of the SDF Grants Panel will be 15th March 2024.

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

Mike Scott,  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2024

# Agenda Item 7



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Advisory Group – 26 February 2024

### AONB Rebrand Proposals

#### Background

In England, the National Landscapes Association (formally the National Association of AONBs) has been working with DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to develop proposals to reinforce our 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 is to raise the profile of these landscapes, to protect them for the future, and to make sure that everyone can enjoy them.

The proposals include:

- **For the AONBs to be known as National Landscapes.**  
The legal designation will remain as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but the new name and identity is a powerful illustration of the size and scale of the entire network, with National Landscapes covering 14% of the land area of England and 5% of the land area of Wales.
- **To recommit ourselves to protecting these precious landscapes – their natural and cultural heritage.**  
We must continue to protect and regenerate our landscapes. They are under threat from climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to help our communities understand the history and significance of our landscapes, to help shape them for the future, to tackle the Nature and Climate Emergencies.
- **To ensure that everyone can enjoy these landscapes.**  
Bring people together via strong, inclusive partnerships. We want to collaborate on protecting and regenerating our landscapes, while opening them up for all to enjoy.

These proposals have already been adopted in England, with a formal launch held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

National Landscapes now have a name which really underscores the vital contribution of these places, and of the partnerships that care for them. The natural

beauty of these areas is the sum of their 'sense of place': including geology, climate, landform and species which together give rise to the industry, heritage, culture and language of a place. Together these iconic places form our national identity: from the Isles of Scilly to the Northumberland Coast, Kent Downs to Gower.

National Landscapes aspire to be exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: providing clean air and water, restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

In Wales, the AONB's have the opportunity to adopt these proposals ahead of a celebratory event in the Senedd in April, which will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the milestone legislation which marked the establishment of the AONBs – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

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 AONBs, adopting them in Wales would have benefits for the 4 Welsh AONBs:

- 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 remains relevant and central to future action on nature and climate emergencies, and the needs of both our landscapes and our communities.

The rebranding proposals are supported by Brand Guidelines, setting out a visual identity and tone of voice, ensuring that all the National Landscapes are recognised a 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<sup>th</sup> January 2024, with a discussion following the presentation.

The members of the Advisory Group were asked to submit written responses to the proposals ahead of the next meeting of the group.

## **Members Responses**

Members of the group have submitted 8 written response (as on 19<sup>th</sup> February) – copies of these are attached as below. Overall, 7 were in favour of adopting the proposals.

Most responses were positive, although several highlighted the need for this to be a real change indirection, with real changes, not just window dressing. The issue of resources for the work of the AONB team, and the need for this to be a real partnership was also highlighted.

There was a desire to retain the “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” as part of the formal name – both as an acknowledgement of Gower’s place as the first AONB, and because of it use by local businesses.

While some mentioned the need to raise the profile of Gower (and the work of the partnership), others spoke of “if it a’int broke, don’t fix it”. For some, the policy connections were important, moving to reinforce the importance of the AONB, and its relevance to local government/Welsh Government priorities.

There will be further opportunity to discuss the issues, before the Advisory Group makes a recommendation at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February.

Mike Scott,  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2024



## Response to Gower AONB rebrand proposals

January 2024

*Founded in 1948 (before designation) The Gower Society has now over 1500 members. Our answers below have been formulated by a small group of committee members representing the membership.*

What positives do you see this rebrand bringing to Gower, its communities and its visitors?

- The new title *Gower National Landscape* probably adds more gravitas to the designation. It is easier to recall and remember.
- With the new title, Gower should benefit from the greater focus and initiative.
- Generate the opportunity for the designation to be managed as a partnership by a wider range of stakeholders and be a significant part of the new family with this new name.

What negatives can you envision?

- Gower was the first AONB. With the new 'brand' National Landscapes, there is danger that this status will be lost. We feel strongly that this identity is not forgotten. Full title should be:

***GOWER NATIONAL LANDSCAPE – FIRST UK AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY***

- Concern that greater focus on Gower, will lead to greater number of visitors, increase road users, parking problems, litter, caravan and campsites overflowing, fly camping increase, overcrowded honey spots such as Rhossili.
- Danger that this is merely a 'cosmetic' process, with no assurance of increase in resources or funding.
- There is no reference in the proposal that this new title is to be in Welsh. To be inclusive to all our communities, GOWER NATIONAL LANDSCAPE must be bilingual.

Do you have any other thoughts, comments, concerns or ideas with regards to this rebrand?

- Our sincere request is that this new name should be the opportunity for the unitary authority (Swansea) to focus its efforts with more vigour and integrity to better manage Gower National Landscape and provide the resources that have been lacking for too long.
- It must be managed in partnership with landowners, NRW, National Trust, West Wales Wildlife Trust, The Gower Society, Community Councils, walking groups, horse-riding groups, cycling groups, tourism organisations, commoners, farmers – and the council departments Planning, Highways etc.

Referring to Marsden Review of National Landscapes of Wales (2015)

*Local Partnerships Successful management of the special areas depends on productive partnerships with all those who have an impact on them. We want them to be even more relevant economically, socially and culturally, which will require enhanced and effective local engagement between all relevant stakeholders.*

- If growing numbers are attracted to Gower, there must assurance that the designation is respected by all and for all. Improving awareness must include that our landscapes need protecting.

Referring to Landscapes Review (2019)

*Strengthening the role of designated landscapes would require greater resourcing but not simply in financial terms, but also access to training, advice, information resources etc. Some of this exists and simply requires better signposting or minor strategic investment. Strengthening their role also necessitates a review of governance structures.*

For many years, the local authority has not conducted carrying capacity survey, or monitored caravan numbers closely in recent years.

Do you think Gower should adopt the principals and recommendations from the National Landscape Association to rebrand?

- Yes

But with the proviso that this brand being “more accessible and inclusive” leading to increased visitor numbers, must mean stronger protection of the natural landscape.

**Gower Society February 2024**

## Mike Scott (Environment)

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**From:** STEVE HEARD [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 February 2024 21:45  
**To:** Mike Scott (Environment)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Gower AONB Advisory Group rebranding

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**CAUTION:** External email - Do not click links/open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe

Mike

Please find my comments regarding the suggested rebranding of the Gower ANOB to National Landscape Association (NLA)

I have concerns regarding the rebranding of the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) to the National Landscape Association (NLA)

- 1) I do not feel that this change is actually required. During our last meeting, comments were made regarding the awareness within the nation regarding ANOBs and the 16-24 age group were mentioned as an example. To be frank this does not particularly surprise me as, most 16-24 yr olds are not bothered about such groupings but are more interested in going to a beach, which may be within the ANOB. It would have been more salient, if the full age groups interviewed were supplied along with the questions asked, so that the true "awareness" and the methods used were able to be scrutinised.
- 2) Gower has the honour of being the first and therefore "original" ANOB. This identity wis likely to be lost by becoming amalgamated onto a larger amorphous grouping
- 3) Many residents both indigenous and incoming, feel that they are part of and are proud to live in the 1st ANOB and are not being consulted. This is in my opinion a mistake
- 4) There are many businesses both small and large within Gower and further afield, who have set up their business identity allied with the ANOB. This will be an affiliation and relevance which will be lost by this action. The holiday sector in particular will be hard hit by this change, as will agricultural and associated industry. One large business, the Gower Brewery is an example of this, their motto "Ales of outstanding natural beauty" will become meaningless
- 5) Much has been said regarding the 'financial' aspect of this change. I can see that it is easier to negotiate funding for a "national" group, but is this a valid reason to change? Governments

local, devolved and national can not, without severe difficulty, remove the ANOB status and will, in reality find it impossible not to fund. Our local authority, The City and County of Swansea, do not in my opinion understand nor put serious investment to our identity nor infrastructure, despite this being one of their obligations. By their encouragement of this amalgamation, it may assist them to remove their obligation

6) I understand that we will retain the identity (all be it secondary) Gower ANOB which will run alongside the NLA title. I have concerns that this will confuse and supply a type of dual personality to the area. This can only lead to confusion and a sense of not belonging to either grouping

7) I am concerned that this amalgamation has in reality, been agreed and that going to the Advisory panel at this stage is more of a tick box exercise I say this from experience as there have many examples of decisions being brought to our attention long after the decision has been made. It is extremely interesting that a logo has already been agreed for the proposed identity, before agreement has been made to accept the proposal

I hope that you will accept my comments in the manner they are presented, I understand that our role as members of the Advisory panel is to assist and to advise. I do not believe that we, not for the first time, have been given sufficient information nor time to advise one way or the other.

Regards

Steve Heard

## Response to Gower AONB rebrand proposals

January 2024

### What positives do you see this rebrand bringing to Gower, its communities and its visitors?

The AONB designation has been a well known and understood brand within conservation circles since it's formation. However outside of this small circle it's relevance is less clear and certainly is less well known than the National Park brand. To stay relevant to the wider populations of the UK and not just the conservation world we need a name that is easily more understood and recognised. Hopefully this will achieve this.

### What negatives can you envision?

There is a risk that a change of name may cause confusion, particularly in the first 12 months. To avoid this there would need to be a large media 'push', particularly on social media where a lot of 'casual' visitors to the countryside get there information.

### Do you have any other thoughts, comments, concerns or ideas with regards to this rebrand?

I think this is a positive move, particularly in the light that this has already been widely adopted in England and being left behind is riskier than looking to the future.

Without a large media plan this does run the risk of causing some confusion and negative fallout on social media platforms.

### Do you think Gower should adopt the principals and recommendations from the National Landscape Association to rebrand?

- Yes
- No

Alan Kearsley-Evans  
General Manager for Brecon Beacons and Gower  
National Trust

## Response to Gower AONB rebrand proposals

January 2024

What positives do you see this rebrand bringing to Gower, its communities and its visitors?

Better visible branding (e.g. may encourage people to search online more easily) this also brings more readily recognisable signage and also expectations.

What negatives can you envision?

In some people's responses, a perceived loss of "individuality" in the Gower AONB

Do you have any other thoughts, comments, concerns or ideas with regards to this rebrand?

I think it's great.

Do you think Gower should adopt the principals and recommendations from the National Landscape Association to rebrand?

- Yes indeed!
- No

Judith Doyle - Stewardship Officer, GGAT

From: Clive Scott [redacted]  
Sent on: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 2:24:45 PM  
To: Mike Scott (Environment) [redacted]  
CC: [redacted]

[redacted]

Subject: Re: Gower AONB Advisory Group - Reminder about Rebranding Comments

Follow up: Follow up  
Start date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 12:00:00 AM  
Due date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 12:00:00 AM

CAUTION: External email - Do not click links/open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe

4 points below that summarise why I would support the re-branding ...

- 1) The re-branding is a 'development' as part of the evolution from AONB's to a future organisation that has more influence and can become comparable in its effectiveness to National Parks.
- 2) Adopting the 're-branding' is a positive step and means that Gower AONB's current status can be built on.
- 3) We can all challenge the new name but that would just become a quagmire of subjectivity.

**GOWER NATIONAL LANDSCAPE**  
**An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

... sounds good.

4) Opposing the re-branding would probably leave Gower AONB isolated and weak. The first AONB would probably become the last AONB.  
**I cannot see any logical reasons to oppose the re-branding.**

On 13 Feb 2024, at 12:30, Mike Scott (Environment) <Mike.Scott2@swansea.gov.uk> wrote:

<image001.gif>

Hi all – I just wanted to remind you that we need your written comments and opinions on the rebranding proposals by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February.

We will also be taking verbal comments at the Advisory meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February, as we put together the report for Swansea Council.

Here is a link to a short film produced by the National Landscape Association (formerly the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty):

['Welcome to National Landscapes'](#)

This is an example of the social media that they are producing, to raise the profile of the National Landscapes across England and Wales.

Cofion / Regards

Mike Scott

<image003.png>  
Mike Scott

Swyddog AonHNE Gwyr  
Gower AONB Officer

[redacted]

## Response to Gower AONB rebrand proposals

Clr Paul Lloyd - January 2024

What positives do you see this rebrand bringing to Gower, its communities and its visitors?

A refreshed purpose. Plus it will help it to contribute to the Welsh government's policies & ambitions. Contribute to the health & wellbeing of both residents & visitors. It will increase participation in Gower across a wider range of groups.

What negatives can you envision?

Have to be aware of resistance to change.

Do you have any other thoughts, comments, concerns or ideas with regards to this rebrand?

I look forward to progressing the rebrand. To ensure its success, we have to ensure that we bring everyone along with us.

Do you think Gower should adopt the principals and recommendations from the National Landscape Association to rebrand?

- **X Yes**
- No



## Response to Gower AONB rebrand proposals

Barbara Parry - January 2024

What positives do you see this rebrand bringing to Gower, its communities and its visitors?

I would hope that it raises awareness of the work the Team do on Gower and thereby promotes the positivity of the partnership with the communities.

What negatives can you envision?

People may say 'if it ain't broke, don't mend it' so it would be important to highlight the positive points to the community.

Do you have any other thoughts, comments, concerns or ideas with regards to this rebrand?

Do you think Gower should adopt the principals and recommendations from the National Landscape Association to rebrand?

- Yes

**From:** Paxton Hood-Williams (Councillor [redacted])  
**Sent on:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 4:28:11 PM  
**To:** Mike Scott (Environment) [redacted]  
**Subject:** National Landscape rebranding

**Follow up:** Follow up  
**Start date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 12:00:00 AM  
**Due date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 12:00:00 AM

Good afternoon Mike

Just a quick note to say I support the rebranding change to National Landscape, albeit we have to ensure that we can still refer to the term AONB and its expansion.

Stay safe and well

Paxton

*Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams*

[redacted signature block]

# Agenda Item 8



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Advisory Group – 26 February 2024

### **Celebratory Event – National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949**

#### **For Information**

National Landscapes Association is holding a celebratory event at the Sennedd on 24<sup>th</sup> April, hosted by Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change. This will mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks & Access To The Countryside Act, which created the National Parks and AONBs.

Gower AONB has been invited to attend, and to bring project partners with us, to demonstrate the impact that we have on our landscapes and our communities, as part of the celebrations.

Initial discussions with NLA have suggested that we could take along at least 10 representatives – a mixture of staff, project partners and invitees.

I am planning to invite two SDF funded projects to attend, focusing on those that involve communities, volunteering and nature recovery.

Mike Scott,  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2024