



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP

At: Minor Hall, Reynoldston Village Hall, Reynoldston, Gower

On: Monday, 19 September 2016

Time: 7.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Paul Lloyd

Steering Group Membership:

Councillors: M C Child, J P Curtice, J E C Harris, P R Hood-Williams, L James and K E Marsh

R Button, R Cooper, C Daugherty, J Davies, S Heard, S Hill, P R Hood-Williams, G Howe, H Morgan, D Vine, A Woodman and R Wright

AGENDA

Page No.

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions.**
- 2 **Apologies for Absence.**
- 3 **Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**
- 4 **Minutes.** 1 - 5
To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting(s).
- 5 **Matters Arising from the Minutes.**
- 6 **Ash Die-back. (Verbal)**
- 7 **Japanese Knotweed on Gower. (Verbal)**
- 8 **Road Casualties on Gower Commons. (Verbal)**
- 9 **Rural Development Plan & Local Action Group.** 6 - 9

Next Meeting: Monday, 19 December 2016 at 7.00 pm at Penclawdd
Community Centre, Penclawdd, Swansea.



Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
13 September 2016

Contact: Democratic Services: - 636923

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP ANNUAL MEETING

HELD AT REYNOLDSTON VILLAGE HALL, REYNOLDSTON, GOWER,
SWANSEA ON MONDAY, 4 JULY 2016 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M C Child
K E Marsh

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice

Councillor(s)

J E C Harris

Representing Organisations:

R Button	Tourism Swansea Bay
S Heard	Gower Riding Club/Port Eynon Community Council
G Howe	Gower Society
A Woodman	Forestry and Farming
J Davies	Bay Trans
R Wright	Natural Resources Wales

Officer(s)

Chris Lindley	Gower AONB Team Leader
Paul Meller	Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager
Jeremy Parkhouse	Democratic Services Officer
Mike Scott	Gower AONB Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

H Jones	Reynoldston Village Hall Association
J Jones	Representing Gower MP Byron Davies
R Evans A.M.	Assembly Member for Gower
P Lanfear	Gower Commoners Association
J Barrow	Fairwood Commoners Association
G Harding	Hawk and Owl Trust
P.C. P Davies	South Wales Police
Sgt C Dix	South Wales Police
Community Councillor	Port Eynon Community Council
R Fisher	
P Thornton	WTSWW
H Osborn	Natural Resources Wales
A Price	Dryad Bushcraft
J Doyle	Resident
B E Phillips	Resident
F Owenjohn	Resident
G Leamon	Resident
J Leamon	Resident

Apologies for Absence

R Cooper, P R Hood-Williams and D Vine.

1 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.**

The Chair welcomed all present to Reynoldston Village Hall and commenced proceedings.

2 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

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

3 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Steering Group Meeting Held on 21 December 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

4 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

Illuminated Sign

Gordon Howe commented that despite reporting the illuminated sign at Knelston some time ago, the unlawful sign remained in place.

5 **THE WORK AND ROLES OF THE AONB PARTNERSHIP & AONB TEAM. (VERBAL)**

The Gower AONB Officer provided a presentation on the work of the Gower AONB Partnership. He outlined the Gower AONB designation, the role of the Gower AONB Partnership and the work of the AONB Team within the City and County of Swansea.

6 **PARTNERS REPORT - GOWER SOCIETY. (VERBAL)**

Gordon Howe, Gower Society provided an update report on the work of the Society during the last year. He stated that the Society had awarded over £75,000 of grants into Gower during the previous year and highlighted the significant role the Society had on Gower.

He also commented regarding the role of the City and County of Swansea on Gower and the need for the protection of the AONB to be a priority for the Authority, for residents and for those who work on Gower.

He praised the Gower AONB Team for their work and highlighted the improvements made by Planning Services, particularly their website.

7 **PARTNERS REPORT - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. (VERBAL)**

Paul Meller, Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager provided an update regarding the Local Development Plan (LDP). He stated that the LDP contained a number of policies that affected the AONB and the Plan was drafted to accommodate population growth.

The Authority had commenced notification of the consultation process on the Deposit Plan and was holding a series of roadshows through July and August 2016 where the public could make their formal comments to Officers.

He added that one roadshow had been scheduled to be held in Pennard. However, developments on Gower were very limited compared to other areas of Swansea. The information was available on the Council website and hard copies were available for the appropriate fee. All community and town councils had been sent a copy of the Deposit Plan.

In response to concerns regarding enforcement, he commented that resources were diminishing within the Council and it was important that people worked together to find solutions to problems. He added there were a number of outstanding enforcement issues and unfortunately, the process was slow and tortuous. However, nothing was being ignored and Officers were working hard in order to progress the outstanding matters.

8 **PARTNERS REPORT - NATURAL RESOURCES WALES. (VERBAL)**

Hamish Osborne, Swansea Team Leader, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided an update regarding the work of NRW, particularly in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

He provided details regarding the management of NRW in Swansea and the Swansea Valley; the purpose of the organisation; the woodland estates, nature reserves and conservation of protected sites it manages on Gower, including problems with larch and ash die-back; the management of heathland; and the regulation of water quality.

He highlighted the close partnership work between NRW and the Gower AONB Team and the need for continued partnership working on Gower.

In addition, he outlined the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Public Service Board Plan and its relevance to Gower.

Community Councillor R Fisher, Port Eynon Community Council queried the cutting of Japanese knotweed in hedgerows on Gower by the City and County of Swansea which results in it spreading and would ruin hedges within a short period of time. It was stated that it was the responsibility of landowners to properly clear and dispose of Japanese knotweed.

9 **PARTNERS REPORT - GOWER LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP.**

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader provided a presentation on the role of the Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP).

He outlined the background to the GLP and stated that the programme is involved with over 50 projects concerned with conserving and celebrating the special qualities of Gower. The £1.9m programme had received a grant of £1.3M from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

He outlined the partnership working undertaken by the GLP and highlighted the work completed by partner organisations and the GLP Delivery Plan.

10 **PRESENTATIONS - GOWER VOICES.**

The following were allowed 10 minutes to discuss a topic concerning the Gower AONB:

a) Stock Deaths on Gower Roads – John Barrow.

It was outlined that since Christmas 2015, 8 cattle, 7 horses and nearly 20 sheep had been killed on Fairwood Common roads. It was added that it took approximately 3 years to breed an animal and be able to place it on the common for grazing, without which the commons, which cannot be managed mechanically, would become overgrown. The overriding factor in these deaths was speed and there was a desperate need for the introduction of traffic control measures and enforcement.

The meeting commented on the issues raised and options available. It was stated that 90% of individuals involved in such accidents were local. It was also suggested that average speed cameras would be a major deterrent. NRW representatives agreed to meet with Commoners in order to discuss the issue further.

b) Internet and Phone Connectivity on Gower – Ceri Butcher.

In the absence of the speaker it was highlighted that internet and phone connectivity on Gower remained a huge problem.

The Chair would investigate the issue further.

11 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

Councillor K E Marsh asked questions relating to the involvement of the AONB Team in the planning process, cases of ash die-back on Gower and Japanese knotweed treatment on Gower. The questions were responded to by City and County of Swansea Officers and the NRW representative.

Rebecca Evans, A.M. proposed that the impact of leaving the European Union upon the AONB, including ways to mitigate risks and look for new opportunities outside the EU, be discussed at a future Steering Group meeting.

Gordon Howe, Gower Society queried whether Welsh Water had realised the impact of 26 new homes at Scurlage and the impact it would have, along with the connection of a large number of caravans, to the network and the lack of control over water infiltration.

Peter Lanfear, Gower Commoners queried whether Japanese knotweed within hedgerows should be cut as this would cause it to spread. He also queried the current practice of the City and County of Swansea towards collection of fly tipping on commons. It was stated that previously, the Authority used to collect all items that had been fly tipped on commons. However, only items dumped on the roadside would be collected, putting huge pressure on the Commoners to remove the items.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1) The impact of leaving the European Union upon the AONB, including ways to mitigate risks and look for new opportunities outside the EU, be discussed at a future Steering Group meeting;
- 2) Fly tipping on Gower commons be discussed at a future Steering Group meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

CHAIR

Agenda Item 9

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 19 September 2016

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RDP) & LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)

What is the RDP?

- European Union programme
- Bring rural development in line with EU priorities
- Identify and agree areas where EU support can give the most added value
- Part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The CAP for Wales enables the funding of activities which support farmers, the countryside and rural communities. These activities encourage the sustainable management of agriculture and the environment in four key areas:

- Agriculture
- Forestry, environment and countryside
- Supply chain for agriculture and forestry
- Quality of life in rural areas

What is the LAG?

An unincorporated association:

- building the capacity of local organisations and individuals to develop and implement projects
- drawing up a transparent selection procedure, which avoid conflicts of interest, ensure that at least 50% of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities
- prioritising projects according to their contribution to meeting the objectives and targets in the Local Development Strategy (LDS)
- preparing and publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure & defining selection criteria
- receiving and assessing applications for support
- selecting projects, agreeing level of grant support before approval. £445k grant pot, 80% intervention rate. Lead body will ensure compliance & eligibility.
- Monitor implementation of LDS, projects supported and carry out evaluation of activities linked to strategy.

City and County of Swansea is the lead body.

The LDS vision and objectives are attached.

Current Membership of the LAG and the three sub-groups is attached.

Brexit

CCS is currently delivering the following EU funded programmes:

Project/programme	EU grant £	End date
Rural Development Plan	1.4m	31 Dec 2021
Workways +	1.4m	30 Nov 2018
Communities for Work	1.6m	31 Mar 2018
Cynydd	1.6m	28 Feb 2019
Total	6m	

Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) expect that these existing funding commitments will be honoured. Extensions currently limited to whenever Article 50 is triggered and the 2 year countdown to full exit is set. The longer Article 50 is delayed, the longer the programmes can run, unless there is agreement to let the programme complete during formal negotiations once Article 50 is triggered. Welsh Government is seeking assurances on being able to deliver the RDP to the current agreed end date, the end of some programmes may be at risk depending on the trigger date.

Chris Lindley
12 September 2016

In 2020 the rural wards of Swansea should:

- Be a vibrant community in its/their own right, not just 'dormitories' to the urban wards.
- Have a strong economy that takes advantage of local distinctiveness and all opportunities.
- Have a truly local supply chain, keeping money and resources in the area.
- Be easy to access for locals and visitors through a variety of transport options.
- Feel connected, through transport and digital networks that are fit for purpose.
- Have high quality products, facilities and levels of service for visitors and locals.
- Benefit from a strong tourism industry that is evenly spread across the rural wards and throughout the year.
- Have thriving local services such as libraries, shops and post offices
- Have a diverse and resilient natural environment that is protected, valued and sustainably managed.

TABLE 3: STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

RURAL STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	LEADER THEMES	CCT	
Strategic Aim 1: Develop rural transport and infrastructure			
Objective 1: Support an integrated and diverse transport network	Themes 1, 3	Conserving our natural environment, cultural and built heritage	
Objective 2: Support and develop accessible, fit for purpose services	Themes 2, 3, 4, 5		
Strategic Aim 2: Enhance tourism offer			
Objective 3: Enhance quality of local offer and improve marketing	Themes 1, 2, 5		
Objective 4: Encourage development of year round sustainable tourism offer across the rural area (especially food, crafts and recreation)	Themes 1, 2, 3, 5		
Strategic Aim 3: Deliver a strong economy and vibrant communities			
Objective 5: Support development of a self-sufficient rural economy	Themes 2, 3, 4, 5		
Objective 6: Support and develop cohesive, resilient and engaged communities	Themes 2, 3, 4		
Objective 7: Enable digital connectivity	Theme 5		

National LEADER Themes:

1. Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources
2. Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains
3. Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services
4. Renewable energy at Community level
5. Exploitation of digital technology

RDP LAG and sub-group Membership – Version at 1 August 2016

8 Public / 4 Private / 7 Third Sector = 19 members

No	Name	Organisation	Sector	E&C	Tourism	T&I
1	Alyx Baharie	Swansea Council for Voluntary Service	Third	Yes		
2	Ant Flanagan – Vice Chair	Gower Power Co-op	Third	Yes		Yes Chair
3	Catherine Lewis	Tourism Swansea Bay	Private	Yes Chair	Yes	
4	Chris Lindley	CCS – Gower AONB	Public		Yes	Yes
5	Christine Thomas	Friends of Coedbach Park – Pontarddulais	Third	Yes		
6	Clare James	CCS – Economic Development	Public	Yes	Yes	
7	Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams	Councillor Fairwood Ward & Three Crosses	Public			
8	Deb Hill	Swansea Environmental Forum	Third			
9	Hamish Osborn – Chair	Natural Resources Wales	Public	Yes		Yes
10	Helen Nicholas	Gower Unearthed	Third		Yes	
11	Jo Scott	Rhossili – volunteer	Third		Yes	
12	John Davies	Bay Trans	Private			Yes
13	John Howells	Ilston Community Council	Public	Yes		
14	Nick Guy	Wheelrights	Private			Yes
15	Paul Baker	Llangyfelach Community Council	Public		Yes	Yes
16	Polly Gordon	CCS – Poverty & Prevention	Public	Yes		
17	Rachel Saunders	Farmers Union of Wales	Private			
18	Robin Kirby	Gower Society	Third			
19	Steve Hopkins	CCS - Tourism	Public			
Also add below to correspondence as they may deputise for Steve Hopkins						
20	Geraldine Williams	CCS - Tourism	Public		Yes	
21	Nerys Adams	CCS - Tourism	Public			

Note: E&C = Economy and Community

T&I = Transport and Infrastructure

Agenda Item 10

Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 19 September 2016

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND – UPDATE FOR STEERING GROUP

The AONB Team operate a small grant scheme - The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) – using funding provided by Welsh Government.

The aim of the fund is to support innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which involve local communities in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The SDF aims through partnership, to develop and test ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in countryside of great natural beauty and diversity. The scheme will seek to conserve and enhance the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community. Sustaining the social well-being and economic viability of communities are also important aims of this scheme.

Applications can be for small grants of less than £3,000 or larger grants of up to £25,000. Applications over £3,000 are assessed by the SDF Grants Panel, which is a subgroup of the AONB Partnership Steering Group.

Report for 2016/17 to date

This year, the budget for the fund is £55,000. There are currently 15 projects being funded, with a further 4 applications either anticipated or under assessment. Currently £3,131.52 is uncommitted for 2016/17, but it is likely that this will be fully committed by the end of October.

The Committed Funds figure includes a CCS Management Fee of £5,500 (10%).

Total Funds available	£ 55,000.00
Committed Funds	£ 48,118.48
Under Commitment	£ 3,131.52
Pending Applications	£ 3,000.00

Projection for 2017/18

The budget for 2017/18 will not be confirmed until March/April 2017, however, there are 4 projects currently being funded for 2017/18, with 2 applications under assessment, and 3 more anticipated within the next 2 months. A budget of £48,600 is anticipated, with £25,670 currently committed, and applications valued at £20,600 anticipated – it is likely that the fund will be fully committed ahead of 2017/18.

Mike Scott,
12th September 2016