



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## **Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group**

**At:** Reynoldston Village Hall - Church Meadow, Reynoldston, Gower, Swansea

**On:** Monday, 2 December 2019

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Chair:** Councillor Paul Lloyd

#### **Membership:**

Councillors: M C Child, J P Curtice, P R Hood-Williams, L James and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: R Button, J Chambers, J France, S Heard, S Hill, G Howe, P Jenkins, H Osborn, B Parry, P Thornton and D P Tucker

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### **Agenda**

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<b>1 Apologies for Absence.</b>	
<b>2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.</b> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>	
<b>3 Minutes.</b> To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting(s).	<b>1 - 6</b>
<b>4 Matters Arising from the Minutes.</b>	
<b>5 Gower Dark Sky Community Application - Update.</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>
<b>6 Welsh Government Consultation - National Development Framework.</b>	<b>9 - 10</b>
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<b>8 Cefn Bryn Parking Issues. (Verbal)</b>	
<b>9 Sustainable Development Fund.</b>	<b>12 - 16</b>
<b>10 Gower AONB Management Plan Sub-Group. (Verbal)</b>	

**Next Meeting:** Monday, 23 March 2020 at 7.00 pm

*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**25 November 2019**

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**Contact: Democratic Services: - 636923**

# Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

Down To Earth, Little Bryngwyn, Cefn Bryn, SA3 1ED

Monday, 23 September 2019 at 7.00 pm

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

### Councillors

M C Child

P R Hood-Williams

L James

### Steering Group Members

R Button

J Chambers

J France

S Heard

S Hill

G Howe

P Jenkins

P Thornton

D P Tucker

### Officer(s)

Paul Meller

Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager

Chris Lindley

Gower AONB Team Leader

Mike Scott

Gower AONB Officer

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

### Also Present: -

Reverend J Davies, I Button, J Gooding

### Apologies for Absence

Councillors: J P Curtice and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: H Osborn and B Parry

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## 14 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.

## 15 Minutes.

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting held on 24 June 2019 be approved as a correct record.

## 16 Matters Arising from the Minutes.

- Minute No.7 – Presentations

Councillor M C Child welcomed the 'slow down' signs that had been placed at various locations on the Commons as part of the Safety on the Commons Campaign.

## 17 Landscapes for Life Conference Report.

The Chair presented a report on the NAAONB Conference 2019. It was explained that this year's Conference, which formed part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act that paved the way for designated landscapes was held in the University of Essex, Colchester. The theme was "Outstanding landscapes, outstanding beauty" and the themes explored included the role of landscapes in mitigating the effects of climate change, the importance of beauty in times of change and the impacts nature on health & wellbeing.

It was added that with the Designated Landscapes Review in progress in England, the Environment & Agriculture Bills due soon, the Welsh Government's publication of its Valued & Resilient policy paper and the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, it had never been a more important time to demonstrate the value of designated landscapes.

He made reference to the Glover Review of AONB's / National Parks in England and the interim findings were provided.

The Steering Group referred to the recent press coverage regarding the Review, which coincided with the Landscapes for Life week. The Group also recognised the similarity between England and Wales, highlighting that the target of net zero carbon by 2050 was too long into the future. A lack of resources, disadvantaged groups having access to the countryside and climate emergency issues were discussed.

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

## 18 Presentation - AONB's Declaration for Nature.

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader provided the Steering Group with a presentation on AONB's Declaration for Nature. Details provided included: -

- Context - Climate change emergency declaration, Glover Review in England and Marsden Review in Wales (2015);
- Timeline – Response to Glover report, NAAONB Chair's Conference to sign off declaration and final declaration in December 2019;
- Opportunities for Wales and Gower AONB;
- Future Generations Commissioner 10 point plan.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- The Nature Recovery Plan being key;
- How Wales is affected as long as it is aligned support;
- Reporting what the Authority does and the bio-diversity link with future generations;
- Reversing the loss of flora and fauna;
- The declaration being the main thrust;

- The link with previous work undertaken by the Gower Landscape Partnership;
- The contradiction in wanting more visitors coming into the countryside and wanting to protect the environment;
- How imagination was required to give people access whilst at the same time protecting the environment;
- The need for wider communication;
- Establishing exactly what state of nature from the past was indicated as the aim because the landscape had changed significantly over many years;
- Achieving the aims of the AONB and defining the natural boundary;
- Understanding the effect of management upon the countryside;
- Establishing a framework with evidence.

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

## **19 Landscapes for Life Week 21-29 September 2019. (Verbal)**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer provided the Steering Group with a verbal update regarding the Landscapes for Life Week 21-29 September 2019. He outlined that the week highlighted the following: -

- It is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act;
- The conclusion of the Glover Review;
- Used common branding to raise awareness through social and traditional media;
- Facebook – posted twice a day featuring favourite reviews or aspects of Gower from individuals supported by a short piece of text;
- Twitter – common branding.

The Steering Group discussed the following: -

- The highlighted the lack of resources within the AONB Team to be able to undertake the work;
- How the week was a national event which had been organised nationally;
- The nature of the English centred approach of the Glover Review;
- The distinct lack of awareness, communication and lack of involvement of schools to promote the week.

**Resolved** that the content of the presentation be noted.

## **20 Gower Dark Sky Community Award Application.**

Chris Lindley, Gower AONB Team Leader presented an update report on the Gower Dark Sky Community Award Application.

It was outlined that the application to the International DarkSky Association (IDA) was considered by their last committee meeting at the end of July. In general, feedback from this meeting was very positive, but they have requested some further information / evidence regarding the examples of projects where lighting controls had been applied, our proposals for dark sky monitoring post-award and clarification on the timescale and technical content for the revised Gower AONB Lighting Guide to

being updated as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan.

It was added that Swansea Council and Dark Sky Wales had been working to address the above points and the Authority was expecting the IDA to approve the Dark Sky Community Award application at its next committee meeting on 30 September 2019.

The Steering Group highlighted providing examples of improved lighting on Gower and the issue of absentee landlords.

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

## 21 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.

The Gower AONB Officer presented the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Panel Financial Summary report.

It was outlined that the Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2019/20 as £55,000, with the verbal commitment for the same for 2020/21.

The fund was now heavily committed, both for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

- **2019/20**

Total Funds available	£ 55,000.00
Committed Funds	£ 47,000
Uncommitted Funds	£ 8,000

For the current year, there were 10 projects approved with SDF funding for 2019/20, and a further application was anticipated, which would fully commit the SDF budget. There had been two further expressions of interest, for which there was currently no funding available. The Committed Funds figure included the CCS Management Fee of £5,500 (10%).

- **2020/21**

£36,030 committed, with 2 applications worth £19,000 anticipated, which would leave the fund fully committed.

- **2021/22**

£13,500 committed, with 1 application worth £10,000 anticipated.

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

**22 Sustainable Development Fund - Annual Report.**

The Gower AONB Officer presented 'for information' the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Gower AONB Annual Report, 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019.

**23 Appointment of SDF Appeals Panel.**

The Gower AONB Officer reported that the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Appeals Panel had to be finalised.

**Resolved** that the SDF Appeals Panel be appointed as follows: -

S Heard (Chair), B Parry, H Osborn, P Thornton, S Hill, G Howe, Councillor P R Hood-Williams and P Tucker.

**24 Discussion - Parking on Cefn Bryn.**

Following discussions at the Annual Meeting, it was proposed that a Working Group be established to discuss the issue further.

The Group discussed the problems being encountered on Cefn Bryn including erosion, animal fatalities, speeding traffic, lack of grazing affecting the Common and prevention options.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) A Working Group be established;
- 2) The membership consists of S Heard (Chair), S Hill, P Tucker, Councillor L James, Councillor P R Hood-Williams, J Chambers and P Lanfear;
- 3) The Working Group be supported by the Gower AONB Team;
- 4) The Working Group meets as soon as possible.

**25 Update - Gower AONB Management Plan Review.**

The Gower AONB Leader presented a Gower AONB Management Plan Review Update Report.

He outlined that the current plan was adopted as Council policy in March 2017. The Action Plan was reviewed by the last Steering Group meeting (March 2019) and now covered the period up 2022.

The Authority is required to review the Management Plan every five years and Natural Resources Wales has a statutory role in that process. The stages of the review were provided and to comply with that timescale, the Plan review should start in the current year. The last review concentrated on updating the plan evidence, objectives and actions.

It was added that there had been significant changes and updates to the policy context that the new AONB Plan needed to consider and respond to, including:

- The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and how the Plan can contribute to the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the AONB
- The declaration of a Climate Change Emergencies by UK / Wales Governments and Swansea Council.

It was recommended that the AONB Partnership Steering Group forms a sub-group with the Gower AONB Team to formally initiate the first stages of the review process. The sub-group would report back to the Steering Group in due course.

**Resolved that: -**

- 1) The Sub Group be established as outlined above;
- 2) The membership includes Gower Society representative, NRW representative, P Thornton and any 2 other interested parties.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

**Chair**



# Agenda Item 5



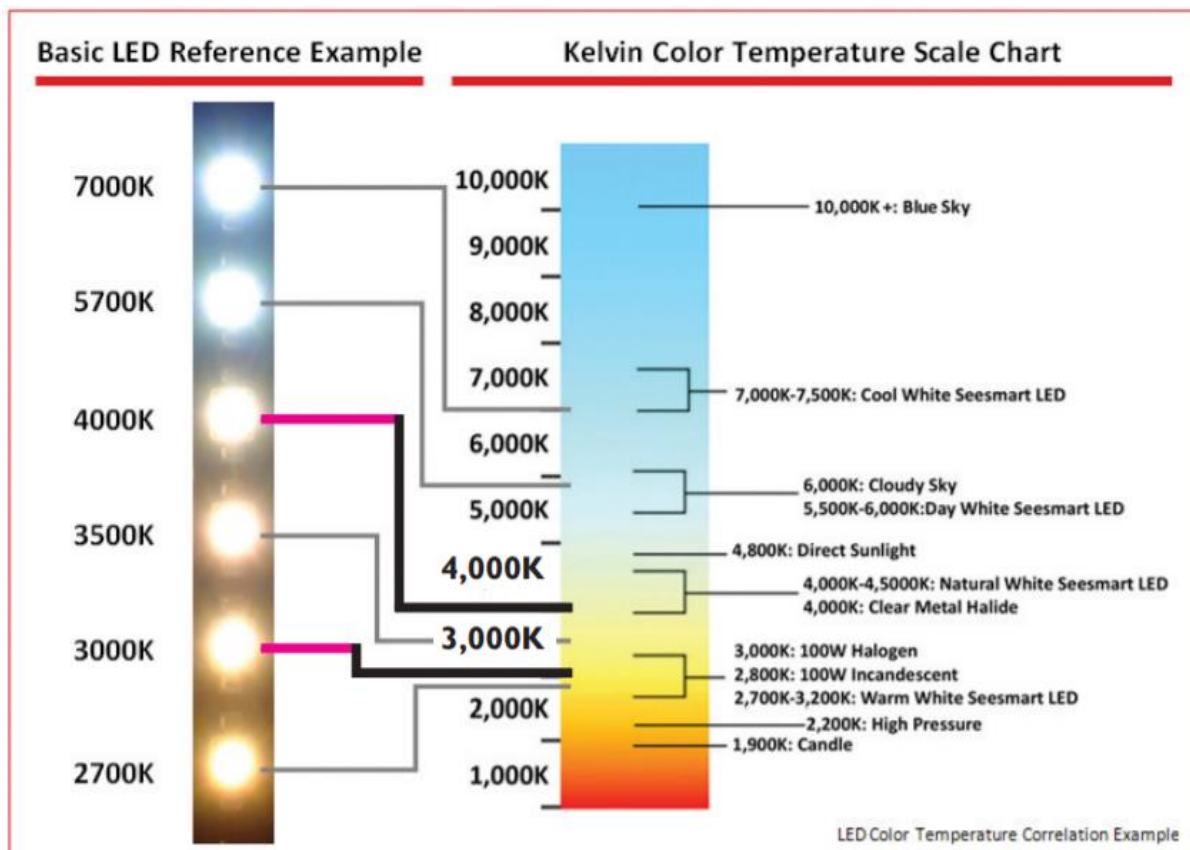
## Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 December 2019

### Gower Dark Sky Community Application – Update

Our consultant Allan Trow (Dark Sky Wales Training Services) has been in regular contact with International DarkSky Association (IDA) regarding the completion of our application, but there is one remaining issue that it is going to take further time to resolve with the IDA.

In summary, the issue is around having safeguards in planning guidance concerning the 'colour temperature' of development lighting on Gower. The IDA is seeking thresholds of 3000kelvin in the AONB. 3000kelvin is described as a 'warm-white' colour, and the threshold would limit blue-spectrum light that is linked with impacts of on human health and wildlife.



Source: Northumberland National Park

The 3000kelvin threshold is not referenced in the 2010 AONB lighting guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – so, part of the ‘Lighting Management Plan’ in our application to the IDA was that we would update the SPG with this threshold and report back on that in our first annual report.

That approach is no longer acceptable to the IDA; they want to ensure that the threshold limit is included in the SPG before deciding on our award. I am working with Planning Policy colleagues to put this in place, but obviously this will take some time – it will be well into the New Year before the SPG will be ready.

I am not anticipating any issues with implementing the 3000kelvin threshold – our highways lighting engineers have confirmed that they will accept street lighting systems of 3000k lighting within the AONB – when their standard elsewhere across the authority is 4000k; 3000k has also recently been agreed in the planning conditions for a housing development in Southgate.

However, the remaining actions for our project as I see it are:

- The need to conclude Dark Sky Wales’ commission to assist us in the application – they have completed what was required of them and we should be arranging their final invoice/payment
- Gower Society grant-aid – I need to discuss with the Society what grant claim we may make – although all of the work is complete, we do not have a final application to the IDA.
- I need to work with Planning Policy to progress the SPG update as quickly as we can.

**Chris Lindley**  
**Gower AONB Team Leader**  
**21 November 2019**



## Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 December 2019

### **Welsh Government Consultation – Draft National Development Framework**

Welsh Government has just (15 November) concluded a formal consultation on the draft National Development Framework (NDF), which will set the direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. The draft NDF addresses national priorities through the planning system, including:

- sustaining and developing a vibrant economy;
- decarbonisation;
- developing resilient ecosystems; and
- improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Details of the consultation are available here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-10/draft-national-development-framework-consultation-document.pdf>

Swansea Council's response to the draft NDF raised specific points regarding Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

#2 An additional policy for the MSWW Region to highlight the future role of the designated National Parks and AONB is also considered necessary, which would lay the foundation upon which SDPs could build. These are highly significant, nationally designated areas, that are a distinguishing feature at a national scale, and the NDF has an important role in identifying the opportunities and responsibilities for these areas. Such Areas provide an opportunity for increasing tourism activity in a sustainable manner and a clear framework should be established in the national plan relating to the fundamental need to protect and enhance these areas as national assets. More broadly in relation to AONBs, whilst there is a scattering of references to AONBs in the document (e.g. p12 Challenges and opportunities talks about living landscapes), generally speaking the conclusions and recommendations of the Future Landscapes work that has been undertaken across Wales are not apparent in the draft NDF. Looking at NPs and AONBs together as the designated landscapes of Wales. AONBs and NPs are nationally important assets, designated for the benefit of the nation and to protect their unique landscapes. Their national importance is recognised and stated in Planning Policy Wales, so the Council suggests they should have the same national consideration in the NDF.

In the Council's view, the Minister has clearly stated the need for parity for AONBs with National Parks (NPs) in terms of status, profile and resourcing, and the Council's view is that AONBs are not profiled in the same way, e.g:

- NPs are shown on the very first plan – but not AONBs;
- NPs get referenced and named in the regional profiles but not the AONBs.
- Whilst both the National Parks and an AONB are identified in the regional profile for Mid and South West Wales, the overview description on p56 only mentions the National Parks.

**Chris Lindley**

**Gower AONB Team Leader**

**22 November 2019**

# Agenda Item 7



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 December 2019

### Gower AONB Design Guide Review

The Gower AONB Design Guide was published in November 2011, and was well received. It provides a practical design tool to be used by all involved in the design and development process, whether planning permission is required or not. It sets out the good design objectives to be followed to ensure that development respects the distinctive character of both the natural and built environment of Gower.

It included specific design modules covering the more common types of development seen on Gower, namely:

- residential
- agricultural
- commercial and tourism
- conversions
- together with guidance on landscape design and repair and maintenance

Following the adoption of the LDP in February 2019, the Design Guide has been updated and extended by the Planning Policy Team, working with Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners. The revised edition will include new sections on:

- Chalets
- Lighting
- Advertising Signage

It is expected that a 6-week public consultation will start at the end of January 2020, with adoption and publication in May 2020.

**Mike Scott,**  
**20<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

# Agenda Item 9



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

### Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 December 2019

### Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary

Welsh Government have confirmed the SDF budget for 2019/20 as £55,000, with a verbal commitment for the same for 2020/21.

The fund is now heavily committed, both for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

- **2019/20**

Total Funds available	£ 55,000
Committed Funds	£ 53,000
Uncommitted Funds	£ 2,000

For the current year, there are 12 projects approved with SDF funding for 2019/20, and a further application is anticipated, which will fully commit the SDF budget. There have been two further expressions of interest, for which there is currently no funding available. The Committed Funds figure includes the CCS Management Fee of £5,500 (10%).

- **2020/21**

£36,030 committed, with 2 applications worth £19,000 anticipated, which would leave the fund fully committed.

- **2021/22**

£13,500 committed, with 1 application worth £10,000 anticipated

### Additional Capital Funding – 2019/20

Welsh Government have provided an additional £74,172 (Capital Funding 2019/20) for specific projects – please see the attached Welsh Government Press Release and the note summarising the projects for further details.

**Mike Scott,**  
**19<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

PRESS RELEASE

# £4m funding boost for Wales' National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Wales' national parks and other cherished landscapes are to receive a £4m funding boost from the Welsh Government, Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, Hannah Blythyn announced today.**

The Deputy Minister made the announcement at the annual Designated Landscapes seminar held in Snowdonia National Park.

This additional investment for 2019/20, which is on top of the more than £3m of Welsh Government funding that was also provided to our National Parks and AONBs in March 2019, will enable key improvements – with many of the proposals supporting Welsh Government priorities, including decarbonisation and greening measures, improved tourism infrastructure, enhanced biodiversity and further support for access and recreation.

In April the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. Together with combatting the steep decline in biodiversity, these are likely to be Wales' most pressing priorities for years to come.

The Welsh Government is committed to concerted joint working and effective collaboration around the response to climate change.

The Designated Landscapes have made a significant commitment to supporting this concerted effort as they seek to balance increasing tourism pressures with significant environmental challenges.

They also have a critical role in promoting sustainable tourism, which this funding will also support through improvements to tourist attractions and footpaths.

Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government Hannah Blythyn said:

- “ Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are very special to the people of Wales and attract millions visitors each year.
- “ The stunning landscapes play a vital role in delivering rich ecosystems and vibrant and resilient communities, providing a wide range of recreational opportunities.
- “ Our countryside is hugely important to the people of Wales and everyone must continue to have the opportunity to enjoy it. This is not simply about tourism and the economy – our landscapes can also bring broader health and well-being benefits.
- “ This announcement is proof of the Welsh Government’s continued commitment to ensuring our designated landscapes and their communities prosper and flourish. ”

The Welsh Government continues to collaborate with the National Park Authorities and AONBs to recognise the challenges they face – and welcomes the key projects and priorities they have identified to progress this vital area of work.

**Additional Capital funding 2019-20 by Designated Landscape includes:**

- Snowdonia National Park Authority: £1,858,540
  - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority: £611,000
  - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority: £850,006
  - Wye Valley AONB (Monmouthshire County Council): £60,000
  - Llŷn Peninsula AONB (Gwynedd Council): £59,000
  - Ynys Môn AONB (Anglesey County Council): £347,000
  - Gower AONB (Swansea City Council): £74,172
  - Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB (Denbighshire CC: £88,000
- Total: £3,947,718



## Gower AONB - Additional Welsh Government Funding 2019/20 Project Outlines

Following an inquiry from Welsh Government, the following projects were highlighted, based upon a site visit by WG staff.

- Gower Off-road cycle route. You may recall we talked about this on your visit. This project will develop and promote a network of bridleways as a way of enjoying the countryside by bike. The network will enable visitors to explore large areas of Gower AONB by bicycle and it crosses much of the landscape including the high points of all the major hills. Swansea Council will deliver the project by undertaking the physical works, legal processes and organise promotion of the network. Swansea Council will be responsible for maintenance of the network once completed. The breakdown of works is as follows:
  - Waymarking and signposts - £ 6 500
  - Promotion - £ 1 500
  - Legal orders and Landowner compensation - £18 000
  - Staff time (match funding) - £ 8 000
  - **TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT - £26 000**

*(This project will not be creating new routes, but will concentrate on enabling existing bridleways to be used as a network for off-road cycling.)*

- Coeden Fach Native Tree Nursery – Coeden Fach is a community tree nursery growing native species of trees and hedgerow plants from locally collected seeds in an environmentally friendly way. Working with volunteers and disadvantaged groups from all over Gower and Swansea, the Nursery provides therapeutic gardening and growing sessions to promote physical and mental health, well-being and self-esteem as well as providing new experiences and transferable skills which can improve employment prospects. The Nursery works with Swansea Council to plant large numbers of local provenance trees in community areas to re-establish or add to the tree canopy and improve wildlife corridors and connectivity. Coeden Fach was set up in their current site (Bishopston) with SDF funding almost 10 years ago; they are now about to move to a new larger site (in Clyne Gardens) enabling them to grow trees in much greater numbers. Coeden Fach has already attracted funding to support this move and work with volunteers at the new site. Currently the site is a grassed area with a water supply but no other facilities. Welsh Government funding of £10k would enable Coeden Fach to erect a polytunnel to increase the number of saplings that can be grown, and would also allow the purchase of essential equipment for site establishment and maintenance.
  - **TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT - £10 000**

- Walling – following on from the Mewslade Wall project, the AONB has established a follow up project with the National Trust and the Gower Society to fund a three-year drystone wall restoration programme in the Rhossili/Middleton area. The walls and field patterns are a fundamental component of the landscape character and historic landscape in this part of the AONB. Welsh Government funding of £5k in this financial year would enable additional capital restoration works to be included in the programme.

- **TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT - £5 000**

- Nitten Field – you will remember our walk around this field with the slow-worms a few weeks ago. The field habitat is in good condition, but the fencing (required to keep the sheep in the field when they graze it in Spring) is 15 years old and needs replacing before next spring. 460m of post and wire netting fencing at Glastir standard rate of £3.48/m is £1600.80. The fencing will enable the continued habitat management of the site.

- **TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT - £1600.80**

- Cwmlwylwd Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – access improvement works. Please note that this is a project to improve access to the countryside, but it is in an LNR approximately 2km outside of the AONB. The works would be completed by contractors on behalf of Swansea Council, comprising:

- New plastic boardwalk - £ 19 300
- New plastic steps (135m of step fronts) - £ 5 271
- Timber LNR entrance signs -£ 1 500
- 3 no. Oak benches -£ 1 500
- 2no. Interpretation panels -£ 4 000
- **TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT - £31 571**

- **Project Summary**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
Gower Off-road Cycle Route	£26,000.00
Coeden Fach Native Tree Nursery	£10,000.00
Gower Walling Project	£5,000.00
Nitten Field	£1,600.80
Cwmlwylwd LNR	£31,571.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£74,171.80</b>

Mike Scott,  
AONB Officer  
24th October 2019