

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