



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group**

Barham Centre, Mount Pisgah Chapel, Parkmill, Swansea -  
Barham Centre, Parkmill, Swansea

Monday, 24 September 2018 at 7.00 pm

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

### **Councillors**

P R Hood-Williams                      L James                                      A H Stevens

### **Steering Group Members**

R Button                                      R Cooper                                      S Heard  
S Hill    G Howe                                        M Lewis  
B Parry    D P Tucker

### **Officer(s)**

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

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors: M C Child and J P Curtice  
Steering Group Members: K Marsh, H Osborn and D Vine

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## **9 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.

## **10 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Annual Meeting held on 25 June 2018, be accepted as a correct record, subject to the following amendment: -

Minute No.5 – Partner Bodies – Gower Society.

Amend Gower Society membership to 1,000 members.

## **11 Matters Arising from the Minutes.**

There were none.

## **12 Landscapes For Life Conference Report.**

The Chair provided a written report and feedback regarding the Landscapes for Life Conference, which he attended with the Gower AONB Officer.

The Conference was held in the University of Kent, Canterbury on 24 to 26 July 2018 and the theme was "Shaping the Long View". He added that both the UK and Welsh Governments had indicated their commitment to Protected Landscapes and with this in mind, the NAAONB proposed that demonstrating and measuring the benefits of landscape management would be of crucial importance in the years ahead.

The Conference looked at how the work of the AONB family network achieved clean air, clean & plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife. It also looked at how to help to reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy by using natural resources in a more sustainable way. The ultimate aim was to ensure that the natural beauty of AONB's was valued and secured. The conference also sought to explore how connecting people with nature could enhance the beauty and heritage of the natural environment for future generations.

The Steering Group asked questions regarding the impact of Brexit discussions that took place and it was explained that speakers at the Conference had given their views on the possible outcomes. The Chair also indicated that food producers were preparing for the impact of Brexit and climate change, with some abandoning traditional crops in favour of vineyards / fruit.

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

## **13 Welsh Government Statement - Designated Landscapes - Valued & Resilient.**

The Welsh Government Valued and Resilient report was provided which outlined the Government's priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) and National Parks.

The Gower AONB Officer highlighted the four goals for AONB's in Wales, namely, valued places; resilient environments; resilient communities; and resilient ways of working.

The Group highlighted the necessity of having good, clean and accessible facilities, particularly public toilets for tourists. It was commented that many tourist areas charged for toilet use in order to retain and keep facilities clean.

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

## **14 Letter from Welsh Government Minister to Gower AONB.**

The letter of Hannah Blythyn AM, Welsh Government Minister for Environment, requesting views regarding establishing greater parity for AONB's and National Parks in Wales, was reported for information.

**15 Gower Landscape Partnership Board Meeting - Draft Minutes - 9 August 2018.**

The draft Minutes of the Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP) meeting held on 9 August 2018 were reported 'for information'.

The Gower AONB Officer informed the Steering Group that the final GLP meeting would be held once the evaluation report had been finalised. When Heritage Lottery Funding had signed off the report it would signify the end of their work. A 10-year Maintenance and Management Plan had also been agreed by GLP, under the terms of the HLF funding.

The Steering Group commented that GLP needed a legacy and the Maintenance and Management Plan should be enforceable upon partner organisations in respect of maintaining projects where funding was received.

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

**16 Gower Dark Skies Community Project.**

The Gower AONB Officer reported that the AONB Team had now put in place the start of a project to take forward the development work and formal application to the International DarkSky Association (IDA), for Gower AONB to become a 'Dark Sky Community'.

Grant funding had been secured through Natural Resources Wales and the Gower Society. This funding had enabled the Council to appoint Dark Sky Wales Training Services to deliver technical, advisory and business engagement support to the project. A copy of the grant application to the Gower Society was attached for information to give the Steering Group a summary and background to the project.

The Steering Group outlined its support for the application and some examples of poor lighting on Gower / near Gower were highlighted.

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

**17 Sustainable Development Fund Report.**

The Gower AONB Officer reported that the Welsh Government had confirmed the SDF budget for 2019/20 as £55,000. He added that there were currently 8 projects with SDF funding for 2018/19, with a further application being developed, and 4 more anticipated, which had heavily committed the funds for 2019/20.

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

Total Funds available	£ 55,000.00
Committed Funds	£ 41,390.00
Uncommitted Funds	£ 13,610.00

SDF budget for 2019/20 had been confirmed as £55,000, with an indication that the budget for 2020/21 would be the same. The fund was heavily committed for 2019/20, with £30,350 already committed, with another £25,310 anticipated, which would over commit the fund.

The Steering Group requested an annual list of where the funds had been allocated.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the report be noted;
- 2) An annual report be submitted to future Steering Group meetings.

## **18 AONB Management Plan - Start of Review Process.**

The Gower AONB Officer informed the Steering Group that the next review of the Gower AONB Management Plan was due to commence shortly. He added that the overall visions remained the same but the objectives and plans may require amending. A report would be provided to the next Steering Group meeting in December 2018.

The Steering Group suggested topics which should be included in the Plan such as seascapes and the dark skies project.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the update be noted;
- 2) A further report be provided to the Steering Group meeting scheduled for 3 December 2018.

## **19 Port Eynon & Horton Feasibility Study.**

Gordon Howe, Gower Society referred to a recent meeting held by consultants regarding a feasibility study of Port Eynon and Horton. He added that the Tourism Section, Swansea Council, had appointed the consultants.

The meeting discussed local facilities and services and examined ways of improving the community for residents and visitors.

The Gower AONB Officer stated that he was aware of the study and had spoken to the consultants in May 2018. The Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Manager stated that he had only just been informed of the study and would inform the appropriate people of his disappointment that neither he nor Planning Services had been consulted.

The Steering Group expressed concern that it had not been involved in the consultation process. It was added that the Gower AONB Team should also have been consulted far more than had occurred. The meeting also discussed the potential options put forward.

Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group (24.09.2018)  
Cont'd

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The content of the discussions be noted;
- 2) The consultants be requested to provide a presentation to the next Steering Group meeting on 3 December 2018.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

**Chair**