



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 26 June 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

### Councillors

P R Hood-Williams

L James

N L Matthews

### Steering Group Members

Howard Evans

Hamish Osborn

Barbara Parry

Clive Scott

Paul Tucker

### Also Present

Hannah Bowden

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Society

### Officer(s)

Paul Meller

Natural Environment Section Manager

Jeremy Parkhouse

Democratic Services Officer

Mike Scott

Gower AONB Officer

### Apologies for Absence

Councillors: S E Keeton and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Stephen Heard, Carrie Townsend Jones and Alan Kearsley-Evans

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## 1 Election of Vice-Chair for the 2023-2024 Municipal year.

**Resolved** that Barbara Parry be elected Vice-Chair of the Advisory Group for the 2023-2024 Municipal year.

## 2 Declarations of Interest.

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 Advisory Group Meeting held on 15 February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### 4 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 the following: -

- Gower Show – The Gower AONB Partnership would have a marquee as usual, hosting a number of partners.
- Gower Dark Sky Community Application – a draft application for “Dark Sky Community” status was submitted in January and a response was awaited from the International Dark Sky Committee. The application had been acknowledged, and a newly appointed project officer had been in communication.
- Gower Dark Sky – Retro Fit Projects – Ty Rhossili had been surveyed and lighting upgraded to meet the requirements of the building’s use as well as adhering to dark sky standards. The Wales-wide collaborative project was underway, with lighting consultants Ridge having surveyed Gower AONB. A report with recommendations for lighting improvements and estimated costings would be provided in the coming months.
- Port Eynon Bay Dunes – work was being planned for September and no comments had been received from the Community Councils.
- Fairwood Common – Work to install a new water connection at Moor Lakes was completed in March 2023, providing drinking water for stock grazing the Common. Dormouse surveys were being undertaken to ascertain their presence in suitable habitat on the Common.
- Pennard Castle – Interpretation panels were installed in 2022 and 2023. Stage 1 of the ivy removal works were underway, rare plant seed had been collected and grown on at Celtic Wildflower Nurseries, and a Scheduled Monument Consent application had been made. A contractor was in place to undertake investigative works so that a tender document for Stage 2 of the works (ivy removal & some restoration work) could be drawn up for bidding contractors.
- Gower Places of Worship – Initial surveys of twelve churches were completed in 2022. The implementation of some recommendations had commenced. New tower doors had been installed at Oxwich and Llanrhidian to allow continued access by roosting bats. Specialist surveys for bats and swift boxes were underway for several churches.
- Clyne Valley Country Park – Following a site visit with Corporate Building Services, stabilisation work would start this autumn on the Ivy Tower. Work was also being planned on the main buildings of the Clyne Woods Arsenic Works, following an environmental survey. A planning application had been submitted for

replacement signage at Blackpill. Work to make the buildings at New Mill Farm safe was underway.

Biodiversity interpretation and a nature trail were installed in 2022. A second round of Japanese knotweed treatment was scheduled for autumn 2023. The Council was working with Natural Resources Wales on a survey of Clyne River to determine what restoration and flood mitigation measures could be implemented with the help of CVCP.

- Parkmill Japanese Knotweed – A third year of treatment was scheduled for autumn 2023. A survey in spring 2024 would determine the need for any further treatment.
- SDF Panel – The dates of the SDF Grant Panel had been confirmed for 2023/24 (30 June, 22 September, 8 December and 15 March 2024).
- AONB Advisory Group – The dates for the Advisory Group had been confirmed for 2023/24 (26 June, 25 September and 26 February 2024).
- NAAONB Rebrand – The National Association of AONB's was discussing a significant rebrand to address some of the issues raised in the Marsden Report – 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.
- AONB Team Staffing – An "AONB Nature and Communities Officer" post was being advertised, which would provide 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.

The Chair thanked the officers for the report.

## **5 Road and Village Signage.**

Howard Evans, Gower Society highlighted the number and variety of road signs throughout Gower. He circulated a number of examples of the signage to the Group, which emphasised the lack of consistency of content, differences in style / design and in some cases, poor positioning which impacted upon visibility.

The Group discussed the options available to progress the issue, highways / planning matters, enforcement.

It was proposed that Highways be given the opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) Highways be given the opportunity to respond to the issues raised.
- 2) The issue be discussed further at the next meeting.

## **6 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Panel Financial Summary report 'for information'.

It was noted that the £100,000 SDF budget for 2022/23, was fully spent and a total of 19 projects had been supported.

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

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£100,000
Uncommitted Funds	£0
Applications in progress	£0

It was added that a detailed report would be produced over the summer and circulated to the Steering Group, highlighting the work done by the projects which had been supported.

In addition, the SDF budget of £100,000 for 2023/24 had been confirmed by Welsh Government. To date, 14 projects had funding committed, with a further 4 applications in progress.

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

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£53,173
Uncommitted Funds	£46,827
Applications in progress	£30,616

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the SDF Grants Panel would be held on 30 June 2023.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

**Chair**