



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Gower National Landscape Advisory Group

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS Teams  
**On:** Monday, 24 June 2024  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Chair:** Councillor Paul Lloyd

#### Membership:

Councillors: P R Hood-Williams, L James, S E Keeton, N L Matthews and A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Judith Doyle, Howard Evans, Stephen Heard, Carrie Townsend Jones, Alan Kearsley-Evans, Peter Lanfear, Philip Ogleby, Hamish Osborn, Barbara Parry, Clive Scott and Paul Tucker

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### Agenda

	Page No.
<b>1 Election of Vice-Chair for the 2024-2025 Municipal year.</b>	
<b>2 Apologies for Absence.</b>	
<b>3 Declarations of Interest.</b> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>	
<b>4 Minutes.</b> To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.	<b>1 - 5</b>
<b>5 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary. (For Information) (Mike Scott)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6 Projects Reports and Updates - June 2024. (For Information) (Mike Scott)</b>	<b>7 - 11</b>
<b>7 Partners Reports and Updates. (Verbal) (Group Members)</b>	
<b>8 Events and Engagement. (Verbal) (Jake Cosgrove)</b>	
<b>9 Advisory Group - Future Priorities and Funding. (Mike Scott)</b>	<b>12 - 14</b>

**Next Meeting:** Monday, 9 September 2024 at 6.30 pm

*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**17 June 2024**

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**Contact: Democratic Services: - 01792 636923**

# Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 26 February 2024 at 6.30 pm

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

### Councillors

P R Hood-Williams  
N L Matthews

L James

S E Keeton

### Steering Group Members

Judith Doyle  
Alan Kearsley-Evans  
Barbara Parry

Howard Evans  
Peter Lanfear  
Clive Scott

Stephen Heard  
Hamish Osborn  
Paul Tucker

### Officer(s)

Jake Cosgrove  
Evelyn Gruchala  
Ursula Jones  
Paul Meller  
Jeremy Parkhouse  
Mike Scott

Communities and Nature Project Officer  
Natural Environment Volunteer Co-ordinator  
Communities and Nature Project Officer  
Natural Environment Section Manager  
Democratic Services Officer  
Gower AONB Officer

### Also present

Jill Burgess (Observer) Gower Society

### Apologies for Absence

Councillors: A H Stevens

Steering Group Members: Carrie Townsend Jones

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## 18 **Declarations of Interest.**

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

## 19 **To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Advisory Group Meeting held on 25 September 2023 and 29 January 2024, be approved and signed as correct records.

## 20 Project Reports and Updates.

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented a 'for information' update report on progress made by the Gower AONB Team since the previous meeting, on the following areas: -

- Gower AONB Management Plan.
- Social Media.
- Hedgerow Projects.
- Gower Dark Skies Community Status.
- Dark Skies – retro-fit projects.
- Port Eynon Dunes.
- St Marys Church, Knelston.
- Backingstone Chapel.
- Parking Issues.
- Pennard Castle.
- Gower Nature Recovery Programme.
- Gower Places of Worship.
- Clyne Valley Country Park.
- Grant Funding.

## 21 Sustainable Development Fund - Financial Summary.

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

It was outlined that the SDF budget of £100,000 for 2023/24 had been confirmed by Welsh Government. So far, 20 projects had funding committed, with a further application in progress at present. One project had reported that they were unable to proceed, and funds had been returned, with a further two withdrawn at the application stage.

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

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£96,282
Uncommitted Funds	£3,718
Applications in progress	£2,000

It was added that the next meeting of the SDF Grants Panel was scheduled for 15 March 2024.

The SDF budget of £100,000 for 2024/25 had been confirmed by Welsh Government, and was already heavily committed, with £3,000 currently uncommitted.

## **22 Food and Communities.**

Josh Pike, Summit Good provided a detailed and informative presentation regarding Summit Good, which is a Swansea based Social Enterprise that was set up as a Community Interest Company. It was explained that it is basically a group of mates that were looking to get their hands dirty for the greater good. The following details were provided: -

- Facilities available at the Killan Road site, including the men's / women's sheds.
- Methods used for growing and items being grown at the site.
- The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme being run from the site and how it is organised.
- The groups / individuals / children using the facilities.
- Purchase and use of additional land near the site.
- Ensuring the projects were not profit focussed and were there for engaging with horticulture and the local community.

The Advisory Group asked a number of questions, which were responded to by the Summit Good representative and the Chair thanked him for providing his presentation.

## **23 AONB Rebrand Proposals.**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer presented a report which sought the view of the Advisory Group in relation to the AONB Rebrand Proposals.

It was outlined that in England, the National Landscapes Association (formally the National Association of AONB's) had been working with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to develop proposals to reinforce the commitment to protecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Heritage – their natural and cultural heritage, and to launch ambitious targets addressing the aims of the AONB family. The intention was to raise the profile of these landscapes, to protect them for the future, and to make sure that everyone can enjoy them. The proposals, which had already been adopted in England, included: -

- For the AONBs to be known as National Landscapes.
- To recommit ourselves to protecting these precious landscapes – their natural and cultural heritage.
- To ensure that everyone can enjoy these landscapes.

It was added that in Wales, the AONB's had the opportunity to adopt the proposals ahead of a celebratory event in the Senedd in April, which would mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the milestone legislation, which marked the establishment of the AONBs – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

It was further outlined that because of the work carried out by the English National Landscapes, the costs of adopting the changes would be minimal – a draft logo was included in the design work funded by DEFRA, should the proposals be adopted.

Although the proposals were originally focused on the English AONB's, adopting them in Wales would have benefits for the 4 Welsh AONB's as follows: -

- Helping to raise their public profile.
- Emphasising their part in a national family of protected landscapes, whilst retaining their individual identities.
- Emphasising their importance in responding to the nature and climate emergencies.
- Helping to build strong, inclusive partnerships.

The proposals support both Welsh Government and Swansea Council corporate priorities, ensuring that Gower AONB remained relevant and central to future action on nature and climate emergencies, and the needs of both our landscapes and our communities. The rebranding proposals were supported by Brand Guidelines, setting out a visual identity and tone of voice, ensuring that all the National Landscapes were recognised as part of a strong national family, who share the same values.

The Gower AONB Advisory Group was briefed on the proposals by John Watkins (Chief Executive of NLA) on 29 January 2024, with a discussion following the presentation.

The members of the Advisory Group were asked to submit written responses to the proposals, and these were provided at Appendix A.

Lengthy discussions followed regarding the contents of the report, the options available for the AONB, collaborative working, Welsh Government preferences, the implications for the AONB of not becoming a National Landscape and the benefits of becoming a National Landscape.

**Resolved** that the Gower AONB Advisory Group recommends that AONB Rebrand Proposals be approved by the Council.

## **24 Celebratory Event - National Parks & Access To The Countryside Act 1949.**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer reported 'for information' that the National Landscapes Association were holding a celebratory event at the Senedd on 24 April 2024, hosted by Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change.

This would mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, which created the National Parks and AONB's. Gower AONB had been invited to attend, and to include project partners, to demonstrate the impact that we have on our landscapes and our communities, as part of the celebrations.

## **25 EDI and Nature & Climate Emergencies.**

Mike Scott, Gower AONB Officer referred to the recent Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Nature & Climate Emergency training provided by Welsh Government. He added that a link had been circulated to the training recordings which was available on the Welsh Government website.

He added that the Advisory Group required further discussions on both topics.

**Resolved** that a face to face only workshop session be arranged to discuss both topics.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

**Chair**

# Agenda Item 5



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower National Landscape Advisory Group – 24 June 2024

### Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary

#### For Information

#### Sustainable Development Fund – Financial Summary

The Sustainable Development Fund budget of £100,000 for 2024/25 has been confirmed by Welsh Government – this is the last year of the 3 year grant funding currently agreed.

So far, 13 projects have funding committed and are underway, with a further application in progress at present. One project has reported an underspend in 2023/24 – if they are unable to increase spend in 2024/25, their grant for 2024/25 will be reduced accordingly.

Committed Funds figure includes the City and County of Swansea Management Fee of £10,000.

Total Funds available	£100,000
Committed Funds	£98,589
Uncommitted Funds	£1,411
Applications in progress	£3,000

The next meeting of the Sustainable Development Fund Grants Panel will be 23 September 2024.

**Mike Scott**  
**14 June 2024**



# Agenda Item 6



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

Gower National Landscape Advisory Group – 24 June 2024

### Projects Reports and Updates – June 2024

Issue	Update	Lead Contact
Gower AONB Management Plan	Formal review process to be started – 2024/25	MS
Gower AONB Rebrand	The rebrand proposals were approved by Swansea Council on 16 <sup>th</sup> May – rebranded as “Gower National Landscape – an area of outstanding natural beauty”. Work will prioritise nature recovery and inclusion. Further work to amend references to AONB (eg in the Council Constitution) will need to be carried out.	MS
National Landscapes Launch Event – Senedd – 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	The Team attended the National Landscapes launch event at the Senedd – alongside the other AONB/NLs. Well attended event, with speeches from MS’s Huw Irranca-Jones and Julie James. Gower staff exhibited project case studies and networked with Members of Senedd and other staff across Wales. Also, Ruth Evans (Coeden Fach Community Tree Nursery) spoke about partnerships and funding.	MS
Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales Seminar – 16/17th May 2024	Staff attended the TCLW seminar in Bangor, focussing on decarbonisation of DLs in Wales. Discussion around “Fair Transition”, community projects, Welsh agriculture and Race To Zero. More information about the seminar, including all presentations and workshops, found here: <a href="https://landscapeswales.org.uk/tclw-seminar-2024-working-with-our-communities-to-achieve-net-zero/">https://landscapeswales.org.uk/tclw-seminar-2024-working-with-our-communities-to-achieve-net-zero/</a>	MS
Mumbles Lighthouse Island	The aim of our project is to gain a deeper understanding of the condition of the engine room (listed building on the island) so we can produce a feasibility study with some design options that will restore and preserve the building, whilst enhancing the site for bats. Heritage consultants Hiraeth are currently in the process of writing a condition report on the building which will be supplemented by	JC

	<p>information from their structural engineer. We will receive their report late May.</p> <p>AONB staff and Story of Mumbles will lead a walk to the Island for Gower Walking Festival in September.</p>	
Gower Dark Skies Community Status	<p>Final draft close to being submitted to DSI for final comments before being sent off.</p> <p>On June 22<sup>nd</sup> we will deliver a summer solstice solar observing event in Rhossili, in partnership with National Trust.</p> <p>The main event of the day will be solar observing through 2 or 3 high powered telescopes, facilitated by astronomers from Dark Sky Wales. Tickets will be free but organised via the council's ticket source to control numbers. This event will showcase the work that is being done to preserve Gower's dark skies and educate attendees on what steps they can take to reduce their own impact.</p>	JC
Dark Skies – retro-fit projects	<p>Work on all-Wales project is progressing – Ridge Consultants have provided advice on 33 Gower sites, and detailed lighting retrofit specifications for three sites on Gower.</p> <p>'Before' retrofitting monitoring of bat activity has been undertaken on three of the sites. An 'after' snapshot will be undertaken in June/July. Retrofitting has been undertaken at Rhossili Toilet Block and Rhosili National Trust Visitor Centre. The bespoke fittings from the supplier have been delivered and a fitter will be providing a date to undertake the install at Penclawdd Community Centre. Work is underway to progress Llanrhidian Primary School. 'Before' nighttime photos have been taken of each of the locations, and 'after' photos will be taken once all sites are retrofitted to clearly show the benefits of the scheme.</p> <p>The remaining 30 sites will be formed into a list of priority and engagement will be undertaken with landowners/occupiers to address lighting improvements.</p>	UJ JC
St Marys Church, Knelston	Scheduled Monument Consent is being sought to carry out stabilisation works.	MS
Backingstone Chapel	On 15-16 January the scrub was carefully removed by contractors and AONB team have been liaising regularly with Gower Unearthed and Cllr Lyndon	JC

	<p>Jones about next steps. AONB team is arranging a 3d photogrammetry scan to allow for Cadw to assess the stability of the structure and mortar holding it together and check for surviving agricultural features and update the management plan.</p> <p>Gower Unearthed secured funding from Gower Society to commission a geomagnetic survey of the site.</p>	
Parking Issues	Residents at Pennard have raised issue of parking on Pennard Common. Discussions with residents, golf club and commoners, in an attempt to find a solution.	MS
Pennard Castle	<p>A contractor (Sally Strachey) has been appointed to undertake the ivy removal, repointing, stone repair and rare plant mitigation work. Work started w/c 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The ivy will be cleared by 21<sup>st</sup> June. Several rare plants have been removed and safely stored in compost to be replanted after the mortar works are complete. Mortar works will be undertaken in September 2024. Two jackdaw nests were observed in the walls of the Castle prior to work commencing; these have been closely monitored during work to avoid negative impacts.</p>	UJ
Gower Nature Recovery Programme	<p>Continuation of Japanese Knotweed survey and clearance works planned for Ilston and Clyne valleys. A dormouse survey has been completed on Fairwood Common, no presence was confirmed.</p> <p>A meeting was held with Fairwood Commoners and NRW to discuss purchase of GPS cattle collars, and some scrub clearance to aid grazing. AONB team has provided funding to the Gower Commoners association for 80 collars.</p> <p>Several hedge-laying workshops were run (Parkmill, Upper Killay and Bishopston), with SLSP funding Nov 2023 – Feb 2024. More are planned for winter 2024/25.</p> <p>Drystone Walling – Gower Walling Project (joint funding with NT &amp; Gower Society) continuing. Volunteer workshops planned with Wildlife Trust over the summer.</p> <p>Dark Skies retrofit will begin to address lighting improvements at sites on Gower as per the report from Ridge – this will include engagement with landowners/occupiers, detailed survey of lighting retrofit and installation.</p>	UJ MS JC

	Four free-to-attend Welsh Dark Skies Week events were organised for half-term week in February, 604 participants joined in total.	
Gower Places of Worship	<p>Bat doors installed in two church towers. Twenty-four swift boxes installed at four churches (Llanynnewydd, Pennard, Penrice &amp; Wernffrwd), swift callers at all to help increase uptake have been switched on May – July inclusive. Loft hatch and ladders replaced to aid access for inspections and keep bats from becoming trapped inside the church and perishing. Site-specific management plans have been produced for twelve churches. Bat survey data and assessments have enabled detailed mitigation strategies for Llanrhidian, Oxwich and Ilston churches to be produced; the consultant is producing method statements to support bat license from NRW to enable works to go ahead, once these are complete then a Faculty permission will be applied for and a contractor will be asked to quote for the work. Have been approached by three new churches to make improvements - bird boxes and hedgerow creation.</p> <p>Have engaged with the newly formed Gower Ministerial Area Ecology Committee at their first meeting Jan 2024.</p>	UJ
Clyne Valley Country Park	<p>Signage installed at Blackpill and Killay Station – similar signage is planned at Dunvant, work being coordinated with Active Travel team.</p> <p>Heritage interpretation has been installed throughout the Park Feb/March 2024.</p> <p>Consultation of the initial stages of the draft management plan has been completed. The full document is ready to go for internal consultation, followed by stakeholder consultation towards the end of the year.</p> <p>Contractor has been appointed for official mountain bike trail refurbishment works; a kick-off meeting was undertaken on w/c 13 May, works will start in September 2024 and will be completed before March 2025.</p> <p>CVCP are continuing with their work in the Valley, including permissive path maintenance, creation of areas to relax (Brickworks) and guided walks.</p> <p>A “Levelling Up” grant (managed by External Funding Team) is funding work at Clyne Woods Copper &amp; Arsenic Works – a photogrammetry/Lidar survey will be carried out, but location makes further stabilisation works impractical.</p>	UJ MS
Gower Show 2024	Team is planning to attend as usual, with a partnership tent.	MS

Vile Landscape Project	A project to look at the Vile, its protection, the involvement of the local community and its future is to be started. The Gower National Landscape team will lead the project.	MS
National Landscapes Conference 2024	The National Landscapes Conference - Changing Landscapes: Changing Minds - takes place at Harper Adams University 3-5 July 2024. 2 staff and 2 members of the Advisory Group will be attending the annual conference.	MS
Grant Funding	NRW grant funding (2024-25) has been accepted, and WG funding is in place until 2024/25. Anticipate further discussions with funders during summer/autumn to explore future funding options.	MS

**Mike Scott**  
**14 June 2024**



## Report of the Gower AONB Officer

### Gower National Landscape Advisory Group – 24 June 2024

#### **Advisory Group – Future Priorities and Funding**

##### **Introduction**

The Gower AONB Management Plan 2017 sets out a 20-year vision for Gower, supported by 12 themes and 39 objectives. This management plan relates to all those involved in Gower and is not purely a Council document. Of these objectives, 13 are addressed by work carried out by the Gower Natural Landscapes Team, although there is some overlap with other objectives.

The management plan is adopted by Swansea Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), ensuring that it can be referred to in the planning process, particularly the Local Development Plan.

The plan is a statutory document and is to be reviewed every five years – the next review is due to start this year. This will be the first review since the declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergencies by Welsh Government and Swansea Council and this will require the plan to address these issues as a priority.

##### **Vision**

The Gower Management Plan 2006 included a 20-year vision for Gower, which has been retained in subsequent management plans.

*Gower is recognised by residents and visitors as a protected landscape of international importance where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and cultural value, and with high biological diversity. Its natural beauty will be sustained by the conservation and enhancement of its natural special qualities, whilst at the same time supporting a sustainable local economy and maintaining culturally rich communities and is reflected in the quality and scale of the built environment.*

##### **Priorities**

The Gower AONB Management Plan 2017 set out 12 themes as priorities:

- Awareness raising and understanding.
- Biodiversity.
- Geology.
- Landscape and seascape.
- Cultural heritage.

- Natural resources.
- Tranquillity.
- Recreational resources.
- Primary industries.
- Tourism.
- Transport.
- Utilities and communications.

Following the declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergencies, by both Welsh Government and Welsh Government, it is expected that addressing these two issues will be a priority for future management plans. This is reflected in the priorities of the main grant funders and is expected to become the main funding priority in future.

## Funding

Funding for the Gower National Landscape team comes from three main sources, each with their own priorities and themes.

Funder	Current Annual Funding	Priorities and Themes
Swansea Council	£88,600	Core funding for staff and match funding
Natural Resources Wales	£75,000	75% grant funding for projects addressing NRW Priority Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity enhancement and ecosystem resilience, including land, water, and woodland / forest management, including developing sustainable agricultural practice.</li> <li>• Climate change adaptation, mitigation, and carbon management, including coastal and marine issues.</li> <li>• Access, recreation and sustainable tourism for health and well-being.</li> <li>• Supporting Welsh language, culture, and the historic environment.</li> </ul>
Welsh Government – project funding	£200,000	100% project funding addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Recovery</li> <li>• Decarbonisation</li> <li>• Supporting Communities</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism</li> </ul>
Welsh Government – staff funding	£50,000	100% revenue funding (staff costs) addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity (including local Nature Recovery Action Plans)</li> <li>• Decarbonisation</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism</li> </ul>
Welsh Government – SDF grant scheme funding	£100,000	Sustainable Development Fund grant scheme, based on Future Generations priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a prosperous Wales,</li> <li>• a resilient Wales,</li> <li>• a healthier Wales,</li> <li>• a more equal Wales,</li> <li>• a Wales of cohesive communities,</li> <li>• a Wales of vibrant culture,</li> <li>• a globally responsible Wales</li> </ul>

The current grant offers all end in March 2025, and discussions with the funders are taking place over the summer and autumn, to explore how future funding can best be put in place. It is likely that the current priorities will continue – providing a focus on responding to climate and nature emergencies. While this will inevitably shape the work that the Gower National Landscape team do, there will remain significant flexibility in the detail of the projects.

### **Future Direction and Priorities**

Ahead of the discussions with NRW and Welsh Government, and to help shape the forthcoming management plan review, it would be helpful to have your comments on our future priorities.

In particular:

- Should the 20-year Vision be reviewed?
- Have we missed any issues which should be a priority?
- Are any of the priorities no longer priorities, or do they need rewording?
- The objectives will need to be reviewed – do you have comments on this?
- We would welcome comments on how we can include the activity of partner organisations in achieving the priorities in the management plan.

**Mike Scott**  
**17 June 2024**