

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP

HELD AT LLANRHIDIAN HOLIDAY PARK, LLANRHIDIAN, SWANSEA ON MONDAY 2 MARCH 2015 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor P Lloyd (Chair) presided

Councillor(s): **Councillor(s):** **Councillor(s):**

M C Child

K E Marsh

Representing organisations:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| R Button | - | Tourism Swansea Bay |
| S Heard | - | Gower Riding Club/Port Eynon Community Council |
| Community Cllr P R Hood-Williams | - | Upper Killay Community Council |
| G Howe | - | Gower Society |
| A Woodman | - | Forestry and Farming |
| Community Cllr R Cooper | - | Llanrhidian Higher Community Council |
| J Davies | - | Bay Trans |
| R Wright | - | NRW - Natural Resources Wales |

Officers:

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| C Lindley | - | Gower AONB Team Leader |
| M Scott | - | Gower AONB Officer |
| J Parkhouse | - | Democratic Services Officer |

ALSO PRESENT:

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|
| C Williams | - | Farmer |
| S Clayfield | - | Rosedale, Llanrhidian |
| A Richards | - | Sunny Marshes, Llanrhidian |
| J White | - | Friends of Swansea Horses |
| I E Button | - | Rhossili Community Council |
| A Cowley | - | Calibion Saw Mill |
| R Pritchard | - | Weobley Castle |
| E Cowley | - | Dunraven Farm, Burry Green |
| M Cowley | - | Dunraven Farm, Burry Green |
| R Edwards | - | Crofty |
| R Beynon | - | Pwll Y Froga Farm |

45. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J E C Harris, B Parry, K Flanders and H Lloyd.

46. **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:

G Howe (Gower Society) - Minute No. 52 - the proposal to install the new shared communication mast to increase cover in the Gower AONB - personal as a member of the Gower Society.

47. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The public asked the following questions:-

Community Councillor I Button, Rhossili Community Council asked questions in relation to the closing of Plantasia and repairs to the road on Cefn Bryn.

Ms J White, Friends of Swansea Horses asked a question in relation to animal welfare, particularly marsh ponies that are linked to residential areas in Swansea. She requested that animal welfare matters and marsh ponies be added to a future agenda of the Steering Group for discussion.

Mr R Beynon, Pwll Y Froga Farm asked the Vice Chair a question in relation to taking photographs of his property on behalf of the Gower Society or 'for his self gratification.' The Vice Chair was concerned about Mr Beynons implication and denied the allegation of taking photographs on the day referred to but did accept that he took aerial photographs for the Gower Society last in August 2014. The Chair stated that the question was inappropriate for the meeting.

AGREED that animal welfare matters, in particular marsh ponies be added to a future agenda of the Steering Group for discussion.

48. **MINUTES**

AGREED that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group Meeting held on 8 December 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

49. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Gower AONB - Affordable Housing

A Woodman requested a progress update regarding affordable housing. The Gower AONB Officer indicated that the draft letter would be circulated around the Group very shortly and apologised for the delay. He added that there was no deadline for submissions.

Broadband on Gower

R Button highlighted that there had been no progress to date in relation to improving the broadband service on Gower, particularly in Rhossili. Councillor K E Marsh added that he was attempting to contact a representative of BT in order to progress matters.

50. **GOWER AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN - UPDATE**

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented an update report on the Gower AONB Management Plan. It was outlined that the consultation period on the Draft Management Plan had ended on 19 December 2014. Responses were received from the following organisations:-

- Natural Resources Wales
- National Trust
- The Gower Society
- The Countryside Management System (CMS) Consortium
- Swansea Bay Sustainable Travel and Tourism Partnership (Bay Trans)
- Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust
- Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales
- South Wales Police

It was added that the Council had also conducted an integrated impact assessment on the Management Plan which had made a number of recommendations for the final version. Responses were also received from 10 private individuals/businesses. The Gower AONB Team Leader was preparing a consultation report in order to finalise the Management Plan. This would be issued to the AONB Steering Group for approval. The timetable for Council adoption of the final Management Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance was also provided.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

51. **GOWER AONB - ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUB-GROUP - PROGRESS UPDATE**

It was reported that the Alternative Energy Sub-Group had met on 7 January 2015 in order to review the range of issues, technologies, policy and guidance/policy adopted in other AONBs. It was added that the Sub-Group had asked the Gower AONB Team to prepare a position statement for the approval of the Steering Group. The statement would inform the Local Planning Authority, landowners, applicants and other interested parties regarding the development of new energy projects within, or likely to affect, the Gower AONB. The scope of the position statement would be broadened, to include other (non-renewable) energy technologies that could impact on the AONB. There was also some discussion on future energy provision and technologies. The position statement will be prepared for review by the Sub-Group and for subsequent Steering Group approval in due course.

The Group commented on the outline position statement contents and the progress of the Sub-Group. It was added that this was a good opportunity for the Steering Group to lead on this issue.

52. **THE PROPOSAL TO INSTALL THE NEW SHARED COMMUNICATION MAST TO INCREASE COVER IN THE GOWER AONB**

A report was presented in relation to the proposal to install the new shared communication mast to increase cover in the Gower AONB. It was broadly recognised by the Steering Group that the issue for consideration was improved coverage against the visual impact of the mast. It was added that even though the coverage could well be improved, the visual impacts within the AONB had to be discussed and the various other options available examined.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

53. **POSSIBLE DIALOGUE WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES REGARDING DECISIONS WHICH MAY AFFECT THE GOWER AONB**

A Woodman presented a report which discussed possible dialogue with other authorities regarding decisions which may affect the Gower AONB. It was outlined that two planning decisions, by neighbouring authorities, in recent years had and continued to attract criticism by people living on North Gower.

Both of these planning decisions affected North Gower by causing pollution and nuisance which spoils the natural beauty of the AONB.

The Machynys Golf Driving Range floodlights cause substantial light pollution along much of North Gower. Secondly, the motor racing facilities at Pembrey causes noticeable noise pollution over much of north Gower when Formula 1 teams are testing their cars at the facility.

Furthermore, he queried whether the officers of the Council should identify areas where decisions of other authorities would detrimentally affect objectives of the Gower AONB. He also queried whether the Steering Group should request that the Council open dialogue with identified authorities with the objective of avoiding/preventing issues and decisions that would detrimentally affect the objectives of the Gower AONB.

The Steering Group discussed the issues raised at length, particularly the light pollution caused by the golf course at Machynys. It was commented that the issue regarding light pollution had been pursued in a number of areas by local individuals, with no success.

It was highlighted that neighbouring authorities do have to account for the impact on the AONB under planning legislation and therefore must consider the impact of applications within their particular area. Organisations/authorities would therefore be expected to consult with neighbouring authorities. Matters could also be pursued with the relevant Pollution Control Section of the Authority in which the possible nuisance is located. It was added that there was also an opportunity to include such issues in the Gower AONB Management Plan.

AGREED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) officers investigate the conditions imposed upon the Machynys golf course when the planning consent for the driving range was granted.

54. **GOWER AONB RANGER REPORT - QUARTER 3**

The updated Gower AONB Ranger Report for Quarter 3, 2014/15 was provided for information. It was explained that unfortunately, due to the contract of the Gower AONB Ranger not being renewed at the end of March 2015, much of the work undertaken by the Ranger will not continue after this date.

The Steering Group discussed the implications of no Ranger presence being available on the AONB throughout the summer months. This would have further implications for the AONB going forward and officers would have to work closely with local Police in order to prevent future problems.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

55. **ASH DIEBACK DISEASE (CHALARA) - EXTRACTS FROM THE LATEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION FROM DEFRA TREE HEALTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Extracts from the latest available data from DEFRA Tree Health Management Plan was provided for information. The Steering Group discussed the possible implications for the Gower AONB. It was proposed that representatives from NRW Forestry Woodland Division be invited to a future meeting in order to provide an update on the issue.

AGREED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) representatives from NRW Woodland Division be invited to provide an update presentation at a future meeting of the Steering Group.

56. **LDP UPDATE**

In the absence of the Planning Policy and Environment Manager, the item was deferred.

57. **DESIGNED LANDSCAPES REVIEW**

The Gower AONB Team Leader reported that the Review Panel had reported back on Stage 1 of the Review to the Welsh Government Minister. Local authorities were expecting to see the results of the Review very shortly. However, there was currently an embargo on any details being released.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

58. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND PANEL UPDATE**

The Gower AONB Officer provided the Steering Group with a verbal update on the Sustainable Development Fund Panel. He outlined that the Panel had received £93,000 in funding from the Welsh Government this financial year which included £70,000 initially and an additional £23,000 received last month. All grant money available had been allocated by the Panel.

It was added that Welsh Government had indicated that the Panel would receive £60,000 funding for the next financial year and at present there was £10,000 uncommitted funds. He also provided examples of the wide range of projects that the Panel had supported.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

59. **ANNUAL FORUM DISCUSSIONS**

The Chair requested that Members of the Steering Group indicate their preferred time and day for meetings for the next Municipal Year. He added that the next meeting would be the Annual Forum where Steering Group Members would be elected.

AGREED that:

- (1) future meetings take place at 7.00 p.m. on Monday evenings;
- (2) the Annual Forum takes place in June 2015, as indicated in the Council Diary.

60. **MEMBER TRAINING - WALES AONB PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**

The Members who attended the Wales AONB Partnership Member Training reported that the training had been very worthwhile, very interesting and worth attending.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

61. **DRAFT MARINE CHARACTER AREAS**

The report was provided for information. The Steering Group queried the details of the Authority's response to the consultation which ended on 16 February 2015.

AGREED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;

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- (2) the response of the Authority to the consultation process be reported to the Steering Group.

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

CHAIR