

## **Minutes of a Public Meeting of the Mawnan NDP Steering Group held on 19 November 2018 at The Bowling Club, Mawnan Smith**

**Present:** Terry Damer (Chair); Dennis McQuillan (Sec); Peter Stokes (Treasurer), Cllrs Rex Sadler and Graham Marsden, Carrie Gilmore, Richard Martin, Mick Hartley, Georgena Morris, Melissa Mercer (Media).

The signed-in public attendance was 50; however, a head count indicated that a further 20 were also present – the hall was full. The audience included Cllr Moyle, chair of the Parish Council, Cllrs Bradley, Brooksbank and Nash.

**1. Apologies:** Cllr Jackie Whibley, Jon Holt.

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and was grateful for the exceptional turnout, undoubtedly the result of advertising the presentation by the Cornwall AONB team.

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last progress meeting on 17 September 2018 (arrangements for exposition) and the record of a further mini-meeting on 3 October 2018 (dissemination of Questionnaire results) had been distributed to the SG and via the NDP website. They were also e-mailed out to everyone on the electronic mail list. The minutes and record were accepted for signature by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising. However, given the attendance, the Chair summarised events since the last public meeting:

- A 40% returns rate on the Questionnaire and the importance of that to the NDP consultation process.
- Some 1300 written comments received which added flavour and colour to parish detail.
- Led to the analysis exposition on 21/22 September which 100 people attended.
- A mini-display at the Fun Run on 29 September.
- Circulation of the Q analysis on the website and via our contact list.

### **4. Presentation by Cornwall AONB**

The Chair welcomed Jane Davies, LLB (Development Officer) who represented the Cornwall Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONB). The slides used in her presentation are available on the NDP website at [www.mawnan.org](http://www.mawnan.org). The following summary of her talk was provided by Cllr Peter Bradley.

- There are 46 AONBs designated in the UK.

- Cornwall has 958 square Km of designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The current Cornwall AONB set-up was created in 1959, when 12 sections; which include 10 coastal sections of the South-West Coast Path (including Constantine & Mawnan Smith) and 2 landward areas of Bodmin Moor and the Camel Estuary; were designated by the UK Government, under the National Parks & Access to The Countryside Act 1949.
- This was reaffirmed in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.
- AONB Cornwall are an independent organisation but are based in Cornwall Council HQ; the infrastructure and IT are supported by the same Authority.
- Financially, 75% of the annual budget is funded is by the Department for Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and 25% by Cornwall Council.
- AONB Cornwall are a relatively small operation but is partnered with 21 other organisations (for example National Trust) giving them knowledge and expertise across a wide range of Countryside & Rural practitioners. As a result, they campaign for and routinely suggest that new developments should be required to fund and fit schemes to support and encourage bio-diversity, such as nest boxes, bee bricks, bat boxes and meadows.
- They produce a 5-year plan, which carries limited protection from planning and other developments (mainly large-scale schemes) and under Policy 23 of Cornwall Local Plan 2016, are considered as a consultee, but not a statutory consultee.
- Part of the small Team includes a Planning Officer, but due to the frequency of applications and pressure on their limited resources, regularly they miss and are unable to respond to contentious applications within their remit.
- AONB Cornwall on the whole have a good relationship with Cornwall Planning Officers, who frequently respond favourably to objections. However, due to missed opportunities (see above paragraph) many objectionable applications slip through and are passed, much to their regret.

- In April 2017, following fears that funding from Central Government would soon drastically reduce or even end altogether, AONB Cornwall registered as a Charitable Incorporated Charity (CIC) and recently added a fifth Trustee to oversee running of the Charity. The reason for forming a Charity is that in the future it will be easier to access grants and other income to hopefully become financially self-funding. However, Jane stressed that if Government funding ended, then AONB Cornwall would have to drastically downsize and would not be able to fund the current Team or operations.
- AONB have set up a number of practical environmental projects, the most recent being funding and practical assistance to a group wishing to preserve a wooded area between Perranarworthal and Mylor. The Environment Landscape Trust (ELF) enables professional woodmen to coppice the woods and educate/train volunteers in the skill set of wood craft. Participants receive payment in kind, with seasoned logs and wood prepared on site, by use of a solar dryer (poly-tunnel) purchased with the AONB grant, whilst helping to preserve and improve the woodland.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018, after 18 months of planning and development, AONB Cornwall launched an "App" available for Apple (iPhone/iPad) and Android platforms via respective "App Stores" which gives users an interactive experience when accessing AONB including information from their database (e.g. - Maps & detailed descriptive data).
- "Beauty Betrayed..." it has been noted nationwide, not just locally, that pressure to build more housing is pushing Councils and Planning Authorities to permit developments in otherwise "safe" areas. In the past 5 years building projects and housing developments have doubled on land adjacent to and even within some AONBs which has provoked anger and disgust in the local community.
- There is currently a review of AONB and National Parks underway at the request of DEFRA Secretary, Michael Gove, entitled the Glover Review.
- It has been suggested that Cornwall's AONB be dissolved and replaced with a National Park, which would strengthen their status, and empower them as a planning Authority. This could prevent planning decisions that despoil the countryside being pushed through by unsympathetic Planning Officers. However, recent political upheaval has cast doubt on whether the Glover Review will ever be implemented; even if it does find in Cornwall's favour.

## Responses to Questions & Comment

There was general surprise that the AONB, unlike National Parks, had no statutory power over planning applications. The European Union has strong environmental policies that are incorporated within UK policy and these would hopefully be retained whatever the Brexit outcome. In the face of increasing development pressure, it has been proposed that the whole of the Cornwall coastal fringe be a National Park. These and other matters would be addressed by the Glover Review and the Chair encouraged the audience to participate via the DEFRA website.

The rules regarding wind turbines were raised. Jane noted that the AONB team do comment on their appropriateness. There were restrictions via European Directives, however, she noted that applications had diminished in line with government funding.

The Chair commented on the evolution of the NDP housing process that showed that most residents were in favour of some housing development but were concerned that a large development had occurred within the AONB. Jane commented that no parish plan had been in place at the time of the application to develop Lowenna Fields and that the planning officer had to balance housing demand and other pressures. She reinforced the importance of an NDP which could be as permissive as the National Framework and Local Plans and could limit development sites within the parish. She also highlighted the role of a Local Landscape Character Assessment as a supporting tool for the AONB team. Cllr Marsden echoed the need for an NDP and urged the audience to support and engage with the process.

### **5. Any Other Business**

The Chair outlined the "Next Steps" in the NDP process. Objectives and policies were being drafted and plans were in hand to engage a planning consultant to help with the development of the draft plan. The public would be kept informed to ensure that no interest areas had been overlooked.

### **6. Next Meeting**

The next public meeting of the Steering Group would be held in the Bowling Club at 7.00 pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

The Chair thanked Jane for the excellent AONB presentation. The meeting was closed at 8.40 pm.

T Damer

Chair

Mawnan NDP

14 December 2018