

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

**Minutes of the meeting held on
March 16th 2011
Old Wesleyan Chapel, St Mary's**

Present:

Philip Hygate (Chair)
Johann Hicks (Vice Chair)
Craig Dryden
Zoe Julian
David Mawer
Richard McCarthy
Paul St Pierre
David Senior
Jules Webber
Maria Wilby
Trevor Kirk (AONB Officer)
Rebecca Steggles (AONB Assistant)

1. Apologies

Received from Chris Gregory (Duchy of Cornwall), Marian Bennett (Councillor for Bryher), Phil McMahon (English Heritage), Eleanor Breen (Council of the Isles of Scilly), Sangeeta McNair (Natural England), Andrew May (Land-Based sector and NFU representative), Matthew Rogers (Land-Based sector) and Steve Watt (IFCA-Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority).

2. JAC Membership

The Chair welcomed Maria Wilby to the JAC, and in addition commented on the opportunities available to work alongside the Green Team and the Five Islands School.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Trevor Kirk noted that on the final page under *Dates of AONB JAC Meetings in 2011*, that June date should be changed to read the 15th.

Minutes of the JAC meeting on December 8th 2010 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Any other items which the Chair considers urgent

None

6. Isles of Scilly AONB Business Plan 2011-2012

Trevor Kirk introduced the AONB Business Plan and noted the requirement from Defra, which states that all appropriate bodies, such as the JAC and host authority, must approve a draft before funds are released.

Members revised the AONB Business Plan on a page by page basis and noted the following:

- The Chair noted that on Page 4 under point 1.1.1 that the measurement given in km² should have a conversion to miles.
- Zoe Julian pointed out the section on page 10, point 2.3.5 *Scoping of a farmers/growers forum to promote and coordinate holistic land management in Scilly...* and asked how the AONB saw itself being involved in such a forum. Trevor Kirk noted that the AONB's role is to act as facilitator, working with farmers/growers and other organisations, bringing support and delivery for holistic land management in Scilly.
- Paul St Pierre noted the importance of the JAC and the AONB Unit in the development of the Seabird Recovery Project, and that future AONB support would be welcome. Trevor Kirk assured Paul St Pierre of the AONB's continued support for the Seabird Recovery Project.
- Johann Hicks noted on Page 9 under point 2.2.2.1, and highlighted the reference to changes within the planning system and wondered what the implications are for Scilly. Craig Dryden explained how the new Localism Bill may affect planning decisions locally and also noted the future uncertainties regarding the scrapping of many core strategies at government level.
- Jules Webber noted that on page 11, under section 2.4 *Consultation with Natural England and the Local Authority* that the Isles of Scilly AONB Business Plan is fit for purpose in obtaining a grant from Defra for 2011-2012. Jules noted that improvements should be made to the detail over time, making sure priorities for the next financial year are developed and delivered.
- Zoe Julian noted on page 13 under *Funding Partners* that due to a decrease in membership to Island Tourism the amount Island Tourism are able to contribute to the partnership maybe a little less.

- David Senior pointed out that his name is missing from the JAC Membership list on page 14.

Action

AONB Officer to make changes to the draft AONB Business Plan in accordance with JAC members' recommendations

Action

AONB Officer to consult with the funding partner, Island Tourism on the amount eligible towards the AONB Partnership

7. JAC sub-group on NAAONB Conference 2011

Minutes of the previous JAC Sub group NAAONB Conference meetings (31st January and 1st March 2011), were attached for members' attention. Trevor Kirk highlighted the key draft agenda items for the field trip visits to Scilly, scheduled for 6th July 2011. Trevor invited members to comment on the draft itinerary.

The Chair noted the networking opportunities at NAAONB Conference and encouraged JAC members to participate where possible.

The group had no further comments.

8. JAC Sub-Group on Waymarking and Signposting

The minutes from the previous JAC Sub group meeting for Waymarking and Signposting (31st January 2011) were attached for members' attention. Trevor Kirk informed JAC of the sub-group's decision to suspend its activities until Blue Sail had released the *Future of Tourism in Scilly*.

9. Planning Consultative Panel

Trevor Kirk briefed members on the challenges PCP faces due to the recent loss of two members from the panel. Trevor reminded JAC of PCP protocol, which states that in order to reach a quorum; three members are to be present at each meeting. Trevor noted that in the last JAC meeting (December 8th 2010), that Matthew Rogers and Andrew May were identified as the only two JAC members that were able to join PCP (all other members are routinely involved in the planning process). Trevor informed JAC that Matthew Rogers has since declined the offer and Andrew May requires more information on the PCP members' role before coming to a decision.

Trevor noted the complex planning issues addressed by PCP and informed JAC that bespoke training could be offered to members who wish to join and for those that currently sit on PCP.

Craig Dryden suggested that training that could be offered through the Planning Department for the Council of Isles of Scilly and Cornwall Council. Craig also noted the

difficulties and unique issues surrounding development in such a small community and agreed that bespoke training would sit well within PCP.

Jules Webber noted recent discussions with the Chief Planning Officer and the Isles of Scilly Bat Group on training for protected species within the planning system. Trevor Kirk similarly noted potential support from the South-West Protected Landscape Forum (SWPLF).

Maria Wilby expressed to JAC her wish to sit as a member of PCP if bespoke training could be offered to her.

The Chair noted the benefit of networking between AONBs, in order to share practice and burdens with regard to planning protocols.

Action

AONB Officer and Jules Webber to work together on delivering bespoke training for PCP members.

Action

Richard McCarthy to talk to Tresco Estate, on the possibilities of advocating a representative to PCP.

10. AONB Officers Report

Trevor Kirk noted the current SDF under-spend of £23,590. Trevor explained the circumstances of this under-spend, in particular applicants' refusal of grant-aid totaling c.£21,000. Trevor noted that work with the Local Action Group (LAG) team would improve the situation as LAG is a potential match-funder for SDF, unlocking a potential barrier for many applicants. Trevor invited member's comments in helping to address these issues.

Jules Webber noted that considerable work had been carried out in conjunction with the AONB Officer to resolve this issue, in particular looking into 'fast track' projects. Jules noted that for next year, 2011-2012 specific projects need to be targeted in advance with reserve projects in place to back up any that are withdrawn at a late stage.

11. Members Reports

David Senior commented on the Council of the Isles of Scilly's Climate Change Strategy and that it is nearing completion, due for full adoption by Council in May 2011. David also noted his new role within Technical Services, which will look in particular at coastal sea defence management for the Isles of Scilly. David hopes to bring news on his new role and plans for project delivery to the JAC.

Paul St Pierre updated the JAC on the Seabird Recovery Project and noted the final report is due for circulation imminently. Paul thanked the JAC for their support in getting

the report to this stage. Paul noted that the RSPB are to put forward applications for funding through LIFE (LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU) and Defra for this project. Paul noted that the various outcomes of this report need to be well communicated to the local community, especially to residents on St Agnes.

Paul informed the JAC of Jaclyn Pearson's role as WEX (Wildlife Explorers Club) Coordinator, working closely with the Council of the Isles of Scilly, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and the AONB Unit. Paul also noted the important work of Vickie Heaney in carrying out annual seabird surveys on the Islands.

Paul also informed the JAC that the Regional Officer for the RSPB is keen to visit Scilly and asked if he could attend the next JAC meeting, scheduled for July 15th. The Chair welcomed this visit.

Zoe Julian noted the flexibility and impressive work of the Blue Sail consultants in preparing the *Future of Tourism in Scilly*. Zoe also noted the high level of attendance at Blue Sail workshops. The report is currently being drafted for completion in May 2011.

Zoe informed JAC that Island Marketing is working hard advertising Scilly, both regionally and nationally.

Zoe updated JAC on the recent Island Tourism AGM. Walk Scilly is ready to launch on 2nd April 2011. Island Tourism is hoping to produce its own website, which is thought to help recruit new members. It was also noted that Juliet May has stepped down as Chair of Island Tourism, with Euan Roger and Sabina Schraudolph as the new Joint Chair. Zoe noted that Island Tourism is looking positively towards any recommended changes to the structure of tourism in accordance with *Future of Tourism in Scilly*.

Richard McCarthy informed members that the Duchy of Cornwall Tenants Association has been very active regarding the sub-letting of agricultural land in Scilly.

Richard also informed members of the Housing Strategy, which is being revised to include the Duchy working closely with the Council of the Isles of Scilly's Housing Officer.

Richard also noted the recent Elder Care Meeting at which Councillors agreed the existing Secondary School as an adequate building to house the elderly in Scilly. Richard made reference to similar work he has observed elsewhere in the UK, for example where partnerships have been formed between the NHS and Local Authority Housing Departments, which has provided a high-quality result.

Craig Dryden updated JAC on the work of the Economic Development Department and the Local Action Group team. Craig noted that Phase 1 of the Porthcressa Regeneration Scheme is close to securing planning permission, with a business plan being formed to

implement work on the bulb store and work/live units for autumn 2011. Craig also informed the JAC of the proposed development of the former Porthmellon Stores, to change the existing building into an innovation centre, which will hold 15 work units. Craig noted that the innovation centre will benefit from 2nd generation broadband, which will in turn open up new business markets and improve existing ones.

Craig updated JAC on the Duchy of Cornwall's project to improve the slipway at Porthloo, noting that these improvements will now enable larger vessels to make use of the slipway. Craig also noted work to the six work spaces on St Agnes, plus the refurbishment of St Agnes Island Community Hall, both projects being sought through Local Action Group (LAG) and Convergence Funding.

Craig updated JAC on strategies undergoing consultation:

- Climate Change Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Conservation Area Appraisal
- Historic Environment Research Framework

Maria Wilby noted the Green Team's current recycling project (plastic bottles to plastic sheets). Maria informed the JAC that the Green Team is working closely with St Mary's Hall Hotel to submit a proposal to the Local Action Group to fund a recycling unit at the Porthmellon Industrial Estate. Maria also informed JAC of other work in which the Green Team are involved, such as Community Orchard Tree Planting.

Maria noted the need to address local issues arising on the Islands to the Green Team, and is hoping that this can be achieved through her work with the JAC.

David Mawer provided JAC with an update on the current work of the Isles of Wildlife Trust in controlling rats on the Uninhabited Islands. David noted that all the uninhabited Islands should be rat free for this bird breeding season. David also mentioned the Wildlife Trust's Heathland meeting which is scheduled for 30th March 2011.

Jules Webber briefed JAC on the new memorandum has been developed between Natural England, the NAAONB and Defra to identify tri-partite roles, both locally and nationally. Jules noted that the existing agreement held between AONBs and Natural England is to be transferred to Defra on April 1st 2011, and that a new memorandum of agreement will need to be constituted between AONBs and Defra.

Jules noted the continued support from Defra for the SWPLF Officer's post, which Jules added needs to be tapped into more frequently by the Isles of Scilly AONB Partnership.

Jules informed JAC that Defra have agreed the 2010-2011 Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements, with five formal offers being made to tenants on the Isles of Scilly. These agreements secure revenue for the delivery of environmental projects, for example to Heathland Restoration and Management. Jules noted however, that Defra

are still to confirm the funding for 2011-2012 HLS agreements. Jules noted that Natural England is looking positively towards funding for wildlife enhancement projects in Scilly.

Sangeeta McNair submitted a written summary of Natural England's Marine Sector work.

- **Seagrass Mapping in Scilly** – This project was carried out by the Marine Biological Association (MBA) for Natural England and by Tim Allsop locally. The final report is currently being produced as a Natural England Commissioned Report (NECR) and a PDF will be hopefully be available by end March, or soon after.
- **Scilly Reefs** - are a feature of the Isles of Scilly European Marine Site (EMS) and as such Natural England are required to monitor in order to report on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS). Reef biotope includes - Kelp forest, subtidal faunal turf communities, subtidal rock and boulder communities, vertical rocks. 3 different surveys are being carried out this year:
 1. Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee carried out work on Scilly's reefs in July 2010, in conjunction with Isles of Scilly SFC. Further surveys are planned for spring 2011. Sangeeta will be working with CIFCA, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and the Isles of Scilly IFCA to plan the monitoring for the deep water reefs within the Isles of Scilly SAC boundary.
 2. Subtidal Diving Surveys – Planned for 4th-14th June 2011. NE working with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust to ensure best sites are chosen / historic and new. Working with Isles of Scilly IFCA to monitor sites e.g. use of new IFCA RIB.
 3. Intertidal survey planned for 26th September – 1st October 2011. Natural England are working with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust to ensure the best choice of sites. Intertidal reef sites below Mean Low Water (MLW) and low shore boulder communities.
- **Scilly Grey Seals** - Cornwall Seal Group and Exeter University were contracted by Natural England to carry out pup surveys for Grey Seals in Scilly 2010-2011. They carried out surveys from August-Dec and we should have the final report by end March 2011, which will then be published as part of the Natural England Commissioned Report series.
- **Scilly Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)** - There was a meeting of the Isles of Scilly MCZ group at the end of January 2011, where two sites were put forward as Control Zones, one for reef and one for seagrass, more discussions will

continue at the next meeting in April 2011, where Peter Ryder (Science Advisory Panel Chair) has been invited to attend (but is yet to confirm).

- **Isles of Scilly Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities (IFCA)** - The Isles of Scilly IFCA had its shadow meeting on 5th October 2010 and elected Councillor Chris Thomas as the new Chair. The next meeting was held at the end of January 2011 and Natural England has been working with the Isles of Scilly IFCA and the Maritime Officer to develop a joint work plan for 2011.

Jules informed JAC that Jim Smyllie (Natural England Executive Director, Delivering with Local Communities) wishes to attend the next JAC meeting as does the Marine Director (James Marsden). The Chair welcomed their involvement in the next JAC meeting.

Jules informed JAC of Peter Bowden's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in April 2011.

Action: AONB Office to draft a letter on behalf of the AONB Partnership to Peter Bowden.

Philip Hygate (Chair) briefed JAC on the new school build with particular reference to out-door learning experiences that will engage young people with their environment. The Chair requested that JAC members should, in tandem with the Green Team, visit the new school in September 2011.

The Chair reported on news from the NAAONB and that the Minister for the Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon is very receptive to AONBs as they fit well within the coalition governments 'Big Society' concept. The Chair also noted that the NAAONB is looking to reshape its function and support to AONBs.

The Chair noted the next JAC, scheduled for 15th June 2011, will be on an off-island. Trevor Kirk proposed St Martin's as this would allow the afternoon field session to include Tim Allsop (Local Diver and Chair of Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Trustees) and visit to Churchtown Farm (Local flower farm, which has recently entered into the HLS scheme). St Martin's is deemed an appropriate venue to discuss both terrestrial and maritime issues within the AONB.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11.50a.m.