

**Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)**

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
June 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 11.00 a.m.  
Island Hotel, Tresco**

<b>Present:</b>	Johann Hicks (Vice-Chair)	<b>JH</b>
	Marian Bennett	<b>MB</b>
	Eleanor Breen	<b>EB</b>
	Chris Gregory	<b>CG</b>
	Zoe Julian	<b>ZJ</b>
	Nick Lishman	<b>NL</b>
	David Mawer	<b>DM</b>
	Andrew May	<b>AM</b>
	Richard McCarthy	<b>RM</b>
	Phil McMahon	<b>PM</b>
	Sangeeta McNair	<b>SM</b>
	Matthew Rogers	<b>MR</b>
	Paul St Pierre	<b>PSP</b>
	Trevor Kirk (AONB Officer)	<b>TK</b>

**In Attendance:** Zenna Jenkins

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair opened the meeting at 11.10 a.m.

**1. Apologies**

Received from Philip Hygate(Chair), Robert Dorrien-Smith, Craig Dryden, Mike Gurr, Mike Nelhams, Julie Webber (Natural England represented by Sangeeta McNair) and Brice Wilby.

The chair welcomed the group and introduced Sangeeta McNair from Natural England. For the foreseeable future SM will rotate with Julie Webber in representing Natural England at JAC meetings.

**2. AONB Staffing and JAC Representation**

JAC noted that Kaydee Torbet (previously AONB Assistant) has recently been appointed to a position within the Economic Development team of the Council of the Isles of Scilly. JAC recorded its thanks to Kaydee and particularly noted her role in the development and design of the AONB Management Plan 2010-2014.

JAC was informed that Rebecca Steggles has been appointed AONB Assistant. Rebecca will join the AONB team on July 19<sup>th</sup> 2010.

The Chair reported that Amanda Martin has resigned her position as a Council representative on JAC.

The AONB Officer informed JAC that David Senior (Climate Change Coordinator for the Council of the Isles of Scilly) is attending the meeting as an observer. The Chair proposed that David Senior should be co-opted as a JAC member, a view that was echoed and supported by RM and NL.

**Resolution:** MB proposed and RM seconded David Senior's co-option to JAC. JAC approved the co-option.

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes of JAC meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

MB asked if the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust had accepted the offer of a display board in the Isles of Scilly Museum. DM confirmed that the offer has been accepted.

Andrew May stated that he would like to see the AONB Partnership Agreement and Memorandum of Agreement as discussed in item 5 in the previous JAC meeting. TK stated that the agreement and memorandum have already been signed off but that he can arrange for copies to be viewed.

PM noted that, in his view, hardcopy of the recently adopted AONB Management Plan 2010-2014 compares very favourably with other AONB management plans.

### **5. Planning Consultative Panel (PCP) Recommendations: Summary Reports**

The AONB Officer reminded JAC that PCP recommendations are a standing item on the JAC agenda, the purpose being to highlight the work of this important JAC sub-group. RM noted that presentation of PCP recommendations to JAC could potentially be enhanced but confirmed that, as a Council member, he believes that PCP recommendations are given appropriate consideration by the Planning Officers and are deemed important material considerations by the Planning and Development Committee.

## 6. Members' Reports

**Phil McMahon** reported that English Heritage has commented on the draft Isles of Scilly Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2). The AONB Officer confirmed that he is collaborating with Council Officers to develop a joint response, as well as feeding comments directly to the SMP2 consultation team.

PM noted the English Heritage initiative, *Places of Worship at Risk*. MB noted that, while no churches and chapels are immediately at risk in Scilly, congregations are very small on some off-islands, giving rise to concerns about the medium-/long-term plans for the continued use and maintenance of these important buildings.

JAC noted that, while the primary religious functions of places of worship should be supported and conserved, the identification of alternative appropriate uses might be appropriate should those primary functions cease.

In relation to Scheduled Monuments at Risk, CG asked if there has been a review of the 'at risk status' of Scilly's Scheduled Monuments. EB informed JAC that she is working with English Heritage, tenants in Scilly and other stakeholders to review the 'at risk status' of Scilly's Scheduled Monuments according to a schedule agreed with English Heritage. EB confirmed that an overview of Scheduled Monuments at Risk can be presented at a future JAC meeting.

EB also noted that conservation grazing in Scilly has done much to enhance access to and management of many archaeological sites, monuments and landscapes.

PM noted that the English Heritage publication, *Defending the Isles of Scilly*, should be published by autumn 2010.

**Eleanor Breen** informed JAC that interviews are being held on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 for the post of Historic Researcher on the Porthcressa Regeneration Project.

EB noted that important evidence of later prehistoric activity was recorded during recent development work for affordable housing on St Agnes. While the Chair expressed regret that important archaeological remains are now sealed beneath the development site, EB reminded JAC of the function of *Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment)* in the recording and conservation of England's historic environment, the principles of which national planning policy have been applied on St Agnes.

EB noted that the new school site on St Mary's has yielded little archaeology, with post-medieval field boundaries being the main recorded features. Furthermore, pre-development geophysical survey allowed the targeting of excavation in key areas, thereby streamlining the process of archaeological mitigation.

EB also informed JAC that English Heritage has recently updated the interpretation panels at all English Heritage guardianship sites in Scilly.

**David Mawer** noted the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust's ongoing work on conservation grazing, including attendance of a Grazing and Access Working Group chaired by the AONB Officer and attended by island stakeholders, including petitioners against Wildlife Trust conservation grazing. The group has registered some successes by identifying compromise solutions to the delivery of some elements of the Wildlife Trust's conservation grazing programme. Importantly, the group has also confirmed that it is not against the principle of conservation grazing; rather, it is the detail of its delivery that is the subject of discussion.

Other recent Wildlife Trust work includes bracken rolling and cutting, footpath maintenance, our local volunteer group and our Marine Project; the latter involving dive surveys, intertidal habitat monitoring and an education programme for schools.

CG endorsed the work of the AONB Unit in facilitating the Grazing and Access Working Group. RM echoed CG's sentiments, and recorded his view that the group should continue to take seriously any objections to conservation grazing. MB also supported the AONB Unit's work in mediating between interest groups in Scilly, and reminded JAC that the Grazing and Access Working Group has resolved to focus on the resolution of specific issues as they manifest themselves in specific locations in Scilly (indeed, site-specific work has already begun on the Garrison).

**Matthew Rogers** informed JAC that bulb lifting has started. MR also noted that a number of recent press articles have focused on Scilly's scented narcissi. MR is doing a considerable amount of work on tree management and offered to make a presentation to JAC on this important, though often overlooked, aspect of landscape management in Scilly. CG recorded his support and enthusiasm for MR's work on tree management and urged JAC to accept MR's offer.

**Action:** MR to be invited to address a future JAC meeting on tree management in Scilly.

**Zoe Julian** informed JAC that a meeting was recently held on St Martin's to solicit islanders' views on the introduction of cattle to the Churchtown Farm tenancy. While a small number of people oppose the introduction of cattle, a productive dialogue has been established and it is hoped that a proactive and evidence-based approach will help islanders (and visitors) to understand the relative merits and challenges associated with grazing, including its use as a conservation management tool.

ZJ noted that poor weather adversely affected Walk Scilly 2010 with several walks being cancelled. However, the sister-festival – Scilly Folk Festival – was well-attended and well-received. Walk Scilly was supported by the AONB Partnership through the

Sustainable Development Fund, while the Scilly Folk Festival was supported as an AONB championed project.

ZJ reported that the Island Tourism website is being enhanced and developed through Local Action Group (LAG) funding. The Tourist Information Centre kiosk has also opened on the quay.

Island Tourism is now linked to Penzance Chamber of Commerce; a relationship that will potentially offer much to the islands' tourism businesses.

ZJ reminded JAC that an Isles of Scilly Destination Management Strategy is being developed.

ZJ also noted that current staffing levels mean that the airport on St Mary's is closed at lunch time.

Island Tourism has written to the Chair of the Council of the Isles of Scilly raising objections to the recent Chief Officers' pay rise.

ZJ also informed JAC that Kate Sleep is stepping down as the Council's Tourism Officer.

**Richard McCarthy** highlighted the important role of the quayside Tourist Information Centre in welcoming and orientating new arrivals to Scilly, and especially those arriving by cruise ship (a burgeoning market in Scilly).

RM reported that the Duchy Tenants Association AGM is due to take place in July 2010.

**Sangeeta McNair** informed JAC that Natural England has received a lot of positive feedback on the Scilly options for Environmental Stewardship, with six applications pending.

The Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Steering Group is scheduled to meet on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2010. The management scheme is scheduled to be completed by February 2010. SM reminded JAC that the identification of candidate MCZ's in Scilly is a stakeholder-led process that is being managed through the *Finding Sanctuary* initiative. Feedback throughout the South-West English region covered by *Finding Sanctuary* suggests that the Scilly stakeholder-led process is a model of best practise.

A report on Seagrass monitoring in Scilly should be available by the next JAC meeting in September 2010. Natural England is also developing a Grey Seal pup survey to be carried out during summer 2010.

ZJ noted that the maps for the Seagrass survey were funded by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust.

**Chris Gregory** highlighted Environmental Stewardship Schemes as a real opportunity for land managers in Scilly, especially in light of the recently adopted Scilly options. The land management sector also needs to establish ways of adding value to products. Local Action Group funding may be one funding source for such innovative work.

**Paul St Pierre** noted that a workshop for the Scilly Seabird Recovery Project took place in March 2010, with the AONB Unit assisting the project team (RSPB, Natural England and Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust) to deliver the workshop. A contractor will be engaged to carry out a feasibility study on rat control, focusing initially on St Agnes and Gugh. Clare Lewis (AONB Unit's Environmental Awareness Coordinator) is the Scilly-based contact point for the project. JAC also discussed and approved community contacts for the project on the off-islands: RM on St Agnes, MB on Bryher, ZJ on St Martin's and Mike Nelhams on Tresco.

Vickie Heaney continues to monitor seabirds in Scilly and Jaclyn Pearson is working with Scilly's schoolchildren on bird studies.

Four Manx Shearwaters have been identified on Peninnis.

The University of Plymouth is studying Kittiwakes in Scilly, including some work with tracking devices. The RSPB has also undertaken Shag tracking and has shown that the south end of St Martin's is an important feeding area.

**Nick Lishman** reported that Island Marketing is leading on the Destination Management Strategy and is applying for Local Action Group funding to help deliver this important piece of work.

NL reminded JAC that renewable energy sources play an important role in securing sustainable and resilient communities, though a tension may exist in the location of visually prominent facilities within the AONB designation. Preliminary negotiations on a proposed small-scale solar farm on St Agnes are an important test-bed, especially in evaluating the relationships between environmental stewardship, sustainable energy generation and economic benefit (the latter through current Feed-in-Tariffs)

NL also reported that the Community orchard at Trenoweth – part-funded by an AONB SDF grant – is flourishing.

**Andrew May** reported that the flower industry has enjoyed a successful year and continues to deliver several benefits to Scilly, including employment and environmental stewardship.

Natural England recently held a briefing session for farm tenants on the new Scilly options for environmental stewardship. The session, held on St Mary's and delivered with the support of the AONB Unit, was well-attended and productive. However, there

are some outstanding issues, most notably on the obligation to cut hedges using a finger bar cutter. The Chair confirmed that this issue has been raised with Natural England and that it is hoped that a compromise solution can be achieved.

12.45pm Robert Dorrien-Smith joined the meeting

Drafting of the Capacity for Change in Farming report is making significant progress, though the date for final release has yet to be confirmed.

AM reminded JAC that a significant amount of topsoil, ram and granite has been excavated on the new school site and that plans for the re-use and/or disposal of this material should be examined by the AONB Partnership in light of the potential environmental impacts. CG noted that plans for re-use and disposal of this material would be carefully controlled through the planning process will be a controlled process, with PCP having an opportunity to comment on proposed plans.

AM noted an increase in bee activity in Scilly. NL confirmed that his colonies are doing well and that he is looking to move hives around the island.

**Marian Bennett** reported a reduction in the number of bats in Bryher Church. The next bat survey on Bryher is due to take place in July.

There is a serious problem with rats on Bryher which requires a focused approach.

MB reported that the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust is posting maps and notices on Bryher to inform residents and visitors about the movement of grazing stock.

MB reported that the gorse on Bryher was fantastic this year, especially on Samson Hill where conservation grazing is part of the land management programme.

The new affordable houses on Bryher are due for occupancy in autumn 2010. Also, a proposed site for a MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) has been identified adjacent to the waste collection site on Bryher.

MB noted that beach litter continues to be an issue in Scilly. JAC noted the work of the AONB Unit's Environmental Awareness Coordinator in enhancing public awareness of the issue and in physically addressing the problem through a programme of beach cleans.

MB reported that a full-time Air Traffic Control Officer has been appointed. This new appointment will enhance the cost-effectiveness and operational delivery of airport services.

On a general note, MB highlighted the symbiotic relationship between environmental stewardship and economic development and noted the Council's determination to maintain a balanced relationship between the two.

## **7. AONB Officer's Report**

TK reported progress in the development of an AONB Business Plan for 2010-2012. As production of an AONB Business Plan is a condition of Natural England core funding, the AONB Officer will be working with JAC members to develop a plan by the end of August 2010.

The AONB Unit has commissioned a scoping report on waymarking and signposting in Scilly. This project contributes to delivery of Action 41 in the AONB Delivery Plan 2010-2014.

The Grazing and Access Working Group continues to meet with the AONB Officer as Chair. The group is delivering some small-scale compromise solutions. The challenges that lie ahead include identification of robust evidence on which further consensus can be based e.g. visitor perceptions of conservation grazing and the historic role of grazing on Scilly's heathlands.

Action 20 of the AONB Delivery Plan 2010-2014 is to facilitate transfer of Scilly's farm tenancies to the next generation of agri-environment schemes. Therefore, the AONB Unit is supporting two initiatives:

- training an island resident to research and produce the Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) that lie at the heart of agri-environment applications
- research and publication of a guide to Scilly's rare arable plant species

TK informed JAC that the AONB Unit has carried out a significant amount of work to enhance Sustainable Development Fund administrative procedures. The AONB Unit has worked with the Council's Finance and Economic Development teams to review most aspects of SDF paperwork, including application forms, guidance to applicants, project assessment forms, claims and reporting forms, and project monitoring procedures. The revised administrative procedures will ensure that the AONB Unit, SDF project managers and the Council's Finance Department have a common understanding of auditing requirements and procurement procedures. Completion of this significant piece of work has delayed the launch of SDF 2010-2011 until July 2010.

The National Association of AONB (NAAONB) Annual Conference is being held in Hythe, Kent in July 2010. The Chair, Vice Chair and AONB Officer will be attending.

The Isles of Scilly AONB has offered to co-host the NAAONB Conference 2011 in partnership with Cornwall and Tamar Valley AONBs. The main conference venue will be on the mainland, with some study visits to Scilly. It is anticipated that conference organisation will require a significant investment of AONB staff time. However,

promotion of the AONB designation on a national stage will have considerable benefits for the AONB JAC and Scilly's community.

#### **8. A.O.B**

RM noted that Reverend David Easton's book on Non-Conformist Chapels in Scilly has been published.

RM also reported that children of the Five Islands School can use the Isles of Scilly Museum free of charge.

RM reiterated that Scilly's bee keepers require considerable quantities of sugar if bee keeping is to flourish on the islands. The AONB Unit was asked to look again at making grant-aid for this purpose.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 10.00am.

The chair closed the meeting at 1.15pm

#### **Afternoon Tour of the Tresco Estate**

JAC thanks Robert Dorrien-Smith and Mike Nelhams for leading a tour of Tresco Estate during the afternoon following the JAC meeting. The tour highlighted achievements, opportunities and challenges in the management of this part of the Isles of Scilly AONB.

Key issues addressed included:

- Sustainable waste management and recycling
- Renewable energy, especially in recent tourism-related developments
- Use of local materials, especially in recent tourism-related developments
- Coastline management
- Abbey Gardens: sustainable tourism at an internationally important garden