



Members of the Chilterns Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to an ordinary meeting of The Chilterns Conservation Board on

Tuesday 6th September 2022 at 10.00am

Bovingdon Green Village Hall, Frieth Road, Marlow SL7 2JQ

Online session open/coffee available from 9.45am.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declaration of interest in any of the agenda items
3. Notice of urgent business
4. Approve the minutes of the AGM and ordinary meeting held 14 June 2022
5. Matters arising
6. Public Questions
7. Chairman's update
8. CEO's update
9. Finance and Budget
10. Planning Committee
11. Governance - Policies
12. Boundary Review (Stephen Rudd, Team Manager, Thames Solent, Natural England)
13. EDI update (Annette Weiss, People and Society Officer)
14. Meeting dates 2023 to be confirmed (see below)
15. Any Urgent Business
16. Website update (Vicki Pearce, Communications Officer)
17. Beacons of the Past project update (Wendy Morrison, Project Manager)
18. Date of next Board meeting: Tuesday 6th December 2022. Location TBC

Next Planning Committee meeting: Thursday 13th October 2022. Village Centre Chinnor.

Next Executive Committee meeting: Tuesday 1st November 2022, Village Centre Chinnor

See over for proposed 2023 meeting dates

Proposed 2023 meeting dates:

Board meetings	Executive Committee	Planning Committee
14 th March 2023	14 th February 2023	11 th January 2023
13 th June 2023 plus AGM	9 th May 2023	12 th April 2023
12 th September 2023	11 th July 2023	19 th July 2023
12 th December 2023	14 th November 2023	11 th October 2023
<i>Location TBC</i>	<i>Location Chinnor</i>	<i>Location Chinnor</i>



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD
FOR THE CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

**Held at Edlesborough Memorial Hall, High Street, Edlesborough, Dunstable LU6
2HX on Tuesday 14th June 2022 at 10.05am.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr David Bartholomew
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Reena Ranger
Cllr Gareth Williams

Appointing Body

Oxfordshire County Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Buckinghamshire Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
Alison Doggett
Paul Mainds
John Nicholls
Elizabeth Wilson

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State- Chair
Secretary of State- Deputy-Chair
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr John Harfield
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Adrian Watney

Bedfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire
Hertfordshire

CCB Staff

Lynne Cordice
Deirdre Hansen
Graham Hurst

Senior Administration Officer
Clerk to the Board
Finance Officer (S151 Officer)

Other

Tom Beeston
Joseph Stewart

Chief Officer Chiltern Society

The S151 Officer welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

1. Election of Chairman

There had been one nomination for the post.

The Board RESOLVED that PAUL MAINDS be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

PAUL MAINDS took the CHAIR.

He thanked the members for electing him.

He thanked Cllrs Peter Martin, Robert Roche, and Phil Williams, who have been replaced by their Councils, for their contributions to the CCB.

He remarked that Alison Doggett will also be leaving the CCB after 9 years' service. He thanked her for her service.

New Board members, Cllr Gareth Williams, Buckinghamshire Council and Joe Stewart, Secretary of State appointee were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from *Cllr Andrea Baughan, Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Robert Carington, Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council, *Nick Graham, Monitoring Officer, *Cllr John Griffin, Oxfordshire Parish Councils, Cllr Carl Jackson, Buckinghamshire Council, *Cllr Steve Jarvis, North Hertfordshire District Council, Elaine King, CCB CEO, Geeta Ludhra, Secretary of State appointee, *John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee, *Cllr Sir Hector Sants, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils, *Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Council and Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee. (*Those * listened in on the meeting online*)

3. Election of Deputy Chairman

There had been one nomination for the post.

The Board RESOLVED that John Nicholls be elected Deputy Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

He thanked the members for electing him.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

5. Minutes of the meeting 24th April 2022

The minutes had been approved as true record and signed at the board meeting 7th September 2021. The Chairman noted that changes to the Code of Governance can only be made at an AGM. There are some suggested changes on the agenda of the ordinary meeting following this AGM. He suggested that an EGM may be required to approve the proposed changes.

6. Election of Members to the Executive Committee

There had been no volunteers to fill the two vacancies, the Chairman suggested to leave those appointments to the next Board meeting.

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Executive Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives
Paul Mains
John Nicholls

Local Authority Representatives
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Richard Newcombe

Parish Council Representatives
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sir Hector Sants

7. Election of members to the Planning Committee

There had been no volunteers to fill the vacancy, the Chairman suggested to leave the appointment to the next Board meeting.

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Planning Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives
Colin Courtney
John Nicholls
Elizabeth Wilson

Local Authority Representatives
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Reena Ranger

Parish Council Representatives
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Adrian Watkins

8. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting June 2023 TBC

The Chairman.....

Date.....



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE
CHILTERN'S AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

**Held at Edlesborough Memorial Hall, High Street, Edlesborough, Dunstable LU6
2HX on Tuesday 14th June 2022 at 10.25am.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr David Bartholomew
Cllr Lynn Lloyd
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Reena Ranger
Cllr Gareth Williams

Appointing Body

Oxfordshire County Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Buckinghamshire Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
Alison Doggett
Paul Mainds
John Nicholls
Elizabeth Wilson

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State- Chair
Secretary of State- Deputy-Chair
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr John Harfield
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Adrian Watney

Bedfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire
Hertfordshire

CCB Staff

Lynne Cordice
Deirdre Hansen
Graham Hurst

Senior Administration Officer
Clerk to the Board
Finance Officer (S151 Officer)

Other

Tom Beeston
Joseph Stewart

Chief Officer Chiltern Society

22/23.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from *Cllr Andrea Baughan, Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Robert Carington, Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Paul Duckett, Central Bedfordshire Council, *Nick Graham, Monitoring Officer, *Cllr John Griffin, Oxfordshire Parish Councils, Cllr Carl Jackson, Buckinghamshire Council, *Cllr

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Steve Jarvis, North Hertfordshire District Council, Elaine King, CCB CEO, Geeta Ludhra, Secretary of State appointee, *John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee, *Cllr Sir Hector Sants, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils, *Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Council and Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee. (*Those * listened in on the meeting online*)

22/23.2 Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interest in any agenda item was made

22/23.3 Notice of Urgent Business

None

22/23.4 Minutes of the Board Meeting 1st March 2022.

The minutes of the Board meeting 1st March 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman

22/23.5 Matters Arising

The Chairman has asked the CEO for a delivery plan for the Business Plan, she will report to the next Executive Committee meeting.

22/23.6 Chair's Update

The Chair reported on his activities since his last update March 2022 and highlighted the following:

1. He is pleased that we are back to face-to-face meetings with improved Board engagement and a planned visit to a FiPL project after the meeting
2. We need to explore better ways for the Board to engage with staff.
3. The CEO is working on improvements to the staff structure
4. Joe Stewart, our new Secretary of State Board Member, replacing Alison Doggett from 01/07/22, was welcomed to his first meeting.
5. There are no co-options to propose at this meeting.
6. The Natural England team looking at the Boundary Review spent three days in the Chilterns. The Conservation and Landscape Manager had organised a comprehensive tour of the Chilterns, which had given a broad view of the Chilterns and was well received. The Chairman had met them in Henley. Natural England is seeking to write a brief for a consultancy to do the next step in the work. The Boundary Review will take a considerable amount of staff time.
7. The Chairman attends advisory group meetings with Natural England, along with CCB's CEO, Planner and Conservation and Landscape Manager (At the subsequent MAG meeting, 20.6, Natural England were invited to attend the September board meeting to brief members.)
8. Mend the Gap. A resident's group has been working with our staff and the North Wessex Downs AONB. After a complaint that progress is too slow the Chair joined a meeting with two representatives of the local community and the CEO. It was an 'uncomfortable' meeting, but positive actions were proposed and agreed. The Chairman has asked the CEO to lead and take the Chair of the group to give a clearer focus on delivery. A grant scheme will be introduced. The Chairman will meet with the group again, it is important to maintain contact between the residents' group and the Board. The Chairman reported that the programme manager has resigned. It is acknowledged that short term employment contracts can cause disruption. The Chairman has made suggestions for future employee engagement.

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9. He reported a certain amount of frustration with the updating and making visible internal policies and procedures.
10. Equally there is still no progress on a 'shared space' to enable easy access to documents for board members.
11. The grant application to Arts Council England, referred to at the last meeting, by the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading has not been successful.
12. It is hoped that work on the 25-year Long Term Strategy document can begin during the next year and a plan is to be produced.
13. A brief review of our Communications strategy would be helpful, given recent discussions with the Comms team.
14. He is supporting the CEO in what are continuing to be challenging times.

Members commented on items in the Chairman's update and asked questions.

Questions were asked about timelines, completion dates, project management experience, financial risks, and risk assessments. There was some concern that the problems with "Mend the Gap" had not been highlighted sooner. The Chairman reported that the next Executive Committee meeting will review these matters and set out how to handle and report on such problems in future.

The Chief Officer of the Chilterns Society requested to comment, he pointed out that recruitment in the sector both of our organisations operate in is virtually impossible. He commended the CCB 'fantastic' staff team and stressed the teams experience should not be underestimated. The Chairman thanked him for these comments which are clearly well informed by experience.

22/23.7 Public Question Time.

No public present.

Agenda item 9. Finance and Budget was agreed to be moved up the agenda.

22/23.8 Finance and Budget

The Finance Officer had provided a comprehensive finance report on activities up to the end of the financial year 31st March 2022 and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2021-22

He presented a combined Profit and Loss Account together with a Balance Sheet for the financial year.

1. Overall, there was a combined surplus of income of £12,339.
2. Core income was higher than budgeted due to a £65,054 legacy, a Defra £35,992 "top-up" and £49,012 recharge to project.
3. Project income includes new projects: River Chess Smarter Water Catchment Project (NLHF), Farming in protected Landscapes (Defra), Chalkscapes (NHLF) and Green Recovery Challenge Fund (Defra/NHLF) totalling £619,412.
4. Core and Project expenditure are largely as budgeted, noting that at present the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project income is behind schedule, due to grant claims not yet submitted. The project will break even once the outstanding sum of £189,725 has been reimbursed.
5. The AGAR is required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. It is prepared under local government accounting principles which do not recognise deferred

income and therefore income is recognised when funds are received rather than earned.

6. The external auditors report can only be completed once the sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR have been approved by the Board.
7. The internal auditors have only recently commenced their audit.
8. The completed AGAR will be published on the CCB website.

Members asked questions on publication of salary banding, we are not obliged to publish senior staff salaries. Do we have an investment strategy? It was confirmed that we do, and the Finance Officer explained the strategy. He was asked if the CCB had considered lending to Local Authorities, he will investigate this.

1. The Board APPROVED the CCB's Annual Accounts for 31 March 2022.

2. The Board APPROVED and SIGNED the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 and the Accounting Statements 2021/22, both part of the AGAR 2021/22.

22/23.9 Chief Executive's Update

In the CEO's absence the Chairman went through her written report.

The Members used the opportunity to ask questions. The CEO was asked to look at a Deer Policy for the Chilterns. Members discussed.

A comment was made that not enough farmers are involved with the FiPL programme. The CEO will be asked to confirm at the September Board meeting the measures currently underway to increase engagement.

Concern was expressed of the continuing pressure on Chalk Streams. While the team have expanded in recent months, they lack the capacity to look out for all the Chilterns Chalk Streams.

The question was asked "What had started the Red Kites Campaign"? This will be put to the CEO/Team.

It was noted that planning application at Tralee Farm, Buckinghamshire for 101 houses, which has a non-determination appeal pending should be refused as it is not compliant with the Local Plan.

1. The Board NOTED the report.

22/23.10 Income Generation

Covered by the CEO's update.

22/23.11 Governance Review

The Board had been presented with the report from the Task and Finish Group on the role and operations of the proposed new governance structure, on the Task and Finish Group's future work and on the operations of the Planning Committee.

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At the March Board meeting a change in Board structure had been approved, comprising the existing Board supported and supplemented by an Advisory Group drawn from stakeholders.

What the Advisory Group is intended to achieve still needs to be defined, as does how it will operate, its size and form. The T&F group recommends that full consideration must await the Natural England Boundary Review and Defra's exploring governance arrangements leading from the Landscapes Review. Our work on governance is welcomed by Defra and is influencing their thinking and the outcome of their work. The Deputy Chairman was encouraged to develop the Defra contacts.

Suggested new structure:

1. Board Advisory Group- BAG:
To advise the Board on strategic policy and to provide a forum to enable stakeholders with a role in implementing those strategic policies to report and monitor progress. Size and membership to be considered once the outcome of the Defra and Natural England reviews is known Meeting once a year suggested, supplemented by topic groups. And the required additional resources will need to be found.
2. Board:
To continue much as it operates now, setting the strategic direction of the CCB taking advice of the BAG into consideration, but not be bound by it. It is to be considered whether any of its roles in implementing such strategy can be delegated to the Executive Committee.
3. Executive Committee:
To provide such input as is appropriate into the operations of the CCB to deliver the strategic direction set by the Board.
We are currently bound by our Statutory Instrument, but Defra has indicated that it is open to discussing a more relaxed approach and the CCB will engage with Defra to achieve this.
4. Types of decisions handled by each tier were illustrated.
5. It was noted that the Management Plan process may change due to a review by Natural England.
6. Major decisions: those known about at the time of the preparation of the Business Plan should be included and agreed in the Business Plan. Ad hoc opportunities arising would remain delegated to the CEO, with decisions being guided by predetermined criteria as set in the Business Plan.
7. Planning Committee:
The current Code of Governance (agreed Sept 2021) contains some inconsistencies, and the delegations need to be clarified.
A Real Time system allowing members to contribute to planning applications being considered for comment by the CCB has been agreed. The system to be developed in-house, which will take considerable amounts of officer time. The scope and functions to evolve incrementally with experience.

Now a basic structure has been agreed it is proposed to temporary pause the work of the T&F group until Defra/Natural England reviews have concluded. It is anticipated once these reviews have concluded that a great deal of work will have to be done.

Two exceptions to the pause of work of the T&F group are proposed:

1. The T&F group to prepare a summary paper for information for the Board, setting out the conclusions and decisions of all the stages of the governance review so far.

2. The changes to the Planning Committee's governance can proceed by the Planning Committee and the T&F group, but to be held as draft pending the Defra/Natural England reviews.

The T&F group were thanked for their contributions.

1. **The Board AGREED that the work of the T&F group to date be deployed in discussions with Defra and Natural England on their wider function and governance reviews, but that further work be paused pending the outcome of those reviews, when the work will be resumed.**
2. **The Board AGREED that a brief information report be circulated setting out the conclusions and decisions on future governance reached thus far.**
3. **The Board AGREED that the T&F group and the Planning Committee continue detailed work on evolving that Committee's role, up to and including draft revised governance arrangements.**

22/23.12 Landscape Review

It was decided to move this item to the next meeting.

22/23.13 EDI Group report

The Chairman reported that the group is chaired by Board member Geeta Ludhra. The People and Society Officer (Annette Venters) has joined the group as staff member. The group have met. The Chairman read a brief report from Geeta Ludhra who was unable to attend the meeting. The need for a broad approach to the issues was emphasised. A further paper will be prepared by the 'People and Society Officer' and circulated to the Board before the next meeting.

Members discussed.

It was agreed to keep this item on each agenda.

1. **The Board NOTED the report.**

22/23.14 Meeting dates 2022-23

2022-23 meeting dates to be finalised at the September meeting.

22/23.48 Urgent business

- a. This meeting is Alison Doggett's last meeting as Board member appointed by the Secretary of State. The Chairman thanked her for her nine years of valuable service and contributions to the CCB.
Alison gave a brief history on the establishment of the CCB's first big Lottery funded project "Beacons of the Past Hillforts". Alison had worked tirelessly with Shirley Judges, another previous Board member, writing and putting this bid together with help from the Countryside Officer. The bid was successful in 2016, and the project is coming to its end this year.
She has seen enormous developments in the CCB during her nine years.

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She has enjoyed her time at the CCB and shall miss it. She is publishing an updated version of her Chilterns Book.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and thanked the staff for all their work.

Future meetings

<u>Full Board</u>	6 September 2022 6 December 2022
<u>Executive Committee</u>	19 July 2022 1 November 2022
<u>Planning Committee</u>	12 July 2022 11 October 2022

The Chairman.....

Date.....

The Chairman introduced Gareth Clay, Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, who gave a short introduction to the restoration and expansion programme supported by FiPL of an orchard at Ivinghoe Aston Farm. He will be leading the members on a visit to the farm.

Item 8 **Chief Executive's update (September 2022)**

Author: **Elaine King, CEO**

Purpose of Report: **To update Board members on some of the staff team's work since the Board last met on 14 June 2022**

Background:

The CCB's staff team continues to deliver a huge amount of work across a broad range of areas. This update describes some of the work carried out since the last Board meeting on 14 June, broadly set out to follow the three strategic priorities in the CCB's 2022/23 Business Plan.

Recommendations: **To note the report and provide feedback.**

Item 8 **Chief Executive's update (September 2022)****Author:** **Elaine King, CEO****Purpose of Report:** **To update Board members on some of the staff team's work since the Board last met on 14 June 2022.****Background:**

The CCB's staff team continues to deliver a huge amount of work across a broad range of areas. This update describes some of the work carried out since the last Board meeting on 14 June, broadly set out to follow the three strategic priorities set out in the CCB's 2022/23 Business Plan.

1. Organising for the future

- The **administration team** continues to be extremely busy providing a diverse range of services to support the staff team – both core staff and those working on projects.
- A key element of the work includes providing **financial and administrative support** to project teams, such as the Farming in Protected Landscape programme.
- Overdue claims to the **National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)** for two of our projects are being progressed: **Chalk, Cherries and Chairs** has submitted its claim to September 2021, with focus now on the claim for October 2021 to March 2022.
- The **Chalkscapes** project claim to the end of July 2022 will be submitted by 9 September and claims to the **HS2 Additional Projects** fund are also being progressed.
- The team has identified improvements that are needed to **finance systems and processes** to avoid future delays in the submission of funding claims. Changes are being made, with further improvements planned.
- Exploring **file sharing options** for the staff team, Board members and Committees remains a priority and this work is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.
- **Hybrid working arrangements** continue though, from August, staff are specifically asked to work two days in the office if they are full time, with a view to supporting collaborative working with colleagues, while recognising the value of time working at home.
- The **return to the office** has been supported by a review of all workstations to ensure that they are fully equipped and can be used efficiently, and an updated **booking system** for desks and meeting rooms.
- **Governance Review:** CCB staff have continued to support and advise the CCB's internal governance review task and finish group, especially on **reforming the Planning Committee** and worked to ensure that our own plans and ideas make a positive contribution to national discussions on AONB and National Park governance arrangements.
- Matt and Elaine have continued to liaise with **Defra and Natural England** to ensure strategic alignment between Defra's implementation of the Government's response to the **Landscapes Review**, and Natural England's **Designations Programme**. See section 3. 'Leadership and Influence' for more detail on this work.
- John Nicholls has stepped back from chairing the **Planning Committee** to spend more time with his Governance Task and Finish Group and being vice-chair of the Board. Sue Rowland is now Committee Chair and chaired her first meeting in July. Elizabeth Wilson continues in her role as vice-chair
- Work to develop an **Income Generation Strategy** has slowed during this period, though the CEO will be progressing the work with colleagues over the coming weeks. This includes a discussion on **Green Finance** with other AONB Lead Officers at the national conference in September. Pending work includes informing local authorities of the uplift to our core grant.

- The CEO has continued to liaise with Defra over securing an **improved grant for AONBs**. In addition to the 15% uplift announced in April 2022, we hope for more good news in the next couple of months.
- The **Business Plan** has led to the development of an **HR strategy**, which will ensure that our organisational structure supports optimum delivery of the Business Plan and the Management Plan. As part of this work, and as discussed with the Board previously, additional senior level capacity will be created in the staff team and a job advertisement is expected to go live in the next two weeks.
- A draft **Delivery Plan** for the Business Plan is in development. Progress has been slower than intended, in large part due to the senior team's volume of work and some immediate priorities needing to be addressed.
- The **CCB's policies** are also being reviewed and finalised, along with increasing their visibility to staff, Board members and the wider public. See agenda item 11 for more detail.
- **Staff training and development** continues to be a priority area. With an expanding team, more staff have line-management responsibilities. Later this year we will therefore provide **management and leadership training for staff**, guided by the CCB's HR policies, once they are finalised.
- The CCB team is regularly encouraged to explore training and development opportunities and a number of staff have recently carried out in person and online training on a range of areas including **regenerative farming, digital marketing and understanding local government**, in addition to **coaching and mentoring**.
- Nick Marriner also represented the CCB and the wider network of AONBs at an AONB/National Park **Agriculture and Rural Development Group** meeting in Dartmoor, in June.
- All members of the team have been encouraged to attend the **National Association for AONB's (NAAONB) annual conference** in September – the first in-person since 2019.
- Held over three days in Lancaster, this event is an opportunity to **connect with other AONB staff**, hear from a range of **speakers** and join **site visits** to see the work of local AONBs.
- **Seven staff and two Board members** are attending, including **Geeta Ludhra** – who will be joined by other keynote speakers to set the scene – and **Elaine King**, who will be chairing a **National Landscapes Question Time** with a panel including Tony Juniper (Chair at Natural England) and Sion McGeever (Deputy Director at Defra).
- **Equality, inclusion and diversity** is a key priority for the CCB. The **EDI Task and Finish group**, chaired by Geeta Ludhra, has met a number of times and a strategy and work plan is being developed in collaboration with the staff team. Annette Weiss will be updating further at the meeting. Key to our approach is to build on existing work being carried out across the team and to identify gaps and opportunities.
- The CCB's growth in recent years means that some **systems and infrastructure need improving** to ensure the team can work effectively. In line with the Business Plan, we are working to improve a number of areas including **ICT systems, financial systems, and internal communications**.
- We still need to develop a strategic **volunteering strategy** for the CCB. In the meantime volunteering continues to be a key element of our projects, for example the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project's [Chilterns Champions](#) initiative and the Beacons of the Past LiDAR portal which to date has involved over 8,000 volunteers.
- The **CCB's Clerk, Deidre Hansen**, continues to provide advice and support to the CEO, Chair, and the Board on a range of areas including governance and procedures. Key areas of work have included liaising with local authorities regarding Board appointments, providing new board members with documentation on Board membership, updating the

CCB's Contract Standing Orders to comply with current legislation and liaising with the Monitoring Officer (including a meeting later this month).

2. Delivering existing commitments and priorities

- **Increasing staff capacity: Fran Crowther**, the CCB's new **Project Support Officer**, joined us at the end of March and continues to provide valuable support to a number of the CCB's projects, including Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, Chilterns Chalk Streams Project, Green Recovery Challenge Fund project 'Chalk Streams and Wetland Meadows' and Mend the Gap.
- The CCB also welcomed **Josh Biddle** in August, as our new **Farming Engagement Officer** working with Neil, Allen and the team delivering the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment Plan.
- After 16 years at the CCB, **Donna Webb, our Administration Assistant**, has left to pursue a role as a teaching assistant. Donna was part time (22.5 hrs/week) though the CCB will benefit from additional admin capacity and the post is therefore being [advertised](#) as a full time role. The closing date is 30 September.
- Further to previous discussions with Board members, **a new senior position** has been created to help address 'growing pains' associated with the **CCB's increasing size and ambition**, and to ensure we **maximise opportunities** to deliver our work most effectively. The **job description** is being finalised and an advert will go live in the next two weeks.
- **Mend the Gap** - the CCB's joint programme with the North Wessex Downs - is advertising for a new Programme Manager. The closing date is 10 October.

2.1.1 *Connecting people to landscape, nature, heritage and local producers (Annette)*

- The spring **Chilterns Walking Festival** in May was well received, with 60 events on offer attracting 595 participants on bookable walks. 52% of respondents visited at least one or more local businesses.
- Several **new walks and experiences** were on offer involving new partners [see here](#). The **diversity** of participants has increased but is still low (9% from BMI/other ethnic groups) - an area we're focusing on improving as part of our wider EDI work.
- A **workshop for walk leaders** was convened on 16 August, attracting 15 of our key walk leaders/partners. We reviewed the festivals and were able to discuss and propose new approaches, opportunities and improvements for the future.
- The **Autumn festival** takes place **15-30 October**. The programme will be released soon.
- We have continued our work connecting and collaborating with more diverse groups, piloting joint events and promoting **countryside for all** – see Outstanding Chilterns magazine article [Outdoors for All](#) (p12-13).
- We supported an event with **Dadima's Walks and Natural England** to [celebrate South Asian Heritage Month](#) in July and have lots more activities planned in the coming months.
- The signage audits for the **Chilterns Cycleway** are complete and we are now seeking funding for the production and installation phase. We are in the process of applying to the **Buckinghamshire Community Boards** for funding.
- Work to revitalise the **Chess Valley Walk** is progressing well, with new signage due to be installed mid-September and interpretation boards in October. Updated **walk leaflets** and new **Chess Valley visitor guides** are being produced in time for promotional events in October, including an event at Marylebone station.

2.1.2 *Supporting the local economy and sustainable tourism (Annette)*

- The **Open for Business** project has been helping businesses to develop and market new bookable Chilterns countryside experiences. See Outstanding Chilterns magazine article

[Countryside Experiences](#) p16-17. Several new businesses have been supported with **1:1 business support and marketing advice**, including electric bike tours, [see here](#).

- We are promoting these experiences through **Muddy Stilettos**, with blogs on [family friendly experiences](#) and [days out in the Chilterns](#) and further activity planned with **Chiltern Railways**.
- A well-attended meeting for **deer stalkers** was held on 1 August to introduce ideas to support deer management. The Chilterns has a growing fallow deer population - estimated between 2,500 and 3,000 between Henley and the M40 alone. If the **impacts on crops, forestry and wildlife habitats**, not forgetting road traffic accidents, are to be addressed, all aspects – from deer in field to venison on the fork – need to be considered.

2.2 Nature recovery - farmer/ land manager engagement and support (Kath, Nick, Harriet, Neil)

- One of the Key Priorities in the CCB's Business Plan is to **reverse declines in nature, tackle climate change and support thriving farm businesses**.
- Work is underway to explore the potential for a collaborative approach to **landowner engagement** and support across the Chilterns. This forms part of the wider strategy to scale up successful existing models of **farmer engagement advice and support** (eg as being delivered by the [Central Chilterns Farmer Cluster](#)).
- Invitations to complete an initial **survey** have been sent to over 20 partner organisations, deadline 16th September. These will be followed up with **1-1 interviews and workshops**.
- A **new Farmer Cluster** is at early stages of development in the north Chilterns, with seed funding via the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and the Chalkscapes project development budget to support this early development work. The work is being led by a local farmer, with support from Nick Marriner.
- With Josh, the new Farming Engagement Officer in place, similar work is also underway to explore the scope for rolling out this approach in the **R. Chess Catchment**.
- Together with the support provided by Neil Jackson to the **Christmas Common Cluster** facilitator, Alison Cross, this means we are moving towards four separate farmer clusters across the AONB, each with different funding and support models.
- This creates opportunities to look at **impact and effectiveness** of the different models. Work is underway to commission an evaluation assessment of the Central Chilterns Farmer Cluster, to inform long term planning for how to significantly scale up and resource this work. This is likely to involve peer review workshops, and we invite any Board Member with an interest in this work to speak to Kath or Nick.

2.3 Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (funded by Defra) (Gareth, Lynne, Kath)

- The following update relates to Strategic Priority 2 in the Business Plan (*delivering existing work streams*). However, while FiPL is a specific workstream, it has also contributed or linked to the following priorities and activities:
 - Supporting local businesses and the local economy
 - Developing farmer clusters
 - Contributing to projects, including Chalk, Cherries & Chairs (18 projects!), Mend the Gap, Associated Projects (HS2) and Chalkscapes.
- We have **spent or approved £316,854** of our Year 2 project allocation of £474,545. In addition, discussions likely to lead to an application amount to approximately £89,500, leaving **£68,190 unallocated** – there is therefore plenty of scope for additional projects this financial year.
- Please note that, as well as farmers, **County, Unitary, District and Parish Councils are eligible to apply for funding!**
- **Projects approved for funding** since the last board report are:

- Manor House Farm Partnership: restoration and investigation of Bledlow Cross scheduled monument, along with creation of a permissive footpath heritage trail and interpretation of the site, plus habitat enhancement and community involvement.
- Crowmarsh Battle Farms Ltd: Supporting and showcasing hedge-laying with the National Hedgelaying championships.
- Bolt Hole Farm, Chartridge: Improved public access, new and enhanced hedgerow habitat, and fencing for sheep grazing.
- Coppid Farming Enterprises LLP: Fencing and water supply to enable reintroduction of cattle to enhance management for biodiversity of 40 ha of permanent pasture.
- Collings Hangar Farm: Additional educational access school visits.
- Wild Venison & Game Ltd: Enabling deer management via increased temporary storage capacity for culled animals and greater processing capacity.
- Chilterns Conservation Board: Hedgerow project phase 2 (Central Chilterns farm cluster). CCB will be working with seven of the 18 cluster farmers on a landscape scale hedgerow project that will create and/or restore 8,085m of hedgerow. All but one of these are farms that did not participate in Phase 1 of the hedgerow project. The project will comprise planting 2,740m new hedgerow, gapping up 2,493m, coppicing 2,609m, laying 243m, and 5,631m of fencing.
- Chilterns Conservation Board: Start up activities within the new north Chilterns farm cluster group including sessions on ponds, hedges, soil health and surveys to provide baseline information on overwintering birds.
- Nigel Adams Countryside Management: Purchase of specialist equipment for managing small parcels of species-rich grassland where access by large contracting machinery is not possible.
- **Challenges** include July and August being slightly quieter in terms of enquiries (possibly due to harvesting activities and holidays) but we will be attending three or four **ploughing matches** in September/October to promote the scheme in person with farmers and land managers.
- We are also liaising with **local MPs** that have expressed an interest to Defra in learning more about FiPL projects funded in their constituencies.
- **Cash flow and inflation** continue to be a concern for some projects. We can pay the applicants on an interim basis, to an extent, but payments should only be made to applicants where work has been completed meaning, for example, that we cannot make payments when only materials have been purchased by the applicant.
- The **very dry conditions** have impacted some planting and added to the general difficulties faced by farmers.
- More information on the programme in the Chilterns AONB, **how to apply and a list of projects approved** in year 1 is [here](#)

2.4 Chilterns Chalk Streams Project (Allen, Ceri, Kate, Steph, Fran, Josh)

- The year 2 action plan and budget for the Thames Water-funded SWC pilot was confirmed in March. CCB will be hosting three new posts: a **Chess Valley Farming Officer, Citizen Science Coordinator and Nature Recovery Officer** and will be managing a £50,000 catchment fund, which is available to stakeholders to support work which delivers improvements to the condition of the catchment.
- **Staffing:** We are pleased to welcome **Josh Biddle** as the new **Farm Engagement Officer** for the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment who joined the CCB on 17 August. Josh is keen to meet and work with farmers in the Chess Catchment to identify ways of reducing sedimentation of the river and improve water quality

- Interviews have taken place for the **SWC Community Engagement Officer** (this role will be hosted by Chiltern Society) and for the new **Citizen Science Coordinator**.
- Two staff employed by Chiltern Society to deliver the **Chalk Streams and Wetland Meadow Project (Green Recover Challenge Fund)** will be retained and transferred to the CCB in early October - **Laura Silverstone (Education and Engagement Officer)** and **Adrian Porter (Rivers Officer)**. This meets the original intentions of the GRCF – to build capacity and jobs in the sector.
- **Steph Horn, Programme Coordinator** for the Chess SWC project, started in post on 7 March. Steph's role is to coordinate the delivery of the River Chess catchment plan, working with partners to ensure prompt and effectively delivery of milestones and encouraging greater awareness of the initiative.
- **Citizen science** more than 40 volunteers have been trained in one or more techniques this year including completion of modular river surveys (MoRPH), use of the MudSpotter app (an app which enables users to map sources of pollution into rivers) and use of SMartRivers (a methodology to identify pollution stressors and their impact in aquatic invertebrate communities)
- **Habitat assessments** using the MoRPH method have been completed at the planned restoration site at Restore Hope Latimer, and assessments are underway at a newly fenced section of the river Chess. These assessments provide a baseline allowing impacts of interventions to be assessed.
- **Research** – two new **water quality sensors**, have been placed in the river Chess and are recording real time data. New research work has begun on suspended sediments – quantifying movement of sediment through the Chess.
- **Universities** - the project has **hosted Masters students** who are studying water quality on the R. Chess. We are also collaborating with **Nottingham University** on a PhD project examining the impact of phosphate on invertebrates in the river Chess. We are partners in a **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)** bid, led by **Lancaster University** on water quality changes arising from climate change.
- **A State of the Chess [report](#)** was published in March. The report establishes the baseline condition of the river and its catchment and will be used as the basis for reporting on progress with the catchment plan over the life of the pilot programme.
- **Practical delivery** – the first practical project to **improve wildlife corridors** has been completed - 600m of fencing has been installed to protect banks from erosion and allow marginal vegetation to develop, providing habitat for wildlife.
- **Local farmer** with riparian grazing rights, Scott Horton says *“The new fencing along the river Chess has already made a massive difference. Not only has it created a fabulous green corridor for the movement of wildlife, but it has also created a deeper flow of water, allowing fish to move to places never seen before. The livestock are also much easier to check and move, so bonuses all round.”*
- More information on progress with the Chess SWC pilot is available [here](#).

Chilterns Chalk Streams Project 25th Anniversary

- All Board members should now have received their invitation to the **Chilterns Chalk Streams Project 25th Anniversary Conference on 28th September**. This is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the last 25 years and look forward to the next phase of the project. We hope to see you there.
- At the conference we will also be launching the ‘**State of the Chilterns Chalk Streams**’ report.
- In addition to the main conference, we are running a number of **guided walks** to celebrate the anniversary – more details [here](#) -

2.5 Chalk Streams and Wetland Meadows (Funded by Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund) (Allen and Team, Claire, Kath, Fran, Laura and Adrian from the Chiltern Society)

- We are pleased to have received confirmation that the CCB can extend the project: from October 2022 to March 2023. This enables us to complete some significant **practical river restoration** work during the Autumn months.
- The first river restoration project funded by Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund has begun on the **river Chess**. Practical enhancements will improve the river habitat, particularly to connect two **water vole** populations. The project began with a **joint CCB and Chiltern Society staff day** in July and will continue with further volunteer events through the autumn.
- The CCSP's **education team** has come to the end of a busy school year – they have delivered **outreach activities and school visits to almost 2,000 pupils**, working on the R. Bulbourne and R. Ver for the first time, and delivering **new partnership sessions** with Chiltern Rangers on the River Wye. All **education targets** from the Chalk Streams and Wetlands Meadow Project have now been met.

2.6 Chalk Cherries and Chairs project (funded by the NLHF) (Lachlan, Nick, Harriet, Lizzie, Fran)

- The **Mid Term Evaluation Report** (March 22) identified both strength of achievements and capacity weaknesses
 - **Capacity weaknesses** include overall communications, administrative systems, including finance, reporting and monitoring and specific individual projects
 - Noted **strength of achievements** included habitat restorations, wildlife surveying, the farm cluster, community group engagements, heritage volunteering and connecting landscapes.
 - **Adaptive management sessions** with project partners and steering committee in June 21, December 21 and June 22, have agreed **changes to the project, including six month extension**, funded from pandemic lockdown underspends. In particular, heritage and community work will be integrated within the programme of themed festivals, with built in links and pathways to wildlife and nature conservation:
 - 'Chilterns Landscapes' – A Landscape Art Exhibition and Events at Wycombe Museum (April/May 2022)
 - 'Chilterns Stories' – A collection of original and reissued books with school essay competition (Nov 22 – Jan 23)
 - 'Women, Work and the Chilterns Crafts' – A conference for International Women's Day and a six month museum exhibition (from March 2023)
 - 'Sour Cherry Soup' – Drama Workshops and Performance Tour of an original play (performances in June and July 2023)
 - 'Chilterns Chalk' – A series of visual and digital media products with associated events exploring aspects of geology (October 2023)
 - 'Chilterns Chair Design' – a large exhibition of chairs in the Chairmakers Church, in association with Wycombe Museum to coincide with the reestablishment of Furniture Design MA at Buckinghamshire New University (March 2024)
- The **Wildlife and Nature strand** of work continues successfully, including **whole farm designation as Local Nature Reserve** at Manor Farm, Bradenham. The farmer, **Andrew Stubbings**, is a tenant of the National Trust and will be joining them at the 'Great British Farmers Market', being hosted by the **Conservative Environment Network** at party conference in October.

- Secured **further funding for 7km of hedgerow work** in the cluster for winter 2022/23 through **FiPL** (£111k) and will supplement this with match funding from farmers and other sources.
- Dry weather has impacted negatively on the **survival of hedges** planted last year, especially in chalk areas. This will be addressed against by mulching next year and using an amended planting mix of hardier species.
- A full day **scything course** was organised as part of the summer festival. It was well-attended, predominantly by volunteers from the Wildlife Trusts and Chiltern Society.
- Two **Trainee recruitments**, a second year of the **New Shoots youth training programme**, and the **Small Grants Scheme** are operational.
- Received four Awards – **BEM for lacemaking** volunteer leader Veronica, **Best Community Group in Pride of Bucks Awards** for New Shoots, **Best Individual Contribution in Pride of Bucks Awards** for Tom Fordice and one for the CCC **Tracking the Impact** wildlife surveys that will be announced in October.
- Work is continuing with finalising the content of the **Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit**, including text, infographics and video content. We've taken the decision to launch the Toolkit in CCB's new website format, meaning we can integrate the new materials fully with other planning information.
- The **CCC's Landscape Partnership in Numbers** infographic sets out key achievements.

2.7 Beacons of the Past (funded by the NLHF) (Wendy)

- As the Beacons of the Past Project comes to a close, with a final **end date of 31 October 2022**, the last threads of the deliverables are being drawn together. A few highlights here:
- The **LiDAR Portal** remains highly popular with **Citizen Scientists** and the wider public as well, recently receiving some attention on an Oxford University [blog](#), as well as being the recipient of an **embargoed award** to be announced on 1 October 2022.
- Contingency funds from the project will pay for a **further five years portal hosting** and server maintenance ensuring the ongoing legacy of this LiDAR investment
- Wendy continues to conduct outreach with a number of **guided walks and public talks** occurring in the reporting period.
- The **External Evaluation team** (Bayne & Blackwood) are compiling the end of project report for NLHF and have indicated that the report shows the project has '**smashed expected targets**'.
- The first of the **display panels** will be installed on 30 September at Gallowstree Common and will be a public event (see flyer attached)
- A BotP innovation is the **Augmented Reality at Seven Ways Plain Burnham Beeches**. This is currently in final stage development and will be ready for launch before the end of project.
- A major **legacy for BotP** is the proposal of the **Chilterns Archaeology and Heritage Partnership** (CHAP) initiative (document attached) and Wendy confirmed as the CCB's **permanently employed archaeologist**. Wendy will take up this role on 1 November after the completion of BotP. An ambitious plan, modelled on the CCSP, CHAP will be the **voice for archaeology and heritage** across the AONB.
- Working with the **Carington Estate and the FiPL team**, Wendy has overseen the successful application for funding (£24,255) from the CCB's **Farming in Protected Landscapes programme**. The plan is to conduct the first scientific dating of a chalk figure in the Chilterns landscape (the **Bledlow Cross**) and for subsequent **restoration and outreach** for the site, including **interpretation panels and a circular walk** to become a dedicated footpath.
- Finally, the **Not Bourne Yesterday** project proposal, another BotP legacy and building on the investments made therein, will be **evaluated by the NLHF** on 12 September and a result communicated by midday 16 September.

- If successful, the Development phase would dovetail with building momentum for the CHAP initiative.
- Wendy will be **joining the Board meeting** to present an update on the BofP project and an introduction to the CHAP initiative.

2.8 Chalkscapes project (funded by NLHF) (Claire, Kath)

- Following the resignation of the Project Manager, Inga Garriock, and Development Officer, Luke Burgess, and having secured an **extension to the submission deadline** (from November 2022 to February 2023), the consultancy **Resources for Change** was commissioned in August to provide support to developing the CCB's application for funding.
- Also in August, strategic partner buy-in was secured and a successful **Theory of Change partnership event** co-delivered to reenergise and reset the Chalkscapes project, involving a strategy review, and exploring audiences and partner motivations. The event was well attended and brought back a number of partners who had disengaged over recent months.
- **The NLHF** - including its **Senior Investment Manager** - visited the Chalkscapes project area on 23 August. We took the opportunity to **update on achievements** and set out our framework for successfully completing the delivery stage bid and mitigating risk.
- Presentations included showcasing **innovative work on engaging with urban and BAME audiences** undertaken by the Institute of Health Research at the **University of Bedfordshire**.
- **NLHF** were inspired and reassured by our plans and ability to deliver a successful bid within the challenging timescales ahead.
- Kath continued to work alongside Claire to progress the Chalkscapes project. Input included building partner confidence, clarifying priorities, providing strategic oversight on the land and nature components, and contributing to the NLHF visit and partner workshop.

2.9 Mend the Gap (funded by Network Rail) (Fran, Claire)

- In the absence of a Programme Manager, Fran and Claire, with others on the team, are progressing work on both **mitigation planting projects and wider enhancement work**.
- The CCB is currently **recruiting for a new Programme Manager**, with interviews planned for early October.
- Plans for **mitigation tree planting** have been prioritised to ensure planting can be carried out completed this year. Activities include negotiating and liaising with key partners and providers to resolve blockages in the project and set out a clear pathway to deliver the tree planting in South Stoke identified as a priority this year.
- Sites include Diocese land with 1275m of hedge to be planted and 27 trees to be planted, Ivol Farmland with 1856m of hedge to be planted, 205m of hedge to be 'gapped up' and 61 trees to be planted and Parish Council Field with 310m of hedge to be planted and 14 trees to be planted.
- A number of **Enhancement Projects** have been approved and/or made progress in this period, including creation of an **Otter Holt** in Gatehampton and **Experiential Tourism Training** - workshops supporting 10 businesses to develop the experiences they offer, and bring them to market. This Included 1:1 support from our expert consultant, Deb Brookes.
- Elaine was also part of an **expert panel at a festival** 'Your land: How you can help save the planet', organised by the **Goring Gap Environment Organisation**, which the MtG programme is funding.
- Other projects are either being assessed or on hold until a new Programme Manager is recruited.

2.10 Mitigating the harmful impacts of HS2 (Neil, Matt, Elaine)

The tunnel boring machines (TBMs) have now completed about 1/3 of the total distance

between the South portal (just inside the M25) and North Portal (above Great Missenden. The next vent shaft along the way is at Bottom House Farm Lane, north of Chalfont St Giles. The main works contractors, Align, are providing useful updates on progress though **concerns about unforeseen impacts** for example on the chalk aquifer - remain.

- Progress has been made with designers responding to concerns, including from the CCB, over the **Amersham Vent Shaft head house**. The CCB was party to some of the pre-application discussions, and we have supported the new design which has comprehensively **taken our design recommendations on board**, including the extensive use of flint in the redesign, along with more tree and shrub planting to reduce visibility of the structure.
- Our planning consultant, **Mike Stubbs**, has stressed that the success of the flint wall will be dependent on the quality of the work. He recommends taking note of exemplars from last year's **Building Design competition** and suggests formation of a **flint working group**. The CCB has also been presented with designs for a series of concrete terraces beneath the **Small Dean viaduct** on the edge of Wendover which are more appropriate to an inner city than an AONB. Flint facing was, at one time, mentioned but subsequently withdrawn.

2.11 Developing a Climate Mitigation Plan (Neil)

- **Cranfield University**, commissioned by the National Association (NAAONB), has completed a **carbon audit**, assessing all habitats within each protected landscape in England. We are still to receive the results for the Chilterns, but these should provide an initial baseline for **carbon storage within the Chilterns** and provide insight into the types of land management that might secure significant improvements to carbon sequestration within the AONB.

3. Leadership and influence

- The team continues to deliver a huge amount of valuable work while operating in a constantly shifting internal and external environment. This was identified as a key theme when developing the **Business Plan** and we continue to explore how best to take up opportunities and address the challenges.
- For example, we now benefit from having created **additional comms, administration and project support capacity**, while the gap created as we **recruit managers** for key projects puts pressure on an already stretched core team.

3.1 Natural England's Designations programme

Chilterns AONB Extension (Neil, Elaine, Matt)

- Progress to secure consultants for this NE led project has slipped and we now hope consultants will be contracted to start work in November of this year.
- The team has contributed to Natural England's FAQs which were published in early August on our website [here](#).
- The contact email for queries about the project is: ChilternsAONBBoundaryReview@NaturalEngland.org.uk
- Matt, Neil and Elaine continue to meet fortnightly as part of the **Management Advisory Group (MAG)**, involving CCB and Natural England.
- The inaugural meeting of the **Technical Advisory Group** was held on 10 August, introducing the project to stakeholders - primarily **local authorities** where an AONB extension might be considered. This was a great success with **23 attendees** representing local authorities both within and outside the current AONB boundary.
- A key issue to address is managing **local authority plan-making** in light of the uncertainty created by the boundary review project: this requires a rational and iterative approach.

- It was agreed at the meeting to use the TAG to keep stakeholders up to date with progress on the **Enhanced Management and Governance Arrangements** project (see below).
- Public interest in the Boundary Review remains high, including letters of support from MPs.
- Following the CCB hosting Historic England, Natural England and the NLHF Chairs and CEOs in April, Elaine has progressed discussions with Historic England regarding greater integration between natural and cultural heritage in protected landscapes. More to come.

Enhanced Management and Governance arrangements (Matt, Elaine)

- Natural England now has additional funding and staff in place to support their commitment to help explore enhanced **management and governance arrangements** for the Chilterns AONB, as recommended in the Landscapes Review. We will be ensuring compatibility between this project, the outcomes of our own internal governance review, and Defra's ongoing thinking about its response to the Landscapes Review.
- We expect project to help to **inform wider thinking** on the future of governance in protected landscapes. Next steps include undertaking a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise, which can build on our earlier work through the Chilterns Partnership.

3.2 Influencing development and infrastructure planning and decisions (Matt and Mike)

- The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) was at Bill Committee stage in the House of Commons before Parliament rose on 21 July. The Bill includes the government's proposed reforms of the planning system but does not appear to contain any of the planning measures needed to respond to the Landscapes Review. Further analysis is needed, but there are a few amendments proposed that might be of minor interest. A full report will be taken to the Planning Committee in October.
- Oxfordshire's local authorities have stopped working on the joint **Oxfordshire Plan 2050**, having unsurprisingly failed to reach agreement on how to distribute the over-optimistic levels of housing growth needed to match the commitments made in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.
- Matt and Mike attended and gave oral evidence to the public examination on the **Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan**. A special hearing was convened to consider the Plan's allocation of a greenfield site within the AONB for 130 new homes, commercial premises and community facilities. In some respects, the case is a test of a flawed policy in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, which was altered by the examination inspector to remove the ability of a neighbourhood plan to reduce its housing requirement if it found that development would result in harm to the AONB (also see Woodcote, below). Some observers have since chosen to pitch the matter as being a dichotomy between protecting the AONB or protecting the character of neighbouring Lower Shiplake, which is not the case at all.
- The **Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan** has been the subject of a review. The examiner reported in June 2022 and supported the Neighbourhood Plan's decision to pursue a lower housing allocation (53) compared to the South Oxfordshire DC Local Plan allocation (115). To achieve this outcome the Neighbourhood Plan body had to argue that this lower threshold is supported by robust landscape evidence. Woodcote produced this evidence, and the examiner endorsed this approach. The **examiner referred to the CCB's submissions** which supported the stance taken by the Parish Council.
- Since June 2022 a number of **major planning appeals** have been either held or convened with dates announced. These involve significant levels of development, often within the setting of the AONB. Examples include Crowell Road, Chinnor (54 dwellings in wider setting, allowed on appeal), Papist Way, Cholsey (350, in setting, Inquiry opens August 2022), Tralee Farm, Wycombe (290, in setting, Inquiry sat July 2022), Hampden Farm Barns, Prestwood (10 or 12 dwellings in the AONB – hearing held July 2022) and Luton Airport (passenger throughput cap to 19 million per year), Inquiry set for late September

start. **CCB has responded to all of these.** The pressures on the doorstep of the AONB are ever-present.

- A number of major planning applications have drawn our objection and three are of note:
- Little Marlow Studios, Bucks (film studios), major development within the setting of the AONB when viewed from Winter Hill (Cookham)
- Land East of Tring, Herts (1,400 dwellings and mixed-use), impacting on **Chilterns Beechwoods SAC** policy protection and future strategy to mitigate recreational impacts on AONB – European protected habitats.
- Greenwoods near Barton-le-Clay, Beds, 3,750 dwellings and mixed-use within the setting of the AONB at Pegsdon Hill and Sharpenhoe Clappers.

3.3 External Communications (Vicki, Kim-lin, Helen)

Summary

- Since June, the comms team has delivered a huge amount of work including publishing the CCB's online **Annual Review 2021/22**, delivering 30,000 copies (an increase of 10,000) of **Outstanding Chilterns Magazine** (also online [here](#)) and pushed the **new website** forward, confirming a "go live" date of 5 October. An agency is now distributing the magazine to various outlets (eg museums, cafes, hotels, visitor attractions) across a wider geographical region than previously, including parts of London and other areas outside the AONB.
- The team also continued to produce **new content**, publish a variety of **news articles and social media campaigns** and **support the CCB team** with comms activities and advice.

3 Communications campaigns

Some of the campaigns we've worked on this quarter include:

- [Save water campaign](#) in partnership with Smarter Water Catchment
- [Chilterns Farmer Achieves Local Wildlife Status](#) for Manor Farm
- [Green Spaces Dark Skies](#) - a choreographed light display with 600 people at Dunstable Downs
- Chalk Streams First coalition [press release](#)
- [Promotion of electricity undergrounding work](#) and applications for future projects

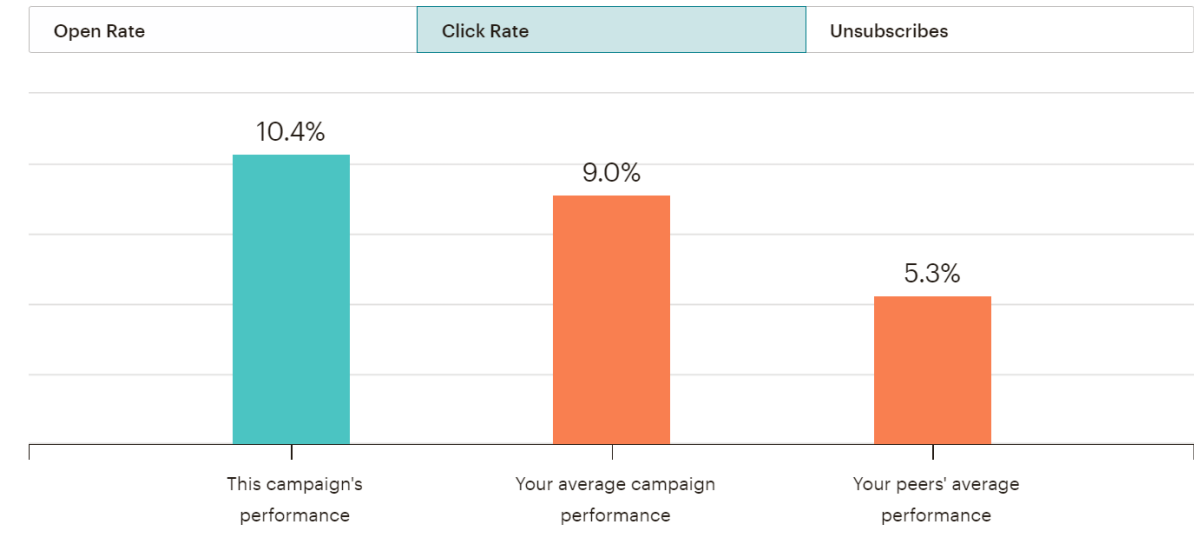
Read more of our latest news updates [here](#)

- **Annual Review:** The 2021-22 Annual Review was published on 16 August and can be viewed from the website [here](#). The comms team will promote the review by including it in the monthly newsletter, promoting on social media and the website and creating a targeted email campaign to our key stakeholders and partners.
- **Outstanding Chilterns Magazine:** The magazine was published on 27 July and achieved **record advertising sales** for the 3rd year in a row (£11k approx. revenue generated (the board receives 60% of this, minus £450 retainer – this is to pay for the agency who sell the advertising space)).
- The **profits offset the cost** of the design (£2k), print (£9k) and distribution (£4k). Total cost of the magazine is approx. £10k – this is much higher than previous years due to the increased volume and print costs having almost doubled since last year. We have **already received some positive feedback from readers** and are currently brainstorming ideas for next years' edition. An online version is available [here](#).
- **New website:** A "go live" date of 5 October has been set. We are working to a milestone of 14 September to release the site to the staff team and CCB Board members for them to review, check and feedback. We are working around the clock to be able to deliver the site by the deadline and have increased comms capacity during this time.
- Members of the staff team are also working hard to provide /write /check /review /comment on content that we've written and we're confident that we will be able to make the deadline.
- **Newsletter:** Our monthly newsletter now goes to 4,500 subscribers and, in the last quarter, we have achieved a **40% average open rate with an average click through rate of 10%** -

this is still much higher than our peers' average performance of 5.3%. Based on these results, we will continue with our current structure and frequency.

- *The chart below shows the click through rate stats for an individual campaign (our July edition) – note, the 9% average performance is for all campaigns since we started sending them – not for this quarter.*

How your email campaign compares



Reserves

The Board will note that the CCB is fortunate to have substantial reserves. An analysis of the CCB reserves is attached to this paper.

The Board's policy on Reserves only refers to the General reserve which states that it should maintain prudent reserve to meet any unexpected expenditure.

I propose that the Reserves policy be reviewed by the CEO and Executive Committee and a paper be presented at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Recommendation

- 1. To note the CCB financial, audit and reserves position**

Item 11**CCB Policies****Author:** Elaine King, CEO**Summary:** The Chilterns Conservation Board is required to establish, publish and implement a range of policies that ensure good governance and compliance with its legal obligations. This paper sets out a proposed new approach and provides an update on progress.**Purpose of Report:** To update the Board regarding the CCB's policies.**Background**

A key element of good organisational governance is ensuring that policies are both effective and visible. Policies should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate updates made and new policies added as required. Policies should also be understood by all those who need to apply them – such as the staff team and Board members – and training provided where necessary. Policies should also be easily accessed, both internally - by staff and Board members - and externally, by members of the public and other interested parties.

The Chilterns Conservation Board's policies are reviewed individually on an ongoing basis. In addition, in 2021, the CEO worked with the then HR advisor to carry out a strategic review of all employment policies with a view to updating, removing and adding policies as appropriate in line with current legislation and other requirements. This work was almost complete by November 2021 when our HR advisor retired.

The CCB subsequently engaged the services of a new HR advisor, Carol Hatcliff, one of whose first tasks was to work with the CEO to complete the review of employment policies, including the staff handbook. This work was completed in March 2022. However, the pressure of other work since then has meant that the policies were not formally signed off by the CEO or presented to the Board for approval.

The intention is therefore to complete the work on the employment policies, alongside a review of all other CCB policies - eg those relating to governance, data protection, IT and finance - and present all policies to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 1 November.

In addition to all policies being updated, new arrangements will be introduced. A series of new supporting documents will be developed to ensure greater visibility and accountability and may include the following:

Policies Policy: describing the approach to be taken in the format, creation, content, approval, review, and accessibility of all CCB policies.

Policy Contents List: setting out policy name, who is responsible (eg CEO, Finance Officer), date of Board approval, date for review and review frequency (eg annually).

Policy Tracker: detailing the policies required to legally and effectively govern and manage the CCB. This document is designed to monitor how and when a policy is created, when it is reviewed and where responsibility lies.

Alongside this work, the team is continuing to explore appropriate means by which files such as these can be shared with Board members.

Recommendation**1. Board Members to provide feedback.**



The Chilterns Heritage and Archaeology Partnership (CHAP) *Ensuring a future for our past*

THE PURPOSE: The Chilterns landscapes and the habitats they support are conserved, enhanced, and sustainably managed in balance with the protection and enjoyment of their archaeological legacy. The narrative of human-nature interconnectedness is shared widely for future generations and opportunities are created for diverse audiences for all Chiltern communities to participate in the discovery of the past, in order to better understand the present, and plan for the future. ***CHAP would be the 'voice for archaeology' in the Chilterns AONB, ensuring that the millennia-long story of the region is shared with the millions who live in and visit.***

THE INNOVATION: CHAP would be the driving force in the conservation and sustainable management of heritage and archaeological assets in the Chilterns, working in partnership with organisations and local communities throughout the AONB and environs to effect significant and lasting positive change.

Significantly, CHAP would be a flagship model for other protected landscapes – the first of its kind in vision, the first three years (covered by this business plan) would work as proof of concept and allow development of a methodology to be adopted and adapted across the country.

THE PARTNERS: led by the Chilterns Conservation Board, but formed as a partnership of statutory agencies, charities, local authorities and voluntary bodies committed to the vision of protecting, understanding, and increasing access and engagement with the heritage of the Chilterns. CHAP's *potential* partners could be:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- Chiltern Society
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Bedfordshire County Council
- Historic England¹
- Forestry England

THE DELIVERABLES

- A coordinated vision and action on heritage and archaeology at a landscape scale across the Chilterns.
- Support the delivery of and add value to, partners ambitions regarding conservation, enhancement, discovery and engagement, outreach and impact
- A means for partners to engage with local communities through a medium that always provokes excitement (archaeological discovery)
- Provide locally relevant education (Local prehistory on the National Curriculum, for example)
- Provide a consistent presence on archaeology and heritage, ensuring long-term best practice management
- Be a driving force in developing and maintaining citizen science networks
- Enable partners to deliver on key objectives of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan (specifically HO 1, 2, 3, SO 2&3, and EO 2, 4 & 5).
- Deliver in areas that are not core to the business remit of partners but are complimentary to partners aims (education & awareness, access improvement etc) and deliver multiple benefits.

THE BUSINESS MODEL: CHAP will be funded primarily through core partner funding supplemented by external funding secured through consultancy services etc. and through external funding bids for relevant projects² An annual expenditure is likely to be £75k and employ one permanent member of staff.

¹ By leading and coordinating a team of trained volunteers, CHAP would be the eyes and ears on the ground, particularly for Scheduled Monuments in the Chilterns AONB, feeding regular condition information back to Historic England and bridging the current gap in capacity, as many sites have not seen an inspector visit in years if not a decade.

² CCB has applied for a NLHF grant to develop a £2.5m project *Not Bourne Yesterday* focussed on chalk stream archaeology. If successful, this will form one of CHAP's initial key deliverables and income streams. Decision expected 30SEP22



UNVEILING EVENT!
**JOIN US FOR THE LAUNCH OF A
NEW HERITAGE DISPLAY PANEL
AT GALLOWSTREE COMMON**

FRIDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER @ 6.15 PM

A new board detailing the archaeological landscape of nearby Iron Age hillfort Castle Grove will be installed near the Pavilion at Gallowstree Playing Fields, **RG4 9BU**

The specially designed new board will be unveiled by local children, joined by *Beacons of the Past* Project Manager, **Dr Wendy Morrison** & Chair of Kidmore End Parish Council, **Dr Caroline Aldridge** 6.15pm.

Please join us for a glass of prosecco!

Dr Morrison will give a talk in the Pavilion @ 7.15
see overleaf for details

**Delicious food from the Hamlet's very own
Bowler Food Truck 6-7.30 pm**



Cricket Club Bar all evening (*cards only*)



Friday September 30 @ 7.15pm

Dr Wendy Morrison
Beacons of the Past –
investigating the Chilterns landscape

Beacons of the Past is a 4-year project funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund with the aim of engaging and inspiring communities to discover, conserve, and enjoy the Chilterns' Iron Age hillforts and their prehistoric chalk landscapes.

Now at the project's conclusion, Project Manager Wendy Morrison will present on the some of the results of the UK's largest bespoke archaeological LiDAR survey, the project's outreach programmes, and discuss the wider context of Castle Grove Iron Age hillfort, which sits on private land on the border of Kidmore End and Checkendon parishes.

The talk will be followed by a brief update on the local work South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group has been involved in, including research based on *Beacons of the Past* LiDAR.

Gallowstree Pavilion, The Hamlet,
Gallowstree Common, Reading RG4 9BU

Dr Wendy Morrison currently works for the Chilterns Conservation Board as Project Manager of the NLHF funded Beacons of the Past Hillforts project. She also is Senior Associate Tutor for Archaeology at the Oxford University Dept for Continuing Education. She is Chair of the Hillfort Study Group and President of the Marlow Archaeology Group. She has over a decade's excavation experience in Southern Britain, the Channel Islands, and India and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

