



Notes of the briefing/workshop of the Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee held on Tuesday 10th August 2021 by remote video conferencing commencing at 10.00 am

Present:

Alison Doggett	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board Member joined the meeting 10.16
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member
Cllr Lynn Lloyd	Board Member
John Nicholls	Board Member
Paul Mainds	Board Member, Chairman
John Shaw	Board Member joined 10.27

In attendance:

Peter Martin	Board Member
Adrian Watney	Board Member
Graham Hurst	CCB Finance Officer
Dr Elaine King	CCB Chief Executive Officer

Deirdre Hansen Clerk to the Board

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for late attendance received from John Griffin, Oxfordshire Parish Council member and John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee.

2. Welcome and introduction

The Chairman welcomed Adrian Watney, the new Hertfordshire Parish Council member. All present were asked to introduce themselves.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Notice of AOB (Urgent Business)

The Chairman had been notified of an item of urgent business: IT security. Two members notified the Chairman that they would have to leave early.

10.16 John Griffin joined the meeting

5. Chairman's update

The Chairman gave an update on his activities since the last meeting:

1. An EOM had been held 24/06/21 to sign off the 2020/21 AGAR.
2. He has held very useful conversations with every board member.

3. Looking at the Board member vacancies. In May we had 10 and half the vacancies have now been filled. He is in touch with Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council leaders to appoint new members, and the CEO is in touch Luton BC. Bedfordshire parish council will make a nomination next month and the election for a Buckinghamshire parish council member is progressing. We should have a full house by the December board meeting. After many years of stable membership with a low turnover, recent years have seen a high turnover of Board membership
4. Held meetings with the Deputy Chairman, the CEO and the Countryside Officer and made three farm visits.
5. Progress is being made with the "Introduction Pack" for new board members.
6. Liaising with the Admin. Assistant to get a secure platform for Board members to access.
7. The following dates are in the diary:
 - i. 9th September for the Executive Committee and staff; a walk and lunch at the Chairman's house.
 - ii. 7th September Board meeting face to face in Bledlow Village Hall.
 - iii. 30th September an "Away day" for the Board and the senior team.
8. Working with the Arts Council on a pilot study art project and had a meeting with the Chairman of the Cotswolds AONB, who issued an invitation for the Chairman to attend the Cotswolds AONB Board meeting 12th October.
9. Together with the CEO and the Deputy Chairman he met up with the Chair and the Chief Officer of the Chiltern Society. He would like them to be given an opportunity to speak at the next Board meeting. The members agreed to invite the Chair and Chief Officer of the Chiltern Society to the next Board meeting.
10. The Chairman asked members to consider other organisations we could invite to speak at future Board meetings.
11. Looking at new ways of increasing the engagement of board members. To do this he would welcome fresh Ideas, bringing people together and establishing new ways of working. He is looking at a 3-stage process:
 - i. From today start getting some ideas and views in to develop a process which can be proposed at the 7th of September Board meeting.
 - ii. Between meetings format ideas and take these as proposals to the 7th December Board meeting
 - iii. At the December Board meeting approve or modify the proposals so that we have a clearer way forward for 2022.
12. The Deputy Chairman had sent out a "Skills audit" to all members, the majority have now been returned.

The Deputy Chairman introduced his skills audit.

The returns have shown a great range of skills. The skills audit was introduced to

1. Enhance the CCB's work and networks by drawing more effectively on the many skills and connections within the Board.
2. Make Board membership more rewarding.
3. To identify and deploy skills which can offer strategic guidance and support in key areas of the CCB's work. It was clearly identified that the members role is to guide policy and to provide strategic insight and direction. Not day to day involvement with the staff and the executive's role.
4. To find suitable candidates to engage with external bodies.
5. To identify gaps which might inform future recruitment.

John Shaw joined the meeting 10.27

Members discussed the matter.

The next step is to look at engaging everyone to co-create and design the process. The Chairman suggested a Task and Finish group. Members were asked to inform the Chairman or Deputy Chairman if they were interested in joining a Task and Finish group to form a suggested process that can be put to the Board at the September meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Chairman for his work on the Skills audit.

John Griffin left meeting 10.49

6. Review of the minutes of the previous meeting- 28/04/21

The review brought up a typo- an errant 'W' on page 2. Clerk to correct.

7. Matters arising

- Staff handbook, the aim is to have this completed by the end of September.
- The HR advisor is leaving her role. The CEO is looking to recruit a new HR advisor.

Peter Martin left the meeting 10.53

8. Finance and Budget planning

The Finance Officer had circulated a summary of the CCB's core finances showing the actual outturn for the year to 31 March 2021, the budget for the current year 2021/22, the actual income and expenditure for the first four months of the current financial year and the draft budgets for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The summary provides visibility of the finances to date, showing we are in a healthy position, looking at where we are heading to in the future ensuring that our finances match our ambitions.

Core funding from Defra accounts for 77% of income, Local Authorities provide a further 19%, with the balance coming from elsewhere. Other sources of income are being sought.

Much of our costs are fixed and contractual. Employment costs account for 77% of core expenditure. Projects are generally self-funding with little or no opportunity to cover core costs. Looking ahead expenditure will exceed income.

The members discussed the future financing arrangements.

The Finance Officer was congratulated on his report and thanked for the new " five year" view.

1. The Committee NOTED the current financial results.

9. Board Review

The Chief Executive Officer had provided a comprehensive overview of the team's activities and achievement since the last Board meeting in February. Highlighting the following items:

1. Glover Report: The Government is working on a consultation report due to be published in the autumn.

- 2. Boundary extension work and exploring governance: Natural England and the CCB will be conducting a theory of change exercise for the management and governance element of the programme.
- 3. Farming in Protected Landscapes: the CCB hosted a Defra team visiting the Chilterns AONB in July. The CCB has now been asked to host a visit by another Defra team, which we will do as it's an opportunity to showcase our work and build relationships.
- 4. Defra is starting to look at the next round of Board member recruitment and is seeking views on improvements- we will be responding.
- 5. HS2: a petition has been started by others; now it has reached 100,000 signatures a Parliamentary debate will be triggered. The CCB will publish a briefing for MPs and the debate will give the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues in parliament.
- 6. Green Recovery Challenge project is moving forward.
- 7. An Expression of Interest for a new NLHF project has been successful and the CCB has been invited to submit a bid. Aiming for submission in March 2022.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions.

It was acknowledged that the team are achieving a huge amount of work. Thanks were expressed to all the team and to those who work behind the scenes.

1. The Committee NOTED the report.

10. Mend the Gap

The CEO had circulated papers for the steering group meeting scheduled for 16th August. Progress is ongoing with no more to add.

1. The Committee NOTED the report

11. Any Urgent Business

1.IT Security:

Awareness about the CCB's IT security had been raised. The Finance Officer explained the current IT security arrangements in place and the risks facing the CCB. He has no concerns, but it was agreed that he would ask the provider for an audit of our current arrangements.

2. The CEO will invite the Chiltern Society to speak at the next Board meeting

Executive Committee meeting due: 2nd November 2021 location TBC.

The Chairman.....

Date.....