

Blackdown Hills
 Parish Network
 Steering Group

MINUTES BHPN STEERING GROUP

AONB meeting room Thursday March 8 2016 10.00am

Attendance:

Heather Stallard	Chair, Hemyock PC, BHBA, AONB Management Gp
Catherine Bass	Co-ordinator, Website
Graham Long	Upottery PC, AONB Management Gp, Communications
Bruce Payne	AONB Management Gp, Natural Futures
Ken Pearson	Churchstanton and Stockland Parish Clerk, BHPN T, T& H
Lisa Turner	AONB Planning officer & BHPN Planning

1. **Minutes of meeting January 18 agreed, matters arising not within the agenda:**
 Re 4b GWR rail incentive grant – CB to continue trying to contact the relevant manager for further information. **CB**

2. **Finances**
 Bank balance £1,903.99
 Five new members have contributed an additional £375 in 2015/2016.
 Awaiting confirmation of contributions from two previous members, Upottery and Cotleigh (£150 together).
 Current liabilities to financial year end £120 (admin costs to CB)

3. **MP report and next meeting**
 Evidence has been received from 11 parishes relating to the questions posed to inform MPs re Planning, Traffic, Transport and Highways, Communication.
 Critical points to emerge:
Planning – seems to be fairly well in hand, with the well known differences between the 4 LAs apparent and some developments causing concern, LT and AONB have a reasonable overview of plans and the associated landscape issues. **ACTION** – a watching brief **All**
T,T&H – high level of concern in some parishes with much HGV traffic, misdirection of through HGV traffic by inappropriate satnav mapping, inadequate signage for HGV routes etc. State of road maintenance throughout the minor road network in the area is a growing problem. **ACTION** – arrange meeting between Steering Group and highways teams of both counties together asap to discuss maintenance rationale and attempt to secure a bespoke traffic survey to quantify issues at points of concern; keep MPs informed. **CB**
 Specific discussion re the Govt decision re A358/A303. A358 is to be developed, A303 will not be improved between junction with A358 and A30 as per recommendations of the report commissioned by DCC from Parsons Brinckerhoff; a new report has been commissioned by DCC to look at the A30 section from the Devonshire Hotel to Honiton.
Public transport – threat of more bus service cuts, recent consultation in Somerset now closed and outcome awaited. **ACTION** – a watching brief and review when Somerset recommendations are published. **All**
Communications – in general parishes seem happy enough as long as all avenues are used. Situation re high speed Broadband is not improving and there is hard evidence that well established businesses are either moving out of the Blackdowns altogether or moving admin functions away to access reliable high speed service. This is demonstrably reducing the number of jobs in the locality. There is evidence too that some associations are offering alternative solutions to members (eg British Asscn Shooting and Conservation, NFU).
 Airband is offering National Parks parishes in Devon and Somerset free broadband access in village halls using fixed wireless, line of sight technology, opportunity to request this for AONB parishes too? Would require installation of more masts which would pose a planning/landscape issue.

It is clear that some parts of the community are not prepared to wait for/ are sceptical that fibre

broadband will be rolled out to offer countrywide 95% coverage, currently there is a wide disparity between urban situations (4% of households without access vs 48% in rural areas).

GL described the result of all these issues as contributing to a general 'urban/rural apartheid' which appears to be becoming established in most aspects of life in the Blackdowns.

Discussed how best to use information returned for MPs from parishes: decided not to send it, rather hold it and augment it for our next meeting with them – in the meantime to set up the next meeting for early September, report what we have done and plan to do before September and ask what they have been able to do on the issues we left them with last September.

CB to set up next meeting with MPs, early September favoured

CB

4. AONB Management group representation

Seven nominations were received following the invitation to all BH parishes to put forward councillor nominees. The ballot process was discussed - member parishes may vote, sealed postal ballot to be received before the end of April to be opened at the next meeting of the Steering Group.

Nominees and non member parishes to be informed that a ballot is in progress and the outcome published in May.

CB to share draft papers with steering group before circulation to clerks.

CB

5. Website

CB reported on progress with Cosmic on migrating the website to a new and more interactive site which will provide a more up to date platform and also enable parishes with hosted pages to comply fully with transparency code regulations. Draft contract is expected in a day or two, with cost in the order of £700 excl VAT.

Agreed to progress this, no direct funding has yet been identified, agreed to request a small sum from each of the Devon county councillors 2016/2017 locality fund to help defray costs.

CB

6. Annual Parish Meetings and AGM

CB to ask for details of APM dates, AGM date may be shifted from earlier chosen date of May 26 to accommodate date clashes.

7. AOB and Date of next meeting

- KP had raised an issue from Churchstanton PC which had asked to have his affiliation with the council removed from BHPN papers. The steering group expressed the view that it is helpful to have the provenance of its members noted as matter of public record, it is not the case that any member represents the views of those individual bodies. Members of the steering group are elected each year at the BHPN AGM to take forward the interests of the network as a whole. KP to report this reply back to Churchstanton PC
- **Date of next Steering Group meeting Friday May 13 at AONB office.**

KP