

**Minutes
Of an Executive Committee Meeting
Held on Wednesday 30th April 2014
At Boxgrove Village Hall**

Present:

EC Members:

Mike Tristram (Chairman)
James Cooper (Vice Chairman)
David Taylor (Vice Chairman)
Andrew Thomas (ATh) (Treasurer)
William Wolmer (Secretary)
Stan Abbott
Nigel Clutton
James Cooper
Sabrina Harcourt-Smith
Chris Passmore
Tom Tupper
Simon Ward

EC Members' Apologies:

David Ashcroft
Jonny Morris
Rem Moser
James Youatt

Ex-Officio Members:

Tom Ormesher

Ex-Officio Mems' Apologies:

William White

Officer:

Alison Tingley (ATi)

1. Apologies & Welcomes

James Cooper acted as Chairman for the meeting and welcomed Alison Tingley and Tom Tupper.

2. Minutes – Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Any matters arising were dealt with at the end of the meeting

3. AGM agenda – DT pointed out that it was not strictly correct to have AOB on an AGM agenda but it was felt that it was important to allow Members the opportunity to raise concerns. All confirmed that they were happy to stand for re-election.

4. i) SDNPA Local Plan Consultation

A draft response had been circulated to the Executive Members for discussion. Most of the draft responses were approved; some additions and amendments were suggested. The main points agreed were: a simpler and more flexible approach to planning consent (eg prior notification, which sufficiently gives design check opportunity, rather than full planning application requirement) be proposed where improvements to the thermal efficiency of buildings are in line with proposed guidelines (issue 10); an additional underlying principle be added to the wider comments made in the introductory part of the response, that development should not have to meet or promote the purposes of designation, but it was recognised that it should not be in conflict with the purposes or do lasting harm to the special qualities; in order to support low carbon schemes such as biomass or wood fuel (issue 20) option c is supported, provided that smaller schemes in rural areas are not disadvantaged; farm workers housing should be exempt from any threshold that may be set for the contribution towards affordable housing as it is providing a similar need (issue 32 c); designation of Local green Space by communities is not supported unless it has prior agreement from the landowner (issue 48b).

ACTION: ATi to amend the response in line with discussions and submit to the SDNPA. SA to provide thoughts on issue 6.

ii) CIL draft proposed charging structure consultation

A draft response was circulated for discussion along with a copy of the CLA response. It was agreed that the response should be strengthened

5. Membership

In order to attract new members ATi had revised the leaflet. **ACTION:** ATi to circulate electronically. Members to provide comments by 8th May to ATi.

CLA and SDNPA had both agreed to allow SDLMG to be present on their stands at the South of England Show. ATi to attend on 5th & 6th June. SDNPA will also be present at the Alresford Show 6th September, Laughton Ploughing Match 17th September and West Grinsted Ploughing Match 20th September, any volunteers to attend.

It is hoped that improved communications with members will help to retain numbers. It was proposed that members should receive at least 2 newsletters per year along with 2 meetings one summer one winter. An offer had been made by the Deer Initiative Officer in the SE to run a session for members on deer impacts & control. In between times members would be circulated with information via email on events, consultations and notified of opportunities to get involved in project development as they arise, such as discussions with the SDNPA and Water Company to look at payments for ecosystem services.

6. Communications

It was agreed that we should try for three newsletters per year to coincide with the NPA Liaison meeting to help provide valuable feedback to members. Contributions of short articles were requested. **ACTION:** SA & SHS agreed to provide copy.

7. Lead updates

Environment: NIA is continuing to be rolled out in project areas with limited contractors. Heathlands Reunited HLF application has been approved, WW has been lobbying hard to ensure that landowners are able to be included as eligible to carry out funded works even if not on the general contractors lists.

SNDP branding: ATi outlined the new South Downs 'identity' that has just been developed which will be available to businesses and producers. A toolkit on how to use the 'identity' is to be launched in the next few months.

Land Agents: JC reported that he and JY had pulled together a list of land agents on whose expertise the SDLMG could draw as the need arose.

Planning: Dealt with above

Access: DT has not been able to contact Allison Thorpe. ATi informed the group that the SDNPA had recently submitted a bid for the next round of Local Sustainable Transport Funding.

Cultural Heritage: SW informed the group that similarly he had been unable to contact Anne Bone, but he was aware that the LIDAR flights had been undertaken although the results would not be known for sometime.

8. **Summer Meeting** – The Date and venue were confirmed as 11th June at Capron House, Midhurst, 6pm for 6.30pm. It is proposed that the SDNPA make a presentation on the Local Plan and CIL and give Members the opportunity to feedback their views. ATi also informed the EC that there were likely to be Leader consultation events to which the SDLMG in put would be useful, it was agreed that this should be a separate event. **ACTION:** ATi to notify members.

9. **2014 meeting dates** – Dates for further meetings were not set.

James Cooper is to attend the NPA Broadband meeting being organised by Smith's Gore. They had asked for other representatives which ATi had circulated to members known to have diversified, Robert Stent from Avington Park Farm had expressed an interest. Others to attend include JM & ATi. **ACTION:** Confirm to AT

10. Partner (NFU/CLA) / Other Organizations.

JC welcomed TO to his first meeting. NFU: TO informed the group that there had been a delay in the CAP announcement, this is now likely to be end of May. NFU had commented on the Abstraction reform consultation that closed in March. Southern Water are currently running a water trading pilot on the Rother Catchment. HCC are running a fracking event on 5th June, it is currently unclear who will be invited.

See below for FC report

11. Any other business

Matters arising –

Item 2 Farmer Specific Funding Agri-environment scheme group needs to be followed up

Item 3 (c) SDNPA grant funding – SDNPA is to review its due diligence procedures in May/June time. It is hoped that grant funding will be more flexible to give land managers more opportunities to apply.

Item 3 (f) South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative website is to go live soon

Item 9 (b) Executive Committee Structure. MT asked if Isobel Swift (Strutt & Parker Lewes Office) might be an appropriate person to approach to lead on funding schemes for the SDLMG **ACTION:** ATi to approach Isobel

Due to time constraints SA did not provide a verbal report at the meeting but subsequently provided the following points of interest of a forestry nature

1. There is a new leaflet out on managing Chalara dieback of Ash - http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/uploads/documents/Ash_Dieback_Kent_Guidance_web_version.pdf

More details and the current spread can be found here - <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

2. Planning permission has been granted for a wood fuel power station in Sandwich in Kent - <http://estoverenergy.co.uk/project4.shtml>. The likely fuel requirement is about 140k tonnes pa, which is a significant quantity. The company will be looking for long-term supply contracts and there may be associated support to enhance the contractor base within the catchment area. This may impact on wood supply in the east of the NP.
3. The domestic Renewable Heat Incentive has been launched - <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-the-use-of-low-carbon-technologies/supporting-pages/renewable-heat-incentive-rhi>

It is a financial incentive scheme designed to encourage uptake of renewable heating among domestic consumers. The domestic RHI is targeted at, but not limited to, homes off the gas grid. Those without mains gas have the most potential to save on fuel bills and decrease carbon emissions.

The scheme will cover single domestic dwellings and will be open to homeowners, private landlords, social landlords and self-builders. It will not be open to new build properties other than self-build. Given the discussion around the lack of gas grid in the NP, this may have a significant impact on the uptake of renewable equipment and wood supply.

There is a Woodfuel Breakfast at Novington, near Plumpton on the 14 May - <http://www.cla.org.uk/your-area/south-east/events/biomass-breakfast-seminar>

4. The 'Coast to Capital' LEP has grasped the woodland agenda well. They are particularly interested in wood in construction, with an emphasis on the vernacular, which could fit well with NP aspirations. They are keen to support, for example, SIP panel construction (which has high levels of insulation) and weatherboarding. They were also keen on the £60k house, with thinking around 6-12 homes of mixed character supported by small district heating systems.
5. A new project to protect the elms of Brighton and Eastbourne has received lottery funding - <http://www.nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/Sussex-elms-win-lottery-funding.aspx> Work will focus on the Alfriston area.
6. Woodland for Water is a new report which evaluates the key issues relating to woodland and the water framework directive. Targeted woodland planting can be particularly important for slowing flows and for filtering and reducing pollutants - <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/woodlandforwater>
7. West's Wood Fair takes place at East Dean from the 21st to 22 June - <http://westswoodfair.co.uk/>
8. The Surrey Hills Woodfuel Conference takes place on 17 October at Denbies near Dorking. The website will be updated shortly - <http://www.surreyhillswoodland.co.uk/>