

LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 26/5/2021

Present:

Cllr Gruffydd Williams (Chair)

Members: Councillors Simon Glyn, John Brynmor Hughes, Gareth Williams, Aled Wyn Jones, Angela Russell, Annwen Davies (Gwynedd Council) and also Noel Davey (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), T. Victor Jones (Llanbedrog Community Council), Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council), Morgan Jones-Parry (Arfon and Dwyfor Access Forum), Molly Lovatt (Natural Resources Wales), Andrew Davidson (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust), Andy Godber (National Trust), John Gosling (Abersoch and Llŷn Tourism Partneriaeth) and Eirian Allport (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), Jina Gwyrfai (Llanaelhaearn Community Council), Wenda Williams (Aberdaron Community Council).

Officers: Bleddyn P. Jones (Llŷn AONB Officer), Elin Wyn Hughes (Llŷn AONB Projects Officer), Wyn Williams (Countryside Manager), Natalie Lloyd Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Gruffydd Williams as Chairman for the 2021/22 period.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor T. Victor Jones as Vice-chair for the 2021/22 period.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gillian Walker (Cyfeillion Llŷn).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

5. URGENT ITEMS

A matter raised, following the publication of the agenda, was shared regarding aircraft flying from Valley over the area and affecting its tranquillity.

It was noted that there had been a discussion at the Westminster Parliament with the minister in question explaining that the matter of flying above the sea was about to be resolved. However, as part of the training it was a requirement to fly above land from time to time.

It was proposed that the Joint-Committee sends a letter noting their concerns regarding this intrusion.

DECISION:

Resolved to write a letter as a committee to express concern about the situation of aircraft from RAF Valley flying over the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint-committee held on 23 March 2021, as a true record, except for the following:

- A letter was written to the Welsh Government expressing concern about the second home situation and the response received from the Minister was shared.
- It was added that an apology had been received from Wenda Williams for the urgent meeting
- It was asked if there was an update on the Dark Skies Designation Item from 18 November, 2020 as there was no quorum to come to a decision during the meeting. Assurance was given that this item would return to the Joint-Committee at the next meeting.

7. NATIONAL ISSUES

The report was presented by the AONB Service Officer updating the Joint-Committee on national level issues as follows:

- Following the Senedd elections, it had been announced that Julie was the new minister with responsibility for the AONB.
- The National Designated Landscape Partnerships were mentioned and their aim was to assist collaboration between the areas.
- Information was given regarding the Capital Environmental Improvements Grant and noting that further details were available on the internet for the three projects in question.
- It was noted that there had been a cut in Natural Resources Wales finance this year, however, a supplementary fund had appeared to support projects dealing specifically with Nature and Biodiversity.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- It was asked for what purpose money from the new fund would be allocated as there were several local projects in progress.
- A request was made for further details regarding improvements in Trefor

In response, it was noted:

- That the fund was for biodiversity and ecosystems resilience and the AONB Unit was working on proposals to be submitted before Natural Resources Wales.
- The Trefor plans were initial plans only with an estimation of what was required such as tidying up, installing new benches, replacing railings.

8. UPDATE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

An update was given on the Sustainable Development Fund and attention was drawn to the expenditure namely that £87,500 had been claimed from the £100,000. It was explained that the underspend was as a result of projects being suspended due to Covid-19, however, some of the successful projects were shared with the Joint-Committee.

The Joint-Committee was informed that there was £100,000 in the fund again this year and thus far, with the projects accepted, there was £15,000 remaining. It was recommended that members of the Joint-Committee informed their organisations that there was money left.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- It was asked when the latest fund was opened for applications as only £15,000 was left, and where was the fund advertised.
- One member explained that there was money left as a result of the grants panel resolving to refuse an application from an organisation with substantial financial funds.
- It was suggested that the Joint-Committee should have an opportunity to consider applications or for the AONB Service Officer to share the framework steps with all the members so that they are aware of the criteria.

In response, it was noted:

- That the fund opened early to receive and approve applications so that applicants had sufficient time to deliver their projects and for the underspend risk to be lower.
- The fund was advertised widely in the area and information was shared with local councils.
- That applications were considered by the AONB unit and then by the Grants Panel, therefore the Joint-Committee had a voice here.
- Offering training to members could enable them to comment on the projects

9. DINAS DINLLE HILLFORT

A representative of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was welcomed to discuss the Dinas Dinlle Hillfort. Concern was raised about the current condition of the Hillfort and its deterioration due to erosion. It was added that the area was not part of the AONB, however, it had an historical importance for the whole area.

It was explained that the site had been excavated in the past in order to monitor erosion from the direction of the fields as a result of rainfall, and not from the sea. It was explained that the matter needed to be dealt with from an inland perspective. It was added that this was a process that had been happening for centuries and excavation was required before the deterioration got worse.

The National Trust representative gave an additional viewpoint, namely land management, that excavation was required to get as much information as possible about the site as it will be lost in the future. It was added that the area was eroding very quickly.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- Concern was expressed as the site was one of exceptional importance in relation to the area's history and the history of Wales.

- It was asked whether it was possible to install more large boulders in an effort to prevent the loss of the Hillfort.
- It was asked what the Joint-Committee could do to ensure that intervention was undertaken.
- It was suggested that a letter should be sent to the organisations that manage the site to express the Joint-Committee's views.
- It was proposed that Andrew Davidson, as an expert, should offer his expertise on the subject as it was an area full of archaeology and was important.

In response:

- It was agreed that the site was notable with an importance to Welsh history and the local area
- It was suggested that CADW was the contact point where any correspondence to express concern on the matter should be referred to, or the National Trust as managers.
- It was noted that it was possible to internally contact the YGC department for their opinion on the situation.
- Andrew Davidson agreed to offer his expertise.

DECISION

Resolved that the AONB Service Officer, Principal Archaeologist, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and a Representative from the National Trust would meet for further discussions with the Head of YGC regarding expressing the Joint-Committee's wishes to protect this site from damage.

10. LISTED AND TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS

Following a special meeting convened to discuss the planning application for Tan y Mynydd, the AONB Service Officer asked for the Joint-Committee's views and for any suggestions for the Gwynedd policy unit as it reviewed the current policy.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- Reference was made to Policy 7 (Snowdonia National Park Development Policy) noting that a similar one was required for applications in an AONB.
- It was noted that there were no room for the discretion of individual officers when it came to modernising a traditional house
- Reference was made to the hope of a Dark Skies designation in the AONB and this would not be possible if modern buildings with large windows were permitted.
- It was added that the situation with the Tan y Mynydd application indicated that a more robust policy was required so as there was no damage to a traditional building or the surrounding landscape.
- It was asked whether it was possible for the Joint-Committee members to give their views on relevant planning applications.

The AONB Service Officer added that he was trying to get additional planning guidance within the AONB and had raised this with the policy unit and therefore they intend to act on this.

DECISION

Resolved to adopt the Snowdonia Development Policy 7 when considering applications in the AONB from now on (namely the day of the meeting) and that it should be considered when reviewing Gwynedd planning policies.

11. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

The discussion on this item was led by the AONB Service Officer who reminded members that a system already existed whereby the planning department consults with the AONB unit in cases where there are applications within the area or close to the boundary, if they are likely to affect the area.

The planning system was explained further in relation to applications in the AONB, and it was emphasised that the Chair of the Llŷn AONB Joint Committee was entitled to call a meeting of a sub-group to discuss and submit formal comments on behalf of the Joint-Committee, if the application was likely to impact the AONB.

During the discussion, members raised the following matters:-

- Concern was expressed as cases had arisen in the past where members of the Joint Committee had not agreed with the opinion of the Llŷn AONB Officer or the Planning Officer.
- It was added that members of the Joint-Committee needed a right to convene a meeting as well as the Chair.
- It was felt that members of the Joint-Committee did not have a voice and there was no means for them to express an opinion on a contentious planning application.
- One member asked how many applications a week were relevant to the AONB, and was it possible to copy the comments of the AONB Service Officer for Joint-Committee members in order that we may respond.

In response, it was noted:

- That time was tight with applications and it was complex and holding additional meetings would add to the workload.
- Approximately 120 applications dealing with the AONB are received annually.
- There was concern with sharing observations and receiving observations back from individual members of the Joint-Committee as this would add excessively to the workload.

DECISION

It was resolved to add the following clause to the relevant part of the Constitution that was passed: .."Or, in exceptional cases, by 2 or 3 members of the Consultative Committee".

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 6.30pm.

CHAIR