

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK
STEERING GROUP HELD IN THE GUTHLAXTON COMMITTEE ROOM
ON WEDNESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2017 AT 9:30**

PRESENT

Cllr Huw Williams, H&BBC	Cllr HW
Cllr P Posnett MBE, LCC	Cllr PP
Cllr E Vardy, CBC (Chair)	Cllr EV
Anna Low, LCC	AL
Vicky Cormie, LCC	VC
Fiona Walker, LCC	FW
Claire Install, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust	CI
Chris Traill, CBC	CT
Dr Julie Attard, University of Leicester	JA
Ian Nelson, NWLDC	IN
John Everitt, National Forest Company	JE
John Howells, Ramblers Association / Leicestershire Local Access Forum	JH
Mark Fennel, CBC	MF
Martin Peters, Leicestershire Promotions	MP
Neil Rudge, Natural England	NR
Paul Tame, National Farmers Union	PT
Peter Tyldesley, Bradgate Park Trust	PTy
Sam Lattaway, National Forest Company (Vice-Chair)	SL

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Trevor Pendleton, NWLDC	Cllr TP
Michael Jeeves, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust	MJ
Roy Denney, Leicestershire Local Access Forum	RD

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 10TH MAY 2017

Members accepted the minutes of the meeting of the 10th May 2017 as a true record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr EV announced the good news that the bid had been successful and that everyone had played an integral part in delivering the bid. Special thanks to SL, JE and AL for all of their work.

5. HLF BID

SL had prepared a presentation (attached to minutes) regarding the HLF Landscape Partnership and how to move it forward.

SL delivered the presentation, including where the project is at now, the development phase, and the funding commitments.

While explaining the development phase, SL said that the partnership has gone from being challenged for not having strong partnerships in 2013, to being told that the strength of the partnership has been specifically highlighted as an important part of the 2017 bid's success. SL congratulated everybody. SL also said that they needed to drill down to the fine details of who's doing what and develop a fully costed business plan.

SL then went onto explain what this looks like and detailed the next key things to consider. A 'wow factor' interpretation project is among the projects that will need further development

SL advised that there were HLF forms to fill out in order to get permission to start the project and that confirmation of financial commitment to match funding was required.

With regard to match funding for the development phase, SL said that Local Authorities would need to provide written confirmation on headed paper that the money is committed in next year's budget and for 2019/20.

IN raised an issue in that, although an 'in principle' confirmation can be given, budgets can change during the year and that commitments made now are not necessarily guaranteed in the face of budget changes.

SL asked that everybody have as concrete confirmation of their match funding as they can get.

Cllr EV said that CBC would let him have that and CT confirmed this.

Cllr HW advised that it shouldn't be a problem.

AL agreed that LCC would be able to provide confirmation.

VC asked whether it made a difference who the confirmation came from.

SL said that it needed to be someone who has the power to make the commitment.

CT asked whether there was a holding account.

SL replied that it was easier to split contributions by financial year but that, if funding could only be secured in 2018/19, partners could give the whole payment in that year and the NFC would have to ensure that the correct amounts are carried across the two financial years.

CT then asked if they can contribute and add to the volunteer hours needed.

SL advised that they need to look at it in more detail but they can contribute volunteers and that these hours will need to be logged.

Cllr PP agreed with the budget and will remind the Cabinet later today to ensure that it is included in the forecast.

SL then went onto proof of ownership/leasehold requirements and asked that partners start this process as it may not be straightforward.

NR said that the implementation of works undertaken on protected sites needed to be processed early to avoid delays.

Cllr EV confirmed that CBC would provide proof of ownership

PTy said that it wasn't a problem for Bradgate. They'll just need to confirm ownership of land.

SL advised that the detailed project management structure would be the same as that presented at the 10th May meeting.

In regards to Governance, SL said that they will establish a Landscape Project Steering Group (LPSG). The members at the meeting today are strategic and the LPSG will be delivering the project. SL said that they will still have stakeholder and working groups but that the headings for the working groups will change to: (1) Community, History & Arts, (2) Natural Environment, and (3) Economy & Tourism sector.

SL then went on to say that to avoid confusion, they want to change the Steering Group name to 'Charnwood Forest Regional Park Board' to ensure a clear separation.

All were in agreement to change the name.

Members were then asked if they agreed to the establishment of the LPSG and to delegate the operational decision-making to the LPSG.

The group were all in agreement.

SL said that best practice was for the LPSG to have an independent chair. He said that the members should talk about any suitable candidates to approach.

Members were then asked if they were in agreement to have an independent chair and to delegate the recruitment of the LPSG chair to the Steering Group.

JE clarified that everyone was to think about potential nominees and that recruitment would be an open and transparent process.

Cllr EV replied that any ideas for someone independent and suitable should be fed back to AL, SL and himself.

SL added that the candidate having a strong link to Charnwood Forest would be especially good.

SL then moved onto the LPSG membership.

SL said that as CBC was the largest Borough Council, would NWLC & Hinckley be happy for CBC to represent District and Borough Councils as a whole.

IN and HW agreed.

JA, PTy, SL, MP all confirmed that they were happy for their areas to be included in the initial membership.

SL said that Charnwood Arts and Voluntary Action Leicestershire had been included as it was really important to engage the community of Leicester.

SL added that Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) also needed to be included. JH agreed.

SL then said that finding a single community representative for Charnwood Forest would be challenging and was something for the group to think about further before deciding on.

The group were asked if everybody agreed to the initial membership and for the Steering group to identify additional members as necessary.

The group were in agreement.

Cllr EV asked that if anybody had any ideas, then to let them know.

MP suggested that they keep the LPSG small.

JE said that it was a good starting point and that they needed to test the size and frequency of the group, how decisions are made and the communication between the groups.

SL then continued the presentation and discussed the Project Development Team, which would be hosted by the NFC. He advised that the job descriptions were already done and asked if the members were happy for the recruitment to be delegated to NFC and LPSG. He also asked if members agreed to provide desk space to project staff where possible for short-term 'hot desking'.

CBC and LCC confirmed desks would be made available. Other members of the group agreed that they would look into it.

SL then went through the remainder of the HLF Permission to Start form and said that a key element was about the procurement of goods and services. He said that the partnership would need to demonstrate value for money. The NFC's procurement policies would be used (as the hosting body) and have been approved by Defra. These require competitive tendering for all contracts. However, if there is only a single suitable trader and a clear case can be made for this, a single tender can be used.

CI asked if there was repeated work such as digging and the procurement has been done once, would they need to do it again or could they use the same.

SL advised that this was a delivery phase concern and that they will look at this nearer the time.

CT said that in the final meeting, they should be engaging people on a wider scale and look at joint communications.

SL said that they could look at publicising on lottery machines and giving discounted entry with lottery tickets; something to recognise and reward the contributions of lottery players.

PT asked if the survey of farmers and land owners would be after the event.

SL said that they were getting ideas of how grants can help land owners and that they will be a grant fund for this within the Delivery Phase. He said that the LPSG will talk to land owners in order to know how to shape this.

JE asked what the timeline was to get permission to start.

SL advised that it would take a few weeks to turn around and should be done by Christmas or New Year. He said that in anticipation, they would get recruitment packs ready for the New Year. He also advised that they hoped to stagger the interviews for the two posts and to have them both start from April 2018.

Cllr EV asked SL to send the presentation to everyone.

6. STAKEHOLDER FORUM EVENT

AL advised that she and SL had discussed the Stakeholder forum event and that they had a draft proposal.

AL said that the proposed timeline was January or February 2018 and that the event would be from 9:00-12:00 noon.

AL asked the members if they had any volunteers who could facilitate the workshops.

MP said that half an hour for the workshops was not long enough if there are to be large groups.

Cllr EV suggested that the end time is amended to 12:30pm so that the workshops can run for longer, if required. AL agreed to amend this and advised that attendees will also have the opportunity to put their ideas forward in a post-it exercise.

Cllr EV asked if everyone was happy with the proposal if the times are amended.

The group were all in agreement.

7. LAUNCH EVENT

JE said that there are a few reasons behind having a formal launch including: raising our profile with the general public; engaging stakeholders including potential candidates for the Independent Chair; engaging different partners; getting match funders involved; and getting HLF excited about the project.

JE then said that there was merit in a media focused launch event and that we should try to get Sir David Attenborough involved if his calendar allows.

JE proposed that a date is set and an A-lister like Sir David approached to increase publicity.

MP asked which bit we were launching.

JE advised that the project is live now. He then asked if they want a politician such as Michael Gove to be involved. JE said we need to consider what we are trying to achieve, how time critical it is and the scale of work involved.

Cllr EV suggested that a letter is sent to Sir David as soon as possible as this will steer the next actions such as setting a date.

Cllr EV also asked that everyone give it some thought and make any suggestions.

SL then stated that NFC will be leading the communications and media and that it would be better to have one point of contact.

Cllr EV asked if was all partners were happy with NFC being the one point of contact.

There were no objections.

JE summarised that NFC would write to Sir David as a starting point to getting a date for the launch or to determine whether it was a non-starter and move forward from there.

Cllr EV asked if everybody was happy with this.

The group were in agreement.

8. DATES AND VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Cllr EV said that he, AL and SL would discuss and come back with the date of the next meeting in order to move forward.

Cllr EV asked if that was OK with everybody and there were no objections.

9. AOB – WEB PRESENCE

AL said that LCC would continue to administer the Board meetings so it made sense for these minutes to be published on the county council's resources website; <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-partnerships/charnwood-forest-regional-park>. She suggested the minutes from the LPSG could be published on the NFC project website and that the two sites should link to each other.

CI asked whether the project would have its own website. SL confirmed that it would have a dedicated website in due course.

Cllr EV said that it had been a good meeting with decisions made and thanked members for attending.

The meeting concluded at 10:40.