



BOARD MEETING

10.30 am – Friday 14 June 2019

The Morritt Arms, Greta Bridge, County Durham

Board Members Present: David Hill (Chairman); David Alborough (Northumbrian Water); Amanda Anderson (Moorland Association); Richard Betton (Northern Hill Farming Panel); Jim Cokill (Durham Wildlife Trust); David Gray (Open Seat); Elliott Lorimer (Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership); Amanda Miller (RSPB); Gary Smith (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority); Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission); Chris Woodley-Stewart (North Pennines AONB Partnership);

Others present: Allie Hesketh (NFU); Ian Proudler (LNP Curlew Project Funding Officer); Clare Steward (Environment Agency); Gill Thompson (Northumberland National Park Authority); Jim Wardill (RSPB)

1. Apologies

Paul Burgess (Nidderdale AONB Partnership); Neil Kilgour (Open Seat); Ben Lamb (Tees Rivers Trust); Fiona Morris (Environment Agency); Laurie Norris (NFU); Christine Venus (Natural England); Pauline Wall (Northumberland National Park Authority)

2. Draft position statement on vertebrate control Amanda Miller gave a brief introduction to the work of the Curlew group in developing an advice note, and the potential for developing a 'position statement' on vertebrate control. It was noted that the advice note had been shared with farmers at the HNV Farming Group and been well received. It was also being shared with a number of landowners. In discussion, a number of detailed points were made about the advice note. It was agreed that a small number would be printed, with the document also available electronically via the LNP website - as a complete document or as individual sections. It was agreed that the next steps would be:

- a. Comments on the advice note should be sent to Chris Tomson (chris.tomson@rspb.org.uk) by 1 July;
- b. The final draft would then be sent to Gary Smith for formatting (LNP logo, map etc) prior to publication;
- c. The Curlew group would finalise the Communications Plan for the project;

There was also support for the idea of preparing a position statement on vertebrate control. It was, therefore, agreed that Amanda Miller would produce a draft for circulation to all the Board members. Following those comments, a final draft would be brought to the next Board meeting.

3. Adder project

Kelly Harmar introduced the report, and the proposal that the LNP should commit to a programme of survey work to bolster the national 'Make the Adder Count' survey programme, which had focused largely on sites in the south of England. In discussion, it was noted that a number of local survey projects were underway and could usefully feed in to this work. The Board agreed the proposal to set up a steering group to coordinate the project.

4. Data sharing

The Board considered the report, prepared by Gary Smith, about making the LNP's data more widely available. The Board noted that there was no intention to try to become a 'data centre', simply to put LNP data into the public domain for those that wish to use it. The Board agreed that the starting point should be that data collected by the LNP would be made available unless there was a very good reason not to do so.

5. Update on other LNP projects

HNV farming – the group had met on 13 June. Recent events had made it impracticable to plan a formal launch of the ADAS report without a serious risk of its import being subsumed by political developments. In the meantime, the NFU and YDNPA were developing a 'Communication Plan' to promote the Report at a variety of local events over the next 6 months. They would also seek a meeting with the relevant Defra Minister and or Tim Farron MP, as the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hill Farming. It was also suggested that the LNP might look to second a member of staff from Defra to help drive forward the work on HNV farming.

Hill Farm Training – through the pilot project in Northumberland, a locally-adapted version of the FCL Hill Farming Training project has been developed by Ema Caskie at NNPA. A number of farmers have been trained up to run courses in NNP, NPAONB & YDNP. Two events on farms in the Hadrian's Wall area of the NNP have been arranged for the autumn and winter. There was some concern that organisations would not pay enough per day needed for the training to be viable. This was exacerbated by the fact that the Foundation for Common Land was seeking a commission for each course. It was proposed that Ema Caskie and Adrian Shepherd meet FCL representatives to resolve this.

The Board noted that there was still considerable uncertainty about the Defra funding of 'tests and trials' for the new ELMS. The National Audit Office had recently published a highly critical report: [Early review of the new farming programme - National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#).

6. Financial update

The Board noted the financial position. It was agreed that Gary Smith would invoice the AONB Partnerships and NP authorities for their funding contributions for 2019/20.

7. Information sharing

Two reports had recently been published that might be of interest to Board Members: [Green Brexit](#) – by the Soil Association; and, [Fork in the Road](#) – a report of the journey round the UK by members of the RSA Food, Farming & Countryside Commission

8. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

It was noted that Amanda Anderson and Neil Kilgour had given apologies for the last meeting. The minutes were otherwise agreed to be a true record.

It was agreed to wind up the work of the Great Upland Forest Group, and the production of a natural capital document for the Northern Upland Chain.

9. Any other business

The Board were reminded that the next meeting would coincide with the Annual Forum. Suggestions for themes or speakers would be very welcome. One possible theme might be 'Nature Recovery Networks'.

10. Date of next meeting and Annual Forum

6 September 2019.

AGREED ACTIONS

	NAME	ACTION
1.	All	To provide any comments on the draft Curlew advice note to Chris Tomson by 1 July.
2.	Amanda Miller	To send the final agreed Curlew advice note to Gary Smith
3.	Gary Smith	To format the Curlew advice note (adding LNP logo etc) and arrange for publication (on the website and in hard copy).
4.	Amanda Miller	To work with the Curlew project group to produce a communications plan.
5.	Amanda Miller	To circulate a draft position statement on vertebrate control to the Board for comment. The final draft to come to the Board meeting in September.
6.	Paul Burgess	To set up a steering group to take forward the Adder conservation project.
7.	Richard Betton, Adrian Shepherd & NFU	To produce a Communication Plan for promoting the ADAS report
8.	Robert Mayhew	To continue the development of the Hill Farming Training Initiative and arrange the participants for the first 2 courses for the winter of 19/20
9.	Adrian Shepherd, Ema Caskie	To discuss the MOA for the Hill farm Training with the Foundation for Common Land
10.	Gary Smith	To invoice the AONB Partnerships and NP Authorities for 2019/20 funding contributions
11.	Gary Smith	To arrange for the minutes of the meeting on 8 March to be amended to include apologies from Amanda Anderson and Neil Kilgour. ✓
12.	All	To let Gary Smith have suggestions for topics/speakers for the Annual Forum