



## **BOARD MEETING**

**10:00 am – Thursday 3 December 2020**

**Via Video Conferencing**

**Board Members Present:** David Hill (Chairman); Chris Woodley-Stewart (North Pennines AONB Partnership); David Alborough (Northumbrian Water); Amanda Anderson (Moorland Association); Richard Betton (Northern Hill Farming Panel); Jim Cokill (Durham Wildlife Trust); David Gray (Open Seat); Neil Kilgour (Open Seat); Ben Lamb (Tees Rivers Trust); Elliott Lorimer (Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership); Iain Mann (Nidderdale AONB); Laurie Norris (NFU); Gary Smith (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority); Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission); Christine Venus (Natural England)

**Others present:** Robert Mayhew (Northumberland National Park Authority); Ian Proudler (LNP Curlew Project Funding Officer); Tony Serjeant (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority); David Morris (RSPB)

### **1. Apologies**

Jim Wardill (RSPB); Fiona Morris (Environment Agency); Pauline Wall (Northumberland NPA); Jim Cokill joined the meeting after item 3.

### **2. Curlew Project**

Ian Proudler gave an update on the progress of the Curlew Project to date. The contract for the Funding Development Officer post is due to finish at the end of December 2020. Since September the project has made good progress, and is on course to produce a 'shovel-ready' set of proposals and costings before the end of December.

The NLHF has announced that it will resume accepting applications for grants from £100,000-£250,000 and £250,000-£5million from 8 February. However, it is expected that we would need to submit a fresh EoI for the Curlew Project, and it is not yet clear what new criteria will be used to judge EoIs and grant applications (although it is likely that economic benefits will feature more strongly).

Tony Serjeant then talked the board through the four options put forward to manage the project after the end of December. Following considerable discussion, the Board agreed that the best way forward was option 4:

- *The NUCLNP seeks to progress the Project utilising existing resources: For example, the LNP's Curlew Working Group could convene on a less frequent (but regular) basis to review funding opportunities on the horizon and identify elements of the Project that could be taken forward and advise the Board.*

The Board members thanked Ian Proudler for his tremendous contribution to the development of the project and to building such a wide-ranging coalition of potential partners.

**Action:** *DH to review and refresh the membership of the Curlew Working Group, and invite representation from the farmer/landowner interests'.*

### **3. Proposal on ‘What the Hills are worth’**

Richard Betton presented the paper that was provided before the meeting along with the ‘Confidential’ EFTEC Scoping report from Ian Dickie.

The scoping study sets out the details of the potential approaches to natural capital accounting, the ways to approach accounting to support different decision-making purposes, and an estimate of the time and resources required.

In discussion, the Board:

- approved the scoping study for payment;
- identified a number of desired changes to the technical detail set out in Table A1.
- agreed to fund the development of a set of natural capital accounts, with the funding coming from the deferral of the Nature Recovery Planning work previously approved, the residual funding allocated to the Curlew Project; and, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.
- authorised Gary Smith, Adrian Shepherd and David Alborough to negotiate the letting of a suitable contract.

**Action: GS to arrange payment for the scoping study;**

***The scoping study to be shared with Ed Milbank for comment;***

***GS, AS and DA to negotiate the letting of a suitable contract for the creation of a set of natural capital accounts.***

### **4. Initial Learning from ELMS Tests & Trials**

The Board noted and commented on the initial learning from the 3 Tests underway, and the learning from the established PBR Trial in Wensleydale.

Northumberland NPA – 6 of the 9 workshops have been held. Delays due to Covid-19. Workshops scheduled for spring 2021. Engaging with Newcastle University. Commitment from Land Managers has been fantastic.

3 AONB’s – working together on research and data evidence gathering. During September and October 2020, Nethergill Associates and the ELM Advisors have visited each of the farmer participants to present and discuss the initial findings of the farm business analysis.

In January 2021, each AONB will be holding a meeting of their respective group of farmer participants to share thinking on the test process so far and to discuss the details on ELM, expected to be issued by Defra before Christmas. A final report is due for completion by the end of April 2021.

**Action: CV to investigate potential Habitats Regulations Assessment to ascertain whether proposed approaches are capable of being applied in relation to European protected sites;**

### **5. Strategies**

At the last meeting it was identified that there are so many policies, strategies and initiatives being developed nationally and locally that it is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers and landowners to know what any of it means for them. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a diagram or similar to show the current framework of strategies and plans that relate to the LNP area.

Iain Mann had produced an initial diagram for the Board to consider. In discussion, Board members raised the need to: reflect the critical role of farmers/landowners in shaping and delivering policies; add Biodiversity Net Gain as a funding mechanism; and, make clear that farm viability is part of the desired outcomes on the ground.

**Action: IM to revise the diagram to reflect the comments, and bring back to a future Board meeting.**

## **6. Update on Cumbria & Northumberland LNRS Pilots**

Chris Woodley-Stewart gave a brief verbal update on the Cumbria and Northumberland LNR Pilots. Mapping and statements of biodiversity priorities are currently being prepared. A 'convener' is being recruited by Natural England for each pilot area to make sure that all relevant local stakeholders (farmers, landowners etc) are engaged in the process in of drawing up a draft set of Environmental Land Management (ELM) priorities for the LNRS area.

## **7. Update on Nature Recovery Plans**

Chris Woodley-Stewart gave a brief verbal update on the work that the 3 AONB Partnerships and the 2 National Park Authorities are doing to create a create a single, coherent, over-arching set of priorities and objectives for nature recovery across the five National Landscapes. In light of the pressures of resourcing the LNRS pilots and understanding the level of detail they will go into, the work was now moving at a slower pace than originally envisaged, but some progress is expected in the next few months.

## **8. Financial update**

The Board noted the current financial position and pre-existing commitments. These have now been superseded by the agreement to fund the 'What the Hills are Worth' work (item 3).

## **9. Meeting dates and arrangements for 2021**

Discussion on whether to hold the board meetings in person or via video conferencing. Overall consensus was that it would be good to get back to holding at least some meetings in person, maybe at different locations around the LNP. However, it is likely that at least the first couple of meetings next year will still need to be by VC.

The Board agreed that the Annual Forum was likely to be better attended if held by VC.

***Action: Secretariat to doodlepoll dates for Board Meetings in 2021, and for the Annual Forum.***

## **10. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes were agreed to be a true record. All the actions had been completed.

## **11. Any other business**

A question was asked about the length of the appointment of those Board members elected to the two 'Open seats'.

***Action: Secretariat to find out the information and report back.***

## **12. Date of next meeting**

Next meeting will be by VC in March 2021. Doodlepoll for dates will follow shortly.

Agenda items to include: Nature Recovery Plans (Chris WS);

## AGREED ACTIONS

	NAME	ACTION
1.	David Hill	<b>Curlew Project</b> - DH to review and refresh the membership of the Curlew Working Group, and invite representation from the farmer/landowner interests'
2.	Gary Smith	<b>'What the Hills are worth'</b> - GS to arrange payment for the scoping study;
3.		<b>'What the Hills are worth'</b> - The scoping study to be shared with Ed Milbank for comment;
4.	Gary Smith, Adrian Shepherd, David Alborough	<b>'What the Hills are worth'</b> - GS, AS and DA to negotiate the letting of a suitable contract for the creation of a set of natural capital accounts.
5.	Christine Venus	<b>Elms Tests &amp; Trials</b> - CV to investigate potential Habitats Regulations Assessment to ascertain whether proposed approaches are capable of being applied in relation to European protected sites;
6.	Iain Mann	<b>Strategies</b> - IM to revise the diagram to reflect the comments, and bring back to a future Board meeting.
7.	Josie Wilson	Secretariat to doodlepoll dates for Board Meetings in 2021, and for the Annual Forum.
8.	Josie Wilson	Length of appointment for Open Seats - Secretariat to find out the information and report back.