



Minutes of NUCLNP Board Meeting held on Thursday 16th June 2022, 10.30am to 12.30pm

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

Board Members Present:

David Hill (Environment Bank) (Chair)
Amanda Anderson (Moorland Association) – attended virtually
Richard Betton (Northern Hill Farming Panel)
Robert Carr (Environment Agency)
Neil Kilgour (Abbeystead Estate)
Ben Lamb (Tees Rivers Trust)
Robert Mayhew (Northumberland NPA)
Gary Smith (Yorkshire Dales NPA)
Ross Smith (Northumbrian Water)
Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission)
Christine Venus (Natural England)

In Attendance

Gill Thompson (Northumberland NPA)
Jayne Longlands (Northumberland NPA)
Helen Avery (Green Finance Institute)
Liam McAleese (Esmée Fairbairn Foundation)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular the two guest speakers. All those at the meeting introduced themselves to the room.

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from; Elliot Lorimer (Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership), Chris Woodley-Stewart (North Pennines AONB), David Gray (GSC Grays), Jim Cokill (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust), Pauline Wall (Northumberland NPA), Iain Mann (Nidderdale AONB), Stuart Pudney (Northumbrian Water), Clare Steward (Environment Agency), Jim Wardill (RSPB), Laurie Norris (NFU).

2. Minutes of the last NUCLNP meeting held on Thursday 10th March 2022

It was noted that, in future, Stuart Pudney from Northumbrian Water would be attending some Board Meetings, with Ross Smith to attend others.

With regards to the Great North Forest Group, it was stated that we needed to be clear on the remit of this group. Gary Smith reported that the bid, led by North Pennines AONB had been successful, however they were waiting to recruit a lead for this project. Three woodland projects would take place over the LNP area and further discussions would be required in liaison with Crispin Thorn. Crispin said that collaboration was required in order to reach a co-ordinated outcome.

Richard Betton suggested that a site-specific approach which was relevant to the area in question would be required.

Life Wader Programme; it was noted that the project manager for the Tweed would be starting in July. This item therefore needed to be pushed back until later in the year.

The Minutes of the last NUCLNP meeting held on Thursday 10th March 2022 were approved and seconded as a true and correct record.

Actions:

1. Partnership Woodland conversations to continue to be fed into the group.
2. Routine NUCLNP updates to be provided in written format and circulated in advance of the meeting.

3. Esmee Fairbairn Foundation: 'Our Natural World' strategy: Liam McAleese

Liam McAleese, Director of Our Natural World for the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, highlighted the strength and depth of funding available via the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation - with a £56.1 billion spend in the previous year.

He noted the work which had been commissioned within the NUCLNP area and suggested that collaboration would be beneficial for future projects. As there were less resources in the North of England, then joined-up working would assist with levelling-up strategies. It was suggested that members consider nature-based financing in the UK via the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

To unlock funding, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation very much needed to work with landowners, public sector bodies and other stakeholders in order to achieve this aim.

Following Liam McAleese's presentation, the following comments were made:-

- Neil Kilgour queried why only 6% of applications were approved; he considered that some good applicants could potentially miss out. Liam said that he was happy to assist with applications and would reply to queries from those who required support. It was noted that collaborations were taking place (such as the one on Hadrian's Wall).
- Richard Betton suggested that one size did not fit all and that outcomes may not be achieved; Liam noted that people were at the heart of communities and their decision making. The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation were working with the Green Finance Institute to

seek appropriate solutions and detailed community engagement guides were available to assist.

- Speaking from experience, Gary Smith noted that the Esmée Foundation were excellent to work with. Gary thanked Liam for all the help and support provided to him.

4. Green Finance Institute – Who are we and what do we do?: Helen Avery

Helen Avery, Director of Nature Programmes and GFI Hive, gave a presentation on the Green Finance Institute. She noted that their main aim was to work on the ground to find solutions and mobilise outcomes.

An estimated £56 billion was required to fill the finance gap and opportunities were highlighted for building projects from the ground-up. Helen said that the key to opening up opportunities was to gain understanding of the issues faced; various forums, such as hosting the secretariat for the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), and the UK National Consultation Group, would assist, and a toolkit was available.

Discussions ensued and the following points made:-

- The Chair asked if the TNFD would become mandatory? It was noted that the Government had put financial monies into this, however the aim was for UK Corporates to sign up for TNFD, which would then lead to a government mandate.
- Richard Betton asked where the tenant farmer sat in the great scheme of things; Helen noted this was on her radar. Helen said she would consult further with Richard when particular advice within this area of work was required. Liam noted that the Tenant Farmer Association had been included as part of discussions held through his area of work.
- Neil Kilgour said that some of the old traditional buildings may not be rentable in years to come; village halls, as well as the period of time for community income penalties, were also noted. Helen replied that she considered risk-sharing had been well thought through. With regards to listed buildings, loans would not be available in some cases if they were felt not to be energy sustainable.

5. NUC Natural Capital Account – What Next? How do we use this to inform decision making?

It was noted that a report had previously been circulated by Gary Smith.

Robert Mayhew felt that we needed to place a value on biodiversity and so would welcome a separate meeting to discuss this area of work further. Crispin Thorn added that it may be worth inviting United Utilities (or similar organisations) to join the meeting and gain their views on this.

The Chair queried some of the figures in Table 1 - it was noted that these were over a period of 60 years. Gary reported that the costs to society of maintaining current systems added up to a lot more than the income raised through selling livestock; in addition, farmers were financially currently operating at a loss.

Gary Smith said that peatland costs needed to be fixed, which would help achieve a positive value as opposed to a negative one. Richard Betton suggested that an increase in peat bogs would result in a negative carbon footprint over time.

Actions:

1. It was agreed to arrange a separate session on the NUC Natural Capital Account

6. Update on Other LNP Projects

(a) Curlew Update

Gill Thompson reported, noting that the RSPB Curlew LIFE Project was taking place at Geltside and Hadrian's Wall over five years (Tina Taylor was the Officer for this project). Current monitoring effort: 25 active volunteers, 4963 hectares monitored, 38 survey plots/24 farms.

Each site has two surveys, then if thought to be a territory, weekly visits to determine success of the nests. In addition, this year there is a Senior Research Assistant undertaking nest monitoring and radio tagging of chicks and adults both at RSPB Geltsdale and in the Hadrian's Wall project area. This should give more information about breeding success/productivity. So far:-

- 26 nests found (13 Hadrian's Wall)
- 27 chicks radio tagged (14 HW)
- 4 adults radio tagged

Habitat improvements made to date have been rush management, scrape creation and shelterbelt removal.

It was the 1900's Anniversary of Hadrian Wall so some joined up work on people engagement will be taking place with relation to this project, likely to be based at the Sill.

Gill noted that future joint conversations with the Yorkshire Dales National Park (and the other PL's) would be beneficial to find out what ringing studies and other work was underway.

The Chair asked if silage making could be controlled to help support curlew nesting. Neil Kilgour noted that, with looking at 49 farms in Bowland, only 3 nests had resulted in fledgling success; he felt the curlew situation was a horror story.

Robert Mayhew suggested that continued discussions and joint working with the Curlew Project would be beneficial.

7. Information Sharing/Intelligence

(a) Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission: Representation

Prior to the meeting, Iain Mann from Nidderdale AONB had provided a written report for the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission as follows:-

- “I sit on the Commission’s Land, Water, Nature & Food Panel, initially to represent Nidderdale and Howardian Hills AONBs and Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors NPAs, but also to represent LNP if members are happy for me to do so Yes
- Y&H Climate Commission is “an independent advisory body set up to bring actors from the public, private and third sectors together to support and guide ambitious climate actions across the region
- Land, Water, Nature & Food Panel is one of 6 panels that focus on specific elements within the Commission’s Action Plan
- Aim is to produce a series of position statements covering areas such as Creating a secure, sustainable, regional urban and rural food system and Achieving nature’s recovery to help drive required changes.”

In addition to this, he also provided a Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) update:-

- “£617k in grants offered so far, covering 61 projects. Number of these completed in Year 1, but also includes multiyear projects. Approx. £1.3M grant funding available in total across 3 years of programme. Looking to develop further strategic projects for habitat/species conservation, access/education, etc. We also have 2 on-going FiPL-funded Curlew recovery projects.”

Elliot Lorimer of the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership had also provided a FiPL update, as follows:-

- “We now have over 50 agreements in place with likelihood of more being approved next week. We have a programme budget of c.£1.2m for 22/23 and c.£850k for 23/24 – we have committed almost 50% of 22/23 budget so far.
- At present, average grant agreement size is approx. £15k, which was proving to be a challenge in terms of administration with only a small programme team. Therefore, like Nidderdale, we are looking to develop more strategic, landscape-scale and/or estate-wide projects. We too have one Curlew (and other waders) conservation related project on-going, with another involving a group of farmers in Craven district (in both Forest of Bowland and Yorkshire Dales) under development.”

With relation to the North Pennines AONB, Richard Betton said that half of FiPL projects had been submitted so they were well on-target. He added that boundary restoration was taking place for small land holders, rather than for commercial farmers.

Northumberland FiPL; Robert Mayhew noted that this had been well received by land managers, but a lot of hard work was taking place behind the scenes.

Robert Mayhew said he was aware that Nature Recovery monies were reducing substantially. The Chair observed the £350 million currently being provided by the government in this area, although he was mindful of the high levels of investment required (as stated in Helen's report).

Action: agreed to include a FiPL Update at future NUCLNP meetings.

8. Financial Update (paper attached)

This agenda item had previously been circulated by Robert Mayhew.

Robert noted that all Park contributions had been received and thanked all Partners.

9. Any Other Business

(a) Website Updates

The importance of keeping the NUCLNP Website fresh was mentioned.

Action: member contributions were required in order to update the website (with Gary Smith's report to be included).

(b) UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Robert Carr noted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (80% revenue, 20% capital), with nature recovery being included as part of this. The fund would be signed off this Summer, with payments to follow over three years. Online forms were available for those who wished to apply.

10. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 6th September 2022 (virtually)

It was noted that we were trying to find a date for our December 2022 meeting.

Action: the December 2022 meeting be moved to take place in January 2023 – a Doodle Poll would follow to obtain availability.

Liam and Helen were thanked for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was drawn to a close at 12.30pm.

Signed:

Date: :