

Blackdown Hills Parish Network

AGM Minutes & Annual report to the Network Thursday 10 November 2022 at 7.30 pm Otterford Parish Hall

Present:

Steering group

Heather Stallard (Chair, Hemyock)
Mike Canham (Otterford PC)
Daniel Lazar (Membury PC)
Ken Pearson (Churchstanton PC, Stockland cl)
Graham Long (Upottery PC)
Bob Nelson (Broadhembury PC)
Alison Weekes (Clayhidon PC)
Catherine Bass (Co-ordinator, Culmstock)

Parish reps

Paul Spearing (Chardstock)
Vicky Whitworth (Chardstock)
Ian Morgan (Stockland)
Tim Youngs (AONB)
David Shaylor (Buckland St Mary)
Charles Silverlight (West Buckland)
Karen Street (Neroche)
Katie Thompson (Yarcombe)
Adrian Lausch (Membury)

Apologies

Sarah Dawes (Monkton)
Claudia Napier (Sheldon)
John Harrison (Corfe)
Tim Pointing (Uffculme)
John Barrow (Dunkeswell)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Monkton, Corfe and Sheldon, with post meeting apologies received from Dunkeswell and Uffculme.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 11 November 2021, previously circulated, were agreed unanimously 1°BN 2°DL

There were no matters arising.

3. Report from the Chair:

HS commented that it had been a relief to be able to conduct most meetings face to face this year, following the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Two important events happened in the year which will affect some parishes in the Network, the first being the introduction of Unitary status for Somerset which will change the focus from two tiered government with Local Authorities sitting between the County Council and parishes. Instead there will be Local Community Networks to bring together Somerset Unitary Councillors and Officers with Town, City and Parish Councils, Health, Police, Voluntary Sector and local groups to share views and information. The second important event was the outcome of the by-election in June for the Tiverton and Honiton constituency, previously served by Conservative MP Neil Parish, and now by Liberal Democrat Richard Foord. The other BHPN MPs are Conservatives Rebecca Pow and Marcus Fysh. The Steering Group is actively seeking a meeting with the MPs early in the New Year.

The Steering Group has focussed principally on the Climate Change agenda, actively feeding in to the AONB Climate Action Plan. The key point to realise is that we can only measure how we are doing if we are able to capture good baseline data from which to work. The BHPN has already contributed to the Carbon Impact Tool developed at Exeter and Bristol Universities. The next goal is to obtain funding to purchase a heat sensing IR camera to share with parishes to enable householders to identify heat loss locations in their homes.

The BHPN has recommended that the AONB Building Design Guide is updated to emphasise energy saving measures which can reduce the carbon footprint. Parishes are urged to insist on high standards in new builds to ensure that future emissions are reduced as far and as fast as possible.

Graham Long has remained the broadband champion for the BHPN; it is clear that Devon and Somerset, through the mismanagement of Connecting Devon & Somerset, is still years behind most of the country in the roll out of Ultrafast broadband and consumers will have to wait some time for full fibre to their premises.

The Steering Group maintains a watching brief on Traffic, Transport and Highways. A growing problem is the number of Diversion signs in operation at any one time with little indication as to which particular set of

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signs relates to the numerous works in progress, signs are frequently left behind after work is completed creating further confusion.

The BHPN has three elected members to represent network interests on the AONB Management Board. These are currently Bob Nelson, Mike Canham and Graham Long. Bob Nelson was recently elected as Chair of the AONB Management group and prefers to relinquish the direct representative role. Daniel Lazar was co-opted in his place. The next full elections are in 2024.

HS announced that Catherine Bass has decided to step back from the Co-ordinator role which she has occupied since the publication of the BHPN Community Plan in 2011, and thanked her for the work she has done in supporting the Steering Group. Catherine will remain as a member of the steering group.

4. Presentation of accounts, copy attached. CB reported that there had been a small increase in parish subscriptions for the year ended 31/3/2022, due to a new member and an increased subscription from another parish. Apart from admin costs, website and online communication costs are the major item of expenditure. There will be a concerted push to increase membership which has remained at approximately half of the eligible parishes in the AONB area for several years. The accounts were unanimously approved.

1°AW 2°KS

5. Election of Steering Group

Current members are

Heather Stallard	Hemyock	MDDC
Bob Nelson	Broadhembury	EDDC (elected BHPN rep, now chair of AONB MG)
Graham Long	Upottery	EDDC (elected BHPN rep to AONB MG)
Mike Canham	Otterford	SWTD (elected BHPN rep to AONB MG)
Daniel Lazar	Membury	EDDC (co-opted BHPN co-opted rep to AONB MG)
Ken Pearson	Churchstanton	SWTD & Stockland EDDC
Alison Weekes	Clayhidon	MDDC
Alex Stevens	Upottery	EDDC
Catherine Bass	Culmstock	MDDC

The current steering group was unanimously re-elected.

1°TY 2°KT

HS invited interested attendees to volunteer for the Steering group, reps Paul Spearing (Chardstock) and Katie Thompson (Yarcombe) were both interested and will be contacted after the AGM.

6. Introduction of Executive Officer
The steering group advertised throughout the network for an Executive Officer to replace the Co-ordinator role vacated by Catherine Bass. Following interview, Adrian Lausch (Membury clerk) has been appointed to the role.
7. Proposed amendment of the current Constitution.
Several minor amendments were circulated prior to the meeting, clarifying details regarding representation on the AONB management group, membership criteria, quoracy at general meetings and reporting of plans and activities. A copy of the unanimously agreed amended Constitution is appended. 1°KP 2°CB
8. Presentation of the BHPN Purpose document
BN presented this document which supplements the Constitution. Adopted unopposed 1°DL 2°AW
A copy of the document is appended.
9. Presentation of the BHPN 2023 Aims and Intentions Plan
MC presented this plan describing a range of objectives with attached target completion dates for the steering group to take forward in 2023. The plan was agreed in principle with minor amendments to be added prior to circulation.

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TY, AONB, commented that this accords well with principles of open accountability and will raise the profile of the BHPN. CL, Cllr, described this as an excellent document encapsulating the virtues of the Network model. A copy of the final document is appended.

Adopted unopposed.

1°HS 2°CL

10. Presentation by Chardstock Ecogroup, Founding and Funding an Ecogroup. Speakers Paul Spearing and Vicky Whitworth gave an interesting guide to the development and current activities of their local Ecogroup. Slides appended.

11. AOB

- a. Govt Rural Living Costs consultation, responses for to BHPN by Nov 14 please to Graham Long.
- b. Govt Boundary Commission consultation - Individual comments online by Dec 5 or to BHPN

HS thanked all attendees for their contributions, Otterford Parish Hall for the tea & coffee and Churchinford Community Shop for fruit juice & edibles. The meeting closed at 21.00.