

**MEETING OF THE
COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD –**

**FOLLOWED BY THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL
LANDSCAPE BOARD**

**HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COTSWOLD DISTRICT
COUNCIL, TRINITY ROAD, CIRENCESTER GL7 1PX
TUESDAY 24th JUNE 2025, 10:00am**

Present

Nigel Adcock (NG)
Rebecca Charley (Vice Chair, RC)
Paul Crossley (PC))
Amanda Davis (AD)
Ben Dent (BD)
Andrea Graham (AG)
Liz Hodges (LH)
Graham Hopkins (GH)
Doug Hulyer (DH)
Cate Le Grice Mack (CM)
Brendan McCarthy (Chair, BM)
Rosie Pearson (RP)
Liz Reason (LR)
Isabel Ross (IR)
Ray Sanderson (RS)
Ben Stokes (BS)
John Swanton (JS)
Sarah Whalley-Hoggins (SWH)
James Williams (JW)

Also in Attendance

Rebecca Waite (RW)
Magda Glanowska (MG)
Fred Smith (FS)
Mark Connelly (MC)
Rebecca Jones (RJ)
Della Morris (DM)
Michele Holden (MH)
Alana Hopkins (AH)
Chris Swarder (observing)

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- Apologies – apologies were received from
Jo Barker
Chris Brant
David Broad
Brendan Costelloe

Sue Crawford
Ellie Fujioka
Martin Horwood
David Powell
Margaret Reid
Martin Smith
Martin Brown
Matt Darby
Katherine Chesson
Juliet Layton

- Introductions and announcements – The Chair introduced Chris Swarder (observing) who has recently applied to join the Board as a Secretary of State appointed member.

The Chair welcomed James Williams who has recently joined the Board representing Wick & Abson Parish Council.

The Chair also thanked those Board members whose time on the Board has concluded since the last meeting, this included Paul Hodgkinson, Emma Sims, and Alastair Adams.

As part of the introduction, the Chair reminded Board members that attendance is recorded and all members should do their best to attend or send apologies in advance, and he reminded all Board members to submit their completed Related Party Transaction forms to Della Morris by the stated deadline.

- Declarations of interest – no interests were declared.
- Public questions – there were no public questions.

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2025

- Decision - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Meeting held on 25 February 2025 be approved as a correct record.
- Actions Arising – all actions arising were either completed or in progress, the CEO ran through a quick verbal update.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – 20 MAY 2025

- The Board noted the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2025.

4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

People

Starters/leavers -

Scott Brown has left and taken up a role with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trusts.

Olivia Blackwell has taken up the role of Farming Engagement Lead

We are recruiting to find a new Farming Engagement Officer.

Nina Stubbington's contract concluded and she has moved back closer to home and started a new role.

Ros Marsden was approaching the end of her contract within the Everyone's Evenlode team, and has now taken up a new role at Creative Sustainability in Stroud. RW announced that she has passed her probationary period as Chief Executive.

We are recruiting for four roles currently:

1. Business Support Officer
2. FiPL Farming Engagement Officer
3. Grants Coordinator (Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF))
4. Water Restoration Officer (funded by a substantial grant from the Water Restoration Fund)

Five new Secretary of State-appointed Board members are also being sought. There were 75 applicants, shortlisted to 11, with interviews held soon.

Property

The office move is now complete, and the lease at Greystones Farm is terminated.

Fundraising

We (led by James Webb) have successfully bid for £249,929 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, for Caring for the Cotswolds. The new role recruitment will manage this.

We (led by James Webb) are still progressing the Landscape Connections bid – in partnership with National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The overall application is in, and we are now bidding for £250,000 to support a development phase. The bid will be submitted in July.

We (led by James Webb) are also working on another significant bid, in partnership with Creative Sustainability and others to NLHF for a climate-themed engagement programme – the Great Big Climate Circus.

James Webb is also working on the 'value add' document – which RW described as a strong piece of work. The Chair encouraged local authority board members to promote this document once it is released, and to stress the importance of the value of CNL to local authorities.

Access and volunteers

RW introduced Sarah West – the new Head Warden. Thanks were offered to the outgoing Head Warden, Mike Cripps. The Wardens' annual conference was on Friday 20th June – with an outstanding attendance. RW offered a quick review of warden activity in 2024/25 which included 55,352 hours of work (which at minimum wage would equate to a value of £675,000), 373 active wardens.

Comments:

- RP asked about diversity re: S.O.S Board member applications. RW replied that thanks to a concerted effort in the recruitment process, this has been

better than previously. There was more ethnic diversity, an improved gender balance, and some younger applicants. • The Chair offered congratulations on the office move. • CM commended the value add document. • AD requested that parish and town council be sent the value add document as well. • The Chair noted the visibility of the warden's work on paths and trails around the Cotswolds. • AD vocalised a formal vote of thanks to the wardens for the minutes.	
Decision:	Actions Arising:
The Board noted the update.	1. Ensure all local authority Board members are notified when the Value Add document has been shared – as a reminder for them to share it on. 2. Sarah West to prepare a presentation for the next Board meeting in October.

5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

RW gave an overview of the 2024/25 year-end Key Performance Indicators, highlighting that they require review for 2025/26 – some in the current KPI set have worked well, others a little less so. She also detailed how most of the KPIs which work well have encouraged improvements – both culturally and in terms of external relationships. She stressed the importance of a 'golden thread' running through all strategic CNL documents – through the KPIs, work programme, Management Plan, and business plan.

Comments:	
• SWH noted the importance of financial detail as part of the KPIs, and asked if CNL should be considering other income streams to build resilience (e.g charging for official advice as a consultee).	
Decision:	Actions Arising:
The Board noted the report.	N/A

6. PLANS, STRATEGIES, AND POLICIES FOR BOARD APPROVAL / ADOPTION

- a) FS introduced his Climate Action paper, stressing the need for an action plan, and invited a strategic discussion about an action plan within the CNL. He reviewed work to date and set out the need for what comes next, including the action plan (which he defined as being currently at concept stage).

- b) RW talked through Local Government Reform - Implications of Local Government Reform on the Size and Structure of the Conservation Board. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging the potential changes which may happen early and preparing for them. She invited the Board members to discuss the 12 proposed priorities from the paper.
- c) MH presented a paper detailing the organisation's constitution – for adoption. She detailed that no changes had been made since the version produced in February 2-24, and that all that was being sought was formal adoption by the Board.

Comments:
6a) • NA expressed concern over the lack of ongoing maintenance after woodland and tree planting target activity in his area – stressing that where newly planted trees weren't cared for, the failure rate was high – rendering the activity futile. He asked how CNL might help address that. FS noted that CNL's role is to explain the importance of related guidance – and to encourage a healthy mix of climate action steps. • CM noted the importance of silvopasture and agroforestry – noting that climate action steps can be dovetailed into farming. • LR welcomed the concept of integrating climate-positive and regenerative steps into farming. • AG noted the importance of engaging with farmers and addressing any hesitancy from the farming community by emphasizing the economic benefits and productivity gains of using 'regenerative' / nature-friendly / nature based techniques. • DH noted the importance of defining where CNL can exert influence in relation to climate action. Land use appears to be the greatest opportunity to lead, with other actions lending support. He encouraged further analysis of which areas of work CNL can take the lead in and how that might be achieved. • FS agreed with DH and noted the intention to define a theory of change against each point in the action plan. • AD noted that Gloucestershire County Council's Nature Recovery Plan and tools currently in use to map that against parish and town council activity to help those smaller organisations define how they can help with climate action. She asked if CNL could potentially help town and parish councils involve themselves in climate action work – and to view them as partners for delivery. • PC expressed the view that data mapping is important – establishing areas where the greatest problems are will help address them. • GH noted that data continues to move and change over time and that continuous analysis is required. His view is that there is no single answer and that continuous analysis of data will be required. • RP stated her agreement with the three levers suggested by FS. She also encouraged different phrasing to 'regenerative' – as this can be broad and encompass many things – some more effective than others. She also stated

how important agroforestry is and noted that its employment can lead to yields increasing.

- SWH expressed doubts about reaching net zero and stated her concern that the paper did not include any costing detail. She also expressed her concerns over solar energy farms – and the impact these may have on the protected landscape (for example if a number of landowners were to sell to solar farms). She encouraged a more pro-active approach to scrutinizing and potentially objecting to applications relating to solar farms / renewable energy production.
- The Chair reminded the Board that this paper seeks balance, and establishes CNL's position in response to the fine balance between statutory purposes and a developing climate crisis.
- GH reinforced the point made by the Chair, and noted that the paper being discussed has been written alongside CNL's relevant position statements, and that net zero should still be aimed for – even if it is slipping out of reach as time passes.
- FS agreed and said that the goal of the action plan was to be realistic and achievable, even if that means ack
- AD noted that the paper details the action plan – and that should it be approved, the full action plan would be more likely to include costs.
- LR declared herself as Chair of Southill Community Energy. She also noted that with so many different sources for data, reconciling them with one another could be a challenge.

6b)

- CM noted the importance of integrated transport and expressed the view that the changes to local government could be the opportunity to improve this.
- LH highlighted the possibility of parish and town council potentially receiving more funding than previously – so observed that reducing the number of town and parish representative on the CNL board may be a mistake as they may help bring more funding in.
- LR supported the statements made by LH. She also suggested considering the amalgamation of the Climate Action and Nature Recovery working groups – as the two work areas are so closely connected.
- IR countered by saying LR's point was well worth discussion, but that the two areas of work are often seen as distinct and have separate skill sets (though connected),.
- SWH stressed the importance of engaging with local authorities now, and advocated making this a priority, with reference to the 'value add' discussion. She felt that training and information delivery will be of great importance. She also suggested the idea of a working group to stay on top of the process of local government reform, and for this topic to be a consideration on all CNL board papers until the reforms are concluded.
- AD noted that the place based workstream which may see funds reallocated would be a useful place for us to engage.

Decision:	Actions Arising:
6a) On the questions posed in the paper: 1. Agreed 2. Agreed, with a note to emphasize the importance of aiming for net zero, and including costing when appropriate. 3. Notes on theory of change, golden thread, costs, phrasing around 'regenerative' importance of soil and water as resources, leadership. 6b) The priority actions of the Local Government Reform paper were agreed without amendment. 6c) The CNL Board Constitution was formally adopted.	N/A

7. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MG ran through the minutes of the previous meeting/s and provided a verbal update on the key areas under discussion, followed by presenting the year-end financial results (2024/25).

Comments:	
The Chair congratulated the finance team on the improved position compared to previously.	
Decision:	Actions Arising:
The Board approved the year end financial results 2024/25.	N/A

8. FORWARD PLANNING

The Chair and RW reminded the Board of forthcoming presentations at the next meeting from Simon Smith and Sarah West, and about the planned strategy day / Board visits after the October 2025 meeting.

Comments:	
N/A	
Decision:	Actions Arising:
N/A	N/A

9. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair invited Board members to voice any other business.

Comments:	
SWH and LH both reminded the Board that retaining local government reform on the agenda for future meetings as a standing item, and referencing it on all papers would be a sensible precaution and a good way to stay up to date with the latest plans.	
Decision:	Actions Arising:
	N/A

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next CNL Board meeting will be held on 21 October 2025. Location Council Chambers, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester GL7 1PX.

The Meeting commenced at 10:05am and closed at 12.06pm.