

CEO's Update for 20th January 2026 Executive Committee

Communications and Engagement

- I've been really proud of the work Alana has been doing that resulted in a lot of communication and publicity over the Christmas and New Year period.
- James, Bec (Foster) and Alana were interviewed by BBC Radio Gloucestershire to talk about the Caring for the Cotswolds scheme and CNL at 60 respectively.
- Alana has also successfully secured monthly articles celebrating the CN at 60 in this year's Cotswold Life along with many other plans including the launch of the Field and Folk film in the summer.
- The deadline for applications for Caring for the Cotswolds was 18th January. James will be covering this and exciting news on the Landscape Connections bid in his item later.
- In advance of that, I want to register my admiration for James and his team (Helen, Rowan and Bec) for all they've achieved since their creation last summer and to James for his vision and leadership of this newly formed Engagement Team. Not least I want to thank James for his continuing fundraising and grant application successes whether Caring for the Cotswolds, Great Big Climate Circus and Landscape Connections.

Planning & Infrastructure

- John and Simon Joyce have been exceptional busy of late and I wanted to formally register my appreciation for the sheer amount of work, particularly regarding local development plans, they've undertaken all while maintaining a high standard that regularly elicits positive feedback from members of the PIWG, stakeholders and other National Landscapes.
- I was particularly proud of John and Simon's partnership approach with the Chilterns National Landscape on responding to MHCLGs consultation on Reforms to the Statutory Consultee System.
- John has also successfully secured approval for a £370,000 project to remove 1.6km of overhead electricity cables and 18 cable poles on Bredon Hill, north-east of Kemerton. The overhead cables would be replaced with 2.3km of underground cables. This will significantly enhance visual amenity in this locality.

Management Plan

Simon has been busy sending out the Management Plan now that we have received the designed version. In terms of endorsement the following table outlines progress with only four local authorities yet to endorse.

Local Authority	Endorsed	Date Endorsed	Notes
Bath & North East Somerset	No		No information received.
Cheltenham	Yes	16/04/2025	Decision taken by Leader.
Cherwell	Yes	06/01/2026	Endorsed by Executive.
Cotswold	Yes	08/05/2025	Endorsed by Cabinet.
Gloucestershire	Yes	23/10/2025	Decision taken by cabinet member.
Oxfordshire	Yes	15/04/2025	Letter from Paul Fermer, Director of Environment
South Gloucestershire	Yes	17/-0/2025	Formally recognised by the Council.
Stratford	Yes	02/06/2025	Endorsed by Cabinet.

Stroud	Yes	12/06/2025	Endorsed by Environment Committee.
Tewkesbury	Yes	14/05/2025	Voted through unanimously at full council.
Warwickshire	No		No information received.
West Oxfordshire	Yes	23/04/2025	Endorsed by Executive.
Wiltshire	Yes	15/06/2025	Endorsed at cabinet meeting.
Worcestershire	No		No information received.
Wychavon	No		Isabel Roberts, Planning Policy Manager will discuss endorsement with director.

Nature Recovery

Simon Smith will now be focusing on establishing the Nature Recovery Working Group from April 2026.

Corporate Services and Operations

Work has been continuing on the following areas:

- GDPR work
- Health and safety
- Audit and review of all policies
- All staff now trained to Fire Warden level
- All staff have successfully achieved their carbon literacy certification
- Business planning approach

Work is commencing shortly in the following areas:

- Fundraising strategy
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Board member lifecycle review

Farming in Protected landscapes (FiPL)

- I'm really pleased to confirm FiPL will be extended for a further three years to March 2029. This was announced by Emma Reynolds, the Environment Secretary, at the Oxford Farming Conference on 8th January.
- The overall (national) funding allocation will be £30m per year. The allocation for 2026/27 is confirmed with allocations for the following two years to be confirmed.
- The priority for the FiPL team over the next three months will be to maximise the allocation and spend of this year's grant money. At the end of December 2025 circa £100k remained to be allocated to projects that must be completed by the end of March 2026. The team is confident this can be achieved. The project pipeline remains healthy with numerous projects in development with an e-newsletter circulated to around 500 farmers, land managers and advisers encouraging further proposals.
- The FiPL panel next meets 27th January.

Actions Arising from October 2025 Board		
Reference	Description	Progress
B/10/25/1	CEO to consider relevant speakers at next Board to address the enforcement action of those bodies that hold water companies to account.	Done. Rowan (CNL's Water Restoration Officer) and Jennifer Lanham (Previous of CNL but now at Thames Water) will be presenting to February Board.
B/10/25/2	CNL Board to write to SoS to state importance of renewal of higher tier countryside stewardship with 5-year options for nature recovery and to ask to continue them to be renewed.	At the end of November 2025, Defra announced an extension to CS Higher Tier agreements that have 5-year actions due to expire at the end of the year. Matt was one of 140 agreement holders offered an extension and has accepted. Meanwhile the existing agreement has ended. There is no longer the need for the CNL Board to write to the Secretary of State.
B/10/25/3	Ask for a national speaker on farming challenges and in particular how the Board can help encourage landowners transitioning agricultural land into land for nature recovery.	CEO has held introductory meetings with Diane Mitchell, Poppy Sherbourne and Jacks Weaver at NFU. Poppy will be speaking at the February Board.
B/10/25/4	Simon Smith to provide slides for circulation to Board members.	Done.
B/10/25/5	To take on feedback from Board members, providing the final draft of the Climate Action Plan in January's Executive Committee.	Done.
B/10/25/6	Sarah West to keep Board updated on the work and initiatives of the voluntary wardens.	Ongoing.
B/10/25/7	CEO to provide final draft of Business Plan for endorsement in February.	Item scheduled for January Executive.
B/10/25/8	John Mills to arrange Board member engagement on housing pressures potentially via the Planning & Infrastructure Working Group.	Ongoing. Further to JM's email to Board members, this was discussed at the Planning and Infrastructure Working Group on 12 th January with view to arranging a meeting or

		other method of engagement prior to the February Board.
B/10/25/9	CEO to consider how to continue strengthening engagement with LAs.	Ongoing.