

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Summary:** To (1) provide a high level summary of activity since the last Board Meeting in June 2020 and (2) outline the key decisions/ discussions required from this Meeting.

**Recommendation:** That the Board notes the report

**Reviewed by the Executive Committee:** Yes / No

**If yes, the Committee's comments:** N/A

**Report by:** Andy Parsons - Chief Executive

### PRIORITY ACTIVITY SINCE THE JUNE BOARD MEETING (not recorded in other papers)

#### 1. Team

- The team have completed a huge clear out of the office to improve the working environment. The two downstairs rooms have been emptied and Relish (the café operator) are renting them from us, generating new income of £550 per month.
- Everyone has continued to be effective in remote working. We have maintained regular contact through weekly team meetings and 1-1s.

#### 2. Brand Launch

- The Cotswolds National Landscape was officially launched on 15 September. Alana Hopkins put together a week-long series of social media posts which included a diverse range of people who live, work and play in the Cotswolds. This was supplemented with posts from our Chairman, Julian Glover, Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, Cllr Jenny Forde (CDC) and Lord Gardiner.
- The website has been redesigned and navigation greatly improved.
- I was interviewed on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and the launch was picked up by a BAME TV station called BEN TV 'Bridging the Gap' (on the homepage of their website).

#### 3. External Engagement (Chief Executive)

##### *A417 revised road scheme*

- The key focus during the period has been the A417. Graham Hopkins, John Mills, Mark Connelly and I have represented the Board at various meetings.
- We have been involved in a series of collaborative sessions, with Highways England, National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to review the changes to the scheme – looking at ways to mitigate the adverse impacts and maximise the potential of the positive changes.
- I have been really pleased with this new approach, Highways England are working with us and sharing information in an open and trusting way.
- The level of information that we are now receiving is helpful in better understanding their decision-making.
- With consultation starting this month, these sessions should ensure that there are no 'nasty surprises' in our respective consultation responses as we have been given the opportunity to air our concerns in a collaborative environment.
- Our A417 Steering Group met on 25 September to review the progress made to date and to start considering how we resource our consultation response.

*Other activity*

- 25 June & 2 September – with Mark Connelly, continued to develop the relationship with Ground Control who have agreed to fund the materials required for the Ourboretum project.
- 1 July – attended the SW National Landscapes forum and presented the work we have completed on our new name and brand.
- 2 July – participated in Cotswold District Council’s leisure strategy consultation.
- 3 July – with James Webb and Ed Bonn, met with representatives of FarmEd (a LEADER funding beneficiary) to discuss potential opportunities to work together in the future.
- 3 July – met with Wessex Water’s Head of Community Engagement to discuss how we could support their ‘Water Rangers’ initiative by involving the Voluntary Wardens.
- 13 July and 14 September – attended the GFirst-led Visitor Economy and Tourism Business Group meetings.
- 16 July – attended a Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership Board meeting.
- 14 August – introductory meeting with Alex Chalk MP for Cheltenham.
- 24 August – introductory meeting with Christine Gore, Interim Chief Executive at Cotswold District Council.
- 25 August – met with Publica to start planning the updated Employee Handbook.
- 10 September – with the Chairman, Vice-Chair and Alana Hopkins, held an induction meeting for Sue Crawford, Benjamin Dent and John Swanton.
- 24 September – with Ann Wyatt, met with Publica to look at updating the Service Level Agreement for the services they provide.

**OVERVIEW OF THIS BOARD MEETING – 7 October**

4. The key items of focus at this meeting are:
- Item 6 - under the direction of Ann Wyatt, financial reporting to the Board will be different. This will be a good opportunity to talk through the changes and what further improvements are proposed.
  - Item 8 - the new Communications Strategy is now more closely aligned to the Business Plan Framework 2020-23. It has been written in extraordinary times but Alana Hopkins has clearly outlined the Board’s priorities, including a central focus on maximising the benefits of our digital channels and how fundraising will help us to achieve our goals. The Year 1 activity plan really highlights the huge amount of work, planning and expertise required to deliver the strategy.
  - Item 12 – Simon Smith will be presenting on Nature Recovery – looking at it from a local, regional and national perspective. This will be a central theme to much of our work over the coming months and years. It is hoped that this presentation will give Board Members a greater understanding of our involvement in developing plans, etc. and how we are working in partnership to achieve its desired outcomes.

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None