MEETING OF THE
COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD –

HELD AT ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, CIRENCESTER GL7 6JS.
TUESDAY 23rd JUNE, 10:00am

Present
Nigel Adcock (NG)
Cheryl Agg (CA)
Jo Barker (JB)
David Broad (DB)
Martin Brown (MB)
Rebecca Charley (Vice Chair, RC)
Susan Crawford (SC)
Paul Crossley (PC)
Matthew Darby (MD)
Amanda Davis (AD)
Ben Dent (BD)
Ellie Fujioka (EF)
Andrea Graham (AG)
Jon Grantham (JG)
Adrian Hardman (AH)
Beverley Hardman (BH)
Liz Hodges (LH)
Graham Hopkins (GH)
Martin Horwood (MH)
Doug Hulyer (DH)
Juliet Layton (JL)
Cate Le Grice Mack (CGM)
Nick Martell-Bundock (NMB)
Brendan McCarthy (Chair, BM)
Rosie Pearson (RP)
David Powell (DP)
Martin Smith (MS)
Ben Stokes (BS)
John Swanton (JS)
Sarah Whalley-Hoggins (SWH)
James Williams (JW)

Also in Attendance:
Olivia Blackwell (OB)
Maria Carter (Minute-taking)
Mark Connelly (MC)
Nicole Daw (ND)
Magda Glanowska (MG)
Alana Hopkins (AH)
Della Morris (DM)
Becky Jones (RJ)
Simon Smith (SS)
Rebecca Waite (RW, CEO)
Alice Whitehead (AW)
Lyna Zhang (LZ).

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Observing: Emilie Brignall and Caroline Cotterell (new Board members from 1 July 2026). They gave brief introductions to themselves.

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Apologies – apologies were received from: Chris Brant, Brendan Costello, Andy Graham, Beverley Hardman, Hannah McDonnell, Liz Reason, Margaret Reid, Ray Sanderson and Anisa Saleh.

Introductions and announcements – The Chair welcomed everyone and said that the AGM will follow the Board meeting and that the venue for the next meeting in November had been changed, he asked Board members to note this change.

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

2. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 24 FEBRUARY 2026

- Decision - resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Meeting held on 24 February 2026 be approved as a correct record. Minor change - Martin Brown needs to be added as present at the previous Board meeting.

- Actions Arising – all actions arising were either completed or in progress. Board members received a table listing all the actions.

3. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 May 2026

- The minutes of the previous Executive Committee Meeting held on 19 May 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The CEO welcomed new Board members Caroline and Emilie (observing) and Jonny Loose from National Trust and all Board members and staff team. She highlighted some points from her written report.

- The CEO explained the date change to the next Board meeting to 3 November, the site visits would be arranged following the Board at this time. She explained that the CNL likes to set all dates at least a year in advance so that representatives can have as much advance notice as possible if they have clashes with other meetings.
- The event celebrating the 60th Anniversary of CNL will be held on 15 August 2026 in Cheltenham. She thanked Alana Hopkins, CNL Communications Lead for all her work on the events and activities planned for the Anniversary.
- The CNL wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the housing pressures across the Cotswolds.
- Rt. Hon Steve Reed has responded to the CNL letter and the CEO will send the response onto Board members. She confirmed that the letter could be shared publicly, but not the accompanying documents that were more for explanation and context for Board members. She explained that if Board members wanted to share the letter, for example

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with local authorities planning staff, she could provide more explanatory information (for their understanding) in due course. This applied to local authorities as well as Town and Parish Councils.

- Management Plan
  The CEO said that there were a number of outstanding endorsements for the CNL Management Plan. The Management Plan was drafted on behalf of the local authorities by the CNL and therefore needed the support of the organisations it represents.

Comments:
Relevant Board members explained some of the issues they'd experienced to get endorsement for the Management Plan but said they would continue to seek support for it. SWH asked about the recruitment for the Strategic Planning role and what had been put in place? She considered that the role was very important and that planning applications across the Cotswolds were high. The CEO explained that firstly, it had taken longer than anticipated as the job description needed revising to consider the strategic element of the role, she had listened to the comments of Board members, local authority planning staff and CNL staff members about this. She believed the job description (as revised) is improved to respond to the demands of the role into the future. Meanwhile, the CEO and Simon Joyce have been working together to deal with the workload. Simon Joyce continues to work flexibly and two planning consultants from Chilterns NL have also supported the CNL. SWH asked about the CEO's trip to Prague in March, she wanted to know who paid and was it a worthwhile use of time? She was concerned about the use of taxpayer's money. The CEO confirmed that the trip was funded by Europarc. Bex had represented all English and Welsh National Parks and National Landscapes at the event. The contribution from CNL for the trip was three days of Bex's time for the event. The Chair added that sharing and learning from others in Europe about this important subject was of good value to the CNL. Comments were received from other Board members expressing how positive it was to share and pick-up information from other protected areas across Europe. BS said that advice from the CNL's planning function was important and he was in a planning committee awaiting a response from the CNL. Many planning committees rely on the guidance provided by CNL planning function. SWH said that she was going to recommend to Stratford District Council that they do not provide core funding to the CNL as she hasn't received enough information about the details of budget lines for CNL's Climate Action work and more generally, for all

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departments across the CNL. She was concerned that tax payers in her area were not getting value for money.

The Chair explained that scrutiny takes place through the Finance and Governance Committee and they bring recommendations to the Board.

The CEO invited SWH to attend the next F&G Committee meeting and scrutinise the budgets. She explained that essentially the budget for Climate Action was made up of two staff members' salaries.

The CEO went onto confirm that the funding settlement from Defra was confirmed but currently, the Board hadn't received the funding.

DH thanked the CEO for her update and asked if there were any lessons to be learned from the fact that Ofgem were minded not to proceed with National Grid's Cotswolds Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project. There was some discussion about this by Board members and the Chair.

The CEO and Mark Connelly were engaged in the stakeholder group for the project and will keep the Board updated. There continues to be a good relationship between the CNL with National Grid.

Action reference:	**Actions Arising:**
B/03/26/1	**Action**: Board members to chase their respective local authorities for the endorsement of the CNL Management Plan. • Paul Crossley BNES Council • Adrian Hardman Worcestershire County Council • Jo Barker Warwickshire County Council • Beverley Hardman Wychavon District Council

5. SPOTLIGHT ON FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

The presentation will be sent to Board members. This was given by Mark Connelly and Oliva Blackwell. Mark spoke about the FiPL programme to date and Olivia covered the Regenerative Agriculture Accelerator Programme ('RAAP' launched in 2024 and now in year three).

The RAAP was supported by FiPL funding and will include additional funding from the Rothschild Foundation. Olivia said the Cotswolds region is a hotbed for regenerative agriculture in England.

Comments:

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MH asked a question about recruitment of farmers into the RAAP. Olivia said that farmers had been made aware of the programme through social media and newsletters. Farmers and advisors were welcome to join. However, members needed to commit to the programme as places were essentially, funded for the events that included farm walks.

The programme included those farmers that may have started down the regen agriculture route but wanted to know more. Support for tenant farmers included access to FiPL and RAAP. RP asked about restrictions for the RAAP and Olivia said that there weren't any that she was aware of but that Jonty Brunyee made the final decision on applicants in assessing if they were likely to get value from the programme.

CGM said she was greatly encouraged to hear about the RAAP and said if there was anything she could do to help, she would.

MD expressed he was a supporter of the FiPL programme and GH expressed how important use of new technology was in Agriculture. Mark Connelly said there was a new fund for the farming community for this.

MH asked if the programmes were open to local authorities and tenant farmers, Mark said community groups had applied to FiPL and he didn't see any barriers there.

The Chair said that he was encouraged that FiPL would continue until 2029.

No decisions or actions

6. NATIONAL TRUST

Jonny Loose gave a presentation about the joint working between CNL and the National Trust. The presentation will be made available for Board members.
Jonny used the example of the A417 road scheme in describing how partnership working had enabled habitats and people to be connected and how the scheme had been enhanced by collaboration.

Jonny said that the CNL and NT had joint ambition and goals over the next 10 years. He said the NT were keen to work at landscape scale along the same aspirations and objectives as the CNL. Partnership working would feature as a key part for improving nature in the Cotswolds between the two organisations and others.

Comments:

- The Chair thanked Jonny Loose for his presentation. He said it was great to see the new NT strategy and how dependant it is on partnership, he expressed how Jonny had explained this so well.

No decisions or actions

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9. YEAR-END FINANCIAL RESULTS 2025-26

DP said it had been a busy year on the Committee. He commended the reports to the Board and said the year-end work and internal audit went successfully.

Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Magda Glanowska read the key points to note for Board members.

She said the accounts would have to be submitted to an External Auditor, PKF, by 1st July. Following a competitive procurement exercise, TIAA Ltd was appointed as the Board's new Internal Auditor of independent standing and has successfully completed its first internal audit review for FY25/26. This provides additional assurance over the effectiveness of the Board's internal control environment and supports continuous improvement across governance, risk management and financial processes.

In February 2026, the Board appointed Lyna Zhang as Finance and Programme Manager (80% Finance).

Looking ahead, the Board has received three-year indicative funding allocations from DEFRA covering FY26/27onwards. Whilst these figures remain subject to confirmation, they provide a valuable basis for longer-term financial planning. During FY26/27, officers will use this information to develop a Medium-Term Financial Plan as part of a wider Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

She said the year-end reserves position is consistent with the revised Reserves Policy approved by the Board in February 2026.

The Chair commented on the finances and said the finance team had some challenges but were doing very well. He said that ten years ago there weren't any reserves and now there is. This is going in the right direction. He said that Board members had the details sent to them:
Appendix b show the detailed management accounts, scrutinised by the F&G Committee.
Appendix c Virements and new contracts
Appendix d showed the development of the Medium-term Financial Strategy.

The Chair said that a Medium-term financial strategy would give the Board more confidence as they moved forward. He said that the Board haven't known their budget previously, but they will now and this helps to build a strategy. The Chair asked Board members what the medium plan should cover.

Comments:
• JG said that at a time when there is great uncertainly in the long term, it is so good to have this financial strategy.
Decision:
The minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee were accepted by the Board The Year-end financial results were approved by the Board Virements and contracts were approved by the Board

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The Medium-term Financial Strategy was provided for feedback from the Board – members could provide comments to the CEO or Magda Glanowska about the plan.

7. FORWARD PLANNING

The CEO outlined the main areas of business for the next Board meeting in November.

The main item for the next Board meeting would feature Outdoor learning. The CEO explained there was a spare slot, she asked Board members if they would like an update on any other particular areas. The normal business would apply.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd November 2026, 10:00am-1:00pm at Council Chambers, Stroud District Council.

The Meeting commenced at 10:03am and closed 12.26pm.

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