MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD

HELD AT COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE, MARSDEN MANOR FARM, RENDCOMB, CIRENCESTER, GL7 7EU

TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2026, 10:00am

Present
Rebecca Charley (Chair)
Paul Crossley (PC) – arrived 10.27am
Amanda Davis (AD) – joined online via Teams 10.07am
Andrea Graham (ACG, Vice-Chair) – joined online via Teams
Jon Grantham (JG)
Juliet Layton (JL) left at 12.29pm
Cate Le Grice-Mack (CGM) – arrived at 10.27am
Rosie Pearson (RP) – online
Ben Stokes (BS)

Also in Attendance:
Maria Carter (minute-taking)
Olivia Blackwell (OB)
Tatiana Chapman (TC)
Mark Connelly (MC)
Fred Constantine (FC)
Magda Glanowska (MG)
Simon Joyce (SJ, joined online via Teams)
Simon Smith (SS)
Rebecca Waite (RW)
Alice Whitehead (AW)
Graham Hopkins (GH observing, online)

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1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- Apologies – CGM had sent her apologies, was able to attend on the day.
- Introductions and announcements – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including those online. The CEO said the next Executive meeting would be held online. The meeting was being recorded for note-taking purposes only.
- Declarations of interest – no interests were declared.
- Public questions – None

2. MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 MAY 2026

- Decision – The minutes were noted and approved.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – 23 JUNE 2026

- The Executive Committee noted the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 23 June 2026. There were no amendments reported.

4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The CEO highlighted some points from her report to the Executive Committee.

Comments:
• The CEO explained that after 18 months, three local councils hadn't endorsed the CNL Management Plan. They include Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Council, Warwickshire District Council and Wychavon District Council. • PC updated the Committee with the reason why BANES had not endorsed the plan and this was due to conflict with policies in the local council development plan and the CNL Management Plan.
Outcome
The Executive Committee noted the update from the CEO.

5. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

MG talked through the Financial and Operational Overview paper, updating the figures slightly, since the report was drafted.

- The funding had now been received from Defra for our core budget (updated in Q2 Management accounts).
- Overhead savings are due to payroll costs.
- The next F&G Committee will discuss how budgets are set. The assumptions will be presented at the next Board meeting in November.
- The External audit is now finished and published on the website. She said the Finance team are working on medium-term financial strategy that will be presented at the February Board meeting.

Comments:
• The Chair asked what are the implications for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – what is the implication on funding? The CEO had asked Defra regularly about this. The impacts of LGR may require changes to the CNL Constitution, Board legislation and Board structure changes, let alone funding allocations. • BS asked that could the CNL be looking at a funding reduction in the future, from local Councils? The CEO said core funding had been agreed for three years, so the CNL could be affected from 2029 after the LGR. She said that currently, CNL received: • 80% of core funding from Defra • 20% of core funding from Councils represented on CNL Board.
Outcome:
The Executive Committee noted the update.

6. NATURE RECOVERY

SS took his report as read by Executive members, he said the Nature Recovery Working Group (NRWG) would assign a Chair and Vice-Chair in due course.

He said that the NRWG had considered monitoring against the CNL Management Plan targets for nature recovery. SS would be looking at this in a paper for the next meeting of the WG. He flagged this was something that may need to be considered for the whole

organisation. The WG asked to be regularly updated on the progress of the Wildlife Rich Habitat Fund (WRHF).

The Cotswolds Mosaic Habitat Demonstration project
The CEO introduced how an initial discussion about green finance with NLA colleagues had developed into an outline proposal for habitat creation project, involving support from Defra, NLA and other partners.

SS provided a presentation about the rationale, principles and practice of the demonstration project.

Comments:
Chair: We need to make sure that CNL work with the Local Authorities to help meet their targets to for their own local nature recovery strategies, as the CNL are assisting them to achieve their targets. The members discussed how achieving the nature recovery targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) requires suitable and stable agricultural support schemes. The members considered how they could feedback to Defra about the need for schemes that consistently support PLTOF. The Cotswolds Mosaic Habitat Demonstration project A group discussion followed that helped to confirm the outline scope of the project. Members were excited about it and considered it a great opportunity. However, they also raised points about managing risk, management of project, CNL as a landowner, the food verses nature debate, local land for local food/farming and keeping the balance between nature (conservation) and people (land as amenity). Members of the Executive also acknowledged that more people were concerned about the long-term effects of climate change and nature loss. The group agreed it would make an excellent demonstration project for Cotswolds High Wold calcareous mosaic habitat.

Decision:	**Actions Arising:**
1.The Executive agreed to seek approval from the Board to obtain the land, as proposed by the CEO. 2.An Extraordinary General Meeting would be required to obtain approval for receipt of funding, this is subject to the acceptance of the offer on the land.	SS to start drafting a list of nature recovery leads from each Council (within the CNL) to be used for the December Nature Recovery Forum online event and broader work. (Ref: E/10/26/1) MC, SS and the CEO would feedback through their relevant channels about the need for consistent and long-term Agri-environment schemes to deliver the PLTOF. (Ref: E/10/26/2)

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7. CLIMATE ACTION

FC highlighted key parts from his report.

FC explained how both the Farming and Forestry project and Farm Carbon Assessment project would allow the CNL to take the lead in understanding the specific climate issues and opportunities in the CNL. He hoped the findings could support wider stakeholder collaboration and positive change.

Climate Adaptation Plan
A draft plan had been prepared but temporarily paused while other projects progressed. The CNL was liaising closely with the Chilterns National Landscape to refine the approach, messaging and practical application. The final plan was expected by the end of 2026.

Woodland proposals
FC explained how the CAWG would be assisting with woodland creation proposals and to update the CNL Guidance on Woodland Creation in the coming year.

The CAWG had discussed about the constraints of UK woodland creation grant schemes in the CNL. FC discussed if feedback to granters would be useful at this stage, as woodland proposals needed positive assistance to achieve delivery of tree planting targets.

Comments:	
• JL asked about the sustainable transport workshop. AW confirmed more details of the workshop for young people to be held on 29 October in Bourton-on-the-Water. • BS asked how the organisation can track the feedback on discussions for example, about issues with grant schemes. The CEO said that there was regular engagement with Defra on these types of issues. She said the organisation engages directly with the Policy teams, however primary discussions were through the Protected Landscapes Policy team.	
Outcome:	**Actions:**
The Executive Committee noted the update.	The CEO to continue to engage with Defra and Forestry Commission on the delivery of Woodland grant schemes in Protected Landscapes. (Ref: E/10/26/3)

8. PROJECTS AND FUNDRAISING

The CEO provided an update in place of JW.

Common Connections
She said there would be a spotlight on this project at the next Board on 3 November. The afternoon site visit will focus on the project at Selsley Common outlining the site as is and talking about the proposed approach and plans.

Caring for the Cotswolds

The CEO outlined the project funded by NLHF for paid work placements for small groups of young people that may open up career pathways into Cotswolds-based jobs. Initial feedback from the first group was excellent, with another group due to start in October.

Comments:
JG attended the July Grants Youth Panel that involved lower sixth-form students. He said the level of engagement and preparation from the young people was remarkable. The meeting was well prepared with great delivery.
Outcome:
The Executive Committee noted the update.

9. PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Simon Joyce outlined his report.

Comments:
• The CEO thanked SJ for managing the very high workload.
Outcome:
The Executive Committee noted the update.

10. ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Ben Stokes provided an overview of the work to date by the Working Group.
The WG wanted to ask the Executive Committee to consider a ring-fenced budget, potentially funding one day per week of dedicated officer time and also EDI training.

Members of the WG considered that this investment would strengthen the organisation's aspirations for inclusion across areas such as race and disability and enable the CNL to model and share good practice with partner organisations.

Comments:	
AD: Dedicated officer support was needed, with EDI training identified as an immediate priority. ACG: The WG had reviewed EDI policies from comparable organisations and considered it important for the CNL to lead by example. RP: Transparency required the organisation to acknowledge where it was falling short, including the lack of representation within the organisation. GH: The CNL needed to define its desired position and the outcomes it wished to achieve.	
Outcome:	**Actions Arising:**
The Executive Committee noted the update.	The CEO has agreed to look at the resourcing and will, come back to the WG. (Ref: E/10/26/4)

11. FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

The report was provided by Mark Connelly and Olivia Blackwell.
MC highlighted the main points in the meeting.

Comments:

OB confirmed that some of the allocation for this financial year was not being spent in 2026 but spread across 2027-2029. Funding is restricted for certain activities and can be refused if they fit a different grant criteria.
Outcome:
The Executive Committee noted the update.

12. FORWARD PLANNING

The CEO discussed the next Board meeting to be held on 3 November 2026 at Stroud District Council. (The draft agenda had been included in the pack of papers sent to Executive members).

The CEO confirmed that transport will be arranged for the afternoon site visit and lunch would be provided. She asked Committee members to get back to Della Morris if they could attend the site visit (on receiving the details).

13. OTHER BUSINESS

AD asked if the Board's work should reflect the full character of the Cotswolds, including its built environment, tranquillity, architecture and local distinctiveness, as well as nature recovery and land management. She clarified that she was investigating the totality of the CCB's remit.

Comments:	
• JG commented that design policies and Cotswolds-specific considerations were already included in relevant planning responses. • MC said that National Landscapes were not planning authorities. Responsibility for planning decisions, conservation areas and buildings rests with other bodies. However, architecture and local distinctiveness were recognised in the CNL Management Plan and landscape guidance. The policies are owned by the CNL and are for place, but other bodies have specific powers on planning.	
Outcome:	**Actions arising:**
AD points were noted. Continue to work with partners to ensure the totality of CCB's remit is clear.	None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 19 January 2027 and will be held online. Board meetings will continue to be held face-to-face.

The Meeting commenced at 10.05am and closed at 1.15pm.