

Link2Nature: Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership (WSLNP)Board Meeting Minutes

**Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 2-4pm**  
**Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Office, Devizes**

**1. Present:**

**Hugo Brooke (HB)** – Trustee, Butterfly Conservation  
**Stephen Davis, (SD)** – Head of Conservation Policy, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust  
**Gerry Hamersley (GH)** – Area Manager, Natural England  
**Gary Mantle (GM)** – Director, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (Chair, WSLNP)  
**Philippa Read (PR)** - Chief Executive, Community First  
**James Sheppard (JS)** – (Vice- Chair of Wiltshire NFU)  
**Toby Sturgis (TS)** – (Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment & Development Control Services, Wiltshire Council)  
**Steven Waygood (SW)** – Head of Environment & Chemistry, RWE Npower)  
**Bill Blumsom (BB)** – WSLNP Coordinator

<b>Abbreviations used within this document:</b>		
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	
LAG	Local Action Group	
LNP	Local Nature Partnership	
WSLNP	Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership	
SWLEP	Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership	
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
GI	Green Infrastructure	
MOD	Ministry Of Defence	
NE	Natural England	
WWT	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	
NIA	Nature Improvement Area	
JSA	Joint Strategic Assessment	
EU	European Union	
WC	Wiltshire Council	
<b>Minutes</b>		<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>  GM welcomed those present and introductions were made by each individual.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Hayley Bamborough (Voice and Influence Team, Wiltshire Council), Frances Chinemana ( Consultant in Public Health, Wiltshire Council) Fleur de Rhe-Philippe (Cabinet Member for Economic Development &amp; Strategic Planning, Wiltshire Council), Sue Harper (SO1 MCI/CE) Maggie Rae (Director of Public Health &amp; Public Protection), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning &amp; Sustainability, Swindon Borough Council).</p>		
<p><b>2. Minutes</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 were approved with no amendments.</p>		
<p><b>3. Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> GM had requested thoughts regarding potential additional Board members. No</p>		

<p>suggestions have been received since the last meeting. GM felt that the private sector is an area we need to focus on. GM mentioned that in the West of England LNP 5 private organisations were contributing to the funding of the co-ordinator post.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> SD mentioned that the LNP has requested funding through the Technical Assistance section of the EU SIF. It was also mentioned that we need to look at potential funding through other Local Growth Funds as well as European funding.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> JS mentioned that he has recently been appointed as Chair of the NFU Wiltshire and may have to find a replacement to represent farming interests on the LNP Board.</p> <p><b>All to consider additional members for Board. JS to advise GM / BB of situation regarding any potential replacement for himself on LNP Board.</b></p>	<p><b>ALL JS</b></p>
<p><b>4. Review of Year and Strategic Plan</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> BB gave a short presentation summarising the purpose and aims of the LNP as agreed by the board. BB then summarised the main achievements of the LNP since its launch in March last year including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance processes set up</li> <li>• Strategic Plan and Terms of Reference agreed</li> <li>• Launch of LNP and website and logo</li> <li>• Partner and community engagement events</li> <li>• Engagement and best practice sharing with other LNPs</li> <li>• State of the Environment Report 2013 published</li> <li>• Landscape Conservation and NIA Vision developed</li> <li>• Worked with the LEP to incorporate Chapter 13 “Investing in Nature” within the EU SIF</li> <li>• Supported development of Wiltshire GI Strategy</li> <li>• Environmental Investment Prospectus “Investing In Nature” written</li> <li>• Small Grants Fund launched and 12 awards made</li> </ul> <p><b>4.2</b> The board then reviewed progress against the strategic objectives and the discussion moved on to priorities for 2014 and how the LNP continues to build momentum and engage more widely in order to deliver its objectives in the coming year.</p> <p><b>4.3 GH</b> commented that the presentation was a good reminder of how much had been achieved since the launch of the LNP and that it had made more progress than some other LNPs within a similar timeframe.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> The board stressed that it was important to maintain momentum and gain more active engagement of the partners of the LNP in order to deliver its objectives and raise the profile of the Link2Nature partnership.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> The role of the next Annual Forum will be important in raising the profile and capturing some of the energy of partners whilst moving forward. It’s important that we tell a wider audience what has been done to date and enable others to get involved and “run with the baton” in the coming year.</p> <p><b>4.6</b> GM raised the concern as to whether we are engaging with people who are not</p>	

part of an organisation effectively and whether a gap existed here which needs to be filled? GH felt the focus probably needed to be on organisations that could help us achieve our objectives.

**4.7** SW felt that we needed to focus on communications and be clear as to who our audience was and what we wanted to tell them in order to gain greater engagement. HB felt that we now had some meaningful information to communicate. TS felt that many in Wiltshire Council would not yet know who we are or what we are seeking to achieve and that we needed to consider how we would change that and raise perception and understanding of the LNP role and aims.

**4.8** JS felt that more could be done to engage with the farming community which could help with potential progression of NIAs. A presence at the NFU Countryside Day on the 27<sup>th</sup> June might also be helpful. GM raised the question of how we might help that, perhaps by developing some positive messages about where successful change has occurred and why. For instance specific rises in farmland bird populations and why the increase has occurred. Perhaps some clear targeted messages about specific species that could be helped and linked with stewardship and the new NELMS scheme. It was mentioned that the NFU has an excellent communications network and that the LNP could have a role to play in co-running an event with the NFU to engage the farming community. It would have to be relevant and engage farmers and could be linked to raising awareness of NELMS and how the “middle tier landscape area” scheme might work. It is likely that schemes will be targeted against locally set criteria and the LNP could work with the farming community to identify these. This could be combined with some simple suggestions about target species or activities that could be undertaken to qualify for payments. A next step could be to agree some potential locally set criteria for local farmland bird projects.

**4.9** NIAs were discussed and it was felt that the enormous time and effort required to replicate NIAs would be a challenge. Cross compliance in area schemes was also identified as a potential issue. It was felt that the Landscape bio-diversity areas provided a framework against which to have discussions about potential landscape scale initiatives that could link the farming community, NELMs and the LNP.

**4.10** It was felt we needed to know what the big ticket issues in Wiltshire were such as Bio-diversity offsetting. JS felt that farmers were very much focussed on flooding and river management and badger culling at present.

**4.11** It was agreed that as well as running the Annual Forum this year there was value in also running a joint LNP and NFU event to engage the farming community in meaningful discussion about the issues above and to engage the farming community in working with the LNP to seek potential ways forward on a range of issues.

**4.12** It was also suggested that the LNP might want to develop a magazine article for the NFU monthly farmer’s magazine. BB to investigate.

**4.12** The Green Awards were discussed and the potential for the LNP to engage further with service based industries through the organisation of the Green Awards for 2014

**4.13** It was also agreed that the LNP needs to build a strong relationship with the Health & Wellbeing Board. BB to discuss with FC.

<p><b>ACTION :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>JS to speak to Andi Witcombe and liaise with BB re discussions about a joint event later this year.</b></li> <li>• <b>BB to liaise with HB to update and implement revised communications strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>BB to liaise with Michelle Gard re Green Awards 2014</b></li> <li>• <b>BB to liaise with FC re approaching Health &amp; Wellbeing Board</b></li> <li>• <b>BB to explore the possibility of an LNP article in a farming magazine</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>JS/BB</b></p> <p><b>HB/BB</b></p> <p><b>BB/MG</b></p> <p><b>BB/FC</b></p> <p><b>BB</b></p>
<p><b>5. EU Strategic Investment Fund</b></p> <p>5.1 BB gave an update on progress. The ESIF has been submitted and feedback from government is expected in March. Whilst it was good that the ESIF now included a chapter on Investing in the Environment and Landscape the document did not still have a full breadth of sustainability and environment incorporated within it. BB will liaise with the LEP team and advise of the outcome of the submission as soon as available.</p> <p><b>ACTION: BB to monitor progress and update board.</b></p>	<p><b>BB</b></p>
<p><b>6. Bristol Avon Catchment Group (BACG)</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> The BACG have recently agreed with the West England Nature Partnership (WENP) that they will become the single water group working in partnership with the WENP. They will consult with the WENP and also provide consistent and regular updates on their activities to the LNP.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> The BACG have now extended this invitation to the WSLNP. After consideration the board agreed to accept their offer. SD/BB to follow up with BACG and establish exactly how the relationship will work.</p> <p><b>6.3</b> There are two other Water Catchment Groups in Wiltshire and it was agreed that L2N would approach them to discuss similar arrangements.</p> <p><b>ACTION: BB/SD to consult with BACG and pass on the board's decision and agree next steps. BB &amp; SD to also approach other two catchment groups.</b></p>	<p><b>BB/SD</b></p> <p><b>BB/SD</b></p>
<p><b>7. Proposed visit by Lord de Mauley</b></p> <p>7.1 BB updated the board on preparations for Lord de Mauley's pending visit on the 18<sup>th</sup> March and confirmed that it will take place at the Kings Wood Farm WWT reserve.</p>	

<p><b>8. Funding of the LNP</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b> SD confirmed that a further years funding for the role of co-ordinator has been agreed with Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Councils.</p> <p><b>8.2</b> Funding was discussed more widely and it was noted that the WENP is partly funded by five private businesses. It was agreed that we needed to seek additional sources of funding for other activities that the LNP may wish to promote or undertake. BB/SD agreed to take this issue to the Exec Group and explore with the group other potential sources of funding.</p> <p><b>BB/ SD to table on next Exec Group agenda.</b></p>	<b>BB/SD</b>
<p><b>9. Re-structuring of the environmental sector</b></p> <p>9.1 TS gave an update on the Wiltshire Council re-structuring. At this stage further clarification is required of the final structural proposals.</p> <p>9.2 GH gave an update for the DEFRA family. The Natural England and Environment Agency structures are reverting back to geographic teams. It is likely that Wiltshire will be grouped with Somerset and Bristol and Avon. GH mentioned some of the likely personnel in the new team but this will be officially confirmed in due course.</p>	
<p><b>10. Brief Updates</b></p> <p><b>10.1</b> Small Grants Fund. All funds have now been allocated for the financial year to a total of 12 community groups. Public Health Wiltshire kindly provided further £495 of funding to ensure all approved applications could be covered. The board extended formal thanks to Frances Chinemana and Wiltshire Public Health on behalf of Link2Nature. BB to discuss with FC the possibility of a further sum of money being available in the next financial year for further grants.</p> <p>10.2 Wiltshire Council Green infrastructure Strategy this has taken a backseat to the SEP in recent months but it is hoped it will be ready for wider consultation shortly.</p> <p>10.3 Annual Forum was discussed and BB was tasked with working up a proposal for the next forum event.</p> <p>10.3 SD gave a brief update on the Executive Group. All items they have discussed were covered in the above agenda. SD also asked the board to advise if they felt the Exec Group was not focusing on the issues the board wished it too. At this stage it was felt that it was.</p> <p><b>ACTION: BB to draft proposal for an annual forum event later this year.</b></p>	<b>BB</b>
<p><b>Dates of Next Meeting</b> – next meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June from 1pm to 4 pm at Lower Moor Farm WWT Reserve and to be followed by a walk in search of Nightingales.</p> <p><b>Any Other Business - None</b></p>	

## Summary of action points

### All Board members:

- Consider suitable additional Board members

### James Sheppard

- To advise if replacement required for his position on board and if so recommend suitable replacement.
- To speak to Andi Witcombe re possible joint LNP/NFU event and liaise with BB

### Bill Blumsom

- Organise meeting with HB to discuss communications strategy
- Discuss Green Awards with Michelle Gard of WWT
- Discuss Health and Wellbeing approached with FC and also discuss further funding for Small Grants Fund
- Explore possibility of an LNP article in a suitable farming publication
- Monitor and report on ESIF progress
- Draft proposal for next Annual Forum event and circulate
- Organise next meeting at Lower Moor Farm

### Bill Blumsom / Stephen Davis:

- Liaise with BACG and agree next steps
- Approach the two additional water catchment Groups and make similar proposal
- Funding to be discussed at next Exec Group meeting