

Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project

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Summary: The Executive Committee requested that an Accord be prepared between the Board and the Chiltern Woodland Project to describe the working relationship.

Purpose of Report: To seek committee approval for the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project.

Background

1. There is a close working relationship between the Conservation Board and Woodland Project which has been in place for many years. The Project was established by The Chiltern Society in the early 1980s with a specific remit to promote the management of small woodland across the Chilterns, including all the AONB. Since its establishment the project has been managed by John Morris. From time to time the project has employed other staff as finances have allowed. Currently the CWP manages the Special Trees and Woodlands Project, including the project officer, Liz Manley.
2. In 2006 the Woodland Project invited the Board to appoint a trustee. At its meeting in October 2006 the Board nominated Dr. Mike Render. (Mike works for the Forestry Commission and was formerly the forestry officer for Bucks CC).
3. Since 1999 the Board, and its predecessors, has provided office accommodation, which it continues to do. Depending upon the Project's finances a charge is made for rent. The Project has always been charged for its share of direct costs such as postage and telephone.
4. In view of the close working relationship, the Board has not sought to employ a woodland officer (other staff including the Chief Officer also have some forestry expertise) as the necessary skills were available from John Morris.
5. The Board has from time to time also provided funding directly or helped arrange funding from other parties. For example the Board helped develop the EU funded project known as TWIG and more recently the HLF funded Special Trees and Woods Project, both of which were and are managed by the CWP.
6. It is in the interests of both organisations to maintain a close working relationship and for the Board to assist the Project remain a viable body.

Recommendation

1. **To approve the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project**



**Chiltern
Woodlands Project**

**Draft Accord between the
Chilterns Conservation Board and
Chiltern Woodlands Project**

The Purpose of this accord is to describe how the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project will work together to meet shared objectives

The Chiltern Conservation Board was established by Parliamentary Order on December 14th 2004. Its statutory aims are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns
- To promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB
- In do so far as it is compatible with the first two aims, the Board will seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

The Chiltern Woodlands Project is a registered charitable trust (no. 1002512) company limited by guarantee (not for profit) founded in 1989. Its aims are:

- To promote and encourage the sustainable management of woodlands in the Chiltern Hills.
- To protect and enhance the landscape
- To maintain and enhance the biodiversity
- To promote a sustainable woodland economy
- To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Chiltern woods.

The Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project have identified their shared priorities as:

- Securing an attractive and sustainable landscape.

- Protection of existing woodlands.
- Promoting the long term sustainable management of woodlands.
- Promoting public enjoyment and understanding of woodlands and woodland heritage.
- Encouraging appropriate economic activity which supports the management of woodlands.
- Securing the protection of the special woodland heritage of woodlands.

The Conservation Board and Woodlands Project will work together in partnership to deliver these shared priorities.

We will do this by:

- Working closely and collaboratively at all levels.
- The CCB and CWP will agree an annual joint work programme.
- The CWP will assist the CCB with the preparation and implementation of the Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB.
- The CWP Board has given the Conservation Board the right to appoint a trustee of the CWP.
- The CCB Chief Officer and CWP manager will hold regular liaison meetings.
- CCB staff and CWP staff will liaise directly on all relevant matters.
- Staff will respond positively to request to attend Board meeting of each organisation and to provide information useful to each organisation.
- The CCB and CWP will invite the other organisation to be represented on any relevant work groups.
- The Conservation Board will provide office accommodation for the CWP which will be occupied on a Tenancy at Will lease.
- The Conservation Board will re-charge direct costs on an annual basis and will consider requires to waive other charges such as rent and rates depending upon the CWP's financial position.
- The Conservation Board will make available to the CWP meeting room facilities and general use of office equipment.
- The CCB will make available general IT support. Direct IT support will be charged directly.
- The CWP manager/staff will provide, on a no cost basis, the Conservation Board and its staff general support and information on woodland issues.

- The Conservation Board will assist the CWP with its fund raising efforts to enable it to function effectively and employ a manager.
- CWP and CCB will jointly develop a promotion and events programme.
- CCB and CWP will jointly identify priorities for future woodland work in the new Chilterns AONB Management Plan, these might include for example:-
 - Woodfuel
 - Climate Change and wood
 - Pest management
 - Woodland heritage
- Run the Special Trees and Woods project (until June 2009) with funded agreed by Heritage Lottery Fund and Chilterns Conservation Board. Working with volunteers and community groups to record the tree and woodland heritage of the Natural Area. Results are shown on the Chilterns AONB website.