

Designation History Series

Mendip Hills AONB

Ray Woolmore
Senior Planning Officer
Countryside Agency
1999

MENDIP HILLS AONB

Origin of proposal

1. During the 2nd World War, John Dower was requested by Government to study the problems relating to the establishment of National Parks in England and Wales and his Report¹ (May 1945) included the Mendip Hills in his list (Division C) of "Other Amenity Areas" not suggested as National Parks, but as areas of landscape beauty which merited some form of national protection in the future. Many of these "Other Amenity Areas" became the basis of the 52 conservation areas of high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value, listed in the July 1947 Report of the National Parks Committee, set up by Government following the Dower Report, and chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse.² The 62 square mile/161 square kilometres area of the Mendip Hills (Map 1) was included in Hobhouse's list of conservation areas. Lying entirely in the old geographical county (pre 1974 re-organisation) of Somerset, it stretched along the Carboniferous Limestone ridge from Bleadon Hill in the west (with an outlier of Brean Down further west) to north of Shepton Mallet in the east. (The designated AONB excludes the Mendips between Wells and Shepton Mallet). To the south the Hills rose abruptly out of the flat Somerset Levels and Moors to a 300m ridge, but to the north and east it gradually merged with the Avon Vales, the southern end of the Cotswolds and the Yeovil Scarplands. It combined the classic features of a Carboniferous Limestone karst landscape (including a small core of Old Red Sandstone) with the complex ritual, industrial and agricultural landscapes extending in time from the prehistoric period to modern quarrying.

Designation History

2. The National Parks Commission (NPC) gave priority to its programme of National Park designations, and it was not until 1957 that the NPC turned its attention to AONBs, using the Hobhouse conservation areas for its initial list of proposals. The Mendip Hills was not in this initial list, but was noted as an area for future inclusion in the AONB programme.

3. In 1966 a number of national and local amenity and conservation groups, including the Mendip Society, wrote to the NPC seeking early designation of the Mendip Hills as an AONB; and in 1967 a similar request was put to the NPC by Axbridge Rural District Council, which was particularly concerned about the impacts of limestone working on the area. The NPC's initial view was - while it accepted future consideration of the area as an AONB, the priority in its current programme was for coastal AONBs rather than inland areas. It promised, however to consider the question of the Mendips at its next AONB programme review; and in October/November 1967³ the NPC formally decided to bring the area into its programme.

4. In January 1968 the NPC invited the Somerset County Council to prepare a preliminary map of the AONB showing possible boundaries. Following an inspection of the area by Commissioners in January 1969, the Commission considered, and agreed, the report (Paper A/970)⁴ of their inspecting party at their February 1969 meeting. They generally agreed with the boundaries of the area put forward in the preliminary map, which covered the western part of the Mendips i.e. the section stretching from Bleadon Hill in the west to the A39 main road from Bath to Wells. The inspecting party observed that the landscape on both east and west sides of the A39 differed little in landscape quality, but nevertheless it was accepted that the road formed the most convenient boundary separating the finest landscape of the proposed AONB to the west from the dominantly ordinary scenery to the east. The preliminary map included Blagdon Lake on the north side of the Mendips, but excluded Chew Valley Lake, a large reservoir supporting much wildlife. The Commission suggested three amendments to the preliminary map prepared by Somerset County Council - the exclusion of a small area west of Blagdon Lake, where there was recent housing development, the addition of Chew Valley Lake and the villages of Litton and Chewton Mendip.

5. Following further correspondence with the County Council the preliminary map boundary was re-drawn, and presented to the Commission at their June 1969 meeting, together with Paper A1019⁵ which described the changes. The Commission agreed⁵ the new boundary which generally reflected the changes they had suggested at their February meeting. However, the Commission also resolved not to proceed further with the designation until the Statement of Intent for the AONB had been improved by the County Council.

6. The County Council prepared a revised Statement of Intent which was considered by the Commission at their October 1969 meeting⁶ and accepted. Work then continued on the designation process, and the County Council first sought views on the agreed preliminary map from a range of bodies. These views, more especially those requesting amendments, were reported in summary form, in paper A/1096⁷, to the Commission at their May 1970 meeting⁷. Many of the changes proposed were minor and accepted; but major proposals for extensions eastwards from Wells, including land at Measbury Castle and Beacon Hill towards Shepton Mallet, by CPRE, the Ramblers' Association, the YHA and the Mendip Society, were rejected. While Measbury Castle and Beacon Hill were felt to be possibly worthy of inclusion; their detached location in what was described as less worthy land militated against this view. At the same time the Somerset Branch of the CPRE had also suggested that the Polden Hills might be included as a detached section of the proposed AONB, but this was rejected, though the Commission Secretary's letter suggested that this did not preclude consideration of the area as a separate AONB at a later date.

7. A major objection to the designation of the area was made by the Somerset Branch of the NFU to its unnecessarily wide extent in relation to the dominance of dairy and arable farming over the area (particularly around the Chew Valley Lake); and this was considered by the Commission at their July 1970 meeting⁸. Although the Commission did not agree with the NFU views, particularly with regard to the inclusion of the Chew Valley Lake Area (which the Commission itself had added to Somerset's original preliminary map boundaries), it was agreed that an early meeting between the Commission and the NFU should take place to attempt to allay their fears. The meeting was held in August, but no modification was made to the boundary as a result.

8. In further correspondence in August 1970, the Mendip Society requested that the Commission consider a number of detailed changes to the boundary, as well as seeking the inclusion of Brean Down, Steep Holme and Flat Holm as outliers of the Mendips. The argument for the inclusion of the area between Wells and Shepton Mallet was again pursued on the grounds of its very great amenity importance and scenic link with the rest of the Mendips.

9. In October 1970 the Commission formally consulted the local authorities on the designation map agreed at their July 1970 meeting. Only two authorities, Axbridge RDC and Clutton RDC, suggested amendments to the boundary of the AONB, and these were set out in Commission Paper 71/19, and submitted to the Commission's meeting in February 1971⁹. Most of these amendments were minor (including proposed boundary changes around the village of Blagdon), and mostly were not agreed, along with a more substantial proposal from Axbridge RDC to include Brean Down, which was also rejected. The Commission authorised their officers to proceed with the public advertisement of the designation at this February 1971 meeting.

10. At their meeting on 2 November 1971¹⁰ the Commission considered paper 71/186, which contained their officers' recommendations on the representations received following the public advertisement of the designation order. The major formal representations came from the CPRE, the RA and the Mendip Society, and related to informal proposals previously made to extend the proposed designation eastward. These proposals were again rejected on the grounds that the area was generally not up to national AONB standard and lacked the distinctive character of the more impressive Mendip scenery to the east. The NFU repeated their previous informal representations to withdraw large areas around Chew Valley Lake and agricultural land to the south; as well as the Cheddar strawberry growing area. These representations were rejected by the Commission. Although the Commission agreed at their November meeting to the making and submitting of the Order on the basis of the recommendations in paper 71/186 following requests by the Mendip Society, the CPRE and the RA for a site meeting with the Commission, such a meeting took place in December, and included the County

Planning Officer. No major changes were made to the boundary as a result of this meeting apart from a small extension to the AONB to the north of Shipham.

11. The Designation Order for the Mendip Hills AONB was eventually signed on 14 February 1972; and submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment. The Secretary of State confirmed the designation order without modification on 1 December 1972. Covering 202 square kilometres the designated area (Map 2) stretched from Bleadon Hill in the west to the A39 Bath-Wells road in the east, including the greater part of the Mendip Hills.

12. A further chapter in the designation history of the Mendip Hills AONB opened with a review of the existing AONB boundaries in 1986 undertaken jointly by the local authorities (as part of the local plan process) and the Countryside Commission. The review was part of a wider review of the boundaries of several AONBs undertaken by the Commission in the eighties, and then endorsed by the Secretary of State. The purpose of this review (described as minor) was to make small-scale alterations to the boundary to redress anomalies which had come to light since designation in 1972. No large-scale additions or deletions were to be considered, so the Commission did not take any view on local authority suggestions to make a major eastward extension to the AONB (reflecting similar proposals prior to 1972).

13. The anomalies considered mainly concerned settlements on the edge of the designated area where, for convenience, the 1972 boundary followed roads, and several important Mendip settlements were consequently divided by the AONB boundary. The other main anomalies were in the Shipham, Winscombe and Blagdon areas, near the northern boundary of the AONB, where considerable land of AONB quality in and around these villages had been excluded from the AONB to allow for residential growth. With the smaller housing needs anticipated in the late eighties it was proposed to bring the AONB quality land and settlements into the AONB, and the whole of the villages of Blagdon and Shipham, as well as much open land around Winscombe and Shipham. At Wells too, it was proposed to extend the AONB to bring in an area of mainly parkland on the scarp overlooking the City.

14. All these proposals received wide publicity through the local plan process and the views of the public and interested organisations were sought; and it was agreed by the Commission that this consultation would meet their requirements for the informal public consultation which was normally part of the boundary review.

15. The Commission considered these proposals (and several minor proposals not mentioned above) at their February¹¹ and October 1987 meetings (Commission papers 87/12¹¹ and 87/70¹²), and at their October 1987¹² meeting, authorised their

officers to proceed with the statutory advertisement of the Commission's intention to make and submit a variation order for the Mendip Hills AONB to the Secretary of State.

16. Following public advertisement of the designation order in February 1988, only thirteen representations were received, and were described in Commission Paper 88/39, considered by the Commission at their June 1988¹³ meeting. No changes were made in light of the representations received which largely dealt with issues already considered. The Mendip Hills AONB Variation Order was signed on 2 June 1988 and submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who confirmed it with modifications, on 5 October 1989. His modification removed the centre of the village of Shipham from the AONB, and also drew back out of the AONB land on the periphery of Winscombe village. Otherwise he confirmed the designation order, which, had the effect of making the land covered by the AONB some 206 square kilometres, a net increase of 4 sq km over the previous figure. A subsequent re-measurement of all National Parks and AONB designations, using more accurate instrumentation, in 1991 brought the actual area down to 198 square kilometres.

References

1. John Dower "National Parks in England and Wales, Cmd 6628, HMSO, London, May 1945.
2. The National Parks Committee (Chairman Sir Arthur Hobhouse), "Report of the National Park Committee (England and Wales)" Cmd 7121, HMSO, London, July 1947.
3. Minutes of the meeting of the National Parks Commission (3958) held on 31 October and 1 November, 1967.
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (106) held on 4 February 1969.
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (233) held on 3 June 1969.
6. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (329) held on 7 October 1969.
7. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (534) held on 5 May 1970.
8. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (596) held on 7 July 1970.
9. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (778) held on 2 February 1971.
10. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (1009) held on 2 November 1971.
11. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (M87/15) held on 5 February 1987.
12. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (M87/70) held on 1 October 1987.
13. Minutes of the meeting of the Countryside Commission (M88/48) held on 2 June 1988.

Folios

All the references above are included as FOLIOS and are numbered as the references.

Maps

- Map 1 - Hobhouse Conservation area, Mendip Hills
- Map 2 - Mendip Hills AONB (Page 69, 1972-3 Annual Report of the Countryside Commission)

Files

The following files have been consulted:

Title	NPC or CC No	COU No
Mendip Hills Proposed AONB	AB/27	COU1/1134
Mendip Hills AONB (Proposed) - Preliminary Consultations by Somerset County Council. From Oct 1969	V/32	COU6/41
Mendip Hills AONB (Proposed) - Statutory Consultations with Local District Councils from 12 Aug 1970	V/33	COU6/106
Mendip Hills AONB (Proposed) Statutory Consultations - Observations by Axbridge Rural District Council From 14 Jan 1971	V/62	COU6/188
Mendip Hills AONB (Proposed) Making of Designation Order	V/90	COU6/191
Mendip Hills - Proposed Mendip Hills AONB - Public Advertisement	V/64	COU6/190
Mendip Hills AONB Boundary Review	273/9/3	1636

MAP 1

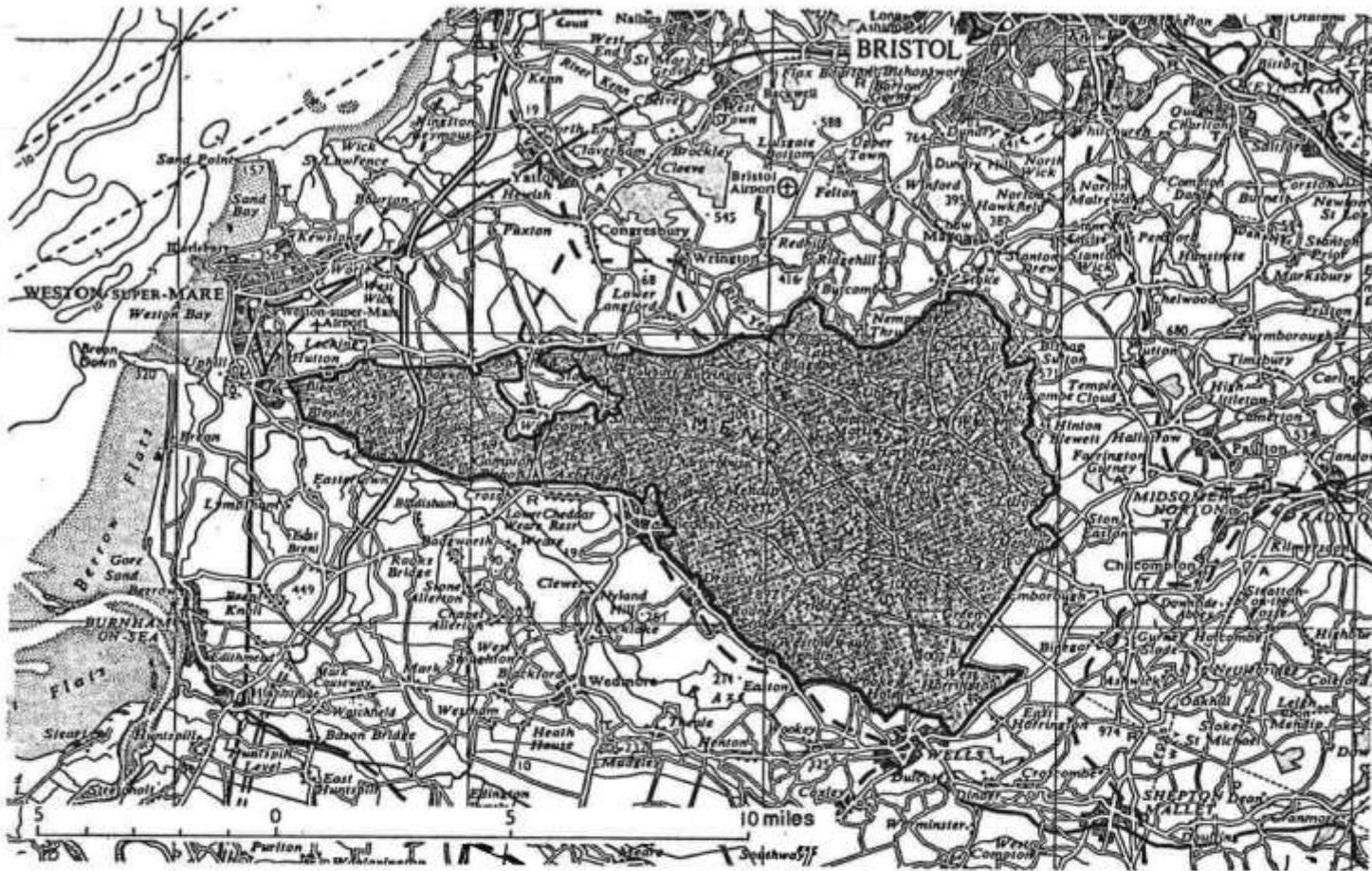
GREAT BRITAIN

(OUTLINE EDITION)



MAP 2

Map 4 Mendip Hills AONB



Map 2

Mendip Hills AONB (Page 69, 1972-3 Annual Report of the Countryside Commission)

No. On Map	Local Authority	Description of Alteration	Professional Officer's Comments and Recommendations
(f)		(f) To include Brean Down to the west of Eleadon	(f) <u>Not Agreed</u> This area, although part of the Mendip geological system, is completely detached from Mendip proper and bears no relationship in terms of landscape.
2 (a)	<u>Glutton R.D.C.</u>	(a) To include Hinton Blewett including the Forbury or Village green	(a) <u>Not Agreed</u> The landscape around here is of good quality, but the Commission's aim has been to connect the land around Chew Valley Lake with Mendip proper by as short a line as possible. The present line is extremely logical and it would make no sense to deviate from this simply to include one village.
(b)		(b) To include the hamlet of Stowey in the parish of Stowey-Sutton	(b) <u>Not Agreed</u> The same remarks apply as to (a) above, but the suggested deviation would be even more illogical.

E.P.A.
22/1/71

FOLIO 1



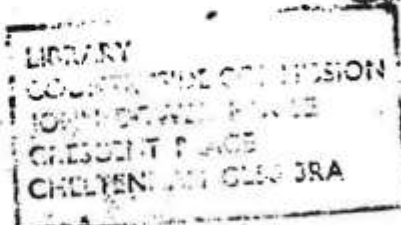
MINISTRY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

NATIONAL PARKS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Report by
JOHN DOWER

Stockchecked
1989
Countryside

*Presented by the Minister of Town and Country Planning to Parliament
by Command of His Majesty
May 1945*



LONDON
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Cmd. 6628

should include the protection of substantial areas of mere and marsh as strict Nature Reserves. The other two groups, which are not in any order of priority, comprise all the best that remains, after taking the areas included in Division A, in the moorland and mountain masses of the North (Cheviots and Pennines) and of Wales and the Welsh Marches. These are, in effect, the two great reserves from which further National Parks or extensions of existing Parks—not necessarily corresponding precisely to the unit areas as listed—could progressively be drawn, as policy, finance and administrative capacity allowed.

	Approx. square miles
(1) The Broads	120
(2) North York Moors and Coast	460
(3) Dorset Coast and Heaths	200
(4) Berkshire and Marlborough Downs... ..	240
	1,020
(5) North-east Cheviots (Till and Coquet)	300
(6) North Pennines (South Tyne, Wear and Tees)	640
(7) Swaledale Pennines (with part of Wensleydale)	240
(8) Howgill Fells (upper Lune)	280
	1,460
(9) Merioneth Coast and Mountains (incl. Berwyns)	660
(10) Plynlimon	400
(11) Radnor and Clun Forests	420
(12) Elenith Mountains* (Elan, Towy and Cothi)	440
	1,920
	<u>4,400</u>

11. *Division C: Other Amenity Areas NOT suggested as National Parks.* (see explanation in paragraph 8 above). These are set out in four groups—Northern; Western; South-western; and Southern and Eastern. It may be thought that some of the areas in this last group should have been placed, so as to secure a more even distribution of National Parks over the country, in Divisions A or B, in which areas in the North, West and South-west predominate. The answer is that the wilder country most suitable for National Parks is predominantly in the North, West and South-west. Nevertheless I should have included at least two southern areas in Divisions A or B if I were not reasonably satisfied that they would, in future, be adequately dealt with by other agencies; the South Downs by the county and local authorities, and the New Forest by the Forestry Commission. Both have, unfortunately, suffered considerably in places from past misdevelopments. Other areas where the Forestry Commission has a major interest are the Forest of Dean (already a National Forest Park), the South-west Cheviots (Kielder and Kershope Forests), Cannock Chase, Breckland and the Suffolk Heaths.

* There is no current general name for this well-marked mountain range running from Rhayader south-west almost to Carmarthen: I take the revival of the ancient name "Elenith" from Mr. A. G. Bradley and Mr. Edmund Vale.

MAP II



Distribution of areas to be considered when National Parks in England and Wales are selected.

Notes.

To show the coastal areas clearly, their depth is, in some parts, exaggerated. Small enclaves of urban and industrial development are disregarded.

Northern

Northumberland Coast (part)
 South-west Cheviots
 Bowland Fells
 Nidderdale Pennines
 Industrial Pennines
 Charnwood Forest
 Cannock Chase
 Delamere Forest

South-western

The Cotswolds
 The Mendips
 The Quantocks
 Cornish Coast (remaining parts)
 South Devon Coast
 Blackdown Hills
 Dorset Downs

*Western
 (Wales and Welsh Marches)*

Anglesey Coast
 Llyn Coast
 Denbigh Moors
 Clwydian Range
 Cardigan Coast
 Gower
 The Eppynt
 South Shropshire Hills
 Malvern Hills
 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye

Southern and Eastern

The New Forest
 Hampshire Downs and Hindhead
 South Downs
 Forest Ridges (Horsham to Battle)
 North Downs
 The Chilterns
 Breckland
 Suffolk Heaths and Coast
 North Norfolk Coast

12. The terms of reference for this report do not extend to Scotland and the foregoing lists are therefore confined to England and Wales. It is, however, exceedingly desirable that National Parks should be established, and areas for further National Parks reserved, in Scotland *pari passu* with England and Wales, and at a rate of not less than one to three. The mountain masses of the Highlands, with their glens and lochs, are far larger and more continuously wild than any corresponding areas south of the Border; and (in my opinion) at least two selected Highland areas of ample size should become Scottish National Parks simultaneously with the establishment of the first six English and Welsh National Parks. Such action would have, besides its intrinsic merit, the advantage of providing a further insurance against the congestion and other ill-effects which would arise from any scheme which started with too small a number or extent of National Park areas.

A national objective for national decision and action

13. The next requirement of my definition is that National Parks should be in a true and full sense *national*, if they are to be worthy of their name and purpose. This does not mean that *local* interests are to be disregarded. On the contrary, the well-being of those who live and work within them must always be a first consideration. But it does mean that their holiday and recreational use should be for people—and especially young people—of every class and kind and from every part of the country, indeed of the world. National Parks are not for any privileged or otherwise restricted section of the population, but for all who care to refresh their minds and spirits and to exercise their bodies in a peaceful setting of natural beauty.* Few national purposes are more vital or more rich in promise of health and happiness than the provision, first, of general and generous opportunity for holidays (by the "holidays with pay" system and otherwise) and, second, of large, open and beautiful tracts

* This qualification does, of course, imply one broad restriction, namely, that it is no concern of National Parks to cater for those who prefer a town setting for their holidays: see paragraph 29 below.

FOLIO 2



MINISTRY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

REPORT
OF THE
NATIONAL PARKS
COMMITTEE
(ENGLAND AND WALES)

*Presented by the Minister of Town and Country Planning to Parliament
by Command of His Majesty
July 1947*

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(f) to hold, improve and manage land and other property and to carry out on such land building or other development or any acts appropriate to the functions of estate ownership;

(g) to enter into covenants and agreements with owners or occupiers covering the development and management of their land or property and to pay consideration for such covenants; and

(h) to assist by grants or otherwise local authorities or other organisations.

VIII. Conservation Areas

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

227. There are many areas of fine country and coast in England and Wales which are not included in our selection of National Parks but yet possess outstanding landscape beauty, are often of great scientific interest and, in many cases, include important holiday areas. While in the main they do not call for the degree of positive management required in National Parks, nor for the closer scientific control which may be necessary in National Nature Reserves, their contribution to the wider enjoyment of the countryside is so important that special measures should be taken to preserve their natural beauty and interest. Indeed we regard our proposals for these areas as an essential corollary to our National Park scheme.

228. In carrying out their duties in relation to National Parks, the Commission and their staff will accumulate a wealth of experience and technical knowledge which we feel should be placed at the disposal of the local authorities responsible for the planning and administration of these other areas of special beauty and interest. Further we consider that the expert advice from the Commission should on occasion be accompanied by some financial assistance, in the form of grants to local authorities or to other appropriate bodies, for the protection of natural beauty and interest or to promote the enjoyment of these areas by the visiting public. We recommend, therefore, that the Minister of Town and Country Planning should designate areas of high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value as CONSERVATION AREAS, to be dealt with in the manner indicated in succeeding paragraphs of this chapter.

SELECTION

229. We have selected 52 areas, which we list in Appendix C, and include on the map at the end of this Report, for designation as Conservation Areas.

230. Our list includes a wide variety of landscape types from all parts of England and Wales. All of them have great natural beauty or special interest, and most of them are of substantial continuous extent; indeed we have omitted from our selection many smaller areas of attractive country which should be protected as Green Belts, Open Spaces, Rural Zones or Nature Reserves under local planning.

231. Some of the areas selected, such as the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds, fall short of National Park standards in extent or wildness. Other areas are not included as National Parks on account of intensive land uses which would not allow a sufficient freedom of rambling access. Of these, the Breckland and the Marlborough and Berkshire Downs are good examples, where forestry and arable farming respectively are paramount. Yet others, such as the Howgill Fells or the Elenith Mountains, though intrinsically suitable to be

National Parks, are adjacent to country of still higher quality which has given preference in our selection. If, however, it is desired at some date to increase the number of National Parks, we assume that additional areas will be sought from among the Conservation Areas.

232. Many of the areas proposed are within easy reach of large centres of population. These more accessible areas will provide enjoyment for people living in towns and cities more remote from National Parks, who will be able to visit and explore their Conservation Areas in shorter periods of leisure.

233. Our proposals have also been strongly reinforced by the findings of the Wild Life Conservation Special Committee. In presenting their scheme for Nature Conservation for the whole of England and Wales, they attach particular importance to the preservation of large tracts of interesting country, too large for strict preservation as National Nature Reserves, but yet of great value either physiographically or geologically or as containing complex communities of plant and animal life. We have therefore worked in close co-operation with the Special Committee in making our selection, and in drawing the boundaries of Conservation Areas so as to include land which is recommended as of outstanding scientific value. We also make provision for the application of expert advice from the proposed Biological Service (Chapter X), to the protection of these areas, the interest and beauty of which are so largely derived from their underlying geological formations and from the richness of their flora and fauna.

DESIGNATION

234. It has not been possible to make a detailed survey of the boundaries of the 52 Conservation Areas proposed. We have, therefore, indicated on a map what we consider to be their approximate limits. We recommend, therefore, that local planning authorities should be charged to submit, with the assistance of the National Parks Commission, within twelve months of the passage of the necessary legislation, detailed boundaries for the approval of the Minister of Town and Country Planning; and that the Minister, after making any modifications in the boundaries which he may think desirable, should thereafter formally designate each Conservation Area.

PLANNING ORGANISATION

235. For the planning of Conservation Areas we do not suggest any alteration in the normal local planning authorities, which, under the new Bill, will be the County and County Borough Councils. We wish to ensure, however, that the expert advice of the National Parks Commission, and in appropriate cases, of the Biological Service, is made available, and that each of the Conservation Areas (since they are for the most part geographically homogeneous), should be comprehensively treated as a single unit. We think that these objects can be most effectively achieved by the use of Advisory Committees, an expedient already well established in planning administration.

236. We therefore recommend that the Minister of Town and Country Planning should, on the designation of any area as a Conservation Area, make an Order requiring the local planning authority to set up an Advisory Committee or (where two or more local planning authorities are concerned in any area), a Joint Advisory Committee.

237. We further recommend:—

(a) that the area of the Advisory Committee's responsibility should be co-extensive with the Conservation Area;

Appendix C

PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS WITH APPROXIMATE SIZE IN SQUARE MILES

Northern

Northumberland Coast	...	...	...	...	76
The Cheviot and Rothbury Forest	...	...	...	...	288
Kielder Moors	...	...	...	...	401
North Pennines	...	...	...	...	653
Howgill Fells	...	...	...	...	311
Silverdale	...	...	...	...	79
Forest of Bowland	...	...	...	...	289
Nidderdale Moors	...	...	...	...	239
South Pennines	...	...	...	...	154
Howardian Hills	...	...	...	...	58
Flamborough Coast	...	...	...	...	18
Delamere Forest	...	...	...	...	27

Western

Anglesey Coast	...	...	...	...	76
Llwyn Coast	...	...	...	...	34
Denbigh Moors	...	...	...	...	146
Clwydian Range	...	...	...	...	120
Berwyn	...	...	...	...	205
Plynlimon	...	...	...	...	520
Clun and Radnor Forests	...	...	...	...	474
Shropshire Hills	...	...	...	...	192
Elenith Mountains	...	...	...	...	484
Epynt	...	...	...	...	179
Cardigan Coast	...	...	...	...	18
Gower	...	...	...	...	48
South Glamorgan Coast	...	...	...	...	14
Forest of Dean and Wye Valley	...	...	...	...	232
Malvern Hills	...	...	...	...	23

South Western

The Mendips	...	...	...	...	62
Bideford Bay	...	...	...	...	51
Bodmin Moor	...	...	...	...	95
Cornish Coast	...	...	...	...	269
Isles of Scilly	...	...	...	...	7
South Devon Coast	...	...	...	...	85
Blackdown Hills and Sidmouth Bay	...	...	...	...	212

Southern

Dorset Downs, Heaths and Coast ...	441
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs ...	231
The New Forest ...	243
Isle of Wight Coast ...	11
Hampshire Downs ...	221
Hindhead ...	154
The North Downs ...	273
Forest Ridges ...	132
Dungeness ...	50
The Cotswolds ...	660
Marlborough and Berkshire Downs ...	435
The Chilterns ...	273

Eastern and Central

Suffolk Coast and Heaths ...	128
Breckland ...	313
North Norfolk Coast ...	44
Clipsham-Holywell ...	24
Charnwood Forest ...	39
Cannock Chase ...	24

FOLIO 3

C/M/67/9

NATIONAL PARKS COMMISSION

Minutes of the hundred and ninety-second meeting held at 1, Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1., on Tuesday, October 31, and Wednesday, November 1, 1967.

PRESENT:

The Baroness Wootton of Abinger
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Aubrey Buxton, M.C.
Mrs. Elwyn Davies
Mr. George Howard
Mr. Cecil H. King
Mr. William Lindsay
Professor O.R. McGregor
Mr. Peter F. Shephard
Mr. J. Longland

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Sports Council

Mr. M.F.B. Bell
Mr. J.R.L. Ferguson
Mr. R.J.S. Hookway

Secretary

Item 7:

Mr. William Goode
Mr. A.G. McClelland
Mr. R.A. Banks
Professor H.C. Darby
Mr. W.A. Muddell
Mr. A.F. Rowntree
Mr. N.H. Calvert
Mr. W.E. Bradbury

Water Resources Board

Item 8:

Mr. A.M. Allen

British Waterways Board

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Jones.

J.T.W.

The Minutes of the September meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Telemetric and Telecommunications Masts (Minute 3913)

The Deputy Chairman drew attention to an article in the Observer of October 29. The office undertook to investigate the possible use of satellites to replace telemetric and telecommunications masts.

(G/741)

GENERAL

Cost of undergrounding electricity supply lines

The Commission noted the opinion of an official of the Central Electricity Generating Board, reflecting on the high cost of undergrounding 400 kV lines,

preface to the sections of the report containing these statistics had been agreed by the Deputy Chairman and was before the Commission. The Commission agreed not to raise any objection to the use of this material provided that the last sentence in the draft preface to the report was removed.

(IC/5/125/7)

6. Exmoor: Ploughing and Fencing of Open Land

The Commission took note of Paper D/1074 being a copy of a letter and supporting papers from Somerset County Council to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government on the problem of ploughing and fencing of open land on Exmoor and of the Ministry's reply. Mr. Howard reported on his meeting on October 11/12 with representatives of Exmoor landowners and farmers.

(ER/5/113/Ft.3)
(ER/5/113/1)

7. Northumberland: public access

The Commission recalled that Mr. Blenkinsop had asked for an access order on land in the area of Faddon Hill, Brown Rigg Head, Kelly's Pike and Blackwood Law, and that the office had suggested to Northumberland County Council that they might try for an access agreement as preferable to an order.

The County Council had replied that the National Park Planning Committee did not think that enough people visited the area to warrant the making of an access agreement or order.

The Commission decided to take no further action in the matter.

(ND/5/141)

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

8. Future Programme

The Commission had before them Paper A/830 being a note of work under way and areas still to be considered by them for possible designation.

The Commission decided to urge the Welsh Office to speed up the confirmation of the Anglesey designation, and that the office should bring into the programme of designations proposals for

- Forest of Dean and Wye Valley
- Mendips
- Lincolnshire Wolds.

They directed the removal of Flamborough and of Coed Helen Estate from the list, and deferred comment on any further programme.

(AD/51/1/Pt.2)

NOMINATIONS

9. Dartmoor National Park Committee

The Commission decided to recommend to the Minister that Messrs. Foot, [unclear] and Lt. Col. Roberts all be re-appointed

FOLIO 4

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1, Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1., on Tuesday, February 4, 1969.

PRESENT:

Baroness Wootton of Abinger
James Fisher
Mr. Aubrey Buxton, M.C.
Mrs. Margaret Davies
Mr. George Howard
Mr. Elwyn Jones
Mr. Cecil H. King
Mr. William Lindsay, C.B.E.
Professor O.R. McGregor
Mr. Peter F. Shephard

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Mr. Edward Davies)
Ald. C.M. Jones, O.B.E., J.P.)
Mr. Trevor Lewis)
Captain H.R.H. Vaughan, R.N. J.P.)

Committee for Wales

Mr. M.F.B. Bell
Mr. J.R.B. Ferguson
Mr. T. Farmer
Mrs. M.B. Jones
Mr. R. Bush

Secretary

Mr. R.J.S. Hookway
Mr. P.N. Allen

Mr. J. Yates

(For item 14)

The Minutes of the December 31 meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Monthly Synopsis

The Commission received and noted the monthly synopsis for December, 1968, (paper S/68/12).

S/53/120)

COMMITTEE FOR WALES

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Committee for Wales, adding that their next meetings would be taking place in the Principality.

Mrs. Davies gave an oral report of the first meeting of the Committee for Wales. The Commission noted that the Committee had decided to take time to work themselves in, before considering delegation of functions and in the meantime simply to act in accordance with their terms of reference, i.e. to help the Countryside Commission in their work in Wales.

The Commission endorsed this decision and noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be in Aberystwyth, on April 10. 11 J.F.W.

(S/2)

INFORMATION AND PUBLICITYPublicity

The Commission decided to recommend to the Minister that Mrs. Dower, whose current term of office was due to expire on October 8, 1969, should be re-appointed for a further period of three years, and that Mr. Child, whose current term of office was also due to expire on October 8, 1969, should be replaced on the Committee.

The Commission noted that because of the recent reconstitution of the Northumberland National Park Planning Committee, enlarging its functions and renaming it as the Countryside and National Park Planning Committee, a further place had been created on the Committee for a Ministerial member. The Commission decided to recommend to the Minister that Mr. W.F.P. Hugonin and Mr. K.R. Ashby be appointed to fill two vacancies on the Committee (i.e. the one caused by the replacement of Mr. Child and the one caused by the recent reconstitution). Should either Mr. Hugonin or Mr. Ashby be unable to accept appointment the Commission agreed to put forward Mr. B. Worthington and the Hon. P.J.W. Fairfax as reserves.

(ND/2/1/Pt.3)

(iii) Pembrokeshire Coast Park Planning Committee

The Commission received Paper C/493 giving brief details of present members and of candidates for the Pembrokeshire Coast Park Planning Committee.

The Commission decided to recommend to the Secretary of State for Wales that Col. G.A. Jackson, whose present term of office was due to expire in May, 1969, should be re-appointed to the Committee for a further period of three years, and that Mrs. R. Donnelly, whose current term of office was also due to expire in May, 1969, should be replaced on the Committee by Captain Dillwyn Miles.

(PC/2/1/Pt.3)

(iv) Brecon Beacons National Park Planning Committees

The Commission received Paper C/494 giving brief details of present members and of candidates of the Breconshire, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire, Park Planning Committees and also of the Brecon Beacons Joint Advisory Committee.

The Commission decided to recommend to the Secretary of State for Wales the re-appointment of those members of the above-mentioned Committees whose current terms of office were due to expire on May 25, 31, and June 1, 1969.

(BB/2/1/Pt.3)

(v) Yorkshire Dales (N.R.) Park Planning Committee

The Commission received Addendum 1 to Agenda CA/69/1 and agreed to make no change in their recommendation of December 31, 1968 (Minute 80 refers).

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

106. Mendips - Designation (Minute 3958)

The Commission received Paper A/970 being a report of the recent site inspection of the area made by the Deputy Chairman. They accepted the recommendations of the Deputy Chairman and agreed that the office should discuss the proposed modifications of the boundary and the Statement of Intentions with the County Planning Officer.

(AB/27)

/North

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Mendips: Proposed Designation

1. The Commission will recall that, at their October, 1967 meeting they decided to proceed towards the designation of an area included in the "Hobhouse" Report and known as the "Mendips". Minute 3958.
2. The area lies wholly within the County of Somerset and, in response to our approach to the County Council, we received for approval (i) a preliminary map showing the boundary suggested by the County Council and (ii) the Council's statement of planning intentions (see appendix).

Area proposed for designation

3. The area shown in the preliminary map covers the western part of the Mendips - that is to say, the section stretching from Bleadon Hill in the west to the A.39 main road from Bath to Wells. The area of the Mendips to the east of this line, with the exception of one very small area, has been excluded. The draft boundary has been well drawn in detail to include Blagdon Lake on the north side of the Mendips, but excludes Chew Valley Lake, a large but attractive reservoir supporting wild life.

It is considered that there may be justification for including this lake and the area of countryside immediately around it. A site inspection, led by the Deputy Chairman, has been conducted to judge, amongst other matters, whether this area should be included.

Statement of Intent

4. The statement of intent, outlines very briefly the County Council's intentions towards preserving and enhancing the area. It is considered, however, that it is not nearly informative enough even if the County Council have not yet had the time or resources to make a full survey and analysis of the area. It compares very unfavourably with statements of Intent received for some other A.O.N.B. designations (e.g. Dedham Vale and Wye Valley).

5. The Commission wrote to the County Council on the 27th April 1968, advising them that the Statement should outline the Council's future planning objectives and policies, not only in the interests of preserving the character of the area but also for its enhancement by positive action, whether these would attract grant aid or not.

6. In the circumstances it is considered that the best course will be to write to the County Council again setting out the main headings under which the Commission would like to see more detailed information on problems, objectives and future actions which are thought desirable for conserving and enhancing the Mendips. Should the Commission feel that the proposed designated area should be enlarged to include Chew Valley Lake, the County will also be asked to agree to this, and if they do, the revised statement of intent will have to be altered to take this into account.

Next stage

7. After the Commission have reached a final decision on the proposed boundaries and are satisfied with the statement of intentions (eventually following further consultations with the County Council), the next procedural stage will be for the County Council to undertake preliminary consultations with the district councils and other interested bodies.

Proposed Mendips area of outstanding natural beauty

Statement of planning intentions received from
Somerset County Council

1. The area suggested for designation as an "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" forms part of a larger area already defined in the current County Development Plan as being of Great Landscape Value. The Plan sets out the policies of the Local Planning Authority for the control of development in such areas. Every endeavour will be made by the Authority to exercise such powers to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Mendip Hills and to make full use of the national recognition of their landscape quality reflected in the formal designation to achieve this objective.

2. The Local Planning Authority cannot at this stage specify a detailed programme of any "positive action" they may wish to take in accordance with the powers available to them for the enhancement of natural beauty - this will call for a more comprehensive study of the area. The Planning Authority appreciate, however, that the Mendips have a considerable potential for the careful selection of view points. The formation of these view points, the creation of suitable public access facilities and the provision of small parking areas (as has been done in the Exmoor National Park and the Quantock Hills area of outstanding natural beauty) are all matters to which the Planning Authority will wish to give early consideration. The major problem in relation to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area concerned arises from existing and permitted quarrying activities. Otherwise the removal of a few unsightly structures may need to be contemplated or their impact softened by suitable tree planting. The extension of the M.5 motorway through part of the area suggested for designation (the Lox Yeo Valley) has to be accepted and will necessitate careful attention to site treatment and landscape planting. The Local Planning Authority would give early consideration to these particular matters and would keep under review other 'actions' facilitated by the designation.

CM/69/1 - 106

106. Mendips - Designation (Minute 3958)

The Commission received Paper A/970 being a report of the recent site inspection of the area made by the Deputy Chairman. They accepted the recommendations of the Deputy Chairman and agreed that the office should discuss the proposed modifications of the boundary and the Statement of Intentions with the County Planning Officer.

(AB/27)

FOLIO 5

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the ninth meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1, Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1. on Tuesday, June 3, 1969.

PRESENT:

The Baroness Wootton of Abinger

Chairman

Mr. James Fisher

Deputy Chairman

Dr. Margaret Davies

Mr. George Howard

Sir William Lindsay, C.B.E.

Professor G. R. McGregor

Mr. Peter P. Shephard

Mr. Jack Longland

Mr. M. F. B. Bell

Secretary

Mr. J. R. B. Ferguson

Mrs. M. B. Jones

Mr. R. Bush

Mr. D. T. Millock

Mr. R. J. S. Hookway

Mr. L. J. Watson

Mr. N. P. Allen

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Buxton, Mr. Jones and Mr. King.

The Commission asked the Chairman to write to Mr. King thanking him for his past help.

The minutes of the meeting of May 6, 1969 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

216. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 192

In response to a request from Mr. Longland, the Secretary gave a report on progress made by the Working Party on the Wymol Estate. The Commission endorsed the suggestions he had made regarding the presentation of the report of the Working Party by the Secretary of State to the various interests concerned.

They agreed that a grant of £10,000 should be recommended on the understanding that the restaurant would be licenced and open to the public and that a proportion of the accommodation in the hostel adjoining should be available for the general public.

(SA/5/209)

229. Services Use of Dartmoor (Minute 207)

The Chairman gave a report on her recent visit to Exeter with Mr. Buxton Mr. Ferguson at which the services use of Dartmoor had been discussed with the Dartmoor Park Planning Committee. The Commission noted the reply of the Minister of Planning and Land to the Chairman's letter of May 6. They agreed that the Commission should now seek another meeting with Lord Waldegrave to discuss the maximum length of lease which the Commission could countenance, the timing of the Commission's action, and the management of the publicity arising therefrom.

(DN/1)

230. Exmoor - Purchase of Property by Somerset County Council

The Commission noted that the Clerk of the Somerset County Council had asked the Secretary outlining a proposal to purchase an estate in Exmoor, including the Chains, which had recently come on to the market. The Commission endorsed the Secretary's action in encouraging the Somerset County Council to move towards the purchase of the property. The Secretary undertook to report on the future progress.

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

231. Section 87 Designation: General Policy

The Commission briefly discussed their general policy in relation to designations under Section 87. They agreed that it was desirable at an early date to review their policy in the light of the general planning developments which had supervened since they had last considered the subject.

232. High Weald - Suggested New A.O.N.B. Designation

In view of their decision to review their general policy on Section 87 designations the Commission considered it inappropriate to reach a decision on the suggested designation put forward by the Clerk of the East Sussex County Council on behalf of his Council and of the West Sussex, Kent and Surrey County Councils and the Hastings County Borough Council.

They agreed that the Clerk should be informed that they were reviewing their designation policy, and would be returning in due course to consideration of the proposal in the light of their conclusions.

The Commission then went on to discuss the merits of the proposed area and decided that a site visit be arranged in the summer or autumn of 1969, emphasising that arrangements should be made on a confidential basis.

(AN/55)

233. Mendips Designation (Minute 3958)

The Commission considered paper A/1019 setting forth the staff's recommendations on the boundary proposals put forward by the Somerset County Council. The Commission agreed with the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the paper. At the same time they agreed that the statement of intent submitted by the County Council was not satisfactory and directed that the County Council should be informed that until a specific statement had been produced suggesting in concrete terms what was proposed for the area the Commission could not proceed further with designation under Section 87.

Proposed Mendips Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

At their February, 1969, meeting the Commission considered a report of the survey party (Mr. Fisher, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Allen and Mr. Watson) which had inspected the boundary put forward by the Somerset County Council for the proposed Mendips Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Minute 3958).

2. The Commission agreed generally with the area selected by the County Council but, on the advice of the survey party, decided to suggest three amendments to the Council:-

- (A) the exclusion of a small area to the west of Blagdon Lake which, the Commission felt, should be left out because of recent housing development;
- (B) the addition of a larger area including Chew Valley Lake; and
- (C) the addition of a small area including the villages of Litton and Chewton Mendip.

3. The Clerk of the County Council has now replied confirming the County Planning Committee's agreement to (B) and (C), but suggesting the exclusion of a small part of area (B) comprising Bishop Sutton village on the eastern side of the lake which is said to be largely built up.

4. Regarding Area (A) the County Planning Committee feel that "despite the recent housing development referred to by the Commission..... the Blagdon/Rickford area is an attractive area close to Blagdon Lake which fully justified its inclusion in the area of outstanding natural beauty". The Committee urge the Commission to retain the area within the boundary.

Recommendations

5. There seems to be some inconsistency in the County Planning Committee's desire to retain in the area to be designated the small developed area west of Blagdon Lake in Area A, but to leave out the small built-up area including Bishop Sutton village.

6. The Commission visiting party did not actually see the new development at Bishop Sutton Village (Area B), but it is suggested that the Commission should agree to leave this out subject to the Council finding a suitable alternative boundary identifiable on the ground.

7. It is suggested that the Commission should maintain their preference for leaving out the newly developed area west of Blagdon (Area A), but with an adjustment of the alternative boundary so as to leave in the Rickford area.

Statement of Intentions

8. A copy of the Council's Statement of Intentions is re-circulated as Appendix 1 to this Paper, and the letter which was sent to the County Planning Officer is at Appendix 2. The County Clerk's reply says that the County Planning Committee "took the view that this was not the time to be more specific as was pointed out in their draft statement (Appendix 1) a more detailed programme of /objectives

REC'D

7 2 r

objectives needs to be preceded by a comprehensive study of the area if and when designation has been effected. For instance, the Committee say, "the bridleway suggestion would entail an examination of defined rights of way and detailed survey on the ground to establish possible routes before it could reasonably be adopted as an objective".

9. Notwithstanding this explanation the present statement is unsatisfactory. The vague references to public access facilities, viewpoints, eyesores, etc. are inadequate, and the reference to quarrying problems appears to be misleading. While it takes a long time to achieve agreement to form a long distance footpath there is no reason why the County Council should not declare at least their intention to carry out an early investigation as to its feasibility.

10. The Commission may agree that, whilst the Council should be pressed to be more explicit before the Commission reach, say, the advertisement stage, the preparation of a more comprehensive and factual statement should not be allowed to hold up the next stage of the procedure, i.e. the preliminary informal consultations with the district councils and other interested bodies which the County Council have agreed to undertake.

(AB/27)

21 May, 1969

T.F./N.P.A.

FOLIO 6

IN CONFIDENCE

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

C/14/69/8

Minutes of the twelfth meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1, Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1., on Tuesday, October 7, 1969.

PRESENT:

The Baroness Wootton of Abinger
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Aubrey Buxton
Dr. Margaret Davies
Mr. George Howard
Sir William Lindsay, C.B.E.
Mr. Jack Longland
Professor O.R. McGregor
Mr. Peter F. Shephard

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Mr. H.F.B. Bell
Mr. R.J.S. Hookway
Mr. R. Bush
Mr. M. Weintraub

Secretary

Mr. T. Farmer

(For National Park Items)

Mrs. M.B. Jones

(For Countryside Items)

Mr. N.P. Allen)

Mr. A.A.C. Phillips)

(For Technical Items)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Elwyn Jones.

Minutes of the meeting held on August 5, 1969 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

98. Lake District - Proposed Afforestation Scheme at Park Moss, Ulpha (Minute 286)

Mr. Longland asked whether a satisfactory arrangement, with regard to this proposed afforestation scheme, had been achieved. The Secretary reported that Mr. Macdonald had the matter in hand and would be meeting the Forestry Commission Conservator shortly to discuss the matter.

(CV/1)

99. Monthly Synopsis for July 1969

(i) Item 2 - Lake District, Brown Howe Estate, Coniston

The Chairman inquired whether Ministry approval had yet been given to the Lake District Board's proposal to acquire the land concerned. The Secretary reported that this had now been received.

Mr. Longland asked what the owner was intending to do with the rest of the site and in particular the house. The Secretary undertook to look into the matter.

328. Dartmoor: Water for Plymouth and South West Devon (Minute 287)

The Chairman reported on her recent visit with the Deputy Chairman to a number of the alternative sites for a new reservoir to serve Plymouth and South West Devon.

The Commission agreed to inform the two water undertakings concerned that they were opposed to any reservoir within the National Park, pressing for a joint scheme at Townleigh where North Devon could be served too. A reservoir there would be welcomed on amenity, landscape, and social grounds; it would form a focal point for ancillary tourist developments in a development area.

They agreed that the Devon County Council should be told that the Commission were opposed to reservoirs at Lee Mill, Cartisknowle, and Woodcourt.

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

329. Proposed Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Commission considered paper A/1046 being the revised statement of planning intent submitted by the Somerset County Council with regard to the proposed Mendip Hills area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Commission agreed to accept the statement in its revised form and to ask the Somerset County Council to proceed with preliminary consultations.

(AD/27)

330. Chilterns Woodlands Plan

The Commission considered paper B/2140²¹⁴⁰ outlining the main points of the Chilterns Woodlands Plan prepared by the Forestry Commission, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils. The Commission agreed to discuss this matter further with the Buckinghamshire County Council before taking any further action.

331. Proposed Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Commission considered paper A/1045 being a list of representations which had been received following the statutory public advertisement of the Commission's intention to designate the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths areas of outstanding natural beauty, together with comments by the Field Officer and East Suffolk County Council on the suggestions.

The Commission agreed to accept the amendments suggested by East Suffolk County Council and to authorise the making of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order, 1969.

(AD/25/2/2)

PLANNING STUDIES

332. The Wash Desk Study

The Commission considered paper C/611 being the contribution of the technical staff to this study. The Commission agreed to accept Mr. Duxton's offer to revise the paper to make its recommendations more positive before it

FOLIO 7

IN CONFIDENCE

C/H/70/5

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1 Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1, on Tuesday, May 5, 1970.

PRESENT:

Mr. John Cripps, C.B.E.
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Aubrey Buxton
Dr. Margaret Davies
Mr. Elwyn Jones
Sir William Lindsay, C.B.E.
Mr. Jack Longland
Professor O. R. McGregor
Mr. Peter F. Shephard

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Mr. M. F. B. Bell
Mr. R. Ditchfield
Mr. R. Bush
Mr. M. Weintraub
Mr. H. Deadman
Mr. T. Farmer, M.B.E.

Secretary to Commission

Mrs. M. B. Jones
Mr. A. A. C. Phillips
Mr. J. Davidson

Secretary to Committee for Wales
(National Park, A.O.N.B. and Development
Control Items 531-541)
(Countryside Items)
(Research Items)
(Planning Study Items)

Mr. J. Price

(Pembrokeshire County Planning Officer
for Item 15)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Howard.

The minutes of the meeting held on April 7, 1970 were approved and signed by the Chairman subject to the amendment of minute 497(i) to read ".....Mr. Howard suggested that Professor Marston Fleming might be helpful".

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

10. Ninth Meeting of the Publicity Committee (Minute 499)

Mr. Bush reported that he had met representatives of the B.B.C. and other interested bodies on April 8 to discuss the future planning of "The Archers". The Commission noted that he had suggested that several of the proposed recreational developments in "Cambridge" should be brought together in the form of a country park. The Commission agreed that Mr. Bush arrange a convenient date for Mr. Baseley to meet the Chairman and Mr. Howard to discuss the Commission's contribution to the future planning of "The Archers".

(38/1)

51. Peak District National Park - Proposed Extension of Boundary (Minute 508)

of State had suggested the names of Mr. Cecil John and Miss Anne Phillips as replacements and had asked for the Commission's views on his suggestions.

The Commission agreed that the Secretary of State be informed that they agreed his suggestion with regard to Miss Phillips but that they now felt strongly that Mr. Barratt should continue to serve on the Committee, because this would significantly help his work as Director of the Pembrokeshire Countryside Unit. The note about Mr. Cecil John did not indicate that he had relevant experience or qualification. Mr. Barratt was much valued as a member of the Committee by both the County Council and the Commission.

The Commission agreed that the policy memorandum on Ministerial appointments should be re-circulated at their next meeting. They also asked that the Chairman should recommend the candidate(s) whom he considered most suitable.

(PC/2/1/Pt.3)

533. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park: Proposed Holiday Development at Freshwater East

The Commission considered paper B/2285 outlining the Pembrokeshire County Council's proposed scheme for the development of Freshwater East as a holiday centre. Mr. J. Price, Pembrokeshire County Planning Officer attended the meeting and explained in detail his Council's proposals.

The Commission agreed to accept in principle for grant purposes the proposals for the acquisition for access and clearing of eyesores on the beach and dune areas (shown green on the map displayed) and also for Stage 1 of the car parking, subject to the provision of detailed costings. The office was instructed to inform the Welsh Office and Pembrokeshire County Council accordingly, also that the Commission agreed the comprehensive development plan was ready for consideration at public inquiry.

(DM/8)

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

534. Proposed Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Commission considered paper A/1096 being a summary of the suggestions received by Somerset County Council following preliminary consultations with the District Councils and other bodies concerned, together with comments by the Somerset County Planning Officer and the Commission's Field Adviser. The Commission noted the reservations expressed by the National Farmers' Union but agreed that these were irrelevant to designation of the area.

The Commission decided to endorse the recommendations of their Field Adviser, and to defer consideration of Section B of the paper until after the County Planning Committee had met on June 22.

(AB/27)

535. Lincolnshire Wolds Proposed Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Minutes 294 and 3)

The Commission considered paper A/1099 being up-to-date statement of progress with this proposal. On Mr. Fisher's recommendation the Commission agreed to endorse the County Council's proposals in principle and to accept the

IN-CONFIDENCE

C O U N T R Y S I D E C O M M I S S I O N

PAPER A/1096

MENDIP HILLS - PROPOSED AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Results of Consultation on Draft Boundary with Government Departments, District and Parish Councils and other interested bodies together with comments by the Somerset County Planning Officer and the Commission's Field Advisor

A. Replies suggesting amendments

<u>Department, Council or Body consulted</u>	<u>Summary of Comment</u>	<u>County Planning Officer's Comment and Recommendation</u>	<u>County Planning Committee Decision</u>	<u>Commission Field Advisors' Comments</u>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<u>NORTH-EAST BOUNDARY</u> Clutton R.D.C.	Extend boundary to include Hinton Blewett (and Forebury)	The original draft boundary was extended North-Eastwards to include Chew Valley Lake, East and West Harptree on the suggestion of the Countryside Commission. It might be thought reasonable to include the high ground of Knowle Hill adjoining the Lake, but it is considered that any further extension of the boundary would not be justified having regard to the objective of defining Outstanding Natural Beauty. Though attractive, the area proposed for inclusion are typical of a much wider section of the County. A large part is already defined in the County Development Plan as being of great landscape value and it is thought that this represents the appropriate classification	Agreed the County Planning Officer's recommendations	In agreement with the County Planning Officer's recommendations.
Minton Blewett Parish Council.	- ditto -			
Chew Magna Parish Council	Extend boundary to include Knowle Hill and Hollow Brook. North East of Chew Valley Lake.			
Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Somerset Branch).	Extend boundary North Eastwards to include Hinton Blewett - thence to Ston Easton, White Bridge and Old Down.			
Ramblers Association.	Extend boundary to include Knowle Hill.			
E. Harptree Parish Council.	Oppose inclusion of East Harptree - designation will restrict possible expansion.			

<u>Department, Council or Body consulted</u>	<u>Summary of Comment</u>	<u>County Planning Officer's Comment and Recommendation</u>	<u>County Planning Committee Decision</u>	<u>Commission Field Advisors Comments</u>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<u>EASTERN BOUNDARY</u> Chewton Mendip Parish Council.	Extend boundary to include Hill Grove, Nodde Hill and Chew Down.	<u>RECOMMEND</u> no change other than the inclusion of Knowle Hill.	Agreed with C.P.O.	Agreed with C.P.O.
<u>SOUTH-EAST BOUNDARY</u> St. Cuthbert (out) Parish Council. Council for the Preservation of Rural England. Ramblers Association.	Extend boundary to include area to the north of Dulcote and Dinder Villages. Extend boundary to include Maesbury Castle, Beacon Hill and Shepton Forest. Extend boundary to Emborough - along B.3139 to Whitnell Corner - east to Fosseway (N.E. of Shepton Mallet) and in- clude Croscombe Dinder, Dulcote and East Horrington - ditto -	The whole of this area comprises very attractive Country but this is already recognised by its definition as an area of great landscape value in the County Development Plan. It is not thought that it merits designa- tion as an area of <u>outstanding</u> natural beauty. <u>RECOMMEND</u> no change.	Agree with the C.P.O.'s recom- mendations but feel that Maesbury Castle and Beacon Hill are both worthy of inclusion.	I have some reser- vations about the inclusion of Maesbury Castle and Beacon Hill, not so much because I am doubtful about them being worthy of in- clusion, but because they are situated about 1½ miles east of the nearest point of the A.O.N.B. and their inclusion might mean bringing in less worthy and perhaps unwanted territory.
Youth Hostels Association (South West Regional Group). Mendip Preservation Society.	Extend boundary South Eastwards to Dinder - north to Whitnell Corner - thence to Emborough and Chewton Mendip.			

<u>Department, Council or Body consulted</u>	<u>Summary of Comment</u>	<u>County Planning Officer's Comment and Recommendation</u>	<u>County Planning Committee Decision</u>	<u>Commission Field Advisor's Comments</u>
(1) Ramblers Association	(2) Extend boundary to include the two fields between "Groenacres" and the Old Bristol Road.	(3) The two fields do not merit inclusion. Their future use is so closely related to the Wells as to make it desirable to con- sider them with the future policy for the development of the City.	(4) (Decision awaited following Com- mittee's meeting with N.F.U. on 29th April)	(5) I have no strong views about this area especially as it relates to the Term Map for Wells. I should be content to accept the C.P.O.'s recom- mendation.
<u>SOUTHERN BOUNDARY</u> Ramblers Association Mendip Preservation Society Axbridge R.D.C.	Extend boundary to include West Close Hill (west of Westbury-sub-Mendip). - ditto - Exclude horticultural land on southern slopes above Cheddar and Axbridge by re-drawing boundary on contour above those areas	This was excluded to enable a more satisfactory boundary to be selected. If the boundary inclusion would appear to be justified. <u>RECOMMEND</u> no change - it is not practical to use contour lines as a boundary and in any case it is considered that the inclusion of this land is justified.	Agree C.P.O.'s recommendations.	Agree C.P.O.'s recommendations.
<u>WESTERN BOUNDARY</u> Bleadon Parish Council Bleadon Village A. Attles Committee	Extend boundary to follow River Axe from Shipplate to A.370 thence to Borough boundary. - ditto -	The existing Bleadon-Loxton road is roughly parallel to the Axe and is thought to provide the better boundary. The western end of Bleadon Hill has been affected to a considerable	Agree with C.P.O.'s recommendations	Agree with C.P.O.'s recommendations.

<u>Department, Council or Body consulted</u>	<u>Summary of Comment</u>	<u>County Planning Officer's Comment and Recommendation</u>	<u>County Planning Committee Decision</u>	<u>Commission Field Advisor's Comments</u>
(1) Ramblers Association Axbridge R.D.C.	(2) Extend boundary to include remainder of Bleadon Hill, Purn Hill, Uphill Slopes and Oldmixon Hill. Extend boundary to include South Hill and also include Brean Down.	(3) degree by building development and it is considered unrealistic to extend the draft boundary in that direction. Brean Down is a 'detached' feature fully protected by National Trust ownership and Development Plan. Its inclusion in the proposed A.O.N.B. is impracticable. <u>RECOMMEND</u> no change.	(4) Agree C.P.O.'s recommendations	(5) Agree with C.P.O.'s Recommendations.
<u>NORTHERN BOUNDARY</u> Axbridge R.D.C. Ramblers Association	Boundary east and south of Winscombe should be amended to follow Banwell Road and Church Road Extend boundary to include land in Starr - Rowborough area. Extend boundary to include land ath. of Sandford Hill.	The boundary as drafted was carefully drawn to include areas thought to merit designation and in regard to the pattern of existing development and the probability of further development in the Winscombe area. <u>RECOMMEND</u> no change.	Agree with C.P.O.'s recommendation	Agree with C.P.O.'s recommendation
Mendip Preservation Society <u>B. Objections to Designation</u> National Farmers' Union (Somerset Branch)	Designation of such a wide area of Mendips not compatible with type of farming practised (mainly dairy and arable). Margins of profit perilously slender and majority of farmers could not afford to spend more on buildings to meet special requirements which Planning	The action to be taken on this 'policy' objection will be a matter for decision by the Countryside Commission though the Committee may wish to recommend the Commission to meet the request for a joint meeting with representatives of the Union. It is thought that some of the fears expressed by the Union are exaggerated	(Still awaited following a meeting of the County Planning Committee with representatives of the N.F.U. on 29th April)	

<u>Department, Council or Body consulted</u>	<u>Summary of Comment</u>	<u>County Planning Officer's Comment and Recommendation</u>	<u>County Planning Committee Decision</u>	<u>Commission Field Advisor's Comments</u>
(1) National Farmers' Union (continued)	(2) Authority might consider necessary in designated area. Secondly, depopu- lation of hamlets and small villages could well result from a policy restricting the erection of houses. Scarcity values for existing properties could be created which would make them unavailable to local inhabitants. Area is un- necessarily extensive and includes a lot of excel- lent agricultural land (particularly in vicinity of Chaston Mendip, Linton the Harptrees, Compton Martin and Ubley). Visitors will increase and there will be serious interference with agri- cultural use including problems of litter, open gates and damaged fences etc. Matter considered to be of such importance as to justify meeting between representatives of Union and the Local Planning Authority to discuss it in more detail before any sub- mission is made to the Minister.	(3) For example: the greater part of the area concerned is very sparsely populated now and designated as an A.O.N.B. is unlikely to have a material effect on this factor.	(4)	(5)

C. The following bodies have indicated agreement with the boundary as drafted or that they have no comments to offer:-

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Headquarters and Divisional Land Commissioner)
Forestry Commission (Headquarters and S.W. Conservancy)
Ministry of Public Building and Works
Natural Environment Research Council (Nature Conservancy)
British Airways Board
Central Electricity Generating Board (Headquarters and South West Region)
South Western Electricity Board
South Western Gas Board
Bristol Waterways Company
The Country Landowners' Association (Somerset and Dorset Region)
Somerset Archaeological Society
Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation
Somerset River Authority
Wells City Council
Wells Rural District Council
Churchill Parish Council
Compton Bishop Parish Council
Westbury-Sub-Mendip Parish Council
Finescombe Parish Council
Shipham Parish Council
Priddy Parish Committee
(N.B. No replies have been received from thirty additional bodies invited to comment)

CM/70/5-534

Proposed Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Commission considered paper A/1096 being a summary of the suggestions received by Somerset County Council following preliminary consultations with the District Councils and other bodies concerned, together with comments by the Somerset County Planning Officer and the Commission's Field Adviser. The Commission noted the reservations expressed by the National Farmers' Union but agreed that these were irrelevant to designation of the area.

The Commission decided to endorse the recommendations of their Field Adviser, and to defer consideration of Section B of the paper until after the County Planning Committee had met on June 22.

(AB/27)

County Planning Department
County Hall, Taunton.

T.F.

April, 1970.

FOLIO 8

IN CONFIDENCE

C/W/70/7

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1 Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1. on Tuesday, July 7, 1970.

PRESENT:

Mr. John Cripps, C.B.E.
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Aubrey Buxton
Dr. Margaret Davies
Mr. George Howard
Mr. Elwyn Jones
Sir William Lindsay, C.B.E.
Sir Jack Longland
Professor O.R. McGregor
Mr. Peter F. Shephard

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Mr. M.F. B. Bell
Mr. R. Ditchfield
Mr. R. Bush
Mr. M. Weintraub
Mr. A. Deadman, C.B.E.

Secretary to Commission

Mr. A. A. C. Phillips)
Miss G. Runnicles)
Mr. J. Davidson)
Mr. J. Zetter)
Mr. T. Farmer, M.B.E.)
Mr. N. P. Allen)
Mr. L. J. Watson
Mrs. M. B. Jones

Secretary to Committee for
Wales
(For Research and
Experimental Items)
(For Planning Studies and
Techniques Items)
(For A.O.N.B. and
Development Control Items)
(For A.O.N.B. Items)
(For Countryside and
Section 5 Items)

The Chairman expressed the Commission's pleasure at having Mr. James Fisher at the meeting.

The Chairman congratulated Sir Jack Longland on his knighthood.

At Mr. Fisher's suggestion, the Commission agreed that their congratulations should be conveyed to Sir Frank Fraser Darling on receiving his recent honour.

The Commission also agreed that Dr. Davies convey their congratulations to Sir John MacWilliam on receiving his knighthood when she saw him at the meeting of the Countryside Commission for Scotland on July 8.

The minutes of the meeting held on June 2, 1970 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

595. Mid Wales Land Use Strategy - Pilot Report

The Commission noted that the Welsh Office had asked for their comments on the above report. They considered paper C/788 describing the sections of the report of interest to them and containing recommendations about the comments that should be made in reply to the consultation. The Commission accepted the recommendations subject to deletion of the sentence in paragraph 3 about the employment provided by forestry.

They noted, however, that the problem of declining farming in upland areas was a general one which was likely to be aggravated by entry into the European Common Market. They considered that this problem was becoming urgent and that the Commission should take the lead in formulating a policy. They asked officers to consider how the subject should be tackled and to brief the Chairman and Mr. Howard in time for the Harrogate conference on "The Changing Uplands".
(26/2)

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

596. Proposed Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
(Minute 534)

The Commission received paper A/1112 outlining representations made on the draft boundary and including the County Planning Committee's comments and decisions, together with comments by Mr. N. P. Allen on the N.F.U.'s objection. Mrs. Davies said that the N.F.U.'s objection was ill-founded and was characteristic of the Union's general lack of sympathy for the Commission's aims. Mr. Elwyn Jones pointed out that one purpose of designation was to provide a basis for stricter planning control, which was one of the things worrying farmers, and he thought it would be right frankly to acknowledge that purpose.

The Commission agreed, that before proceeding further towards designation the Chairman should discuss with N.F.U. representatives the implications of the proposed designation and try to allay their fears.
(AB/27)

597. Proposed North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Commission noted that the three County Councils concerned had now completed their preliminary consultations with District Councils and other bodies. Summary of the suggestions received by them, and comments of the three County Planning Officers and the Commission's Field Adviser, were before the Commission as paper A/1115.

The Commission agreed to accept the recommendations of their Field Adviser as explained in the paper and authorised the office to proceed to statutory consultations and advertisement

CLM 17017-596

IN CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION
Mendip Hills - Proposed Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A/1112

B. Objections to
Designation
Consultee

National
Farmers' Union
(Somerset Branch)

Designation of such a wide area of Mendips not compatible with type of farming practised (mainly dairy and arable). Margins of profit perilously slender and majority of farmers could not afford to spend more on buildings to meet special requirements which planning Authority might consider necessary in designated area. Secondly, depopulation of hamlets and small villages could well result from a policy restricting the erection of houses. Scarcity values for existing properties could be created which would make them unavailable to local inhabitants. Area is unnecessarily extensive and includes a lot of excellent agricultural land (particularly in vicinity of Chewton Mendip, Littleton the Harptrees, Compton Martin and Ubley). Visitors will increase and there will be serious interference with agriculture use including problems of litter, open gates and damaged fences etc. Matter considered to be of such importance as to justify meeting between representatives of Union and the Local Planning Authority to discuss it in more detail before any submission is made to the Minister.

Summary of Comments

The Action to be taken on this 'policy' objection will be a matter for decision by the Country-side Commission though the Committee may wish to recommend the Commission to meet the request for a joint meeting with representatives of the Union. It is thought that some of the fears expressed by the Union are exaggerated for example: the greater part of the area concerned is very sparsely populated now and designation as A.O.N.B. is unlikely to have a material effect on this factor.

County Planning Officers' Comment and recommendations

County Planning Committee decision

Commission Officer's Comments

The County Planning Committee obviously prefer to leave the Commission to decide on the N.F.U.'s suggested boundary alteration. I think it would be a great pity to exclude the attractive Chew Valley Lake area, and I believe that the Commissioner visiting party (Mr. Fisher and Dr. Davies) would share this view.

T.F.
June, 1970.

FOLIO 9

IN CONFIDENCE

C/M/71/2

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1 Cambridge Regent's Park, London NW1 on Tuesday 2 February 1971.

PRESENT:

Mr John Cripps CBE
Mr Aubrey Buxton
Dr Margaret Davies
Mr George Howard
Mr Elwyn Jones
Professor O R McGregor
Mr Peter Shepheard
Alderman Tudor E Watkins

Chairman

Mr M F B Bell
Mr R Bush
Mr R Ditchfield
Mr H Deadman CBE
Mr A A C Phillips
Mr N P Allen
Mr T Farmer MBE
Mr W E P Gibbon
Mrs M B Jones
Mr R Woolmore
Mr J. M. Davidson

Secretary to Commission

Secretary to Committee for Wales

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sir William Lindsay and Sir Jack Longland

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 1971

The minutes of the above meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman subject to the amendment of minute 737 to read "... he favoured concentrating on the Reading to Oxford stretch ...".

MATTERS ARISING

758 COASTAL REPORTS LEAFLET (MINUTE 730)

The Chairman suggested, and the Commission agreed that the leaflet to be produced summarising the main recommendations contained in the coastal reports should be circulated to all members of Parliament.

759 REVIEW OF NATIONAL PARK OBJECTIVES (MINUTE 732)

The Chairman referred to his proposal that a more limited review of National Park objectives should be carried out by the Commission than was originally envisaged. A paper had been tabled suggesting that the review should be a dialogue with National Park authorities and be conducted by a member of the Commission with support from Commission staff. The Chairman said that Sir Jack Longland would be willing to take on the task if the Commission were agreeable.

of the Roskill Commission from interested parties by the end of February; and in view of this he asked whether the Commission would be prepared to delegate the job of forwarding comments to the Office in consultation with the Chairman and perhaps Mr Buxton. The Chairman said that the Commission would prefer to see the draft of their comments and suggested that the Department be told that it would not be possible for the Commission's comments to be available until after the next meeting on 2 March.

The Commission agreed that a draft submission should be circulated to members for consideration at the next meeting; if it emerged that the Department could not wait until March 3, the draft should be approved by the Chairman in consultation with Mr Buxton.

NATIONAL PARKS

776 LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK: PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF BLAWITH FELLS TO SECURE PUBLIC ACCESS

The Commission received paper 71/12 outlining the proposals of the Lake District Planning Board for the acquisition of Blawith Fells for public access, together with a report of the site visit made by Mr Woolmore. The Commission noted that the Lake District Planning Board were anxious not to lose the opportunity to secure for public access this large and important area of open country near Coniston Water. They agreed to recommend payment of exchequer grant towards the expenditure incurred by the Board in acquiring the land.

(AT/53)

777 NORTHUMBERLAND PARK PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE: MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Commission noted that the Secretary of State had reappointed Mr Hackett to the above Committee, but that Lord Sandford had asked the Commission to reconsider their recommendation of Mr Fairfax as a replacement for Mr Gardener, because Mr Fairfax's interests appeared to be more local than national. He had also suggested that it would be helpful in all such cases if the Secretary of State could be provided with the names of two or three suitable candidates from whom to choose.

The Commission agreed to reaffirm their recommendation of Mr Fairfax and to suggest the names of Mr A G McLellan and Mr Robert Smith as alternatives.

(ND/2/1 Part B)

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

778 PROPOSED MENDIP HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Commission noted that statutory consultations with the local authorities whose areas would be affected by the designation of the Mendip Hills area of outstanding natural beauty had now been completed. The Commission considered, paper 71/19 reporting the outcome of these consultations, agreed with the recommendations of Mr Allen, and authorised the office to proceed to the next stage of the designation procedure, namely public advertisement of their intention to designate the area.

(3/24)

PROPOSED MENDIP HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
FORMAL CONSULTATIONS - PROFESSIONAL OFFICER'S COMMENTS

No. On Map	Local Authority	Description of Alteration	Professional Officer's Comments and Recommendations
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1 (a)	Arbridge R.D.C.	(a) To exclude land to the west of Rhodyate Hill, Blagdon, to allow for the future growth of the village	(a) <u>Not agreed</u> Originally the Commission agreed to exclude an area around Blagdon instead of following a more logical line. But when it was realised that Blagdon had expanded enough already, it was decided to revert to the original line, only excluding a portion of the modern part of the village where there was existing development of an indifferent character. Room for future house building in the area has been allowed for at Winscombe and Shipham.
(b)		(b) To include an area to the south of the above	(b) <u>Agreed</u> I can find no convincing reason why this small area was originally excluded.
(c)		(c) To extend the boundary to the south and west of Winscombe to follow the line of Barwell Road and Church Road. This would include Max Dog an area of considerable botanical interest.	(c) <u>Agreed</u> I have not been able to visit the area. The land seems to be part of the Lox Yeo river system containing an interesting botanical site, and on this basis I would support the inclusion. The former boundary was not entirely logical whereas this one is, and there is no harm in including a small area of flat land within the Mendip system.
(d)		(d) To exclude the horticultural land on the southern slopes above Arbridge and Cheddar (This land comprises smallholdings which are the livelihood of many local people.)	(d) <u>Not Agreed</u> The boundary would not be logical or easy to define and well managed horticultural land does not detract from the scenery.
(e)		(e) To include South Hill, Blagdon	(e) <u>Not agreed</u> I have not seen the land but cannot believe that the inclusion of this tiny hill would constitute a meaningful addition to the proposed designation.

FOLIO 10

IN CONFIDENCE

C/M/71/10

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Minutes of the thirty fifth meeting of the Countryside Commission held at 1 Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, London N W 1, on Tuesday, 2nd November 1971.

PRESENT :

Mr John Cripps CHE	Chairman
Mr Robin Herbert	Deputy Chairman
Dr Margaret Davies	
Mr George Howard	
Mr Brian Hubbard	
Mr Stanley P Johnson	
Sir Jack Longland	
Prof O R McGregor	
Ald Tudor E Watkins	

Mr R J S Hookway	Director
Mr R G Brown	
Mr A A C Phillips	
Mr H Deadman CHE	Secretary to Committee for Wales
Mr Bush	

Mr M Weintraub	)	
Mr T Farmer MBE	)	
Mr P Allen	)	
Mrs M B Jones	)	for appropriate items.
Mr A A Macdonald	)	
Mr J M Davidson	)	
Mr J Anfield	)	
Mr T Millar	)	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE : were received from Mr Buxton and Mr Colman.

March 1974, to coincide with his appointment to the PPC; that Dr Farrer and Mr Dunston Adams be appointed for a period expiring in March 1975 to coincide with their appointment to the PPC.
(YD/2/1/Pt 6)

1006. PEAK PARK PLANNING BOARD - MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Chairman proposed and the Commission agreed to recommend the appointment of Mrs Judith Riley, M.A, MSc, to fill the vacancy on the Peak Park Planning Board, with Mr William Kenneth Wilde, as an alternative. Prof McGregor suggested that an attempt should be made to secure more female representation on Park Planning Authorities through the Ministerial appointment. The Commission were favourably disposed to this suggestion and agreed that appropriate women's organisations (e.g Womens Institute) should be included in the revised list of bodies to be consulted.

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

1007. PROPOSED DESIGNATION: LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS A.O.N.B. (MINUTE 913)

The Commission noted that Lindsey County Council had now completed informal, preliminary consultations with local district councils and other bodies interested in the proposed designation. They also received paper 71/166 summarising the results of these consultations with recommendations for the area and boundary on which statutory consultation should be carried out.

The Commission agreed to proceed to statutory consultation on the basis of the recommendations contained in paper 71/166.
(AB/73/B)

1008. PROPOSED NORTH WESSEX DOWNS A.O.N.B.

The Commission noted that statutory public advertisement of their intention to designate the North Wessex Downs area of outstanding natural beauty had now been completed. They noted paper 71/187 summarising representations received as a result of public advertisement together with their officer's recommendations concerning suggested boundary changes.

The Commission agreed to the making and submitting of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1971, on the basis of the recommendations contained in paper 71/187.
(V/34)

1009. PROPOSED MENDIP HILLS A.O.N.B.

The Commission noted that statutory public advertisement of their intention to designate the Mendip Hills area of outstanding natural beauty had now been completed. They received paper 71/186 summarising representations received as a result of public advertisement together with their officer's recommendations concerning suggested boundary changes.

The Commission agreed to the making and submitting of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order, 1971, on the basis of the recommendations contained in paper 71/186.
(V/64)

PS 3 C/M/7/10 - 1007 + C/M/7/11 - 1028 (MA)

71/186

IN-CONFERENCE

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

PROPOSED MENDIP HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

ADVERTISEMENT STAGE - REPRESENTATIONS

MAP NO	RECEIVED FROM	PROPOSAL	REASONS	FIELD OFFICER'S COMMENTS
1	Extensions CPRE (V/73)	To include Chewton Plain to the east of the proposed boundary. Also to include Maesbury Castle, Beacon Hill and Shepton Forest as far as Cranmore Tower.	To preserve the stone wall area of the Chewton Plain. This feature is under increasing threat.	Not accepted. I have examined the area in detail and find that it is not up to a standard nationally. In spite of much of its elevation (at Moesbury Castle, Beacon Hill and Cranmore Tower the land rises to 900 ft and) it lacks the more distinctive character of the main area east of the A39. It is, for instance, of lesser landscape quality than the Quantocks. The Chewton plain area lacks any interest apart from small incidents. The area between the minor road south of the A377 and northwards to East Horrington is attractive well-wooded country but is much more part of the typical Somersetshire hill scenery and is quite distinct from the more impressive Mendip scenery in the more popular parts.
2i	Ramblers' Association (V/77)	i. To include area around Milton Lodge and Green Acres north of Wells. (Northern part was included in original boundary of AONB).	An area of field and parkland of exceptional natural beauty because of its views over Wells. Area forms part of the aspect of the Mendip as viewed from Wells. The area is under threat of development. Access is by an important existing public footpath which is also likely to form part of the Long Distance Path.	This is an area of pleasant scenery surrounding Wells and providing many fine views of the city. But it is a negligible area as far as designation is concerned having no AONB character and likely to come under pressure from urban expansion in the long term. There is no threat to local defined footpaths and the County say that they have, as yet, no plans for a long distance path, which, if planned, would follow the scarp further north.

MAP NO	RECEIVED FROM	PROPOSAL	REASONS	FIELD OFFICER'S COMMENTS
2ii	Ramblers' (cont)	ii. To include Purn Hill, South Hill, Walborough and Oldmixon Hills, west of the present boundary towards the sea.	Areas beautiful because of their views of the sea, the coastline and of Eleanon Hill. Purn Hill and Walborough are attractive. Adjacent land necessary for protection of views from these hills. Area is under pressure from expansion of Weston-super-Mare. Area important for public access. Threat of quarrying.	Bleaden Hill proper is included at the western extremity of the proposed aonb, but to try to extend the area to the S West and West would be meaningless from an aonb point of view. The Commission agreed this view in the past when they rejected a similar but smaller area. Nobody can deny the unpleasant effects that quarrying has had in the area, but this does not affect the case for extending the aonb. Future quarrying is likely to be much more rigorously controlled.
2iii		iii. To include land to the north and west of Shipham on the northern boundary.	A pleasant area of fields and heatherous. Necessary to preserve foreground of hills along north side of Mendips. Essential to preserve view from ramparts of the Dolebury Hill Fort. The area is becoming commuter-country and needs protection from development. Area crossed by important footpath.	Not agreed. The present proposed boundary in this semi-urbanised area of what was once very attractive countryside seems to have been very logically drawn. If Shipham village had not been allowed to grow untidy there might have been a case for including land immediately under Dolebury Warren and Rowbarrow Warren but housing development has now spoilt the views of this land. Protection from future development is a matter for local development control.
2iv		iv. To include Tor Hill, Lyvatt Hill and Sharcombe and also Maesbury Hill and Beacon Hill.	Area is undoubtedly of outstanding natural beauty. Maesbury and Beacon Hills are both good viewpoints. Fear of quarrying and demand for residential development from Walls. Many pleasant footpaths in area.	Not agreed. See 1 above.

MAP NO	RECEIVED FROM	PROPOSAL	REASONS	FIELD OFFICER'S COMMENTS
2v	Ramblers' (cont)	v. To include Knowle Hill on the north-eastern side of boundary.	The Hill is without doubt an aonb by reason of the views of Chew Valley Reservoir and of the nature of hill itself - a most attractive area of grass and bracken. If lake is included it is illogical to exclude Hill. Fear development pressure on Chew Stoke and Chew Magna. Number of footpaths for access on to hill.	Not agreed. Knowle Hill is an attractive feature but is typical of dozens of small hills in this part of Somerset, and its inclusion could not be justified. Chew Valley and Blagdon Lake areas have been included in the proposed aonb for quite different reasons. I agree that there is heavy development pressure on all of the villages around, and the present boundary has been carefully drawn with this in mind.
2vi		vi. To include Westclose Hill to the west of Westbury-sub-Mendip.	An attractive spur of the Mendips and is part of south facing escarpment. To preserve the foreground view. Some semi-suburban building between Wells and Cheddar and the preservation of a green belt between Westbury and Rodney Stoke is desirable. A public footpath exists on hill.	Agreed. I feel that this small hill might just be seen as part of the important scarp and there would be no objections to moving the boundary or the aonb south to the main road. 'Protection' from creeping urban development is a problem for the entire Mendip area and must be the subject, one hopes, of a local settlement policy once designation has taken place.
2vii		vii. To include Emborough Pool to the east of the boundary.	Need to preserve the approaches to Emborough Pool. The pleasantly undulating country is much the same as that on the west side of the Bristol Wells road which is included in the AONB. Both sides of road should have same protection partly to protect distant views from Pen Hill and partly to preserve the character of the	Not agreed. See 1 above. This is one of the small pleasant incidents referred to but the area in general does not reach aonb status. This is quite good farming land which is not subject to any great pressure or change. The County have been considering the creation of a picnic place at the Pool.

MAP NO	RECEIVED FROM	PROPOSAL	REASONS	FIELD OFFICER'S COMMENTS
3i	The Mendip Society (V/76)	i. To include land to the west of Compton Bishop, south of Loxton as far as Shipplate.	It forms a physical boundary and incorporates the lower slopes of Crook Peak and Loxton Hill. Also includes the wharf at Rackley and Shiplate Manor Farm.	Not agreed. This is part of the low-lying flood plain and is in no way related, except by proximity, to Mendip itself. It appears to be well preserved.
3ii		ii. To include Old Nixon.	This wooded hill is an important feature of Mendip.	I am unable to identify this feature for which no location is given but feel that any of the above remarks would apply and therefore form reasonable grounds for <u>exclusion</u> .
3iii		iii. To include land to the west, north and north-west of Shipham.	The village of Sidcot is scenically important. The boundary formed by Broadway is a real one and Society consider that land on both sides of this road is scenically important.	Not agreed. (See 2iii above).
3iv		iv. To include land to the south east of Hinton Blewett through Chewton Wood to Rush Hill. Also to include Emborough and Maesbury Castle to the south-east of St Cuthbert out to our own boundary near Wells.	Chewton Plain contains fine unique dry stone wall boundaries. Maesbury, Ham Wood, Crocombe and Dinder are of very great amenity importance and scenically part of Mendip. Dulcote Hill is under threat of mineral working.	Not agreed. This is part of the Chewton Plain and the extensive area to the south and south-east referred to in 1 above. Dulcote Hill, once a pleasant feature, has been devastated by quarrying.
3v		v. Boundary to follow A371 from Wells to Cheddar.		Not agreed. If the boundary were to follow the main road it would mean the inclusion of much well farmed land of indifferent scenic quality.