

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON TUESDAY 24 APRIL 2007 AT 09.30 HOURS AT SOUTH EFFORD HOUSE

Present:

Members

Clive Chatters (Chairman)
Barry Rickman (Deputy Chairman)

Lee Dunsdon	Mel Kendal
Peter Frost	Clive Maton
Tony Gentle	Bob Morris
Diana Halford	Vicky Myers
Roger Heape	Leo Randall
Jeremy Heron	Alan Rice
Kathy Heron	Alan Weeks
Julian Johnson	Pat Wyeth
Ted Johnson	

Officers

Lindsay Cornish, Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Pat Higgins, John Ward, John Clements, Steve Trotter, Barry Holland, Paula Freeland, George Trevelyan, Nick Evans, Ian Barker, Frank Green, David Stone, Rosalind Alderman and Carolyn Hoole.

PART I – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

157. Apologies for absence

157.1 Susan Achmatowicz, John Sanger and Stan Wade.

158. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority

158.1 Clive Chatters was duly proposed and seconded as Chairman of the Authority until the Annual Authority meeting on 28 June 2007.

Resolved: That Clive Chatters be appointed as Chairman of the Authority until the Annual Authority meeting on 28 June 2007.

Voting: Unanimous

158.2 Barry Rickman was duly proposed and seconded as Deputy Chairman of the Authority.

158.3 Kevin Gardner pointed out that Barry Rickman would be a member of the Authority only until 7 May 2007 (being four days after the local elections on 3 May), and therefore could be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Authority only for the period from the current meeting until 7 May 2007. Thereafter his membership of the New Forest National Park Authority would fall away pending his formal re-appointment by the New Forest District Council.

This problem would not arise in future years, as pursuant to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, members' appointments to the Authority would continue for three months after the local elections. However, a short term solution was required to address the immediate situation.

- 158.4 Following discussion, Members accepted that the Authority would be without a Deputy Chairman between 7 May 2007 and the Annual meeting on 28 June 2007.

Resolved: That Barry Rickman be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Authority until his appointment to the Authority ceases on 7 May 2007.

Voting: Unanimous

159. Declarations of interest

- 159.1 On advice from the Monitoring Officer, Local Authority members accepted and declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in agenda items which related to their role as County, District or Parish members. In particular, Mel Kendal declared a personal but not prejudicial interest, as Leader of New Forest District Council and as a member of Hampshire County Council, in minute items 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 170 and 171 (agenda items 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15).
- 159.2 Kathy Heron declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 164 (agenda item 8), in that she was closely involved with the local hunt which had applied for funding for an incinerator, referred to in the report.
- 159.3 Julian Johnson declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 164 (agenda item 8) as the Chairman of both South West Committees dealing with spatial planning and conformity.
- 159.4 Vicky Myers declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 164 (agenda item 8), as a Forestry Commission Ranger who had helped to co-ordinate the recent "Spring Clean" litter pick event referred to in the report.

160. Chairman's announcements

- 160.1 The Chairman announced that there were no items which would be considered under Part II of the agenda.

161. Minutes of meeting on 28 March 2007

- 161.1 The minutes of the meeting on 28 March 2007 were agreed as a true record.

162. Public Question Time

- 162.1 There were no questions or statements from the public.

163. Interim Committee arrangements after Local Government Elections in May 2007

- 163.1 Kevin Gardner introduced the report (NFNPA 176/07) and explained that, as referred to in minute 158.3, local authority and Secretary of State (Parish Council) appointees would cease to be members of the Authority on 7 May 2007. As a result, it was necessary to determine how the Authority would conduct the business of its committees, and in particular the discharge of its planning functions, until its Annual meeting on 28 June by which point it would have been informed by the appointing authorities of the new members and could re-appoint its committees.
- 163.2 The report suggested two options with regard to the Planning Development Control Committee: either (i) the size of the committee would be reduced to five members (being the County Council and non Parish Secretary of State appointed members on the existing Committee, less one Secretary of State member in order to reflect the balance on the Authority); or (ii) all planning matters would be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Chairman of the existing Planning Development Control Committee. It was also proposed that the membership of the Resources and Performance Committee be reduced to five members, being those members of the Committee who would not be affected by the local government elections.
- 163.3 Members were not in favour of the above options for the Planning Development Control Committee and, after discussing various alternatives, expressed their preference for a scenario whereby the Planning Development Control Committee would comprise all the remaining members of the Authority during the interim period, namely 12 members. The Committee would meet on the dates already scheduled for this purpose, namely 15 May and 19 June.
- 163.4 It was noted that the quorum for these meetings would be one third of the members of the Committee, being four members to include at least one County and one Secretary of State appointed member in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Authority's Standing Orders. A potential problem with this option was that Authority members who were not members of the existing Planning Development Control Committee would need training in development control matters, although it was pointed out that some of these members already had some knowledge of planning through their originating Councils. The Parish Councils would be informed of the Authority's arrangements for the interim period.

Resolved:

1. That the Authority's Planning Development Control Committee comprise all remaining members of the Authority, for the period between 7 May 2007 until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007, and that the Parish Councils be informed of these arrangements.

Voting: 11-5 (3 abstentions)

2. That the membership of the Resources and Performance Committee be reduced from seven members to five members being the County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees to that Committee, with immediate effect, until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.

Voting: Unanimous

164. Chief Executive's report

- 164.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 177/07) and said that the date of the workshop on the Authority's second purpose referred to on page 3 of the report had now been confirmed as 14 May 2007.
- 164.2 Members noted the Chief Executive's report.

165. Oral report from Resources and Performance Committee

- 165.1 The Authority was advised that the minutes of the last Committee meeting had been circulated to all members and, at the request of the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Committee, Roger Heape, members noted the issues contained therein.

166. Budgetary Control Report for the period to 31 March 2007

- 166.1 Pat Higgins introduced the report (NFNPA 178/07) and said that final outturn figures would be brought to the Authority at its Annual meeting in June as part of a report on the final accounts for 2006/2007.
- 166.2 Roger Heape emphasised that the medium term financial position was unsustainable. The results of the funding study would provide the basis for core funding discussions with Defra. To assist with these discussions, the consultants appointed to undertake the study had been asked to expand on that part of the report which dealt with benchmarking expenditure against that of other National Park Authorities.

Resolved: That the current expenditure position for the National Park Authority be **noted** and the transfer of any underspend in the Sustainable Development Grants budget to the Sustainable Development Grants Reserve and the transfer of all other budget underspends to the General Fund Reserve be **approved**.

Voting: None voting against

167. Final Draft Corporate Plan for approval

- 167.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 179/07) and explained that there were no substantial changes to the Plan from the previous year's Plan, apart from Appendix 4 (Performance Indicators). George Trevelyan took members through this section of the report.
- 167.2 Ted Johnson congratulated staff on achievements to date and thanked Janet Purnell for her assistance with compiling the draft Plan.

Resolved:

1. That the draft of the second Corporate Plan set out in Annex 1 to Paper NFNPA 179/07 be **approved** and published.
2. That the further work needed to finalise information in Appendix 4 of the Plan be **noted**.

Voting: Unanimous

168. Response to the 'Future Matters' consultation

- 168.1 Nick Evans introduced the report (NFNPA 180/07) and said that a high level of response had been received, particularly from individuals.
- 168.2 Members raised the following points:
- (a) members welcomed the response to the consultation, in particular the suggestion that many people believed in the importance of protecting the tranquillity of the New Forest;
 - (b) it was pointed out that people often responded inconsistently to consultations of this sort. The exact phrasing of the questions asked in consultations was therefore vital; one idea suggested was that further consultations should be electronic so that ticking one option would automatically preclude ticking all inconsistent options;
 - (c) methods of obtaining the views of the younger section of the population should be considered;
 - (d) Mel Kendal raised the need to work with the District and County Councils as well as other partners such as the Forestry Commission on identifying suitable sites within the Local Development Framework to accommodate travellers and gypsies in order to prevent unauthorised encampments being established. Members were referred to Ted Johnson's report on the last meeting of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association, at which this issue had been addressed; and
 - (e) Members asked that officers put together a summary of the final report.
- 168.3 Members noted the report.

169. Working Vision, Objectives and Issues for the National Park Management Plan

- 169.1 Nick Evans introduced the report (paper NFNPA 181/07).
- 169.2 Roger Heape emphasised the importance of the words used in setting out the Vision, and requested that a clear link be made between the "Special Qualities" of the New Forest and the draft Vision. The section headings in particular should be made more specific to the New Forest.
- 169.3 Further debate followed during which points were raised relating to the involvement of communities in the management and conservation of their local areas and the need to sustain current initiatives including the litter picking campaign and promotion of animal safety on roads within the National Park. The vision, objectives and key issues set out in the report were supported, however, in summarising the comments made by Roger Heape and other members, the Chairman requested that consideration be given to using words which suitably expressed the passion which the Authority felt for the conservation and welfare of the National Park and its special qualities.

Resolved: That the following be approved:

1. the working Vision for the National Park shown in Annex 1 of the submitted report;
2. the working objectives listed in Annex 3; and
3. the key issues outlined in Annex 4.

170. Developing the Biodiversity Action Plan for the New Forest National Park

170.1 Ian Barker, the Authority’s Ecologist, introduced the report (NFNPA 182/07) which outlined the work officers were undertaking to produce a Biodiversity Action Plan and a proposed timetable.

170.2 Members noted that suburban gardens contained great biodiversity and that preserving minimum garden sizes and restricting urban densities should be taken into account in the biodiversity action plan.

Resolved: That the proposed timetable, preparation process, partnerships and vision for the Plan be **noted and approved**.

Voting: Unanimous

171. Consultation response: Heritage Protection for the 21st Century – White Paper

171.1 Paula Freeland introduced the report (paper NFNPA 183/07) and explained that there would be financial implications arising from the proposals, as local planning authorities would acquire new responsibilities and existing systems would be broadened. The accompanying regulatory impact assessment suggested that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport would meet any additional burden on local authorities. A copy of the White Paper would be placed in the members’ reading area at South Efford House.

Resolved: That the proposed response to the consultation on the ‘Heritage Protection for the 21st Century’ White Paper set out in sections 2 and 3 of paper NFNPA 183/07 be **approved**.

Voting: Unanimous

172. Urgent Items by the Chairman

172.1 The Chairman advised that there were no matters of urgency which he intended to raise under this item.

PART II – ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPTED INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

173.1 There were no agenda items for consideration under Part II of the agenda.

The meeting closed at 11:55 hrs.

Signed Date:.....
(Chairman)