

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JANUARY 2008 AT 09.30 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, SOUTH EFFORD HOUSE, MILFORD ROAD, NEAR LYMINGTON

Present:

Members

Clive Chatters (Chairman)

Lee Dunsdon
Peter Frost
Diana Halford
Tony Gentle
Roger Heape
Kathy Heron
Maureen Holding
Ted Johnson
Clive Maton

Bob Morris
Vicky Myers
Leo Randall
Alan Rice
Barry Rickman
Stan Wade
Alan Weeks
Pat Wyeth

Officers

Lindsay Cornish, Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), John Ward, Steve Trotter, Martin O'Neill, Paula Freeland, Bryan Wilson, Sarah Manchester, Sue Castleton, Karen Evans, Helen Bonds, David Stone, Rosalind Alderman and Carolyn Hoole.

Other attendees

Mr Kevin Stubbs (independent consultant on the Conservation Area proposals), Councillor Thorold Masefield (Brockenhurst Parish Council), Colonel Peter Sweet, Councillor Brian Mulhall (East Boldre Parish Council), Councillor Colin Wise (Boldre Parish Council) and Mr Mike Chilcott (New Forest Association).

PART I – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

75. Apologies for absence

75.1 Susan Achmatowicz, Julian Johnson, Mel Kendal and John Sanger.

76. Declarations of interest

76.1 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, members of New Forest District Council would have a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 83 (Response to the consultation draft of 'Future Matters': the Sustainable Community Strategy for New Forest District 2008 – 2012). Members declared their interests in accordance with this guidance.

76.2 The Monitoring Officer also explained that members who owned an interest in land within the proposed conservation areas to be discussed under minute item 82 (Conservation Area review – Proposed designation of conservation areas,

Forest South East, Forest Central (North and South)), or whose relatives or close personal associates owned such an interest, would have a personal and prejudicial interest in that item.

76.3 Clive Chatters declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 82 as a member of the New Forest Association and also because his employer (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) owned land within the area covered by the proposals, although he had no responsibility for the management of that land. Clive Maton declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 82 as a professional chainsaw operator employed from time to time within the area affected by the proposals.

76.4 In addition, Peter Frost, Diana Halford and Bob Morris each declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 82 as a member of the New Forest Association.

77. Chairman's announcements

77.1 The Chairman announced that there were no items to be heard as urgent business and there would be no Part II session to the meeting.

78. Minutes of meeting on 6 December 2007

78.1 The minutes of the meeting on 6 December 2007 were agreed as a true record.

79. Public Question Time

79.1 Cllr Thorold Masefield (Chairman of Brockenhurst Parish Council and a Brockenhurst Primary School Governor) addressed the Authority on cycle tracks. He said there was a need across the New Forest for better connections both organisationally and physically. Better connections were needed between existing tracks and between village 'venues' and tracks, and there was a need for protected cycle tracks within Brockenhurst. He asked which organisation would take the lead in co-ordinating action and when people would be consulted and to whom the Parish Council should submit its views, specifically on the Sustrans proposal. The Chairman advised that Mr Masefield would receive a detailed written response from the Authority.

79.2 As a commoner, Colonel Peter Sweet expressed his concern over what he perceived as problems, reported in the press, over the working relationships between various organisations within the National Park such as the Authority, New Forest District Council, the Commoners' Defence Association and others. Colonel Sweet praised the work of the Official Verderer, Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, and expressed his concern at the circumstances surrounding the government's decision not to appoint him for a further term of office. He personally did not believe that the Authority had been involved in this decision despite what others were suggesting. He asked that the Authority do all it could to restore normal working relations with its partners.

79.3 In response, the Chairman said he had been liaising with Councillor Treleven of New Forest District Council and they had worked out a way that the two authorities could work well together on issues of spatial planning. He went on to stress that the appointment process and the number of terms served by the Official Verderer were matters determined by central government and the Authority had had no involvement in the process so far. As Chairman, however, he had been invited to sit on the selection panel that would consider applications for the post. The Authority had worked constructively and productively with the

Official Verderer and would continue to do so. The Authority would endeavour to keep its relationships with all of its partners as healthy as possible.

- 79.4 Members then received presentations on Paper NFNPA 227/08 (Conservation area review – Proposed designation of conservation areas, Forest South East, Forest Central (North and South) – minute item 82) from Cllr Brian Mulhall (East Boldre Parish Council) and Cllr Colin Wise (District Councillor for Boldre and Sway and member of Boldre Parish Council). Cllr Mulhall explained to members that the e-mail correspondence from East Boldre Parish Council annexed to the paper, which suggested the Parish Council was in support of the proposals, was incorrect and did not accurately represent the views of the Parish Council. The Parish Council welcomed strict planning controls but did not agree with officers that the proposals for the conservation area would strengthen or improve the current protection. Cllr Wise asked members to vote against the proposals on a number of grounds, including that the proposals lacked justification, that he believed the designations were unlikely to operate in a satisfactory manner, he felt consultation had been inadequate and that the controls would be unduly onerous on residents in the areas in question, particularly with regard to trees which he felt already had adequate protection. He also felt enforcement would be difficult.
- 79.5 The above presentations were followed by a presentation on the same matter by Mr Mike Chilcott (New Forest Association) in support of the proposed conservation areas. Mr Chilcott said that the Association welcomed this work and the Authority's approach to new conservation areas. Having visited many of the public events at which the proposals had been publicised, he felt that many residents of the affected areas were strongly in support of the proposals.

80. Chief Executive's Report

- 80.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 226/08)
- 80.2 In response to questions from members and the points raised by Colonel Sweet on the Authority's working relationship with the Commoners' Defence Association, she said that the Authority's officers had been very disappointed that the Commoners' Defence Association had withdrawn from the 'Life in Common' Heritage Lottery Fund bid partnership. No explicit reason had been given for the withdrawal, and Authority staff had worked extremely hard to address commoners' concerns as they arose. The Chief Executive believed some problems may have arisen because certain projects were not eligible for this particular funding stream. However, the work that had been done would not be wasted and the Authority was seeking alternative sources of funding for a number of exciting projects that had been developed, although it was likely that implementation of some aspects of the Commoning Review might not be possible. Much common ground existed between the aspirations of the Authority and the commoners, and the Authority would continue to welcome commoners' input into its activities. Some members expressed disappointment with the Commoners' Defence Association's position. Others commented that some commoners felt they had not had enough input into the bids, and some had had concerns regarding proposed mire restoration.
- 80.3 Members then noted the report.

81. Oral report from the Resources and Performance Committee

81.1 Roger Heape, Chairman of the Resources and Performance Committee, updated members on matters dealt with at the last meeting of the Committee on 10 December 2007, the minutes for this meeting having been circulated with the Authority agenda. He said that the next meeting of the Committee would take place the following week and the Authority's new Chief Finance Officer, Paul Carey-Kent, would attend. The Authority's longer term budget figures were beginning to appear more favourable than had been the case six months previously.

81.2 Members noted the report.

82. Conservation area review – Proposed designation of conservation areas, Forest South East, Forest Central (North and South)

82.1 Paula Freeland, the Authority's Head of Environmental Design, introduced the report (Paper NFNPA 227/08). She explained that conservation areas were areas of special historical or architectural interest; there were eighteen existing conservation areas within the National Park.

82.2 Several members commented that they had attended one of the sessions at which the proposals had been publicised during the consultation period, and had observed a great deal of public support for the proposals. They were accordingly in favour of the proposals as they felt designating the conservation areas would protect the National Park from increasing urbanisation through piecemeal development and insufficient control of demolition of traditional buildings. Paula Freeland responded to concerns raised by some members on the increased level of planning control that could result from the proposed designation. She also explained that the use of an Article 4(2) Direction was not an automatic consequence of designating a Conservation Area. Any proposal would relate to a specific building and would be subject to specific consultation and approval. The list of controls set out in paragraph 6 of Annex 1 of the report was illustrative; only those controls relevant to the individual building would be used, not the full list.

82.3 In response to a query, Paula Freeland explained that it would be possible to add a more descriptive subtitle to the titles of the proposed conservation areas. Bryan Wilson, the Authority's Senior Tree Officer, explained the benefits of the proposals with regard to the protection of trees. Kevin Stubbs, the consultant employed by the Authority to assist with identifying the proposed areas, clarified the historic features that influenced the boundary decisions that had been made with regard to the Forest South East proposals.

Resolved: That:

1. in accordance with the powers contained in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, conservation areas are designated, to be known as:

- Forest South East
- Forest Central (North and South)

to cover the areas shown on the plans annexed to the submitted report (Annex 1 and 3 respectively) and that notice of the designation be duly given and advertised in accordance with the provisions of Section 70 of the Act;

- 2. the Character Appraisals of these areas, including illustrations, maps and additional summary material as suggested by English Heritage, be published; and
- 3. in accordance with the powers contained in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, conservation areas known as Minstead and Emery Down be cancelled.

Voting: 11-6 (2 abstentions)

83. Response to the consultation draft of 'Future Matters': the Sustainable Community Strategy for New Forest District 2008 – 2012

- 83.1 John Ward, Director of Strategy and Planning of the Authority, introduced Paper NFNPA 228/08 in Sarah Applegate's absence and explained that New Forest District Council and the Changing Lives Partnership were consulting on their draft Sustainable Community Strategy entitled "'Future matters': The sustainable community strategy for New Forest District 2008-2012". The report before members set out a proposed response by the Authority to the consultation.
- 83.2 Members requested that the paragraphs on shared community identity be strengthened and were in favour of more emphatic wording than "it would be useful" in respect of the suggestion in paragraph 2.8 referring to the Countryside Access Plan in the Strategy. Paragraph 2.16 should be amended to include a reference to outdoor leisure.

Resolved: That the Director of Strategy and Planning be authorised to submit a response to the draft New Forest District Sustainable Community Strategy based on the comments outlined in report NFNPA 228/08 and incorporating the suggestions agreed at the meeting.

Voting: none voting against

84. Report on New Forest Access Forum meeting (3 December 2007)

- 84.1 Members noted issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Access Forum on 3 December 2007 and the date of the next Forum meeting on Monday 3 March 2008.

85. Report on New Forest Consultative Panel meeting (3 January 2008)

- 85.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report and, in response to a query, said he would report back to Ted Johnson as to when the application of policy options for the Shoreline Management Plan would be decided.
- 85.2 Members noted issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 3 January 2008 and the date of the next Forum meeting on Thursday 6 March 2008.

86. Urgent Items by the Chairman

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

The meeting closed at 11:30 hours.

SignedDate:.....
(Chairman)