

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2007 AT 09.30 HOURS AT BROCKENHURST VILLAGE HALL

Present:

Members

Clive Chatters (Chairman)
Barry Rickman (Deputy Chairman)

Lee Dunsdon
Peter Frost
Tony Gentle
Roger Heape
Kathy Heron
Maureen Holding
Julian Johnson

Ted Johnson
Mel Kendal
Bob Morris
Leo Randall
Stan Wade
Pat Wyeth

Officers

Lindsay Cornish, Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), John Ward, Steve Trotter, Emma Rigglesworth, David Illsley, David Stone, Rosalind Alderman and Carolyn Hoole.

PART I – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

44. Apologies for absence

44.1 Susan Achmatowicz, Diana Halford, Clive Maton, Vicky Myers, Alan Rice and Alan Weeks.

45. Declarations of interest

45.1 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.

45.2 In particular, the Monitoring Officer explained that members of Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council and Trustees of the Ninth Centenary Trust would have a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 50 (Chief Executive's Report) and members of New Forest District Council, the Verderers, employees of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and members of any other group in receipt of LEADER+ funding since 2002 would have a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 52 (Update on Forest Friendly Farming and an initial response to the Commoning Review).

45.3 Members declared their interests in accordance with this guidance. In addition, Peter Frost declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 53 (Report on New Forest Consultative Panel Meeting) as a member of the Consultative Panel.

46. Chairman's announcements

46.1 The Chairman announced that there would be an item for consideration under Part II of the agenda following the public section of the Authority meeting, and a Standards Committee meeting would take place after that.

47. Minutes of meeting on 13 September 2007

47.1 Subject to the correction of a minor typographical error at minute item 24.1, the minutes of the meeting on 13 September 2007 were agreed as a true record.

48. Public Question Time

48.1 There were no questions or statements from the public.

49. Incorporation of the English National Park Authorities Association

49.1 Lindsay Cornish presented the report (NFNPA 210/07) and explained that, owing to a number of legal issues, it had been decided that the English National Park Authorities Association should be incorporated. The Authority was now asked to decide whether it wished to continue its membership and, if so, to approve the necessary actions.

Resolved:

1. That the Authority continue its membership of the English National Park Authorities Association, following incorporation.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman to agree the final terms of incorporation.
3. That the appointment of the Chairman as a Director of an incorporated English National Park Authorities Association be approved.

Voting: None voting against

50. Chief Executive's Report

50.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 211/07). Members commended the 'New Forest New Chapter' inaugural workshop that had been held on 12 October.

50.2 Members noted the report.

51. Oral report from the Resources and Performance Committee

51.1 Roger Heape, Chairman of the Resources and Performance Committee, updated members on matters dealt with at the last meeting of the Committee on 25 September 2007. The minutes of that meeting had been tabled at the current meeting. Kevin Gardner explained that an action point relating to the revision of the Authority's protocols (pursuant to the adoption of the new Code of Conduct) would be dealt with when he presented a report to the Standards Committee following the Authority meeting. This would subsequently be reported to the Authority in December for adoption.

51.2 Members then noted this report.

52. Update on Forest Friendly Farming and an initial response to the Commoning Review

52.1 Emma Rigglesworth introduced the report (NFNPA 212/07) and took members through the progress that had been made, as detailed in the report. Members welcomed an update to paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 of the report, namely that, following negotiations, the entitlement available to commoners under the Defra Single Payment Scheme would increase by approximately £1.7 million by 2012. Prior to this date, commoners would receive an increasing proportion of their entitlement as a flat rate payment year on year until the full payment was achieved in 2012 and the historical component of the entitlement fell away. Members sought assurance that the increased payment would not result in unsustainable numbers of commoners' stock being turned out on the Forest.

52.2 Other questions and comments raised in discussion included:

- animal accidents tended to occur on certain roads, rather than specific black spots; increased surveillance and enforcement of speed limits would necessitate new signage; concern was expressed over proposals to change the nature of roadside verges as part of routine maintenance;
- in the longer term the impact of the Stallion Scheme on bloodlines would need to be investigated; in the short term the loss of set-aside could have implications for availability of off-Forest grazing;
- the need to encourage young commoners was emphasised, as was the importance of ensuring the availability of back up grazing land within and outside the National Park including the need to liaise with relevant local authorities on the latter.

52.3 The Chairman thanked the Official Verderer for chairing the group and the commoners for their input. Members congratulated the officers of the Authority, the commoners and others who had been involved, on the achievements made so far, and congratulated Kathryn Boler and others who had been involved in preparing the bid for new LEADER funding.

Resolved:

1. That the commoners be congratulated on their hard work in producing the New Forest Review which is to be welcomed and that the areas for immediate action be confirmed.
2. That a series of meetings be arranged to agree how best to progress the Review recommendations and report back on progress by March 2008.
3. That the timetable and process for the submission of an application to the LEADER programme be approved, subject to agreeing satisfactory arrangements for managing and administering the programme.

Voting: None voting against

53. Report on New Forest Consultative Panel Meeting (6 September)

53.1 Members noted issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 6 September 2007 and the date of the next Panel meeting on Thursday 15 November 2007.

54. Urgent Items by the Chairman

- 54.1 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

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

The public and press were accordingly requested to leave the meeting.

55. Accommodation update

- 55.1 The Monitoring Officer reminded members that, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, information disclosed in private session is confidential. Lindsay Cornish then updated members on the position regarding long term accommodation for the Authority. (This is a summary of a minute which contains exempt information).

The developments in the search for accommodation were noted by members.

The meeting closed at 11:10 am.

Signed Date:.....
(Chairman)