

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2008 AT 09.30 HOURS IN THE FOREST ROOM, FOREST LODGE HOTEL, LYNDHURST

Present:

Members

Clive Chatters (Chairman)
Barry Rickman (Deputy Chairman)

Lee Dunsdon	Vicky Myers
Peter Frost	Leo Randall
Tony Gentle	Alan Rice
Roger Heape (until minute item 16)	John Sanger (until minute item 15)
Maureen Holding (until minute item 15)	Stan Wade
Mel Kendal (until minute item 15)	Alan Weeks (until minute item 14)
Clive Maton (until minute item 10)	Pat Wyeth (until minute item 15)
Bob Morris	

Officers

Lindsay Cornish, Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Paul Carey-Kent, John Ward, Steve Trotter, Martin O'Neill, Steve Avery, George Trevelyan, Julia Mutlow, Saira Evans, Nick Evans, David Stone, Rosalind Alderman and Carolyn Hoole.

PART I – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Diana Halford, Kathy Heron, Ted Johnson and Julian Johnson.

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

2.1 The Chief Executive facilitated the election of Roger Heape as Interim Chairman to oversee the appointment of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

2.2 Clive Chatters was duly proposed and seconded as Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

Resolved: That Clive Chatters be appointed as Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority.

Voting: Unanimous

2.3 Barry Rickman was duly proposed and seconded as Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

Resolved: That Barry Rickman be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority.

Voting: Unanimous

3. Declarations of interest

- 3.1 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 Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council would have a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute items 11 (Chief Executive's Report), 14 (National Park Plan – Draft for Public Consultation) and 15 (Recreation Management Strategy – Draft for Public Consultation). Members who were in a position of control or management of any of the organisations referred to in minute item 8 (Appointment of Authority representatives on external organisations) would also have a personal but not prejudicial interest in that minute item. Members declared their interests in accordance with this guidance.
- 3.2 Vicky Myers declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 15 (Recreation Management Strategy – Draft for Public Consultation) as a Forestry Commission Ranger.

4. Chairman's announcements

- 4.1 The Chairman drew attention to the large size of the agenda and requested that members focus their discussions on the substantive items as much as possible.

5. Minutes of meeting on 22 May 2008

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2008 were agreed as a true record.

6. Public Question Time

- 6.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bridget Taylor addressed the meeting on behalf of Councillor Veronica Johnson and expressed concern that Burley Parish Council, whilst accepting that it was outside the required timeframes to give notice to speak, had not been allowed an opportunity to address the Planning Development Control Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2008.
- 6.2 The Chairman explained that the Authority was mindful of the importance of hearing the views of the Parish Councils and would consider the points raised; an explanation of the circumstances in this case would be forwarded to Burley Parish Council in due course.
- 6.3 There were no further questions or statements from the public.

7. Appointments to Committees

- 7.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 255/08) and informed the Authority that in all cases except the Resources and Performance Committee, members had indicated their preference to continue with their current committee membership.
- 7.2 In the case of the Resources and Performance Committee, where two vacancies existed (one Secretary of State and one local authority vacancy), she reported that expressions of interest had been received from one Secretary of State member and two local authority members in addition to those received from the remaining members of the Committee. Consequently, and in terms of the current proportionality on the Committee, the three Secretary of State vacancies had been filled but there were five volunteers for four local authority places. A ballot

would therefore be needed to determine which local authority members would be appointed on to the Committee.

Resolved: That

- 1 the Authority's Planning Development Control Committee comprise the following members for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority: Peter Frost, Tony Gentle, Diana Halford, Maureen Holding, Ted Johnson, Clive Maton, Bob Morris, Vicky Myers, Leo Randall, Alan Rice, Barry Rickman, John Sanger, Stan Wade, Alan Weeks and Pat Wyeth;**

Voting: Unanimous

- 2 the Authority's Resources and Performance Committee comprise the following members for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority: Lee Dunsdon, Roger Heape, Julian Johnson, Bob Morris, John Sanger, Stan Wade and Alan Weeks;**

Voting: By ballot

- 3 the Authority's Standards Committee comprise the following Authority members and deputies in addition to the two independent members, for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority:**
Members – Tony Gentle, Clive Maton, Bob Morris and Pat Wyeth
Deputies – Lee Dunsdon, Ted Johnson, Vicky Myers, Leo Randall.

Voting: None voting against

8. Appointment of Authority representatives on external organisations

- 8.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 256/08) and advised that in the majority of cases, the Authority's current external appointees had indicated their willingness to continue in their role. Leo Randall had volunteered to take on the representative role on the National Park Electronic Governance Group in the place of Susan Achmatowicz who had now resigned from the Authority. Lindsay Cornish accordingly suggested that barring the two appointments referred to in the subsequent paragraphs, the Authority confirm the existing appointees for the forthcoming year as per the table in Annex 1.
- 8.2 Lindsay Cornish reported that no volunteer had come forward to replace Susan Achmatowicz on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Partnership Improvement Board and suggested that no member appointment be made as the interests of the Authority could adequately be represented by the Chief Executive, who was entitled to attend meetings of the Board. Members supported this option, subject to the Chief Executive obtaining confirmation of the arrangement from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Partnership Improvement Board.
- 8.3 On advice from Lindsay Cornish, in connection with the second exception, namely the Authority's appointment on the Executive Management Group of the New Forest Centre (Ninth Centenary Trust), a ballot was held to determine the Authority appointment, as two expressions of interest had been received.

Resolved: That

- 1 all external appointments set out in Annex 1 to NFNPA 256/08 be re-appointed for the 2008/2009 Authority year with the exception of those listed in resolutions 2 and 3 below;

Voting: Unanimous

- 2 no member appointment be made to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sub-Regional Improvement Partnership: Improvement Board but that the Authority rely instead on representation by the Chief Executive on the occasions when issues of relevance to the Authority arise; and

Voting: Unanimous

- 3 Roger Heape be appointed as the Authority's representative on the Executive Management Group of the New Forest Ninth Centenary Trust.

Voting: By ballot

9. Wiltshire Council appointments to the National Park Authority

- 9.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 257/08), and advised that the Authority currently had representatives from each of Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury District Council, which were to be amalgamated into the new unitary Authority to be known as Wiltshire Council from May 2009. Members were asked whether they would prefer to continue with two members from Wiltshire Council or to select a different option, such as reducing the overall membership of the Authority to 21 members, or having one appointee from the new unitary authority and one appointee from another local authority or a further Secretary of State appointee. Lindsay Cornish explained that the Authority's views would be passed on to Defra and the Department for Communities and Local Government, to prepare the necessary secondary legislation to implement the changes.

- 9.2 Several members then spoke in favour of the new unitary Council continuing to be represented on the National Park Authority by two members, citing the high volume of work that would be carried out by these members. One member expressed the view that it would be desirable to replace one Wiltshire Council appointee with a person with local knowledge to be appointed by the Secretary of State.

Resolved: That the Chief Executive instruct officials in Defra and the Department for Communities and Local Government to make provision in the relevant Order for Wiltshire Council to appoint two members to the New Forest National Park Authority.

Voting: 15:1 (1 abstention)

10. Public speaking at Planning Development Control Committee meetings

- 10.1 Kevin Gardner introduced the report (NFNPA 258/08), and drew attention to the background leading up to the submission of the revised speaking procedure which incorporated a right of reply for applicants and objectors following the public speaking session but before debate, arising from the decision reached at the Authority meeting on 22 May 2008.

- 10.2 Considerable debate ensued, during which members expressed a preference for the right of reply to be included in the procedure at the end of the debate on a planning application and before the vote was taken. It was also agreed that paragraph 12 of the draft should be amended to specify that it referred only to District or County Councillors who were not also members of the Authority.

Resolved: That the draft speaking procedure attached as Annex 1 to NFNPA 258/08, subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting, be approved for use during a trial period of at least six meetings of the Planning Development Control Committee.

Voting: 11:3 (2 abstentions)

- 10.3 Following the vote, and for ease of interpretation, it was agreed that the text of paragraph 1 of the draft procedure be reworded to provide further clarification of the fact that, in giving notice of an intention to speak, Parish, District and County Councillors, and Authority members who were required to give notice under paragraph 14 of the draft procedure, would not be required to state whether they intended to speak in support of or against the application in question.

11. Chief Executive's Report

- 11.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 259/08). Members noted that Carolyn Hoole, Administrative Assistant in the Member Services section, would be leaving the Authority on 4 July and thanked her for her hard work and positive disposition.

- 11.2 Members then noted the report.

12. Oral report from the Resources and Performance Committee on 25 June 2008

- 12.1 Roger Heape, the Committee Chairman, summarised the issues considered at the Resources and Performance Committee meeting on 25 June 2008, namely the 2007/08 Performance Review, Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2007/08, Annual Internal Audit Report 2007/2008 and Internal Audit Strategy 2008 – 2013. John Sanger asked members to consider how much information they wanted to see in the Performance Review report in future.

- 12.2 Members then noted the report.

13. Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance statement for financial year 2007/08

- 13.1 Paul Carey-Kent introduced the report (Paper NFNPA 260/08) and advised that the report also included a summary of the actual expenditure incurred for the year which reflected a significant under-spend for the year against the approved budget.

Resolved: That

- 1. the Annual Governance Statement attached to the submitted report as Annex 1 be approved;**

2. **the Authority's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2007/08 attached to the submitted report as Annex 2 be approved;**
3. **the final out-turn position for 2007/08 as set out in Annex 3 of the submitted report be noted;**
4. **the transfers of £156,000 to the General Fund, £190,000 to the SSSI Restoration Reserve and the transfer of £19,000 from the Sustainable Development Grants Reserve be approved; and**
5. **the Treasury Management stewardship report and actual prudential indicators for 2007/08 attached to the submitted report as Annex 4 be noted.**

Voting: Unanimous

14. National Park Plan – draft for public consultation

- 14.1 John Ward introduced the report (NFNPA 261/08) and explained that the Plan comprised a single integrated document for the New Forest, including the key statutory documents, namely the National Park Management Plan and the Core Spatial Strategy, as well as a new suite of development control policies to replace those inherited from the former planning authorities for the area. Its span therefore encompassed a policy direction for land management, development (including transport), recreational activities and land use.
- 14.2 John Ward had been impressed with the high level of engagement between the Authority's officers and the public; members had also been extensively involved in the drafting process from the beginning. In creating the draft Plan the Authority had liaised closely with New Forest District Council. The Plan was centred on the Park's nine Special Qualities that had been identified. The key message was that the greatest challenge over the next twenty years would be to maintain the essence of what makes the New Forest National Park special, whilst allowing change and adaptation to occur. Members undertook to submit detailed or specific responses during the consultation period, but, in the ensuing debate, raised various general points which were noted and recorded by officers for inclusion as part of the consultation process. It was specifically suggested that the role of Village and Town Plans should be referred to in the document.
- 14.3 Members congratulated officers on the draft Plan, which achieved a balanced reflection of varying local views.

Resolved: That:

- 1 **the draft of the National Park Plan attached as Annex 1 to NFNPA 261/08 be approved for publication as a consultation document; and**
- 2 **the proposed scope of the consultation and consultation questions be approved.**

Voting: Unanimous

15. Recreation Management Strategy – draft for public consultation

- 15.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report (NFNPA 262/08) which summarised the progress made in preparing the document for public consultation. The document was deliberately strategic and high level, and formed a 'daughter' document to the National Park Plan discussed under the previous minute item. The draft Recreation Management Strategy was similarly a document for the whole National Park rather than just the National Park Authority. The major issues that had been identified so far during the process included:
- the question of how the fragility of the National Park environment should be respected in terms of recreation,
 - how the current demand for recreation should be managed, as well as the potential growth in recreation arising from the projected rise in housing in adjacent conurbations,
 - how the most could be made of the opportunities for recreation and enjoyment for everyone within the context of the New Forest environment, and
 - how uncertainty should be managed.
- 15.2 Vicky Myers congratulated officers on the draft and made a number of detailed comments, which were noted by officers for inclusion in the schedule of responses to the consultation. Bob Morris supported these comments and said he was delighted that the Authority was the first of the national park authorities to begin the adoption of a Recreation Management Strategy. Peter Frost raised some concerns with the draft, which were also noted by officers.

Resolved: That:

1. the draft Recreation Management Strategy attached to the submitted report as Annex 1 be approved for publication as a consultation document; and
2. the proposed scope of the consultation and consultation questions be approved.

Voting: Unanimous

16. New Forest Access Forum Report

- 16.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report (NFNPA 263/08) and briefly updated members on the issues which had been discussed at the meeting of the Forum on 2 June 2008.

Resolved: That

1. the issues of interest discussed at the meeting of the New Forest Access Forum on 2 June 2008 be noted, and
2. the date of the next New Forest Access Forum meeting on Monday 8 September 2008 at Foxlease, Lyndhurst be noted.

Voting: Unanimous

17. Urgent Items by the Chairman

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

The meeting closed at 12:27 hours.

SignedDate:.....
(Chairman)