

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2008 AT 09.30 HOURS IN THE BURLEY ROOM AT THE MOORHILL HOUSE HOTEL, BURLEY

#### **Present:**

##### *Members*

Clive Chatters (Chairman)

Susan Achmatowicz

Peter Frost

Tony Gentle

Roger Heape

Kathy Heron

Ted Johnson

Clive Maton

Bob Morris

Vicky Myers

Leo Randall

Alan Rice

Barry Rickman

John Sanger

Stan Wade

Pat Wyeth

##### *Officers*

Lindsay Cornish, Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), John Ward, Steve Trotter, Barry Holland, Martin O'Neill, Nigel Matthews, Paula Freeland, Bryan Wilson, Jim Mitchell, David Stone, Rosalind Alderman and Carolyn Hoole.

##### *Other attendees*

Colonel Peter Sweet, Peter Roberts (New Forest Association) and Kevin Stubbs (Consultant)

### **PART I – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

#### **103. Apologies for absence**

103.1 Lee Dunsdon, Diana Halford, Maureen Holding, Julian Johnson, Mel Kendal and Alan Weeks.

#### **104. Declarations of interest**

104.1 The Monitoring Officer explained that members having an interest in land that fell within the boundaries of either of the two proposed conservation areas to be discussed at minute item 110 (Conservation area review: Proposed designation of conservation areas - New Forest North East and Western Escarpment), and any member having a relative or close personal associate or employer with an interest in such land, would have a personal and possibly prejudicial interest in this item. Peter Frost declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as the owner of a house in Netley Marsh, and said that, on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, he intended to speak for three minutes on the item and then leave the meeting during the discussion and voting on the proposals for Forest North East. John Sanger also declared a personal interest in accordance with this guidance as the owner of a property in Woodgreen, but added that he did not consider this interest to amount to a prejudicial interest as the property was within an existing conservation area. Kathy Heron declared a personal but not

prejudicial interest in this item as a County Councillor for part of the areas covered by the proposals.

- 104.2 In addition, Alan Rice declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 113 (Coastal issues in the New Forest National Park) as the Hampshire County Council representative to and Chairman of the Lymington-Keyhaven Coastal Area Management Committee and Advisory Committee. The Chairman declared a personal interest in the same item as his employer owned or managed various stretches of land along the coast. Vicky Myers declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in minute item 114 (Education and Interpretation Strategy update) as a co-ordinator of volunteer rangers who would occasionally staff the proposed mobile unit.

#### **105. Chairman's announcements**

- 105.1 The Chairman announced that there would be a Part II session to the meeting and an informal briefing on proposed mineral allocation sites would be held for members following the Authority meeting.

#### **106. Minutes of meeting on 28 February 2008**

- 106.1 Subject to an amendment to the end of the second sentence of paragraph 95.1 to read "... the Committee would continue to look at ways to generate greater income or how efficiencies could be achieved", the minutes of the meeting on 28 February 2008 were agreed as a true record.

#### **107. Public Question Time**

- 107.1 Colonel Peter Sweet spoke as a resident of the National Park, warning that in his view the proposed new Wightlink ferries would have a negative impact on the banks and mudflats of the river and on other river users, and that the greater vehicle capacities of the new ferries would generate further traffic through the New Forest. He felt that the environmental impact survey carried out to date by the Marine and Fisheries Agency was limited, and asked that the Authority ensure that a more comprehensive survey was carried out. The Chairman replied that the Authority would respond to Colonel Sweet in writing.
- 107.2 Peter Roberts, on behalf of the New Forest Association, spoke on minute item 110 (Conservation Areas: New Forest North East and New Forest Western Escarpment) in support of the proposed designations. He said it was apparent that many of the initial negative responses from the public to the earlier proposals affecting the southern part of the Forest had been based on misinformation as to the nature and extent of the designations, and in many cases these concerns had now been allayed. The proposed designation of the conservation areas was important work which had been carried out with great skill, and he recommended that members vote in favour of the proposals.
- 107.3 Speaking on the same item, Peter Frost also spoke in favour of the proposals, stating that designating the proposed conservation areas would help to halt the creeping urbanisation that was eroding the special qualities of the New Forest. He said there was some misunderstanding of the proposals and once the proposals had been explained to the public they were often strongly in favour.

**108. Appointment of Chairman of Sustainable Development Fund Panel (Paper NFNPA 239/08)**

- 108.1 The Chairman introduced the report (NFNPA 239/08) and explained that in accordance with the new changes agreed at the previous Authority meeting, it was necessary to appoint an Authority member as Chairman of the Sustainable Development Fund Panel. The appointment would commence in April 2008 at the beginning of the new financial year and would run through to the Annual meeting of the Authority in June 2009, when a new appointment would be made.
- 108.2 The Chairman called for nominations for the above position. Leo Randall proposed Vicky Myers, which proposal was seconded by Peter Frost. A second proposal nominating Barry Rickman was proposed by Susan Achmatowicz and seconded by Pat Wyeth.
- 108.3 Both candidates having confirmed acceptance of the nomination to the position, an election was held with the result being determined by secret ballot. Barry Rickman was appointed as Chairman of the Panel for the period concerned.

*Resolved:* That Barry Rickman be appointed as Chairman of the Sustainable Development Fund Panel for the period until the Annual Authority meeting in June 2009.

**109. Chief Executive's Report**

- 109.1 Lindsay Cornish introduced the report (NFNPA 240/08) and drew members' attention to some amendments to the list of members' commitments at page 3 of the report, namely (i) that the Chief Executive had attended a meeting of the Ninth Centenary Trust Executive Management Group in place of a member, and (ii) the next Hampshire and Isle of Wight Improvement Board meeting would be held on 28 March. A meeting of the Hampshire Rural Affordable Housing Group would take place on 31 March and as the Chairman would not be able to attend this meeting, volunteers would be sought.
- 109.2 Members were recommended to diarise the date for the Southern Parks Conference scheduled for 7-8 May 2008. The agenda for the conference, which was currently being drafted in conjunction with senior officers from Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities, would include issues associated with recreational horse keeping and horse management in the National Park, as well as planning matters and urban fringe issues.
- 109.3 Leo Randall commended the work the Authority had done with partner and neighbour organisations, referred to at paragraph 10 of the report, and in particular the work carried out with New Forest District Council. He hoped the Authority could work equally closely with some of the other authorities, especially at the boundaries of the Park; he raised concerns in connection with the Salisbury District Council Core Strategy consultation document that had recently been published, which did not appear to take adequate account of the National Park Authority as the planning authority for the relevant part of the area covered by the Strategy. The Chief Executive said she did liaise with the Chief Executives of neighbouring local authorities on a regular basis and at the next set of meetings would highlight the Park's purposes; and she would discuss the Authority's response to the Salisbury Core Strategy consultation with officers.
- 109.4 John Sanger congratulated the Chief Executive and officers on progress that had been achieved, as detailed in the report. Members then noted the report.

- 110. Conservation areas: New Forest North East and New Forest Western Escarpment (Paper NFNPA 241/08)**
- 110.1 Peter Frost declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as the owner of a house in Netley Marsh, and left the meeting during the discussion and voting on the proposals for Forest North East. The Chairman pointed out that members had received written representations from Cllr Martin Powell, the Vice Chairman of Godshill Parish Council, in his personal capacity.
- 110.2 Paula Freeland introduced the report (NFNPA 241/08), explaining that conservation areas were areas of special historical or architectural interest. Two new conservation areas were proposed, namely Forest North East and Western Escarpment, and public consultations had been carried out. She said that the references to "Linwood" should be amended to "Linford" in paragraphs 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 of the report and pages 17 and 22 of Annex 8. The Chairman welcomed Kevin Stubbs, the Authority's consultant in connection with the proposed designations.
- 110.3 Several members commented that they had observed a great deal of public support for the designations, once the proposals had been explained. Members were in favour of the proposals as they felt designating the conservation areas would help to protect the National Park from increasing urbanisation.

*Resolved:*

1. That 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 North East (Copythorne, Winsor, dispersed farms and arable land, Netley Marsh, Bartley, Woodlands, historic edge of Forest encroachment).
    - Western Escarpment (Hatchet Green; Hale Park; dispersed dwellings and associated agricultural land; Woodgreen; Castle Hill and escarpment edge and scattered isolated development; Godshill and surrounding agricultural encroachment into the Forest; Frogham; Blissford and scattered isolated development; Hungerford, Hyde Common, Gorley Common and Ogdens; Edge of floodplain – Stuckton, North Gorley, South Gorley, Mockbeggar and Rockford; Highwood and Hangersley; 20<sup>th</sup> Century dispersed settlement within woodland).
- to cover the areas shown on the plans annexed to the submitted report (Annex 2 and 4 respectively) and that notice of the designation be duly given and advertised in accordance with the provisions of Section 70 of the Act.
2. That Character Appraisals of these areas, including illustrations and maps, be published.
  3. That in accordance with the powers contained in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, conservation areas known as Hatchett Green and Woodgreen are cancelled.

*Voting: none voting against*

**111. Oral report from the Resources and Performance Committee**

111.1 Roger Heape, Chairman of the Resources and Performance Committee, updated members on matters dealt with at the last meeting of the Committee on 4 March 2008, the minutes for this meeting having been circulated at the Authority meeting. He advised that the Committee had focussed chiefly on the draft Budget for 2008/09, to be discussed as the next item of business for the meeting, which was consistent with the Financial Strategy approved by the Authority in February. He added that the forthcoming budget contained provision for the replacement of IT infrastructure and had also been increased by an amount of £300,000 from Natural England which would be used on work to restore Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and congratulated officers on negotiating this funding.

111.2 Members noted the report.

**112 General Fund revenue budget for the financial year 2008/09**

112.1 Barry Holland introduced the report (NFNPA 242/08) and updated members on the 2008/09 Budget which had been described in the Financial Strategy report submitted to the February Authority meeting. Provision had been made within the corporate services budget for ongoing expenditure incurred in replacing IT equipment.

*Resolved:*

1. That the General Fund Budget for 2008/09 be approved.
2. That it be noted that the minimum level for the General Fund Reserve will remain at £0.5m.
3. That the implications on the General Fund Reserve of the proposed budget for 2008/09 be noted.
4. That the risk assessment and Section 25 Statement contained in Annex 4 to paper NFNPA 242/08 be noted.

*Voting: unanimous*

**113. Coastal issues in the New Forest National Park**

113.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report (NFNPA 243/08) and updated members on the issues and work with which the Authority needed to engage, saying that there were some particularly complex issues to be faced on the coastline of the National Park, notably agreeing a fundamental philosophy and approach to coastline management. He said that the work undertaken by New Forest District Council staff on these complex issues had been exemplary. In response to the issues raised in Colonel Peter Sweet's presentation described in minute item 107, he said that the Authority was doing all it could to influence the relevant organisations but did not have a statutory role in decisions regarding the proposed new Wightlink ferries. The relevant authorities were the Marine and Fisheries Agency, the Lymington Harbour Commissioners, Natural England (with regard to the adjacent marshes), New Forest District Council and the Environment Agency (for drainage consents).

- 113.2 In response to a query raised by Kathy Heron, Steve Trotter said he would check the additional capacity of the new ferries and report back to her. One member commented that it was useful to have a coastline strategy in place, but the Authority needed to ensure that it had a practical impact. Clive Chatters commended Steve Trotter on an excellent report and said that the Authority would have some difficult decisions to make on coastline issues over the next few years.

**Resolved:** That the report on coastal issues in the New Forest National Park be noted.

*Voting: none voting against*

#### **114. Education and Interpretation Strategy update**

- 114.1 Nigel Matthews introduced the report (NFNPA 244/08) and updated members on how work to implement the Education and Interpretation Strategy had progressed since the Strategy was approved in June 2007. Members expressed disappointment that the proposed vehicle for the mobile interpretation and information unit, although very fuel efficient and having a small engine capacity, would not run on a renewable energy source. Members were advised that this option had been considered and rejected for practical reasons prior to the report being brought to the Authority. After discussion, members decided that because sustainability was at the heart of the Authority's work, officers should review the options for sourcing the vehicle for the mobile information unit, agreeing that the decision on this would be delegated to the April meeting of the Resources and Performance Committee.

**Resolved:**

1. That the update report on the education and interpretation strategy be noted.
2. That the matter of the mobile information unit be referred to the next Resources and Performance Committee meeting in April to consider a revised proposal.

*Voting: none voting against*

#### **115. Report on New Forest Access Forum (3 March 2008)**

- 115.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report (NFNPA 245/08) and advised members of the main issues raised at the New Forest Access Forum meeting on 3 March 2008.

**Resolved:** That:

1. the issues of interest discussed at the meeting of the New Forest Access Forum on 3 March 2008 be noted;
2. the date of the next New Forest Access Forum meeting on Monday 2 June 2008 at Bramshaw Village Hall (to be followed by a site visit to Foxbury Plantation) be noted.

*Voting: none voting against*

#### **116. Report on New Forest Consultative Panel (6 March 2008)**

116.1 Steve Trotter introduced the report (NFNPA 246/08) and updated members on the issues which had been discussed at the New Forest Consultative Panel meeting on 6 March 2008.

**Resolved:** That:

- 1. the issues of interest discussed at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 6 March 2008 be noted;
- 2. the date of the next New Forest Consultative Panel meeting on Thursday 1 May 2008 be noted.

*Voting: none voting against*

**117. Urgent Items by the Chairman**

117.1 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 this 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, namely the need to avoid compromising the position of the Authority in negotiations to secure suitable long term headquarters accommodation on the most cost-effective terms obtainable.

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

**118. Accommodation update**

118.1 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).

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

**119. Urgent items raised under Part II of the agenda**

119.1 The Chief Executive updated members on two items of urgent business permitted by the Chairman, namely a staff issue and matters in connection with a member’s illness. Both oral reports were noted by the Authority.

The meeting closed at 12:14 hours.

Signed .....Date:.....  
(Chairman)