MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2011 AT 10.00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, AVENUE ROAD, LYMINGTON

Present:

Members
Julian Johnson (Chairman)
Vicky Myers (Deputy Chairman)

Brian Dash
Richard Frampton
Peter Frost
Roger Heape
David Harrison
Edward Heron
Penny Jackman
Keith Mans

Maureen Holding
Leo Randall
Bob Morris
John Pemberton
Alan Rice
Barry Rickman
Pat Wyeth

Officers
Alison Barnes
Julia Mutlow
Bob Jackson
Steve Avery
Paula Freeland
David Illsley
Hilary Makin
Nigel Matthews
David Stone
Rosalind Alderman
Kathryn Boler
Tony Spence

Chief Executive Officer
Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Chief Finance Officer
Director of Park Services
Specialist Services Manager
Policy Manager
Communications Manager
Community and Visitor Services Manager
Business Services Manager
Member Services Officer
External Funding Officer
Policy Officer

By invitation:
Rosemary Rutins (Democratic Services Manager, New Forest District Council)
Clare Taylor (Council for National Parks Mosaic Project Officer)
Ranjan Patel (Southampton Community Champion)
Shobhna Phillips (Southampton Community Champion)

37. Apologies for absence.
37.1 Apologies for absence were received from Tony Gentle, Ted Johnson and Clive Maton.

38. Declarations of interest.
38.1 Local authority appointed Members accepted and declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in agenda items which related to their role as County, District or Parish Members, and in particular members of New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council declared a personal interest in Minute item 44 (Outcome of National Park Governance Review and next stages).

38.2 Roger Heape, Pat Wyeth and John Pemberton each declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 46 (New Forest Centre Agreement) as Member of the Executive Management Group at the Centre and Trustees respectively of the Ninth Centenary Trust. They
each made short statements before leaving the meeting for the duration of the debate and decision on this matter.

39. **Chairman’s announcements.**

39.1 The Chairman welcomed Brian Dash as the new Hampshire County Council member of the Authority replacing Alan Weeks. He also welcomed Clare Taylor (Council for National Parks Mosaic Project Officer) and Southampton Community Champions Ranjan Patel and Shobhna Phillips who would address the meeting under item 11 of the agenda (Minute 47).

39.2 The Chairman then updated members with regard to various events he had attended since the last meeting, including participation in the Southern Parks Members Day, the Launch of the World War II Project, the Members’ workshop day on archaeology, launch of the new Park Life, a tour of the new NPA offices after the move to Lymington Town Hall in November, the publicity launch of the Olympic Torch Relay and a meeting with Defra representatives to discuss the Government’s proposals arising from the governance review consultation.

40. **Minutes of meetings on 29 September 2011.**

40.1 The minutes of the meeting on 29 September 2011 were agreed as a true record.

41. **Public Question Time.**

41.1 There were no presentments on this occasion.

42. **Chief Executive’s report.**

42.1 Alison Barnes introduced the report (NPNFA 393/11) and drew Members’ attention to various highlights including the office move to new accommodation at Lymington Town Hall, which represented considerable savings and efficiencies to the Authority. She thanked the officers involved in facilitating the move, including Steve Avery, Paul Fleetwood, Ann Wood, Sharon Wilcockson and other officers who had contributed to the successful move. She then structured the remainder of her update around the ‘Protect, Enjoy, Prosper’ programme.

42.2 Under ‘Protect’, she referred to the grant funding secured in the amount of £551,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the World War II themed project. With match funding, the value of the project, which would run for two years, was £754,000. Over 100 people had contacted the Authority as potential volunteers to assist with the project.

42.3 Alison reported that, following the publication of the Government’s Natural Environment White Paper, a year-long pilot project to improve and raise awareness of the ecological status of the water environment had been launched in collaboration with the charity Pond Conservation. The project had been approved by Defra and would inform the Environment Agency’s management of rivers and ponds in the New Forest and elsewhere in the UK.

42.4 The Bat Group had been studying two rare species in the New Forest (Bechstein’s and Barbastelle) and the group had received funding from the Sustainable Development Fund and planned further work during the winter. Similarly the success of the Authority’s Land Advice Service had continued and the joint project with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Verderers had made very good progress, with help given to 155 landowners or managers in its first 18 months of operation.
42.5 With reference to the theme ‘Enjoy’, Alison Barnes advised that the residents’ newsletter Park Life had been re-formatted and published within the New Forest Post weekly newspaper in order to substantially reduce costs. The newsletter would also be delivered to other outlets such as businesses, post offices, tourist information centres and local information points and would also be available to read online. A copy for each member had been tabled at the meeting.

42.6 Referring to ‘Prosper’, Alison Barnes advised that NPA Officers had attended the ‘Our Land’ launch event on 14 October by the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport.

42.7 She said that efforts to promote increased awareness of the Sustainable Development Fund would be undertaken in the coming months. The Fund had supported over 100 projects with £1 million from the fund and with a further £1.8 million of match funding.

42.8 Members were advised that, in 2011, the New Forest Tour, now in its sixth consecutive year, generated over 34000 passenger journeys and levered approximately £500,000 into the local economy. Plans were in hand to extend the period of operation of the red route in 2012 to match the operating period of the green route. Some members took part in the New Forest Consultative Panel tour which had provided a good opportunity to view relevant sites and interact with other New Forest groups.

42.9 Looking ahead to the New Year, Alison Barnes said that the NPA would be working with businesses to establish more Local Information Points, with other groups to improve access to areas of the New Forest, and would be taking the lead in helping to arrange more than 60 New Forest events in 2012. Officers would also be involved in arrangements for the Olympic Torch Relay to visit the Forest in July 2012, which would present an excellent opportunity to showcase the New Forest.

42.10 Following discussion, the report was noted by members with appreciation for the considerable work which had been undertaken during the period.

43 Oral report from the Resources and Performance Committee meeting on 21 November 2011

43.1 John Pemberton, Chairman of the Committee, took Members through the draft minutes that had been circulated with the agenda and highlighted some of the key points. Members then noted the report.

44. Outcome of the National Park Governance Review and next stages

44.1 David Illsley introduced the report (NFPNA 394/11), drawing members’ attention to the key areas where changes were proposed as well as the recommended responses set out in the Report. He advised that Rosemary Rutins (Democratic Services Manager, New Forest District Council) was also present to assist in answering any questions with regard to the details of the proposed elections.

44.2 In debating the report, members noted that the proposed maximum 8 year term for local authority, parish council and national members would presumably not apply to directly elected members and felt that it would be unfair if one category of membership was exempt from this provision. It was agreed that this point should be highlighted in the response to Defra to emphasise the NPA’s request that the maximum term for the remaining three categories of membership should not be introduced. Members also agreed that the response to Defra should set out the NPA’s reasoning behind the proposal that one of the four directly elected members should be a national member.
Edward Heron expressed the view that the direct election of four members as recommended amounted to a token response to increased democratisation of National Park Authorities, and moved that all local authority and parish seats be put up for direct elections, that the NPA be warded in terms of the sixteen seats which would be created and that members represent specific wards that would be roughly equal in terms of electoral equality. Eligibility for candidates would be that they were qualified to stand for local authority elections.

Some members supported this approach; however, others advised that, although they supported a portion of directly elected members, the proposal had the potential to deplete the existing pool of experience and knowledge of the Authority; one member pointed out that for the purposes of the pilot, it would be more beneficial if the Peak District and New Forest NPAs trialled different options. The above proposal was seconded by Maureen Holding and, following further discussion, put to the vote but not carried. Both Edward Heron and Maureen Holding as proposer and seconder requested that their votes in favour of the proposal be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Members then voted on the recommendations contained in the Report, which were agreed. Edward Heron and Maureen Holding asked that their votes be recorded against the decision.

Resolved: That

1. the conclusions of the Government’s review of the governance arrangements of the English National Parks and the Broads, including the proposed amendments that are specific to the New Forest National Park, be noted.
2. Members agree the proposed feedback to the Government on some of the key proposals, while fully recognising that there will be further public consultation on the amendments before they come into effect in May 2013.

Voting: 12:4 (Edward Heron and Maureen Holding recorded their votes against the decision)

Adoption of Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document

Tony Spence introduced the report (NFNPA 395/11), and outlined why the Design Guide would be important for the National Park. A summary of the consultation process undertaken by the Authority was provided, drawing out some of the main points raised in the public consultation responses and sought. Members’ agreement was sought for the adoption of the design guide as a Supplementary Planning Document for the New Forest National Park.

Members fully supported the document which they said was well structured and presented. In reply to a suggestion that a mechanism be established to review the guide from time to time, members were advised that as the Guide would inform planning decisions, it would be carefully monitored by officers. Any issues could also be raised through the Planning Development Control Committee or on its annual tour to which all members were invited to attend. Users of the guide would also be likely to feed back any concerns.
Resolved: That

1. The revised Design Guide be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to be material in the consideration of planning decisions within the National Park.
2. Responsibility for the final design, illustration and layout of the document be delegated to the Director of Park Services.

Voting: None voting against (1 abstention)

46. New Forest Centre Agreement

46.1 Nigel Matthews presented the report (NFNPA 396/11), which sought approval of a new agreement between the Ninth Centenary Trust and the NPA for the running of the New Forest Centre from 2012 to 2015. He said that the agreement had been considered and recommended for approval by the Resources and Performance Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2011.

46.2 As advised under Minute 38, John Pemberton, Roger Heape and Pat Wyeth declared a prejudicial interest in this matter and after making a short statement left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and decision.

46.3 Members noted that there were clear benefits to the NPA of entering into the agreement and voted to support the recommendation in the report.

Resolved: that

1. Funding be granted for the New Forest Centre for each of the years 2012/13 – 2014/15 at £50,000 a year (excluding staff time) – the same level as has been provided in 2010/11 and 2011/12.
2. It be confirmed that the current levels of member and officer involvement in the Centre are considered adequate for monitoring the results of the Authority’s contribution.

Voting: Unanimous

47. Mosaic Project Update

47.1 Nigel Matthews presented the report (NFNPA 397/11), which updated members on progress with the Mosaic Project. He was joined by Clare Taylor who spoke about her work as Mosaic Project Officer through the Campaign for National Parks and Ranjan Patel and Shobhna Phillips who reported on their experiences working as Community Champions in promoting the benefits of the New Forest to ethnic minority communities in Southampton.

47.2 Following discussion and a number of queries which were responded to by the above Officers and Champions, the Chairman thanked them for their attendance. Members then noted the report.

48. Income Generation – use of logo

48.1 Kathryn Boler introduced the report (NFNPA 398/11). She advised that the Authority’s logo was now fully registered as a trademark with the Intellectual Property Office and elaborated on the range of income generating opportunities for the Authority through the licensing of the use of the logo.
Resolved: that

1. Officers be authorised to negotiate, as opportunities arise with such third parties, the use of the Authority’s logo in return for financial remuneration whilst always ensuring that any negotiations are conducted in accordance with the law and any statutory constraints.

2. The Resources and Performance Committee be authorised to give approval to the use of the Authority’s logo in the manner detailed at 5.1 above.

Voting: Unanimous

49. Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

49.1 The Chairman advised one item of urgent business which was dealt with below.

50. Proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegations Enabling Officers to consider applications made in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and associated Regulations

50.1 Julia Mutlow introduced the report (NFNPA 399/11), which asked members to approve a delegation to the Director of Park Services and Manager of Development Control as set out in the report. Members briefly discussed the report and then approved the recommendations contained therein.

Resolved: That the Director of Park Services and Development Control Manager be authorised:

- to deal with all matters in relation to both pre-application statutory requirements and development consent order applications made to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (“IPC”) (or any subsequent organisation) in respect of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, as either an ‘A’ or ‘B’ Authority as defined by the IPC, in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Decentralisation and Localism Bill), and

- to assess, consider and respond to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (“IPC”) (or any subsequent organisation) on matters relating to the potential environmental impacts arising from Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects required under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Regulations) 2009.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting closed at 11.35 hours.

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