

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 13 JULY 2017 AT 10.00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

Present:

Members

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (Chairman)

Edward Heron (Deputy Chairman)

George Bisson

Gordon Bailey

Richard Clewer

Richard Frampton

Penny Jackman

Mel Kendall

Keith Mans

Phil Marshall

Harry Oram

Neville Penman

Leo Randall

Barry Rickman

John Sanger

Marian Spain

Pat Wyeth

Officers

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Nigel Stone

Julia Mutlow

David Stone

Jo Murphy

Vicki Gibbon

Frances Connolly

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Chief Finance Officer

Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Corporate Services Manager

Information and Data Protection Officer

Member Services Administrator

Executive Assistant

In Attendance

Richard Taylor

Justine Thorpe

Minstead Parish Council (New Member of the Authority)

Audit Manager, Ernst & Young LLP

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

- 1.1 The Chief Executive facilitated the election of Pat Wyeth as Interim Chairman to oversee the appointment of the Chairman. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was nominated and duly seconded as Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) for the ensuing year. There being no further nominations, the nomination was put to the vote and carried by show of hands. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was accordingly elected as Chairman.

Resolved, that Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre be appointed as Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority in 2018.

Voting: Unanimous

- 1.2 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre thanked Members for their confidence in appointing him as Chairman. He then oversaw the appointment of the Deputy Chairman. Edward Heron was proposed and seconded and elected by show of hands as Deputy Chairman of the NPA for the ensuing year.

Resolved, that Edward Heron be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority in 2018.

Voting: Unanimous

2. Apologies for absence.

- 2.1 An apology for absence was received from David Harrison.

3. Declarations of Interest.

- 3.1 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre declared an interest in minute items 6 as a member of the New Forest Association and minute item 9 as a trustee of the New Forest Trust.

Leo Randall declared an interest in minute item 6 as a member of the New Forest Association.

4. Chairman's announcements.

- 4.1 The Chairman welcomed three new Members to the Authority; namely, Richard Clewer who had joined the Authority from Wiltshire Council as a Local Authority Member and Mel Kendal and Neville Penman who joined the Authority from Hampshire County Council as Local Authority Members. He also welcomed Richard Taylor who joined the Authority from Minstead Parish Council and would represent the North East Quadrant. Due to the Secretary of State having not yet confirmed Richard Taylor's appointment, he was unable to participate in the current meeting but was present and remained in the public gallery.

- 4.2 The Chairman then thanked the Members who would be leaving the Authority for their service and commitment; Julian Johnson, Ken Thornber and John Pemberton. He advised that a further two Members who were unable to attend the meeting, Andy Moore and Russell Wynn would also be leaving the Authority and he thanked them for their service on the Authority.

- 4.3 A presentation was made to Roy Arnold in memory of Sally Arnold who sadly passed away in March; the Chairman expressed his appreciation for her devotion and passion for the New Forest and her service and commitment to the National Park Authority.

5. Minutes

- 5.1 The minutes of 23 March 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. Public Question Time

- 6.1 Brian Tarnoff, Chairman of the New Forest Association's Habitat and landscape Committee expressed a range of concerns and suggestions about the current review of the Recreation management Strategy (RMS). He also brought to Members' attention the development of the England Coast Path which he felt was unnecessary and would result in disturbance to coastal habitats.

The Chairman thanked Mr Tarnoff for his comments and encouraged him to submit the NFA's full response to the RMS consultation. He also confirmed that the proposed route for the Coast Path has not yet been published and that when it is, landowners would be able to object whereas others could only comment.

7. Appointments of Committees (NFNPA 524/17)

- 7.1 The Chairman presented the report, and listed and proposed the local authority and Secretary of State appointed Members on the Planning Development Control Committee, Resources, Audit and Performance Committee and Standards Committee. He also proposed that the Planning Development Control Committee be reduced to 13 Members as recommended in the report and that, of this new

number, the Committee carry the two Secretary of State vacancies until the October Authority meeting following confirmation of the Secretary of State vacancies on the Authority. Members unanimously agreed the above proposals.

- 7.2 Members then endorsed the Committee appointments which are summarised in **Annex 1** to these minutes.

Resolved, That:

1. the membership of the Planning Development Control Committee be reduced to 13 Members and that appointments be made to the new membership as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership;
2. appointments be made to the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership; and
3. appointments be made to Standards Committee as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership.

Voting: Unanimous

8. Election of Committee Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Committees of the New Forest National Park Authority

- 8.1 Consideration was given to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman positions in respect of the nominations made at the meeting for the three Committees whose membership had now been determined.

Resolved, that:

1. Leo Randall be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
2. Harry Oram be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
3. David Harrison be appointed as Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
4. Marian Spain be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
5. Phil Marshall be appointed as Chairman of the Standards Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position; and

6. George Bisson be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position.

Voting: the above positions were voted on by only the membership of each committee with none voting against and no abstentions.

9. Appointment of Representatives to External Organisations (NFNPA 525/17)

- 9.1 Members resolved to re-appoint Members to all those appointments for which there was no change or the correct number of volunteers had expressed an interest. It was agreed that the remaining vacancies be carried until the October Authority meeting in order to provide an opportunity for the new Secretary of State appointees to volunteer. The final representation agreed is summarised in **Annex 2** to these minutes.

Resolved, that the appointments to external organisations for the period up to the Annual meeting of the Authority in 2018, as listed in Annex 2 to these minutes, be approved, it being recorded that the remaining vacancies on outside bodies would be revisited at the October Authority meeting following confirmation of the appointments to the Secretary of State vacancies on the Authority.

Voting: Unanimous

10. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 526/17)

- 10.1 Alison Barnes presented her report, drawing attention to some key highlights over the previous year, as set out in the draft Annual Review. The development of the Local Plan had been a significant achievement with 800 people attending drop-in sessions over the year and 400 responses being received from individuals and organisations, she advised that this was on track for formal adoption in late 2018.

It was highlighted that the Our Past, Our Future scheme was now well into its first year with many excellent successes being made, one of the main accomplishments which particularly stood out was the amount of volunteered hours which was 14,877.

In 2016/17 the first New Forest fungi campaign was launched in conjunction with partner organisations to combat commercial fungi picking in the forest, this proved to be successful and would be built on for the future.

Alison Barnes reminded Members that in 2016 the Authority agreed to help the New Forest Marque to increase membership and boost their profile by giving them a £25,000 grant; there are now 135 local food, drink and craft members and a new manager, Claire Lee, had been appointed.

- 10.2 Ms Barnes then brought Members attention to the 2017/18 Quarter 1 report beginning with 'Protect'. The Future Forest 'call for views' consultation had now begun in conjunction with partner organisations, Ms Barnes commented that this was a very important milestone and represented how vital it was to work with other New Forest organisations.

The Land Advice Service had done a fantastic job and supported nearly 70 commoners with applications for the basic payment scheme. Recent archaeological excavation work had uncovered a possible hunting lodge at Denny.

The third Building Design Awards had now been launched with a closing date of 9 October, categories include: individual buildings, extensions and larger developments.

- 10.3 Under the 'Enjoy' programme Alison Barnes highlighted that PEDALL had recently been awarded £300,000 by the Big Lottery Fund. This was proving to be an excellent partnership between the NPA, Southlands School, Oaklodge School and SCARF (supporting special children and their relatives and friends) to run accessible cycling sessions and to help people who find it more difficult to access the forest to get out and about on specially adapted cycles.

A number of youth engagement projects had recently taken place including young people from Priestlands School completing their John Muir award. NPA Rangers have also been contracted to provide 35 National Citizenship Service sessions reaching up to 750 16 and 17 year olds.

Ms Barnes highlighted that the Ranger team had made over 6,000 contacts this quarter; the seasonal rangers contracts had been extended to cover the ground nesting bird season (March – July) and they would be working at camping in the forest campsites to promote how visitors can help care of the forest.

The education team had recently given 15 schools 'litter hero' assemblies and 'caring for the forest sessions' reaching out to over 3,825 children, this had really captured the children's imaginations.

- 10.4 Under the 'Prosper' programme the recent mentoring scheme with the Commoners Defence Association had proved extremely popular and had paired six experienced commoners with new and young commoners; a waiting list for the scheme was now operating for the coming year.

Alison Barnes reminded members that the New Forest Tour Bus returned on 8 July and the Beach Bus (Lymington to Hythe) returns on the 28 July, a concierge service would also be available at Brockenhurst Station and the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst.

Following the upgrade to a smooth tarmac surface in 2015 the Lyndhurst to Ashurst cycle route had proved to be very popular bringing the number of bikes using the road down by 50% with the average number of bikes who used the cycle route per day increasing from 36 in 2014 to 77 in 2016.

Ms Barnes asked Members to note her report which was duly noted.

11. Oral Report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 5 June 2017

- 11.1 Marian Spain, Deputy Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee (RAPC) updated Members on the recent RAPC meeting which had taken place on the 5 June 2017, highlighting the Annual Internal Audit results which had given an assurance level of either reasonable or substantial on all of the completed reviews. Ms Spain explained that the RAPC had scrutinised the Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement and had supported the approval of the Financial Report as recommended under item 13 of the agenda.

- 11.2 Ms Spain also drew Members' attention to two Members' days which were proposed; one to look at water quality, as this had been highlighted as an area with a target which was not deemed to be particularly demanding, and the second to look at the Authority's grant funding proposals and whether they could be enhanced.

- 11.3 Members noted the report.

12. Audit Results Report 2016/17 (NFNPA 527/17)

- 12.1 Justine Thorpe, Audit Manager, Ernst and Young introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the Executive Summary which contained an overview of the audit outcome. She stated that there was only one audit difference found in the draft financial statements presented for audit on 5 June 2017, as detailed on page 2 of the report, which was an excellent result.
- 12.2 Ms Thorpe was pleased to report that the audit was almost complete two months sooner than the statutory deadline, and that this was a positive result given that the statutory deadlines were being brought forward next year. The Auditors expected to issue an unqualified opinion and agreed that appropriate arrangements were in place to ensure value for money.
- 12.3 Members noted the report.

13. Draft Financial Report (NFNPA 528/17)

- 13.1 Nigel Stone introduced the report and explained that it contained the final draft of the Authority's Financial Report 2016/17 which had been the subject of the external audit as described in the previous agenda item. Mr Stone also drew Members' attention to the Annual Governance Statement, which had been considered and recommended for approval by the RAPC on 5 June 17 and the Letter of Representation which could be found at Annex 2 of the report.
- 13.2 Mr Stone explained that the savings for the year were £59,000, which was marginally higher than the estimated £40 - £50,000, and that the amount to be taken from reserves had been reduced accordingly. He informed Members that the new affordable houses at Bransgore, which had been valued at £315,000, were now shown as a 'Community Asset' on the Balance Sheet. He also highlighted the significant increase in the pension liabilities shown on the Balance Sheet, stating that this was owing to a recent triennial review of the scheme which had increased the overall liability from £4 million to £6 million. However he reassured Members that there were policies and procedures in place to meet future pension needs.
- 13.3 In response to questions regarding the comparatively low valuation of the Bransgore affordable houses, Mr Stone said that the valuation was based on the expected rental income/yield, an 'existing use value', and purely done for accounting purposes without any view to actually selling them.
- 13.4 In response to a question Mr Stone explained the Authority's agreed Medium-Term Financial Plan strategy for utilising a small amount of reserves to smooth out the recent grant reductions.

Resolved, that the Financial Report, the Annual Governance Statement contained therein and the letter of Representation be approved.

Voting: unanimous

14. Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent

- 14.1 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre gave his apologies for the next Authority meeting on 12 October 2017 and informed Members that Edward Heron, the Deputy Chairman, would Chair the meeting in his absence.

PART II – ITEMS THAT 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 disclosing sensitive information relating to the Authority's financial affairs*

15. Oral Report on Land in the North of the Forest

- 15.1 Members considered an oral update on land in the North of the Forest (this is a summary of a minute that contains exempt information).

16 Land at Rockford (NFNPA 529/17)

- 16.1 Members considered a report on land at Rockford (this is a summary of a minute that contains exempt information).

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm.

Signed:
(Chairman)

Date: