

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 23 MARCH 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

David Harrison

Penny Jackman

Julian Johnson

Phil Marshall

Harry Oram

Leo Randall

John Sanger

Marian Spain

Ken Thornber

Pat Wyeth

##### *Officers*

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Julia Mutlow

Paul Walton

Nigel Matthews

Nigel Stone

Hilary Makin

David Stone

Vicki Gibbon

Frances Connolly

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Head of Environment and Rural Economy

Head of Recreation Management and Learning

Chief Finance Officer

Communications Manager

Corporate Services Manager

Member Services Administrator

Executive Assistant

#### **43. Apologies for absence.**

43.1 Apologies for absence were received from Richard Frampton, Andy Moore, Keith Mans, John Pemberton, Barry Rickman and Russell Wynn.

#### **44. Declarations of interest.**

44.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **45. Chairman's announcements.**

45.1 The Chairman expressed his sadness at the recent passing of Sally Arnold and said that Sally had been an active Member of the Authority since 2013. She was driven by a real love for the Forest and was a popular and diligent Member. On behalf of all the Members and Officers at the Authority the Chairman offered his condolences to Sally's family and asked everyone in the Council Chamber to join with him in a few moments of quiet reflection to remember Sally.

#### **46. Minutes of meeting on 19 January 2017.**

46.1 The minutes of 19 January 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

#### **47. Public Question Time**

47.1 Mr Alexander Fothergill addressed the meeting in connection with the minutes of the Authority meeting on 19 January 2017 and expressed concern that areas of his

presentation to that meeting had been omitted from the summary of his presentation in the minutes. He said that the omissions made his statements look like his opinion only and removed any responsibility of the National Park Authority from having an impact on his property. He then referred to the amendments he had requested to the minutes of the January meeting which would reinstate the omissions he had referred to.

47.2 The Chairman thanked Mr Fothergill for his presentation and advised that the minutes had now been approved as a correct record by members.

#### **48. Building Design Awards**

48.1 Steve Avery presented the Building Design Awards, stating that this was now in its third year and the aim of the Awards was to recognise the contribution good design makes to the built environment of the National Park. The winners of the Awards were as follows:

- Individual Building – Naboth’s Vineyard, Minstead. Robert Davis collected the award. In this category the Panel also wished to issue a ‘Certificate of High Commendation’ to Woodis, Setley. Robert Davis also collected this award.
- Extensions - The Cottage, Redlynch, Dr Mo Cawdury and Miss Jane Sweet collected the award.
- Larger Developments – The Boltons, Lyndhurst. Ewan Green (Archardia Architects) and Michael Mintram (Hanover Housing) collect the award.

#### **49. Chief Executive’s Report (NFNPA 518/17)**

49.1 The Chief Executive began her report by saying how privileged she had been to be asked to speak at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Forest Association, now known as Friends of the Forest. Clive Chatters had also given a presentation on the challenges facing the Forest with the main points of particular relevance to the NPA being recreation and urban growth.

Ms Barnes drew Members attention to page six of her report which mentioned our responses to proposals for urban growth in the Waterside and Christchurch which would in turn affect the Forest.

49.2 Under the ‘Protect’ programme the Chief Executive highlighted that the idea of developing a partnership looking at a ‘green halo’ approach across the Forest was well under way. Ms Barnes reminded Members of the Members’ Day on Natural Capital which took place last year, looking at what nature does for us. This ‘natural capital’ approach is being used within the green halo discussions to promote a joint understanding of what different organisations and sectors in and around the Forest can do to protect it for the future. She commented that natural capital is also likely to feature strongly within the Government’s expected 25 year plans for the Environment and Food and Farming.

49.3 Alison Barnes highlighted Awards which had recently been presented in various categories across the Forest: the NPA Building Design Awards, Our Past Our Future Volunteering Awards, National Parks UK Volunteer Awards Best Project which was won by the Pondhead Conservation Trust and the Current Archaeology

Award for the best innovation in the last 50 years, won by the NPA Archaeology for their Lidar project.

- 49.4 Under the 'Enjoy' programme Ms Barnes commented on the recent volunteering fair which took place in January, 46 organisations were represented and on hand to give advice to the 700 people who attended this was a 40% increase on 2016 attendance. A recent OPOF event had celebrated the 30,000 hours which had been completed by 500 volunteers, with over 60 of the volunteers receiving certificates for the work they had carried out.

A 'spring clean' event had taken place in March which was supported by NFDC, the Forestry Commission, McDonalds and the Authority. Around 400 people volunteered to take part in the event and 250 bags of litter were collected. Ms Barnes highlighted a new initiative which had begun in conjunction with NFDC and the Forestry commission with temporary road signs being placed where significant litter picks had taken place, demonstrating to the public the pride that was taken in the Forest and collaborative action being taken to deal with litter throughout the Forest.

- 49.5 The communications team had recently produced the 2017 visitor publications where, each year 'care for' messages are added for the guidance of the public. In this year's Essential Guide, emphasis had been placed on ground nesting birds and a strong message with regards to staying on the main tracks. The team had also produced a 'welcome home' leaflet which would be distributed to new residents to help them learn how to care for the Forest on a daily basis; it also provided links to the Authority's website for more information.

- 49.6 Under the 'Prosper' programme, the Chief Executive drew Members' attention to the recent RTPI Planning Excellence award which the Authority had been shortlisted for in recognition of its affordable housing scheme at Bransgore.

Ms Barnes commented that she had recently attended the New Forest Rural Communities Matters Conference which was organised by the Police and Crime commissioner; discussion had focused on topics such as fly tipping, animal road traffic incidents and arson.

- 49.7 Under the 'Achieving Excellence' programme Ms Barnes informed Members of the recent visit by Hampshire County Council CEO John Coughlan, this had been an excellent opportunity to discuss issues and joint working between HCC and the Authority.

- 49.8 The Chief Executive added that the Officer team at the National Park had been devastated to hear of the news of the passing away of Sally Arnold. Ms Barnes said that Sally would be greatly missed and she dedicated her report to Sally's memory.

She then asked Members to note her report.

- 49.9 A Member asked for more information on the Green Halo project. Ms Barnes replied that this was still in the early stages with work taking place to identifying partners and projects that they could contribute. More information would be included to the Members' bulletin.

Following further brief discussion, the report was then noted.

**50. Oral report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 6 March 2017**

50.1 David Harrison updated Members on the recent RAPC meeting which had taken place on 6 March, highlighting that the Auditors had found no significant risks and didn't anticipate any changes to the audit plan for the coming year. He advised that a separate internal audit had taken place for the Bransgore development and would be reported on at the next Authority meeting.

50.2 Mr Harrison advised that an extensive debate on the 'Discover England Fund' had taken place during the meeting with some Members having reservations about making an informed decision with the information available. An extraordinary RAPC meeting would take place following the Full Authority Meeting to enable Members to discuss the proposal further.

Members then noted the oral report

**51. Draft Budget 2017/18 (NFNPA 519/17)**

51.1 The Chief Finance officer presented his report on the General Fund budget for 2017/18 to Members commenting that the report had previously been agreed by the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee.

Members approved the report.

**Resolved**, that the Authority

1. approve the General Fund Budget for 2017/18
2. note that the underlying minimum level for the General Fund remains at £0.3 million
3. note the implications for the Reserves of the proposed budget for 2017/18
4. note the Risk Assessment and Section 25 Statement (Section 7)
5. approve the treasury management strategy in Annex 3
6. note the medium term financial plan up to 2019/20 in Annex 4.

*Voting: unanimous*

**52. Draft Work Programme (NFNPA 520/17)**

52.1 David Stone introduced his report on the draft work programme for 2017/18 which would be the last one supporting the Authority's Business Plan (2015-18). A new Business Plan was in the process of being completed and would be brought to Members' for approval at the Authority meeting in March 2018.

52.2 Members agreed to the recommendations in the report.

**Resolved**, that

1. the Authority approve the draft 2017/18 Work programme.

*Voting: unanimous*

**53. Planning Fees (NFNPA 521/17)**

53.1 Steve Avery reported on the recent letter the Authority had received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which detailed an offer to all local planning authorities to increase their planning fees by 20% from July 2017 on the condition that the additional funds were then re-invested in the planning service. Mr Avery asked the Authority to formally accept the Government's offer.

53.2 Following discussion, Members agreed to the recommendation in the report

**Resolved**, that the Authority

1. formally accepts the Government's offer to raise planning fees by 20% from July 2017, with the additional income being re-invested in the Authority's planning service.

*Voting: unanimous*

**54. Evaluation Review of Pre-application Advice (NFNPA 522/17)**

54.1 Steve Avery introduced his report reminding Members that at the Authority meeting in September 2016 Members had agreed to introduce a pre-application charge to begin in October 2016; Members had also requested that the scheme be reviewed after six months.

54.2 Mr Avery explained that the review had now taken place and income of £9,000 had been generated. He was pleased to report that the refusal rate for applications had not increased but that there had been a noticeable reduction in pre-application enquiries. Mr Avery asked Members to note his report.

54.3 Members noted the report.

**55. Review of Recreation Management Strategy (NFNPA 523/17)**

55.1 Nigel Matthews presented his report informing Members that the RMS Steering Group would like to progress a review of the Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030. It was envisaged that at the time of publication the Strategy as a whole would be reviewed every five years. Much had been achieved since 2010 and many aspects of the Strategy would still be relevant, however new developments would now need to be taken into account.

55.2 Mr Matthews advised that the Authority would lead on a public consultation on behalf of the other members of the RMS Steering Group. The public consultation would be in two stages the first being a 'call for views' process during the summer followed by an opportunity for comments on the proposed draft update to the Strategy.

55.3 Following discussion Members agreed that this would be an excellent opportunity for engagement and endorsed the recommendation on the paper.

**Resolved**, that the Authority

1. accepts the proposal to lead a public 'call for views' consultation to inform an update of the New Forest National Park Recreation management Strategy 2010-2030 in partnership with the other organisation on the Recreation Management Steering Group.

Voting: unanimous

**56. Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent**

**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*

**57. Oral Report on Land in the North of the Forest**

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

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm.

Signed: .....  
(Chairman)

Date: .....