

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2016 AT 9.30 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

#### **Present:**

##### *Members*

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (Chairman)

Edward Heron (Deputy Chairman)

Sally Arnold

Gordon Bailey

George Bisson

Richard Frampton

David Harrison

Penny Jackman

Julian Johnson

Keith Mans

Phil Marshall

Harry Oram

Andy Moore

Leo Randall

Barry Rickman

John Sanger

Marian Spain

Judith Webb

Pat Wyeth

Also present :

Russell Wynn

(Secretary of State member  
with effect from May 2016)

##### *Officers*

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Julia Mutlow

Nigel Matthews

David Illsley

Hilary Makin

Nigel Stone

Rosalind Alderman

Vicki Gibbon

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Head of Recreation Management and Learning

Policy Manager

Communications Manager

Finance and Performance Manager

Member Services Officer

Member Services Administrator

## **PART I**

### **42. Apologies for absence.**

42.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Pemberton and Ken Thornber.

### **43. Declarations of interest.**

43.1 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre and Phil Marshall each declared an interest in minute item 46 as a member of the New Forest Association (NFA).

43.2 Richard Frampton declared a pecuniary interest in minute item 51 and accordingly left the Council Chamber during the debate and vote on this item.

43.3 David Harrison declared an interest in minute item 47 as a trustee of PEDALL.

#### **44. Chairman's announcements.**

- 44.1 The Chairman advised Members that Chris Lagdon had now tendered his resignation as a Hampshire County Council Member of the Authority; Andy Moore would replace Chris Lagdon. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Mr Lagdon and welcomed Andy Moore to the Authority.
- 44.2 Russell Wynn was welcomed to the Authority as a new Secretary of State Member. His term of office would officially start in May 2016.

#### **45. Minutes of meeting on 21 January 2016.**

- 45.1 The minutes of 21 January 2016 were agreed as a true record.

#### **46. Public Question Time**

- 46.1 Brian Tarnoff reminded Members that at the January Authority meeting he had requested a broader inclusion in the stakeholders' meetings to develop a strategy for 2016 on fungi foraging. He felt that the baton for these meetings had now been passed on to Natural England, which would be waiting for the formation of a national policy on the matter before moving forward.
- 46.2 Mr Tarnoff said that it was vitally important that a common message was agreed by the major Forest organisations in time for the New Forest Show at the end of July, in order to have a consistent approach during this autumn's vulnerable season for fungi. Should Natural England formulate their national policy soon, he believed that this would be taken forward in a timely fashion, however if this was to be delayed he felt that a local code should be developed with the proviso that it could be changed to be in line with any stricter measures in the eventual national policy.
- 46.3 Mr Tarnoff asked the Authority to commit to a timeframe that would develop a consistent message and materials to be put in place before this year's New Forest Show which should include participation by relevant stakeholder groups, whether organised by Natural England, the Forestry Commission, the Authority or the New Forest Association.
- 46.4 The Chairman thanked Mr Tarnoff for his statement. He drew attention to a statement the Forestry Commission had recently produced in 'The New Forest Essential Guide' which advised that they would be reviewing the guidelines on fungi picking for personal consumption. The statement also contained an appeal to the public to look but not pick fungi.

#### **47. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 495/16)**

- 47.1 Alison Barnes presented her report, drawing attention to key highlights over the final period of the year since the meeting in January 2016.
- 47.2 Under the 'Protect' programme, Alison advised that the Our Past, Our Future (OPOF) project was now well underway; a recent hedge laying training session had been attended by 17 volunteers and 45 metres of hedge had been laid. The traditional building skills course was now fully booked, which demonstrated the enthusiasm for these courses throughout the New Forest. Also as part of the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) scheme the National Trust had a target of planting 20,000 trees on their Foxbury estate, 5,000 of which had already been planted thanks to volunteers. During a recent volunteer fair, 50 new contacts were made and since the start of OPOF 200 volunteer days had been recorded in the last 3 months. The Chief Executive thanked Rachael Gallagher and her team for all their hard work.

The affordable housing project to build two homes which the Authority would let to local people at Bransgore had now started. The income generated would be put back into National Park projects.

The Chief Executive highlighted the recent verge protection project which sought to protect grazed verges on the open forest that were being damaged by vehicle overrun, parking and storage of materials, which had been funded by the HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) scheme. Sarah Kelly (Landscape Officer) had recently attended Parish quadrant meetings to draw attention to the project. The Local Plan was now well under way with the draft plan being ready for public consultation in October 2016 and for adoption in Spring 2018.

Ms Barnes commented that an 8 point plan for England's National Parks had been developed in conjunction with Government organisations which showed the importance the government placed on National Parks. Defra would be producing a 25 year plan for the environment which would highlight the importance of resources and seek to connect people with nature.

- 47.3 Under the 'Enjoy' programme, Ms Barnes commented on the recent 'Clean for the Queen' which had been organised locally by NFDC, the Forestry Commission and the NPA rangers. Hundreds of people had joined community litter picks during the first weekend in March and 700 bags of litter had been collected.

The New Forest WW1 exhibition had been launched at the New Forest Centre and information panels would be taken around the New Forest when the exhibition ended on 1 May.

Ms Barnes drew attention to the recent children's book which had been produced as part of the sustainable transport fund; the book focused on the squirrel character 'Furzley' and would be used in assemblies and classroom sessions around the New Forest. The education team had exceeded all records and reached over 10,000 children this year.

As part of the OPOF scheme the first New Forest Arts Festival would take place between 11 to 26 June and had been put together with 50 other organisations. There would be a variety of events in various unique venues.

- 47.4 Under the 'Prosper' programme, Ms Barnes commented that the Authority had recently been working with M3 LEP to create a wood fuel network across Hampshire. Dates for the New Forest Tour and beach bus season had now been announced: the New Forest Tour would run between 25 June – 11 September and the Beach Bus between 23 July – 29 August.

- 47.5 Under the 'Excellence' programme, Ms Barnes drew Members' attention to the recent completion of the new work plans for the Authority which mirrored the actions contained in the Partnership Plan.

The National Parks Partnership had moved forward and the document establishing the Partnership would be signed shortly. Naomi Conway would be the lead officer in respect of the partnership.

- 47.6 In response to a request by Members, Harry Oram agreed to give a presentation on wood fuel to the Members as he had expertise in this area.

#### **48. 2016/17 Work Programme (NFNPA 496/16)**

- 48.1 Alison Barnes introduced the report, advising that the 2016/17 work programme set out how the Authority would deliver its part of the Partnership Plan for the New Forest. She asked Members to endorse the Plan as set out in the report.

**Resolved**, that the Authority approve the draft 2016/17 work programme.

*Voting: unanimous*

**49. Budget (NFNPA 492/16)**

- 49.1 Nigel Stone presented his report which set out the proposal for the revenue budget for the financial year 2016/17 for consideration by the Authority; the report also provided a medium term projection for the Authority's financial position up to March 2020.
- 49.2 Nigel Stone mentioned that in November 2015 the Chancellor had announced that National Parks' budgets would be protected, and in January 2016 a letter had been received from Rory Stewart, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, detailing the exact details of the four year grant for the Authority. The grant settlement letter included an endorsement of the 'huge value' attached to National Parks.
- 49.3 In response to a Member's query, Nigel Stone explained that the increase in staff costs was due to scale point rises, a 1% pay award and also the increase in National Insurance contributions. Mr Stone also advised that the developer contributions that the Authority received would be used for schemes such as the Bransgore development.

**Resolved**, that:

1. the General Fund Budget for 2016/17 be **approved**;
2. the underlying minimum level for the General Fund which remains at £0.3 million be **noted**;
3. the implications on the Reserves of the proposed budget for 2016/17 be **noted**;
4. the Risk Assessment and Section 25 Statement (Section 7) be **noted**;
5. the Treasury Management Strategy in Annex 3 to NFNPA 492/16 be **approved**; and
6. the Medium Term Financial Plan up to 2019/20 in Annex 4 to NFNPA 492/16 be **noted**.

*Voting: unanimous*

**50. Oral Report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee Meeting on 7 March 2016**

- 50.1 David Harrison, Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee gave an oral update on key issues discussed at the last Committee meeting on 7 March advising that lengthy discussion had taken place at the meeting on the 2016-17 draft work programme, which had been approved by the Committee.
- 50.2 The draft budget, which had also been approved by the Committee, showed a shortfall of £140,000 for 2017/18, but it was hoped that this could be found through income generation proposals. Mr Harrison also advised Members that a bid was being drafted alongside the South Downs National Park Authority for LSTF (Local Sustainable Transport) funding. This had been considered and supported by the Committee at the meeting.

**51. Affordable Housing Tenancy Agreement (NFNPA 498/16)**

- 51.1 Steve Avery introduced his report and asked Members to formally approve the tenancy report for the letting of two affordable homes that were currently being built in Bransgore. He advised that all works were currently on track and that the houses should be completed by August and marketed in May.

**Resolved**, that the Tenancy Policy for the two affordable homes in Bransgore as set out in Annex 1 of report NFNPA 498/16 be **approved**.

*Voting: unanimous*

**52. Updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) (NFNPA 499/16)**

52.1 David Illsley advised Members that all planning authorities were required to prepare a Local Development Scheme detailing the timetable for the preparation of their Local Plan. The importance of having an up to date LDS was highlighted in the current Government consultation on planning changes (February 2016), which also included a commitment to publish league tables on local authorities' progress on their Local Plans.

52.2 David Illsley summarised that the publication of the draft Local Plan for consultation would take place in October 2016, with submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination in December 2017 and adoption taking place in summer 2018. Members were then asked to endorse the recommendation on the paper.

**Resolved**, that the revised Local Development Scheme attached as Annex 1 to NFNPA 499/16 be endorsed with immediate effect

*Voting: unanimous*

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

53.1 The Chairman referred Members to the statement regarding fungi that Mr Tarnoff had given at the beginning of the meeting, and asked whether Members wished to discuss matters further. Members agreed to postpone the discussion for the time being but assured Mr Tarnoff and the NFA that this matter would be further considered and it was hoped that a draft strategy, statement and policies would be in place with Natural England and the Forestry Commission by the start of the New Forest Show.

53.2 Judith Webb advised Members that she would be standing down as a Member of the Authority. Members thanked her for all the hard work she had put in and wished her well for the future.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am.

Signed: .....  
(Chairman)

Date: .....