

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017 AT 10.00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

Present:

Members

Edward Heron (Deputy Chairman, in the Chair)

George Bisson

Harry Oram

Gordon Bailey

Gavin Parker

Richard Clewer

Neville Penman

Richard Frampton

Leo Randall

David Harrison

Barry Rickman

Patrick Heneghan

John Sanger

Penny Jackman

Richard Taylor

Mel Kendall

Keith Mans

Officers

Alison Barnes

Chief Executive Officer

Steve Avery

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Nigel Stone

Chief Finance Officer

Julia Mutlow

Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Nigel Matthews

Head of Recreation Management and Learning

David Illsley

Policy Manager

David Stone

Corporate Services Manager

Vicki Gibbon

Member Services Administrator

17. Apologies for absence.

17.1 Apologies for absence were received from Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Phil Marshall, Marian Spain and Pat Wyeth.

18. Declarations of Interest.

18.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

19. Chairman's announcements.

19.1 The Chairman welcomed the new Secretary of State Members to the Authority, Richard Taylor, Gavin Parker and Patrick Heneghan.

20. Minutes

20.1 The minutes of 13 July 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

21. Public Question Time

21.1 Brian Tarnoff Chairman of the Habitat and Landscape Committee of the Friends of the New Forest (New Forest Association), addressed members on the following issues:

21.2 *England Coast Path (update)*

Mr Tarnoff referred to the concerns raised by the NFA at the July Authority meeting regarding the development of the England Coast Path. As the path was partially addressed in the current Recreation Management Strategy review, he hoped that this would provide an opportunity for many Forest bodies to come together to share information about the Coast Path consultation.

He said that the NFA was concerned about the lack of habitat exclusions by the Natural England Coastal Path (South Hub) Team's already published assessments of stretches along the coast which he felt had not carried out a broad Habitats Regulation Assessment in considering the implications of the route and coastal margin for the coast. He added that the NFA hoped to offer the expertise of its ecologists to the Authority to discuss these concerns during the consultation.

21.3 *Undergrounding of Powerlines*

Referring to the National Grid's Visual Impact Provision project at Hale he said that this was a project which the NFA would have nominally supported. However, from discussions with ecologists who were following this project closely, the NFA had concerns that the route, methods and long term maintenance would prove an unsuitable or damaging impact upon the habitat. Whilst acknowledging that this statement was slightly premature at this stage, he said that it was worth noting now so that if the ecological concerns proved correct, the NFA could support the Authority in taking the hard decision to call for an appropriate redesign that avoided the protected habitat or to call for a halt to the project.

21.4 *NPS Conference*

He said that the NFA was hosting the National Parks Societies Conference at the Balmer Lawn Hotel in Brockenhurst as part of the commemoration of the NFA's Sesquicentennial year. The programme included a range of discussion topics and he offered to share these presentations at any future members' day or training session should the Authority find this helpful.

22. Chief Executives Report (NFNPA 530/17)

22.1 The Chief Executive welcomed the new Members to the Authority and clarified that her report would cover the period from the last quarter and would reflect the Authority's purposes and duties.

22.2 Under the Protect programme Ms Barnes highlighted the recent conservation work which had involved cleaning and repointing of the Beaulieu Ice house. The Our Past, Our Future project had enabled this important work to be carried out along with the help of local volunteers.

A number of courses had taken place over the summer, these included land management, cross compliance and building courses which had been run or managed by the Land Advice Service. The LAS had also supported several local commoners over the summer, helping them to complete their Basic Payment Scheme applications along with giving them advice on legislation, regulations and best practice land management.

Ms Barnes informed Members of the heathland restoration programme which had taken place at the National Trust's Foxbury site. This was an OPOF HLF funded project which had helped to increase the nightjar population on the site, the site would also help to offset recreation in the forest.

Work had recently been carried out in conjunction with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and over 70 volunteers to survey the rare smooth snake in the forest, ARC had received the first stage of a HLS fund to implement a national project which would help to extend the New Forest Project in 2019.

Ms Barnes reminded Members of the sessions which had recently taken place regarding the Fawley Waterside proposal, pre-application discussions were continuing as they progress their plans to redevelop the former power station site. The Authority would work closely with NFDC to ensure any development would be compatible with the special qualities of the National Park.

22.3 Under the Prosper programme the Chief Executive brought Members attention to 'Green Brexit', where the NPA was involved with partner organisations to draft a paper which was presented to the National Parks Minister Lord Gardiner at the New Forest Show calling for government support for commoners, verderers, farmers and land owners. The Minister also marked National Parks week with a cake to celebrate the Charter of the Forest and to promote the Future Forest consultation.

22.4 Under the Enjoy programme Ms Barnes highlighted a very successful New Forest Show which had focused on the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, various activities took place on the stand including the Charter of the Forest animation and tree timeline. The materials used at the Show would now be re-used in an exhibition at the New Forest Centre.

The National Citizenship Service had also proved an excellent success with 28 New Forest sessions run over six weeks for 589 young people aged 16-17 years, 88% of these said they had enjoyed their time in the National Park.

The Chief Executive advised that National Parks England and Public Health England were looking at a joint accord on how to build on the many health and psychological benefits of getting out and active in National Parks. This joint Accord was launched by Steve Brine MP, Minister for Public Health in the South Downs National Park in September.

The Autumn programme of events was beginning with the education team attending school assemblies with 'Grandma's Groceries' to teach them about local food and produce and where food comes from. The Walking Festival would soon begin with 80 walks guided by local experts to encourage people to understand and care for the Forest.

Ms Barnes reminded Members that with the dark night's drawing in it was a time when animal accidents began to increase, she advised that the NPA had signed up to the Shared Forest Business Group initiative where employees are reminded of the dangers of driving too fast along forest roads.

22.5 Under the Prosper programme the Chief Executive commented that New Forest Tour ticket sale revenue had increased with the help of the concierge. The concierge had supported visitors and staff at the new Forest Centre as well as Brockenhurst railway station.

- 22.6 Under the Excellence programme Members were advised of the upcoming Green Halo launch event which would take place on 22 November at Ordnance Survey Headquarters. The Green Halo partnership would be covering four themes; supporting the economy, improving health and wellbeing, encouraging sustainable living and enhancing the natural environment.

Ms Barnes dedicated her report to Nick Evans who sadly passed away recently and asked Members and Officers to remember him with a minute's silence.

Following a short interlude, Members commented on several aspects of the report which was then noted.

23. Finalisation of Committee Appointments and Representation on External Bodies (NFNPA 531/17)

- 23.1 The Chairman reminded Members that during the Annual Authority meeting in July it was resolved that two Secretary of State vacancies on the Planning Development Control Committee and one Secretary of State vacancy on the Resource Audit and Performance Committee would be carried forward to the October meeting.
- 23.2 A number of vacancies on external bodies were also carried forward to the October meeting in order for the new Secretary of State appointees to express an interest in these.
- 23.2 Authority Members were asked to approve the recommendation as set out below, which they duly approved.

Resolved, that

1. Richard Taylor and Gavin Parker be appointed as Secretary of State Members to the Planning Development Control Committee for the period up until the Annual Authority meeting in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership.
2. Patrick Heneghan be appointed as Secretary of State Member to the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee for the period up until the Annual Authority meeting in 2018 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership.
3. the appointments for the new Secretary of State Members onto the relevant external bodies be approved as detailed below:
 - Richard Taylor be appointed to the Building Design Awards panel
 - Patrick Heneghan be appointed to the Campaign for National Parks
 - Richard Taylor be appointed to the Cycle Working Group with Patrick Heneghan as reserve
 - Richard Taylor be appointed to the Lymington to Brockenhurst Community rail Partnership
 - Richard Taylor be appointed as reserve to the New Forest Access Forum
 - Patrick Heneghan be appointed to the Solent Forum

24. Oral Report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 11 September 2017

- 24.1 David Harrison, Chairman of the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee updated Members on the recent meeting which had taken place, highlighting the first quarter progress report on which a number of points had been discussed during the meeting; however many of the RAG statuses on the actions were green

reflecting steady progress. He also commented that the New Forest Tour had not performed as well this year compared to last year which was due to the poor weather over the summer months.

Members noted the report

25. Update on the Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030 (NFNPA 532/17)

- 25.1 Nigel Matthews updated Authority Members on the recent 'call for views' consultation which had taken place. Over 7000 comments (from over 1,500 respondents) had been received all of which had now been read. Officers would now analyse the comments to look at why topics were chosen and what this means. A public summary would be drafted later in the year.

Members noted the report.

26. New Forest Centre Annual Report (NFNPA 533/17)

- 26.1 Nigel Matthews gave a brief overview of the New Forest Centre Annual Report which had previously been discussed with Members at the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee. Mr Matthews highlighted that the Authority currently provided a grant of £40,000/year to the Ninth Centenary Trust to support the work of the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst. The Agreement between the Authority and the Trust ends next year and a paper will be prepared for the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee in November and the Authority in January. This will include information on the closure of the Visitor Information Centre, travel ambassadors and a review of the grant.

Members noted the report.

27 Local Plan Update and Revised Local Development Scheme (NFNPA 534/17)

- 27.1 David Illsley updated Members on the progress of the Local Plan Review. Responses were received from around 400 individuals and organisations on the consultation draft Local Plan published in late 2016 and a summary of these responses has been available online since early 2017. In addition to the consideration of responses raised during this consultation, a number of important evidence based studies have also been completed over recent months to inform the Local Plan Review.
- 27.2 Mr Illsley commented that as with any Local Plan review, issues had continued to evolve throughout the process and that the timetable for submission had changed slightly which was documented in the report. Consultation on the Submission draft Local Plan was now proposed to commence in January 2018, with submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination in Spring 2018. Members were asked to approve the recommendations as set out in the report, including the formal adoption of the revised Local Development Scheme (October 2017).

Resolved, that

1. the progress made on the Local Plan review and emerging policy directions be noted, and
2. the revised Local Development Scheme (Annex 1) be endorsed and brought into immediate effect (from 12 October 2017)

28 Verge Protection in the New Forest National Park (NFNPA 535/17)

- 28.1 David Illsley drew Members' attention to the recent verge protection work being carried out to address the issue of verge damage in the New Forest. Initially this work was being carried out in the Western Escarpment Conservation Area however the report also highlighted the other measures and approaches underway across the rest of the National Park. This work involved a range of statutory bodies.
- 29.1 Following discussion Members agreed to approve the recommendation as set out in the report with the inclusion of encouraging officers to move forward with a National Park wide verge protection initiative.

Resolved, that the progress to date on verge protection measures in the National Park be noted and that the on-going partnership work with statutory bodies and local communities to address the issues be supported and officers encouraged to move forward with a park wide verge protection initiative.

29. Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent

- 29.1 There was no further items.

PART II – ITEMS THAT MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPTED INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

There were no Part 2 items to be considered.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

Signed:
(Chairman)

Date: