

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2019 AT 10.00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

#### **Present:**

##### *Members*

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (Chairman)

Edward Heron (Deputy Chairman)

Gordon Bailey

David Bence

George Bisson

Richard Clewer

Richard Frampton

David Harrison

Patrick Heneghan

Mel Kendal

Keith Mans

Harry Oram

Gavin Parker

Neville Penman

Leo Randall

John Sanger

Ann Sevier

Richard Taylor

Pat Wyeth

##### *Officers*

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Rosalind Alderman

Nigel Stone

Nigel Matthews

Paul Walton

Hilary Makin

David Stone

Vicki Gibbon

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Chief Finance Officer

Head of Recreation Management and Learning

Head of Environment and Rural Economy

Communications Manager

Corporate Services Manager

Member Services Administrator

**Also in attendance:** Richard Burke, District Recreation and Public Affairs  
Manager, Forestry Commission

#### **40. Apologies for absence.**

40.1 An apology for absence was received from Barry Rickman.

#### **41. Declarations of Interest.**

41.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### **42. Chairman's announcements.**

42.1 The Chairman congratulated the winners of this year's Building Design awards which was now in its fourth consecutive year, the winners were:

Non-Residential Scheme Winner was Lepe Country Park and the award was presented to Martin Hallam and Andrew Parker from Hampshire County Council.

Non-Residential Highly Commended Winner was Brokenhurst College and the award was collected by David Steele from HNW architects.

Conservation Scheme winner was Exbury Farmhouse and the award was collected by Mike Ford from Footprint architects on behalf of the owners.

Conservation Scheme certificate of merit was awarded to the Chapel at Woodgreen and was collected by Mrs Jennifer Hart the owner of the property, Mr Colin Burt FRICS, Chartered Surveyer and Mr Paul Lockyer from PWH Building Ltd.

- 42.2 Mr Avery advised members that nominations for this year's Building Design awards was now open and a new category had been added to coincide with the 'Year of Green Action' which would be Best Green Building Award.

### **43. Minutes**

- 43.1 The minutes of 17 January 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **44. Public Question Time**

- 44.1 Doug Gemmell (Protect Hale Purlieu Movement) presented a statement setting out the Movement's concerns with regard to the undergrounding of 400Kv cables in Hale Purlieu. A copy of the full presentation is available from Member Services.

### **45. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 566/19)**

- 45.1 The Chief Executive reminded members that her report covered the period from the last Authority meeting in January and centred around the Authority's four themes of Protect, Enjoy, Prosper and Achieving Excellence.
- 45.2 Under the Protect programme the Chief Executive drew members' attention to the recent consultation on the Ashurst Hospital site which was part of the Local Plan; the Authority was expected to receive the Inspectors' comments for consideration shortly and the Local Plan would be presented for Members approval later in the year. The Authority had inputted on the emerging Hythe and Dibden Neighbourhood Plan and would also be commenting on our neighbouring authorities' local plans including New Forest District Council. Ms Barnes remarked on the OPOF scheme and the practical conservation work which had recently taken place along with the progress on the Living Waters project; she was pleased to announce that further funding had been secured to continue and develop work at Hatchet Pond which was one of the most important freshwater bodies in the UK.
- 45.3 Under the Enjoy programme, Ms Barnes reported on the completion of the new wild play site in Sway and the vast number of pupils the education team had engaged with during litter assemblies, this amounted to over 7,500 children in 34 schools. Ms Barnes updated Authority members on the successful campaigns which were being run in conjunction with our partner organisations including the #add3minutes campaign, the great British spring clean and responsible dog walking. Finally, under the Enjoy programme Ms Barnes reported on the recent volunteer fair which had been the most successful yet with over 750 attendees and many new organisations.
- 45.4 Under the Prosper programme Ms Barnes drew members' attention to the recent visit by senior officials from Defra to the Forest and the recent meetings which had taken place with key government bodies and the Forest Farming group to discuss schemes following Brexit.
- 45.5 Under the Achieving Excellence programme Ms Barnes commented on the recent meeting she had attended with the Chief Executive of the Solent LEP where she had made the case for Natural Capital to form part of the Local Industrial Strategy and

reminded members that the Authority would continue to work with National Parks England to feed into the Glover Review.

Members then noted the Chief Executive's Report.

#### **46. Oral Report from Resource, Audit and Performance Committee**

- 46.1 David Harrison, Chairman of the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee gave an update on the issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 4 March. He advised that Bruce Rothnie had attended the meeting to brief members on the background to the Accord between National Parks England and the Forestry Commission and actions agreed on joint collaborative work. The Committee had requested an update at its next meeting on progress against these actions.
- 46.2 Members discussed the possibility of making application to the Local Enterprise Partnerships for funding for joint Authority and Forestry Commission projects and asked officers to submit a report on the possibility of sourcing income through these income streams to the next meeting of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee.

**Action:** Officers to submit a report to the next meeting of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on the possibility of sourcing funds for joint NPA and FC projects through LEP income streams.

- 46.3 David Harrison advised members that the draft Work Programme 2019-20, the draft 2019-20 budget, and the National Parks Charity Foundation report had all been supported at the Resources, Audit and Performance committee and were on the agenda of the current Authority meeting.

#### **47 Draft Budget 2019/20 (Paper NFNPA 567/19)**

- 47.1 Nigel Stone introduced his report advising members that the report had been supported at the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 4 March. He explained that the Authority's current financial position was good and that there was a significant amount of reserves.
- 47.2 He reminded members that this was the last year of the current funding settlement from Defra and following the government's spending review in the summer, the Authority would receive its 3-year settlement in the autumn.
- 47.3 Mr Stone asked members to endorse the recommendation as set out in the report.

**Resolved**, that:

- (1) the General Fund Budget for 2019/20 be approved;
- (2) it be noted that the underlying minimum level for the General Fund Reserve remains at £0.3 million;
- (3) the implications on the Reserves of the proposed budget for 2019/20 be noted
- (4) the Risk Assessment and Section 25 Statement (Section 7) be noted
- (5) the Treasury Management Strategy in Annex 3 be approved
- (6) the Medium-Term Financial Plan up to 2021/22 in Annex 4 be noted

*Voting: unanimous*

**48. New Annual Work Programme (NFNPA 568/19)**

- 48.1 Alison Barnes introduced her report advising that the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee had met informally on 8 March and agreed a draft 2019/20 Work Programme which was sharp, outcome focused and unambiguous, measuring quarterly and overall (year to date) progress against a traffic light (red, amber, green) risk status. She added that narratives reporting progress on the actions would also be covered in the quarterly Chief Executives' report to Authority meetings.
- 48.2 Ms Barnes advised that the Committee had also agreed that a new table be added to the Work Programme setting out key areas of the Authority's work for the year grouped under the strategic themes in the Business Plan. She added that the Work Programme needed to be read in tandem with the new budget in terms of matching available resources to the actions in the Work Programme.
- 48.3 The Chairman thanked the Committee members for their input into the draft programme and in particular to David Bence for his input into the new format. In agreeing the programme, members noted that it was flexible with opportunities to change or add actions depending on developments and circumstances.

**Resolved**, that draft Work Programme 2019/20 attached to the submitted report as Annexes 1 and 2 be approved.

*Voting: unanimous*

**49. Professional Dog Walkers Charter (NFNPA 569/19)**

- 49.1 Nigel Matthews said that in recent months a Professional Dog Walkers Charter had been developed building on the positive dialogue which already existed with many dog walkers. Compliance with the Charter would be voluntary and it had been well received by commercial dog walkers who wanted to demonstrate high professional standards in an area which currently was largely unregulated.
- 49.2 He said that the proposed Charter needed to apply across the whole of the National Park and yet be flexible enough for any local restrictions there might be. On being asked for their views on the Charter, the Verderers had queried whether commercial dog walking on the Crown lands should be required to obtain the permission of the Forestry Commission.
- 49.3 Richard Burke (District Recreation and Public Affairs Manager, Forestry Commission) advised that the current Forestry Commission byelaws did not provide a legal basis to require people carrying out a commercial dog walking activity on the Crown lands to apply for a licence as this was a permitted lawful activity. Accordingly, the Charter being developed in partnership with the NPA was supported by the Forestry Commission.
- 49.4 During the ensuing discussion some members expressed the view that the byelaws should be reviewed to ensure that commercial dog walking activities were regulated. Other views expressed were that the Charter represented a benchmark of good practice for responsible dog walking and a platform for discussion and engagement with dog walkers - should the Charter prove insufficient, further investigation could be undertaken into reviewing the byelaws.

- 49.5 A proposal to defer this item to the next meeting was not carried and members supported the recommendations in the report.

**Resolved**, that

1. the NPA be listed as being supportive of the Professional Dog Walkers' Charter.
2. Officers report back on responses to the introduction and roll-out of the Charter through the quarterly Work Programme reports to the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee.

*Voting: 8-5 (1 abstention)*

**50. New Forest Partnership Plan Update (NFNPA 570/19)**

- 50.1 Steve Avery introduced his report advising that the Partnership Plan was the single most important document for National Parks and sets out the overall vision and approach in delivering the two national park purposes. The document was required to be updated every 5 years and the current Plan was due to be updated in 2020.
- 50.2 He reminded members that this was not only the Authority's plan but the collective work of the Authority and its partners. Mr Avery advised that his report sets out the background to the Authority's Partnership Plan, an overview of the progress made under the current Plan and preparations to carry out a review of the Plan in 2020.

**Resolved**, that the review process for updating the Partnership Plan 2020-2025 be agreed.

*Voting: unanimous*

**51. UK National Parks – Charity Foundation (NFNPA 571/19)**

- 51.1 The Chief Executive presented her report which provided an update on the progress made by National Parks Partnerships in establishing the UK National Parks Charity foundation. She reminded members that the recommendation had previously been considered by the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee who had recommended its approval to the Authority.

**Resolved**, that:

1. the New Forest National Park Authority submit a formal application for the membership of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation;
2. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take all steps as necessary to implement this decision, including entering into any agreements and signing any documentation; and
3. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take any subsequent decisions on behalf of the Authority as a member of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation, including the nomination or seconding of Trustees and reporting regularly to the Authority on this matter.

*Voting: unanimous*

**52. Review of Charges for Pre-Application Advice (NFNPA 572/19)**

52.1 Steve Avery advised that the proposed increase in fees had been considered and supported by the Planning Committee on 19 March 2019.

**Resolved**, that the proposed increase in fees for written pre-application advice be approved to take effect on 1 April 2019, as recommended by the Planning Committee.

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

53.1 The Chairman advised that in accordance with a request by the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee, arrangements had been made for members to meet informally with the Authority's apprentice rangers in the breakout area immediately following the meeting. He then made a presentation to Marty Meaker one of the apprentice rangers from the previous year who has been awarded 'Intermediate Environmental Conservation Apprentice 2018' and 'Best Apprentice of the Year' at Kingston Maurward College and congratulated him on his achievement.

53.2 Craig Daters and Gillie Molland from the ranger team then provided a brief update on the apprenticeship scheme and the work under taken by apprentice rangers.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

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