

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2019 AT 10.30 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

#### **Present:**

##### *Members*

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (Chairman)

Gordon Bailey

David Bence

George Bisson

Richard Frampton

Patrick Heneghan

Mel Kendal

Keith Mans

Harry Oram

Gavin Parker

Leo Randall

Barry Rickman

John Sanger

Ann Sevier

Richard Taylor

Pat Wyeth

##### *Officers*

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Rosalind Alderman

Nigel Stone

Nigel Matthews

David Illsley

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

Policy Manager

Corporate Services Manager

Member Services Administrator

#### **29. Apologies for absence.**

29.1 Apologies for absence were received from Richard Clewer, Edward Heron and Neville Penman.

#### **30. Declarations of Interest.**

30.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### **31. Chairman's announcements.**

31.1 The Chairman made a presentation to Debbie Newman who received this on behalf of Phil Marshall who sadly passed away in September 2018. He reflected on Phil's dedication to the Forest and the Authority where he had served as a Secretary of State member for over six years.

31.2 The Chairman also made a presentation to Marian Spain who had recently left the Authority as Secretary of State member to take up a new role as Interim Chief Executive at Natural England. He thanked Marian for all her hard work and input over the last seven years.

#### **32. Minutes**

32.1 The minutes of 11 October were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**33. Public Question Time**

- 33.1 Richard Carter (Protect Hale Purlieu Movement) presented a statement expressing concerns regarding the undergrounding of 400Kv cables in Hale Purlieu. A copy of the full presentation is available from Member Services.

**34. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 563/19)**

- 34.1 The Chief Executive wished members a happy new year and presented her report. She reminded members that the report covered the period from the last Authority meeting in October and centred around the Authority's four themes of Protect, Enjoy, Prosper and Achieving Excellence.
- 34.2 Under the Protect programme the Chief Executive drew members attention to the Local Plan examination hearing sessions which took place in November, the late notice withdrawal of the Lyndhurst Park Hotel inquiry by Pegasus Life (which the Authority were intending to recover costs from), the Commoning Voices exhibition which had been touring the Forest and was now available to view in the foyer of the NPA offices and the #add3minutes animal campaign. Ms Barnes also highlighted the work which had been carried out by the archaeology team, the tree team with promoting measures for bio security and the recent applications of partners to the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) for improved footpath infrastructure in Fawley and work at RSPB Franchises Lodge.
- 34.3 Under the Enjoy programme, Ms Barnes informed members of the recent Family Trees event which took place during the opening weekend of National Tree week in November, the success of the Walking Festival in October and the new walking app which had recently been launched and seen 4,500 downloads in the first two months. Ms Barnes went on to update members on the 450 students the education team had engaged with, the excellent attendance at the first workshop of the Commercial Dog Walkers Forum and Pedall's new base which was now open and operational in Burley.
- 34.4 Under the Prosper programme the Chief Executive highlighted the New Forest Tour which had an 11% increase in revenue and a 15% increase in patronage in 2018 compared with 2017, with all routes now being confirmed for 2019. Ms Barnes commended Authority staff who had joined with local organisations to carry out a litter pick at Hurst beach on New Year's Eve. The Authority, along with partner organisations, would shortly be conducting the annual Spring Clean litter pick.
- 34.5 Under the Achieving Excellence programme Ms Barnes commented on the excellent attendance at the Green Halo anniversary event which was held in November at Ordnance Survey, the new Green Halo website which had recently been launched and the visit by Julian Glover and Sarah Mukherjee of the Landscape Review team which the Authority hosted in October. Ms Barnes also advised members of the focus areas for 2019 which included the comprehensive spending review, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UK national parks, the nationwide 2019 Year of Green Action and progressing the work on recreation management.

**35. Oral Report from Resource, Audit and Performance Committee**

- 35.1 The Chairman of the Resource, Audit and Performance committee was unable to attend the Authority meeting on this occasion and therefore members noted the minutes that had been circulated.

**36 Appointment to Vacancy on the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee and to External Bodies (Paper NFNPA 564/19)**

- 36.1 The Chairman advised that due to the resignation of Marian Spain new appointments needed to be made to fill the vacancies which had now arisen on the Resource, Audit and Performance committee, the OPOF Partnership Scheme Board and for the Chairman of the Sustainable Communities Fund Panel.
- 36.2 Following discussion, Members agreed appointments to these vacancies.

**Resolved**, that

1. David Bence be appointed as Secretary of State member to the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee for the period up until the Annual Authority meeting in 2019 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend the membership; and that
2. Patrick Heneghan be appointed as member to the Our Past, Our Future Partnership Board as the Authority's representative and that John Sanger be appointed to the Chairman of the Sustainable Communities Fund Panel for the period up until the Annual Authority meeting in 2019 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend the membership.

*Voting: unanimous*

**37. New Forest National Park Local Plan Review (NFNPA 565/19)**

- 37.1 David Illsley presented his report and reminded members that the draft Local Plan had been endorsed at the Authority meeting in December 2017 for consultation and submission to the Secretary of State. The draft Local Plan, supporting documents and representations received during the final consultation stage in early 2018 had subsequently been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in May 2018.
- 37.2 The examination is being conducted by two Government appointed Planning Inspectors. The Examination hearing sessions were held in November 2018 and the correspondence received from the Inspectors following the hearing sessions was set out in Annex 1 of the report. The Authority's response to the Inspectors' letter dated 29 November 2018 was contained in Annex 2 and focused specifically on the potential redevelopment of the Ashurst Hospital site. Mr Illsley advised members that, since the Committee report had been prepared, the Inspectors had written to the Authority requesting that it carry out a further 6-week consultation on this sole aspect of the draft Plan. The Inspectors would then hold a one-day hearing in March 2019 to consider the representations received.
- 37.3 The Inspector's final report was anticipated to be issued in the late spring or early summer of 2019, after which a recommendation on the final adoption of the Plan would be made to the Authority.
- 37.4 Following brief discussion, members supported the recommendation contained in the report.

**Resolved**, that Members note:

- (i) the stage reached in the Local Plan Review process;
- (ii) the recent exchange of correspondence with the Government-appointed Planning Inspectors (Annexes 1 and 2 of the report); and
- (iii) the potential remaining steps in the Local Plan process.

*Voting: unanimous*

**38. Recreation Management Oral Update**

- 38.1 Nigel Matthews updated members on the results of a new study into visitor numbers to the National Park which had been commissioned by the Authority on behalf of the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group. RJS Associates Ltd had been appointed to carry out the study, which used a range of existing datasets to calculate changes in visitor numbers since 2004, and look forwards to 2037. Mr Matthews described the remit, methodology and datasets used, and key results of the study
- 38.2 The new calculations indicate that there had been 15.2 million visitor days to the New Forest National Park in 2017 compared to 13.55 million in 2004 – and by 2037 the total could rise to 17.6 million visitor days.
- 38.3 Officers had also compared the New Forest with other English national parks: because the New Forest has by far the highest proportion of land area designated as SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), it has by far the highest number of visitor days on these protected habitats.
- 38.4 Mr Matthews drew the following conclusions:
- the New Forest is rich in wildlife and enables many people to benefit from improved health and wellbeing and contribute to the local economy;
  - managing recreation is vital; and
  - looking ahead – there was much more to be done, jointly by all the organisations with a remit for managing recreation.
- 38.5 In terms of the way forward, he said that:
- Further development of work was necessary by multiple partners:
    - a) to inform visitors and local people about the things that make the Forest special
    - b) campaigns/new ways to address specific issues
    - c) to help people benefit from connecting with the National Park (health and wellbeing, young people and people with disabilities).
  - Clarification is needed of the ‘planning framework’ which guides judgements about where people should be encouraged to enjoy recreation.
  - New research is being done (on behalf of various local planning authorities) into how people use the protected areas for recreation, and where they come from.
- 38.6 Members were advised that a press release was being released that day from the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group containing the same messages as the current update. The full report would also be available for public consideration.
- 38.7 Mr Matthews then responded to several queries from members and clarified aspects of the report and results. The report was then noted by members.

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

- 39.1 The Chairman informed members of the 'Rewilding the New Forest' debate which would be held in Lyndhurst Community Centre on Thursday 21 February at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Signed: .....  
(Chairman)

Date: .....