

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 11 JULY 2019 AT 10.00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, LYMINGTON

Present:

Members

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (Chairman)
Patrick Heneghan (Deputy Chairman)
Gordon Bailey
Sue Bennison
George Bisson
Richard Clewer
David Harrison
Edward Heron
Mel Kendal
Keith Mans

Harry Oram
Neville Penman
Caroline Rackham
Leo Randall
Barry Rickman
Ann Sevier
Richard Taylor

Officers

Alison Barnes	Chief Executive Officer
Steve Avery	Executive Director, Strategy and Planning
Rosalind Alderman	Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Stone	Chief Finance Officer
Nigel Matthews	Head of Recreation Management and Learning
David Stone	Corporate Services Manager
David Illsley	Policy Manager
Jim Mitchell	Interpretation and Outreach Manager
Vicki Gibbon	Member Services Administrator

Also present: Kevin Suter and James Stuttaford (Ernst and Young LLP)
Bruce Rothnie (Deputy Surveyor, Forestry England)
Lord Willie Manners (Official Verderer)
Dante Munns, Area Manager RSPB

1. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman

- 1.1 The Chief Executive facilitated the election of David Harrison as Interim Chairman to oversee the appointment of the Chairman. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was nominated and duly seconded as Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) for the ensuing year. There being no further nominations, the nomination was put to the vote and carried by show of hands. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was accordingly elected as Chairman.

Resolved, that Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre be appointed as Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority in 2020.

Voting: Unanimous

- 1.2 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre thanked members for their support and confidence in appointing him as Chairman. He then oversaw the appointment of the Deputy Chairman. Patrick Heneghan was proposed and seconded and elected by show of hands as Deputy Chairman of the NPA for the ensuing year.

Resolved, that Patrick Heneghan be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the period up to the next Annual meeting of the Authority in 2020.

Voting: Unanimous

2. Apologies for absence.

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Sanger and Gavin Parker.

3. Declarations of Interest.

3.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

4. Chairman's announcements.

4.1 The Chairman welcomed Sue Bennison and Caroline Rackham as new local authority members on the Authority. He added that the new Secretary of State appointments would be announced once Ministerial approval was received.

4.2 The Chairman thanked Pat Wyeth and Richard Frampton on behalf of Members for their input during their time as members of the Authority. He mentioned that Pat had been on the Authority since its establishment in 2005 and had been an active member on committees and in particular the Planning Committee. Richard had served on the Authority for 8 years and had been on both the Planning Committee and the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee. He then made presentations to Pat and Richard in recognition of their service on the Authority.

5. Minutes

5.1 The minutes of 28 March were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. Public Question Time

6.1 Brian Tarnoff (Friends of the New Forest/New Forest Association) – made a presentation to members on the Partnership Plan, the Recreation Management Strategy and the New Forest District Council's Local Plan. A copy of the full presentation is available from Member Services.

7. Appointments of Committees (NFNPA 572/19)

7.1 The Chairman presented the report and listed and proposed the local authority and Secretary of State appointed members on the Planning Committee, Resources, Audit and Performance Committee and Standards Committee as set out in the report.

7.2 Members then endorsed the Committee appointments which are summarised in **Annex 1** to these minutes.

Resolved, That:

1. appointments be made to the Planning Committee as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership;
2. appointments be made to Resources, Audit and Performance Committee as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership; and
3. appointments be made to Standards Committee as set out in Annex 1 to these minutes for the period until the next annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to amend the membership.

Voting: Unanimous

8. Election of Committee Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committees of the New Forest National Park Authority

- 8.1 Consideration was given to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman positions in respect of the three Committees whose membership had now been determined.

Resolved, that:

1. Leo Randall be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
2. Gordon Bailey be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
3. David Harrison be appointed as Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
4. Patrick Heneghan be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position;
5. George Bisson be appointed as Chairman of the Standards Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position; and
6. David Harrison be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee for the period until the annual meeting of the NPA in 2020 or until such earlier time as the NPA wishes to review the position.

Voting: the above positions were voted on by only the membership of each committee with none voting against and no abstentions.

9. Appointment of Representatives to external Organisations (NFNPA 573/19)

- 9.1 The Chairman presented the report and listed and proposed the Authority appointments on outside bodies.

- 9.2 Members then endorsed the appointments which are summarised in **Annex 2** to these minutes.

Resolved, that the appointments to external organisations for the period up to the Annual meeting of the Authority in 2020, as listed in Annex 2 to these minutes, be approved.

Voting: Unanimous

10. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 574/19)

- 10.1 The Chief Executive reminded members that her report covered the period from the last Authority meeting in March and centred around the Authority's four themes of Protect, Enjoy, Prosper and Achieving Excellence.
- 10.2 Under the Protect programme the Chief Executive highlighted some of the main achievements by officers over the last quarter these included the planning team determining 117 planning applications with an 85% approval rate, continuing liaison with NFDC on the draft Hythe and Dibden Neighbourhood Plan and the large application which had recently been received for the Fawley Power Station development which would be determined by the Planning Committee later in the year.
- 10.3 Continuing with the protect programme Ms Barnes complemented the team on the recent Dig Burley archaeological project which saw 50 householders taking part with finds including a Neolithic flint arrowhead. A new edition of Park Life had recently been printed and distributed across the forest which focussed on wildlife and working together with our partners. Ms Barnes went on to explain that over £6,000 had been awarded to 43 schools and groups as part of the Year of Green Action and there were opportunities for hundreds of youngsters to take part in the John Muir National Citizenship Service Schemes.
- 10.4 Under the Enjoy programme, the Chief Executive reminded members that it was currently peak visitor season in the forest and the Ranger team had engaged with over 9,000 people so far. The education team were also extremely busy working with 642 pupils from 11 schools and 600 people attending the Wild Play Day at the beach in April. A joint 'keep your distance' campaign with Forestry England, the Verderers and the CDA was launched at Bolton's Bench and Hatchett Pond, online videos had also begun on social media.
- 10.5 Under the Prosper programme, Ms Barnes highlighted a successful meeting with local business interests and Professor Dieter Helm, Chair of the Natural Capital Committee as part of the green halo partnership. It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to develop a consistent approach to natural capital in the development of their local industrial strategies.
- 10.6 Under the Achieving Excellence programme, the Chief Executive advised members that the Partnership Plan would be reviewed shortly, and a Partnership Plan 'primer' document had been produced. Ms Barnes informed members that 22 strategic actions had now been proposed by the RMS Steering group which include boosting education about the New Forest's special qualities along with new initiatives to address the most serious and widespread issues.

The Chief Executive asked members to note her report.

11. Oral Report from Resources, Audit and Performance Committee

- 11.1 The Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee gave an update to Members on the meeting of the Committee which had taken place on 3 June and mentioned that, under the annual internal audit report, the NPA had received five audit assurances to date. He added that under the year end progress report, members had discussed the promotion of local carbon/renewable energy technologies within the confines of the existing building and lease. In this regard the Committee had noted that the Authority had installed two electric charging points and one of the pool cars was an electric vehicle. Looking ahead, any future Authority building would include plans to achieve a carbon neutral building.

12 Auditors Report 2018/19 (*Paper NFNPA 575/19*)

- 12.1 Mr Suter introduced James Stuttaford who had managed the audit process and thanked the finance team for their assistance during the audit. He said that he was pleased to advise that, subject to the completion of certain outstanding items, it was expected that an unqualified audit opinion on the Authority's financial statements and value for money conclusion would be issued.
- 12.2 Mr Suter advised that the main outstanding item in the audit concerned an ongoing national issue regarding the provision to be made in the accounts for the gross liability to the pension fund following a high court judgement in June on age discrimination arising from public sector pension scheme transitional arrangements. Progress on resolving this issue had been made since the financial year-end which could lead to the need for a re-assessment of the pension scheme liabilities and consequently an amendment to the financial statements. It was still anticipated that the audit opinion on the financial statements would be signed off by the statutory deadline once a report on the matter was received from the Hampshire Pension Fund.

The report was then noted by members.

13. Draft Financial Report 2018/19 (*NFNPA 576/19*)

- 13.1 Nigel Stone introduced the financial report. Referring to the year-end position, he mentioned that, at the start of the 2018/19 financial year, an amount of £40,000 had been budgeted as the anticipated contribution from the Authority's revenue support reserve to balance the budget at the end of the financial year. However, the year-end position was that it had only been necessary to take £27,000 from this reserve leading to an 'underspend' of £13,000. He also mentioned that the issue with the pension fund contribution as discussed under the preceding item would not affect this bottom line figure.
- 13.2 Mr Stone then highlighted various key aspects of income and expenditure during the year and drew members' attention to the recommendation in the report which accommodated the outstanding issue regarding the Authority's pension fund contribution.

Resolved, that the Financial Report, the Accounting Policies and Annual Governance Statement contained therein, and the Letter of Representation be approved, subject to any further changes required in relation to the outstanding issues identified at the meeting for which

delegation is given for these to be mutually agreed by the Chief Finance Officer, Chief Executive and Chairman.

Voting: Unanimous

14. Recreation Management Strategy – Towards a Spatial Vision (NFNPA 577/19)

- 14.1 Steve Avery referred to the work done on the Recreation Management Strategy through the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group which included two public consultations. The latest consultation had resulted in the suite of 22 strategic actions grouped under seven objectives set out in Annex 2 to the report which in turn were grouped under three areas of work. The actions and objectives summarised the work that the RMS Steering Group believed should be taken forward in the coming months and years and which were subject to formal endorsement by each of the organisations represented on the Steering Group. He then elaborated on the areas of work and said that the most significant of the strategic actions were also likely to feature in the update to the Partnership Plan which was now being reviewed.
- 14.2 Mr Avery said that one of the key strategic actions coming out of the document was to develop a spatial plan to better manage the distribution and type of recreation facilities to protect the Forest. Fundamental to this was the location and spread of public car parking on and close to the open Forest. As part of this work, the Steering Group proposed that the partners consider the feasibility of taking forward a Local Development Order to facilitate changes to public car parking provision on the Crownlands and adjacent commons.
- 14.3 He said that the purpose and scope of LDOs was to direct visitors to the more sustainable and resilient locations of the Forest and away from the most sensitive areas. There would be no net increase in overall parking spaces.
- 14.4 He then explained the purpose, benefits and legal basis of LDOs and said that they were designed for a specific type of development within a defined area and would allow those organisations represented on the Steering Group to set out the overall rationale for public car parking in the Forest within a broader, strategic framework for managing recreation in the Forest.
- 14.5 Bruce Rothnie (Deputy Surveyor, Forestry England) and Lord Willie Manners (Official Verderer) then addressed members in support of the actions contained in the report and requested that they be approved by the Authority.
- 14.6 Members expressed their support for the recommendations but asked officers to ensure that the reasons for the actions and proposals were fully communicated and explained to people both inside and outside the National Park.

Resolved, that:

1. the findings from the 2018 Future Forest consultation on recreation management be noted;
2. the Strategic Actions that have been compiled by the RMS Steering Group be endorsed; and
3. authority be delegated to officers to undertake further investigation into the feasibility of a Local Development Order

Voting: Unanimous

15. Franchises Lodge Report (NFNPA 578/19)

- 15.1 Jim Mitchell was joined by Dante Munns, Area Manager RSPB in presenting the report.
- 15.2 Mr Munns referred to slides of the site to demonstrate its location, features and principle vision and referred to the large number of species found within Franchises Lodge.
- 15.3 He said that a limited degree of access had been provided to the site creating an opportunity for people to experience the site and its features. The RSPB and NPA were currently engaging with partners, neighbours, landowners and different interest groups to share the vision for the site and future habitats as well as to understand peoples' different perspectives and views for the site.
- 15.4 He then elaborated on key aspects of his report including the archaeological review that had been undertaken of the site by the NPA, connecting with local communities through volunteering opportunities and proposed woodland management work. He added that the RSPB were in the process of recruiting for a Site Manager for Franchises Lodge who would drive forward the development and implementation of the reserve management plan.

The Chairman thanked Mr Munns for his report which was then noted by members.

16. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Report (NFNPA 579/19)

- 16.1 David Illsley presented his report by advising members that they had previously resolved to keep the decision on whether to implement CIL in the National Park under review. Following a number of recent changes, the principle of introducing a CIL Charging Schedule for the National Park had been considered and unanimously supported by the Planning Committee in June 2019. He asked that members of the Authority now endorse the principle of introducing a CIL Charging Schedule for the National Park and to authorise officers to take this forward.

Resolved, that members endorse the principle of developing a CIL Charging Schedule for the New Forest National Park and authorise officers to take this work forward.

Voting: Unanimous

17. Any other items the Chairman decides are urgent

- 17.1 There were no items on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

Signed: Date:
(Chairman)