

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER 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  
David Bence  
Sue Bennison  
George Bisson  
David Harrison  
Mel Kendal  
Keith Mans (until agenda item 7)  
Harry Oram

Neville Penman  
Leo Randall  
Caroline Rackham  
Barry Rickman  
Ann Sevier  
Richard Taylor  
Steve Trow

##### *Officers*

Alison Barnes	Chief Executive Officer
Steve Avery	Executive Director, Strategy and Planning
Rosalind Alderman	Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Stone	Head of Resources
David Stone	Corporate Services Manager
David Illsley	Policy Manager
Hilary Makin	Communications Manager
Tony Spence	Policy Officer
Denise Allen	Member Services Administrator

#### **27. Apologies for absence**

27.1 Apologies for absence were received from Richard Clewer, Edward Heron, George Meyrick and John Sanger.

#### **28. Declarations of Interest**

28.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### **29. Chairman's announcements**

29.1 The Chairman paid tribute to two founding members of the Authority who recently passed away: Tony Gentle, a Test Valley Borough Council member who served as a member for eight years from the Authority's inception; and Ted Johnson OBE, who was instrumental in achieving Special Heritage Area status for the Forest and went on to be elected the Authority's first chairman.

29.2 Mr Crosthwaite-Eyre reminded members that a briefing on Fawley Waterside would follow immediately after the meeting. He also reminded members of the Building Design workshop on 28 January 2020 which was of particular relevance to members of the Planning Committee.

29.3 The Chairman advised that a formal request for an extension to his term of office as Secretary of State member of the Authority beyond the current appointment (March 2020) had been submitted to Defra so as to provide continuity pending the election of a new Chairman at the Annual Authority meeting in September 2020. The request

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is pending approval by Defra.

### **30. Minutes**

- 30.1 The minutes of 10 October 2019 Authority meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **31. Public Question Time**

- 31.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

### **32. Chief Executive's Report (NFNPA 587/19)**

- 32.1 The Chief Executive reminded members that her report covered the last quarter of 2019 and centred around the Authority's four themes of Protect, Enjoy, Prosper and Achieving Excellence.
- 32.2 Under the Protect programme the Chief Executive pointed to the 25 year anniversary of the National Lottery which funds the Our Past Our Future scheme, noting that social media posts based around this anniversary achieved a reach of 35,000. Ms Barnes congratulated NFLAS (New Forest Land Advice Service) on building new links with ExxonMobil to create opportunities for commoner grazings thus helping to support young commoners, and noted the excellent volunteer uptake on the Working Woodlands project in providing health and social benefits for volunteers whilst at the same time supporting local woodland owners and contractors. Ms Barnes also highlighted improving water quality management across the Forest, and the wildlife campaign featured in a special Park Life issue and at the New Forest Show 2019. Social media posts on Forest wildlife and plants linked to Halloween achieved a Facebook reach of over 35,000 and engagement of more than 2,000. Two new seasonal rangers have also been promoting the HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) scheme's habitat restoration and commoning message across the Forest with 32 events planned in total.
- 32.3 The Chief Executive congratulated Laurence Shaw and his team on having LiDAR scanned the whole of the New Forest open Crown Lands (over 23,000 hectares). Ms Barnes also thanked Frank Green, who recently retired, for his significant contribution to the heritage and archaeology of the Forest.
- 32.4 Under the Enjoy programme, Ms Barnes highlighted the success of the 'Commoning Voices' exhibition, the Walking Festival 2019 (with participation up 15% on 2018), and the 'Family Trees' event where 100 people planted a tree seed and which reached 20,000 people on social media. Ms Barnes celebrated the education team's success in engaging young people across the spectrum from infants to post-graduates and thanked recently retired Sue Palmer for the remarkable legacy she leaves behind. Ms Barnes requested members 'spread the word' amongst their communities to promote the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Volunteer Fair on 26 January 2020 where over 50 different organisations are due to be represented.
- 32.5 Under the Prosper programme, the Chief Executive congratulated New Forest Aromatics on winning the 'Best Contribution to the National Park' award sponsored by the NFNPA, and advised members of a new category in the Building Design Awards to mark the Year of Green Action: 'Best Green Building'. Ms Barnes congratulated the New Forest Tour team on their results despite adverse summer weather, noting that the three tour routes are now self-sustaining. Lastly, members were asked to promote the sustainable communities fund grants designed to help communities achieve their local objectives, for

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example, re-purposing the derelict station master's house in New Milton.

- 32.6 Under the Achieving Excellence programme, Ms Barnes reported highlights of the Year of Green Action including: guided walks, the Big Pedal rideout, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary YOGA celebrations, the young environmental champion award, the Prince's Trust young people working for the John Muir Award, and the planting of 70 trees at Foxhills School, Ashurst.
- 32.7 The Chief Executive thanked members for their support during the past year, asked them to note her report and invited questions.
- 32.8 Discussion ensued as to whether the NFNPA should endorse a climate change emergency immediately. The Chief Executive explained that a Climate Emergency paper originally scheduled for December had been postponed due to the pre-election period of *purdah*. Ms Barnes listed some of the measures already taken by the Authority including: monitoring carbon data, a section set aside within the Partnership Plan, specific policies within the Local Plan, adaptation and carbon capture advice for land managers through NFLAS, wetland restorations, work with other authorities and Defra on the nitrates issue, the sustainable communities fund, Greener Living Shows, the Green Doors open day, supporting design for low energy usage through the Building Design Awards and building design SPDs, the Green Halo Partnership's work, and work with Southampton City Council.
- 32.9 The majority of members felt that although urgent action was required, the Authority should have a clear strategy and key actions drafted prior to endorsement. Ms Barnes suggested an overarching strategy encompassing four key areas: what can be done in our own estates; what can be done in the NFNP and the District as a whole; what can be done to work with and support people who are motivated to change; and lastly, habitat and ecosystem management to achieve carbon capture in our forests, rivers, salt marshes, and soils ('net zero with nature'). Ms Barnes recommended that these be reviewed to establish what has already been achieved and what still remains to be done, to be presented at the January 2020 Authority meeting.
- 32.10 Members then noted the report.
- 33. Oral report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 4 November 2019 (*Draft minutes circulated separately*).**
- 33.1 David Harrison, Chairman of the Resource, Audit and Performance Committee reported on the issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 4 November 2019 highlighting a positive expenditure position on the half-year budgetary control report along with investment income in excess of original projections. Mr Harrison also reported that although budgeted 'top up' payments to the Hampshire Pension Fund may no longer be required, the Authority had been advised to retain a pension 'risk reserve' for the time being.
- 33.2 Mr Harrison reported on the 2 year review of the 'Love the Forest' visitor giving scheme which provides an income of more than £30,000 per annum along with the added benefit of the Forest Ambassador training scheme. He also reported that for the next 5 years Public Health England will make paediatric doctors available, at no cost to the Authority, as part of a joint learning and working initiative on social prescribing.
- 33.3 Members noted the report and the Part II paper.

### 34. **Draft Revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme – Application of Measures and Contribution Level (NFNPA 588/19)**

- 34.1 Tony Spence summarized the key elements of the Revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the most important revisions to the Authority's existing habitat mitigation scheme as presented to the Planning Committee on 17 December 2019. Mr Spence emphasized that, as supported by both the HRA of the recently adopted Local Plan and Natural England, mitigation would be necessary for all new residential and visitor accommodation and would need to be sufficient to cover the full lifetime of the development.
- 34.2 Mr Spence explained that the Authority should use the revised mitigation measures and developer contribution level included in the draft Revised Scheme for current planning applications that require mitigation in order to include the most up-to-date information on mitigation to satisfy the requirements of the Habitat Regulations. He confirmed that this would not preclude adjustments to the scheme following public consultation. Mr Spence also confirmed that the viability of a higher contribution level for development was tested as part of the Whole-Plan viability evidence for the Local Plan's Examination and so had already been factored into viability considerations. Mr Avery stated that past experience indicated that the viability of smaller affordable housing schemes would not be adversely affected by the measures and undertook to report annually to members on how the resultant monies had been spent.

**Resolved**, that the habitat mitigation measures and the higher developer contribution level included in the draft Revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme for new planning applications that require mitigation be applied effective immediately.

*Voting: 16:0, 1 abstention*

### 35. **Formal Adoption of the Hythe and Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (NFNPA 590/19)**

- 35.1 David Illsley introduced the Hythe and Dibden Neighbourhood Plan on which the Authority has worked closely with the NFDC and the Parish Council over the past 4 years. Mr Illsley explained that the Plan had been revised to incorporate the independent Examiner's recommendations and a local referendum followed in October 2019 with 84.8% of the local residents who voted, voting in favour of the Plan. The Plan was formally adopted by NFDC at the full Council meeting on 9 December 2019. Mr Illsley advised that once adopted, the Plan would become part of the statutory 'development plan' for the National Park – alongside the Authority's Local Plan – and form the basis for decisions on planning applications within the parish. Mr Illsley went on to commend the Parish Council and others involved in the development of the Plan and recommended it for formal adoption by the Authority.
- 35.2 Members congratulated the residents and Parish Council of Hythe and Dibden in achieving the first neighbourhood plan for the whole New Forest area, and thanked the planning officers and other members of the Authority for their part in reaching this point.

**Resolved**, that the Hythe and Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) be formally adopted and brought into immediate effect to form part of the statutory 'development plan' and the basis for planning decisions within the part of the National Park in the parish of Hythe and Dibden.

*Voting: Unanimous*

**36 Section 106 Monitoring (NFNPA 591/19)**

36.1 Steve Avery advised that the recommendations in the Section 106 Monitoring paper were presented to and supported by the Planning Committee on 17 December 2019. The paper sought members' approval to start charging fees for monitoring legal agreements attached to planning permissions in accordance with new government legislation passed in September 2019. Mr Avery directed members' attention to section 4.2 and the table setting out the proposed scale of fees which would enable the Authority to cover the costs of monitoring compliance with legal agreements.

**Resolved**, that the principle of charging a proportionate fee for the monitoring of legal planning obligations be endorsed by members.

*Voting: Unanimous*

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

37.1 There were no further items.

**38. Date of next meeting**

38.1 The next meeting of the New Forest National Park Authority will be held at 10:00 am on Thursday, 23 January 2020 in the Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 11:27 am.

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