

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE MICROSOFT VIRTUAL TEAMS MEETING OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD ON THURSDAY 29 APRIL 2021 AT 10.00 AM

Present:

Members

Gavin Parker (Chair)

Patrick Heneghan (Deputy Chair)

Gordon Bailey

Sue Bennison

David Bence

George Bisson

Richard Clewer

David Harrison

Edward Heron

Alexis McEvoy

Victoria Mander

Keith Mans

George Meyrick

Neville Penman

Leo Randall

Barry Rickman

John Sanger

Ann Sevier

Stephen Tarling

Richard Taylor

Steve Trow

Officers

Alison Barnes

Steve Avery

Rosalind Alderman

Nigel Stone

Paul Walton

Fiona Wynne

David Stone

Vicki Gibbon

Simon Ludlow

Sam Greatorex

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director, Strategy and Planning

Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Head of Resources (Chief Finance Officer)

Head of Environment and Rural Economy

Grants Officer

Corporate Services Manager

Member Services Administrator

ICT Technical Officer

Systems Support Technician

29. Chair's Introduction to Conduct of Remotely held Meetings on Microsoft Teams.

30. Apologies for absence.

30.1 An apology for absence was received from Caroline Rackham.

31. Declarations of Interest.

31.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

32. Chair's announcements.

32.1 The Chair paid tribute to Leo Randall who would soon be leaving the Authority having joined on its establishment in April 2005. For the majority of that time he had chaired the Planning Committee and had also represented the Authority on a number of outside bodies including the Building Design Awards Panel and the New Forest Local Access Forum. The Chair said that Leo Randall would be greatly missed by both members and officers, and advised that a gift in recognition of his service would be either presented to Leo at the Authority meeting in July or delivered to him depending on his wishes.

33. Minutes

Resolved, that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 be approved as a true record.

Voting: 19:0, 1 abstention from a member not present at the March meeting and 1 abstention from a member who was late joining the meeting

34. Public Question Time

34.1 There were no public questions on this occasion

35. Oral Report from the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee Meeting 12 April 2021

35.1 David Harrison (Chair of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee) advised that the majority of items considered at the Committee meeting on 12 April were included on the agenda for the current Authority meeting and accordingly it was not necessary to elaborate further on the issues.

36. Partnership Plan Update (AM 590-21)

36.1 Steve Avery introduced his report which provided an update on the Partnership Plan and requested members' approval to carry out a public consultation in addition to considering the feasibility of establishing a Partnership Board to oversee implementation of the new Partnership Plan.

36.2 Mr Avery explained that it was important to review the previous Partnership Plan whereby the vast majority of actions had been achieved, which had also enabled lessons to be learnt to provide a more succinct new Partnership Plan. He explained that the main part of the new Plan would address the principal challenges and opportunities facing the New Forest with a shared ambition and agenda for action. The focus would be on achieving outcomes in five key areas: nature recovery, net zero with nature, thriving forest, and inclusive National Park and team New Forest.

36.3 In response to a query as to the rationale for the Partnership Board, Mr Avery explained that the Partnership Board would consist of senior representatives to oversee the new Plan and to align resources to ensure the commitment to deliver. Following discussion members resolved to endorse the recommendation as set out below.

Resolved, that

1. the Authority undertake a formal public consultation on the emerging new Partnership Plan in June 2021, based on the draft document and subject to (i) the receipt and consideration of any further comments from statutory partner organisations and (ii) any subsequent changes to the draft document that are agreed between the Executive Director and the Chair of the Authority (prior to the consultation); and
2. the Authority work with the statutory partner organisations to establish a Partnership Board to oversee implementation of the new Partnership Plan.

Voting: unanimous

37. Application to the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund (AM 591-21)

- 37.1 Fiona Wynne presented her report, reminding members that an expression of interest to the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund had recently been submitted, and she was now pleased to announce that this had been approved to the next stage and that a full application had been requested by 14 May. As the bid sought funding for over £50,000 members' approval was required.

Resolved, that Members support the submission of the application to the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund as outlined in the report, and that authority be delegated to officers to take all action as necessary in this regard.

Voting: unanimous

38. Climate and Nature Emergency (AM 592-21)

- 38.1 Paul Walton introduced his report, highlighting that in January 2020 the Authority had declared a climate and nature emergency, committing to becoming a net zero organisation by 2030 and to work with partner organisations to develop a plan for the National Park and surrounding area to become 'net zero with nature' by 2050.
- 38.2 Mr Walton explained that his report set out the work that had been achieved over the last year and detailed the work which would be carried out in the future regarding climate and nature emergencies. Following discussion, members duly noted the report.

39. Approval of the 2021/22 Work Programme (AM 593-21)

- 39.1 Nigel Stone presented the report which was to consider the Work Programme for 2021/22 containing the key areas of delivery for the next financial year. He added that the Work Programme had been considered in detail at the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 12 April 2021 which had recommended its approval to the Authority.
- 39.2 He then elaborated on the link between the Partnership Plan, Business Plan and Work Programme. The current Business Plan which ended in 2021 would be revised after the approval of the revised Partnership Plan. The 2021/22 Work Programme, which carried forward the updated structure of the 2020/21 Work Programme, was designed to be ambitious but achievable whilst being flexible and resilient to meet any developments that might occur during the coming year. He then elaborated on the structure and content of the Work Programme for members' information.
- 39.3 During the discussion which followed members recorded their thanks to officers for their high levels of professionalism and hard work in very difficult circumstances over the last year.

Resolved that, the Authority approve the Work Programme for 2021/22 as attached to the report as Annex 1.

Voting: unanimous

40. Revised Ethical Sponsorship and Corporate Partnership Policy (AM 594-21)

- 40.1 Hilary Makin advised members that her report focused on the review of the Ethical Sponsorship and Corporate Partnership Policy. The policy had recently been reviewed and update by officers, and following the RAPC meeting in April, additional comments had been received and incorporated into the document. Members then resolved to adopt the policy.

Resolved, that the Authority adopt the revised Ethical Sponsorship and Corporate Partnership Policy with immediate effect.

Voting: unanimous

41. Proposed Amendments to the Scheme of Delegations (AM 595-21)

- 41.1 Rosalind Alderman advised members that a High Court judgement had been handed down the previous day confirming that the term 'present' in the Local Government Act 1972 should be interpreted to mean physical presence at a meeting. When the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 lapsed in early May 2021 the Authority would therefore be reverting to physical, in-person meetings. Officers were accordingly preparing to hold Authority and Committee meetings in a Covid-safe environment from that date.
- 41.2 Rosalind Alderman added that, although it was not considered likely, there might be circumstances whereby it would not be possible or practicable to hold a physical meeting safely. In these circumstances, and where failure to take action or make a decision would prejudice the interests of the Authority, it was anticipated that most decisions could be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, under her delegation for urgent matters. However, although a failure to take decisions on planning applications might not amount to prejudicing the interests of the Authority, meaning those applications could not necessarily be determined under Ms Barnes' delegations, any delay could nonetheless cause harm to the interests of applicants and interested parties. Following discussion members therefore agreed that it would be appropriate for the Authority to adopt the revised Scheme of Delegations as detailed in the report, subject to some minor amendments discussed at the meeting, to delegate authority to officers to make decisions in these circumstances. Ms Alderman was requested to prepare an amended version, in consultation with the Chair, for adoption by the Authority.

Resolved, that the Authority adopt the revised Scheme of Delegations to Committees and Officers as annexed to AM 595-21, including amendments to be agreed by the Chair and Solicitor, with effect from 7 May 2021.

Voting: unanimous

42. Any other items the Chair decides are urgent

- 42.1 The Chair advised that Defra had informed the wider National Parks England group that a written ministerial statement was likely at the end of May or beginning of June regarding the response to the Landscapes Review that had been carried out by Julian Glover.

43. Date of next meeting

43.1 Thursday 1 July 2021 at 10.00am – Venue – Brockenhurst Village Hall

The meeting closed at 12.00pm.

Signed: Date:
(Chair)