NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23 JULY 2026 AT 10.00 AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST

Present:
Members

Victoria Mander (Chair)
Gordon Bailey
Fran Carpenter
Zoe Clewer
Richard Clewer
Mary Davies (Deputy Chair)
Jack Davies
Martin Eyre
David Harrison
Ella Mason
George Meyrick
Adarsh Parekh
Caroline Rackham
Joe Reilly
Barry Rickman
Ann Sevier
Brice Stratford
Derek Tipp
Steve Trow
James Wylor-Owen

Officers

Alison Barnes	Chief Executive
Nigel Stone	Head of Resources (Chief Finance Officer)
Gareth Hale	Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
David Illsley	Interim Head of Planning & Place
Paul Walton	Head of Environment & Rural Economy
Vicki Gibbon	Member Services Administrator
Rachel Bonathan	Administrator

227. Apologies for Absence

227.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Adams and Dan Poole.

228. Declarations of Interest

228.1 George Meyrick declared a prejudicial interest under Part 2 section B (non-pecuniary interests) of the NPA’s Code of Conduct in minute items 233 and 234 and accordingly left the meeting during the debate and vote on that item.

229. Chair’s Announcements

229.1 The Chair welcomed new members to the Authority, Fran Carpenter, Jack Davies, Martin Eyre and Dan Poole.

230. Minutes

230.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026 were approved as a true record. The Part 1 minutes from the meeting held on 1 May 2026 were also approved. However, the Part 2 minutes required amendments, which were discussed under Part 2 of this meeting.

***Resolved*, that** the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March and Part I of the minutes held on 1 May 2026 be approved as a true record.
Voting: None voting against

231 Public Question Time

231.1 Sarah Nield (NFA), Brian Tarnoff and Louise Kingshot gave presentments to the Authority, copies of which are available upon request from Member Services.

231.2 Responding to each matter in turn, David Illsley advised Ms Nield that the Authority acknowledged the concerns that had been raised and would continue to engage with neighbouring authorities.

Mr Illsley informed Mr Tarnoff that the A326 proposal to which he referred is the subject of a current planning application and, as such, he was unable to comment on its merits as the Authority is one of the determining planning authorities. He advised that all documentation relating to the proposal was available on the Authority's website.

In response to Ms Kingshott, Mr Illsley explained that the site in question had been submitted for consideration as part of the Local Plan Review. As the decision to proceed with consultation on the Local Plan was to be determined at this meeting, he noted that, should it be approved as such, Ms Kingshott would have the opportunity to raise any further concerns during the consultation period and would be directly notified of the start of the consultation.

232 Appointments of Committees *(AM 738/26)*

232.1 The Chair advised that there were a number of current vacancies on Authority committees, including the position of Deputy Chair of the Authority. Following nominations and subsequent vote, Mary Davies was appointed as Deputy Chair of the Authority. Martin Eyre and Gordon Bailey were appointed to the Planning Committee, while Jack Davies and Fran Carpenter were appointed to the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee. In addition, Fran Carpenter was appointed to the Standards Committee.

232.2 Gareth Hale, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, also advised that a new position had become available on the Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA) Planning Advisory Board, which would provide advice and recommendations to the HSCCA Board. It was proposed and seconded that the Chair of the Planning Committee, Steve Trow, be appointed to this role. The proposal was subsequently approved.

232.3 Gareth Hale advised members that John Adams has been absent for a number of meetings due to ill health and that Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a member ceases to be a member of their authority if they fail to attend any meeting (including committees) of the authority throughout a period of 6 consecutive months from the date of his last attendance, unless that failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period. For John, that period would end before the next Authority meeting.

232.4 Victoria Mander, Chair, then introduced a verbal motion which was proposed, seconded and voted unanimously, shown as item 6 below.

Resolved that:
1. Mary Davies be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Authority until the Annual meeting of the Authority in October 2026 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend its membership

2. Martin Eyre and Gordon Bailey be appointed to the Planning Committee until the Annual meeting of the Authority in October 2026 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend its membership

3. Jack Davies and Fran Carpenter be appointed to the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee until the Annual meeting of the Authority in October 2026 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend its membership

4. Fran Carpenter be appointed to the Standards Committee until the Annual meeting of the Authority in October 2026 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend its membership

5. The Chair of Planning Committee, namely Steve Trow be appointed to the Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority Planning Advisory Board until the Annual meeting of the Authority in October 2027 or until such earlier time as the Authority wishes to amend its membership

6. Members are asked to resolve that, having regard to the current ill health of NPA member, John Adams, they accept his apologies today and formally record that his absence due to his ill health is a reason approved by the Authority under section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, with the effect that it will reset that 6 month statutory period from the date of today's meeting.

Voting: Unanimous

233 Chief Executive's Report *(AM 739/26)*

233.1 The Chief Executive presented her report, covering the period since the last Authority meeting held on 26 March 2026. The report was structured in alignment with the National Park Authority's statutory purposes and duty and delivered within the framework of the Re:New Forest themes outlined in the Business Plan.

233.2 Under the *Protect* theme, Ms Barnes highlighted the significant work undertaken by the Planning Team to ensure that the draft Local Plan was on schedule and fully prepared for the next phase of consultation. She noted that this matter would be discussed in greater detail later in the meeting agenda. Ms Barnes also drew attention to the high volume of planning applications and enforcement cases currently being managed by the team.

In relation to Nature and Nature Recovery, Ms Barnes referred to the Government's 30 by 30 initiative, launched on 13 July, as well as the Protected Sites Strategy. She also highlighted the ongoing collaboration with partner organisations to share best practice and strengthen approaches to wildfire prevention and management.

233.3 Under the *Enjoy* theme, the Chief Executive highlighted the success of the Drive Safe campaign, which has now been supported by more than 50 businesses. She also referred to joint patrols undertaken with partner organisations to address issues including animal-related road incidents, fly-tipping and speeding, as well as a programme of workshops delivered in local schools.

Ms Barnes further noted that the YouCAN scheme had now entered its final phase and was scheduled to conclude in August 2026.

233.4 Under the *Prosper* theme, it was reported that the New Forest Tour had commenced and was now in its 23rd year of operation. The service would run for a ten-week period throughout the summer.

Ms Barnes also highlighted ongoing work to support green skills and employment opportunities, including a second networking workshop which was held in May. In addition, she advised that the General Power of Competence had been extended to all National Park Authorities.

Looking ahead, Ms Barnes noted that Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire would bring a period of significant change. She emphasised that the Authority would continue to explore ways to support both residents and partner organisations throughout the transition.

233.5 Under the *Excellence* theme, the Chief Executive drew Members' attention to the Authority's new website, which was launched in March. She explained that the redesigned site had improved accessibility and navigation, making it easier for users to find relevant information. The website was also more engaging and included features such as New Forest Code alerts, which could be used to communicate important messages, including wildfire warnings.

Ms Barnes also highlighted that the New Forest Partnership Plan was currently under review, providing an opportunity to assess progress and ensure that the Plan continued to reflect the priorities and aspirations of the National Park and partner organisations.

Members noted the report.

234 New Forest National Park Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) and Local Development Scheme Update *(AM 740/26)*

234.1 David Illsley began his report by reminding members that maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan was essential in supporting the National Park purposes, meeting local development needs and ensuring planning decisions continued to be made through a plan-led system. The Authority has now reached the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan Review, following Regulation 18 consultations undertaken during 2025. The Government's deadline for submission of the draft Plan for examination was December 2026. If this deadline was not adhered to the Local Plan review would have to be started again and this could take another three years.

234.2 Mr Illsley highlighted several sections of the report including the feedback which had been received during the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation and the amendments which had subsequently been made to the draft Plan. It was noted that the draft Plan had been informed by a comprehensive evidence base, including the Habitat Regulations Assessment, Viability Assessment, Housing Needs Assessment and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, all of which had influenced policy development and proposed site allocations.

234.3 Members were informed that the Regulation 19 consultation was proposed to run from mid-August to the end of September 2026. It was noted that all respondents to the previous consultation would be notified directly and that public drop-in sessions would be held during September. The consultation would focus on representations relating to the soundness of the draft Plan.

234.4 Mr Illsley also advised members of the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme to reflect the revised timetable for the submission of the Local Plan, ensuring alignment with the Government's December 2026 deadline.

234.5 Members were then invited to discuss the report and raise any further questions for clarification.

234.6 Several members expressed their concerns regarding the proposed allocation of a travelling showpeople site in Netley Marsh as they felt it was an inappropriate location.

234.7 Zoe Clewer proposed a motion to amend, relating to a specific aspect of the Local Plan. She stated that Landford and Nomansland were proposed to be designated as a ‘small defined village’ and noted that local residents had expressed opposition to this designation through responses submitted during the consultation process.

Ms Clewer explained that Landford and Nomansland each had distinct identities and that designating them as a ‘small defined village’ would alter the character and individuality of the area. She therefore proposed that both settlements be removed from the Local Plan as a small defined village at Policy SP3 and all other references that relate to it. The amendment was seconded by Richard Clewer.

Following debate of the proposed motion to amend Members of the Authority then voted on the proposed amendment, which was not carried, falling by 5 votes in favour to 12 against with 1 abstention. The Authority subsequently proceeded to consider the original recommendation set out in the officer’s report.

***Resolved*, that members**

a) endorse the Regulation 19 Submission draft New Forest Local Plan 2024-2043 in Annex 1 of report AM 740/26 and the accompanying updates to the Local Plan Policies Map (Annex 2) for the purposes of public consultation;

b) delegate authority to the Interim Head of Planning & Place to make any necessary minor textual and formatting updates prior to consultation;

c) delegate authority to the Interim Head of Planning & Place to submit the draft Local Plan, supporting evidence base and all the representations received during the Regulation 19 consultation stage to the Secretary of State for independent examination before the deadline of the end of December 2026; and

d) adopt the revised New Forest National Park Local Development Scheme (Annex 4) to come into immediate effect as the published timetable for the remaining steps in the Local Plan review process

Voting: 16:2

235 Adoption of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan *(AM 741/26)*

235.1 Sarah Applegate, Senior Policy Officer introduced her report advising that this report was to recommend the adoption of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan which followed on from the independent examination of the Plan in 2025 and the publication of the Inspector's Report earlier in the year. The Inspector concluded that the Plan was sound subject to a number of modifications, which had now been made. Members then resolved to adopt the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan as per the recommendations below.

***Resolved*, that members**

1. note the findings of the Inspector's Report (Annex A online);

2. endorse the schedule of Main Modifications (Annex B online), the updated Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Annex C online), Policies Map (Annex D online), Sustainability Appraisal (Annex E online), Habitats Regulations Assessment (Annex F online) and Inspector's Report;

3. formally adopt the updated Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and bring into immediate effect to form part of the statutory 'development plan' for the New Forest National Park.

4. delegate authority to the Interim Head of Planning and Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make any inconsequential changes to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan and Policies Map required prior to publication;

5. adopt the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme 2025 (Annex G online) to be brought into immediate effect.

Voting: None voting against

236 Oral Report from Resources, Audit and Performance Committee – 1 June 2026

236.1 Mary Davies, Chair of RAPC, provided a brief summary of the Committee's recent meeting. She drew members' attention to the minutes which had been provided highlighting the Internal Audit Annual Conclusion 2025/26, the Final Quarter Progress Report 2025/26 and the Annual Health & Safety Report 2025/26. Ms Davies also noted that member attendance at meetings continued to be lower than expected and reminded members of the importance of regular attendance. She emphasised that good attendance is essential to ensure committees are quorate and able to facilitate effective discussion, debate, and decision-making.

Members noted the report.

237 Budget Update 2026/27 *(AM 742/26)*

237.1 Nigel Stone, Head of Resources (CFO), advised members that in March 2026 the Authority's budget for 2026/27 was approved, this report was to provide members with an update on the budget following confirmation of the core capital grant and one-off revenue uplift. Following discussions and questions, Members resolved to approve the additions to the 2026/27 budget.

Resolved that:
Members approve the suggested additions to the 2026/27 budget.
Voting: Unanimous

238 New Forest National Park Partnership Plan Review *(AM 743/26)*

238.1 Paul Walton, Head of Environment and Rural Economy, introduced his report by reminding members that all National Park Authorities were required to have a management plan for their area to help guide the collective work of all those with responsibility or an interest in the National Park. The New Forest National Park Management Plan, now known as the Partnership Plan, was due to be updated in 2027. The report sets out the proposed approach to reviewing the Partnership Plan in preparation for its publication.

238.2 Mr Walton then highlighted the key aspects of the report and outlined the proposed review process. Members noted the contents of the report.

239 Amendments to Members Social Media Policy *(AM 744/26)*

239.1 Gareth Hale, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, advised members that the Authority's Social Media Policy was last reviewed and updated in 2023 and was therefore due for further review. He explained that the revised policy had been considered by the Standards Committee in May 2026 and, following a number of amendments requested by the Committee, was now being presented to the full Authority for approval and endorsement.

239.2 During the discussion, members expressed broad support for the revised policy and were minded to endorse the recommendation, subject to a small number of additional amendments. These amendments were noted by officers for incorporation into the final version of the policy.

Resolved that
Members agree to adopt the revised Members Social Media Policy attached to report AM 744/26 Appendix 2 subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.
Voting: Unanimous

240 Any Other Business

240.1 There were no further items.

241. Date of next meeting

241.1 Thursday 15 October 2026 at 10.00am – Council Chamber, NFDC, Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst.

PART II ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPTED INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

The Chair read out the resolution to move into Part II

Members are asked to resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 and Paragraph 5, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, namely the need to avoid disclosing sensitive information relating to the Authority’s financial and business affairs.

Proposed and Seconded.

Resolved: Unanimous.

241 Capital Investment Appraisal 2026/27 (July) (AM 745/26)

241.1 This item was heard and minuted in part 2 of the meeting in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders.

Part 1 of the meeting closed at 1:25 pm.

Signed: ……………….. Date: ………..……... (Chair)