NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12 May 2026 AT 2:00 PM
IN THE ANDERWOOD ROOM, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL OFFICES, AVENUE ROAD, LYMINGTON

Attending:

Committee: Zoe Clewer
Ann Sevier (Chair)
Brice Stratford
Caroline Rackham
Derek Tipp
James Wylor-Owen

Officers:	Gareth Hale	Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
	Nigel Stone	Head of Resources (CFO)
	Vicki Gibbon	Member Services Administrator

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest were made on this occasion.

3 Minutes

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.

4 Public Question Time

4.1 There were no public questions on this occasion.

5 Update on Consultation (*SC 59/26)*

5.1 Gareth Hale, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, provided a brief update on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation entitled "Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England", which was issued on 18 December 2024. He reminded Members that the consultation sought views on proposed reforms to the current regulatory framework for local authority Members, as established by the Localism Act 2011. The consultation had now concluded, and MHCLG had published the outcomes on its website. Mr Hale explained that the consultation covered seven key areas, noting that each outcome would require the introduction of legislation before any resulting obligations become binding on authorities.

5.2 Mr Hale then outlined each of the seven areas of the consultation, highlighting those of particular relevance to National Park Authority Members. He noted that the Authority was already well positioned, with an established Code of Conduct and a Standards Committee that meets regularly. He advised that the Authority would need to await the introduction of relevant legislation before giving full consideration to the implications in due course.

Members noted the report.

6. Update on Internal Corporate Government Framework Audit *(SC 60/26)*

6.1 Gareth Hale advised the Committee that a recent internal audit had been undertaken to review the Authority's governance framework. The audit focused on two principal areas: the corporate governance framework documentation and the Member declaration process. He emphasised the importance of the Member declaration process, noting that it was a statutory requirement and must be maintained and kept up to date.

6.2 Mr Hale reported that the audit found all governance framework documents to be in place, current, and operating in accordance with the appropriate procedures. However, two areas for improvement were identified, including recommendations for the establishment of centralised logs.

Members then noted the report.

7. Amendments to Members Social Media Policy *(SC 61/26)*

7.1 Gareth Hale introduced his report, advising that the Members' Social Media Policy was last updated in 2023 and was therefore due for review. He then outlined the proposed amendments to the policy, highlighting the key changes and providing Members with the opportunity to comment and engage in discussion.

7.2 Following discussion, Members requested a number of amendments to the policy. It was agreed that Gareth Hale would incorporate these changes and circulate the revised policy by email to all members of the Standards Committee in advance of the report being presented at the Full Authority meeting in July.

***Resolved*, that**

The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer will prepare an updated version of the Member's Social Media Policy taking into account the points discussed with Members. That document will be shared with Members of the Standards Committee providing them a further opportunity to input on the changes and agree them before the document is approved to proceed to the Authority meeting on 23 July 2026.

Voting: Unanimous

8 **Any other business the Chair decides are urgent**

8.1 The Chair advised the Committee that Mel Kendal had stepped down as a Member of the Authority and, consequently, as Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee. It was therefore necessary to appoint a new Deputy Chair.

It was proposed and seconded that James Wyler-Owen be elected as Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee.

***Resolved*, that**

James Wylor-Owen be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee

Voting: Unanimous

9 Date of next meeting

9.1 To be advised.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm.

…………………………………………. ……………………………………..
Chairman Date