

# National Park Authority

28 July 2021

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chair)

Councillor P Baker BEM, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Mr G Jones, Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr R Plummer, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland.

*[Councillor R Owens joined the meeting during consideration of the minutes of the Personnel Committee (Minute 6(iv) refers)]*

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.15am; 11.25am – 12.55pm; 1.25pm - 2.00pm)

## 1. Apologies

There were apologies for absence from Councillor M Evans and Councillor P Kidney.

## 2. Disclosures of Interest

Councillor P Baker disclosed a personal interest in report 32/21 Support for Ironman Wales; Councillor P Harries and Dr M Havard disclosed a personal interest in respect of Report 35/21 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust; Dr R Plummer disclosed an interest during the discussion on the minutes of the Operational Review Committee in respect of Marine National Parks however they all remained in the meeting.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings (Annual General and Ordinary Meetings) held on the 16 June 2021 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual General and Ordinary meetings held on the 16 June 2021 be confirmed and authenticated.

## 4. Matters arising

### (a) Wales Charter for Member Support and Development

It was reported that the Authority had submitted its application for the Advanced Charter for Member Support and Development and congratulations were given to the Democratic Services Team.

**Noted.**



## **5. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair was pleased to report that he had recently been able to attend functions in person, having met Huw Evans as he walked the Wales Coast Path, attended a preview of the Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales exhibition by Mike Perry at Oriel y Parc, and the official re-opening ceremony at Llys y Fran attended by Vaughan Gethin. He had also spoken at the launch of the CLEAN (Catchment Level Environment Action Network) Water project held at Castell Henllys. The Chair had also attended a number of online meetings, with the Chairs of the Welsh National Park Authorities, Welsh Local Government Association's Partnership Council and Rural Forum. In addition he had attended the Authority's Community/Town/City Council Seminar at which the Strategy document had been discussed.

**Noted.**

## **6. Reports of meetings of various Authority Committees**

The following reports of meetings of a number of the Authority's Committees were presented to Members for consideration/information:

- (i) Development Management Committees held on 9 June 2021, 16 June 2021 and 21 June 2021;
- (ii) Youth Committee held on 22 June 2021;
- (iii) Operational Review Committee held on 23 June 2021; and
- (iv) Personnel Committee held on 23 June 2021.

Members were encouraged by the work of the Youth Committee. It was noted that they wanted to engage further with Authority Members, and it was intended to arrange an informal meeting in the autumn.

In respect of the minutes of the Operational Review Committee, the Chief Executive reported that the Authority's Internal Auditors, TIAA, had been asked to look at the Authority's Risk Register and a workshop would be arranged in the autumn. With regard to potential for a Marine National Park, the matter had been raised with Natural Resources Wales, however this was the beginning of a long term process and further updates would be provided in due course.

Considering the minutes of the Personnel Committee, an update was requested on the meeting with the Chair/Deputy Chair of Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee to discuss the Terms of Reference. The Chief Executive advised that it had been necessary to wait until the Chair/Deputy Chair had been elected at the recent meeting of the Committee; however a meeting would be arranged in the coming weeks. With regard to the Listening Service discussed by the Committee, Members wondered whether any contact had been made with those who



had volunteered. The HR Manager advised that a member of staff had informed him that they had used the service and had found it useful. Finally an update was sought on the Kickstart Scheme. The HR Manager reported that there had been problems with take-up of the scheme due to concerns regarding COVID and the short term nature of the placement, with no long term job security. However two eligible individuals had applied to the scheme in recent weeks and arrangements would be made to interview them.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the above mentioned Committees be adopted/received.

*[Councillor M Williams apologised that he had to leave the meeting before the vote on the following item was taken, however he hoped to return before the meeting concluded.]*

## **7. ISA260 Report to those Charged with Governance**

The Chair welcomed Mr Deryck Evans from Audit Wales, who explained that the ISA260 Report was made by the Auditor in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing. The Auditor intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts, once a signed copy of the Accounts and a Letter of Representation had been received. However there were some uncorrected misstatements set out in the report which had to be brought to Members' attention, as well as some misstatements that had now been corrected. These would have a minimal impact on service expenditure and would be resolved during the coming financial year.

Mr Evans thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the accounts and facilitating the audit, particularly given the impact of COVID-19. He noted that the Authority was one of only a few Authorities across Wales to have achieved sign-off of their accounts by the end of July in accordance with the statutory deadline. The Finance Manager in turn thanked Audit Wales for the timely manner in which they had undertaken the audit which had allowed the deadline to be met.

Members congratulated officers on their timely production of the accounts, and asked that their thanks be passed on to members of the Finance Team. They asked if there were any lessons to be learned in respect of the uncorrected misstatements. The Finance Manager explained that the advice on Furlough received from HMRC in June 2020 was incorrect and this had only come to light in June 2021; the other issues were not material. In response to a question from Members, it was confirmed that the reasons why the misstatements had not been corrected had been discussed with Audit Wales and officers would include a brief note to explain this.



It was **resolved** that:

- a) the ISA260 Report from Audit Wales be accepted; and
- b) the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 be approved.

## **8. Annual Report on Meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) 2020/21**

Members were reminded that the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 placed a duty on the Authority to set out its Well-being Objectives and to demonstrate how these contributed to the Welsh Government's seven Well-being Goals. Under the legislation, each year bodies had to publish an annual report showing the progress they had made in meeting their objectives. They also had to demonstrate how they had applied the 5 ways of working under the sustainable development principles of Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement. For the year 2020/21, the Authority was also still required to publish an Improvement Plan Part 2 by 31<sup>st</sup> October under the Local Government (Wales) Measure.

The document before the Authority was both its annual report on progress made against its Well-being Objectives and its Improvement Plan Part 2. In order to ensure equality and biodiversity considerations were mainstreamed across the Authority it also acted as its annual equality report and formed one element of the Authority's reporting on how it complied with the S6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

It was noted that while the report was long, this reflected the wide range of work and activities undertaken by the Authority. However a summary infographic of achievements against the Well-being objectives was included.

The report outlined progress against the work programme proposed in the Authority's Corporate and Resources Plan for the year 2020/21. Members were reminded that the Corporate and Resources Plan 2020/21 had been split into two and realigned to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first section was based on short and mid-term priorities focused on its COVID-19 response and recovery planning, while long term priorities and actions that were originally planned for 2020/21 that remained relevant were kept in the second section. As expected some activities within work streams had been progressed during 2020/21, however a number of them, particular those involving face to face contact between individuals, had been impacted by the lifting or re instating of restrictions and regulations or by the Authority having to adapt or reprioritise its work to focus on COVID-19 related responses.



Members congratulated the Performance and Compliance Coordinator on a comprehensive and thorough report which reflected the excellent work of the whole Authority and asked that their thanks be passed on to staff. While they commended the use of colour and graphics, it was suggested that a short summary or other means of communicating the achievements to various audiences was worth considering. They also asked whether it was proposed to review the Authority's well-being objectives and the Chief Executive replied that this would follow agreement of the High Level Strategy (Minute 9 refers) and would be the subject of further reports to the Authority in the autumn.

It was **resolved** that the Annual Report on meeting Well-being Objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) 2020/21 be approved.

*[The meeting was adjourned between 11.15 and 11.25am]*

## **9. To agree a High Level Strategy for the Authority**

Members were reminded that at the May meeting of the Authority, it had been agreed that a consultation exercise on the draft High Level Strategy be carried out. The draft Strategy had been published on the Authority's website and a survey created using the Survey Monkey platform. The consultation had been promoted by a press release, via the Authority's social media channels, highlighted to key partners, and distributed to members of internal groups such as the Youth Committee and Volunteer Forum. In addition, a seminar had been held with representatives of City, Town and Community Councils.

A total of 197 responses had been received, and the report summarised the results of the consultation. While not every comment was positive, most were largely supportive.

Members were asked to approve the High Level Strategy and to comment on the 19 outcomes that had been identified to deliver the strategy, 14 of which were specific to the 4 priorities in addition to 5 cross cutting outcomes that would impact on all the work of the Authority.

Members liked the clarity of the four 'C's' which comprised the priorities of the strategy and its concise nature, fitting on one page. They provided detailed comments on the objectives, noting particularly that the reference to tourism should refer to sustainable tourism, and the Chief Executive agreed to take these into consideration going forward.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) the responses to the consultation be noted;
- b) the High Level Strategy be agreed and used as the basis of the work of the Authority on this strategy from April 2022 onwards.



*[Dr R Heath-Davies and Councillor K Doolin tendered their apologies and left the meeting during consideration of the following item.]*

**10. Action Plans in Support of the National Park Management Plan**

Members were reminded that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan 2020-2024 had been adopted on 11th December 2019 and officers had undertaken to prepare and publish a series of action plans in support of it which would set out the Authority's current and proposed responses to key policy challenges identified in the Management Plan. Three action plans had been approved by the Authority to date, and those for Health and Wellbeing and Sustainable Recreation and Visitor Management were presented for approval.

The action plans had been drafted following consultation with Authority staff and external organisations, and took account of corporate and national wellbeing objectives and measures relating to climate change, as well as Landscapes for All, and the Destination Pembrokeshire Plan.

Members were pleased to see lead officers identified for each of the actions and asked how the action plans would translate into individual staff work programmes. Officers explained that the actions would be reflected in team plans and objectives for individuals identified in Work and Wellbeing Reviews, and monitored through performance indicators. It was also noted that projects would be developed to deliver actions with bids for funding submitted through the Authority's internal processes. Members also hoped that the Authority could encourage diversity in its widest sense, working through, for example, the arts and music, and officers referred to the work at Oriel y Parc and the Experiences for All research project which aimed to work with local groups to identify how better to engage with a variety of individuals. The point would also be raised with the internal Engagement Action Plan group.

In respect of the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, questions were also asked about opportunities for social prescribing and opportunities for further engagement with the Health Board, GPs and chemists to support those recovering from illness. Members also commended the provision of beach wheelchairs and highlighted the importance of the coastal bus services, initiatives that were identified in the sustainable Recreation and Visitor Management Action Plan.

It was **resolved** that the Health and Well-being Action Plan and the Sustainable Recreation and Visitor Management Action Plan be approved.



## 11. To agree to support Ironman Wales 2022-2026

Members were reminded that Ironman Wales had been held in Tenby since 2011 and that the Authority, working with other bodies, had provided annual financial support for the event. While the Authority did not benefit directly from the support, the event promoted the National Park to audiences around the world, supported Pembrokeshire business by encouraging visitors to the area and contributed to improving the health and well-being of local people.

It was proposed that the partnership approach towards local support for the event would continue from 2022. Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) had already agreed to support the event, and it was requested that the Authority contributed £20,000 per year for the next five years. In return for this, the event would meet a sustainable events standard, the Authority would have an agreed number of logos and promotional items on the course and would receive 4 free places in the race, which would be passed onto the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust to support their fundraising.

Members were happy to support the proposal, considering that the investment by the Authority was modest considering how important the event was to the whole county. A concern was raised regarding the carbon footprint of the event, which saw competitors and spectators travelling large distances, however the move to a sustainable events standard was welcomed. Councillor P Baker, who was PCC's Cabinet Member for Major Events, highlighted the importance of the park and ride to minimise traffic movements on the day of the event and also noted that discussions were taking place regarding improved rail services. The Chief Executive added that the Authority would continue to work with PCC and others to lever in environmental as well and health and well-being benefits.

It was **resolved** that the Authority support Ironman Wales for the period of 2022 to 2026 with a contribution of £20,000 per year.

*[Councillor M Williams returned to the meeting during consideration of the following item but abstained from voting.]*

## 12. Membership of Committees and Outside Bodies.

Members were reminded that at the Annual General Meeting on 16 June 2021, it was reported that consideration of the membership of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, Grievance Committee and Appeals Committee would be confirmed once the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Authority and other relevant Committees had been appointed. This had now taken place and suggested compositions of the Committees were set out in the report.



One Member noted that fortunately it had not been necessary to convene these Committees in recent years, however it was suggested that Members would benefit from training before such a need arose. Officers agreed that this could be arranged.

It was **resolved** that Membership of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, Grievance Committee and Appeals Committee be confirmed as set out in the report.

### **13. Corporate Events**

The report set out those events to which Members of the Authority had been invited during the forthcoming year and Members were asked to agree attendance at these. Details of the events would be circulated to all Members by email and they would be asked to reply if they were interested, with attendees selected on a first come first served basis.

It was **resolved** that Members be authorised to attend the events as follows:

- a) Members' National Induction Courses hosted by the South Downs National Park Authority between 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (*usually new Members, or those who have not yet had the opportunity to attend an Induction Course*);
- b) Online Europarc Conference 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 "Parks in the Spotlight: Powered by People, Inspired by Nature" (*up to 2 Members*);
- c) WLGA Annual Conference, date to be confirmed (*1 or 2 Members*)

*[The meeting was adjourned between 12.55pm and 1.25pm.]*

*[Councillor S Yelland tendered his apologies and left the meeting. Councillor M James advised that he would be late returning and arrived during consideration of the following item.]*

### **14. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust – Impact Report 2020-2021**

It was reported that as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust (PCNPT) and the National Park Authority, the Trust had committed to sharing with the Authority an update of its progress on an annual basis. The Trust had launched to the public in April 2019 and the report noted the key highlights from 2020-21, as well as looking forward to initiatives under way for 2021-22. Also appended to the report was the Trust's Annual Impact Report 2020-21 which outlined details of the projects that the





Trust had supported with the funds it had raised to date. The Chair of the Trust, Elsa Davies, had sent her apologies due to a prior commitment.

Thanking the officer for a clear report, Members were pleased to see the sums raised, but asked for a breakdown of the £61,548 raised in the last financial year. The External Funding Manager explained that those donors who were happy to be acknowledged were listed on the final page of the Impact Report, however she reported that 68% had come from grant and foundation fundraising; 20% from corporate fundraising; 10% from high net worth individuals; and the remaining 5% from individuals through personal donations, sponsorship and gifts. She clarified that some of the £19,000 raised for the Wild about Woodlands appeal was included in that sum, however some had been raised in the current financial year and would be shown in the 2021-22 accounts.

Other Members asked for a comparison with other National Park Trusts and whether the Trust had explored the potential for legacy giving. The officer replied that PCNPT was broadly in line with other charities set up at a similar time, however much depended on the resources and financial investment committed by the relevant Authorities, as well as the demographic and population density of the area in which they were located. However all the National Park charities worked together by sharing knowledge and experiences. With regard to legacies, the Trust was actively promoting this as a way of supporting and safeguarding the National Park and had partnered with Fairwill, an online will writing platform to facilitate this means of giving.

### **Noted.**

#### **15. Review of the Public Participation Scheme at meeting of the Development Management Committee**

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Authority on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, and following a Member workshop on the subject, it had been agreed that public speaking would be permitted at the first Committee meeting at which an application was heard for a period of 5 minutes and the same speaker would be permitted to speak on the same application for a period of 3 minutes at any subsequent meetings the application may be deferred to.

During the discussion at the NPA meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, several changes to the guidance document had been suggested, and it was determined that the public speaking arrangement be altered and that the guidance document be referred back to a future meeting of the Authority for consideration. Officers had now revised the guidance document in accordance with Members' comments, and this was appended to the report.



Noting that during a subsequent meeting, those addressing the Committee were asked not to repeat what they had said previously, one Member sought confirmation that what had been said would have been recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and therefore anyone who had been unable to attend both meetings would be aware of all the points raised, and the Director of Planning and Park Direction confirmed that this was the case.

Another Member asked that consideration be given in future to including a reference to the location from which a person could address the Development Management Committee, given the situation that had emerged at a recent meeting of that Committee. However this should be discussed with the Chair of the Committee, and not debated that day. The Chief Executive noted that a Notice of Motion on that subject had been received, however Standing Orders required this to be submitted 10 working days before the meeting, and it had not been received in time for the meeting that day. The Notice of Motion would therefore be heard at the next meeting of the Authority.

Finally it was requested that in any future version of the guidance, consideration should be given to rewording the second paragraph on page 322 of the report “Speakers should avoid referring to matters outside the remit ...” to “Matters outside the remit... cannot be taken into consideration”. Also that the document be dated and a version number included.

It was **resolved** that the changes to the guidance document in respect of Public Participation at Development Management Committee Meetings be endorsed.

