

# National Park Authority

14 December 2022

## Present (In Person)

Councillor Mrs D Clements (Chair)

Councillor Steve Alderman, Councillor Dr SL Hancock, Councillor R Jordan, Councillor Mrs M Wiggins and Councillor C Williams.

## Present (Remotely)

Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M James, Mrs J James, Mr GA Jones, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Councillor Mrs S Skyrme-Blackhall, Councillor Mrs V Thomas and Councillor A Wilcox.

[Mrs S Hoss arrived remotely during consideration of matters arising from the minutes (Minute 4) and Dr RM Plummer, having apologised that she would be late, arrived remotely during the Chair's Announcements (Minute 5).]

[Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock and Remotely 10.00am – 11.50am; 12.00pm – 2.00pm]

### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence, although Dr R Plummer had advised that she would be joining later.

### **2. Disclosures of Interest**

Dr R Plummer made a general (personal) declaration in respect of her membership of the Natural Resources Wales Board and as a trustee of Plantlife.

### **3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 October 2022 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26 October 2022 be confirmed and signed.

### **4. Matters arising**

#### **(i) Action Log**

A couple of Members were concerned that actions raised by Members were being missed either by not being captured in the minutes or not taken forward by officers. It was suggested that actions be recorded in bold in the minutes and this was proposed and seconded. The Administration and Democratic Services Manager responded that she considered the minutes to be a record of what had been discussed at the meeting and suggested that actions could either be recorded in an



addendum or included as a separate standing item on the agenda. She also noted that some of the points raised by Members had been discussed at meetings, however as no decision was made by the Committee to accept these, they would not be captured in the minutes. She clarified that, if Members wished an action to be captured, .e.g. if they wanted to task an officer with a specific course of action, then the clearest way to do this was for Members to ensure that their points were set out in any proposal put forward.

A number of Members asked that if a separate Action Log was created that the actions were related to a specific meeting minute so that the two did not become detached.

It was **resolved** that officers be tasked with devising a process for recording action logs for the National Park Authority and each of its Committees and that these be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and updated as actions progressed.

(ii) Public Convenience Funding (Minute 11)

While Members had been provided with a brief note of the meeting which had taken place with representatives from Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and Visit Pembrokeshire as agreed at the last meeting, they asked for any additional feedback or comment. The Chair advised that although the Authority had put forward a proposal to make a short-term contribution in order to allow a longer term opportunity to be explored, unfortunately no agreement had been possible and therefore the toilets might close. She added that some Members would be aware that letters had been sent to relevant Community Councils to ask if they were willing to take on the responsibility through increases to their precepts, however she felt that that outlook for continued provision of public conveniences in Pembrokeshire was fairly bleak. The Chief Executive added that as this was a decision for the Council, the Authority had no further plans to engage with PCC on the matter, unless Members decided otherwise.

Members were disappointed with the outcome and felt that closure of public conveniences would be a retrograde step. If that happened, they were also concerned about the impact of the loss of blue flag beaches in the county; they hoped that PCC would continue to explore all avenues to keep them open. It was suggested by some Members that further discussion needed to take place, and while officers were happy to do so, the Chief Executive advised that further clarity was needed from Members regarding what could be offered. He suggested that a Member could put forward a Notice of Motion at a future meeting as a means of taking this forward.

**Noted.**



(iii) Welsh Language Strategy Working Group (Minute 14)

It was reported that Dr R Heath-Davies and Dr M Havard sat as Authority Members on this Working Group which had met during November. If any Member had any ideas for inclusion in the next Welsh Language promotion strategy, they were asked to pass these on.

**Noted.**

**5. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised that she and the Chief Executive had met the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS online and this had been a positive meeting covering such topics as finance and diversity in the organisation. The Chief Executive added that although the Welsh Government budget had been published earlier in the week, the figures were not clear and the Authority had only received an indication that the Authority would receive a flat line budget next year. It was hoped that more information would be available for the budget workshop which was scheduled to take place the following week.

The Chair went on to say that she had recently presented a cheque for £500 as sponsorship to the Tenby Boxing Day Swim and had attended the service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in Haverfordwest. She also advised that she and the Chief Executive had met the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park the previous day and had had a positive and wide ranging conversation. Finally she reported that former County Councillor John Allen-Mirehouse had sadly passed away and the Authority's condolences were given to his family. He had served on the National Park Authority for over 20 years and Councillor Dr S Hancock paid tribute to him, having served alongside him. The meeting held a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

**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 19 October 2022 and 16 November 2022;
- (ii) Chief Executive Performance Review Panel held on 21 September 2022;

One Member noted that these minutes provided an excellent example of action oriented minutes. The Member also noted that she was aware that the Corporate Health Standard (referred to at paragraphs 11 and 12(iv)) was changing and assessments were not currently being carried out; she



would provide an update when more information was available. A typographical error in respect of the word “morale” was also identified at paragraph 12(iv).

- (iii) Youth Committee held on 27 October 2022; and
- (iv) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 9 November 2022.

Officers were asked to re-send the link to the Cyber Security reports, which had been circulated to all Members, as this had expired.

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

**7. Update on the Notice of Motion that the Authority enters into negotiation with Lamphey Community Council, and any interested parties, to either gift or sell land in Freshwater East, for the provision of a children’s play area.**

Members were reminded that this Notice of Motion had been delegated to the Operational Review Committee by the National Park Authority earlier in the year and it had resolved that officers enter into further communication with Lamphey Community Council regarding the provision of a children’s play area at Freshwater East and report back.

The Chief Executive reported that the Estates Officer had attended a meeting of Lamphey Community Council in the autumn and had explained that while the Authority was happy to work with them on this matter, it was first necessary for them to provide a substantive proposal for its consideration. Nothing further had been heard from the Community Council since that meeting, so the agreed action point still rested with them.

It was noted that the Committee had previously agreed that if no further approach had been received, the Notice of Motion would be considered as closed. This had been communicated to Councillor Kidney, who had raised the matter, but was no longer a Member of the Authority. He added that the Authority remained happy to work with the Community Council should they put forward any proposals in future.

**Noted.**

**8. PCNPA response to Audit Wales – Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 calls for action**

It was reported that in July 2022 the Auditor General for Wales had published the Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 report, which set out five calls for action for organisations to tackle the



common barriers to decarbonisation in the public sector. The report did not make specific recommendations given the high-level nature of the review, however, it encouraged public bodies to consider the messages in the report, and through their internal governance structures, set out publicly how they intended to respond to the calls for action.

The report before Members set out the Authority's progress to date against these calls for action and future activities that would support it to further deliver against them under the headings of Leadership and Collaboration; Strategic Direction; Finance; Skills Gaps and Increasing Capacity; and Data.

Much of the progress was captured in the Authority's Responding to Climate Change Emergency (National Park Management Plan) Action Plan that had been approved by Members in June 2020. Key developments and achievements under this plan were highlighted in Appendix 1. However it was noted that this plan would be superseded by the creation of the Decarbonisation Delivery Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan, which would support delivery against outcomes under the Authority's new Climate Well-being Objective, and this new Plan would be further informed by the Authority's 2021/22 Net Zero submission to Welsh Government and cross year data analysis set out in Appendix 2.

The officer clarified that the Authority did not have to submit a response to the Call for Action and that publicly setting out the Authority's actions and intentions was sufficient. She also clarified that the target for the Authority to be carbon neutral was 2030, while 2040 was the aim for carbon neutrality of the National Park as a whole.

Members noted that the report contained a lot of information, but felt that more emphasis could have been given to the recent changes to the Authority's vision and strategy, and the resulting restructure, which had been driven by the call for net zero carbon and the climate emergency. They asked a number of detailed questions, particularly regarding the approach to embedding the target for carbon neutrality within planning, and these were answered by the Director.

Matthew Brushett from Audit Wales had attended the meeting and he thanked officers for a comprehensive report, which he advised had been forwarded to the team which had written the report.

### **Noted.**

[Councillor M James tendered his apologies and left the meeting during the course of the following item.]



## 9. **Review of PCNPA Car Park Season Ticket offer in advance of the 2023 Season**

Members were reminded that the Authority offered 2 season ticket types - one ticket type was valid for use at any of its car parks and cost £70 while the other was limited to use at a single nominated location only and cost £25. Both tickets were available to all, with no qualifying criteria or limit on numbers issued. The report set out background information and comparative data with other car park operators in Pembrokeshire and also included an impact assessment of the proposed price increase and an officer response to the impacts identified. Members were asked to approve an increased price point of £140 and £50 for the season tickets respectively and also to the passing on of postal costs to the purchaser.

Referring to the well drafted Integrated Impact Assessment, one Member asked about the proposed mitigation measures in respect of the impact of increasing charges on disadvantaged homes. Officers replied that at present the Authority had little information on why tickets were purchased and it was intended to try to obtain this in order to provide better evidence going forward. However the Authority was not set up to provide support to disadvantaged homes and would work with other organisations which had appropriate mechanisms in place, such as foodbanks, to explore possible responses.

Members expressed a wide range of views on the subject of ticket pricing and provision, and it was suggested that a task and finish group be established to consider the provision of season tickets, as well as the price for pay and display tickets, in future seasons. It was also considered that there needed to be a more regular review of charges and that in publicity of this decision it needed to be stressed that the new prices still reflected good value for money.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) the price of season tickets be increased to £50 for use in a single nominated car park, all season, and £140 for use in National Park Authority car parks all season also that postal costs be passed on to the purchaser; and
- b) a task and finish group be established to consider the future provision of season tickets and car park charges.

[The meeting was adjourned between 11.50am and 12.00pm]

## 10. **Amendment of the Authority's Scheme of Delegation in relation to Planning**

Members were reminded that temporary amendments to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation in relation to Development Management were first agreed on 6th May 2020 and extended a number of times, most recently



in December 2021. These amendments had been introduced to assist the Authority in delivering the continuity of the Development Management service during the Covid -19 period. Some elements of the temporary amendments would now cease at the end of December 2022, but it was proposed that some were retained as permanent amendments. Some additional amendments were also proposed to improve the clarity of the Scheme and ensure any new powers which were introduced were captured immediately by the wording of the scheme. A copy of the full replacement text for Section D (Planning Applications and Related Matters) of the Scheme of Delegation was appended at Appendix 2 and Members were asked to amend the Scheme accordingly.

The Chair of the Development Management Committee commented that this was a thorough and careful review which would be helpful in trying to rationalise the amount of work coming before the Committee and therefore allowing those applications that did so to be given due consideration. She noted that it was the Authority's custom and practice to circulate those applications where delegation was with the agreement of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee to all Members for comment beforehand and asked whether it was possible to include this within the scheme. The Director agreed that a footnote could be added to that effect. She also advised, in response to a question, that no major applications had been delegated during the period of extended delegation and in practice she did not expect this criterion to be used regularly.

Other minor amendments had been suggested by email prior to the meeting and some typographical errors identified and it was noted that the current Scheme of Delegation as a whole needed to be updated, for example to reflect job titles amended as part of the Authority's reorganisation and the change of name of the Personnel Committee. The recommendation to approve the amended Scheme subject to these minor factual updates and correction of typographical errors was therefore moved and seconded.

Another Member suggested that applications that were new, novel or contentious should be brought before the Committee, however the officer advised that point 10 of the Scheme allowed for applications which were of significant public and/or Member interest or where the matter was considered to be contentious or controversial to come before the Committee.

However another Member reminded Members that the extended scheme of delegation had been introduced due to the difficulties caused by the Covid Pandemic and felt that the Scheme should now revert to the wording adopted previously, and this was moved and seconded. He was particularly concerned that applications where the views of the Town or



Community Council differed to those of officers came before the Committee in the interests of democracy, and to allow the Councils to feel that their voices had been heard. It was noted that other amendments were proposed to the Scheme in addition to the three criteria agreed as a temporary extension in response to Covid and as a result officers advised that a vote should be taken on the original motion to approve the revised scheme as if this did not succeed, it would have the effect of the Scheme of Delegation reverting to its pre-Covid state.

It was **resolved** that the scheme of delegation Section D with regard to planning applications and related matters be amended as outlined within the report and set out in full in Appendix 2 to it and that the entire Scheme of Delegation be reviewed to correct typographical errors and minor factual updates.

#### **11. Cyber Security Lead Member**

Members were reminded that at its November meeting, the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee had discussed confidential correspondence from Audit Wales in relation to Cyber Security. During consideration of this item Members had recognised the importance of this issue and the need to ensure that they were better informed and better able to seek assurance that the Authority was undertaking appropriate action to protect itself from cyber-attacks. It had therefore been suggested that it would be beneficial to appoint a Lead Member for Cyber Security. This Member would engage with the IT Department and lead officers in the Authority to develop a better understanding of the issues and be able to support other Members when questioning and seeking assurance in relation to how the Authority protects itself from cyber-attacks.

It was noted that all Members were equally responsible for the good governance of the Authority, ensuring that it acted in accordance with legal requirements and also good practice, therefore the Lead Member would not have any additional responsibility or accountability. However, they would receive more specialised training and support to develop a better understanding of the cyber issues.

The Chair of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee added that in recommending that a Lead Member be appointed the Committee wished to emulate other successful organisations in seeking someone to champion this area of work, to ask the right questions and to keep cyber security in the forefront of everyone's mind. She noted that once officers had fully assessed the reports, some sort of action plan would be presented to the Authority and also that all Members would receive training in this area. Dr R Plummer endorsed the principle of a champion, and suggested that training could be discussed at the Member Support





and Development Committee. She added that she was happy to be considered as the Lead Member if that was helpful.

It was **resolved** that Dr R Plummer be appointed as the Lead Member for Cyber Security.

**12. Project update on the procurement of a contractor following the tender process for the Green Room Redevelopment Project**

Members were reminded that in September 2021 it had been agreed in principle to replace the Green Meeting Room on the basis that a 'Green Room Development Group' be established to oversee the delivery of the project and that further details of the final proposal would be agreed by the Authority.

The Buildings Projects Manager updated Members that following planning and building regulations approval and completion of the detailed design process, preparation of the tender package had been completed in October and agreement made at a meeting of the Development Group to seek invitations to tender via the Sell2Wales platform. Unfortunately no formal tender offers had been returned via the portal by the return date and the officer suggested that this was likely to be due principally to the current market conditions. It was therefore proposed that the future strategy should consist of a two-stage return process with pre-qualification on Sell2Wales by March 2023 with a second stage with the selected contractors to be completed by July 2023. The proposed start of construction would be August/September 2023 with expected completion in March 2024. Further updates would be provided as the process progressed and prior to appointment of a contractor.

While Members were disappointed that there had been no tenders, they noted that this reflected their experience elsewhere. Whilst one Member questioned whether the project should continue, most agreed that it was worth going out to tender again, and believed that once the "market" settled down such a building project would be attractive. It was also suggested that some additional promotion of the contract be carried out prior to the tender process.

**Noted.**

**13. Update following the recent meeting of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)**

The Chief Executive reminded Members that since its inauguration, discussions had continued with the CJC to establish the Authority's role within it. A compromise had now been agreed whereby the Authority would be co-opted onto the CJC and its Sub-Committees. A co-option



agreement would be drawn up and this would be presented to a future meeting of the Authority.

**Noted.**

[Councillors Simon Hancock, Rhys Jordan and Steve Alderman and Dr R Heath-Davies tendered their apologies and left the meeting during the course of the following presentation.]

**14. Presentation on the work of Visit Pembrokeshire over the last year from its Chief Executive Emma Thornton**

With apologies for the length of the meeting that day, the Chair welcomed Emma Thornton to the meeting. Her presentation covered the work of Visit Pembrokeshire over the previous year and she began by recapping, for the benefit of newer Members, on its role as the destination management organisation for Pembrokeshire, with a core focus to build sustainable tourism for the benefit of both those living in Pembrokeshire and those visiting, and explaining that it was unique in the way it worked as a public, private and third sector partnership.

A key element of its work was in building the Pembrokeshire Brand and coordinating the marketing of Pembrokeshire as a destination to grow new audiences; this was all done digitally and there had been an increase in its impact via social media and in subscribers to its consumer e-newsletter which both aimed to drive traffic to the Visit Pembrokeshire website. Much work was also taking place in engaging with the trade and increasing the organisation's membership. This was supported by its work in leadership and advocacy which aimed to ensure that the trade had access to and were engaged in all the current Welsh Government consultations.

Much work had been undertaken during the previous year in coordinating delivery of the Destination Management Plan (DMP), which was currently being reviewed in light of covid, the climate emergency and the cost-of-living crisis. It was hoped to publish an updated DMP in the first quarter of 2023. Undertaking research to provide the data used as a basis for the plan, such as an accommodation bedstock survey and the annual survey measuring the economic volume and value of tourism in the County, was another important activity.

Visit Pembrokeshire had been delighted to support the major events which had been held in Pembrokeshire during the year – in particular Ironman and the World Coastal Rowing Championships - and had hosted its own Award ceremony which recognised best practice within Pembrokeshire. During the year it had also developed an 'Open to All' project which aimed to support Pembrokeshire business to become more



accessible and inclusive to disabled visitors. The presentation finished with an outline of the organisation's priorities for 2023.

Members thanked the Chief Executive for her presentation and commended the organisation for its work, agreeing with the importance of promoting Pembrokeshire as a year-round destination. They asked that a copy of the presentation be circulated after the meeting. A number of Members highlighted issues such as the lack of accommodation in Pembrokeshire for disabled users and staff shortages leading to closure of businesses and she replied that these were both problems that were not unique to Pembrokeshire and noted that the skills shortage was a big problem and was one of the reasons to tackle the seasonality of tourism. This was linked to a shortage of accommodation for staff and Emma noted that these were not problems that could be addressed by Visit Pembrokeshire directly but needed to be tackled collectively.

Members were also pleased to hear of the increasing engagement of the public with the 'Pembrokeshire Brand' through social media and the internet, but asked whether that was being translated into an increase in visitors. Emma replied that it was difficult to know what was driving increased visitor footfall, but she was aware that particular campaigns had impacted specific businesses. In response to a further question she noted that Visit Pembrokeshire had 270 member business, however this was a small percentage of the total in Pembrokeshire and growing this number was a key focus for the year ahead, both to bring additional income and to develop a sense of 'team Pembrokeshire'.

**Noted.**

## **15. Seasons Greetings**

The Chair wished everyone a Happy and healthy Christmas and thanked both officers and Members for their contributions to the meeting that day.

