

OPERATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

11 December 2019

Present: Councillor K Doolin (Chair)
Councillor ML Evans, Councillor P Harries, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor S Yelland.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 1.15pm – 2.50pm)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Dr R Plummer.

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 September 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Pathways Project – Review after 2 years delivery

It was reported that the Pathways project was two years into a three and a half year period of funding provided by Welsh Government. Project activity focused on the health, wellbeing and developmental benefits offered by the outdoors, and was divided into two work areas: providing supported practical volunteering sessions for individuals, and developing the capacity of other organisations to access the benefits that regular use of the outdoors offered their clients.

The report provided information on the numbers of people and groups which had taken part in the project as well as an overview of the activities that had taken place and some of the challenges faced.

The report noted that there was a strong focus on evaluation to capture the impact that participation had on those taking part, and officers had invited two people who had participated in the project to share their thoughts with the Committee.

The first of these was Laura Phillips, Coordinator for Pembrokeshire Springboard, a Learning Pembrokeshire project, which provided free courses to adults and families in partnership with 10 Pembrokeshire schools. She explained that through partnership with the National Park she had been encouraged to consider outdoor learning as a key part of



the diverse offer that Springboard provided. She had also been introduced to the John Muir Award which encouraged participants to discover, explore, learn and share the outdoors. She spoke of the enthusiasm and inspiration offered by the Discovery Ranger who ran this side of the project, which had enabled her team to help others. She added that over 1000 people had undertaken outdoor learning as a result and this had been life changing for some of the learners, making them think differently about their lives and locality.

The other aspect of the project was working with individual volunteers, many of whom needed support to undertake voluntary work in the outdoors and in order to do this the Pathways Volunteer Officer explained that he needed the help of Volunteer Leaders and he introduced Kate Rastall who undertook such a role. Kate explained that she had volunteered with the National Park for many years and had worked with many groups through a variety of organisations, however none had been as supportive and inclusive as the Pathways group; it focused on the collective task being carried out, rather than the difficulties and problems of individuals. Volunteers varied in age and background and many suffered with learning disabilities, physical and mental health issues. However the group worked as a team where people listened to and respected one another and this provided many long term benefits. In addition to learning new skills, volunteers gained pride in their achievements, improved fitness and confidence to undertake other challenges as well as enriched understanding and knowledge of wildlife and the outdoors.

Thanking Laura and Kate for sharing their inspiring stories, Members were delighted to hear of the impact that the project was having, although they wished to encourage greater engagement with the Welsh speaking communities of Pembrokeshire. Officers explained that different avenues for funding a successor project were now being sought and they invited the Members to join them at any of their sessions, agreeing to circulate details of when and where these were taking place.

NOTED

5. Volunteering

The report before the Committee explained that volunteers had been contributing to the work of the National Park Authority for at least fifty years. Until recently most volunteered in their local area with their local ranger as Voluntary Wardens, primarily carrying out practical conservation tasks in a group, however in recent years Activity Volunteers had led and supported the varied Activities and Events programme and the Pathways project (Minute 4 refers) had been introduced to provide supported volunteering opportunities.



The Volunteer Development Officer went on to explain that her job title demonstrated that the role of volunteering within the Authority was changing with opportunities for a greater range of work across the Authority as well as an emphasis on the personal and social benefits that volunteering could bring to individuals. An Action Plan had been developed to achieve these aims and the objectives were set out in the report. These were also supported by a Volunteer Forum which had been set up to give volunteers a voice and to improve communication between volunteers and the Authority. It had been suggested that Member representation on the Forum would be helpful, and this would be considered at the next meeting of the National Park Authority.

Members thanked the officer for another inspiring presentation which demonstrated the fantastic work being done across the Authority.

NOTED

[Mrs J James, Dr M Havard and Councillor P Harries tendered their apologies and left the meeting at this juncture. This had the effect of leaving the meeting inquorate, however as no decisions were to be taken the remaining items were received for information only.]

6. Oriel Y Parc – Future Priorities

It was reported that in the summer of 2019 business plans had been prepared for the three centres across the National Park, and that for Oriel y Parc was appended to the report.

The Plan outlined the current tourism environment in Wales, setting the scene for Oriel y Parc within the wider tourism sector of Wales and the UK. The document summarised the centre's visitor figures and financial profile as well as the results from staff and volunteer consultations. These were then used to create the vision, aims and priorities for Oriel y Parc over the next three years.

The predominant conclusion from the finding was that the site would benefit from a package of investment that re-positioned and re-branded Oriel y Parc as a National Park Discovery Centre with services and facilities to inspire people of all ages to explore the landscape, history, culture and heritage of the National Park. Priorities included site presentation, commercial development and visitor intelligence. As a result of recent project funding from Welsh Government, work would soon start to implement this.

The Manager concluded by reminding Members that the launch of the new Exhibition entitled "Wriggle! The Wonderful World of Worms" would take place on 25 January 2020 and all Members would be invited.



NOTED.

7. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31st October 2019

The report given by the Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20 following the seven well-being objectives, with an additional section providing general governance information.

The report presented the performance to 31st October 2019 and included quarter 1 and 2 statistics (April – September) for some data sets. Where work streams, measures or actions related to the Authority's S6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act these were labelled accordingly. It was noted that a number of actions were in amber or red and these related to areas where work had not yet begun, posts had been vacant or further work was needed to progress the activities. It was anticipated that the activities should move from red and amber to green as progress was made throughout the year.

The report highlighted a number of areas of work where the RAG (Red Amber Green) rating was red, including planning, Parkwise training, the Celtic Routes project, outdoor learning and Health and Safety and provided updates on the actions being taken.

Members thanked the officer for the tremendous amount of work undertaken.

NOTED

8. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest Risk Register. The Finance Manager advised that it had been reviewed by both Management and Leadership Teams and recent progress and changes noted. One additional action had been added to the register in respect of Ash Dieback.

NOTED

9. Continuous Improvement Group: delegation of issues

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues that needed to be delegated to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

