

## EMPLOYEE FORUM

3 October 2018

Present:

Member representatives:

Mr A Archer, Councillor P Harries, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor R Owens, Dr RM Plummer and Councillor M Williams.

Staff representatives:

Ms H Buck, Ms N Couceiro, Mrs D Hughes and Ms E Rooney.

Union representatives:

Ms H Huelin and Mr Jason Forrest (Unison).

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 11.00am – 12.40pm)

### 1. Election of Chair

The Chief Executive explained that it was the Authority's custom for Chair's to be elected from Member and staff representatives alternately. As the previous Chair had been a staff representative, nominations were sought from Members of the Authority.

It was **RESOLVED** that Mr A Archer be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

### 2. Election of Deputy Chair

It was **RESOLVED** that Mrs D Hughes be elected Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

### 3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Miss S Davies, Mr R Hughes and Mr M George.

### 2. Introductions

Each person introduced themselves to the rest of the Employee Forum.

### 3. Disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March 2018 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March



2018 be confirmed and signed.

## **5. Revision of the Health and Safety Policy**

The Personnel Manager explained that the most recent version of the Health and Safety Policy had been adopted in March 2015, and in accordance with good practice, the Authority, under the guidance of the Health and Safety Group, had been undertaking work to revise the policy. In particular, the policy better integrated developments in visitor safety work. A copy of the draft revised policy was appended for members of the Forum.

Forum members were pleased to note that this was a clear, plain language policy, however it was suggested that para 2.5 'being well resourced' could include a reference to staffing and other resources that support mental wellbeing. A question was also asked regarding what was meant by 'visitor incident monitoring' and the Personnel Manager explained that this encompassed the work undertaken on visitor safety for example a major incident on the Coast Path which was dealt with by the Coastguard.

The Personnel Manager agreed to include the comments made at the meeting and the draft policy would then be presented to the National Park Authority for approval later in the year.

**NOTED.**

## **6. Health and Safety "Sit Less Move More" Initiative: Tackling Sedentary Behaviour at Work**

The report of the Health and Tourism Policy Officer outlined the risks to health resulting from sedentary behaviour, and the initiative undertaken by those based in the Authority's Llanion offices to counter this by taking part in a virtual coast path walking challenge. She emphasised that this was not about exercise, as many people were fit and strong, but focussed on the recommendation that staff stand up and move about each hour of the day.

Feedback from those who took part had been positive, with several stating that they felt physically and mentally better. They also welcomed the support of management, which countered the fear that people would be perceived as wasting time. It was hoped to undertake a similar initiative later in the year.

Authority Members felt this had been an interesting and innovative initiative and were pleased that the reports from those who had taken part had been so positive. They commented that many of the meetings in which they were involved could benefit from breaks which would allow



people to move about more and they hoped that the initiative would be taken further. Other staff reps noted that an unexpected bonus had been the camaraderie and increased opportunities for face to face conversations with colleagues in the corridors.

Representatives from the Union also agreed that this was a positive action and asked if it could be shared with other employers in Pembrokeshire. Staff were happy for them to do so.

**NOTED.**

**7. Ministers Policy Statement – Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government’s Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks**

The Chief Executive reminded members of the Forum that the above mentioned statement had been published on 27 July 2018 and this outlined key priority areas following consideration of the outcomes from the Review of Designated Landscapes, Future Landscapes Wales Programme and the Taking forward Wales’ Sustainable Management of Natural Resources consultation. He stated that this provided clarity of purpose for the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the context of the UK’s exit from the European Union and at the close of a period of review.

The document had been discussed by both staff and Members in a variety of fora, but that this meeting provided an opportunity for views to be shared between the groups.

Members of the Forum agreed that it was hoped this document would bring an end to what had been a long period of review and were pleased to note that the proposed budget cut for the Authority had also been reversed. This led to a discussion on commerciality and staff believed that the Authority was currently striking a good balance between generating income and maintaining the heritage value of sites, staying true to the values of the National Park. Some Members of the Authority remained concerned about the potential impact on local businesses, however others noted that the attractions of the National Park generated revenue for such business. Such discussions between Members would continue to ensure that the appropriate balance was struck. It was also noted that in response to the economic challenges, more fundraising roles were being created across the National Parks.

**NOTED.**



## **8. Future Funding Priorities for the Authority**

The Chief Executive noted that despite the re-instatement of the Authority's budget, there remained a great deal of uncertainty. He believed that the planned review of the work of the Authority should still take place as the financial situation was unlikely to improve in the next ten years, and that Members, staff and other stakeholders would be given an opportunity to feed into the process.

**NOTED.**

## **9. UNISON proposal that the Authority consider becoming an accredited Living Wage Employer**

UNISON officers noted that the Authority had paid the Living Wage to its staff for a number of years and asked whether any further consideration had been given to signing up as an accredited employer. Officers replied that the decision had been taken to pay a supplementary allowance to bring all wages to the equivalent of the Living Wage unless it became unaffordable for the Authority. However there were also costs associated with accreditation and considerations regarding contractors which had to be taken into account.

One Member noted that an organisation's greatest asset was its staff and that adoption of accredited status would show appreciation and confidence in them. He proposed that the Forum recommend to the Authority that such an action be undertaken. While other Members were supportive of this, they were concerned about the possible cost and suggested that further information needed to be provided before a decision could be taken. The Personnel Manager pointed out that in any case, the NJC two year pay deal, designed to accommodate the National Living Wage, as opposed to the 'real' living wage, included significant salary increases at the lower points of the pay spine and the Authority had not yet agreed how this would be implemented. It was suggested that a further report be brought to the Authority once a decision had been taken with regards to the pay and grading review. This was accepted and the proposition that the Authority be recommended to become a Living Wage Employer was withdrawn.

**NOTED.**

