

**NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
(Extraordinary Meeting)**

20th October 2010

Present: Mr R Howells (Chairman)
Mrs G Hayward and Messrs JA Brinsden, D Ellis, ML Evans, RR Evans, HM George, RN Hancock, SL Hancock, M James, RM Lewis, PJ Morgan, EA Sangster and M Williams.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 11.30a.m. – 12.50p.m.)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ms C Gwyther, Mrs F Lanc and Councillors JS Allen-Mirehouse and WL Raymond.

2. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

3. Exclusion of the public

Prior to Members considering the report of the Director of Recreation, Marketing and Communications (*Minute 4 below refers*), the Head of Legal Services reminded them that there was a statutory presumption that all the business of the Authority should be conducted in public. However, he added that the law acknowledged there were circumstances in which the public could properly be excluded, but that such exclusion had to be justified on one of the statutory grounds.

He advised that he had considered the report prior to its circulation to Members and had been inclined to the view that – on balance – exempting the report from public disclosure at that stage was warranted under paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as it constituted “information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority.” Following this initial judgement, he had then applied the public interest test, and concluded that premature disclosure of the information contained in the report in an unmanaged way could have been detrimental to the public interest and prejudiced the Authority’s effective management of a public asset, such that (to invoke the statutory wording) “the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweigh(ed) the public interest in disclosing the information”.

The Head of Legal Services considered, however, that now that Members were in a position to debate the issues in a full, properly structured manner, they might consider that the balance of judgement had shifted and that the matter could now be considered in public. He added that the judgement was one for Members. Councillor ML Evans argued strongly that the matter should be considered in private, for the



reasons initially put forward by the Head of Legal Services. Councillor Evans' motion was widely supported by Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, would be disclosed.

4. Oriel y Parc café

Members considered a detailed report from the Director of Recreation, Marketing and Communications on the operation of the café at Oriel y Parc, St Davids. The report contained background information on the extension of the original Visitor Centre in 2008 to incorporate a gallery and café, together with details of the original business plan, and went on to present financial information relating to actual café sales over the last three years.

The Director reminded Members that the financial performance of the café had, for the reasons set out in the report, not met the projected targets set out in the original business plan. The issue had been the subject of previous discussions by Members, and the Oriel y Parc Committee – at its meeting held on the 28th October 2009 – resolved that the café operate for a further full season prior to making any decisions on its future operation. Since then (and in line with Members' instructions at that time), a number of changes had been made at the Centre in an attempt to boost income, but unfortunately the 2010 financial figures reflected those experienced in 2009, which forecast that the centre would again be operating over its projected budget.

Members deliberated at great length the options put forward in the report, and the fact that the continuing loss of income by the café at Oriel y Parc could not be sustained. The Chairman stated that officers should start immediately to explore all options regarding the future use of the space.

Following a detailed discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the café facility at Oriel y Parc be closed as soon as practically possible;
- (b) that officers be authorised to immediately explore all options regarding the future use of the space, and
- (c) that a report be brought back to Members at the earliest opportunity.

(The Authority's Monitoring Officer then advised Members that, in the light of the debate undertaken and the decision reached, it would now be appropriate to allow the Director's report to be made available for public consideration, to which Members assented.)

