

# NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

13 August 2018

Present: Mrs G Hayward (Chair)

Mr A Archer, Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor P Harries, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr RM Plummer, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 11.35am)

## 1. Congratulations

The Chair congratulated Dr RM Plummer on becoming a grandmother for the first time.

## 2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Evans, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor R Owens and Councillor A Wilcox.

## 3. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

## 4. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 20 June 2018 – AGM and Ordinary meeting were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the National Park Authority AGM on 20 June 2018 be confirmed and signed.

Turning to Minute 8, Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Pembrokeshire, of the minutes of the Ordinary meeting, Dr R Heath-Davies wished to clarify that her concern had been the difficulty of obtaining information when maps could not be downloaded, for example when out and about and there was a poor mobile signal.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 20 June 2018 be confirmed and signed subject to the above amendment,

## 5. Matters arising

### (a) Carew Castle Café (Minute 4(a) Ordinary Meeting)

It was noted that the Café at Carew Castle was now open.

**NOTED.**



## **6. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reported that she had attended the Scouts AGM where she had received a warm welcome; she had found the meeting very interesting and commended those who gave of their time in many different ways for the benefit of the young people. She had also attended a RAF Centenary celebration hosted by the Sunderland Trust at Pembroke Dock and again applauded the commitment of the staff and volunteers to the organisation and their work in preserving the history of Pembroke Dock.

**NOTED.**

## **7. Reports of meetings of various of the Authority's 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 the 6 June, 18 June and 20 June 2018;
- (ii) Operational Review Committee held on 13 June 2018;
- (iii) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 18 July 2018.

**NOTED.**

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

The Chair welcomed Deryck Evans from the Wales Audit Office to the meeting. He explained that the Audit work had now been completed, and the Auditor, Mr Anthony Barrett, intended to certify the accounts the following day and to issue an unqualified report on the Authority's financial statements on receipt of the signed accounts. Mr Evans wished to thank the Finance Manager and his team for their hard work and for maintaining their high standards despite a number of changes within the team. While there were no misstatements identified within the financial statements, he drew attention to a small number of issues which could be found in Appendix 3 of the report – these comprised technical accounting errors which had no overall impact on the accounts and other minor suggested changes, such as rounding errors. Two recommendations were also made in Appendix 4 regarding the Fixed Asset Register and bank reconciliations and the Finance Manager confirmed that these had now been implemented. Mr Evans also pointed out that a change in the regulations meant that the date for closure of the accounts had been brought forward and therefore there would be a need for a meeting of the National Park Authority in July 2019 so that this deadline could be met.

Members were pleased to receive a set of unqualified accounts and to note that the recommendations made had been implemented. Turning to the table of significant governance issues identified in the Statement of



Accounts, it was requested that an update on the progress made in clearing the backlog of enforcement cases be provided to the next meeting of the Development Management Committee, this being a more public meeting than the Review Committee's which already received such updates, and could therefore provide greater assurance to the public that the problem was being dealt with. It was also noted that there was an error on Appendix 1, the Schedule of Members' Allowances and Expenses paid – footnote 3 should refer to 2016, not 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The ISA260 Report by the Wales Audit Office to those Charged with Governance be accepted; and
- b) The Statement of Accounts 2017/18 be approved and signed.

## **9. Improvement Plan Part 2 and Annual Report on meeting Well-being Objectives 2017/18**

It was reported that under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Authority was required to publish an Improvement Plan Part 2 by 31 October. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 also 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 must publish an annual report showing the progress they have made in meeting their objectives. They must also demonstrate how they have applied the 5 ways of working under the sustainable development principle of Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement.

The report before Members outlined progress against the work programme proposed in the Authority's Corporate and Resources Plan for the year 2017/18 and was both the Authority's Improvement Plan Part 2 and its annual report on progress made against its Well-being Objectives. It also acted as its annual equality report (see Objective 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.).

It was noted that there was an error in the table on page 30 of the report and this would be reviewed before the report was published.

Members thanked the officer for a comprehensive report, which provided a detailed picture of the activities carried by the Authority and which was both useful to them and interesting to the public. It was suggested that additional information be included explaining how the Authority was addressing the backlog of enforcement cases and Members also provided a number of suggestions for the Plan's improvement in future years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Improvement Plan Part 2 and Annual Report on meeting Well-being Objectives 2017/18 be approved.



## 10. Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government's Priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks

It was reported that on the 27 July the Chair of the Authority had received a letter from the Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn AM, which outlined the Priorities for National Park Authorities 2018-19. The letter referred to the Welsh Government statement "Valued and Resilient: The Welsh Government's Priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks", which was published on the same day. Both documents were appended to the report.

The statement outlined key priority areas following consideration of the outcomes from the Review of Designated Landscapes, Future Landscapes Wales Programme and responses to the *Taking forward Wales' sustainable management of natural resources* consultation. It provided clarity of purpose for the National Parks and AONBs in the context of the UK's exit from the European Union and at the close of a period of review.

While Members broadly welcomed the documents, particularly the additional funding that had been announced, they were cautious regarding the future financial situation and asked about the measures being put in place to allocate the additional funding for the current year. The Chief Executive replied that the additional funding provided opportunities and a report would be made in the autumn when the figures for the summer season were available. Members also suggested that processes needed to be put in place to ensure that the Authority could provide evidence of the work currently being undertaken which was in line with the priorities set out in the letter and statement.

In relation to the section 'realising the economic potential', while some Members were disappointed that there was no explicit remit for economic development through its inclusion as a 'third purpose', they took positives from the Minister's encouragement for the Authority to support economic activity and believed that there were opportunities in this regard which needed to be considered. They also believed further work was needed to determine what constituted appropriate commercial activities and how these could be maximised while remaining true to core values and purposes. It was stated that the most important economic driver within the county was its unspoilt landscape and this needed to be maintained.

Members concluded by commending the work of the three Welsh Chief Executives in engaging with Welsh Government in recent years, believing that this was now bearing fruit.



It was **RESOLVED** that the statement “Valued and Resilient: the Welsh Government’s Priorities for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks” and the positive funding announcement from the Welsh Government be noted.

#### **11. Review of Tenby Conservation Area Boundary**

It was reported that the Tenby Conservation Area had been designated in 1971 and extended in 1996. The boundary had again been reviewed and it was proposed to significantly extend it to the west to include the Southcliffe area, important outlying streets, the Old Rectory and the Cemetery. This would include the best-preserved later C19th development of the town, a phase under-represented within the existing boundary.

Most of the buildings in the proposed extension were not listed, but retained their form and settings well, the main threats being alteration from householder permitted development rights including alterations of historic fenestration, removal of front boundaries and provision of hard-standings. Inclusion within the conservation area would ensure that such buildings would be regularly monitored and an Article 4(2) Direction control could be introduced if there was a real and specific threat to the historic character.

The report sought approval for initiating public consultation on the proposed boundary and the results of this would be reported to a future meeting of the Authority.

Members welcomed the report, but sought assurance that any planning applications which had already been submitted would not be affected, and this was given.

It was **RESOLVED** approval be given to proceed with formal public consultation to extend Tenby Conservation Area as set out on the map attached to the report, with a report of consultations to be the focus of a further report to the Authority.

#### **12. To Consider a Change to the Calendar of Meetings in March 2019**

Members were reminded that the Calendar of Meetings 2018/19 had been approved at the meeting of the National Park Authority held on 28 March 2018. Since then, it had been realised that the date of the National Parks UK Member Induction session which was due to take place in Brecon between 12 and 14 March 2019, clashed with meetings of the Development Management Committee and Employee Forum currently scheduled for 13 March 2019. In view of the fact that several Members had expressed an interest in attending the induction in Brecon, it was suggested that consideration be given to moving these meetings to the 6



March. If such a change were agreed, it would also be necessary to move the Operational Review Committee from 6 March to 27 March.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the meetings of the Development Management Committee and Employee Forum be moved from 13 March 2019 to 6 March 2019; and
- b) the meeting of the Operational Review Committee be moved from 6 March 2019 to 27 March 2019.

### **13. Committee Membership**

Members were reminded that, at the Annual General Meeting held on 20 June 2018, 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. The necessary appointments had now taken place and a suggested composition of these Committees was set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that membership of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, Grievance Committee and Appeals Committee be confirmed as:

#### Investigating and Disciplinary Committee

Mrs G Hayward, Chair, National Park Authority  
Councillor D Clements, Deputy Chair, Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee  
Councillor A Wilcox  
Councillor M James  
Councillor P Kidney

#### Grievance Committee

Mr A Archer, Chair, Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee  
Councillor M Williams, Deputy Chair, Development Management Committee  
Dr RM Plummer  
Dr R Heath-Davies  
Councillor PJ Morgan

#### Appeals Committee

Mr AE Sangster, Deputy Chair, National Park Authority  
Councillor R Owens, Chair, Development Management Committee  
Councillor P Harries  
Mrs J James  
Councillor K Doolin



#### 14. **Stack Rocks and St Govan's: Update on Lease Renewal Negotiations**

It was reported that the above mentioned sites fell within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and comprised part of their Castlemartin operational training range. The Authority managed both sites under a single lease, which had expired in March 2016, since when it had continued holding over in possession while negotiating terms for renewal.

The sites were both very important in providing facilities for visitors attracted by the spectacular coastal scenery and historic St Govan's Chapel, and had been managed by the Authority since 1974.

Following the MOD's outright rejection of a suggested move away from a formal Landlord & Tenant arrangement in favour of a more flexible contemporary Management Agreement approach, agreement of terms of a new occupational lease had now been agreed, and the salient terms were set out in the report.

Members were disappointed that the MOD was not more progressive in its outlook and that despite officers' attempts to be proactive, it had still taken several years to reach an agreement. They questioned whether this was in the spirit of partnership working.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers be authorised to document a lease renewal of the Stack Rocks and St Govan's sites on the terms outlined in the report.

#### 15. **Newport Parrog Undergrounding Scheme**

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Authority on 9 August 2017, the ongoing work of officers towards the delivery of a joint undergrounding scheme by Wester Power Distribution (WPD) and BTOpenreach at Newport Parrog was approved, with the Authority contributing £14,000 towards the BTOpenreach total estimated cost of £33,000. WPD would be meeting their costs, estimated to be in the order of £187,000.

While the basis of WPD's involvement remained unchanged, BTOpenreach had now withdrawn their offer of a partial cost recovery model and were now only able to proceed on a full cost recovery basis which they had estimated downwards to £24,054; delivery of the scheme would therefore require the Authority to contribute this sum.

Officers were of the opinion that, notwithstanding the increased financial cost to the Authority, the proposed scheme represented an outstanding opportunity to achieve permanent visual benefits within one of the National Park's most iconic locations. It also offered the potential to be



the ninth undergrounding scheme delivered under this WPD initiative within the National Park.

Members agreed that, an intervention rate by the Authority of 11.3% of the total scheme represented a worthwhile investment in order to achieve undergrounding of these cables, which would enhance the landscape of both Newport Parrog and in longer views of Newport from further up the Afon Nyfer and Carningli. However Members questioned whether greater pressure could be put on BTOpenreach in future to invest in undergrounding as part of upgrades to superfast broadband, for which they understood funding was being provided by Welsh Government. The officer advised that BTOpenreach were reluctant to underground cables as this made them less accessible and the Chief Executive added that Members might have more influence through engagement with utility regulators at stakeholder events.

It was **RESOLVED** that ongoing work towards securing the delivery of an undergrounding scheme at Newport Parrog, to include a financial contribution by the authority towards the scheme's cost up to a maximum of £26,500, be authorised.

**16. Exclusion of the public**

It was **RESOLVED** that the public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**17. Update on the Disposal of the Authority's Land Holding known as National Park Caravan Site, Sageston**

Members were reminded that this land holding was an 8 acre brownfield site on the southern edge of Sageston which the Authority held freehold with full vacant possession. It was surplus to the Authority's operational requirements and outline planning permission had been granted on 30 June 2016 for a development of between 90 and 100 dwellings. At a meeting of the Authority in August 2013 it had been resolved that upon the granting of outline planning permission, officers should commence a marketing exercise of the site. This exercise had been ongoing, with an update provided to a meeting of the National Park Authority in September 2017. An offer to purchase the site had now been received from *ateb* and Members were asked to consider this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the offer from *ateb* as outlined in the report be accepted and officers be authorised to undertake the necessary conveyance process up to and including legal completion.

