

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

28 November 2018

Present: Mrs G Hayward (Chair)

Mr A Archer, Councillor P Baker, Councillor M Evans, Councillor P Harries, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Dr RM Plummer, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor S Yelland

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.45pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin and Councillor M Williams.

2. Disclosures

Councillor P Baker disclosed an interest in item 44/18 Submission of the Deposit LDP and also 47/18 Update on the proposed variation of the pre-existing Car Park Order. Councillor P Harries disclosed an interest in item 44/18 Submission of the Deposit LDP. However both Members remained in the meeting and played a full part in the discussion on the relevant items.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 October 2018 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the National Park Authority on 3 October 2018 be confirmed and signed.

4. Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed Barbara Bevan who was observing the meeting that morning. Barbara had recently started on a temporary contract with the Authority. The Chair went on to report that during November she had attended a meeting of the Council for National Parks at which there had been discussions regarding the review by Julian Glover of English National Parks, similar to that which had been undertaken in Welsh National Parks in recent years. She had also attended the annual National Farmers' Union dinner at which the Authority had been encouraged to take a progressive approach to agricultural matters.

The Chief Executive added that Members may be interested to know that the sale of the Authority's site at Sageston to *ateb* and the lease to Newport Town Council for the former Tourist Information Centre at Newport had both been completed.



NOTED.

5. 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 5th and 17th September 2018;
- (ii) Operational Review Committee held on 26th September 2018.

NOTED.

6. Europarc Youth Manifesto – a call for change in rural communities and protected areas

The Chair reminded Members that at the previous meeting of the Authority she had spoken about her attendance, together with Mr AE Sangster, Discovery Ranger Tom Moses and three Youth Rangers – Cat, Ethan and Matt, at the Europarc Conference on the theme 'Inspired by the next generation'. She welcomed Tom and the Youth Rangers to the meeting.

The Youth Rangers then made a presentation to the Authority regarding the Youth Manifesto (appended to the report) which had been prepared by the Youth delegates from all over Europe and presented to the Conference. This highlighted the concerns of young people and suggested what could be done to address these.

Mrs Hayward and Mr Sangster commended the work and enthusiasm of the young people at the conference and the impact their ideas had had on delegates. Members also thanked the Youth Rangers for their inspirational presentation. It was suggested that in order to take this forward, a meeting of the Youth Rangers, together with a small number of interested Members, should be arranged.

It was **RESOLVED** that a meeting of the Youth Rangers and a small group of Members be arranged to discuss the next steps and relevant actions.

7. Submission of the Deposit Local Development Plan (Replacement) & Focussed Changes and Supporting Documents

The Head of Park Direction explained that the purpose of her report was to seek the formal approval of the Authority to submit the above mentioned documents to the Welsh Government and Planning Inspectorate for Examination. Weblinks to these could be found in the report.



It was noted that before submission could take place, the Consultation Report, which included a summary of all the issues raised at the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Stages of the Plan as well as Officers' proposed response to these, also had to be agreed.

As a result of comments on the Deposit Plan, a number of Focussed Changes were proposed and Members were asked to approve these for consultation. Delegated powers were sought to allow officers to provide the Authority's response to representations received as a result of this consultation. Representations received and the Authority's response to them would form an addendum to the Consultation Report referred to above.

The Report concluded by outlining the next steps which included the Examination into the Plan. Authority was also sought for the Head of Park Direction to negotiate on behalf of the Authority during the Examination, the outcomes of which would be reported back to the Authority in due course.

Members asked a number of questions regarding issues raised at the last Members' Workshop on the LDP and the Focussed Changes which officers answered. It was noted that with regard to a potential Highway issue relating to one of the areas of Open Space proposed, the Highway Authority could make representations on the Focussed Changes.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Authority's Consultation Report on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 be approved.
- b) The Head of Park Direction be authorised to submit Local Development Plan 2, the Focussed Change document and associated documents to the Welsh Government and Planning Inspectorate.
- c) The Head of Park Direction be authorised to advertise Focussed Changes and be provided with delegated powers to respond to the representations received from the consultation of the Focussed Changes and prepare an addendum to the Report of Consultations for the Inspectorate.
- d) The Head of Park Direction be authorised to formally advertise and organise for the Examination, including the Pre-Hearing Meeting and Hearing itself.
- e) The Head of Park Direction be authorised to negotiate on behalf of the National Park Authority during the Examination, the outcomes of which would be reported back for formal confirmation to the National Park Authority in due course.



8. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Pembrokeshire**

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Authority in June 2018, the consultation draft of the successor Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Pembrokeshire had been considered. This plan had been prepared jointly by the National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire County Council to replace the initial ROWIP which covered the period 2008 – 2018.

It was reported that 18 formal written responses had been received and a report on the consultation responses, together with the resulting proposed amendments was appended to the report.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 was also appended for Members and they were asked to approve this document.

Members were pleased to note that the path network was in a good condition and suggested that the Enhancing Pembrokeshire fund could be used to further improve this in future, particularly if work was carried out in partnership with voluntary user groups. The importance of good signage was also noted as a factor in improving usage although another Member agreed that while signage was important in more urban areas, he hoped that there would be no increase in signage in more remote areas of the county which would impact negatively on their sense of tranquillity. It was also hoped that more work could be done with younger people and also through social prescribing, working with the Health Board. The officer replied that the actions identified under Objectives E and F of the Plan encouraged participation and awareness of walking in all groups.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 be approved.

9. **Annual Review of the 2018 Operation and Management of the Authority's Charging Car Park Sites**

The report before Members provided a review of the operation and management of the Authority's car park sites during 2018 including numbers of tickets issued, net receipts and operating costs. Also highlighted was the increasing problem of 'overnighting' mobile home/camper vans and the action that it was proposed to take to address this.

Members agreed that increased overnight camping was a concern and hoped that targeting the problem would reduce it. There also needed to be greater education and communication as to why such parking was not allowed. One Member noted that although receipts were up, operating costs were also, and questioned why that had been the case. The officer



replied that operating costs had increased due to the absence on sick leave of a member of staff and investment in a new pay and display machine. With regard to receipts, the ethos of the Authority was not to maximise revenue and therefore the increase in nil charge and season tickets offered a cost effective means for people to park in the Authority's car parks. It was suggested that further discussion on this point could be the subject of a report to Members in future.

It was **RESOLVED** that the ongoing action of officers in readiness for the 2019 season be endorsed.

10. Update Report on the Proposed Variation of the Pre-existing Car Park Order in readiness for the start of the 2019 Car Park Charging Season

Members were reminded that at their meeting on 16 May 2018, they had resolved to instruct Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) in their capacity as the relevant Highway Authority to commence the statutory process which would allow the Authority to give effect to various provisions as agreed at the meeting of the Authority held on 29 November 2017. As a result, a 21 day public consultation on the Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2015 Variation Order No.1 2019 had taken place, and the report before Members set out the consultation process and summarised the main themes raised during the consultation, together with the Authority's response. A full list of responses to the Order had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Noting that she had received several other representations prior to the meeting, the Chair drew Members' attention to additional information received that morning regarding the car park at West Angle Bay and they were given a few minutes in which to read this.

Referring to the correspondence they had received regarding the introduction of charging at Amroth and Angle car parks, a number of Members were concerned regarding the proposals, particularly in respect of the long held belief by the community that the car park in Angle had been given for free car parking in perpetuity. The Estates Officer responded that the legal document by which the car park at West Angle was transferred to the Authority required it only to be used as a car park with no reference to charging or otherwise. However it was noted that the report before Members that day asked them to consider the outcome of the statutory consultation. PCC, as the relevant Highway Authority, could then complete the process required to vary the terms of the Car Park Order currently in force. Implementation of the Order was at the discretion of the National Park Authority and further discussions on this could take place at a future meeting if necessary. The Estates Officer



added that he understood the Order could take from the beginning of April, and as the 2019 charging season would have already commenced, he would consider deferring introduction of its provisions until the following season.

Other Members were happy to support the responses to the consultation set out in the report and for officers to take forward the process.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The outcome of the statutory consultation be noted.
- b) Members reconfirm their instructions to the Highway Authority to proceed with the Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2015 Variation Order No.1 2019.

11. Proposed Regearing of Marloes Sands Car Park

It was reported that the above mentioned property comprised a large, informally surface car park which had been operated by the National Trust as a paying car park since the early 1980s. In 2011 the opportunity arose to regear that lease with the parties documenting a new 10 year full repairing and insuring lease with a turnover based rent reflecting 60% of the gross car parking income.

Subject to obtaining both landlord and relevant statutory consents, the National Trust were now looking to improve the facilities within the car park by laying a new tarmac surface and constructing a permanent car park attendant/membership recruiting building. However to justify that level of expenditure, they had approached the Authority requesting a new 20 year lease on the pre-existing terms. Officers were of the opinion that the current lease terms in force were equitable and fair and that the requested 20 year extension would have the effect of securing those lease terms into the medium / long term.

One Member expressed concern with the proposal, believing that the National Trust had promised much at this site, but not delivered. He asked whether it was possible to require them to resurface the car park as a condition of the lease extension. The officer replied that as the National Trust was an existing tenant he did not believe that this was possible and felt that granting the extension would encourage them to undertake the work.

It was **RESOLVED** that the granting of a new 20 year lease to the National Trust on the pre-existing terms be authorised.



12. Property Known as Furze Mill abutting the Authority's Car Park at Nolton Haven

It was reported that a small pedestrian bridge existed between the Authority's car park at Nolton Haven and the abutting residential property 'Furze Mill' which had been in situ for many years and which took support on the Authority's land. The purpose of the bridge was to provide a secondary means of pedestrian only access. Ancillary to their use of the bridge, the owners of Furze Mill had also used part of the Authority's soft landscaped car park verge as a pedestrian access way. Furze Mill was now being offered for sale and there was currently no written agreement documenting either the presence of the bridge or use of the pedestrian access way.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with the Authority's adopted Encroachment Policy, a deed of grant to the owners of Furze Mill to regulate the ongoing presence of the bridge and the pedestrian access way ancillary to the use of the bridge along the grass verge of the car park be approved.

13. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) – Changes to Administration

It was reported that the SDF had previously been administered in house. However following staff changes, it was considered to be an appropriate time to reconsider the administration of the Fund and for a trial period of 15 months to enter an agreement to procure this through partnership with PLANED.

Members were reassured that any decision on which projects would benefit from the fund would remain with the SDF Committee, which would continue to run as it did currently.

Members questioned whether the arrangements provided value for money and also asked what would happen if PLANED ceased to exist. Officers replied that the nature of SDF meant that there was a high degree of officer support for projects, and because a number of projects also sought match funding from other funds administered by PLANED it was hoped there would be efficiencies as well as a simplified process for applicants.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposal for partnership working with PLANED for a trial 15 month period to administer the Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of the Authority be approved.

14. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2019/20

It was reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had recently published its draft Annual Report for 2019/20 and the key points



of relevance were summarised, with the changes taking effect from 1st April 2019. Members' views were sought on whether a response to the report should be submitted to the Panel, and if so, the content of such a response.

One Member noted that the final sentence of paragraph 12.2 which stated that 'Expenses reimbursed to members by their local authority are exempt from Income Tax and employee NICs' was incorrect and it was felt that a response should be made regarding this factual inaccuracy.

It was **RESOLVED** that a response should be made to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales regarding the factual inaccuracy of the final sentence of paragraph 12.2 of their draft Annual Report 2019/20.

15. Revision of the Health and Safety Policy

It was reported that the most recent version of the Health and Safety Policy had been adopted in March 2015 and work had recently been undertaken to revise the policy, in particular the policy better integrated developments in visitor safety work. The revised policy had been developed in consultation with the Health and Safety Group, and also via the Staff Representative Group. The draft policy had been considered by the Employee Forum in October and the comments arising from that meeting had been incorporated.

One Member noted that she had had the opportunity, through involvement in other bodies, to review lots of Health and Safety Policies. She felt that the Authority's policy, which was overarching, could benefit from making reference to other of its policies, such as those relating to Display Screen Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment. Also the Authorities' procedures for awareness and training, particularly induction training of new staff, should be made explicit. She also suggested that the title of the person who was responsible for Health and Safety on a day to day basis could be included and it could also be noted that any serious incidents would be reported to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee. Finally Health and Safety increasingly included 'wellbeing' and greater reference could be made to this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Health and Safety Policy be approved subject to taking account of the above suggestions.

16. The Causeway, Carew Millpond and Carew Castle Progress Report

Members were reminded that the Authority had an ongoing commitment to upgrade the visitor attractions at Carew Castle and Tidal Mill, with a budgeted spend of c£160,000 plus £123,212 for a radical enhancement scheme which included development of the Walled Garden and the new tea room which was already in operation. The report sought approval for



three further items of expenditure relating to a five year maintenance plan for the Carew Causeway Structure, connection of the walled garden drainage to the mains sewerage system and an upgrade to the ticketing/sales area in the visitor centre. The Building Project Officer also requested, at the meeting, that as on the previous occasion, normal procurement rules be suspended through use of Major Contract Standing Order 13, under which tenders would be sought from three or four contractors with whom the Authority had previously worked. This was due to the limited timeframe within which the work needed to be undertaken.

Members were supportive of the proposals but questioned whether there were any planning implications for upgrading the ticketing/sales area. The officer replied that a Non-Material Amendment was being sought for an alteration to the landscaping scheme and the proposal would be included in that. He clarified that customers would still enter and exit through the shop but it was hoped that the proposal would provide for a better flow of visitors. It was also requested that the Welsh Mills Society and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings be consulted on matters relating to Carew Mill in future.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) budgets for Carew be approved or increased as follows – Causeway maintenance - £180,000; Mains sewerage connection - £75,000; and ticketing sales area £25,000.
- b) that Major Contract Standing Order be applied with regard to tenders for the Causeway maintenance work.

