

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

25 July 2019

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chairman)
Mr A Archer, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Mr GA Jones, Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr RM Plummer, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00a.m. – 11.35a.m.)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Baker, Councillor M Evans, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor P Kidney and Councillor R Owens.

2. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 05 June 2019 (Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Meeting) were presented for confirmation and signature.

Referring to Minute 7 of the Annual General Meeting, Dr M Havard reported that the correct title of the body referred to in the final paragraph before the resolution should read “Skomer Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Committee”.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 05 June 2019 (Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Meeting) be confirmed and signed, subject to the above-mentioned amendment being noted.

4. Chair’s Announcements

The Chairman reported that he had attended a number of meetings/events since the last meeting of the Authority. These included:

- The opening of the Newport Visitor Centre;
- The Civic Service for the Mayor of St Davids;
- Welcoming the cruise ship Nautica to Goodwick;
- The official opening of the Stones and Bones exhibition at Oriel y Parc;
- The Pembrokeshire Scouts’ Annual General Meeting at St Brides;
- The Park Protector Awards at the Houses of Parliament;
- The Aspire national network for Constable studies at The Tate;
- The Pembrokeshire Business Awards;



- The opening of the Serendome at Bluestone;
- A number of events at the Royal Welsh Show, including the President's lunch, brunch with the 160th Infantry Brigade and the King of Zululand and a meeting with the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government.

NOTED.

5. Reports of meetings of various of the Authority's Committees

Reports of meetings of a number of the Authority's Committees were presented to Members for consideration/information.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the reports of the meetings of the Development Management Committee held on 01 May and 05 June 2019, the Member Support and Development Committee held on 05 June 2019, the Personnel Committee held on 04 and 05 June 2019 and the Operational Review Committee held on 05 June 2019 be received, and
- (b) that the reports of the meetings of the Member Support and Development Committee held on 08 May 2019 and the Operational Review Committee held on 12 June 2019 be adopted.

6. ISA260 report to those charged with governance

The Chairman welcomed Mr Deryck Evans from the Wales Audit Office to the meeting. Mr Evans reported that his office's audit work had now been completed and the report before Members that day was the result of that work. He wished to raise one significant issue, which impacted upon all local authorities, that had arisen as a result of a Court of Appeal ruling against the UK Government's proposals to change the pension schemes of a group of public officers from a final salary to a career average basis. The ruling was known as the McCloud judgement and the estimated cost of providing a remedy to affected employees was likely to be significant. As the sum involved was above the Authority's materiality threshold for the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19, the Authority had made an adjustment, which was referenced within Appendix 3 of the Auditor General's report, together with a couple of misstatements that had been identified during the audit. He added that a guidance document had also been attached to the report, which set out for Members' information the implications of misstatements and their impact on audit work.

This issue apart, Mr Evans reported that he had no other significant concerns and stated that it was the Auditor General's intention to issue an unqualified audit report on the Authority's financial statements. Following a query from Dr M Havard, he wished to confirm that the table set out in



Appendix 3 to the report should in fact read 'Exhibit 1' and not 'Exhibit 2'. Finally, he wished to thank the Finance Manager and his team for their assistance in helping him and his colleagues meet the restricted deadline set this time.

The Finance Manager stated that collaboration between the Authority and the Wales Audit Office worked extremely well. He stated that the McCloud judgement had proved quite difficult, but officers had managed to work through it.

Members were pleased to receive yet another set of unqualified accounts and wished to record their thanks to the Finance Manager and his team for their hard work.

There being no queries raised on the Statement of Accounts that were also before Members that day, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the ISA260 Report from the Wales Audit Office be accepted and a Letter of Representation be signed, and
- (b) that the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 be approved and signed.

7. Annual report on meeting well-being objectives (Improvement Plan Part 2) 2018/19

The Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator reported that the Authority was required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, to publish an Improvement Plan Part 2 by 31 October every year. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) 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.

The document presented to Members that day met the requirements of both Acts, and demonstrated how the Authority had applied the five ways of working under the sustainable development principle of Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement. It outlines progress made against the work programme as set out in the Authority's Corporate and Resources Plan for 2018/19 and also acted as the Authority's annual equality report.

Members were informed that officers had also completed the Future Generations Commissioner's "Progress towards well-being objectives – self reflection toolkit" and had attended a workshop to help public bodies learn together and evaluate each others' responses. In order to take account of this, a journey checker table had been included under each objective in order to note the direction of travel towards achieving each one.



Members thanked the Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator for an excellent report that included a lot of interesting and useful information. They considered the benchmarking data to be extremely helpful as it gave Members reassurance that the Authority was either going in the right direction or leading the way in some issues. However, they considered that officers had been very modest in reporting some of the achievements and that this should be remedied in the next report.

Officers responded to a number of queries from Members including some relating to climate change, invasive species and workforce profiling. Following concerns raised about the closure of public toilets, the Chief Executive stated that concerns had been raised with Pembrokeshire County Council as the closures impacted not only upon the visitor's experience but on the local community as well. He stated that the management of the fabric, and promotion of the National Park – and Pembrokeshire as a whole – relied on an integrated strategy that looked at the bigger picture. He accepted that the financial landscape for local authorities had changed dramatically in recent years, but discussions needed to be held in order to ensure a sustainable future for local communities and visitors alike.

Turning to Carew Castle, Councillor M Williams wished to thank the officers concerned for what he considered to be an excellent enhancement scheme for the site and the first class delivery of the project.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Improvement Plan Part 2 and Annual Report on meeting Well-being Objectives 2018/19 be approved.

8. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

The Chief Executive reported that, since writing the report before Members that day, he had received legal advice on progressing the appointment of a Monitoring Officer for the Authority. As a result, he proposed that the Authority advertise the post, stipulating that applications would be welcomed from individuals, partners interested in offering joint working opportunities or secondments and/or legal companies. He stressed, however, that the Authority would be looking for a named individual if a partner or legal company expressed an interest. He then set out the timescale proposed for the advertisement and recruitment process

It was **RESOLVED** that the recruitment process outlined by the Chief Executive at the meeting



9. Membership of Committees and outside bodies

Members were reminded that, at the Annual General Meeting held on 05 June 2019, 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 it was proposed that the composition of these Committees be as follows:

Investigating and Disciplinary Committee

Councillor P Harries, Chair, National Park Authority
Councillor R Owens, Chair, Development Management Committee
Dr M Havard
Dr R Heath-Davies
Councillor A Wilcox

Grievance Committee

Councillor Mrs D Clements, Deputy Chair, National Park Authority
Councillor K Doolin, Chair, Operational Review Committee
Mr GA Jones
Councillor P Kidney
Dr RM Plummer

Appeals Committee

Councillor M Williams, Deputy Chair, Development Management Committee
Councillor S Yelland, Deputy Chair, Operational Review Committee
Mr A Archer
Mrs J James
Councillor M James

The Administration and Democratic Services Manager also reported that, at the same meeting, the Authority's representation on the Campaign for National Parks and the Pembrokeshire Coast Charitable Trust had been deferred. Since writing the report before Members that day, confirmation had been received that Mr Owain Wyn, Chair of Snowdonia National Park Authority, would represent National Parks Wales on the Campaign for National Parks. However, the Chief Executive suggested that it would be useful for Dr M Havard to also receive the papers for CNP meetings, as she represented the Authority on the Alliance for National Parks Cymru.

It was **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the composition of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, the Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee, as set out in the report before Members that day, be confirmed;



- (b) that, as Mr Owain Wyn, Snowdonia National Park Authority, currently represented National Parks Wales on the Campaign for National Parks, CNP be asked to include Dr M Havard as a contact Member only, and
- (c) that Dr M Havard be appointed to represent the Authority on the Pembrokeshire Coast Charitable Trust.

10. The Wales Charter for Member support and development

Members were reminded that, at their meeting held on 05 September 2018, they had reconfirmed their commitment to Member support and development and to attaining the Welsh Local Government Association's Advanced Charter for Member Support and Development. As a consequence, the Administration and Democratic Services Manager, with the help of Mrs J James, had reviewed the Advanced Charter criteria and had concluded that, while the Authority complied with most of what was required, there were certain criteria that needed to be reviewed to ensure they were still fit for purpose.

Attached to the report before Members that day were two documents:

- (i) Member role descriptions and person specifications, and
- (ii) Member development strategy.

The Member Support and Development Committee, at its meeting held on 08 May 2019, had considered both documents in detail and had adopted them.

Mrs J James stated that the role descriptions and person specifications were quite extensive in terms of role and remit and reflected the high standard with which Members approached their duties.

Dr M Havard thanked both the Administration and Democratic Services Manager and Mrs J James for their hard work in producing such good documents. However, she felt that the reference to Members reporting back when they had attended an outside body on behalf of the Authority should be strengthened with a requirement that they fed back any information to the National Park Authority and not just officers. She also suggested some alternative wording to the introduction to the protocol for Members appointed to represent the National Park Authority on outside bodies.

Dr R Plummer added that reference should also be made in section 5 of the same protocol to the requirements of the Charity Commission.



Councillor Mrs D Clements stressed that a lot of work had been undertaken to ensure that the framework for supporting Members was in place, therefore Members should ensure that they played their part in supporting the Charter process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the under-mentioned documents be adopted, subject to the suggested amendments made at the meeting:

- (a) Member role descriptions and person specifications, and
- (b) Member development strategy.

