

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

08 May 2019

Present: Mrs G Hayward (Chair)
Councillor Mrs D Clements, 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 – 13.10p.m.)

1. Tribute

The Chair expressed her sorrow to hear that Ms June Skilton, the Authority's Personnel Manager, had recently passed away. Mrs Hayward stated that she had got to know June very well since becoming a Member; June was always cheerful and helpful and was a very astute professional officer. The funeral was to be held in Worthing later in the month and representatives of the Authority would be attending.

There followed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and in remembrance of June.

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Ms Debbi Church, who had recently been appointed to the role of IT Manager, to the meeting. Mrs Hayward also mentioned that Ms Jessica Morgan had been appointed to the External Funding Manager post while Ms Nicy Couceiro was on maternity leave.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Archer, Councillor P Baker, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans and Councillor M Williams.

4. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 be confirmed and signed.



6. Matters arising from the minutes

Referring to Minute 7 – Management of public car parks at Amroth, West Angle and Nolton Haven – Dr R Heath-Davies stated that, at the meeting, she had raised concerns that the Authority seemed to be dealing with the issue of car parking in a rather piecemeal way. She suggested that the Authority should be looking at a policy statement on parking, and that there would be follow-up actions arising from that holistic approach.

The Chief Executive stated that this issue would be pursued.

NOTED.

7. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported that she had attended an event at the National Botanic Garden of Wales hosted by Mr Glenn Peters to explore how housing was being built to meet the need of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

NOTED.

8. 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 06 and 25 March 2019 be noted;
- (b) that the reports of the meetings of the following Committees/Panel be adopted:
 - (i) Chief Executive's Performance Review Panel held on 20 March 2019;
 - (ii) Operational Review Committee held on 27 March 2019;
 - (iii) Personnel Committees held on 03 and 10 April 2019, and
 - (iv) SDF Committee held on 10 April 2019.

9. Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2018-19 and Well-being of Future Generations examination and audit of partnership and collaborations

The Chair welcomed Messrs Nick Selwyn, Euros Lake and Matt Brushett to the meeting.

It was reported that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 required the Auditor General to undertake a forward-looking annual improvement assessment and to publish an annual improvement report for each improvement authority in Wales. In addition, he was also



required, under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to assess the extent to which public bodies had acted in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principles when setting their Well-being Objectives and, thereafter, taking steps to meet them.

Mr Selwyn referred to the Annual Improvement Report, stating that all expectations of the Authority were complied with and that there were no acute concerns raised. As a result, there were no formal recommendations set out for the Authority, although there were a couple of proposals for improvement.

Turning to the Well-Being of Future Generations examination and audit of partnership and collaborations report, Mr Selwyn reported that this particular project had been undertaken of all three Welsh National Park Authorities so there was the ability to benchmark progress made against the five ways of working set out in the Act.

Mr Brushett reported that they had undertaken a partnership survey, which had focused on the Authority's involvement with the Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum and the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership. Overall, the survey results had been positive, particularly around collaborative work and the trust and respect between partners was very evident. He considered that this reflected the positive culture within the Authority and that this was a testament to the Authority's staff, who were key to the partnerships concerned.

Mr Lake went on to say that there were some negatives that had come to light during the survey, e.g. it was important to ensure value for money in the work being undertaken, that there was a parity of power in the partnership and the need to prioritise partnership working in view of limited resources. There was a need for the Authority to look at the resources available to it and to evaluate and monitor its partnership involvement which would enable it to think more strategically about future involvement. The report suggested some areas for improvement as a result.

Mr Selwyn added that, as with all public bodies across Wales, one of the major challenges facing the Authority was making the step change from engagement to involvement of people and communities in its work. This would take time and was a message taken from across all local authorities. Other challenges were funding and the need to understand the impact of some of the work that was being undertaken; he was of the view that it was sometimes better to do less although this was, of course, a matter for the Authority to consider.



Members welcomed both reports and the positive messages arising from them. They enquired whether an action plan would be drawn up, which could then be monitored and reviewed. The Chief Executive replied that no specific action plan would be set up, but that all elements would be taken up in the Corporate and Resources Plan or other appropriate mechanism to ensure that they were being met. Mr Selwyn added that the Wales Audit Office deliberately did not set up an action plan for this work as there was a need for the Authority to embed it into its work programme. He accepted, however, that there was a need to track progress made.

Councillor Mrs D Clements noted that it was quite difficult to plan the Authority's long-term work programme when money was forthcoming from Welsh Government at the last minute. Mr Selwyn replied that the Welsh Government was included in the review of the 44 public bodies in Wales and that his colleagues would be highlighting short-term funding issues during their review.

Dr R Heath-Davies stated that there were wider lessons to be learned and looked forward to the Wales Audit Office's overall report on the 44 public bodies reviewed. She enquired whether any best practice guidance had been published on rural resilience that could be used by the Authority. Mr Selwyn referred to a number of publications, which he would provide to the Chief Executive for wider dissemination. However, he emphasised the point that Members needed to understand that the Authority could not do everything and had to prioritise its resources in order to be sustainable.

The Chair thanked the officers for a very thorough, interesting and thought-provoking report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Improvement Report 2018-19 and the Well-being of Future Generations examination and audit of partnership and collaborations be noted.

10. Car parks

It was reported that there was a need to reconfirm the Authority's instructions to the Highway Authority in order to proceed with the Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2015 Variation Order No. 1 2019 in readiness for the 2020 car park charging season.

By way of introduction, the Estates Officer reminded Members that a series of reports had been presented to Members since 2016, culminating in a report to the National Park Authority on 29 November 2017 which, in summary, resolved to introduce the following new provisions:



1. to introduce parking charges at four additional sites (West Angle, Penally, Amroth and Nolton Haven), which currently operated as free use sites;
2. to extend the charging day across all charging sites by an additional two hours from 5pm to 7pm, and
3. to increase the daily rate for coach parking across all sites from £3 up to £8.

A further report had subsequently been presented to the Authority at its meeting held on 28 November 2018 when Members had reconfirmed their instructions to Pembrokeshire County Council, as Highway Authority, to proceed with the Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2015 Variation Order No. 1 2019. However, the County Council had now asked the Authority to clarify and reconfirm its instructions in order that the statutory process could be completed. The report before Members that day therefore set out in detail:

- A. the pre-consultation awareness-raising activities that had been undertaken by the Authority's officers with Amroth, Angle, Penally and Nolton & Roch Community Councils;
- B. the statutory public consultation process, which included direct notification to relevant statutory consultees; a public notice in the Western Telegraph; the deposit of information packs at numerous public buildings for inspection by the public; the placing of public notices at all of the parking places listed in the order, and the promotion of the public consultation on the Authority's website and across its social media channels.

Details of the thirty-eight separate representations received as a result of the public consultation exercise were set out in the report before Members that day. The information captured had also been considered as part of an Equality Impact Assessment. A variety of themes had been identified, and the Authority's response to each theme was also set out in the report.

In conclusion, the Estates Officer recommended that Members reiterate the decisions taken at their meeting held on 29 November 2017.

Members were unhappy at the fact that they were being required to revisit the matter at the behest of Pembrokeshire County Council. The Chief Executive replied that officers had been of the opinion that the decision taken in November 2018 to reconfirm their instructions to the County Council was clear, however County Council officers had requested further clarification before the matter could be presented to Cabinet for approval.



Some Members then raised concerns about the effect this decision would have on residents and businesses in the communities concerned. They were also concerned that the matter was being dealt with in a piecemeal way. There was a need for an element of flexibility, particularly in rural areas.

The Estates Officer replied that this matter had been a matter of review since 2016, when a framework and reasoned justification for the Authority's approach had been set out. He considered this approach to be reasonable and emphasised that consistency was the way forward in his view.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the officers' responses to the emerging themes from the public consultation exercise set out in the report before Members that day be endorsed;
- (b) that the Authority proceed with The Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2015 Variation Order No. 1 (2019) to secure the following outcomes:
 - (i) the introduction of parking charges at four additional sites (West Angle, Penally, Amroth and Nolton Haven) which currently operated as free use sites. Those charges to be:
 - Up to 30 minutes: nil charge;
 - Up to 1 hour: £1;
 - Up to 2 hours: £2;
 - Up to 3 hours: £3;
 - Daily: £5
 - (ii) to extend the charging day across all charging sites (currently 9am to 5pm) by an additional two hours to include the period 5pm to 7pm, and
 - (iii) to increase the daily rate for coach parking across all sites from £3 up to £8.
- (c) that Members reconfirm their instructions to Pembrokeshire County Council (in the latter's capacity as the relevant Highway Authority) to complete the necessary statutory process in readiness for the start of the 2020 car park charging season.

(Dr R Heath-Davies and Councillors P Kidney, R Owens and A Wilcox voted against the above-mentioned decision, while Councillors Mrs D Clements and P Harries abstained from voting.)

11. Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan

The Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services apologised for the fact that the draft Destination Management Plan had not been



included in the papers before Members that day. The relevant document was circulated at the meeting and Members were given time to read it.

He reported that the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership (DPP) comprised of a number of partners, including Pembrokeshire County Council Pembrokeshire Tourism, PLANED, Visit Wales and the National Park Authority. The Partnership's aim was to deliver a very broad range of tourism services and support to the wider tourism sector.

The Partnership had gone through a period of flux in recent years, but since 2018 there had been a desire to refresh the existing approach and 'grow' the tourism industry in a sustainable way. An industry engagement event had therefore been held, aimed at kick-starting a new approach to destination management and marketing in Pembrokeshire. As a result, it was agreed to commission a refreshed vision and business plan for the Partnership by applying for LEADER funding to engage specialist consultancy advice and to adopt an interim Destination Management Plan to help retain a strategic focus for tourism delivery during a period of change. As a Partnership partner, the Authority was requested to adopt the interim Destination Management Plan.

Members welcomed the document, but raised concerns about the fact that sustainability (e.g. no specific reference to the impacts of climate change and/or loss of biodiversity) did not appear anywhere in the document. There was also a need for a clear transport plan to manage destinations, e.g. by stopping the flow to major 'hot-spots' and moving it to less busy areas of the Park. In addition, it was considered important that the document should refer to the county's language and culture, which could help promote key destinations in Pembrokeshire.

It was reported that the new body would draft a longer-term Plan, which Members would have an opportunity to comment on at a later date.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2019/20 Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan be adopted as the key document to guide the Authority's tourism related services and activities over the next 12-18 months.

12. Award of additional grant in aid for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

The Finance Manager reported that additional grant funding of £638,250 had been received from Welsh Government in March 2019 for revenue and capital activities/projects. In addition, a further £510,000 was received for the Authority to act as custodial of funds to support the Wales



Coast Path in partnership with Natural Resources Wales who managed the Path.

Since some of the funding allocated to the Authority would be spent in 2019/20, approval was requested to revise the 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Budgets appropriately, and in accordance with the Welsh Government grant letter. The necessary earmarked reserves would be created in the 2018/19 financial year.

The grant letter outlined how the money allocated to the Wales Coast Path was to be spent and approval was therefore sought to vary the Authority's Financial Standing Orders in regard to the funding element identified for the Wales Coast Path. Section 77 of the Authority's Financial Standards regulated the payment of grants and stipulated that payment of grant in excess of £20,000 required the approval of the Authority. In order for the prompt and effective distribution of the Wales Coast Path funds it was therefore proposed, and expressly only in relation to the allocation of the Wales Coast Path reserves, that the Authority suspended the Financial Standards regarding grants in excess of £20,000.

The Chief Executive welcomed the additional Welsh Government funding, but was cautious of the fact that Members were not involved in the decision-making process and that it didn't quite fit comfortably with Members deciding on project priorities. He stated that he would arrange a Members' Workshop to discuss this issue in future.

Members commented on the fact that there was a need to manage the sustainability of resources, particularly where the appointment of an officer was concerned.

It was **RESOLVED** that the creation of the appropriate earmarked reserves, the amendment of the 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Budgets, and the variation to Financial Standards in relation to the funds allocated to the Wales Coast Path be approved.

13. Deputy Monitoring Officer – confirmation of appointment

The Chief Executive reminded Members that, at a meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 22 November 2017, it had been resolved to agree the principle of creating a Temporary Deputy Monitoring Officer role, to be filled internally for a 12 month period. A review of that role was to be undertaken prior to the end of that period.

He considered that the role, which was currently undertaken by the Administration and Democratic Services Manager, had worked well and



provided a degree of resilience, when the Monitoring Officer had been unavailable. He therefore proposed to make the role permanent.

Mrs J James wished to record the fact that the Administration and Democratic Services Manager had, in her opinion, provided an excellent service on top of her other duties. In response to a query from Dr R Plummer, the Chief Executive confirmed that the salary was index-linked.

It was **RESOLVED** that the post of Deputy Monitoring Officer be made permanent and that the Administration and Democratic Services Manager remain in this post.

14. Trewent Park encroachment

It was reported that, in 2001, the Authority had acquired the freehold of a large area of land at Freshwater East known as The Burrows. In the period following the Authority's acquisition, it became clear that there was a pre-existing and continuous encroachment by Trewent Park across approximately 300m² of the Authority's registered title, and this use continued to this day.

In order to facilitate a proposed new section of permissive path which would traverse the northern edge of the subject land, the Estates Officer had reached agreement with the owner of Trewent Park to regularise the historic ongoing encroachment. This would entail the transfer of paper title of the land to the owners of Trewent Park at a nominal price of £1, to include an obligation for them to construct and thereafter maintain a secure fence to permanently separate the subject land from the proposed new permissive footpath.

It was **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with the Authority's adopted encroachment policy, the transfer of approximately 300m² of land at The Burrows, Freshwater East be endorsed on the terms outlined in the report.

15. Resignation of Monitoring Officer

The Chair referred to the fact that the Authority's Monitoring Officer, Mr Rhys Stephens, would be leaving the Authority at the end of May. She stated that he had made a great impact since arriving and that she would miss his astute, wise and clear advice.

Mr Stephens thanked the Chair for her kind words, stating that he had enjoyed working with the Authority.

16. Chair and Deputy Chair's last Authority meeting

The Chief Executive stated that both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority were attending their last meeting of the Authority as their terms



of office would be coming to an end on 31 May 2019. He felt that this was an end of an era as both Mrs Hayward and Mr Sangster had joined the Authority shortly before he himself had joined.

He went on to say that, over the last 9 years, both Mrs Hayward and Mr Sangster had made a significant contribution to the Authority. They had represented the Authority on numerous external bodies and been Chairs of various Committees. Mrs Hayward had represented the Authority at numerous events all over the county and beyond and her contribution to the Authority was considerable.

Mr Sangster thanked the Chief Executive for his kind words. He stated that he had held a positive view of the National Park throughout and he understood the effectiveness of the Authority. The organisation had been subject to a number of changes in recent years, with various reviews being undertaken with possible changes of direction. However, the Authority had prevailed, mainly due to a number of constants – the values of the National Park, which would carry on into the future.

He had enjoyed working with the Chief Executive and his team, and had been impressed by their effectiveness and their dedication and passion for the National Park. With regard to Members, he considered that what inculcated them all was their commitment to values; while he was leaving, he would be watching with interest what his colleagues would be doing in future. He asked Members not to forget the National Park duty as well as the purposes and he wished everyone well for the future.

Mrs Hayward stated that she had thoroughly enjoyed being a Member of, and being able to work on behalf of, the Authority. It had been a pleasure and a privilege and she had learned a great deal during her term of office; it had been an important part of her life.

She agreed that the Authority had been through some turbulent times, with numerous reviews being undertaken. She added that the Authority had also been regarded with suspicion in the past by some quarters, but was now regarded as valued and resilient.

She had enjoyed working with the Chief Executive, whom she considered to be politically astute and who had dealt with politicians with great care and tact. She referred to the Finance Manager, who guided Members with great skill in times of austerity and she felt confident that the Authority was secure under his guidance. She also referred to the Director of Planning and Park Direction and her team; they were consummate professionals, who managed people's hopes and dreams, and came up with solutions. Finally, she wished to thank the Democratic Services team for all their support and for making her life much easier.



In conclusion, she stated that she was, and would always be, a dedicated advocate for the National Park, and she would miss both Members and officers very much.

17. 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.

(Councillor R Owens voted against the above-mentioned decision as he considered that insufficient information had been provided to convince him that the public should be excluded.)

18. St Justinians – future management of visitor facilities

Members considered a presentation by the Estates Officer on the future management of visitor facilities at St Justinians. He set out a proposed strategy for attempting to resolve the current situation and to secure and safeguard the future management of the area.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members support officers' further exploration of the matter, subject to regular progress reports being provided to Members.

(Dr R Heath-Davies abstained from voting on the above-mentioned decision.)

