

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

20 March 2019

Present: Mrs G Hayward (Chair)
Mr A Archer, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans, Councillor P Harries, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M James, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Dr RM Plummer, Mr AE Sangster, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland.

Councillor Mrs D Clements joined the meeting during the Chair's announcements (*Minute 4 below refers*).

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.15p.m.)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Baker, Mrs J James and Councillor P Kidney.

2. Disclosures

The under-mentioned Members disclosed an interest in the following reports and withdrew from the meeting when the matters were being discussed:

Councillor M Evans disclosed a personal interest in the item relating to the extension of the Tenby Conservation Area (*Minute 9 below refers*).

Councillor M Williams disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to a request for the RNLi to undertake fundraising activities on National Park beaches (*Minute 10 below refers*).

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

Referring to Minute 8 (Oriell y Parc – Service Level Agreement with Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales), Dr R Heath-Davies stated that she had asked for clarification from Mr Ashley McAvoy of ACNMW that – while she considered the agreement to be a strategic and important one between both parties – it would not result in the National Park Authority tying itself exclusively to ACNMW. Mr McAvoy had confirmed at the meeting that this would not be the case and Dr Heath-Davies wished this important clarification to be recorded in the minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 be confirmed and signed subject to the above amendment.



4. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reported that she, along with the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chair, had attended a productive National Parks Wales Executive meeting on 19 March 2019. She had also attended a St David's Day dinner hosted by the Mayor of St Davids, where she had met the High Commissioner of Lesotho, who was keen to work with the Authority.

NOTED.

5. **Report of the meeting of the Development Management Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Development Management Committee held on 23 January 2019 be noted.

6. **Report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee**

The report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 13 February 2019 was presented for consideration.

Referring to Minute 9 (Performance report for the period ending 31 December 2018), Dr R Heath-Davies stated that the reference to "... a nationwide decline in visitor numbers to museums/galleries..." in the third paragraph was incorrect in that she had suggested that the decline in visitor numbers to Castell Henllys could possibly be attributed to the increase in visitor numbers to St Fagans following the recent considerable investment that had been made to improving the facilities at the National Museum of History.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee be adopted.

7. **Management of public car parks at Amroth, West Angle and Nolton Haven**

The Chair stated that representatives of Amroth, Angle and Nolton & Roch Community Councils were observing the debate and welcomed them to the meeting.

The report before Members that day set out the Authority's direct involvement with the car parks at Amroth, West Angle and Nolton Haven from their acquisition in the 1960s to their development and current management as parking facilities to the public. To date, parking at the three car parks was free to the public, but the Estates Officer reminded Members that they had resolved in November 2018 to introduce car parking charges from March 2020, subject to following the required statutory process, which was in hand.

Since that decision had been undertaken, the Authority had been



approached by Amroth, Angle and Nolton & Roch Community Councils to express their interest in managing the respective car parks themselves (in the case of Amroth and Angle via Community Asset Transfer), the details of which were set out in the report before Members that day.

In debating the Community Councils' proposals, the Estates Officer asked Members to take into account the following material considerations:

- The introduction of seasonal parking charges would not result in any loss of parking capacity or withdrawal of service, nor would it give rise to any risk of the car parks being sold in future. Accordingly, a Community Asset Transfer was not considered a relevant option;
- The Authority had maintained the car parks for over half a century and had managed the motorist's use of them over that same extended period;
- The Authority had the capacity and resources to maintain that same level of service delivery beyond March 2020;
- The Authority was not seeking partners or third party operators to manage any, or all, of its charging car parks;
- The proposed charges commencing in March 2020 would increase the Authority's charging car parks sites from ten to fourteen, and
- The benefits of use to the motorist, and the terms and price points for that use were now consistent and standardised across all of the Authority's charging sites.

Some Members queried whether car parking charges should be introduced as they were mindful of the impact it would have on the communities involved. They argued that the Authority should be going back to its core principles and encouraging the sustainable resource of local businesses. They referred to the Corporate and Resources Plan, which was being considered later in the meeting, and which referred to the Authority working alongside communities, encouraging them to become more engaged with the Authority and removing any barriers that prevented communities from enjoying the National Park. They understood that the decision to charge at Amroth, West Angle and Nolton Haven car parks had been taken previously and had been the subject of public consultation, but they urged fellow Members to investigate the matter further and work with the communities involved.

The Estates Officer replied that revisiting the Authority's decision to charge at the three car parks concerned spawned the wider question of whether the Authority should be charging at any of its car parks. He stated that all income generated went into a central pot of funding, and Members then decided how that funding was spent. He counselled that any decision made on one site would have an impact on the Authority's wider portfolio.



Other Members referred to the fact that the matter of car parks and charges had been under consideration for a number of years and that this paper was the culmination prior to agreeing the Car Parking Order later in the year. Members needed to bear in mind the overall purpose of the National Park Authority and the income derived from car parks enabled the Authority to carry out its work. They considered that a great deal of thought had been given to the equality of treatment and concessions to residents, visitors, etc. and a balance had to be struck. It was also felt necessary not to dispose of the Authority's assets as they were an aid to controlling traffic.

It was **RESOLVED** to decline the Community Councils' respective interests in running the delivery of public parking services at Amroth, Angle and Nolton Haven.

8. Corporate and Resources Plan 2019/20

The Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator reminded Members that the draft Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20 had been presented to the Authority at its meeting held on 30 January 2019. Comments expressed at that meeting had been taken on board and the draft Plan had been issued for consultation in February. No external comments were received, although some minor amendments had been applied following comments and feedback from staff and Members.

Councillor P Harries congratulated the Officer on an excellent, very readable, Plan although he suggested that more emphasis needed to be placed on the coast, particularly as this was – in his opinion – the Authority's unique selling point. The Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator replied that reference to marine had been made in the global context, although she would revisit this issue in future.

Dr R Heath-Davies suggested some amendments to the Equalities and Welsh Language section, whereby the Authority should seek to increase the use of the Welsh language in the National Park; there would be a need to tease out some actions in this respect. In addition, she enquired whether the Authority should become more digital in its ways of working and suggested that Members should consider the way they worked in order to reduce their impact on the environment.

The Monitoring Officer also suggested that reference should be made to the Authority's Standards Committee in the governance section.

It was **RESOLVED** that, subject to the suggestions made at the meeting that day, the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20 be approved.



9. **Extension of Tenby Conservation Area**

Since the introduction of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, a total of 500 Conservation Areas had been designated across Wales, 14 of which lay within the National Park. A Conservation Area included unlisted and listed buildings which made a major contribution to the historic environment, and the 14 Areas represented the settlements of greatest architectural and historic importance within the National Park and were a key and finite resource.

All areas, including their boundaries, were regularly reviewed under a Conservation Area programme, and Tenby was the final one to be reviewed. The proposed extension of the existing boundary, as set out in the report before Members that day, was the result of a joint project between the Authority and a working group specially selected by Tenby Town Council, including members of the Tenby Civic Society. The report also set out the public consultation process that had been undertaken and the level of response received as a result; none of the responses were negative.

The Building Conservation Officer reported that, since writing his report, both Tenby Town Council and Tenby Civic Society had confirmed the proposed boundary extension.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) that the reviewed boundary be formally amended as set out in the map attached to the report before Members that day;
- (b) that the base data and annotation of the maps be updated accordingly, and
- (c) that statutory notices be placed in the local press and the London Gazette.

10. **Request from the RNLI to undertake fundraising activities on National Park beaches**

It was reported that, following a successful trial period in 2008, the RNLI had been allowed through express permission to fundraise on a small number of beaches controlled by the National Park Authority. It was felt that the presence provided by RNLI staff, and the advice given by them on safe enjoyment of the beaches, played an important role in maintaining the reputation of Pembrokeshire's beaches as being both clean and safe. They also helped offset the costs of life-guarding for partner organisations such as Pembrokeshire County Council.

The RNLI were now seeking permission to extend their existing beach activities to include fundraising teams of two staff at beach entry points at



Newgale, Broad Haven, Nolton Haven, Whitesands, Newport Beach and Poppit Sands between 01 May and 07 September 2019.

Most Members supported the principle of having a safe presence on beaches, although some Members were concerned that there were other similar organisations who could also benefit from the same 'privileges'. In response to a question from Members, officers replied that – should the RNLI's request be acceded to – they would be encouraged to promote the National Park and its purposes, and to provide bilingual literature, if not a bilingual presence.

A concern was raised that an RNLI unit had been left on one beach for 6-8 weeks at the end of the season. Officers replied that they would raise the matter with the organisation to ensure it did not happen in future.

It was **RESOLVED** that consent be granted for the continuation of the RNLI's fundraising activities for a further five years (to September 2024), subject to the following conditions:

- (a) that fundraising activities undertaken by the RNLI were limited to 28 days on any single site;
- (b) that all promotional and safety literature provided by the RNLI was bilingual, and
- (c) that the RNLI staff involved in fundraising carry the National Park Authority's promotional literature and receive training from the Authority's Discovery Team as part of their formal induction to promote safe use of the National Park.

11. Calendar of meetings 2019/20

Members were reminded that the current calendar of meetings came to an end in June 2019, following the Annual General Meeting. A calendar for the forthcoming year was therefore presented for approval. It was pointed out that, as a result of changes in regulations, the date for closure of the Authority's accounts had been brought forward, resulting in the need to convene a meeting of the Authority in July from now on so that this new deadline could be met.

In addition, and in response to requests from Members, no meetings had been scheduled during August.

It was **RESOLVED** that the calendar of meetings for 2019/20 be approved.

12. Corporate events

The report set out those events to which Members of the Authority had been invited during the forthcoming year and Members were asked to



agree attendance at these. As a number of Members were not present that day, details of the events would be circulated to all Members to give all those who were interested the opportunity to respond.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members be authorised to attend the events as follows:

- (a) Members' National Induction Courses hosted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority between 12-14 March 2019 and the Peak District National Park Authority between 10-13 September 2019 (new Members or those who had not yet had an opportunity to attend an Induction Course);
- (b) Wales Planning Conference on 06 June 2019 (one Member);
- (c) National Parks UK Conference in Skipton, Yorkshire Dales on 17-19 September 2019 (4 Members);
- (d) Europarc Conference in Kemerli National Park, Latvia on 24-27 September 2019 (up to 2 Members);
- (e) National Parks Wales Annual Members' Seminar hosted by the Snowdonia National Park Authority on 12-13 November 2019 (all Members), and
- (f) WLGA Conference, date and venue to be confirmed (up to 2 Members).

13. Member remuneration 2019/20

It was reported that the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had been published in February 2019. Relevant extracts from this were appended to the Officer's report, and the main changes to Members' remuneration for the financial year 2019/20 were summarised as:

- a £60 increase in the Basic Salary for 'ordinary Members' from £3,675 to £3,735 per annum;
- no increase in the Senior Salary payable to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority and (up to two) Chairs of other Committees, but these post holders would receive the uplift in the Basic Salary paid to 'ordinary Members' resulting in a payment of:
 - £12,435 per annum for the Chair of the Authority
 - £7,435 per annum for the Level 1 Senior Salary, and
 - £6,135 per annum for the Level 2 Senior Salary.



The new salary framework would come into effect on 01 April 2019.

No changes had been made to the fees payable to Independent Members of the Standards Committee, nor to the level of travel and subsistence rates. Neither had there been a change to the level of reimbursement of costs of care to Members.

The Authority was entitled to pay a Senior Salary for up to four posts (Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, together with two Committee Chairs). Three were currently remunerated: the posts of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, together with the Chair of the Development Management Committee. The Senior Salary at present being paid to the posts of Deputy Chair and Chair of Committee was the same (Level 2), although the Panel had concluded that the Authority could decide at which of two levels these posts could be remunerated.

Members were therefore asked to determine which posts be eligible to receive a Senior Salary for 2019/20; what level of remuneration should be payable to the posts of Deputy Chair of the Authority and Committee Chair(s); and also the maximum number of days in any one year for which Independent Members of the Standards Committee could be paid.

Members were happy with the posts that were currently eligible to receive a Senior Salary and the level of salary paid to those post holders.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report for 2019/20 be noted;
- (b) the posts of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, together with the Chair of the Development Management Committee be remunerated with a Senior Salary;
- (c) the level 2 Senior Salary be payable to the Deputy Chair of the Authority and the Chair of the Development Management Committee; and
- (d) the maximum number of days for which Independent Standards Committee Members might be paid in any one year remain at 4 days per annum.

14. Officer appointments

The Chief Executive reported that both the Director of Planning and Park Direction and the Monitoring Officer had indicated their wish to resign from the Authority. As both posts were Member appointments, there was a need for the Authority to consider in the first instance whether they wished to fill the vacancies and, if so, the process the process to be



undertaken to do so. He stated that the Personnel Committee had been used to this end with past vacancies.

He stated that there were a number of options available as to the filling of the Monitoring Officer post and that, with Members' agreement, he would pursue these in the first instance.

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

- (a) that both the post of Director of Planning and Park Direction and the Monitoring Officer be filled;
- (b) that the Personnel Committee be authorised to undertake the appointments process;
- (c) that, in the case of the appointment of the Director of Planning and Park Direction, the Chair of the Development Management Committee be involved in the appointments process, and
- (d) that, in the case of the appointment of the Monitoring Officer, that the Chief Executive explore the options detailed at the meeting.

(Councillor M Evans left the meeting at this juncture).

15. Urgent item

It was **RESOLVED** that by reason of special circumstances, the following items be raised as a matter of urgency, pursuant to Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

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 Paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

17. Oriel y Parc café

Members considered a presentation by the Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services concerning the café franchise at Oriel y Parc Landscape Gallery and Visitor Centre.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive and/or the Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to resolve the issue in accordance with the terms agreed at the meeting.

