

## North York Moors National Park Authority

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on Monday 22 September 2014.

### **Present:**

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Alison Fisher, Janet Frank, Jane Mitchell, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott, Hawson Simpson, Herbert Tindall, Jeremy Walker.

### **Apologies:**

David Chance, Bryn Griffiths, David Hugill, David Jeffels, Christopher Massey, Sarah Oswald, Caroline Patmore, Bill Suthers, Richard Thompson.

**Officers in attendance:** Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Catherine Raistrick (Finance & Performance Officer), Vanessa Burgess (Committees & Customer Services Officer), John Derricott (Trust Consultant), Alistair Lince (Senior Manager, Deloitte), Dan Park (Manager, Deloitte)

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**Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book**

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### **Members met with the Auditors prior to the start of the meeting.**

#### **30/14 Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the public minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23 June 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **31/14 Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the public minutes of the Special Authority meeting held on Monday 28 July 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **32/14 Public Question Time**

There were no questions from Members of the public.

#### **33/14 Members Interests**

Members were reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interests relating to any agenda item prior to its consideration.

34/14 **Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 18 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

35/14 **Statement of Final Accounts 2013/14**

Considered:

The report of the Accountant.

Peter Yates informed Members that the Authority's accounts had now been audited and he asked Members to note the adjustments to underspend at paragraph 3.1 of the Accountants report.

**Resolved:**

Members approved the Statement of Final Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2014

36/14 **Letter of Representation and External Audit Report**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Dan Park, Auditor reminded Members of the 5 risks which had previously been identified and which were listed on page 2 of the Audit report. There were no issues with internal controls and with regard to the previously identified non valid debtors; the Authority had now implemented controls to address this issue. Dan Park thanked Irene Brannon, Director of Corporate Services and the Finance team for their work.

Members thanked the Auditors for their report and commended the Finance team on their work.

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive thanked the auditors.

**Resolved:**

Members authorised the signing of the letter of Representation. Members noted the Auditor's Report on the 2013/14 Audit.

37/14 **Final Proposals for Further Reductions in Spending and Increased Income**

Considered:

The report of the Senior Management Team.

The Chief Executive updated Members on the current situation regarding voluntary redundancies and the further decisions in relation to staffing changes and reductions in spending.

Directors updated Members on issues within their departments:

The Director of Park Services advised Members on the following issues:

- More staff in the new structure to work with Volunteers and more cash to support them
- Field Services/Volunteer Ranger activity via community access and best practice based on successful Cleveland Way model.
- Much less ROW work to be done, the Authority would need to negotiate with the County Council re: delegation/management of the network. The Statutory element of the work though would be incorporated within the Head of Recreation and Park management post.

Members commented on the following:

- ROW - Essential maintenance, what will the Authority still be able to do and what will transfer back to the County Council.
- UNISON letter was a good response, Members not happy with the cuts especially to Ranger Services.
- The need to manage Public expectation, it may be good for the Authority to raise Public awareness.
- Difficult to obtain funding for ROW work, but perhaps it could be achieved via Trust.
- Perhaps the Authority could ask local farmers/landowners to help support ROW work by maintaining stiles/paths etc. on their own land.
- Could Parish Forums help more by becoming more of a working body?
- Use of Rate Support Grant

The Director of Park Services informed Members that the whole ROW network had been prioritised in 2001 since which time there had been a 20% improvement across the whole network. Main aim of the Authority now would be to maintain, rather than improve ROW.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Rate Support Grant went directly to the County Council, the National Park didn't benefit from it. However, as Members had suggested, the Authority was in discussion with the County Council, to look at other areas of work they may consider helping with if the Authority continues ROW work.

**Action:** Officers to bring to December NPA detail regarding areas of work the Authority can, cannot continue to do, post changes.

The Director of Planning advised Members on the following in relation to the Planning department:

- Changes within the Planning department will affect Enforcement, Forward Planning and Building Conservation. Future priorities for the department will be reported to Members at December NPA.

One Member asked about the vacancy in the Forward Planning team and how that might be filled.

The Director of Planning advised that at present different options were being considered, including possible secondment from another Authority or as a temporary contract post. However it was likely that recruitment for a direct replacement would be needed to ensure the future policy workload was achievable. All Members were

supportive of the recommendations outlined in the report and the relevant updates from Directors.

The Director of Conservation updated Members on the current situation in the Conservation department as follows:

- The 215k grant budget reduction and staff reductions will create added time pressures for the department. Priorities are to be focused on retaining delivery.
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council have retracted all funding from Coastal Forum/Heritage Coast work. The Authority has asked all remaining partners to confirm if they are willing to continue to support the Coastal Forum; the Authority is awaiting full response, so as yet it is unclear if this work can be sustained.

**Action:** Director of Conservation to inform Members once full response received.

Members asked about the following:

- The possibility of missing the Coastal Forum for a year, then revisit it.
- Possibility of asking Boulby for help to keep the Coastal Forum going
- Would Coastal Communities Fund be in jeopardy without the Forum

The Director of Conservation informed members that the Local Development Strategy had been submitted to Defra and that a decision was due mid-November. Also with regard to the Fisheries Local Access Group, much work needed to be done re: feasibility.

Irene Brannon, Director of Corporate Services updated Members on the situation for the Corporate Services department:

- Issues around office opening hours would mainly impact on the Corporate Services team. There will be no change in the number of hours worked by full-time staff, 37 per week and pay to remain the same. A standard working day of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday (for public opening). Management issue to ensure adequate cover/fairness across all departments in relation to changed finish time on Fridays from 4.30pm to 5pm.
- Departmental savings can be achieved via voluntary redundancies, 1 full-time post to be lost from the IT department.
- Early draft of budget for next year indicates National Park Grant figures of £4.165 million for 2014/15 and £4.093 million for 2015/16.

Members raised the following points:

- Conflict in proposed opening hours between UNISON and Management. A better fit would seem to be 8.30am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday.
- The move to E-documents, will the Authority still provide a paper copy to those Members who need them.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the changed opening hours were designed to better cater for not just our external customers, but our internal customers as well, for some of whom opening between 16.30-17.00pm was essential. However, this change could be reconsidered if it was felt to be a wrong decision in the future. With regard to E-documents, the Chief Executive advised Members that he was keen to press ahead with E-delivery, but understood that some existing Members may have IT related issues. The Authority agreed to look at individual

Members needs, but acknowledged that in the future, any new Members who joined the Authority would be expected to be IT literate, IT ready. That said however, as previously discussed, the Authority would always be willing to support Members with a very specific IT related issue such as those of a disability or a financial nature.

**Resolved:**

Members re-affirmed their support and approved the strategy, confirmed the detailed recommendations for reductions in spending, changes to staffing and approved the outlined budget.

38/14 **Establishing a Charitable Trust to Fund Activity in the North York Moors**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of Park Services.

The Chair introduced John Derricott, the Authority's Trust Consultant to Members, and then the Chief Executive updated Members on recent thinking regarding the setting up of a Trust. Three specific areas of focus for a Trust have been identified - Legacies, Grants and Gift Aid.

Members made the following comments:

- Supportive of the ideas for a Trust, but uncomfortable with the idea of a Business Plan being written before a Trust is set up. The Trust should write the plan once it's established.
- One member queried the suggestion of the NYMNPA CEO being Chair of the Trust
- Aims and objectives for a Trust should be clear
- Many Members had no problem with current CEO being Chair of the Trust, but concerns raised about it being written into the constitution long term, there needs to be flexibility.

One Member asked that it be noted that he was totally against the idea of a Trust being established.

John Derricott advised Members that having the CEO as Head of a Trust showed continuity and clear governance. He added that a Trust would bring benefits to the NYM National Park in relation to funding opportunities. John Derricott advised that a stepped, cautionary approach was the best option when taking the idea of a Trust forward. John informed Members that, once established it would be quite hard to change the constitution of a Trust and he would look to restrict things as much as possible. It would be possible to alter aims and objectives, so he advised that the Trust be established with a broad range of objectives, then be allowed to focus in. The Authority agreed to set out the expectations for a Trust, but not write a business plan.

**Andrew Scott left the meeting at 12.25pm**

**Resolved:**

Members agreed to the recommendations and instructed Officers to undertake further work to establish the NYMNP Trust.

39/14 **Amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct**

Considered:

The report of the Monitoring Officer.

**Resolved:**

Members approved the minor amendments and instructed Officers to make the necessary changes to the Members Handbook.

40/14 **Interest Group (Verbal Presentation) Maryam Farahani – BME Community Link Officer, Mustafa Othman, Ibrahim Dialo - Community Champions**

Maryam Farahani, BME Community Links Officer, Mustafa Othman and Ibrahim Dialo, Community Champions gave Members a 10 minute presentation on their involvement in the National Park. They informed members that:

- within the last 12 months, over 400 BME people had visited the NYM National Park via their scheme and thanked the Authority for providing transport to help make this happen as transport was a critical issue for their communities.
- Training opportunities such as learning map reading skills had proved very useful and had been well received by members of BME groups.

Members thanked Maryam, Mustafa and Ibrahim for their presentation and their invaluable work.

41/14 **Parish Forum Update**

Considered:

The report of the PA to Chief Executive

**Resolved:**

Members noted the report.

42/14 **NYMNPA Members Expenses 2013/2014**

Considered:

The table of Members expenses 2013/14 produced by Rebecca Scott, Customer Services Administration Assistant.

One Member commented that Members should submit expense claims on a regular basis and not leave claims to accrue over long periods. It was suggested that a note be included in Members' Bulletin to remind Members of the need to submit claims regularly.

**Action:** Communications Officer to include a note.

**Resolved:**

Members noted the table.

43/14 **Reports from Members on Outside Bodies**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer

<b>Resolved:</b> Members noted the report.
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44/14 **On the Record**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer.

Alison Fisher requested more information in relation to an item which was included in the National Park England minutes relating to Permitted Development Business Use.

**Action:** Authority Chair, Jim Bailey to arrange for Alison Fisher to be provided with the information requested.

<b>Resolved:</b> Members noted the report.
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..... (Chair)  
15 December 2014

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"**  
at the meeting of the Authority  
on 22 September 2014

**Private Minutes**

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.