

## North York Moors National Park Authority

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on Monday 2 November 2020.

### **Present:**

Jim Bailey, Peter Berry, Malcolm Bowes, Ena Dent, Alison Fisher, Janet Frank, David Hugill, Patrick James, David Jeffels, Bob Marley, Shaun Moody, Heather Moorhouse, Sarah Oswald, Caroline Patmore, Clive Pearson, Andrew Scott, Subash Sharma, Jeremy Walker, Colin Williamson.

**Apologies:** None

### **Officers in Attendance:**

Tom Hind (Chief Executive), Briony Fox (Director of Conservation & Polyhalite Projects), Ian Nicholls (Head of Corporate Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), Michael Graham (Director of Park Services), Pete Williams (Head of Finance), Elizabeth Clements (Deputy Director of Conservation), Rebecca Thompson (Future Farming Policy Officer), Richard Smith (Authority Solicitor), Vanessa Burgess (Committees & Customer Services Officer), Gareth Mills (Grant Thornton – Auditors), Paul Nicholson (NYCC – Finance)

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

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#### 46/20 **Minutes**

**Resolved:**

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2020, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### 47/20 **Public Question Time**

There were no questions from Members of the public.

#### 48/20 **Members Interests**

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

#### 49/20 **Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 15 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

50/20 **Statement of Accounts 2019/20**

**Andrew Scott declared a non-prejudicial interest as a NYM Railway trustee**

Considered:

The report of the S151 Officer

Pete Williams advised members that as the Authority was still waiting for Pensions information, the report presented was still a draft document. The signing off of all three elements; Annual Governance, Letter of Representation and the Statement of Accounts would be done electronically. Pete thanked the Auditors, NYCC colleagues and the Authority's finance team for their hard work through the current challenging times. Pete asked members to agree that the following recommendation be added to the report;

That Members delegate the final sign off to Jim Bailey, Tom Hind and Pete Williams, subject to no material changes. If there are further material changes, then Officers would raise the matter with Members and sign off documentation at a later date.

Members;

- Thanked the Finance and Audit teams for their work
- Jeremy Walker asked that a couple of amends be noted at Para 10 of the Statement; text should read Capital Revenue £557k, not Capital Expenditure and at Para 19, text tense needed changing to read went to the NPA meeting on 27 July 2020, not will go to.
- David Hugill queried the high figure for Heritage assets and why they were itemised separately

Accounting Standards require Historical Assets to be listed separately.

**Action:** Pete Williams and Gareth Mills to provide Members with comparative information relating to Heritage Assets across other NPA's.

**Resolved:**

Members agreed to delegate the final sign off subject to no material changes. Any further material changes, Officers to revisit at future committee and sign off at a later date.

51/20 **Grant Thornton – the Audit Findings (ISA 260) Report for the NYMNPA**

Considered:

The report of the Auditors

Gareth Mills gave the report, advising members that Audit deadlines had been the impacted by Covid. No adjustments had been identified in relation to the financial statement and the main recommendations in the action plan related to future budgeting and a data cleanse of the fixed assets register. Gareth thanked the Authority and NYCC for their work and support.

Members expressed their thanks and welcomed the fact that the Authority had received a clean audit. Members asked officers to keep a watch on pension fund liability going forward.

**Shaun Moody and Gareth Mills left the meeting at 10.05am**

**52/20 Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls advised members that the Authority had in the past tended to follow NYCC's lead in relation to pensions discretions and had opted not to endorse additional payments and to keep redundancy payments at the statutory minimum.

**Resolved:** Members approved the draft discretionary policies detailed in **Appendix 1** of the report.

**53/20 Environmental Land Management (ELMs) System**

Considered:

The report of the Future Farming Policy Officer

Rebecca Thompson updated members on ELMS progress:

- Development of a financial modelling tool
- Face to face workshops taken place
- Consultants working on a report to set out findings of the model, presenting to Defra at end of November 2020

Members made the following comments:

- Thanked Rebecca for her excellent work so far
- Feedback to Defra re: concerns that ELMS unlikely to match the financial benefit of single farm payment and the continued need to support farmers
- Important that the Farming Policy Officer post continues post ELMS work
- Possible member training session re: ELMS work

Tom Hind spoke of a period of profound change within the farming industry as a result of the phasing out of Basic Payment and of the Authority's pivotal role in helping to shape the delivery of policy via our work in the Tests and Trials.

**Action:** BF/RT/TH to consider possible ELMS training/information sharing session for Members.

**Resolved:** Members noted the level of engagement that the Future Farming Policy Officer has had with DEFRA on the Test and Trials stage of the development process for the new Environmental Land Management System.

## **Jeremy Walker left the meeting at 11am**

### **54/20 Update on Easy Access Routes and Transition to Miles without Stiles**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Ranger and Recreation Services

Michael Graham, Director of Park Services presented the paper on behalf of Debbie Trafford.

Some work had not been carried out as scheduled, due to access budgets being cut due to the response to the pandemic; however £8k had been made available from reserves which would enable work to take place at Cawthorn Camp. Work at Rosedale Mineral Railway and Esk Valley to be postponed to financial year 21/22 and funded from operational budgets.

Michael also updated members on:

- Work to replace stiles with gates had continued
- The possibility of an easy access walk along the upper path at the Hole of Horcum from Saltergate car park
- Further partnership working to improve the easy access path at Sheepwash
- Updating existing accessible routes information will form part of launching a new website by March 2022. This work has been significantly delayed by covid.
- Need for improvement to disabled toilet provision across the NP

Members:

- Strongly supported the idea of an easy access path at the Hole of Horcum and, wherever possible, prioritising better disabled toilet provision near easy access routes.
- A member asked for more information about a news item talking about 'lost routes'.
- Asked if the Authority could share more NP local news stories/articles on these and other issues

Michael informed members that definitive rights of way map work had been handed back to NYCC, but that the Authority had invested quite a lot of time on this issue over the last couple of years and although there were still a few anomalies in our area, the situation on the whole was very good.

Michael informed the meeting that Debbie Trafford, Head of Recreation and Ranger Services was due to leave the Authority at the end of November. Officers and Members thanked Debbie for all her hard work and wished her well in her new role.

**Action:** Nina Beadle to provide regular local news links to members via e-mail

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| <b>Resolved:</b> Members noted the report. |
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### **55/20 Election of Elected Posts of Members – Verbal update by Richard Smith**

Richard Smith, Authority Solicitor, reminded members that although the officers/members had taken the government option (covid regulations) to extend

committee memberships at the AGM in July, officers had promised to review the current arrangements later in the year. The Chair asked each member individually, how they wished to proceed. 15 members present at the meeting agreed they were happy to continue with current membership until the next AGM, while 1 further member abstained.

The meeting agreed that the Authority's Solicitor would keep a check on the situation, and refer back to Members if necessary, but that members were content to continue with the current membership until the next AGM.

**56/20 Feedback from Lead Members on Forums**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer.

Sarah Oswald produced a written update on the Awareness, Recreation and Business forum meeting held on 10 Sept 2020.

Malcolm Bowes gave a verbal update on the NYM National Park Trust, stating that the Trust currently had a vacancy for a Trustee and anyone interested should contact himself or Michael Graham to discuss.

**57/20 Reports from Members on Outside Bodies**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer

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| <b>Resolved:</b> the report was noted. |
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**58/20 On The Record**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer. Members noted the contents of the report.

**59/20 Other Business**

Covid

Jim Bailey, Authority Chair raised the issue of changing covid rules and how the Authority might best continue good communication with members, beyond the normal, regular meetings. A brief discussion followed on the helpfulness of the forums, training and the fortnightly meetings which were keeping members informed

**Heather Moorhouse left the meeting at 11.20am**

Tom Hind, Chief Executive also updated members on the how the new changes to covid rules would impact the Authority; visitor centres and the gallery would close, but car parks would remain open. Tom promised to keep members informed re: on-going changes and was currently speaking to members on an individual basis and keen to hear from them about how the Authority might communicate most effectively, especially during such difficult times.

**Action:** Tom/Directors agreed to meet to discuss the best options for communication with Members.

..... (Chair)  
14 December 2020

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"**

**at the meeting of the Authority  
on 2 November 2020**

**Financial Collaboration Agreement**

Members agreed to extend the FCA for a further 2 years to 31 March 2023