

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 JULY 2024 AT 10.00 AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, AVENUE ROAD, LYMINGTON SO41 9ZG

Present:

Members

David Bence (Chair)	
Gordon Bailey	Caroline Rackham
Zoe Clewer	Joe Reilly
Richard Clewer	Ann Sevier
Mary Davies	Brice Stratford
David Harrison	Derek Tipp
Mel Kendal	
Victoria Mander	

Officers

Alison Barnes	Chief Executive
Rosalind Alderman	Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Stone	Head of Resources (Chief Finance Officer)
David Stone	Corporate Services Manager
Paul Walton	Head of Environment & Rural Economy
David Illsley	Policy & Conservation Manager
Jim Mitchell	Access and Learning Manager
Claire Pearce	Youth Development Officer
Vicki Gibbon	Member Services Administrator
Josh Taylor	Communications Assistant
Hayley Quarrington	National Park Intern

Also present: Cllr Mary Deboos (Ringwood Town Council), Cllr Charles Payne (Wellow Parish Council)

96 Apologies for Absence

96.1 Apologies for absence were received from Patrick Heneghan, Keith Mans, George Meyrick, Gavin Parker, Dan Poole and Steve Trow.

97 Election of Deputy Chair (AM 680/24)

97.1 David Bence facilitated the election of new Deputy Chair of the Authority, David Harrison was duly elected until the Annual Authority meeting on 17 October 2024.

Resolved, that David Harrison be elected Deputy Chair of the Authority until the Annual Authority meeting on 17 October 2024.

Voting: Unanimous

98. Declarations of Interest

98.1 Caroline Rackham declared a prejudicial interest under Part 2 section B (non-pecuniary interests) of the NPA's Code of Conduct in minute item 105 due to a member of her family being heavily involved in the preparation of the draft Wellow Neighbourhood Plan. Ms Rackham accordingly left the meeting during the debate and vote on that item.

99. Chair's Announcements

99.1 There were no Chair's announcements on this occasion.

100. Minutes

100.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were approved as a true record.

Resolved, that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 be approved as a true record.

Voting: None voting against

101. Public Question Time

101.1 There were no public questions on this occasion.

102. Chief Executive's Report (AM 681/24)

102.1 The Chief Executive reminded members that her report covered the period since the Authority meeting on 21 March 2024 and that the report fits within the Re:New Forest themes from the Business Plan. Ms Barnes gave a detailed presentation using PowerPoint giving a thorough overview of the Authority's work over the last quarter under each of the purposes.

102.2 Of particular note Ms Barnes highlighted the recent Partnership Plan tour, the extension of Farming in Protected Landscapes roles until the end of September 2025 and the tour of stock with the Verderers which she had recently attended. The Chief Executive reminded members of the upcoming New Forest Show to be held 30 July – 1 August, where a reception would take place on the stand on 30 July and the CLA awards would take place on 31 July.

Following discussion, members noted the report. A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

103. Oral Report from Resources, Audit and Performance Committee – 3 June

103.1 As the Chair of the above Committee had submitted apologies for the current meeting, David Harrison updated members on the salient points discussed at the last meeting of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 3 June 2024 – namely the External Audit Plan 2023/24 which had been presented by the Authority's external auditors Ernst & Young LLP and had included a discussion on the new audit fees for 2023/24, a presentation on the activities of the New Forest Marque by the Chair of the Marque (Dan Parsons), the Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion 2023/24, the year-end Progress Report 2023/24, the Financial Outturn and Treasury Report for 2023/24 and the Annual Health and Safety Report 2023/24. Other reports which had been considered by the Committee were a report on the Team New Forest: Communications Approach and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Members had also received an update on the 2024/25 Budget.

Members noted the above report.

104. Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Adoption (AM 682/24)

104.1 David Illsley began his report by reminding members that work began on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan in early 2021 when the Town Council applied to the

Authority and NFDC for the whole of the parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area. Since 2021, the draft Plan had gone through various stages of consultation before being submitted for independent examination in late 2023. The Examiner's report was received in February 2024 and was considered during the May Planning Committee meeting which set out the Authority's Decision Statement in response. A referendum then took place on 4 July 2024, with a strong majority supporting the Neighbourhood Plan.

104.2 Cllr Mary Deboos, from Ringwood Town Council, then gave members an overview of how the plan was prepared and thanked the Authority for their help on achieving this.

104.3 Members were then asked to resolve the recommendation as detailed below.

Resolved that:

The Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) be formally 'made' (i.e. adopted) and brought into immediate effect to form part of the statutory 'development plan' and the basis for planning decisions within the part of the National Park in Ringwood parish.

Voting: unanimous

105. Wellow Neighbourhood Plan Adoption (AM 683/24)

105.1 David Illsley explained that work commenced on the Wellow Neighbourhood Plan in 2016 and since then it had gone through various stages of consultation before being submitted for independent examination in December 2023. The Examiner's report to the Plan was received in April 2024 and was subsequently considered at the May 2024 Planning Committee meeting. The referendum was held on 11 July 2024, with a large majority supporting the Neighbourhood Plan.

105.2 Cllr Charles Payne, from Wellow Parish Council, addressed members giving a brief overview of the Neighbourhood Plan and thanked the Authority for their help in achieving this.

105.3 Members were asked to resolve the recommendation as set out below.

105.4 As mentioned under item 98.1 of these minutes, Caroline Rackham left the room during the debate and vote on this item due to a prejudicial interest.

Resolved, that

The Wellow Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) be formally 'made' (i.e. adopted) and brought into immediate effect to form part of the statutory 'development plan' and the basis for planning decisions within the part of the National Park in Wellow parish.

Voting: unanimous

106. New Forest National Park Local Development Scheme (AM 684/24)

106.1 David Illsley began his report by highlighting that, at the March 2024 Authority meeting, members resolved that work should commence on a partial review of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan. Following this decision it was necessary to publish an updated Local Development Scheme setting out the timetable for the review. He explained that this report set out the key milestones in the review

process and that there was uncertainty at a national level in the plan making process which included potential changes to the timetable for producing local plans and the role of National Development Management Policies. Therefore, it would be likely that further iterations of the Authority's Local Development Scheme would be required in due course.

Members were asked to resolve the recommendations as set out below.

Resolved that:

the Authority:

- (a) endorse the revised New Forest National Park Local Development Scheme (Annex 1), to be brought into immediate effect; and
- (b) delegate authority to the Executive Director (Strategy & Planning) to undertake the work necessary to publish the revised Local Development Scheme on the Authority's website.

Voting: unanimous

107. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (AM 685/24)

107.1 Jim Mitchell gave members an update on the Authority's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) through its New Forest Voices theme. One of the key initial goals of this work, was to bring all our EDI guidance and procedures into one central policy and this is what was presented to members within the report. The draft policy had been through significant consultation, including to staff and the union, and would be further enhanced with staff and member EDI workshops in the Autumn.

Resolved that:

Subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy be approved.

Voting: unanimous

108. Taking Leadership on Nature Recovery (AM 686/24)

108.1 Paul Walton introduced the report and advised that there had been a worldwide significant loss of biodiversity which was set to continue with National Parks expected to play a key role in reversing biodiversity loss. He then referred to key points in his report setting out how National Parks and the New Forest NPA with its partners, are responding to the challenge of nature recovery. He said that by working together across the family of National Parks there were opportunities to do more for nature recovery. This was being championed by Alison Barnes as Lead Chief Executive for Nature Recovery across the UK's National Parks with the development of a "Team Nature" approach.

108.2 English National Parks had developed a business case for nature recovery, setting an ambition of restoring 165,000 hectares for nature recovery by 2030 and identifying the level of investment needed to deliver it in the amount of £800 million, showing demonstrable leadership across a range of different areas.

108.3 He referred to Team Nature priorities in paragraph 3 of his report and nature recovery projects in the New Forest working to deliver the principles of the Authority's local leadership role on nature recovery.

108.4 Members discussed aspects of the report and Mr Walton replied to several queries raised by members.

The report was then noted.

109. Youth Focussed Work and the YouCAN Project (AM 687/24)

109.1 Claire Pearce, along with Josh Taylor and Hayley Quarrington, gave members an overview of the work which had been completed by the task and finish group. Members were then asked to reaffirm their support and note the next steps.

Resolved that:

The Authority reaffirm its support for the Youth Board, and note the report and next steps.

Voting: unanimous

110. Date of next meeting

110.1 Thursday 17 October 2024 at 10.00am – Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall, Lymington

PART II ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPTED INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

RESOLVED the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, namely the need to avoid disclosing sensitive information relating to personal information and the Authority's financial and business affairs.

111. Approval of Member Non-Attendance at Meetings (AM 688/24)

111.1 Members considered a report on the above matter (this is a summary of a minute that contains exempt information).

112. Planning Statutory Review Claim – Badger Cottage (AM 689/24)

112.1 Members considered a report on the above matter (this is a summary of a minute that contains exempt information).

Part 1 of the meeting closed at 12:30pm.

Signed: Date: (Chair)