

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AUTHORITY MEETING

Held at 2pm on 19 December 2017 at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	Tim Burr
Jo Carr	Norman Dingemans	Chris Dowling	Janet Duncton
Mark Dunn	Neville Harrison	Barbara Holyome	Daniel Humphreys
Helen Jackson	Doug Jones	Tom Jones	Gill Mattock
Robert Mocata	Russell Oppenheimer	Margaret Paren (Chair)	Ian Phillips

Sue Saville

SDNPA Officers:

Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside and Policy Management), Steven Bedford (Finance Officer), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Robin Parr (Head of Governance), Richard Sandiford (Senior Committee and Member Services Officer)

Also attended by:

Ruth James (Communication and Engagement Manager), Robert Thain (Minerals and Waste Lead), Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager), James Winkworth (Head of Marketing and Income Generation)

OPENING REMARKS

323. The Chair informed those present that:

- The meeting was being web-cast by the National Park Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. By coming into the Meeting Room members of the public were considered to have given their consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.
- SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and acted in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

324. The Authority was asked to note Agenda Items 18, 19 and 20. These items were taken as read as no Members indicated they wished to discuss anything related to these items.

325. The Authority was informed that Amber Thacker had resigned from Winchester City Council and from the Authority. Roger Huxstep had been appointed to the Authority by Winchester City Council.

NATIONAL PARK HERO AWARD

326. The Chair awarded the National Park Hero Award to Mr Thomas Moore, Head Teacher of Bury Church of England Primary School and commended his hard work in nurturing the next generation of National Park Heroes.

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

327. Apologies were received from Heather Baker, David Coldwell, Roger Huxstep, Gary Marsh and Pete West.

ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

328. The following declarations of interest were made:

- Sebastian Anstruther – Personal Pecuniary Interest on Agenda Item 12. Declared he would withdraw from the meeting for Item 12.

- Ken Bodfish – Personal Pecuniary Interest on Agenda Item 14. Declared he would withdraw from the meeting for Item 14.

ITEM 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2017

329. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 19 October 2017 subject to the following amendments:

- Neville Harrison being recorded as in attendance at the meeting.
- Minute 269 – Surname 'Phillips' was spelt incorrectly.
- Minute 270 – Norman Dingemans was the ward councillor for Arundel not Arun.
- Minute 311 – The CLA were the Country Land and Business Association not Authority.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING

330. Minute 278. Rampion Windfarm. The Director of Countryside and Policy Management provided an update regarding the project delay of approximately one year caused by cable installation and restoration. The Authority was informed this had affected two Section 106 agreements and Rampion proposed to extend the Section 106 funding to cover the additional monitoring work required.

ITEM 5. URGENT MATTERS

331. There were none.

ITEM 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

332. There were no public speakers.

ITEM 7. NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

333. The Authority was asked to consider whether, in respect of Agenda Items 21 and 22 the public, including the press, should be excluded from the meeting on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the items there would have been disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

334. **RESOLVED:** It was resolved that the meeting would move into private session at the appropriate time to consider Agenda Items 21 and 22.

ITEM 8. UPDATE FROM NPUK CONFERENCE

335. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chief Executive on the NPUK Conference.

- The conference had been very successful with 96% of attendees either satisfied or very satisfied.
- Thanks were expressed to Ruth James, Laura Warren and all Staff and Members who had been involved.
- A wash up session had taken place with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority who were hosting the next NPUK Conference.
- Learning and action points from the conference were to be reported on at the next NPUK Conference.

336. Authority Members formally expressed their congratulations and thanks to all the Staff involved.

ITEM 9. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE

337. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair on the following:

- A meeting was held with Rt Hon Michael Gove MP in preparation for DEFRA's 25 Year Environment Plan. Farming in National Parks was discussed along with the role of National Parks in the 21st Century.
- The DEFRA 25 Year environment plan would be published in January 2018 at the earliest.
- Business from the recent National Parks England Board meeting included an accord that was approved with Mobile UK and discussion on a request from Ministers that the National Park designation process should be streamlined.
- The launch of the Mend Our Ways campaign.
- Lord Gardiner's visit to the South Downs National Park during which he was impressed with the Authority's partnership working and the respect shown to the Authority.
- The second meeting of Transport South East at which the principles of 2020-25 trunk road improvements were discussed.
- A meeting with the President of the CLA. National Parks and the CLA were in agreement on many different matters. There were some differences raised in regard to planning.
- A meeting with Cllr Rob Humby at which the M3 and BOATs (Byways Open to All Traffic) in East Hampshire were discussed.
- The recent Members Day at Stansted Park on Woodland and Forestry which was informative, stimulating and a worthwhile event.

338. Members and Officers made the following comments:

- The Members Day at Stansted Park was very useful.
- Much of the local work on the forest supply chain was based on analysis developed with Grown in Britain; the Authority's work was focussed on the supply, aiming to get more timber from the South Downs into the supply chain. There was great interest at a national level in woods and forestry from DEFRA Officials and Ministers and a national accord was going ahead with the Forestry Commission.
- The trend in forestry policy and practice was to encourage a shift away from utilising high value timber in heating and into construction and other more appropriate and desirable uses.
- The Authority had set up the Forestry Champions Working Group which was looking at ways in which home grown timbers could be better managed and used with construction in mind. Much was heard about this at the Members Day at Stansted Park.
- The Chair of the Planning Committee asked for further clarification on the planning issues discussed with the CLA. These were explained to be matters such as permitted development rights.

ITEM 10. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

339. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Executive (Report NPA22/17).

340. Members made the following comments:

- An update and additional clarification on the various situations of our area officers was requested in relation to paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 and whether the Authority had a preference on ownership of properties, whether freehold, leasehold or rental.
- The Rother Valley Farmers Group was incorrectly referred to as the Upper Rother Farm Cluster in paragraph 6.3.
- Members recorded their thanks to Officers and the Design Review Panel following the recent awards to the Authority from the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- A session on how Members could improve in their use of Social Media was considered to be beneficial.

- A letter had been received from the Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Culture, Media and Sports which set out possibilities for taking forward ways of improving mobile coverage in National Parks.
- An update on whether a National Park phone app would be created was requested.
- The “What’s on” section of the SDNP website did not show a lot of events. This should be enhanced to better engage our audience and reach out to our visitor base.

341. In response to questions Members were advised:

- The Eastern Area Team had been relocated to the University of Sussex Innovation Centre. This was only a short term solution and negotiations were ongoing with Brighton and Hove City Council to move into another building at Stanmer Park. Contingency plans were also being developed in the case that Stanmer Park was not available to move into.
- Accommodation options for the Central Team, such as Amberley Station, were being evaluated as they moved out of the Weald and Downland Museum in 2018. This was also a good opportunity to locate the team more centrally in their area of the park.
- Although the Western Team’s accommodation was not temporary and there was no immediate pressure to relocate it was felt that a better solution may be found in the future.
- The Authority had no preference on its ownership of properties, the best approach would be taken to any sites considered, whether freehold, leasehold or rental. The Authority had made provision for matters such as these through the Strategic Reserve. An overview of the accommodation issues would be reviewed by the Policy and Resources Committee in 2018.
- NPUK or NPE would consider the creation of the National Parks App. The Authority would be making the best use of the platforms that were already in use.

342. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last report.

ITEM II. PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGY

343. Authority Members considered the report and a presentation from the Communications and Engagement Manger (Report NPA23/17).

344. Members made the following comments:

- It was an excellent strategy. It was right that the Authority sought to influence matters such as these and the three chosen areas well matched the National Parks purposes and duty. The messages needed to be positive, resonant and clear. Members would be effective ambassadors to help communicate these messages both locally and nationally.
- The difference in visitor figures between those detailed in the Strategy and those in the public presentation was queried.
- The issues chosen were important and sensible at that time. Future of Farming was a critical issue and water companies were reviewing their own strategies so it was the right time to look to influence them.
- The other issues under consideration had been Affordable Homes and Health and Wellbeing, however, three keys issues was considered to be a manageable amount to ensure the strategy was effective.
- Would the CRM database mentioned in para. 3.3 have been available for Members to interrogate and use as a resource?
- It was queried how the Authority had “Sole Responsibility” as mentioned on page 28 under Sustainable Tourism.
- This strategy and the messages that came out of it would assist in better informing Parish Councils of the ongoing work of the Authority.

345. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The visitor figure contained in the public presentation was from a survey conducted in the first year of the National Park and indicated visits to the park. The figure in the strategy was re-baselined using a methodology comparable to that of other National Parks which reflected visitors rather than visits.
 - In view of the Authority's data protection responsibilities the CRM would not be available to everyone. It was not only a database for storage but also for handling relationship management tasks.
 - The Authority had sole responsibility in that the South Downs National Park had no other destination management organisation. The Authority was the only organisation that covered the whole area. The aim was for the South Downs National Park to be viewed as a landscape brand that people would come to visit, similar to the Lake District or the New Forest.
346. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Agree the Public Affairs Strategy, and associated priority areas for the period January 2018–January 2020.
 2. Agree that the strategy and its priority areas be subject to a review by Policy and Resources Committee in early 2019. Any recommendations arising from this review, including any recommendations to amend the priority areas to be reported to the NPA for consideration.
 3. Note that the stakeholder management plan will be further developed and delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the P&R Committee and the Authority Chair, to approve the updated stakeholder management plan for inclusion in the strategy.

ITEM 12. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE WEST SUSSEX JOINT MINERALS LOCAL PLAN

347. Sebastian Anstruther withdrew from the meeting at 15.16.
348. Authority Members considered the report from the Director of Planning (Report NPA24/17) presented by Robert Thain, Minerals and Waste Lead.
349. Members made the following comments:
- There was expected to be great interest in the Markells Wood and Forestside sites mentioned in the plan.
 - Whilst it appeared the Authority had not achieved the managed retreat from the National Park sought, it was still a very good outcome and the National Park was still well protected. The soft sand review was not required to take place until after the plan was approved.
 - Clarification was requested on the timeframe for the soft sand review.
350. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The soft sand review needed to commence as soon as possible after the plan was approved and needed to be concluded within a specified time period.
351. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Agree the proposed Modifications to the draft West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (Appendix I) for publication and public consultation on their soundness followed by submission to the Inspector.
 2. Agree primary weight should be placed on the draft West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan, in conjunction with other material considerations, when determining minerals development proposals in the interim period until the date of adoption.
 3. Agree to undertake a single issue (soft sand) joint review of the Plan after adoption.
352. Sebastian Anstruther returned to the meeting at 15.24.

ITEM 13. INCOME GENERATION UPDATE

353. Authority Members considered the report and presentation from the Head of Marketing and Income Generation (Report NPA25/17).
354. Members made the following comments:
- Officers were congratulated on the commitments secured so far. The website and twitter account were very professional. The amount of work entailed in creating the new legal entity of the South Downs National Park Trust was also acknowledged.
 - The success already was remarkable. Money from the Mend Our Way campaign was coming into the Authority from the Trust.
355. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the progress on Income Generation and the progress on the establishment of a Charitable Trust.
356. The Chair proposed and Members agreed that Agenda Item 17b be considered at this point.

ITEM 17b. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – ENTERPRISE AND INVESTMENT

357. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair of the Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group.
- The group had visited both Jill Windmill and Seven Sisters Country Park to consider fully the investment opportunities.
 - Jill Windmill was considered not to be an appropriate investment for the Authority, however, it was suggested the South Downs National Park Trust may have been a more appropriate body to consider possibilities for income generation and further discussions would be had.
 - Seven Sisters Country Park was a large scale project where the National Park could make a significant difference. A detailed analysis into the opportunities and liabilities was being commissioned.
 - The aims of the group were to consider these two opportunities and to formulate a process and approach to future opportunities.
 - Members were advised that any recommendations from the group were considered by the Policy and Resources Committee for detailed discussion.
358. Jo Carr left the meeting at 15.46.

ITEM 14. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES

359. Members queried if all Members who were potentially affected by the review were required to declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting and why in this case it was considered necessary that one particular Member should withdraw from the meeting.
360. Members were advised that only one Member was directly affected by the changes recommended and the Monitoring Officer's view was that it was prudent for that Member to declare a personal interest and withdraw from the meeting for that item (to avoid the perception of bias).
361. Ken Bodfish withdrew from the meeting at 15.47pm.
362. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA 26/17).
363. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Consider the outcomes of the independent review of the Scheme of Allowances and;
 2. Agree to amend the Scheme of Allowances to include:
 - a. Removal of the allowances payable for the Chair of the Governance Committee and Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee.
 - b. Inclusion of an allowance for the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee of £1770.38.
 - c. Inclusion of an allowance for the Deputy Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee of £354.07 (subject to any indexation) to become payable when a single

Deputy Chair of the Committee is appointed.

3. Agree that the changes in the Scheme of Allowances be backdated to 11 July 2017.

364. Ken Bodfish returned to the meeting at 15.51.

ITEM 15. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

365. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA 27/17).

366. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to appoint Roger Huxstep to the SDNPA Planning Committee with effect from 19 December 2017.

ITEM 16. APPOINTMENTS TO THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

367. Members were advised that the appendix to the report had been tabled. If any Member wished to discuss the contents of the appendix this would be considered once the meeting had moved into private session.

368. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA 28/17).

369. Members indicated that they wished to discuss matters contained in the appendix. Therefore, discussion on Agenda Item 16 was deferred to private session.

ITEM 17a. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – EUROPEAN EXIT WORKING GROUP

370. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair of the European Exit Working Group.

- The group was very supportive of a South Downs agri-environment pilot and keen to see progress made on this.
- The appointment of a new Future of Farming Officer in the New Year was key to this progress as well as taking forward the excellent work already done with our farm cluster groups where pilots could take place.
- There was much good work being done with cluster facilitators across the South of England where the National Park was taking a more strategic, leadership role. Through this group discussions could be had in the future about agri-environment pilots from the National Park being rolled out in other areas across the South of England.

371. Members made the following comments:

- The agri-environment pilots were test beds for what would be appropriate within the National Park, but there were synergies between the National Park and other chalk landscapes and protected areas. The Authority had a role as a strategic lead through farm clusters in these areas.
- Decision on the use of chemicals post-Brexit was a national level debate.
- Farm Clusters were strongly linked with pilot schemes in the Future of Farming paper to DEFRA. There had also been a positive response from the Secretary of State to farm clusters. The Authority was in a strong and leading position on this both in the National Park family and nationally. Encouraging farmers to work together on a landscape scale was important.
- Suggestion that the group should have been named the European Union Exit Working Group to more accurately reflect its purpose.

ITEM 18. PLANNING COMMITTEE

372. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on the 12 October confirmed (page 75) and 9 November confirmed (page 81).

ITEM 19. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

373. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 21 November confirmed (page 91).

ITEM 20. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES

374. Authority Members noted the report on the Sustainable Communities Fund (page 99).

375. The meeting moved into private session at 16.02.

PRIVATE SESSION

385. The meeting returned to public session at 16.50 to consider the recommendations for Agenda Item 16

ITEM 16. APPOINTMENTS TO THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

386. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:

1. Appoint the persons named in Appendix I as the Independent Persons of the Authority to take effect from 19 December 2017;
2. Agree that the term of each appointment be two years with the option to extend the appointment for an additional two years;
3. Agree that the Independent Persons receive no payment other than travelling and subsistence expenses at Authority-approved rates; and
4. Delegate authority to the Appointments, Management and Standards Committee to approve, monitor and review on an ongoing basis an "Independent Person Protocol" to provide guidance on the operation of the role of the Independent Persons.

387. The meeting closed at 16.55.