

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 1 December 2017

Present: K Ball, S Barker, W Cann, A Cooper, G Gribble, P Harper, S Hill, P W Hitchins, M Jeffery, J McInnes, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, M Simpson, D Webber, P Woods

Apologies: J Christophers

3301 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 6 October 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2017 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3302 Declarations of Interest

None

3303 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) and the Community Ranger, had all attended the Commoners' Briefing on Wednesday, 29 November, where Colonel James Coote, DSO, OBE reiterated that MoD is keen to maintain the excellent working relationship between the Authority and Ten Tors.

The Chairman also reported that, unfortunately, he had been unable to attend the Junior Ranger presentations, and asked Pamela Woods to brief Members regarding the proceedings.

Mrs Woods confirmed that the Junior Ranger event had been terrific, with numerous youngsters receiving certificates and prizes and giving excellent presentations and work is underway to set up an older age-group of 'junior rangers', possibly to be called 'Youth Rangers'.

Mr Retallick arrived

Mr Retallick updated Members on the National Park Forum meeting, held on 24 November. There had been a very good attendance, and a lot of new participants, hence a lot of different questions being asked with staff giving excellent replies.

3304 Items requiring urgent attention

Part II Item – Monitoring Officer Arrangements.

Signed  Date 5.1.18

3305 Public Participation

None

3306 Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/17/040)

Since 2015, the Authority has been working in partnership with Devon & Somerset County Councils, all Devon & Somerset District Councils, Torbay, and Plymouth City Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups and Exmoor National Park Authority to progress towards securing a devolution deal for the Heart of the South West (HotSW) area.

The key role of the HotSW Joint Committee will be to develop, agree, and ensure the implementation of the Productivity Strategy, which will only be achieved by working in collaboration with the individual constituent authorities and the LEP.

Although the Joint Committee is a cost-effective formal structure, provision needs to be made to meet the support costs of what will be a fully constituted local authority joint committee. The Shadow Joint Committee recommends the budget is met by contributions from the constituent authorities. Using the formula of contributions agreed in 2015 to support the devolution project, the contribution requested for District Councils and National Parks is £1,400. This assumes that all authorities agree to become members of the Joint Committee but would need to be recalculated should fewer than 19 Authorities become Members.

Members were asked to formally support the establishment of the Joint Committee; appoint one Member to sit on said Committee, and another to act as a 'substitute'.

During discussion Members agreed that Mr Hitchins, as Chairman, should sit on the Joint Committee as the Authority's representative and Mr Cooper was nominated and seconded to act as his 'substitute'

RESOLVED: Members APPROVED the ten recommendations as laid out in the report.

12:25 Mrs Oakley left the meeting

3307 South West Peatland Partnership - Defra Capital Grant Application

Members received the report of the Director of Conservation & Communities (NPA/17/041).

Signed



Date

5.1.18

In July 2017, Defra launched a new capital grant scheme for the restoration of Peatland in England, the aim of which is to deliver multiple ecosystem services and allow delivery over a three year period, with a start date of 1 April 2018. Payments will be made, in arrears, against milestones.

Findings from the IUCN's Peatland Programme Commission of Inquiry identified the south-west peatlands as being the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in the UK, due to their southerly position.

Working with South West Water and the Bodmin and Exmoor Peatland Partnerships, we have agreed to develop and submit one 'umbrella' bid for the three moors - "*the South West Peatland bid*". The programme of works, as detailed in the bid is ambitious, therefore the appointment of a dedicated officer to deliver this programme is crucial.

The Defra grant will only fund capital work, therefore the Authority will need to find complimentary funding to support delivery. Officers feel this is a positive way to utilise our match funding reserve on a project which aims to deliver against key priorities and attracts a grant of 73%. It should be reiterated that the capital grant is paid in arrears and there will be an upfront cost for the Authority.

A Member queried how far in arrears payments would be made. At this time, all we know is that payments will be in arrears against milestones, but we will find out more if our bid is successful.

The matter of unexploded ordnance clearance was raised, with 'milestones' in mind will contractors be able to manage, and will we be able to deliver the hectareage required each year? Mrs Kohler advised that UXB clearance had been costed into the bid, and it is hoped that the contractor who delivered on Flat Tor Pan would be used again. With regards the ability to deliver the hectareage; the bid is very ambitious but the sites chosen have a mixture of erosion and drainage channels, specialist contractors will not be needed

12:50 Mr Sanders left the meeting

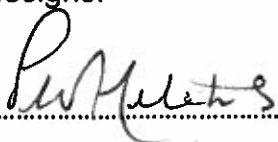
RESOLVED: Members AGREED to support the SW Peatland Project with a contribution of £150,000 to fund a Project Officer to help deliver peatland restoration on Dartmoor.

3308 Moor Otters Evaluation

Members received the report of the Head of Communications, Economy and Fundraising (NPA/17/042)

In June, 2016, Members agreed to support a new public arts initiative on Dartmoor. Key to its success lay in attracting the best quality artists who would be happy to give support. We enlisted the support of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, the Contemporary Craft Festival and Delamore Arts who all contacted their artists, craftspeople and members and encouraged them to submit designs.

Signed



Date

5.1.18

Acquiring some high level sponsorship and valued partners was important and we were able to secure one main financial supporter/sponsor - South West Water, and through our good working relationship with the Duchy of Cornwall, we were able to secure additional support for the project via a specially commissioned otter sculpture, to a design approved by HRH The Prince of Wales.

Six local schools (5 primary and 1 secondary) were invited to decorate their own mini otter sculptures which then formed a mini otter trail based at Princetown Visitor Centre during the summer holidays. Once the holidays ended the sculptures were returned to the schools for them to keep, or auction off.

The large otters were auctioned; an on-line auction commenced on the same day the trail was launched and continued until early October. Before the online auction had closed, the 30 'golden otters' were sold via a 'live' auction in at Bearnas Hampton & Littlewood,. In retrospect, it may have been wiser to have waited until the on-line auction had finished.


As a PR exercise the Trail was a success and generated an approximate income of £60,000 which will be split equally between three areas; Junior Rangers; invasive Non-native plant control; and erosion repairs, all as identified at the start of the campaign:

The project took 18 months from inception to completion and was an excellent example of "Team Dartmoor" in action.

The Authority took a calculated risk in agreeing this initiative however it has paid off and was a huge success. The level of engagement was more than could have been hoped for, and the feedback has been incredible. It has been described as one of the best PR exercises we have ever done, and created a real feel-good factor over the summer. A debt of gratitude is owed to all our sponsors and valued partners for helping to make the project the success it has been.

A Member expressed that, in his opinion, the project had been a fantastic success and the amount raised was a phenomenal achievement. He wanted to personally thank the Head of Communications, Economy & Fundraising and everyone who had worked on the project for their hard work and enthusiasm.

During discussions it was suggested that, in the event of a project like this being undertaken in the future, we have a written brief in place at the beginning to enable any Project Leader to understand what it is we want to achieve. It was also suggested that we keep a tangible rapport with the host businesses, so we can engage with them in the future. Another suggestion was that we put temporary signage in place where repairs/improvement works are being undertaken, so that the public is aware of where the funds have come from and where they are is being spent.

Signed  Date 5.1.18

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the project summary, evaluation report and lessons learned.

3309 Moor than Meets the Eye (Mtmte) Landscape Partnership Scheme Year 3 Progress Report

Members received the report of the Moor than meets the eye Scheme Manager (NPA/17/043)

Overall the Projects and Scheme is well underway. Two projects have been formally withdrawn from delivery, and another two have been significantly re-scoped over the past year following challenges in their delivery. A new Training Co-ordinator was appointed in August 2017 and two new apprentices have been recruited.

Over 230 events have been organised, or supported to date. One of the challenges Mtmte continues to face is engaging partners and those involved in the Scheme to showcase the successes and increase our exposure/recognition in the community.

Preliminary results of the Interim Monitoring & Evaluation Survey were received in October, generally the main findings were that positive change is starting to be seen and we are heading in the right direction. Relationships with communities and organisations are strengthening. However, as is usual with project delivery, there continues to be areas of concern ie projects (those lacking in progress, those with a forecast under/overspend); ensuring accurate project spend forecasts; increasing requests for change control and seeking agreement with the HLF.

As Lead Partner and Accountable Body, the Authority carries a significant risk in managing the scheme and the cash flow position. However, with some revised project plans in place; the undertaking of some re-scoping and robust monitoring management and supervision in hand, there is every reason to feel confident that the scheme will progress as planned and deliver the outcomes sought.

A Member agreed with the Chairman in that it was useful to see how things were progressing, but queried the use of the coloured chart and suggested that a 'key' would be helpful so that Members could understand what made a project red, green or amber. He went on to ask if this item could come to a future A&G meeting in order to discuss further, and was informed that this was already programmed.

RESOLVED: Members noted the progress to date and that a six month report will be present at the Audit and Governance Meeting scheduled for 4 May 2018 and the end of year 4 report to Authority in December 2018.

3310 Tree preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/17/044)

Signed

Date _____

P. M. M. M. M.

5.1.18

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the report.

3311 Mr McInnes proposed that the meeting move into Part II (private) session, which was seconded by Mr Retallick.

RESOLVED: Members moved into Part II (private) session.

3312 Monitoring Officer Arrangements

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/17/045).

RESOLVED: Members noted the contents of the report and agreed the recommendation as set out.

Signed



Date

5.1.18