

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 6 April 2018

Present: K Ball; S Barker; W Cann; A Cooper; 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: G Gribble; J Christophers

3334 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 16 March 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3335 Declarations of Interest

Peter Harper declared that, with regards report NPA/18/017 Proposed National Parks Charity, he had been a Board Member of NPP when discussions on setting up a charity were first discussed.

3336 Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed Geri Daly and Anopa Gumbie, from Grant Thornton, Auditors.

3337 Items requiring urgent attention

The Chairman pointed out that a report on the Proposed National Parks Charity (NPA/18/017) would be heard at Item 10 on the agenda.

3338 Public Participation

None

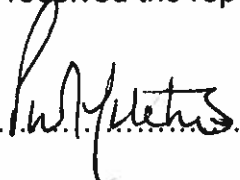
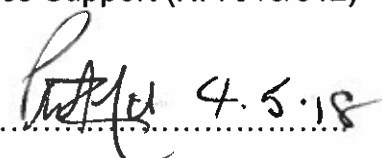
**3339 Dartmoor National Park Authority External Audit Plan
Year Ending 31 March 2018**

The auditors presented the external audit plan, explaining their approach; the timetable, and confirming their fee.

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the report

3340 Audit & Governance Committee - Terms of Reference

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/18/012)

Signed  Date  4.5.18

The Head of Business Support recounted that, in 2006, the Authority established an Audit & Governance Committee (A&G) as a sub-committee of the Authority, and that it is a key component of the Authority's governance framework, whose function is to provide independent and high-level resource to support good governance, and strong public financial management.

Since its inception there has been tremendous change and Authority Members and the current A&G Committee have requested that the work of the Committee be reviewed, along with the Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings. There are two proposed options for the future:

- 1) Delete the A&G Committee; take all current reports and the committee's work to the full Authority; or
- 2) Refresh the A&G Committee's terms of reference and delegated powers; focusing on scrutiny, Performance Management, Business Planning, Financial Monitoring and Audit.

Both options had been reported and discussed at the A&G meeting on 2 February 2018, both have advantages and disadvantages, but it was recommended that Option 2 be adopted and that the A&G Committee's Terms of Reference be revised as per Appendix 2 to the report (NPA/18/012). A&G would continue to meet after Development Management (DM), on the first Friday in February and November. However, the meeting held in May would be at the end of the month in order to accommodate the closedown deadline of 31 May, as is the case this year, and to receive the Outturn report.

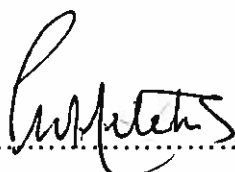
A Member queried whether it would be possible, as in the past, to hold A&G meetings on a separate day altogether, as it was felt that having to sit through long Development Management and Authority meetings could prove too tiring for Committee Members to give their full attention to the business in hand. It was pointed out that when A&G used to meet on the second Friday of the month, poor attendances meant that meetings were not quorate and had to be cancelled, which was why this option had not been put forward now.

A Member stated it was inevitable that A&G meetings would have to follow Development Management meetings, but felt that the May meeting, which is a key meeting needed to be a standalone one and felt that option 2 was a good compromise.

RESOLVED: Members APPROVED the revised Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings for the Audit & Governance Committee, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

3341 Tree Preservation Order: The Hall, Ashburton

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/18/013)

Signed  Date 4.5.18

On 9 January 2018, the Authority made a Tree Preservation Order under delegated powers to protect two mature trees growing in the grounds of The Hall, Ashburton. If confirmed, the Order would protect the trees in perpetuity and, considering the high visual amenity value of the trees, and that no objections to the Order had been received, it was recommended that the Order be confirmed as made.

A Member stated that, a number of beech trees have recently become infected with black rot, and wondered if, as one of the trees subject to the Order is a beech tree, the Authority would be liable for any felling or remedial works, should it become infected, once the Order is confirmed?

The Trees & Landscape Officer confirmed that an assessment had been undertaken on both trees and they had undergone crown reductions; both trees were in good health and the Authority would not be liable, should the tree become infected.

RESOLVED: Members AGREED that the Tree Preservation Order at The Hall, Ashburton be confirmed as made

3342 Proposed National Parks Charity

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/18/017)

The Chief Executive (NPO) apologised for the fact that the report had been distributed separately from the rest of the meetings papers.

The Chief Executive (NPO) reported that, at its AGM in June 2016, NPUK (National Parks UK) established a Working Group to look at ways of growing income for the 15 UK National Parks; the Group was asked to consider a request from National Parks Partnership Limited Liability Partnership (NPP) that a national charity be established, as discussions held with potential corporate sponsors suggested that the absence of a charity was hindering their ability to raise income.

At a meeting of NPUK in February 2018, National Park Authority Chairs considered a paper on the proposed charity. Eight of the 15 NPAs agreed to proceed with the proposal with 7, including Dartmoor, indicating they would need to report to, and seek the approval of, their respective Authorities. On the basis of a majority vote (8), the working group had been authorised to take forward the development of detailed proposals with NPP.

The question for Dartmoor NPA is whether or not we want to be a formal member of the charity and, without a business case setting out the potential for income generation, it is difficult to advise on the impact of the charity in terms of funding. Many of the questions about the governance and how funds might be distributed will only be resolved through the articles of association approval by the Charity Commissioners and in operating the charity. There are also a set of potential reputational issues, or risks. If the Authority wishes

Signed  Date 4.5.18

to influence the charity, then it needs to be a member; if it not, then it should determine not to be a member.

A Member was concerned with the Trustees' Terms of Service and queried the fact that the wording did not state that Trustees should be current National Park Authority Members. He was also nervous about the open ended financial situation, and anxious that, if the Authority chose not to be a member then we would not be able to make a difference.

In general, Members were in agreement that not enough information was to hand at this time and what information there was contradicted itself with regards membership.

In order to play 'devil's advocate' one Member asked; if by not signing up would the Authority be giving the wrong message to Central Government; would they think we were not interested in finding other forms of funding? Would it not be better to walk away later than not sign up from the start? It was considered that walking away would not be easy; there would inevitably be legal implications.

The question was asked that if, as suggested the charity was registered in Scotland, would that have implications for Welsh and English National Parks? One Member advised that this would not be a problem, however they did ask, whether a Local Government/Public Body could be part of a corporate charity as there was no information regarding this in the document.

It was felt that public opinion should also be considered; for example, if a large home builder donated money to a National Park how might that be perceived?

RESOLVED: Members mandated the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman, to make a decision on whether Dartmoor should be a founding member of the National Parks Charity dependent on governance concerns being addressed through the draft articles of association.

Messrs Cann & Barker left the meeting

3343 Love Moor Life

Members received the report of the Head of Communications & Fundraising (NPA/18/014)

Compared to 2009 figures, annual visitor numbers to Dartmoor are down slightly and whilst the majority of those visitors respect the environment, there is a minority who, through ignorance or lack of understanding, do not. The farming community has reported increased problems with visitors, for example; dogs not on leads and out of control; illegal camping and mountain biking; increased litter and other forms of anti-social behaviour. This is often due to a lack of knowledge regarding their rights and responsibilities when accessing Dartmoor. Officers have been working with Rangers and key

Signed  Date 4.5.18

stakeholders to develop a fresh approach to simplify the message in the form of the 'Love Moor Life' campaign which will initially focus on six behaviours we want all visitors to adopt:

- Keep your dog on a lead;
- Bag up litter and take it home;
- Camping: Use a campsite, or check the website;
- Close gates;
- Share roads and bridleways;
- Don't feed the ponies.

These simple messages will be represented as icons and branded as 'The Ranger Code'. It will be delivered across all communications channels and will replace all current signage, information and literature (produced by the Authority) as and when it is due for renewal. The campaign will highlight seasonal issues at different times of the year, starting this spring with dogs.

Love Moor Life is not about preventing people from enjoying Dartmoor; rather it is about getting visitors to adopt and demonstrate the six key messages that form the core of this important campaign, the success of which is critical to keeping Dartmoor special, and respecting the fact that the National Park is a living, working landscape. Our role is to work with partners, and visitors, to help people understand the messages and get them accepted as the social norm.

A Member queried the use of a tent icon to depict the '*camping: use a campsite, or check the website*' message. In his opinion it was motor homes that were the real problem. The Head of Communications & Fundraising assured him that, although the icons are a work in progress, the tent icon was chosen after talking and working with Rangers.

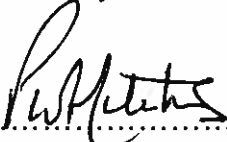
RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the campaign plan aimed at changing visitor behaviour.

3344 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/18/015).

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the report.

It was duly proposed and seconded that, in accordance with s.100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, report NPA/18/016 should be taken in the absence of the Press and Public, on the ground that exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 Paragraph 3 to Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act (as amended) will be discussed, namely:-

Signed  Date *14.5.18*

1. *Information relating to any individual.*
2. *Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual*

RESOLVED: Members resolved to move into Part II private session.

**3345 PART II - Appointment and Remuneration of Statutory Posts
(Section 151/Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer)**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)
(NPA/18/016)

RESOLVED: Members approved the appointment of the Head of Organisational Development as the Authority's Monitoring Officer and approved the remuneration arrangements for the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, as outlined in the report.

Signed  Date 4.5.18