

# DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 28 July 2017

**Present:** W Cann, A Cooper, G Gribble, P W Hitchins, M Jeffery, J McInnes, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, D Webber, P Woods

**Apologies:** K Ball, S Barker, J Christophers, S Hill

## **3277 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 26 May 2017**

The Minutes of the meeting on 26 May 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

## **3278 Minutes of the Authority (Annual) Meeting held on 7 July 2017**

The Minutes of the meeting on 7 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

## **3279 Declarations of Interest**

Mrs Pannell declared a personal interest in NPA/17/032 due to Ref: 16/0069 Greenfield, South Brent being her property.

## **3280 Chairman's Report**

The Director of Conservation and Communities informed Members that the visit by Lord Gardiner was successful. The varied agenda included future of farming, junior rangers, apprenticeships, affordable housing, airband and rural productivity.

The Chairman reported to Members that the National Parks England conference on 18 July 2017 was a good networking opportunity with the new Chairs.

As the summer holidays progress there are many community outreach and engagement events, recently Magnificent Mires event and North Hall dig attracted circa 900 people.

The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman for attending some of the public events in his place.

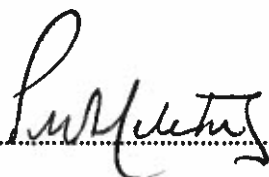
## **3281 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

None

## **3282 Public Participation**

None

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**3283 The Audit Findings for Dartmoor National Park Authority – Year Ended 31 March 2017**

The Head of Business Support reported that unfortunately Grant Thornton has been unable to provide a representative to attend this meeting for which they apologised, but wished to convey that Members should take comfort from the fact that the Audit Findings Report contained no significant issues to report to them.

The Head of Business Support informed the Committee that the audit was substantially complete and took Members through Grant Thornton's Audit Findings Report pointing out that:

- No financial adjustments, mis-statements or omissions had been identified
- Grant Thornton had requested a presentational change to one new note to the accounts (position of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis)
- The accounts and supporting paperwork prepared to good standard
- An unqualified opinion on the accounts would be forthcoming and that
- Grant Thornton is satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Members congratulated the Head of Business Support and the Finance Team for once again meeting the new deadline (a year early) and for producing the accounts to such a high standard. However Members requested that their disappointment at Grant Thornton's non-attendance be passed on, especially as they had agreed to change the meeting dates a year early to accommodate Grant Thornton's aspiration to conclude the audit by 31 July and thus meet new early audit deadline a year early also.

A Member asked if producing the new Expenditure and Funding Analysis, notes and restatement of 2015/16 balances had created a lot of extra work. The Head of Business Support confirmed that it had and that the auditors has also had to spend a significant amount of time auditing it.

**RESOLVED:**

The Members NOTED the content of the report.

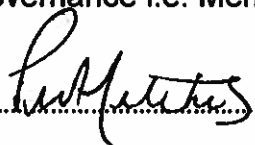
**3284 Annual Statement of Accounts 2016/17**

The Head of Business Support presented the audited version of the Statement of Accounts highlighting the significant presentational changes introduced this year which aims to help Local Authorities to "Tell the Story" to all stakeholders via:

- The new Expenditure and Funding Analysis and associated notes
- Using the Narrative Report as a key tool to explain how the Authority has achieved both financial and non-financial performance and outcomes

The Head of Business Support confirmed that the financial position has not altered from that reported to the Authority in June and that no significant changes were required to the draft accounts as post audit. She also outlined how those Charged with Governance i.e. Members had received the necessary assurance to enable

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them to approve Statement of Accounts and authorise the signing of the Letter of Representation.

The Head of Business Support confirmed that the audit process was almost complete and that once Grant Thornton has issued the Opinion, the Accounts and the Audit Findings Report would be published on the website.

The Chairman thanked the Finance team and all staff involved in getting the Statement of Accounts completed on time.

**RESOLVED: Members:**

- (i) Approved the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts
- (ii) The Chairman was authorised to sign and date the Statement of Responsibilities on behalf of the Authority;
- (iii) Members endorsed the conclusion of Management and the Chief Finance Officer that the Authority's accounts should be prepared on a Going Concern basis;
- (iv) The Chairman and Chief Executive (NPO) were authorised to sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Authority
- (v) Members re-approved the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement approved by the Authority in April 2017 (NPA/17/012).
- (vi) The Chairman and the Chief Executive were authorised to sign the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement.

**3285 Site Size Threshold for the Use of Section 106 and Affordable Housing Contributions**

The Assistant Forward Planner took Members through the report and reminded Members of the Ministerial Statement stating that no authority could insist on the provision of affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought in developments of 10 dwellings or less. In designated areas (including National Parks) the LPA may choose to implement a lower threshold of five units beneath which affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought. If the five unit threshold is implemented then payment of affordable housing and tariff style contributions and developments of between 6-10 units should be sought as cash payment only. The DNPA adopted an Interim Statement on these lines in June 2016

A number of appeals have tested the Written Ministerial Statement and the position has now been clarified. The appeal decisions confirm that the Local Plan still has primacy and should be the starting point for every decision.

Given the heavy emphasis in the Local Plan on the provision of affordable housing for local persons in housing need, Members were requested to rescind the Statement, but to retain, where appropriate, the lower threshold of five units.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr McInnes.

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- (i) Agreed to rescind the Interim Statement on the restricted use of Section 106 Agreements: and
- (ii) Agreed to apply the lower threshold of five units where appropriate.

The Communities Officer informed Members that the Dartmoor Fund has been well received and has helped develop a large number of projects. Two projects have been carried forward; Bridford Village Hall – updating their electrics, and Princetown football field – fencing. The fencing work has been carried out by the probation service which total £8-10k worth of work.

Future funding is dependant on the local councils, but it is almost certain that the pot will be reduced as there is no ongoing commitment.

Members praised the fund and the help it has given to the local communities by getting service provision in the rural areas and how the diverse projects in the Dartmoor area.

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report.

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/17/033).

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report.

**Signed**

*Per Hultén*

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1.9.17