

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 6 January 2017

Present: S Barker, W Cann, J Christophers, A Cooper, G Gribble, S Hill, P W Hitchins, M Jeffery, D Lloyd, J McInnes, I Mortimer, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, D Webber, P Woods

Apologies: K Ball

3210 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 2 December 2016

The Minutes of the meeting on 2 December 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3211 Declarations of Interest

Mr Sanders declared a personal interest in Item 9 due to his position as Chairman of Devon County Council public rights of way committee.

3212 Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed Members that a video conference has recently taken place involving Members of National Parks England. There had been lengthy discussions about the proposed process for selecting and making Secretary of State appointments to National Park Authorities. The details remain unresolved and further discussions are needed. The Chief Executive (NPO) reminded Members that in recent years Natural England has managed the appointment process, but responsibility has now passed to Defra. It was noted that there will be two Secretary of State vacancies arising the Authority at the end of March 2017 and it is a concern that the next round of appointments is not anticipated to conclude until July 2017 at the earliest.

The Chairman requested for Members to show their interest in the Dartmoor Awards Panel. Mr Retallick, Mrs Oakley, Mr Cooper, Mr Jeffery, Mr Webber and Mrs Pannell all expressed an interest.

3213 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None

3214 Public Participation

Mr Trevelyan Evans, item 9 Application for the diversion of Footpath 12 (Bridford) and Bridleway 31 (Bridford) at Burnicombe Farm, Bridford.

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3215 Application for the diversion of Footpath 12 (Bridford) and Bridleway 31 (Bridford) at Burnicombe Farm, Bridford

Mr Evans informed Members that the proposal to create a new footpath to go around the farm, not through it, would improve safety for walkers/horse riders and improve security for the farm. The revised route for to the path would go through a stock field but would actually reduce the number of gates on the path.

The Head of Legal and Democratic services informed Members that the decision on the Path needs to be made on the convenience of the path for users and if it is as enjoyable to use i.e. the gradient and the surface is of a similar nature.

The Head of Recreation, Access & Estates stated to Members that in his opinion the application for the diversion had been made in the interests of the landowner. The motivation to change the route was not in the interest of the public to improve the current route.

Informal Consultations were carried out with the British Horse Society (BHS) and Ramblers Association. BHS stated that local users had no particular concerns with the current route, and considered there to be little risk from farm machinery due to the farm mainly being used as a wedding venue. The Ramblers Association stated that they did not support the application. They stated that the diversion will not improve security and privacy of the farm and did not accept that there is a conflict for users with farm machinery as there is no evidence of working farm machinery. The proposed bridleway is a steep gradient and substantially less convenient. The current route has no conflict with livestock, whereas the proposed route would introduce this risk and involve a significant detour for walkers travelling west to east.

The Officer outlined the financial implications to the Authority if the application were to be opposed and proceed for determination at a Hearing or Public Inquiry.

In the Officers view the application cannot be supported.

In response to a Members question, it was clarified that both the footpath and bridleway need to be assessed together as the routes are inter-dependant. Maintenance for the path if it was to go through the livestock field would be the land owners responsibility.

Mrs Pannell left the meeting.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Jeffery.

RESOLVED: That no Order is made.

3216 Pre-Application Advice Charges Review

The Head of Planning took Members through the report (NPA/17/001). He highlighted a correction in paragraph 1.1, which should state that in the first year of operation, the charges recouped were £15k (not the £20k stated in the report). In fact, this was over 10 months, as the service was suspended for a 2 month period,

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due to staff shortages. There has been a drop off in pre-application written requests in the last year.

The Head of Planning stated to Members that there are no plans to introduce a fee for Householder pre- application advice as this may have a counterproductive effect. It is not proposed to introduce charging or cost recovery in Enforcement cases, as the Authority prides itself that with careful negotiation most cases can be resolved without legal action. The Trees and Landscape Officer provides free advice in respect of protected trees and trees within conservation areas, as this is considered to be in line with a duty and purpose of the Authority.

The overall proposed increase in the charges is approximately 10%. Agents have been consulted previously, but with very little response. Some agents re-iterated their opposition to the introduction of charges for householder advice.

Members agreed that the public now expect to have to pay for planning services as most local councils now have a charging scheme.

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

RESOLVED: It was resolved to:

- i) retain pre-application charges for minor and major applications
- ii) not to introduce charges for householder application
- iii) increase all charges from 1 April 2017 as per the schedule attached at Appendix 2 of the report
- iv) retain 28 calendar day target for minor and householder requests
- v) increase target time for major applications to 42 calendar days

3217 Fees and Charges

The Head of Business Support presented a report to Members reviewing the Authority's schedule of fees and charge for discretionary services.

Mr Jeffery declared a pecuniary interest by reason of his employment with Moorland Guides.

Mrs Oakley declared a pecuniary interest by reason of receiving grant funding through the Hill Farm Project and being part of the Membership scheme.

Mr Retallick declared a pecuniary interest by reason of being part of the Hill Farm Project Membership scheme.

Members noted that the income predicted from fees and charges is set at a fairly conservative level and that many charges are set by central government.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED: It was resolved to:

- i) Approve the recommendations made in section 3 of the report

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- ii) Approve the 2017/18 schedule of fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2

3218 Moor Than Meets the Eye (MTMTE) Landscape Partnership Scheme Year 2 Progress Report

The Director of Conservation and Communities summarised the Report to Members. She stated that most of the projects are moving forward and the Heritage Lottery Fund have no concerns.

The projects with significant changes are outlined in Section 5 for the report. Two projects have been withdrawn – PB8 - Pony Herd identification project and PD3 - East Shallowford Trust Rural Skills.

The Officer informed Members that there may be cash flow problems as the HLF hold back money, but it is not a major concern.

The Scheme Manager and the Board have requested increase level of reporting from the projects and funding will be withheld to those projects who do not report back.

The completed projects have exceeded the expected volunteer days and have resulted in permanent employment for 3 people.

Mr Lloyd, the Members representative on the MTMTE board stated that the Wray Valley Trail is a key project and was remains to the MTMTE project. It has been very encouraging to see the number of volunteers involved and the involvement in the local communities. The Board does need to be more rigorous with projects that fail to report as required.

Mrs Oakley declared a pecuniary interest, due to receiving a grant under the scheme.

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report

3219 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/16/03).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report

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