

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 2 September 2016

Present: K Ball, W Cann, J Christophers, A Cooper, G Gribble, P Hitchins, S Hill, M Jeffery, D Lloyd, J McInnes, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick (part), D Webber.

Apologies: S Barker, I Mortimer, P Sanders, M Retallick (arriving late)

The Chairman amended the running order with Public Participation brought forward to Item 4, and Item 7 and 8 interchanged.

3191 Minutes of the Authority Meetings held on 3 June 2016 & 1 July 2016

The Minutes of the meeting on 3 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record.
The Minutes of the annual meeting on 1 July 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3192 Declarations of Interest

None

3193 Public Participation Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed Mr Warner of Wow Wow We Company. Mr Warner requested the non-participation of a Member due to a conflict of interest which the Chairman declined as Members would not be debating the matter or making a decision.

Mr Warner spoke regarding his original proposal for a new vending facility at Haytor top car park in 2013, and the Authority's decision to withdraw an offer of a mobile vending licence after what Mr Warner felt was an unlawful tendering process. Mr Warner said that the current licensee is contradicting the rules of the licence, using a generator, a number of blackboards, seating and the size of the vehicle and livery. He felt that the mobile vending tender process had been prejudicial, unfair and undemocratic. He felt that the tender process needs a thorough review. He requested an independent inquiry and for the subject to be raised at the next Audit & Governance meeting. He has sought legal advice and is currently pursuing a civil dispute with a limit of potential liability of £250,000.

The Chairman confirmed that a written response will be sent to Mr Warner within 14 days with a copy to Members.

3194 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None

3195 Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed Members and highlighted the work and events that had taken place since the Annual Meeting. One highlighted meeting was the National

Signed  Date 2.12.16

Park Forum and minutes circulated with the Agenda for today's Authority meeting. The Chairman made Members aware of the new Donate for Dartmoor leaflets. There was a successful visit at Brimpts Farm by HRH Prince of Wales attended by Mr Retallick and Mr Harper. Also, the award-winning World War 1 Exhibition at Princetown Visitor Centre by the Dartmoor Trust was brought back by popular demand.

The Chairman informed Members that National Parks England were discussing the term of office for Secretary of State national appointees with DEFRA. He asked for Members to think about and inform him of their opinions on the provisional revision of terms of office of two four year terms or two five year terms.

The Chairman concluded by reminding all Members that the Tour of Britain will be taking place Friday 9 September.

3196 Annual Statement of Accounts 2015/16

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/16/026).

The Head of Business Support advised Members that the Annual Statement of Accounts are produced at the end of each financial year. They are made available for public inspection and are subject to external examination by External Audit. The unaudited accounts were issued and put on the website at the beginning of June. A copy of the Audited Statement of Accounts was provided to Members with the Authority report.

There were no significant changes to the format or content of the Statement of Accounts this year, only that the Explanatory Foreword was re-named the Narrative Report and now includes additional information for the reader in respect of the Business Plan, Performance Indicators and some forward looking commentary.

The 2015/16 financial outturn report was presented to the Audit & Governance Committee and Authority in May and June respectively and there were no changes to the figures as previously reported. No amendments were required post audit.

A summary of financial performance and reconciliation from the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement back to the year-end surplus, as reported in June, was set out in Section 2 of the report and on page 4 of the Statement of Accounts.

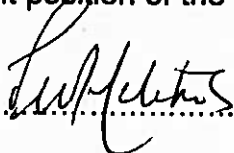
A summary of the Authority's Reserve Balances held as at 31 March was set out in Section 3 of the report and on pages 10 and 26 in the Statement of Accounts.

The unaudited Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue on 25 May which meant the future deadline of 31 May was met at our first attempt. With effect from the 2017/18 financial year, the accounts must be issued by 31 May and audited by 31 July (instead of 30 June and 30 September).

The letter of representation was provided at appendix 2 in the report in which the Authority was asked to confirm that the financial statements give a true and fair view.

The current position of the Pension Fund Liability was provided in section 4 of the report.

Signed



Date

2.12.16

Each year the Authority assesses whether it should be considered as a Going Concern and whether the accounts should be prepared on that basis. Management considers that the Authority is a Going Concern and accounts should be produced on that basis. The Auditors, Grant Thornton, specifically asked that Dartmoor National Park Authority provide some narrative to justify this assessment and this was provided in Appendix 3 and 4 of the report.

Mr Retallick arrived

The Audit was programmed to commence on 15 August as set out in Grant Thornton's Audit Plan. This late start date was queried by both Management and the Audit & Governance Committee, as it was so close to the Authority meeting. There was a concern the audit might not be completed in time and that this might put officers under unnecessary pressure.

A second week of audit was negotiated to commence on 31 May. This proved to be extremely worthwhile, as much of the transactional testing and ground work was done early on. However not everything had been completed by the report deadline date. The Audit Findings report show that Grant Thornton had not been able to finalise everything in time for the Authority meeting.

There were no changes or adjustments to the unaudited Accounts issued on 25 May and it was anticipated that an unqualified opinion would be issued.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Business Support confirmed the Audit fee will be £11,807.

Members recognised and congratulated all staff on the huge effort involved for the outcomes achieved.

Mr Gribble proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Ball.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Approved the 2015/16 Statement of Accounts;
- (ii) Authorised the Chairman to sign and date the Statement of Responsibilities on behalf of the Authority;
- (iii) Endorsed the conclusion of Management and the Chief Financial Officer that the Authority's accounts should be prepared on a Going Concern basis;
- (iv) Authorised the Chairman and the Chief Executive (NPO) to sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Authority;
- (v) Authorised the Chairman and the Chief Executive (NPO) to sign the Annual Governance Statement, approved by the Authority in June 2016 (NPA/16/018).

3197 Audit Findings Report

Members received the report of Andrew Shaw of Grant Thornton LLP.

Mr Shaw highlighted the key issues of the report. He confirmed the receipt of the Financial Statement earlier which bodes well for the future earlier close requirement. Members' attention was drawn to page 23 of the report which summarised the key messages and confirmed that the draft financial statements

Signed  Date 2.12.16

Resources for the Forward Planning team have been confirmed. A new Forward Planner, (seconded from Development Management), joined the team from September and therefore work on the Local Plan was now able to start. With the delayed start Members were asked to agree a revised timetable with the first draft into September 2017. This was thought to be a more realistic timescale and would help with issues arising at draft stage.

Members' Local Plan Steering group had met and considered the Issues Paper. The version attached to the report to Authority reflected members' comments. There were 7 'Topics' which will be the chapters of the new local plan. The role for the Steering Group at the next few meetings will be to go through the paper issue by issue.

The Senior Forward Planner reminded Members that the Local Plan Review is a major project for the Authority and encouraged Members to participate in it. Dates of autumn consultation events will be shared with Members by the Forward Planning team.

Members were informed that the Housing and Economic Land and Availability Assessment panel (HELAA - previously known as SHLAA) was an opportunity to have input in the technical process of identifying suitable development land. Expressions of interest were sought for two Members to be 'community representatives' for the panel. The two representatives will be agreed at the Planning Panel meeting on 23 September 2016.

The Senior Forward Planner requested an adjustment be made to the recommendation allowing final changes to the Issues Paper prior to publication, and adjustments described in the Local Development Scheme timetable to be delegated to the Head of Planning. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) requested a third amendment that 'in consultation with the Chairman the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) can make any amendments to the draft prior to publication'.

The Head of Planning agreed to arrange for an email to be sent to all Members setting out all links to appropriate planning documents.

A Member commented on how they liked the 'Talking Points' document and how easy they found this to read.

Mr Hitchins proposed the recommendations, seconded by Mr Ball.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Endorsed the Local Plan Issues Paper, which will be published for public consultation including the revision stated above ; and
- (ii) Agreed the revised timetable in the Local Development Scheme including agreement of adjustments detailed above.
- (iii) Agreed that in consultation with the Chairman, the Chief Executive may make amendments to the draft paper prior to publication.

Signed Date

3199 Dartmoor Public Arts Initiative

Members received the report of the Head of Communications, Economy & Fundraising (NPA/16/028).

The Chief Executive Officer (National Park Officer) who presented the report to Members on behalf of the Head of Communications, Economy and Fundraising, reminded Members that they agreed to further develop a Public Arts Trail Initiative at the Authority meeting of 3 June 2016.

Members were informed that an experienced project management company had been engaged to undertake the development of the project, secure artists and sponsorship, and develop the trail to an agreed schedule of work and timeline.

Members were asked to approve the setting up of a project Steering Group for the public arts project, comprising of representatives with an interest in the arts and links to local businesses and communities, to provide support, guidance and advice to the Project Manager, consider the positive benefits to Dartmoor but also any issues and risks. Three Members were required to sit on the Steering Group. Ms Oakley, Ms Pannell and Mr Ball all nominated themselves for these roles.

A Member asked whether someone from the arts sector should sit on the Steering Group. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) advised that the opportunity to contribute by designing for the arts sector would therefore mean it would not be appropriate for them to be on the Steering Group. Clarification will be sought from The Head of Communications, Economy and Fundraising.

Mr Hitchins proposed the recommendations, seconded by Mr McInnes.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Approved the recommendation to set up a Steering Group for the Public Arts Project
- (ii) Approved the terms of reference for the Steering Group
- (iii) Nominated three Members to sit on the Steering Group

3200 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/16/029).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report


3201 Note of National Park Forum Meeting 13 July 2016

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) highlighted the comments made at the National Park Forum in July 2016 about the governance arrangements for the appointment of members to the Authority and the election of the Chairman. In discussion it was noted that the regulations governing the election and appointment of members to the Authority are determined by Parliament and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and that there is no option for the

Signed  Date 2.12.16

Authority to alter these at a local level. The Chairman of the Authority is appointed by Members of the Authority at the Annual Meeting. There are no age restrictions on this post and it was not felt appropriate to impose any such restriction.

Members noted the content of the meeting.

Signed  Date 2.12.16