

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

ANNUAL MEETING

Friday 3 July 2015

Present: K Ball, G Gribble, P Harper, P Hitchins, S Hill, J Hockridge,
M Jeffery, J Kidner, D Lloyd, J McInnes, I Mortimer, D Moyse,
N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, D Webber

Apologies: S Barker, J Christophers

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) informed the meeting that under Standing Orders it falls with him to preside over the first item of business, namely the election of Chairman. Once elected, the Chairman will take conduct of the remainder of the meeting.

3092 Election of Chairman

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the meeting that one nomination had been received, for Mr Peter Harper. He confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Harper was elected to serve as Chairman until the next Annual Meeting.

He thanked Members for their continued confidence and support.

3093 Election of Deputy Chairman

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the meeting that one nomination had been received for Mr M Retallick. He confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Retallick was elected to serve as Deputy Chairman until the next Annual Meeting.

He thanked the Chairman and Members for their continued confidence and support.

3094 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Mr Barker and Mr Christophers.

Mrs Pannell declared a personal interest in Item 10 – Ashburton Masterplan, due to her being a voluntary working member of the Ashburton Railway Association. She advised that she would not take part in the discussion and would not vote.

Signed: 

Date: 4/9/15

3095 Appointments to Committees, Sub-committees and Working Panels

Development Management Committee

It was noted that a number of Members had indicated an interest in appointment to the Development Management Committee, as set out in the report. Mr Gribble, Mr Hill, Mr Hockridge, Mr Jeffery, Mrs Pannell and Mr Retallick asked for their names to be added to the list.

It was agreed to add the names of Mr Barker and Mr Christophers in their absence, on the understanding that they would be likely to wish to be appointed.

RESOLVED:

All Members were appointed to serve on the Development Management Committee until the next Annual meeting.

Audit and Governance Committee

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that, due to a change in the constitution, there was now a requirement for ten Members to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee. Seven expressions of interest had been received as set out in the report. Mr Hill, Mr Kidner and Mrs Pannell volunteered to serve on the committee.

RESOLVED:

Mr Harper, Mr Hill, Mr Hitchins, Mr Kidner, Mr Lloyd, Mr McInnes, Mrs Pannell, Mr Retallick, Mr Sanders and Mr Webber were elected to serve on the Audit and Governance Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Standards Sub-Committee

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that there was a requirement for five Members to sit on the Standards Sub-Committee. Two expressions of interest had been received prior to the meeting, as set out in the report. Mr Ball, Mr Hitchins and Mr Harper expressed an interest to serve on the committee

RESOLVED:

Mr Ball, Mr Harper, Mr Hitchins, Mr Sanders and Mr Webber were elected to serve on the Standards Sub-Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Park Management Working Panel

The appointment of Members who had indicated an interest, as set out in the report, with the addition of Mr Hockridge, was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

Mr Ball, Mr Harper, Mr Hitchins, Mr Hockridge, Mr Lloyd, Mr McInnes,

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Date: 4/9/15.....

Dr Mortimer, Miss Moyse, Mrs Oakley, Mr Sanders and Mr Webber were appointed to serve on the Park Management Working Panel until the next Annual Meeting.

Planning and Sustainable Development Working Panel

The appointment of Members who had indicated an interest, as set out in the report, with the addition of Mr McInnes, Mr Jeffery, Mrs Pannell, Mr Kidner, Mr Gribble and Mr Hill, was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

Mr Gribble, Mr Hill, Mr Hitchins, Mr Jeffery, Mr Kidner, Mr McInnes, Dr Mortimer, Miss Moyse, Mrs Oakley, Mrs Pannell, Mr Sanders and Mr Webber were appointed to serve on the Planning and Sustainable Working Panel until the next Annual Meeting.

3096 Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman – Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Panels

Chairman – Development Management Committee

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the meeting that one nomination had been received, for Mr McInnes. Mr McInnes confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr McInnes was duly elected to serve as Chairman of the Development Management Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Deputy Chairman – Development Management Committee

Mr Sanders was nominated by Mr McInnes, seconded by Mr Ball, and confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Sanders was duly elected to serve as Deputy Chairman of the Development Management Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Chairman – Audit and Governance Committee

Mr Kidner nominated Mr Hitchins, who confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Hitchins was duly elected to serve as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Signed: 

Date: 4/9/15

Standards Sub-Committee

Mr Kidner nominated Mr Hitchins, who confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Hitchins was duly elected to serve as Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

Park Management Working Panel

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the meeting that one nomination had been received, for Mr Lloyd. Mr Lloyd confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mr Lloyd was duly elected to serve as Chairman of the Park Management Working Panel until the next Annual Meeting.

Planning and Sustainable Development Working Panel

Mr Jeffery nominated Dr Mortimer, who confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Dr Mortimer was duly elected to serve as Chairman of the Planning and Sustainable Working Panel until the next Annual Meeting.

3097 Appointments to Working Groups

Chairman's Advisory Group

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised Members that the Membership of the Group is determined by the Authority normally in its election of Chairmen to the various Committees and Working Panels.

RESOLVED:

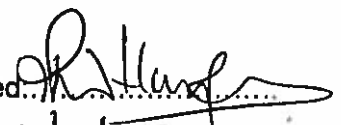
Mr Harper, Mr Hitchins, Mr Lloyd, Mr McInnes, Dr Mortimer and Mr Retallick were appointed to serve on the Chairman's Advisory Group until the next Annual Meeting.

Chief Executive Performance Review Group

Mr Harper, Mr McInnes and Mr Retallick had expressed their interest to serve on the Group.

Signed.....

Date:.....


4/9/15

RESOLVED:

Mr Harper, Mr McInnes and Mr Retallick were appointed to serve on the Chief Executive Performance Review Group until the next Annual Meeting.

Member Champions

Mrs Oakley agreed to continue as Social Inclusion Champion.

Mr Sanders nominated and Mr Jeffery seconded Mr Ball for eGovernment Champion. Mr Ball confirmed his willingness to stand for election.

RESOLVED:

Mrs Oakley was re-appointed as Social Inclusion Champion and Mr Ball was appointed as eGovernment Champion.

Postbridge Visitor Centre Working Group

Mr Harper and Mr Lloyd had expressed their interest to serve on the Group.

RESOLVED:

Mr Harper and Mr Lloyd were appointed to serve on the Postbridge Visitor Centre Working Group until the next Annual Meeting.

3098 Appointments to Outside Bodies 2015/16

Members considered the appointments to outside bodies for 2015/16.

RESOLVED:

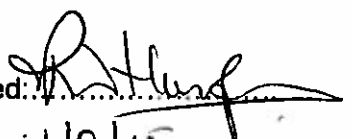
Members were appointed to represent the Authority on outside bodies until the next Annual meeting as per the attached schedule.

3099 Calendar of Meetings 2015/16

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained the proposed changes to the Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16. He advised that the proposal was for the number of Authority and Audit and Governance Committee meetings to reduce; in addition, the only meeting to take place in August would be the Development Management Committee. The key objective of these changes is to have well attended meetings with more efficient use of Member and Officer time.

RESOLVED:

Members approved the Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16.

Signed: 
Date: 4/9/15

3100 Standards Sub-Committee Annual Report 2014/15

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised Members that the production of the Annual Report was not a statutory requirement, rather the decision of Members of the Sub-Committee to report to the wider membership on the work undertaken and plans for 2015/16.

The report sets out the activities of the sub-committee over the past 12 months. A recent issue discussed was that of recording / filming of committee meetings and the impact of new government guidance; this would be reviewed again in the coming year.

It was noted that Rod Blackshaw and Bob Woodall had recently retired as the Authority's Independent Persons, after several years of service to the Standards Committee. An advertisement for new Independent Persons placed in the local press generated good interest but only one application. The Chairman and Head of Legal and Democratic Services will be meeting the applicant next week, to determine whether an appointment can be recommended.

Mr Lloyd asked that his thanks, and those of the Authority, to Mr Nutley for his dedication to the National Park Authority, including his chairmanship of the Standards Sub-Committee, be recorded within the minutes.

3101 Ashburton Masterplan

Speakers: Cllr S Khan - Supporter
Mr P Kemp – Objector
Mr V Coon – Objector
Mr P Vogel – Supporter
Mr C Dennis – Objector
Mr B Lewis – Objector
Mr Wood, Objector

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided Members with information and clarification regarding the ownership of Bullivers Way, Ashburton, formerly the property of the Authority, but made it clear that land ownership was not a material planning consideration.

Bullivers Way, a long, narrow strip of land was transferred into the ownership of the Secretary of State for Transport in 1976 from the British Railways Board. In February 1979 the land was transferred into the ownership of Devon County Council. April 1990 saw the land passed to the Authority and then leased to Ashburton Town Council for a period of 10 years. In 2003 the land was sold to Ashburton Town Council for the sum of £500.00 with the caveat that it was used as a public footpath and for the amenity of the public. A covenant was added to the transfer stating that should there be any development of the land within an 80 year period, the transferor (DNPA) would be entitled to 50% of any increase in value. This parcel of land impacts on part of the Masterplan site and, therefore, the Authority could stand to receive proceeds from any increase in value, if the land is sold by the Town Council for development.

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Councillor Khan stated that the Masterplan was a significant initiative for the town of Ashburton. It was of vital importance and met the planning needs of the town. The Town Council does have some reservations and would like future consideration to be given to the following:

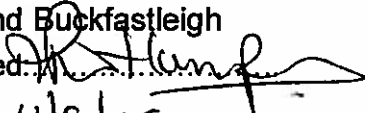
- Access to the whole site is limited; construction traffic movements could be stopped between the hours of 08.30 – 09.15 and 15.15 – 16.00 to allow for the safe movement of children to and from school;
- Further consultation with the Environment Agency regarding the possibility of further flooding past Chuley Road;
- It is essential that there should be a considerable gain in public parking spaces. The loss of on-street parking on Chuley Road will have a large impact;
- The possibility of a convenience store at Chuley Road will help the town resist approaches for an out of town store – the Town Council feels that this would devastate local businesses.
- Levels of affordable housing to be considered again as Ashburton needs good quality affordable housing as a matter of urgency.

Mr Kemp stated that the Ashburton Town Plan, a relevant consideration under policy DMD46, was not mentioned at all within the proposed Masterplan. With regard to parking provision, it was his opinion that the numbers of spaces would in fact be reduced. In addition, the number of affordable housing units stated within the Masterplan had reduced to an extremely low level. He felt that the Masterplan did not meet the needs of the town.

Mr Coon stated that once in a generation there was an opportunity to promote the businesses, residents and historic nature of an area; in his opinion the proposed Masterplan did not do this. He felt that a better scheme would be needed in order to address flooding which, he suggested, would in fact become worse. He added that the narrow streets of the town were not conducive to development; there was no need, as far as he could see, for another convenience store; the railway heritage, the plans and proposals for which had been drawn up by Brunel, would be lost. He advised Members that in 1997 the Authority had welcomed plans to restore the railway and wondered what had changed since that time. South Devon Railway has been running for 46 years and is the biggest tourist attraction in the area. In his opinion, the Authority had 'got it wrong'.

Mr Vogel advised that as a Member of the National Park Authority he had been involved in the work undertaken to produce the Masterplan. Speaking as a resident of Ashburton, he stated that, in his opinion, the Masterplan was viable and deliverable. It would unlock the potential of the site; to not approve the Masterplan would only open the doors to chaotic development by planning appeal with limited public benefit. He urged Members to adopt the Masterplan.

Mr Dennis stated that the Masterplan could, potentially, pose the biggest change for Ashburton for decades. However, he was concerned that the Masterplan only focussed on housing, parking and flooding and felt that the Authority had failed to 'look outside the box'. In his opinion, Ashburton required tourism in order to sustain its economy; the reinstatement of the line between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh

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was essential, with Ashburton station being only 200 yards from the town centre. He added that all traders were in favour of the reinstatement of the railway. He felt that the consultation had been badly handled by the Authority and that DNPA had a responsibility to take into account the views of the Friends of Ashburton Station.

Mr Lewis advised Members that he was speaking on behalf of many local residents. He commented that the Masterplan stated that parking management and enforcement was not a planning issue and, therefore, there would be continued traffic chaos, particularly in St Lawrence Lane, in addition to the loss of parking spaces on Chuley Road. The streets of Ashburton struggled under the volume of traffic; failure to address these issues would undermine the town's economic balance. In his opinion, the advice of the Authority's consultants was incorrect. The statement that there are currently 1.5 vehicles per dwelling had seriously underestimated current levels. He requested that consideration be given to the construction of a new feeder road from the south west.

Mr Wood advised Members that there were currently 18 heritage railways across the UK working closely with Local Authorities. He requested Members gave serious consideration to the reinstatement of the railway as he felt that this could provide a 'win-win' solution for everyone involved. The safeguarding of the buildings and the railway line for future reinstatement was of real importance.

In response to speakers' statements, Members asked the Senior Forward Planner to respond to the following specific points that were raised:

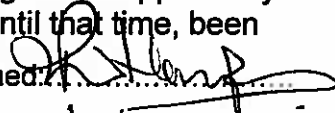
- The loss of public parking spaces on Chuley Road;
- The lack of reference to the Authority's policy DMD46.

The Senior Forward Planner advised Members that it was determined early on that the 3.5ha site be allocated for mixed development, to include housing and commercial uses, having identified the community's priorities for the site including public car parking, heritage, pedestrian permeability and flood risk.

In 2011 the Authority was approached by three landowners regarding the redevelopment of the site. At that time the National Park Authority was in the process of finalising the Local Plan and it was felt that the site warranted its own Masterplan. Work started in 2013; consultants were appointed and, during the summer months, a number of open meetings for the public to attend, as well as focus group meetings with specialist groups, were held. The Draft Masterplan went out for public consultation in February 2014 and the second draft in November 2014.

The consultation in early 2014 showed that highway matters, parking and flooding were the clear priorities for the site, together with affordable housing. In response to this, the Authority explored further flood mitigation options, identified public and business parking opportunities and sought to present the Masterplan in a different way to show that the issues had been considered.

More recently, in November 2014, issues surrounding the railway came to the fore. Whilst this was very late in the process Members were keen to give the opportunity for a case to be presented. The future of the railway had not, until that time, been

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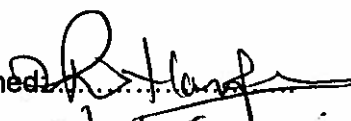
identified as an issue by the local community. Whilst the Authority recognised the potential benefits, there was not enough evidence to determine its viability and achievability; substantial changes would be needed in the Masterplan and it would undermine the delivery of the overall plan which residents have pressed for since 2012. Evidence would also need to support safeguarding in future local plan reviews. Representations had also been received from businesses in favour of the Plan, asking that there be no further delay in its implementation. In addition, the Town Council and District Council have expressed their support for the Masterplan in its current form.

The Head of Planning advised Members that, notwithstanding the fact that the Masterplan does not mention policy DMD46 and the importance of paying proper regard to Town Plans, the Masterplan is wholly in conformity with the policies of the Development Plan, including policy DMD46. In addition, this had never been raised as an issue by the Town Council throughout all of the joint meetings held.

Discussion then followed, with Members raising queries and officer responses as follows:

- With regard to public parking spaces, it was important to remember that the Masterplan is part of a wider scheme for the whole town. Currently there are 220 existing spaces, the proposals are for 289. It was stressed, however, that this is a framework and that parking spaces and housing numbers are indicative.
- Relief road – officers are acutely aware of the challenges ahead. However, it has been concluded that there will be little change regarding the number of traffic movements using current routes and, therefore, the Authority would not be justified in seeking developer contributions for a new road, St. Lawrence Lane has been discussed at length; the Town Council is keen to see on-street parking in this area retained as it also helps to slow the traffic. Stone Park will no longer be accessible as a through route. The point of stepping up access will be considered at the planning application stage.
- The Masterplan is supported by a flood risk assessment. Consultation with the Environment Agency will be ongoing.
- The Masterplan is modelled on 10% and 25% affordable housing throughout the whole site. Officers' view is that the Authority should plan for 25% - more detailed discussions will take place as and when applications come forward.
- With regard to access to the site, Devon County Council (DCC) and the Highways Agency have both been consulted and issues raised have been taken into account. Each application would have to have its own traffic assessment/management plan. DCC and Highways are in support of the Masterplan.

A Member commented that they would like to see the railway station buildings preserved and was encouraged to see this set out in the Masterplan. Another Member regretted that there was no compatibility between the Masterplan and the railway but stated that the long term viability of Ashburton was of paramount importance. They added that, should the Masterplan not be approved there was the risk of chaotic development which would only suit the few.

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A Member commented that no-one liked drastic change but there was a real need to move on. The Masterplan would assist the sustainability of the town, safeguard existing businesses and, whilst preserving the heritage and historic buildings, it would address the modern day requirements regarding parking and housing. The issues surrounding the railway had been brought to the attention of the Authority very late on in the development of the Masterplan. He felt that this could not be accommodated, neither were there any assurances regarding funding for the railway.

Some Members expressed their sympathy to those wanting to reinstate and preserve the railway, but felt that the current issues surrounding parking and development of the site should take precedence.

Dr Mortimer proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Kidner.

RESOLVED:

Members APPROVED the Ashburton Masterplan.

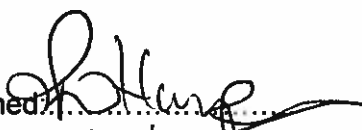
3102 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

The Head of Business Support reported to Members that the strategy is set out each year for Members. With regard to the management of risk regarding Authority funds, the Authority has a list of approved counter-parties. It is a requirement that these have a high credit rating. She advised Members that Barclays, the Authority's bank, recently had its credit rating downgraded by one of the three principal credit scoring agencies. The Section 151 Officer at Devon County Council (DCC) had been consulted and had advised that DCC was in the same position. However, the risk was considered to be very low.

It was proposed to maintain funds, monitor the situation closely and review the strategy over the summer.

RESOLVED:

Members AGREED that the situation should be monitored and reviewed over the next four weeks.

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Date: 4/9/15