

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 3 October 2014

Present: Mr Ball, Mr Harper (Chairman), Mr P Hitchins Mr J Hockridge, Mr M Jeffery, Mr D Lloyd, Mr J McInnes, Dr I Mortimer, Miss D Moyse, Mr J Nutley, Mrs N Oakley, Mr M Retallick (Deputy Chairman), Mr P Sanders, Mr P Vogel, Mr D Webber

Apologies: Mr Barker, Mr Gribble, Mr Kidner

3103 Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 5 September 2014

Save for an amendment to the second paragraph of Minute 3100, as detailed below, the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2014, were signed as a correct record.

Dr Mortimer welcomed the ratio to proportion of Local Authority contribution.....

3104 Declarations of Interest

None

3015 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that the Tour of Britain hill climb on Dartmoor went according to plan. The event provided a good opportunity to talk to some of the Authority's partners about key issues.

He also advised Members of the superb Whitehorse Hill exhibition, at Plymouth Museum, and urged those present to go and see it.

The Chairman and the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (CE(NPO)) had attended an Economic Group Meeting with South Hams District, West Devon Borough and Devon County Council.

In the past two weeks both he and the CE (NPO) had undertaken two visits to the Mires Project, at Flat Tor Pan. Once with members of the Dartmoor Society and Dartmoor Preservation Association, and the second visit with the Chief Executive Officer of South West Water, Mr Chris McLoughlin.

The Chairman also mentioned the BBC's *Countryfile* programme and the recent guest appearance of our Deputy Chairman.

Members were reminded of the National Park Management Plan workshop to be held on 15 October.

3016 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None

3017 Public Participation

None

3018 Proposed Diversion of Public Footpath No 6 Higher Lettaford, North Bovey

Members received the report of the Head of Recreation, Access and Estates (NPA/14/042)

The question of the correct alignment of Footpath 6, around Higher Lettaford, was raised by the vendor, and prospective purchaser, when the property was put up for sale in 2013. The public have been using an unofficial alternative route for some time as the current definitive line of the footpath is unavailable on the ground. Following discussions with all interested local parties, the new owners have offered a diversion of the definitive route to that of the unofficial route, currently being used.

The new route will not come into operation until the date that the diversion Order is confirmed and the existing right of way would only be stopped up on the date when the new path is certified suitable for public use. The part of the route being diverted is 14 metres and the proposed new part of the route is 51 metres, however it is not considered that the additional length will be problematic or inconvenient to the public.

Consultations on the proposed diversion have been undertaken. A total of 10 responses have been received in support of the proposal, each stating it to be sensible and expedient. No objections have been received.

The new route will require a roadside finger post to be installed and the existing stile will be replaced with a self-closing hand gate for livestock purposes. This work would be undertaken by the Ranger Service.

Unless subsequently withdrawn, any objections received during the formal consultation process will be reported to the Authority in due course for decision whether to seek confirmation of the Order.

A Member suggested that the replacement of the stile was unnecessary as there is already a wide field gate which could be used.

The Head of Recreation, Access & Estates referred to the Authority's policy on Gaps, Gates & Stiles and stated that the owners are happy for the stile to be replaced by a self-closing gate, for which they will be responsible.

The Member asked whether it would be possible to ensure that the stiles are replaced all along the Footpath and not have a mixture of stiles and gates.

The Head of Recreation, Access & Estates explained that replacing stiles is an incremental process and something the Authority is working towards. The legal position is that the stiles are authorised structures and the Authority cannot insist they be replaced; however, we do offer to do so free of charge. Where a footpaths crosses land owned by several different people it is sometimes difficult to secure consensus.

A Member thought the proposed route a good compromise that would appease local people who were, initially, very upset.

A Member asked that the little gate be self-closing; and therefore animals would be less likely to escape because it would not be inadvertently left open. Should a member of the public leave the large gate open (which is not self-closing) there would be more chance of stock escaping.

A Member remarked that this is a significant compromise by the new landowners, as even though they had bought the property in good faith, they have agreed to the diversion which actually brings the path closer to the house.

Mr Sanders stated that Mr Gribble had asked him to say that, had he been present, he would be commending the diversion to the Authority.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Members agreed that an Order be made under Section 119 Highways Act 1980 to divert part of public footpath No 6, North Bovey, by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing part of the current route as shown on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report (NPA/14/042);
- (ii) Public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Authority; and
- (iii) In the event of objection(s) to the Order being received, these will be reported to a future meeting of the Authority.

3019 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/14/043)

RESOLVED:

Members noted the content of the report.

3020 Draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee Meeting Held on Friday 16 August 2014

Members received the draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance meeting held on Friday 16 August 2014.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the draft minutes.

Mr Nutley voiced his appreciation to the Head of Resources and her team for their hard work. He also mentioned Mr Charles Waring, a member of that team, who has recently undergone surgery, he was sure that all Members would want to join him in wishing Mr Waring a speedy recovery.