

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority
SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING 24 MAY 2012

Held at Pulborough Village Hall, West Sussex at 2.00pm

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	David Burden
Norman Dingemans	Jim Funnell	Jennifer Gray	Neville Harrison
Barbara Holyome	Mark Kemp-Gee	Margaret Paren (Chair)	Charles Peck
Sue Saville	Sue Seward	Andrew Shaxson	Tom Tupper
Deborah Urquhart	Pete West		

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Hélène Rossiter (Director of Corporate Services) Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Andrew Lee(Director of Strategy & Partnerships), Phil Belden (Head of Operations), Jan Conway ((Capron House Project Manager) Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer) and Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager)

CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

224. The Chair welcomed Diana Kershaw to the meeting as an observer prior to her appointment to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)by the Secretary of State with effect from 1 June 2012.
225. Keith Wood had tendered his resignation from the Authority due to his increased commitments following his appointment as Leader of Winchester City Council. The Chair would send a letter thanking him for his contribution. Winchester City Council would appoint a new Member on 13 June 2012.

APOLOGIES

226. Apologies were received from Nick Bennett, Jo Carr, Janet Coles, David Jenkins, Doug Jones, Tom Jones, and Jeremy Leggett.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

227. Members declared the following interests:

Member	Agenda Item and report	Interest
Sebastian Anstruther	6 South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area (Report 09/12)	Personal but non-prejudicial – Chair of the Arun and Rother River Trust, a partner in the project
Pete West	6 South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area (Report 09/12)	Personal but non-prejudicial – Chair of a partner in the project

MINUTES

228. The minutes of the Authority meeting held on 13 March 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.
229. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the Business Plan had been produced and would be published on the Authority's website on 29 May 2012 (www.southdowns.gov.uk).

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority

URGENT MATTERS

230. No urgent matters were raised.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

231. No members of the public present asked to speak.

'SOUTH DOWNS WAY AHEAD' NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREA (NIA)

232. Report 09/12 seeking formal approval for entering into the South Downs Way Ahead NIA Partnership and contract with Natural England was introduced by the Head of Operations.
233. Member's attention was drawn to the total funding for the SDNPA of £608,285 over 3 years as detailed in paragraph 2.8 of the report, of which £304,000 would be spent by the Authority itself and the balance by other partners in the project. The funding would be used for work undertaken with partners as part of the project. Partner funding would not be released until their Business Plans had been put in place.
234. Members and officers made the following observations during consideration of the Report:
- if not all the speculative / in kind elements of the funding were forthcoming from the Partnership, this would be accommodated by carrying out less work on the project;
 - the development of a visitor payback scheme for the South Downs Way National Trail would be a major piece of work;
 - the Chief Finance Officer reassured Members that the project incorporated standard arrangements for funding from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and robust monitoring would take place;
 - funding and work undertaken would be reported back to Members at a future meeting.
235. The Chief Finance Officer reminded Members that although there was no additional budget commitment for the project, officers did not have the power to draw down the grant, hence the need for full Authority approval to meet timescales. Similar grants would be taken to Resources & Performance Committee for approval under delegated powers.
236. Deborah Urquhart proposed that Recommendation 3 be deferred to the Resources & Performance Committee on 21 June 2012. The proposal was seconded by Mark Kemp-Gee. The Chief Finance Officer advised that this delay would not compromise the delivery of the scheme, but re-iterated that the framework was a standard arrangement for a robust and efficient tendering process designed to maximise value for money.
237. Following a vote, the amendment to Recommendation 3 was lost and the original Recommendation 3 was carried.
238. Deborah Urquhart proposed an additional Recommendation for regular reporting on the scheme to the Authority. The proposal was seconded by Mark Kemp-Gee and following a vote, was carried.
239. **Resolved:** that the Authority
1. approves and endorses the SDNPA's participation in the South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area partnership and contract with Natural England;
 2. approves the SDNPA's South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area three-year budget as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
 3. authorises the commencement of the procurement of a framework agreement to provide services including scrub clearance, fencing and water supply across the National Park over a three year period at an estimated contract value of between £0.550 to £0.800 million; and

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority

4. receives regular reporting on the South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area.

RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DEFRA) GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES

240. Report 10/12 informing the Authority of the proposed response to Defra on the consultation was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer. The consultation would close on 31 May 2012 and the proposed response encapsulated previous comments made by Members.
241. During discussion, it was agreed that the final sentence in Section B would be deleted as it was considered to be an unnecessary expression of opinion.
242. Further discussion took place on Section E regarding the 8 year maximum term of appointment and whether clarification would be sought regarding the inclusion, or otherwise, of the Authority's 'shadow year' in this figure. Alun Alesbury proposed an amendment to the response to include such clarification, which was carried following a vote
243. **Resolved:** that, subject to agreed amendments to text and clarification on Section E the Authority
 1. agrees the consultation response as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

244. **Resolved:** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business on the basis that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the following Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972: Paragraph 3, being information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority.

UPDATE ON CAPRON HOUSE FEASIBILITY AND REFURBISHMENT PROPOSALS

245. Report 10/12 updating the Authority on the feasibility stage of work at Capron House was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer and discussions took place between Members and officers regarding refurbishment proposals.
246. **Resolved:** that any remaining members of the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting which continued in public session at 4.41 pm.

Chair

Meeting closed at 4.42 pm