

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority
SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING 30 MARCH 2017

Held at Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, West Sussex at 2pm

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	Heather Baker
Vaughan Clarke	Janet Duncton	Norman Dingemans	
Barbara Holyome	Daniel Humphreys	Helen Jackson	Doug Jones
Tom Jones	Gill Mattock	Robert Mocatta	Margaret Paren (Chair)
Ian Phillips	Karen Roberts	Jim Sheppard	Amber Thacker
Pete West			

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy & Management), Karen Everett (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Robin Parr (Head of Governance),

Also attended by: James Winkworth (Head of Marketing and Income Generation), Kelly Porter (Major Projects Lead) & Stephen O'Reilly (Eversheds).

OPENING REMARKS

186. The Chair informed those present that:

- The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purpose
- SDNPA Members have a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regard themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and will act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.
- Friday 31st March marked the 7th Anniversary of the creation of the National Park, and the 1st April was the 6th Anniversary of the National Park Authority becoming operational.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

187. Apologies were received from Jo Carr, Mark Dunn, Neville Harrison, Gary Marsh and Sue Saville.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

188. Sebastian Anstruther declared a personal interest in item 13 as a farmer and landowner within the National Park
189. Janet Duncton declared a personal interest in item 13 as a farmer and landowner within the National Park
190. Gill Mattock declared a Public Service Interest in Item 9 as a member of Eastbourne Borough Council.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES

191. The minutes of the Authority meeting held on 31 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

192. There were none

ITEM 5- URGENT MATTERS

193. There were none.

ITEM 6 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

194. The Chair invited Mr Kym Fleming to address the authority on the issue of National Park signage. Mr Fleming stated that he felt the introduction of signage for the National Park would be a benefit to visitors and local residents. Whilst acknowledging the constraints on the Authority he urged that the benefits as well as the costs be taken into account when considering signage for the National Park.

ITEM 7 NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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194. At the request of the authority the Chair advised that the meeting would move into private session for discussion on the exempt appendix 2 of Agenda item 12.

ITEM 8 AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE

195. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair on the following:

Meetings:

National Parks England

A recent National Park England meeting had discussed ongoing work in relation the Future of Farming and had agreed new Standing orders for how NPE meetings operate. An accord with the Forestry commission had also been discussed, but had not been agreed due to concerns by some National Parks in relation to the Forestry Commissions approach to plantation and new afforestation. The meeting also discussed food provenance, which will be the subject of further discussions with DEFRA.

National Parks UK (NPUK) At its recent meeting NPUK had received a report on progress made by National Parks Partnerships Limited. Concerns had been raised over advice that a National Charitable foundation should be established to receive corporate sponsorship and a working group was formed to consider this issue further.

Campaign for National Parks and AONBs Meetings had taken place to discuss matters of mutual interest and the AONBS had expressed a desire to work closely with National Parks, both locally and at a National level.

Professor Ian Bateman The Chair had met with Professor Ian Bateman, Director of the Land Environment, Economics and Policy Institute and his colleague Professor Brett Day. They had discussed how the work of the institute could be used to underpin the ongoing work in relation the future of farming and our proposed SDNP pilots.

VRS AGM The Chair had attended the recent Annual General Meeting of the Volunteer Ranger services and provided an update on the APrk Authority's work. She noted that work was ongoing to develop the VRS governance so it better interfaced with the Authority.

Teachers Conference The Chair had attended the 5th outdoor learning teacher's conference at Plumpton College

Industrial Strategy A draft industrial strategy had been received from the 3 Counties Group Devolution Group. This document did not make reference to green infrastructure, natural capital and the importance of the rural economy and a response stressing the importance of these issues would be sent

ITEM 9 - CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

196. Authority Members considered the report by the Chief Executive Officer (Report 06/17)
The Chief Executive provided the following updates

The South Downs Alphabet book. This had now been launched and members were urged to buy a copy.

Downland Sales: Since writing the report Brighton and Gove City Council had agreed not to sell sites at Poynings and Plumpton. This was good news, but more work was still needed in order to secure these sites as; landscape assets and gateways to the National Park. .East Sussex County Council was currently proposing the sale of countryside sites although no further action was expected in relation this until the summer and the Park Authority was engaged with the County Council in relation to these possible sales.

Pondtail wood: Members were advised that Pondtail Wood had recently been sold. Park Authority staff had already met with the new owner who had confirmed that he would be complying with the enforcement notice. It was expected that he would clear the unauthorised trackways and make good the land. The current understanding was that the appeal against the replanting notice would be continuing in the name of the new owner.

A27- Arundel: The Chief Executive advised that it was expected that public consultation on plans for the A27 at Arundel was expected late summer and that opportunities for member engagement had been scheduled, however would be in advance of the consultation.

National Park Signage: The Chief Executive thanked Mr Fleming for his comments and advised that funds for signage had been identified in the budget and now was the right time

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to progress this work. Officers were in detailed discussion with the four highways authorities who had all given their in-principle support for entry signage and had agreed to manage the process through a license. Following feedback from the Member/partner meeting there were two main materials – a metal sign and a hybrid. Given the complexities of issues of road safety and passive safety relating to each location, we are aiming for June or July Planning Committee with installation to begin work in the autumn.

E-newsletter: the new e-newsletter was due for publication on the 3rd April. South Downs view was also almost nearing completion, and two editions of this would be produced this year.

197. In response to questions members were advised:
- Despite there being a significant underfunding for road projects the Authority had been advised that the proposed Arundel improvements would still go ahead.
 - The new kit to be provided by Columbia would contain the SDNPA shared identity alongside Columbia Clothing logos, although detailed designs were not yet available.
198. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority noted the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last report.

ITEM 10 - BUDGET 2017/18 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

199. Authority Members considered a report and [presentation](#) from the Head of Business Services and the Chief Finance Officer (Report 07/17). Members were advised that reserves had been reviewed against key risks and were deemed to be adequate. There had been no significant change to the budget since its consideration by Policy and Programme Committee.
200. In response to questions members were advised:
- Reserves were kept under review, and whilst these seemed high the only unallocated reserves related to the risk reserve and planning reserve. Other reserves were earmarked for future spending and being held in reserve until they were due to be spent. The level of uncommitted reserves was considered appropriate.
 - The changes in increment and salary budget were a result of the restructuring and other external factors. The staffing budget had not been overspent in 2016/17
 - It was common for organisations to hold funds for third parties, and these funds were accounted for separately, but reported through the budget process. Any interest earned on these monies was paid to the third parties.
 - The organisation was confident in its assumptions around the spend of s106 money and further work would be undertaken to identify if any additional s106 funds were held. It was possible that as s106 money is often paid in instalments, payments had not yet been made to the Authority despite the s106 agreement being made.
201. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
- 1) Approved the 2017/18 Revenue Budget as detailed in Section 2 and Appendices 1, 2 & 3 of this report
 - 2) Approved the Capital Programme as set out in Section 3 and Appendix 4 of this report
 - 3) Approved the use of Reserves as set out in Section 4 and Appendix 5 of this report
 - 4) Noted the Medium Term Financial Strategy and resource projections as set out in Section 5 and Appendix 6 of this report
 - 5) Noted the Supplementary Budget Information since Policy & Programme Committee as set out in Appendix 7 of this report

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ITEM 11 - TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017/18

202. Authority Members considered a report the Chief Finance Officer (Report 08/17). Members were advised that no major changes were required to the policy. The outcome of the Financial Conduct Authority consultation was still awaited and this may have an impact upon future investment income.
203. **RESOLVED:** The Authority approved:
- 1) The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2017/18 and the Treasury Management Practices 2017/18 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report;
 - 2) The Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18, including the benchmark risk factor of 0.05%, as set out in Appendix 3 to this report

ITEM 12 – INCOME GENERATION UPDATE

204. At this juncture Authority member Pete West joined the meeting.
205. Authority Members considered the report and [presentation](#) by the Head of Marketing and Income Generation (Report 09/17).
206. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- The trust would not be able to meet its objects without delivering against the PMP, but the intention was to ensure that many gifted to the trust in form of a grant could only be used for this purpose, the grant agreement would guarantee this.
 - The articles (3.7(4)) would be amended to reflect a minimum quorum of three members.
 - The trust director role would be seconded from the Authority, and the Authority still had a responsibility to the post holder, in terms of line management. However if the trust were unhappy with the work of the Director the post holder could be dismissed as a director of the company.
 - Only the logos identified in the report were being licenced. If the trust wished to use the shared identity it would need to sign up to the licence requirements that other users sign up to. A three year time limit on the logo licence would be included.
 - A soft launch of the trust was intended, and whilst this was hoped to be in July, this was dependent on a range of external factors, such as Companies House and the Charity Commission.
 - Whilst there was a risk that the trust could make the Authority more invisible and cause confusion with public over the respective roles of the organisation it was stated that the authority had always worked in partnership and working with the Trust would be no different. Projects funded by the trust may be delivered by the authority, which would serve to enhance the authority's profile.
207. At this juncture it was proposed and seconded that any Press and Public present be excluded during consideration of the exempt appendix 2 to report 09/17 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 a member of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to an individual, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information **The motion was carried.**
208. Members were advised that the proposed trustees had a wide range of experience across a range of sectors.
209. At this juncture the meeting moved into public session

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210. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:

- 1) Approved the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the South Downs National Park Trust (SDNPT) subject to the comments made by the Authority,
- 2) Approved the appointment of the initial Trustees, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report in accordance with the terms of paragraph 3.6 of the articles of association of the SDNPT and approved the appointment of the NPA member for the purposes of the Authority's indemnity for Members and Officers. ,
- 3) Approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Licence of the Shared Identity and delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to make any minor changes as necessary arising from the South Downs National Park Trust's consideration of the MOU and licence,
- 4) Approved the registration of the South Downs National Park Trust with the Charity Commission and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to take all associated steps and including establishing the South Downs National Park Trust,
- 5) Noted that a Grant Agreement will be brought to a future NPA meeting before the approval of any non-staff financial budget for the Trust.

ITEM 13 - FUTURE OF FARMING

211. Authority Members considered the report and [presentation](#) by the Director for Countryside and Policy Management (Report 10/17).
212. Sebastian Anstruther provided an updated on the National Parks England Future of Farming group. He stated that the ideas being developed were evolutionary, but less radical than they could have been. Although no one yet knows what the future will be there was a general acceptance that the current funding arrangements would not continue. This was being seen as an opportunity to look at new methods of delivery and move away from the current prescriptive scheme to a more flexible, locally tailored arrangement to support activities in specific areas. This approach would enable landscape scale, joined up and co-ordinated delivery in a way the current scheme does not.
213. It was stressed that the response to the current draft paper should include overgrazing, undergrazing and habitat fragmentation in the list of past issues, emphasis on arable and the importance of forestry and woodland management and acknowledged payments for ecosystems services and natural capital.
214. Members commented that
 - There should be local input into any new scheme, but this needed to have regard to the interest of people enjoying the National APrk.
 - There will need to be support for farmers looking to diversify their businesses
 - National Parks purposes and duty should form the basis of our approach and should be embedded in any new scheme developed
 - National Parks England were attempting to seize the initiative, and it was felt this would be more successful if the family of national parks worked together to influence DEFRA.
 - There was a need to consider the impact on areas outside of national parks and build a consensus with others when considering new scheme,

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215. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:-
- 1) Noted the work of National Parks England (NPE) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) with regard to assessing the implications of exiting the European Union (EU) on agriculture within National Parks.
 - 2) Endorsed the Progress Report produced by the NPE Future of Farming Group as the proposed way forward for developing new agri-environment schemes within England's National Parks subject to the comments raised by the Authority
 - 3) Agreed that the Chief Executive report back the Authority's comments to the NPE board at their meeting on the 5th April.

ITEM 14 - HOUSING WHITE PAPER

216. At this juncture Daniel Humphreys left the meeting
217. Authority Members considered a report by the Director Planning and Major Projects Officer (Report 11/17). Members were advised the SDNPA response would feed into a joint response to the white paper which was being co-ordinated by National Parks England
218. Members commented that:
- Our draft local plan discourages splitting sites, but this is encouraged in the white paper and larger site often needed a master plan in order to build sustainable communities.
 - A response to the question in relation to broadband should be made as this was an important issue in the National Park.
 - Delivery of affordable housing was most important issue, and the response would need to capture the flexibility required to deliver affordable housing.
 - For those areas where we are not in agreement with other National parks, and addendum to the response will need to be included.
 - It was unclear how the character of large companies could be taken into account as a factor in planning applications.
219. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:
- 1) Noted the potential impacts of the Housing White Paper on the South Downs National Park, and the content of the proposed SDNPA response
 - 2) Proposed any additional comments or analysis to include in the SDNPA consultation response
 - 3) Delegated Authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Chair of Policy and Programme Committee to prepare and submit the consultation response.

ITEM 15 - LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

220. Authority Members considered a report by the Director Planning (Report 12/17). The Director of Planning advised that following a recent challenge to the Lewes Joint Core Strategy the Judge had quashed the NPA aspects of the core strategy stating that the authority had erred in its application of Natural England advice in relation to culminative impact tests. This potentially was a decision of national significance and the impact was being considered in Government before a decision on whether to appeal the decision was made.
221. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority noted the local plan update

ITEM 16 - PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES – 9 FEBRUARY 2017

222. Karen Roberts queried the process for local consultation on sites that had been identified following the publication of the preferred options. The Director Planning advised that further local consultation will take place on the Local Plan, including any new sites in September.
223. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority noted minutes of the Planning Committee held on the 9th February 2017

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ITEMS 16-19 WERE FOR INFORMATION ONLY

ITEM 14 - PLANNING COMMITTEE

224. The Authority noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 19 January 2017

ITEM 15 - POLICY & PROGRAMME

225. The Authority noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy & Programme Committee meetings held on the 26th January and 28th February 2017

ITEM 18 - GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

226. The Authority noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on the 21 February 2017

ITEM 19 - REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES

227. The Authority noted the following reports:

- Sustainable Communities Fund.
- Local Access Forum

Chair

The meeting closed 17:00hrs

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