

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at 2.00pm on 2 July 2019 at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH.

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Ken Bodfish	Tim Burr	Chris Dowling
Thérèse Evans	Chris Henry	Helen Jackson	Doug Jones
Robert Mocatta	Russell Oppenheimer	Margaret Paren	Ian Phillips
Henry Potter	Vanessa Rowlands	Andrew Shaxson	Isabel Thurston
Diana van der Klugt	Richard Waring		

South Downs National Park Authority Officers:

Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside and Policy Management), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Robin Parr (Head of Governance), Richard Sandiford (Senior Governance Officer).

Also attended by:

Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager), Mike Hughes (Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager), Andy Beattie (Countryside and Policy Manager – Wealden Heaths), Ruth James (Communications and Engagement Manager) and Mark Rose (External Funding Coordinator).

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chief Executive informed those present of general housekeeping matters and welcomed both new and returning Members to the Authority Annual General Meeting (AGM).
2. The Monitoring Officer informed the Authority that as the appointments of Vanessa Rowlands and Richard Waring had not yet been confirmed by the Secretary of State they would be unable to vote on any matter on the agenda.

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. Apologies were received from Sebastian Anstruther, Heather Baker, Helen Burton, Janet Duncton, Barbara Holyome, Michael Lunn, Gary Marsh and William Meyer.

ITEM 2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

4. The election process was presided over by the Chief Executive and the Authority was informed that nominations closed at 4pm on 1 July and as Margaret Paren was the only nomination, Margaret Paren was duly elected as Chair of the Authority until the Authority AGM in 2020 or the end of her appointment as a Secretary of State Member, whichever may be sooner.
5. The Chair welcomed new Members to the Authority and, further to thanks to other Members at previous meetings, expressed her thanks and best wishes to former Members Tim Burr and Daniel Humphreys.

ITEM 3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

6. The election process was presided over by the Chair and the Authority was informed that nominations closed at 4pm on 1 July and there were two nominations.
7. The Monitoring Officer acted as the returning officer and informed the Authority that the valid nominations received were Sebastian Anstruther and Ian Phillips.
8. Ian Phillips made a brief statement to the Authority.
9. The election proceeded by means of secret ballot.

10. The Chair informed the Authority that Ian Phillips was elected as Deputy Chair of the Authority until the Authority AGM in 2020.
11. The Chair made the following comments prior to continuing with the agenda:
 - Members and members of the public were reminded that SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.
 - Although all Members had received electronic copies of the meeting papers, apologies were extended to any Members whose hard copies of papers were delayed in arriving.
 - The Chair informed the Authority that agenda items 20 and 21 were to note. These items were taken as noted as no Member indicated that they had any matters related to these items that they wished to discuss.

ITEM 4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

12. The following declarations of interest were made:
 - Alun Alesbury – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Stoughton Parish Councillor.
 - Chris Dowling – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as an East Sussex County Councillor.
 - Thérèse Evans – Agenda Items 11 and 13, Public Service Interest as a Winchester City Councillor.
 - Chris Henry – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Brighton and Hove City Councillor.
 - Doug Jones – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Buriton Parish Councillor.
 - Robert Mocatta – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as an East Hampshire District and Hampshire County Councillor.
 - Russell Oppenheimer – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Hampshire County Councillor.
 - Henry Potter – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Chichester District and Boxgrove Parish Councillor.
 - Vanessa Rowlands – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Cuckmere Valley Parish Councillor.
 - Andrew Shaxson – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Harting Parish and Elsted and Treyford Parish Councillor.
 - Isobel Thurston – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as an Arun District Councillor.
 - Diana van der Klugt – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Horsham District Councillor.
 - Richard Waring – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Lewes Town Councillor.

ITEM 5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2019

13. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 16 May 2019 subject to an amendment to the list of attendees to record Janet Duncton as in attendance.

ITEM 6. MATTERS ARISING

14. Members were updated on:
- Paragraph 223. The Authority hosted the regular meeting of National Parks agriculture officers which also included 5 Defra officials. These met some South Downs farmers and good feedback was received from those in attendance.
 - Agenda Item 13. The PMP would be considered at the October NPA meeting to ensure Members would be able to see the full document.

ITEM 7. URGENT MATTERS

15. There were none.

ITEM 8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

16. There were no public speakers.

ITEM 9. NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

17. Members were asked to indicate if they wished to discuss any matters under Agenda Item 22, the Part II minutes of the National Park Authority (NPA) meeting held on 16 May 2019. As no Members indicated they wished to discuss any of these matters the Part II minutes of the NPA meeting held on 16 May 2019 were approved as a correct record.

ITEM 10. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE

18. Authority Members considered the report from the Authority Chair (Report NPA19/20-01).

ITEM 11. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

19. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Executive (Report NPA19/20-02).
20. The Chief Executive updated Members on the following:
- That the induction sessions for new Members would be re-run for those not able to attend the initial sessions.
 - A joint campaign with other protected landscapes with the aim of encouraging young people to access the countryside was launching on 19 July 2019 as part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks legislation. Members should begin to see the posters on public transport and at transport hubs over the coming weeks and months.
21. Members made the following comments:
- Paragraph 2.1 - How had the planning awards scheme been advertised and publicised?
 - Paragraph 3.1 - How would new natural capital plans impact on the Authority's Partnership Management Plan (PMP)?
 - Paragraph 5.1 - Members would like a future update on the Authority's work on Health and Wellbeing.
22. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The awards scheme was promoted in the Authority's Planning Newsletter, on the website and in material sent to agents and applicants. Over 60 entries had so far been received.
 - It was important to highlight that National Parks already had delivery mechanisms in place for these natural capital plans in the shape of their PMPs. This Authority's PMP took the lead on natural capital and these plans provided stronger context for the PMP.
23. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last report.

ITEM 12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

24. Appendices 3 and 5 to the report were tabled at the meeting.
25. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA19/20-03) and Members were informed that due to the proximity of this meeting to the Parish Councils election process it was recommended that the NPA review committee appointments at the NPA meeting on 1 October 2019 in order to ensure the appropriate allocation of Members to committee.
26. The Chair informed Members that the vacancy on Planning Committee remained due to ongoing discussions with the Secretary of State.
27. The Chair requested that any Member who wished to volunteer to represent the National Park Authority on any of the outside bodies listed in appendix 5 should contact the Head of Governance.
28. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved, subject to an amendment to recommendation 1 to note an increase of the membership of P&R Committee from 13 to 14, to:
 1. Appoint the Planning Committee, Policy and Resources Committee (noting an increase in membership of this committee to 14) and Appointments, Management & Standards Committee with the Terms of reference set out at Appendix 1, as the committees necessary to discharge the functions of the Authority.
 2. Appoint the Membership of Committees as set out in Appendix 3 to this report (tabled at the meeting).
 3. Appoint the Members to outside bodies and panels until the Authority AGM in 2020 as set out in Appendix 5 to this report (tabled at the meeting).
 4. Suspend Standing Order 8.3 (in relation to the appointment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees) until 24 July 2019 and agree that any election that takes place during this suspension of standing orders is to be conducted in accordance with paragraph 2.4.1 of this report.
 5. Agree, for the purposes of Standing order 8.1(e), that, in line with the Authority's established practice, the Committees appointed by the Authority may not arrange for the discharge of the Authority's functions by a sub-committee. All Committees retain powers under Standing Order 27 to establish Member Task and Finish Groups.
 6. Note that the committee appointments will be reviewed and a further report may be brought back to the October 2019 NPA meeting.

ITEM 13. ADOPTION OF THE SOUTH DOWNS LOCAL PLAN

29. Members were reminded that there was no opportunity at this point in the process to make substantive changes to the Local Plan.
30. Authority Members considered the report from the Planning Policy Manager (Report NPA19/20-04).
31. Members made the following comments:
 - Members expressed their thanks to all officers and Members involved in the production of the Local Plan.
 - This was a document that broke new ground and would have influence further than just this National Park. It was a document the Authority could be proud of.
32. The Chair expressed the Authority's thanks to all officers and Members involved in the producing the Local Plan.

33. The Chief Executive highlighted that the process undertaken to produce the Local Plan had been a model example of Member and officer joint working.
34. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the recommendation.
35. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note the content of the Inspector's Report and his conclusion that the South Downs Local Plan (2014-2033) provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the National Park, provided that a number of Main Modifications are made to it;
 2. Note the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) and the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the South Downs Local Plan;
 3. Adopt the South Downs Local Plan as amended by the Inspector's recommended Main Modifications as the statutory development plan for the South Downs National Park and use the South Downs Local Plan as the basis for planning decisions across the National Park along with neighbourhood development plans and minerals and waste plans where relevant;
 4. Delegate to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to make any minor or inconsequential changes to the text as considered appropriate prior to publication; and
 5. Publish the Policies Map of the development plan for the National Park.

ITEM 14. ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO SUPPORT THE PRODUCTION OF A DESIGN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

36. Authority Members considered the report from the Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager (Report NPA19/20-05).
37. The Chair invited expressions of interest to join the group not only from Members with experience of planning or design.
38. Members made the following comments:
- How large was the Task and Finish Group (TFG) expected to be?
 - It was good to see this guidance coming forward.
 - Would the TFG be able to receive input from outside groups such as developers, agents or architects?
39. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The group was expected to be comprised of approximately 6-8 Members but with the meetings open for all other Members to attend as they wished.
 - Workshops with community groups are also going to be held to help influence the evolution of the document. The Design Review Panel would also be involved, as would the Authority's new agent's forum.
40. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Agree to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group for the Design SPD with the terms of reference set out at Appendix I.
 2. Invite written expressions of interest from Members to be part of the core group for the above, to be notified to the Head of Governance.
 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Authority Chair, Chair of Planning Committee and Chair of Policy & Resources Committee, to appoint the membership of the group.

ITEM 15. RESPONSE TO TRANSPORT FOR SOUTH EAST DRAFT PROPOSAL TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

41. Authority Members considered the report from the Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA19/20-06).
42. The Chair updated Members on the current position of Transport for South East (TfSE) confirming that although it had received additional funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) TfSe was not becoming a statutory body at this point, however, it had not been ruled out for the future.
43. Members made the following comments:
 - The recognition of protected landscapes was welcomed.
 - The document would seem to give the board power to drive through future transportation proposals, but would this reduce this Authority's ability to object to schemes that negatively impacted the National Park?
 - Who would be in a position to coordinate the application of greater pressure to ministers to improve public transport?
 - The TfSE consultation was currently live on their website and anyone could provide feedback through this.
44. In response to questions Members were advised:
 - The proposals did not take away the statutory rights and responsibilities of this Authority and the major development test would still stand.
 - Any coordination would be done by East Sussex County Council who were the lead on this.
45. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved, subject to the amendment of recommendation 3 to refer to section 3 rather than section 2.24, to:
 1. Note the Transport for South East (TfSE) consultation document (Appendix 1)
 2. Support the proposed submission to Government to establish a Sub National transport body (STB), to be known as Transport for the South East, as set out in the consultation document.
 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside and Policy Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to draft and submit the formal SDNPA response to the consultation to include the issues set out in section 3.

ITEM 16. RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND RE.M3 JUNCTION 9 AT WINCHESTER

46. Authority Members considered the report from the Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA19/20-07) and Members were reminded that the NPA was not the decision maker and there was no presumption against major infrastructure in the SDNP; the Authority's role was to provide evidence to the Secretary of State to enable them to make informed decisions which would also take into account the high bar of the major development test.
47. The Chair informed Members that as the National Park boundary was drawn tightly around Junction 9 it was always known that any changes to the junction were likely to impact the National Park. There were still some key documents on drainage, lighting and arboriculture yet to be received from Highways England (HE), but it was hoped these would be completed during the consultation.
48. Members made the following comments:

- It was good to note the depot had been moved.
 - Concern that HE were only “investigating the possibility” of the green bridge. Was there any way a stronger commitment could be achieved?
 - Could the Winchester Landscape Study be extended to include more of the villages in the wider area?
49. In response to questions Members were advised:
- Feasibility studies were being carried out under the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1), however, as announcements on RIS2 were delayed so was the funding which this project would potentially be carried out under.
 - The Winchester Landscape Study (WLS) was not based on any administrative boundaries but rather covered the open downland in that area of the National Park. There was concern about other areas in the vicinity and this would be considered further following the WLS workshop, however, this study was specifically focussed on the open downland.
50. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note the timescale and process for the Highways England public consultation on proposals to address Junction 9 of the M3 at Winchester;
 2. Approve the key priorities identified by officers in conjunction with the Authority Chair as set out in section 4 of report NPA19/20-07;
 3. Delegate to the Director of Countryside Policy & Management, in consultation with the Authority Chair, responsibility to make an initial submission to the public consultation based on these key priorities;
 4. Note that the submitted response and any feedback received from Highways England will be presented to the October meeting of the NPA prior to the final response being submitted.

ITEM 17. ENTRY SIGNAGE FOR THE NATIONAL PARK: PHASE II

51. Authority Members considered the report from the Engagement and Communications Manager (Report NPA19/20-08).
52. Members made the following comments:
- Strongly in favour of more entry signs and National Park signage was regularly raised by other groups and the public.
 - The signs were beautiful to look at and of high quality, signs that were built to last.
 - Would the signs be located on or close to the boundary of the National Park?
 - It was very welcome to see that signage would also be located near sites that were under threat.
 - Perhaps the signs were overly elaborate and too expensive. What was the cost of the signs?
 - Would the Authority have to increase the size of the maintenance team in order to care for the additional signs?
 - The signs were excellent and not overly expensive.
 - It was important that signage was also integrated into villages and communities.
 - Were the signs made by a company in the National Park?
53. In response to questions Members were advised:

- Signs were placed as close to the boundary as possible after highways requirements had been taken into consideration.
 - The signs cost between £5k-£8k dependant on the size and materials. Passive safety comprised approximately 45% of the total cost. The insistence on local materials also increased the cost of their construction.
 - If maintenance requirements significantly increased in the future a contract would be put out for competitive tender.
 - The Authority could not legally require the company to be based in the National Park.
54. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved, subject to the amendment of recommendation 2 stating that the expenditure was £195k rather than £207k, to:
1. Agree Phase II of the signage project as set out at Section 5 of the report, using the design and location principles previously agreed by the Authority (Appendix 1).
 2. Approve expenditure of up to £195k to be taken from strategic reserves.
 3. Approve the commencement of the proposed procurement exercises and delegate authority to the Chief Executive to award contracts for the above, following compliant competitive processes.
55. Alun Alesbury left the meeting at 4.10pm.

ITEM 18. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

56. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Finance Officer (Report NPA19/20-09).
57. Members made the following comments:
- The Authority had approximately £6m in reserves and, although it was important to have reserves, it was also important to be aware of the Authority's use of public money; not only cash balances but also other investments. The Authority should be more commercial in its outlook. It was not prudent to hold substantial reserves which earned significantly less than inflation.
 - The planning reserve was very important to ensure that planners could make professional decisions without the worry of cost implications.
58. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The Authority's current strategy, which took into account the risk appetite, was about balancing risk with liquidity. The Authority's investment strategy and use of reserves was a decision for Members, however, the Authority was currently at a high point of reserves being at the mid-point of improvements to area offices. Bringing Heath Barn farm into use would also require funds from reserves and if the Authority was able to use funds from the reserves at Seven Sisters to reduce the need to borrow then it would. A certain level of reserves was required though to ensure day to day operations were not threatened.
59. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note the provisional 2018/19 revenue outturn position of a net £369,000 below budget variance for the 2018/19 financial year.
 2. Approve the revenue budget carry forward requests from 2018/19 to 2019/20 of £1,083,000 as set out in Appendix 2.
 3. Approve the following capital variations as detailed in section 3.5:
 - (£78,000) reprofile to the 2019/20 financial year to fund completion of phase 2 and possible future phases of the National Park Signage Project.

- £40,000 reprofile to fund a new scrub management machine previously approved by the South Downs National Park Authority (NPA).
- 4. Approve the use of the revenue below budget variance as a contribution to the Estates Management reserve and note the implications for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in accordance with revenue budget approvals.
- 5. Note the comparison of investment returns across National Park Authorities set out at paras 3.7 -3.19, subject to the caveats set out in the report.

ITEM 19. ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS AT YOUTH HOSTEL ASSOCIATION TRULEIGH HILL

60. Authority Members considered the report from the External Funding Coordinator (Report NPA19/20-10).
61. Members made the following comments:
- This was a worthwhile exercise as Truleigh Hill was an area requiring improvement and the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) was potentially a good example for neighbouring properties. Would the improvements to the YHA require planning permission?
 - It was hoped the YHA had learned from some of the issues at Southease and that close attention would be paid to the details. If this Authority did fund it we should be able to point to it as a good example.
 - Although this was an important site there seemed to be a lack of figures on estimated increases in visitors or under-represented groups. What was the exit strategy and legacy? Why was Authority staff working on fundraising with the YHA and how much time of Authority staff was being put into this?
62. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The improvements would require planning permission.
 - The need for these improvements had been documented from YHA user groups for a number of years. The broader Truleigh Hill project has also identified the need.
 - The Authority worked in partnership wherever possible and the partnership with the YHA was a strategic one. The Truleigh Hill hostel was identified as both a risk and opportunity as, for example, 95% of walkers do not realise the café is there. The YHA has been asked to produce further evidence, however, these improvements would greatly increase the accessibility and use of this hostel.
63. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to approve a £70,000 grant from the Strategic Fund to Youth Hostel Association (YHA) for Access Improvements at YHA Truleigh Hill.

ITEM 20. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

64. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 9 May 2019.

ITEM 21. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES

65. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meetings held on 25 April 2019 and 6 June 2019.

ITEM 22. PART II MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2019

66. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 16 May 2019 subject to an amendment to the list of attendees to record Janet Duncton as in attendance.
67. The Chair closed the meeting at 16.47.

