
MINUTES

Meeting: **National Park Authority**

Date: Friday 3 February 2023 at 10.00 am

Venue: Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell

Chair: Cllr A McCloy

Present: Mr J W Berresford, Cllr W Armitage, Cllr P Brady, Cllr M Chaplin, Cllr D Chapman, Cllr C Farrell, Cllr C Furness, Cllr C Greaves, Cllr A Gregory, Prof J Haddock-Fraser, Mr Z Hamid, Cllr A Hart, Cllr I Huddleston, Cllr C McLaren, Cllr Mrs K Potter, Cllr V Priestley, Cllr K Richardson, Miss L Slack, Mr K Smith, Cllr P Tapping, Cllr D Taylor, Cllr J Wharmby and Ms Y Witter

Apologies for absence: Ms A Harling, Cllr Mrs G Heath, Cllr D Murphy and Cllr B Woods.

1/23 ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS PRESENT, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 13

Cllr Gregory declared that the Peak District Foundation had made donations which had benefitted his ward.

Mr Hamid, Cllr McLaren and Cllr McCloy, all declared a prejudicial interest as Trustees of the Foundation and stated that they would leave the room for the duration of this item.

2/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON THE 11TH NOVEMBER & 2ND DECEMBER 2022

The minutes of the previous meetings of the National Park Authority held on 11th November and 2nd December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

3/23 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

4/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present to make representations to the meeting.

5/23 CHAIR'S BRIEFING

The Chair of the Authority provided a verbal update to Members on the following:

- Former Parish Member, Peter Harrison had sadly passed away. The Chair had attended his funeral on behalf of the Authority. Peter had been a much loved and very active member of his community and had served on the Authority twice.
- The Chair and Chief Executive had made a submission to the consultation on the proposal for an East Midlands devolved authority, a copy of which would be circulated to Members for their information.
- The Chair had participated in regular meetings with constituent Authorities.
- The delayed Ministerial visit from Trudy Harrison MP had taken place, and she had been accompanied by Sarah Dines MP. They had been taken out to see the work of the Authority and to some sites which had been recipients of Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme (FiPL) grants.
- A Transport Symposium had taken place earlier in the week in Buxton. This had been convened by the National Park Authority and guests were invited from both the public and private sector and community groups. A constructive and interesting discussion had taken place.

6/23 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Chief Executive's report gave updates to Members on the following:-

- Meetings that he had attended with partners
- Nature Prescription Launch
- National Park Partnership Bulletin
- The Authority's preparation of a response to a letter from DLUHC notifying the Authority that it may be liable for designation for the speed of its decision making on applications for non major development under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

In addition to the written report, the Chief Executive gave the following verbal update:

The letter to DLUHC regarding potential Planning Performance Designation had been responded to in full.

The Government Environmental Improvement Plan had been launched. This was an update to the 2018 Environmental Strategy. Several matters were of relevance to the National Park including:

- A commitment that everyone should be within 15 minutes' walk of a green space.
- A one-year extension to the FiPL scheme and a 15% uplift in funding
- Strengthening of the National Landscapes Partnership
- Reiteration of the goals of the Landscape Review, including the strengthening of Management Plans.
- Confirmation of Access for All funding.
- Green prescribing
- The development of a Natural History GCSE

7/23 EXTERNAL AUDIT 2021/22 ANNUAL REPORT

The report, which asked Members to consider the External Auditors 2021/22 Annual Report was presented by Mark Surridge of Mazars LLP..

The Head of Finance advised that the two internal control recommendations which had been made regarding the segregation of duties and the fixed asset register were accepted, and that steps were being taken to mitigate the risk in that the Head of Law & Monitoring Officer will conduct a review of the significant year end journals.. However, to fully implement the recommendations the Authority would have to invest in a new finance system and a new IT solution for assets, both of which were being looked at with a view to procurement in the next 12 months. The resource implications of this would form part of the wider proposed organisational review.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note the 2021/22 External Auditors Annual Audit Report as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. To note that the letter of management representation at Appendix A within Appendix 1 of the report needed to be signed by the Chief Finance Officer**

8/23 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 (JW)

The report which sought approval for the statement of accounts for 2021/22 was introduced by The Head of Finance.

Regarding section 2.7, Mark Surridge of Mazars confirmed that the pension deficit position had dropped by a third due to the market position, and reflected calculations based on various factors which fluctuated from year to year.

Members asked whether in section 2.4 the wording could be reconsidered, as what was in fact grant income which was not intended to be spent over a single year looked as if it was money which could be available to the Authority this year. The Head of Finance advised that while the correct accounting terminology had been used it could be considered whether there was a clearer way to communicate this.

The recommendation set out in the report was moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- To approve the audited Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**

9/23 2021/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND AMENDED CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (AGM)

Cllr Chaplin joined the meeting at 10.30am

The report, which asked Members to approve the Annual Governance statement for 2021/22 at Appendix 1 of the report, and to approve the amended Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 2 of the report, was introduced by the Head of Law.

The Authority had heard earlier from the External Auditors that they had not been able to complete the Value for Money element of the 2021/22 audit but that they had considered the Annual Governance Statement and to date had not identified any issues and did not contemplate finding any issues that would lead to anything other than an unmodified clean opinion.

Members raised the following points:

- The Authority's rigorous approach to corporate governance was welcomed, particularly in the light of the recent public interest report which had been published regarding breaches of corporate governance by Cheshire East Council in 2014/15.
- Corporate governance could be included in training for new Members.
- Member involvement in this area could be increased via the Governance Review Working Group.
- It would be useful for Members to have a concise summary of the main points of the Code of Corporate Governance to aid understanding.

The Head of Law confirmed that Member's suggestions would be considered and that lessons learned in public interest reports were always studied. She also reminded Members that the Member Code of Conduct and the Nolan principles were their key sources of guidance.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the unaudited Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 for sign off by the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of the Authority at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. To approve the Code of Corporate Governance set out in Appendix 2 of the report.**
- 3. To authorise the Head of Law & Monitoring Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make minor changes to the Code of Corporate Governance each year following publication of the Annual Governance Statement.**

10/23 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT BLOCK 2022/23

The report, which presented to Members the Internal Auditors recommendations for the first block on the 2022/23 Internal Audits and the agreed actions for consideration, was presented by Ian Morton of Veritau.

The highest level of assurance, substantial assurance was gained in three of the four audits – complaints, procurement/creditors and payroll. The Head of Law advised that with regards to Occupational Safety and Health being given reasonable assurance, the issues outlined in the audit had been responded to by the Authority and were being progressed by the Head of People Management. This had been discussed in detail at

the Programmes and Resources Committee which had recently received and approved the Occupational Safety and Health Policy.

Ian Morton confirmed that the Authority had provided a satisfactory response for the issues identified in the audit. There had been some issues with training records which had been due to the system used to record them, which had now been resolved.

Members queried whether casual staff received the same level of training as contract staff, and were advised by the Chief Executive that he would provide a written response.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Audit reports for the four areas covered under Block 1 for 2022/23: Payroll, Occupational Safety & Health, Procurement/Creditors and Complaints (in Appendices' 1- 4 of the report), be received and the agreed actions considered and approved.

11/23 REVENUE BUDGET, 2023/24 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2026/27 (JW)

The report, which presented the Authority's 2023/24 revenue budget for Member approval was presented by the Head of Finance, who advised that there was an error at paragraph 21, for the estimate as at 31/3/24 the total should read £8.674 million which gave rise to a difference of £938,000.

In response to Member queries, Officers advised the following:

- Part of the overall reserve figure included £1.5 million of grant funding which cannot all be spent in one year.
- The Authority's Visitor Centres had cost the Authority money to run but Cycle Hire was operating at a profit.
- Further details of reserves would be given in due course as part of the outturn report.
- The Covid reserve was being used to support hybrid working
- The Authority purchases green electricity but this alone does not reduce the cost.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the Authority's annual budget for the 2023/24 financial year as shown in Appendix 1a of the report.**
- 2. To note the budget reductions at Appendix 2 of the report, taken to balance the 2023/24 budget.**
- 3. To note the Medium-Term Financial Position (MTFP) of the Authority in the period up to March 2027.**

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 11.15 and reconvened at 11.30

12/23 CAR PARKS REVIEW - CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The report, which updated Members on the outcomes of the Byelaw and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation and sought approval to continue the process to implement the 2021 Car Park Review was presented by the Interim Head of Asset Management who requested that the names of the visitors and holiday permits were amended to more accurately reflect their purpose to annual and weekly permits respectively.

A motion to approve the recommendations as set out in the report was moved.

In response to questions from Members the Interim Head of Asset Management confirmed that:

- Enforcement would continue to be carried out under the Derbyshire Enforcement Partnership, who retain the income from any fines.
- The new ticket machines will not take cash and older ones that do will be phased out.
- Payment could be made via the RingGo app.
- All proposed charging sites had been tested for phone signal viability.
- Authority signage had reduced irresponsible parking, e.g. on verges, around North Lees and this could be reproduced elsewhere if necessary.

The motion was seconded.

Members asked who would pay for additional parking control measures that may be required to prevent irresponsible parking, such as bunds or thin yellow lines. Officers advised that the bunds at North Lees had been paid for by the Authority as they were on Authority land. Yellow lines would be the responsibility of the County Council Highways department and any such scheme would involve a consultation process. The landscape impact would also have to be considered.

It was also confirmed that provision had been made to prevent overnight parking in the affected car parks.

The motion for approval of the recommendations was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

1. **To note the consultation feedback and Officers' responses to that feedback.**
2. **To continue the processes to implement the proposed increase in charges and the introduction of charging to the additional proposed car parks as approved, by requesting DEFRA to confirm the amended Byelaws and requesting Derbyshire County Council to make the Traffic Regulation Order (subject to its own approval processes).**

13/23 PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND ANNUAL REPORT

Cllr McCloy, Mr Hamid and Cllr McLaren left the room at 11.56 for the duration of this item, having declared a prejudicial interest as trustees of the Foundation and Mr Berresford took the Chair for this item.

The report, which informed Members of the progress of the Peak District National Park Foundation (“the Foundation”) partnership agreement and gave the Foundation’s Annual report was presented by the Head of Engagement.

The Head of Engagement noted thanks offered by Members for funding which the Foundation had awarded to Moors for the Future Partnership, communities in South Yorkshire, and to Mosaic. She confirmed that the Authority would not, moving forward, charge the Foundation for office accommodation and that the Foundation already had its own website and independent IT systems.

Members suggested that a mid-term review of progress could be appropriate to reassure the Authority that continued investment in an independent Foundation was well founded. The Chief Executive advised that the Foundation needed security for 5 years and if that security was caveated it could cause problems and tie the hands of the Foundation unacceptably. However, monitoring rather than review, would be appropriate.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note the 2021/22 annual report of the Peak District National Park Foundation (“the Foundation”) and progress in its first three years of operation.**
- 2. To approve a short extension of the current Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) and Grant Agreement on similar terms, to enable the Authority and Foundation to negotiate terms of the ongoing relationship for the next five years. The extension would come to an end on completion of the new five-year agreement, or after a period of twelve months, whichever is the earlier.**
- 3. To approve in principle a new five-year Grant Agreement and MoU with the Foundation.**
- 4. To delegate approval of the terms of the new MoU and Grant Agreement to the CEO, in consultation with the Deputy Chair of Authority and Chair of Programmes and Resources Committee.**
- 5. To authorise applications for and acceptance of grants from the Foundation up to a maximum of £200,000 per annum, subject to approval of the relevant Head of Service, without the need to comply with Standing Order 7.C-2 in respect of each individual grant.**

Cllr McCloy, Mr Hamid and Cllr McLaren, re-joined the meeting and Cllr McCloy resumed the Chair.

14/23 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES - NONE SUBMITTED

There were no Outside Body reports.

15/23 EXEMPT INFORMATION S100(A) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 16 to avoid the disclosure of Exempt Information under S100 (A) (4) Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 ‘information relating to the

financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

16/16 Organisational Change (PM)

The meeting ended at 1.40 pm