

10. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT (PM)

1. Purpose

To up-date Members of key items since the previous Authority meeting.

2. Context

2.1 National issues

2.1.1 Government news

Stephen Morgan has replaced Angela Eagle as the Defra farming minister.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee has asked for a call for evidence on upland farming. NPE has developed a collective response. Defra have also just published its Farming Roadmap to 2050 alongside a formal response to the farm profitability review led by Baroness Batters.

Mary Creagh held a governance round table event which was attended by NPE, CNP and others. Hannah Corran, one of our Members, attended to give a youth perspective.

Mary Creagh will be visiting the Peak District in July for a Great North Bog site visit and for the launch of our 75th anniversary report.

2.1.2 Protected Landscape Partnership (PLP) news

No update.

2.1.3 National Parks England (NPE) news

The National Parks UK Chairs and CEO Forum has just taken place in the South Downs. Items discussed included green finance, nature-based solutions, wildfire management and the launch of a revised Joint Statement on the Historic Environment.

2.1.4 National Parks Partnership (NPP) news

NPP is currently recruiting for a new person to lead on income generation with a view to growing beyond corporate partnerships and green finance into philanthropy.

NPP is in the planning stages for a potential 'Love Landscapes' campaign later in the year.

A proposed new clothing deal is being recommended with a leading provider to become the official clothing partner of UK national parks. This is a deal for a more limited range of items than was being proposed with the last potential provider, which makes it simpler to deliver.

The UK Comms Unit now sits within NPP. Brand proposition work is continuing and a new campaign and toolkit are being prepared for the autumn. We are trying to shift the positioning from national parks being seen as nice places to visit, to being dynamic places that provide vital services, where action happens that is key to delivery of national policies and ambitions.

2.2 Local Government Reform

No update.

2.3 MP engagement

Nothing significant to note in this report.

2.4 EMCCA engagement

Attending various meetings with EMCCA is continuing. It is not clear yet whether the Authority is going to be properly recognised as a local authority by EMCCA. We are proposing that we should be attending EMCCA's leaders' summits with other local authority leaders.

Work continues with EMCCA around the visitor economy and managing visitor pressure, sustainable travel, and biodiversity.

2.5 Engagement

A CEO Roadshow will have taken place in Winster by the time of the Authority meeting.

During the hot weather in May, which saw a spate of young people die from entering cold water, we increased our engagement on entering water safely. Our messaging changed to reflect what was happening around the country and to reflect the increased interest in wild swimming that has developed since the last time we did any significant work in this area.

A visit to Stanton Moor and the Nine Ladies stone circle was organised just after the solstice so that partners could witness the scale of visitation and associated issues of parking, litter and campfires. On the moor I spoke to a range of visitors including local villagers, those interested in paganism and those more associated with the party/rave scene. This year there were over 450 tents on the site and approximately ten sound systems. Some of those who were there for the more traditional solstice celebrations complained that there had been more tensions and a 'rougher' element to the gathering this year. We received reports of some robberies having taken place and some people having been beaten up. Just after attending the site with police colleagues, the body of a young man was discovered and a murder investigation has been launched. There is good partnership working in helping try to manage many of the issues associated with this scale of unofficial gathering but clearly there are huge challenges and a lack of resourcing by partners, prevents a more proactive approach. Given the growing level of concern within the local community and seriousness of incidents this year, we will work with partners to review our approach ahead of next year's solstice.

I met with United Utilities in the Goyt valley to discuss their plans for increasing their recreation and engagement offer.

Myself and planning colleagues met with local hospitality business leaders, organised by Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, so that we could better understand some of the issues local hospitality businesses are facing. Gaining a better understanding of the issues is always useful, as is understanding their perspectives on our planning system. There was some useful feedback that we can work with to try and improve our planning service but a lot of the pressures local businesses face are due to national factors that are outside of our control.

I attended the Local Access Forum and also a site visit to look at access improvements and challenges on the Sheffield edge of the national park.

I recently attended the Environmental Quality Mark awards for Staffordshire. It was a good opportunity to talk about the national park and activities to mark our 75th.

2.6 Peak Cluster

Our Strategic Planning manager recently attended a community meeting on the Peak Cluster project. His presence was greatly appreciated by the local community and it was a useful way of gaining a greater understanding of local perceptions and feelings about the project. He will also be attending a UK Cement Industries event at the House of Lords.

2.7 Moorland fires

At the time of writing this report, there is a major fire incident happening on Tintwistle Moor. The Woodhead Road has been closed due to smoke, illustrating why Highways England are funding moorland restoration work with Moors for the Future Partnership, to help try and prevent such incidents. There has also been a fire on the Roaches, caused by a group of young people letting off fireworks. Thankfully that fire did not spread far, due in part to the moorland restoration work in the area meaning that the ground was wet and boggy, even with the warm weather. We have a Fire Operations Group (FOG), that works well for dealing with fires but it is felt we need more coordination around engagement, actions and messaging to try and prevent fires starting. We are therefore considering establishing a Fire Engagement Group (FEG). The work of our new Wildfire Engagement Ranger is key in building relationships with partners and promoting the use of Public Space Protection Orders. We are

letting this work continue before we decide on the composition, remit and operations a possible new Fire Engagement Group.

2.8 Internal issues

2.8.1 Funding news

Despite now being a quarter of the way into the financial year, we are still awaiting sign-off of our Defra core grant agreement. Currently we are able to fund our operations from cash we hold on reserve but there needs to be a swift resolution to the issues. Major concerns have been raised by a number of national parks as to the new terms and conditions Defra is seeking to introduce. Some of the changes are not practical and are inefficient. There also seems to be a move for Defra to be more controlling and require a significant increase in bureaucracy and reporting. We are trying to agree changes in the new terms but this seems to be part of a new commercial contract template that is being rolled out across government.

The new capital funding we have available to us is very welcome and on the recent Members Tour we were able to show how we have successfully put some of last year's capital funding to work for us. We are currently recruiting an additional building surveying, which will be funded out of our capital allocation to help with capacity for delivering this year's capital projects.

A new Landscape Observatory office area is in place at Aldern House to accommodate the growing LO team.

We successfully submitted our Morridge Hill Country Landscape Recovery bid on time and have already started addressing validation questions that are coming in from Defra.

We have secured a new partnership deal with Skoda to support them in the launch of a new electric vehicle in the national park over the summer. This deal not only gives an unrestricted contribution to help fund our work, it will also help promote cycle hire in the national park.

The income we earn from carparks remains strong and we are exploring whether there are any further carparking enhancements, creations or transfers of ownership we can achieve this year. The introduction of charging for toilets at three of our sites has gone well so far, with a small amount of disgruntlement, that is to be expected.

2.8.2 Governance

2.8.2.1 Member news

We have the following new Members:

- Jim Garvey, Staffordshire Moorlands DC
- Theresa Arnold, Barnsley MBC
- Fiona Wilson, Cheshire East Council
- Sam Redfern, Derbyshire County Council

Recruitment is underway for a new Secretary of State Member, with appointments expected in the autumn. We are awaiting the election of a new Parish Member.

The annual Member tour took place on 19th June. Members visited recent carpark developments and investments in our camping sites, cycle hire and National Park Centres.

2.8.3 Staffing

As most Members will be aware, we were recently able to appoint Rob Roddy to the Head of Assets and Enterprise role. Technically, our Standing Orders reserve the decision to appoint a Head of Service to Full Authority, however, as Chief Executive, I have a delegation which authorises me to take action where it is deemed essential for the wellbeing of the Authority or its employees and such action cannot reasonably wait for the next committee meeting. I deemed this to be the case for Rob Roddy's appointment; the role is crucial to the Authority

and any period of vacancy would adversely impact on the Authority and the members of staff within the teams for which the role is responsible. I considered that these factors, together with the risk of losing Rob due to the uncertainty that waiting for ratification by Full Authority would create, justified the use of the delegation. The recruitment exercise was undertaken by myself and Janet Dugdale as Deputy Chair, in consultation with Ken Smith as Chair at that time, and our decision to appoint Rob was unanimous. Given this, I have included a recommendation below for Members to note the appointment of our new Head of Assets and Enterprise.

There are a number of other staff changes happening at the moment. I am sure Members will join me in passing on best wishes to Rhodri Thomas, who is now retiring from the Authority after 38 years' service as our nature/ecology lead. Rob Kenning, our Ranger Manager, will be leaving the Authority to relocate to Scotland with his family and plans are now being developed to ensure we can continue to implement Rob's Ranger 2030 vision. I'm pleased to say we have been able to increase the size of our comms team with the creation of a new Digital and Communications Manager role. We have also just been able to appoint a new manager to head up our Strategy, Data and Performance team – this person will lead on the development of our next National Park Management Plan over the next few years.

Sadly, for us all, Roisin Joyce will be leaving as Director of the Peak District National Park Foundation to take up a new role at the National Landscapes Association.

2.8.4 75th anniversary update

Our joint 75th anniversary report with the Lake District, Dartmoor and Eryri has now been completed and is currently being printed ahead of the launch event at Aldern House on 15th July. The report covers the history and creation of national parks, celebrates many of the successes achieved in the four national parks in question and sets out some recommendations for the future. The report is the work of an independently commissioned author (Andrew McCloy) and therefore it has not been brought to any of the national parks in advance for ratification. National Parks England will be producing a short response to the report on behalf of all ten English national parks. National Parks Minister, Mary Creagh, has confirmed attendance and will speak at the launch event for the report, which we are hosting in Bakewell. We currently have over 80 RSVPs to attend the event, which whilst being 'local' to the four national parks, will have a national feel and significance.

Other 75th anniversary activity has included the launch of two celebratory ales brewed especially for us, with profits from sales going to the Foundation. The ales are called Peak 75 and use the graphics of the new anniversary 'tube map' for their logo. We were also due to launch a newly named train 'Peak District 75' at Manchester Piccadilly, however this had to be rescheduled due to the hot weather. Plans are well underway for our 75th summary garden party on 22nd July, where we look forward to welcoming Members.

3. Proposals

3.1 None

4. Recommendations

- 1. For Members to note the report**
- 2. That Members note the appointment of Rob Roddy to the role of Head of Assets and Enterprise pursuant to delegation 7.A-5 (a) and (b) of Standing Orders.**

5. Corporate Implications

- Legal - none
- Financial – the report gives updates on recent funding developments.

- c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan – the report covers some of the work that is helping deliver the NPMP.
- d. Risk Management – there is a risk around the delay in getting our Defra grant agreement signed off and some risks stemming from the new terms and conditions we are likely to have to accept.
- e. Net Zero – no major net zero implications from the report.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None

7. Appendices

None

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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Responsible Officer, Job Title

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