

National Park Authority

10 May 2023

Present (In Person)

Councillor Mrs D Clements (Chair)

Councillor Steve Alderman, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M James, Mr GA Jones, Councillor R Jordan, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor A Wilcox and Councillor Mrs M Wiggins.

Present (Remotely)

Dr M Havard, Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Councillor R Owens, Dr RM Plummer Councillor Mrs S Skyrme-Blackhall and Councillor C Williams BEM.

[Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock and Remotely 10.00am –
11.40am]

1. **Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr SL Hancock.

2. **Disclosures of Interest**

A general personal disclosure of interest was received from Dr R Plummer in respect of her Membership of the NRW Board and as a Trustee of Plantlife and in particular reference to Report 16/23.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 March 2023 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 29 March 2023 be confirmed and signed on the proposal of Councillor D Clements, seconded by Councillor S Alderman.

4. **Action Log and Matters arising**

The contents of the Action Log were noted. In addition Members were advised that the Visit Pembrokeshire Accounts had now been circulated, and that an expression of interest had been received in respect of attendance at the Europarc Conference, but a further space was still available. In response to a question, the Chair noted that the first meeting of the Toilet Funding Working Group had taken place and additional information was being sought from Pembrokeshire County Council. The Chief Executive also noted that in respect of Minute 17, it had not been necessary to vary financial standards, and the normal procurement process had been followed.



5. Chair's Announcements

- The previously postponed meeting of the Chairs and Chief Executives of the Welsh National Parks with the Minister for Climate Change had now taken place.
- Attendance at the launch of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan and adoption of their new brand
- Attendance at the Dale Study Day; thanks were given to officers for their valuable input

The Chief Executive added that the Authority's purchase of the Dune area at Newport Sands had been completed and signs would be erected that day advising that vehicular access to the beach would be limited to emergency services and those requiring essential access. The prepared communications plan would now be put into effect, and he confirmed that this would include communication with Nevern Community Council.

Noted.

6. Reports of meetings of various Authority Committees

The following reports of meetings of a number of the Authority's Committees were presented to Members for consideration/information:

- (i) Development Management Committee held on 8 March 2023;
- (ii) Sustainable Development Fund Committee held on 25 January 2023;
- (iii) Member Support and Development Committee held on 15 February 2023;
- (iv) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 1 March 2023.

The Chair of the Member Support and Development Committee asked Members who had not yet completed their Personal Development Reviews to do so, as this would enable the training plan to be completed.

With regard to the Risk Register reported to the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee, the Chief Executive noted that a further workshop on risk would be arranged and the Register would be tabled at a future meeting of the Authority.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the above-mentioned Committees be adopted/received.

7. Planning Policy Wales on Net Benefit for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Resilience & Major Development in National Parks

It was reported that targeted changes were proposed to strengthen and clarify Planning Policy Wales in respect of securing a net benefit for biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. An edit was also proposed in respect of major development in National Parks.



The proposals were broadly welcomed, and the Authority’s emerging response was set out in the report. It was reported that it was hoped a joint response with the other two Welsh National Parks could be submitted, however Members’ input was also welcome; comments were requested by 17th May to allow a final response to be submitted before 31st May. It was advised that this would be agreed with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Authority before being submitted.

Members endorsed the emerging response set out, but asked for it to be strengthened in respect of the need to update Technical Advice Note 5, the Sandford Principle, marine protected areas, onsite mitigation and the impact of Developments of National Significance on the resources of the Authority. With regard to the latter, Members suggested that an uplift in fees was necessary, and the Director advised that Planning Officers Society Wales had written to Welsh Government to ask for a review of planning fees more generally. It was suggested that collaboration with other environmental non-governmental organizations such as RSPB would be useful. Several Members noted that they would be sending detailed comments and the officer agreed to incorporate these and other points made at the meeting in the response. With regard to the points made regarding compensation for tree loss, the officer said that further work would be done in the future to assess whether the loss of trees as a result of Ash Dieback had had an impact on landscape character.

On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Dr R Plummer, it was **resolved** that:

- a) the emerging response to the consultation on Planning Policy Wales on net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystems resilience & Major Development in National Parks set out in the report be endorsed, subject to the inclusion of Members’ additional comments made in writing and at the meeting; and
- b) delegated power be given to Strategic Policy Manager to submit a response to Welsh Government subject to agreement by the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority.

8. Welsh Language Standards: Annual Report

Members were reminded that the Authority was required to produce an Annual Report setting out how it had fulfilled the Welsh Language Standards with which it had to comply in the course of carrying out its business, and a copy of the report was before them for their endorsement.

It was noted at the meeting that information on Members’ Welsh Language skills had been provided as follows:

| Level | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| Entry | 5 | 28% |



| | | |
|--------------|---|------|
| Foundation | 1 | 5.5% |
| Intermediate | 0 | 0% |
| Advanced | 1 | 5.5% |
| Proficient | 3 | 17% |
| No skills | 8 | 44% |

Members noted a typographical error in paragraph 1.4 of the Welsh report and noted that cross references were needed in respect of the complaint regarding Welsh Language signage at paragraph 2.8.1 and jobs advertised as Welsh essential at paragraph 4.9. It was also felt that more information was needed on the impact of policies in terms of impact assessments. It was also hoped that in coming years the report could be more celebratory of the work being undertaken by the Authority.

One Member asked, in Welsh, whether simultaneous translation of meetings could be considered, to allow participation through the medium of Welsh. The Chief Executive replied that he would be open to responding to such a request, and other Members suggested that the matter could be discussed when the Authority's Welsh Language Strategy came before the Authority in the coming months.

On the proposal of Councillor M James, seconded by Dr M Havard, it was **resolved** that the Annual Report be endorsed as the Authority's submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner subject to the above-mentioned amendments.

9. **Stack Rocks and St Govans Lease Renewal**

Members were reminded that agreed terms for a lease renewal at Stack Rocks and St Govans had been reached with the MOD, and approved by the Authority at its meeting in August 2018. However for reasons completely outside of the Authority's control the MOD had been unable to document the lease renewal at that time and had only recently reverted to officers confirming their willingness to now do so.

The only material change to the salient terms (as previously approved by the NPA) which the MOD were now seeking was a reduction in the term of the new lease from 21 years down to 10 years. Officers considered this reduced contractual term to be to the Authority's advantage.

Due to the elapsed period since the NPA last considered this matter and the material change represented by the reduced contractual term, it was considered appropriate that this matter should once again be presented to Members for their consideration.

In response to a question, the Estates Officer confirmed that the 10 year agreement would commence from the date the lease was signed.



On the proposal of Councillor P Morgan, seconded by Councillor R Jordan, it was **resolved** that the lease renewal be agreed on the same terms as set out in NPA report No. 35/18, subject only to the contractual term being reduced from 21 years down to 10 years.

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the National Park Authority held on 21 June 2023 without amendment

