

National Park Authority

15 September 2021

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chair)

Councillor P Baker BEM, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor M Evans, Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Mr G Jones, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens, Dr R Plummer, Councillor A Wilcox, Councillor M Williams and Councillor S Yelland.

[Councillor Mrs D Clements arrived during consideration of matters arising on the minutes of the last meeting]

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.15am; 11.25am – 1.10pm)

1. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Dr R Plummer disclosed a personal but not prejudicial, interest in reports 37/21 PCNPA Supplementary Planning Guidance and 41/21 Visit Pembrokeshire.

Councillor Mrs D Clements disclosed a personal but not prejudicial interest in report 41/21 Visit Pembrokeshire

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28 July 2021 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 28 July 2021 be confirmed and authenticated.

4. Matters arising

(a) Minutes of Operational Review Committee 23 June 2021 (Minute 6(iii))

An update was sought on the potential for a Marine National Park. The Chief Executive advised that discussions needed to take place both internally and externally – with Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government – as working in Partnership was likely to lead to greater success. It was also noted that the Members Study Tour on 29 September was no longer going to be on the subject of the marine environment, as the tide times were unsuitable for a foreshore visit, but would focus on other projects. However Members had received an invitation to a site visit organised by the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer in early October.



- (b) Minutes of Personnel Committee 23 June 2021 (Minute 6(iv))
An update was sought on applicants to the Kickstart Scheme. The Chief Executive replied that placement roles had been offered to two individuals – as Archaeology Support Assistant and as Customer service and Site Warden Assistant at Carew Castle. Recruitment for other placements was ongoing.
- (c) Corporate Events (Minute 13 a))
Dr M Havard noted that the Members’ National Induction was currently taking place and that both she and Dr R Plummer were helping to facilitate the session on “The Member Role” which she hoped participants would find interesting.
- (d) Review of the Public Participation Scheme at meetings of the Development Management Committee (Minute 15)
In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Executive agreed to ensure that the revised guidance was circulated to Members.

Noted.

5. Chair’s Announcements

The Chair advised that he had not attended many events since the previous meeting, however he had attended a meeting of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust and the workshop organised by the Authority on Planning Appeals. He had also attended the launch of the Newport Area Environment Group project which had been funded by the Authority’s Sustainable Development Fund. He noted that the following day he would begin his walk of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path and anyone was welcome to join him as he walked; the walk had been planned for 2020 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of creation of the Path, however it had had to be postponed.

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 21 July 2021;
- (ii) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 14 July 2021;
- (iii) Member Support and Development Committee held on 14 July 2021; and
- (iv) Youth Committee held on 20 July 2021.

With regard to Minute 7 of the Member Support and Development Committee, one Member asked whether a date had been received for assessment of the Authority’s application for Advanced status of the



Charter for Member Support and Development. The Administration and Democratic Services Manager replied that the WLGA had asked for clarification on a few points and it was hoped that once this had been provided a date for the assessment could be confirmed.

Members were interested to read of the work being undertaken by the Youth Committee and hoped that the suggestions regarding more inclusive communications in the Authority's publications could be taken forward. It was also hoped that a wider representation of Youth Committee Members could be obtained, with the suggestion that contact could be made with Young Farmers and sporting organisations.

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

7. Notice of Motion by Councillor P Kidney that the National Park's Development (Management) Committee allow speakers to use the premises of Committee Members with prior approval

The Chair advised that it was his intention to deal with this Notice of Motion at the meeting that day and he therefore sought a proposer and seconder. As proposer, Councillor Kidney introduced the motion by explaining that the issue had arisen because he believed a speaker at the Development Management Committee had been hindered from speaking on an application as he had intended to speak from Councillor Kidney's house. He stated that the speaker had done this on two previous occasions and neither he, nor the speaker, were happy about the decision to not allow this a third time. His Notice of Motion was therefore that in future speakers be allowed to use the premises of Members to address the Development Management Committee with prior approval. Councillor Kidney's proposal was seconded by Councillor A Wilcox.

Some Members agreed that as not all members of the public had access to a computer or were comfortable using them it was wrong to restrict their ability to speak; as long as prior approval was given they were happy with the Notice of Motion. It was noted that County Councillors often had a close association with Town/Community Councils and wanted to facilitate them to express their views. Other Members, however, could not support the Motion. It was questioned from whom prior approval would be required and one Member felt that they could be put under undue pressure to host the public when they did not have the competence or connectivity to do so. There were also issues of confidentiality, influence and personal safety to consider. Members noted that where the Authority wished to allow public and stakeholder participation at its meetings it had the responsibility to make proper provision for this to take place and they believed that such provisions were made; the Director of Planning and Park Direction confirmed that



this had been so in the case raised by Councillor Kidney. The issue of public perception was also raised, particularly that of a personal connection to a Member offering access and therefore influence, and it was suggested that it could appear to the public that a Member had already predetermined the matter under consideration prior to the meeting if sitting alongside a speaker.

Other potential scenarios could inadvertently be impacted by the Motion, such as a partner of a Member wishing to speak, and it was suggested that the Motion wording would benefit from being clearer. It was felt that there was a danger in adopting a policy in response to a particular scenario, and it was important to divorce the issue from the case in question.

The Monitoring Officer's advice was also sought, and he advised that provided the Authority made adequate arrangements for a speaker to speak from its premises, he was satisfied it would not be open to criticism from the Ombudsman. He also noted that there was no absolute right to speak, and when the Authority's meetings were held at Llanion, members of the public were expected to attend at that venue. However he said that Members had to be careful regarding public perception and had to be independent in making decisions. There could also be a problem if a speaker became offensive and had to be stopped from speaking, as this could prevent the Member from speaking.

The proposer then concluded by noting that the public perception at the particular meeting was very poor and he had no hesitation in proposing the Notice of Motion. He added that he would be seeking an investigation into the case in question after the meeting. The proposal was then put to the vote, however this was lost.

It was **resolved** that the Notice of Motion that "the National Park's Development (Management) Committee allow speakers to use the premises of Committee Members with prior approval" be not approved.

[With the agreement of Members, the Chair took report 38/21 Data Protection Policy, before 37/21 Supplementary Planning Guidance as the Data Protection Officer had to leave the meeting at 11.30am]

8. **Data Protection Policy**

It was reported that, in response to comments from the Authority's Internal Auditors and as part of a review of key documents, this policy had been revised by the Data Protection Officer (DPO). It had been the subject of consultation with both staff and Members and it was now presented for approval.



Thanking the DPO for her presentation, Members commended the format of the document for its accessible style and language and were pleased to see that comments had been taken on board. However it was suggested that it would be useful to outline the scope of the policy, provide a definition of what personal data was and to link to the data protection complaints procedure.

It was **resolved** that the Data Protection Policy be approved subject to the consideration of the points raised at the meeting.

[The meeting was adjourned between 11.15 and 11.25am]

9. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 – Supplementary Planning Guidance

It was reported that preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) under Local Development Plan 2 had been ongoing, and the following documents were presented for approval for consultation:

- Land Instability – Coal Works
- Loss of Hotels
- Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites
- Safeguarding Minerals Zones
- Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines
- Conservation Areas

It was noted that the Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines SPG would be published for consultation jointly with Pembrokeshire County Council. There would be a three month consultation period which would allow sufficient time for Town and Community Councils to consider the documents. A report of consultations would be presented to a meeting of the Authority early in 2022.

In response to a question, Members were reminded that at its meeting in September 2020, the Authority had agreed to formally roll over some SPG from Local Development Plan 1 as an interim measure for development management purposes; the interim guidance would continue to be used until the new SPG was adopted.

Thanking the officers for the tremendous amount of work in preparing the Guidance, Members were pleased that links had been provided to the documents, rather than being provided as hard copy documents. Some Members had detailed comments, particularly in respect of the Loss of Hotels SPG and they were asked to provide these and they would be considered as part of the consultation exercise.



It was **resolved** that Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of Land Instability – Coal Works; Loss of Hotels; Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites; Safeguarding Minerals Zones; Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines; and Conservation Areas at Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport, Portclew, Porthgain, Saundersfoot, Solva, St Davids, Tenby and Trefin be approved for consultation.

10. Regularisation of Pre-Existing Community Allotments on Authority owned land at Grapley End Fields, Trefin

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Authority in December 2020, authorisation had been given for the purchase of circa 30 acres of land at Trefin to support biodiversity, public access and carbon sequestration objectives. The purchase took place in March 2021. For a period of approximately five years prior to the purchase, local residents had been permitted to use approximately 0.4 acres of the land as a community allotment on an unregulated basis. The use remained ongoing and comprised 14 plots, however officers did not believe this was incompatible with the objectives of the site.

Officers had been in discussion with the allotment holders through the Gwelliant Trefin Improvement (GTI) Charitable Incorporated Organisation and had agreed terms to regularise the continuation of the allotment use as set out in the report. Members' approval was sought for the grant of a new occupational lease.

Most Members were pleased to support the proposal and the resulting collaboration with the local community, however it was suggested that management of the allotments should be undertaken by the Community Council. Further it was questioned whether Members had been made aware of the existence of the allotments in the previous report to the Authority. Officers apologised if this detail had been omitted. It was noted that a visit to the site had been arranged as part of the forthcoming Members' Study Tour when officers would share the plans for the wider site.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) the principle of creating a new legal interest in land to regularise the pre-existing community allotment use at Grapley End Fields, Trefin on the terms outlined in the report be approved.
- b) the resulting lease documentation be delegated to the Chief Executive for approval.

11. Green Room Redevelopment – Budget and Next Steps

Members were reminded that at the National Park Authority meeting held on the 16th June 2021, Members had agreed that the replacement of the committee room (known as the Green Room) at the Authority's HQ



building in Llanion Park should be considered in order to provide modern meeting facilities to serve future Committee, staff and community meetings and to enable the Authority to meet new legal requirements, such as the requirement to web cast meetings.

The outline proposal presented was to replace the existing meeting room, kitchen area and toilets with a single storey building with a slightly larger footprint than the existing Portakabins. It was felt that a single storey replacement would help keep costs as low as possible and have minimal impact on neighbouring properties while meeting related Building Regulations with regards to accessibility (e.g. providing good wheelchair access).

The building would be constructed to Welsh Government sustainable standards using responsibly sourced materials in order to minimise “construction miles”, it would be both “low energy” and highly insulated in order to limit the associated carbon footprint in-line with the Authority’s Responding to the Climate Change Emergency – Delivery Action Plan. The new building would share the benefits of Llanion Park’s existing sustainable technologies i.e. Biomass heating, PV’s, solar hot water system and rainwater harvesting.

The Authority had received some initial advice from a QS consultant to help estimate the associated construction costs and the total cost estimate was c£410,000, not including fixtures and fittings. It was therefore recommended that the Authority set aside £500K from reserves to fund the project with the majority of spend to be incurred in the 2022/23 financial year. The majority of this funding would be allocated from Capital Receipts, around £370K, with any additional money coming from the General Reserve. If the Authority identified alternative sources of funding then it would bid for this funding, however, in order not to delay the process, it would proceed on the basis that it would cover the costs from its Reserves.

To help manage the risks of the project, it was suggested that a ‘Green Room Development Group’ be established to oversee the delivery of the project. It was proposed that the group was chaired by the Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services with assistance from relevant PCNPA staff, two representative NPA Members and appointed consultants / design team. Nominations were therefore also sought for Members to sit on the proposed Development Group.

Most Members were supportive of the proposal, noting that replacement of the existing Portakabins was long overdue and did not currently promote a good first impression for visitors to the Authority. Concern was expressed regarding the potential for costs to escalate, however



Members were happy to move the principle of the recommendation on the basis that the Development Group would monitor these and further details would be brought back to the Authority for approval. One Member could not support the proposal, and suggested that other facilities were available in the County and serious consideration should be given to making use of these before spending large sums of money on building new facilities.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) Replacement of the Green Room as set out in the report be agreed.
- b) £500K be allocated from reserves to fund the project.
- c) A “Green Room Development Group” be set up to oversee the delivery of the project and that Councillors P Baker and P Morgan be appointed as Member representatives.

12. Visit Pembrokeshire

Members were reminded that in February 2020 the Authority had agreed to support the setting up of Visit Pembrokeshire as a trade led, stand-alone Destination Marketing Organisation for Pembrokeshire. In addition to supporting the principle of setting up the new organisation and agreeing to appoint a Director to sit on the Board, the Authority had agreed financial support both in-kind and in cash as set out in the report.

Following its creation, Visit Pembrokeshire had successfully applied to Pembrokeshire County Council for funding through its Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant. A total of £250,637 had been secured which had enabled Visit Pembrokeshire to appoint two external consultants, one focusing on marketing with the other providing Public Relations support. This had changed what support Visit Pembrokeshire required from the Authority as £85,000 of cash match funding was required to secure the Enhancing Pembrokeshire grant.

In view of this it would be beneficial to Visit Pembrokeshire if the in-kind support provided by the Authority for the current year (£34,900) could be changed to cash. The Chief Executive noted that as it had secured funding from Welsh Government to support marketing, the Authority was in a position to allocate this funding.

In response to a question from a Member, it was noted that there was an error in the table on page 61 of the report, whereby the total support in Years 4 and 5 should have read £34,900.

While most Members were happy to support the proposal, more information was requested on how the money would be spent, and some reservations were expressed regarding the sustainability of Visit Pembrokeshire employing consultants and therefore duplicating expertise



across organisations in the County. It was also questioned whether similar requests would be received in future years.

The Chief Executive and Visit Pembrokeshire Board Member agreed to find out what financial information was publicly available and to provide this to Members after the meeting.

It was **resolved** that the support provided to Visit Pembrokeshire for 2021-22 be changed from an in-kind contribution of £34,900 to a cash contribution of £34,900.

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the National Park Authority held on 3 November 2021 without amendment
--

