

# National Park Authority

15 December 2021

Present: Councillor P Harries (Chair)

Councillor P Baker BEM, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Dr M Havard, Dr R Heath-Davies, Mrs J James, Mr G Jones, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Councillor R Owens and Councillor A Wilcox.

[Councillor M James joined the meeting during consideration of the item on Corporate Joint Committees (Minute 8); Councillor M Williams joined the meeting during the Visit Pembrokeshire presentation (Minute 14) having experienced a power cut]

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am – 11.30am; 11.40am – 1.35pm)

## 1. Apologies

There were apologies for absence from Councillor M Evans, Mrs S Hoss, Dr R Plummer and Councillor S Yelland.

## 2. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 November 2021 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 3 November 2021 be confirmed and authenticated.

## 4. Matters arising

Tree Planting Opportunity – Platinum Anniversary – 70 Years since Designation (Minute 7)

One Member pointed out that the minutes referred to 'global warming' in paragraph 2 and that the usual terminology was to addressing 'climate change'. The Chief Executive acknowledged that there was a subtle difference between the two terms and that for consistency the more generic 'climate change' would be used in future, unless global warming was meant specifically.

**Noted.**

## 5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair began by reminding Members that there had been a change in the way they received their emails and asking them to log into the new



system. Officers were available to help should they experience any problems.

The Chair was proud to announce that at the recent UK National Parks Chairs Forum he had had the honour of being elected Chair for the coming year. He was also delighted to report that the Authority had been awarded the Welsh Local Government's advanced level charter for Member Support and Development, and particularly thanked the Chair of the Member Support and Development Committee, Administration and Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Assistant for their hard work in achieving this. Others added their congratulations and expressed their pride in being Members of an Authority which supported its Members; they asked that the award be publicised to demonstrate the excellent standard achieved.

Turning to events, the Chair advised that he had attended the Remembrance Day service in Newport and had laid a wreath on behalf of the Authority. He had also attended several virtual meetings and seminars - regarding excavations at St Patrick's Chapel in Whitesands, Shoreline Management, a talk by TIAA on finance fraud, a meeting regarding phosphates organised by Janet Finch-Saunders AS, a marine energy webinar as well as quite a few COP Wales week talks. Accompanied by the Chief Executive he had attended a talk by Blue Marine regarding Marine National Parks. As Chair had had attended meetings of the WLGA Rural Forum and Partnership Council, National Parks Wales and had, along with the other Welsh Chairs and Chief Executives, met the Minister Julie James AS. He had been unable to attend a meeting of the Campaign for National Parks but thanked Dr M Havard for doing so. He had also attended the Authority's Human Resources and Operational Review Committees, Risk Workshop and the WLGA assessment panel for the Advanced Charter for Member Support and Development. The Chair concluded by reminding Members that the Authority would be sponsoring the Tenby Boxing Day Swim, which was still intended to take place at the moment, and as Chair he would be starting the swim. He wished all staff and Members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### **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 20 October 2021;
- (ii) Youth Committee held on 9 November 2021; and



- (iii) Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee held on 10 November 2021.

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

## 7. Draft Revised Well-being Objectives

Members were reminded that in July 2021 the Authority had approved its new high level strategy, identifying four priority areas for the period 2022-26:

- Conservation – Boosting biodiversity and halting its decline;
- Climate – Destination: Net Zero;
- Connection – Natural Health Service;
- Vibrant Communities – Places people can live, work and enjoy

The approval of the high level strategy had triggered the need to review the Authority's Well-being Objectives to ensure that both they and the high level priorities aligned to support effective delivery against each. The Authority currently had 7 Well-being Objectives that aligned directly with each of the 7 Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, and there had only been minor amendments to these since they had initially been agreed and presented in the Corporate Plan 2016/17.

The Well-being Objectives had been reduced to focus on four key areas aligned with the priority areas and impacts contained in the high level strategy. A range of proposed outcomes were also identified within the report on the high level strategy and consideration had been made of how these could help the Authority prioritise its activities to deliver the revised Well-being Objectives. The proposed revised Well-being Objectives were:

1. Conservation – To halt the decline and enhance biodiversity quality, extent and connectivity at scale, so nature is flourishing in the Park.
2. Climate – To achieve a carbon neutral Authority by 2030 and support the Park to achieve carbon neutrality and adapt to the impact of Climate Change.
3. Connection – To create a Park that is a Natural Health Service that supports people to be healthier, happier and more connected to the landscape, nature and heritage.
4. Communities - To create vibrant, sustainable and prosperous communities in the Park that are places people can live, work and enjoy.

The report went on to outline how each of the proposed revised well-being Objectives would maximise contribution to the well-being goals; were consistent with the five ways of working provided by the sustainable



development principle; and took account of the Future Generation Commissioners' Future Generations Report.

Members were asked to comment on and approve the draft Well-being Objectives for wider consultation, and it was noted that revised Objectives would be set out in the Corporate and Resources Plan 2022/23, together with the Authority's well-being statement and the steps it intends to take to achieve its Well-being Objectives. The plan would take into account the 2022-26 time frame set out in the high level strategy and also longer term targets related to decarbonisation. It was intended that the draft plan would be presented to Members at the Authority meeting in February 2022 for comment and the final plan and revised Well-being Objectives will be presented to the Authority in March 2022 for approval.

The Chair thanked the Performance and Compliance Coordinator for a clear report which demonstrated how the objectives related to other key documents. Members were supportive of the new Objectives, but wondered whether they could be SMARTer – in terms of both ability to measure and achievability. More detailed wording changes were also suggested and the Chief Executive advised that these could be considered as part of the consultation process.

In respect of Objective 4 regarding the creation of vibrant, sustainable and prosperous Communities, one Member noted the surprising footnote which stated that Pembrokeshire had the highest child poverty rate in Wales, and asked whether statistics were available for the National Park. The Chief Executive replied that he believed the information was available only for the County as a whole. Pembrokeshire County Council were leading on work to address the problem which was often hidden in rural areas.

Turning to the consultation, Members asked for more detail, and suggested that care would need to be taken with the way the Objectives were communicated as they believed some of the language was quite bureaucratic and difficult for the public to understand. The Officer noted that advice would be sought from the Communications Team on how best to overcome this, while also meeting with policy requirements. The officer advised that the consultation would commence in the new year when targeted activities would be undertaken with the general public, Community Councils, the Youth Committee and volunteers.

It was **resolved** that the draft Well-being Objectives be approved for wider consultation.



## **8. South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

It was reported that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 had created the framework for a consistent mechanism for regional collaboration between local government, namely Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). The CJC would exercise functions relating to strategic development planning and regional transport planning. They would also be able to do things to promote the economic well-being of their areas. In contrast to other joint committee arrangements, CJCs were separate corporate bodies which could employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and undertake functions. The South West Wales CJC would comprise Carmarthenshire County Council, the City and County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire County Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough. In respect of some functions, both Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority would also be members.

The report before Members highlighted ways in which the CJC might be constituted in order to meet legislative requirements and set out the local arrangements and also sought approval for the involvement of the NPA in such arrangements as applicable. It was noted that discussions regarding the structure of the new body were still ongoing, with its first meeting due to take place in January 2022. However the current draft constitution stated that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Members could only vote where the matter to be decided was about strategic planning functions. Along with representatives of the Brecon Beacons NPA, officers were challenging this issue as they consider that the Authorities should be full members of the CJC, able to vote on governance issues and financial issues along with the planning related work.

While Members were not particularly supportive of the principle of the creation of CJCs, they acknowledged that the legislation to do so had now been passed and it was important for the Authority to take its place at the table. Some concerns were expressed regarding the small size of the Authority and therefore its ability to contribute financially should parity be required with principle Councils, particularly as the report sought delegated authority in respect of financial arrangements. Officers advised that this point had already been made, and while it was anticipated that no contribution would be required in 2022/23 in relation to preparing the Strategic Development Plan, a provision of £20,000 had been made in the Authority's budget for any contribution required in relation to the CJC. It was also clarified that under the Authority's Financial Standards, this was also the level of delegation for budget variations.

Some Members remained concerned about the potential for the new body to threaten the independence of the Authority.



It was **resolved** that:

- (a) the current work streams associated with the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the work currently being undertaken by officers to facilitate such work be noted;
- (b) the proposed establishment of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the various Sub Committees be noted;
- (c) the Chair would represent the Authority on the Corporate Joint Committee. If the Chair was not available then the Deputy Chair would represent the Authority;
- (d) the Deputy Chair would represent the Authority on the Strategic Planning Committee;
- (e) responsibility for agreeing the governance and financial arrangements for the CJC be delegated to the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Executive;
- (f) the view that the Authority be a full member of the CJC, able to vote on issues such as governance, finance as well as planning and be represented on the relevant Sub Committees be endorsed.

*[The meeting was adjourned between 11.30 and 11.40am]*

## **9. Welsh National Parks: Landscapes for Everyone: Our Approach to Social Inclusion and Child Poverty [Revised for 2021]**

Members were reminded that Landscapes for Everyone was a position statement with principles and priority areas to guide the efforts of the Welsh National Parks in delivering their core purposes and duty whilst meeting Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks as set out in the document 'Valued and Resilient' (July 2018).

Landscapes for Everyone had first been published in the spring of 2020 during the early stages of the covid-19 pandemic. The Socio-Economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31 March 2021. The Welsh National Parks had recognised that they would need to be responsive and reflective of both the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the commencement of the Socio Economic Duty and it was planned that the paper would be revised in 2021. The revised document now also covered the policy and programme areas previously covered by the paper Welsh National Parks: Together for Health and Well-being (2016), and it was appended to the report for Members' information.

Members considered this to be an excellent document, which summarised the work of the Parks and how they could be inclusive. It was very readable and a good demonstration of the joint working between the Welsh National Parks.

**Noted.**



## **10. To Extend the Temporary Changes in light of the Impact of Covid 19 to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation**

Members were reminded that in order to enable continuity of the planning service during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, temporary amendments, as set out in the report, had been made to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation. The temporary amendments had originally been proposed in May 2020, and most recently reconfirmed in June 2021; a further temporary extension until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was now sought.

While most Members were happy to support a further delegation of the temporary amendments, others noted that the proposals had been brought in as a temporary measure and it was feared the Authority was sleepwalking into making them permanent and the time had now come to return to the previous arrangements. It was suggested that communities were not getting a fair hearing if applications were delegated when the views of Community Councils were contrary to those of officers and representatives were therefore unable to address the Committee.

It was noted that delegation required the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Development Management Committee.

It was **resolved** that the scheme of delegation with regard to planning be temporarily extended until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **11. Membership of the Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum**

It was reported that the Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum was a statutory body, established jointly by Pembrokeshire County Council and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority in June 2002, to provide advice on the improvement of public access to the countryside.

The statutory role and function of the Forum was to advise the County Council, National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government as to the improvement of public access to the countryside for the purposes of open air recreation and enjoyment. The Forum met in public on a quarterly basis and its membership was balanced to reflect the concerns of local farmers and land managers, as well as the interests of recreational users in the countryside.

In accordance with statutory regulations governing the establishment and administration of Local Access Forums, the appointing authorities were obliged to undertake a review of the membership of the Forum every three years and nominations for a Member of the Authority to serve on the Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum for the next three year term (2022-24) were sought.



Councillor P Harries advised that he had represented the Authority on the Forum since 2012 and he appreciated its value in allowing difficult issues to be discussed and concluded. It was proposed and seconded that he be nominated once again to represent the Authority and he expressed his willingness to do so.

It was **resolved** that Councillor P Harries be appointed to serve as the Authority's representative on the Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum for the period 2022-2024.

## **12. Operational Review Committee: Terms of Reference**

It was reported that as part of its work programme for 2021/22, the Authority's Internal Auditors had undertaken an Assurance Review of Risk Management and this had been considered by Members at a Workshop on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The Review had noted that at present both the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and the Operational Review Committee reviewed the risk register. The Internal Auditors considered this to be not only a duplication of effort, but could lead to different views and outcomes, leading to difficult situations for management and updating of the risk register. They recommended that one Committee only should review the risk register, but that the Authority should have sight of it at least bi-annually.

Those Members present at the risk management workshop on the 17<sup>th</sup> November had agreed that this should be the way forward, and considered that the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee should be the vehicle for so doing. It would therefore be necessary to amend the Terms of Reference for the Operational Review Committee to reflect this situation.

It was **resolved** that the Terms of Reference for the Operational Review Committee be amended by removing reference to its consideration of the Authority's Risk Register to reflect the recommendation of the Authority's Internal Auditors.

## **13. National Parks Partnership and the UK National Parks Communications Team**

Members were reminded that in 2016, the 15 National Park Authorities of Wales, Scotland and England had come together to set up National Parks Partnership (NPP), a Limited Liability Company to secure funding from corporate and other sources to support their work.

While the original intention of NPP had been to secure cash contributions, it had become apparent that the majority of companies were either interested in providing in-kind support or making donations to a charity.





This had created a difficulty in securing sufficient income to cover the running costs of NPP. Due to this, in 2018 the 15 NPAs had agreed to change the funding model of NPP by making an annual contribution of £10,000 a year to cover its running costs for a three year period. In addition, 9 of the NPAs agreed to set up a charitable organisation to support this fundraising work, called the National Parks UK Foundation. Both these decisions had been supported by the Authority at its meeting held on 7th February 2018.

Since that time the Authority had benefited from cash donations of £39,776 and in-kind support of £87,348 making a total benefit of £127,124.

One of the difficulties that NPP had found was that potential supporters and donors wished to deal with one organisation rather than 15 different NPAs. It was also difficult to show the collective impact of the work due to the different priorities and ways of working of the NPAs. To respond to this a Communications Team presenting communications across the UK National Parks had been set up in 2019. Following a competitive tender process the team had been based in the Broads Authority.

Over the next three years it was proposed that the current model of support was continued, subject to the one change that the Lead NPA Chief Executive for Communications, who was currently from the Broads Authority, joined the Board of NPP, and a one page summary of this Business Plan was appended to the report.

Officers considered that NPP worked at a scale that this Authority could not access on its own, and that the internal and local fundraising activities of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust and NPP complemented each other. Also the UK NPA Communications Team supported the work of NPP and contributed towards providing a unified approach for UK National Parks where appropriate and beneficial.

The recommendation therefore was that over the next three years the Authority contributed £10,000 per year to support the work of NPP and an increasing sum starting with a year 1 contribution of £8,067, year 2 contribution of £8, 228 and a year 3 contribution of £8, 339 to support the UK National Parks Communications work.

The Chair expressed his support for this continued support going forward, and this was echoed by other Members. There was one question relating to the Welsh Language statement, and the Chief Executive clarified that although NPP did not fall within the remit of the Authority's Welsh Language Standards, any funding or opportunities relating to Wales would be provided in accordance with the Standards.



It was **resolved** that the work of National Parks Partnership and the UK National Parks Communications Team for the period 2022-2025 be supported as set out in the report.

[Councillors P Baker and M James tendered their apologies and left the meeting during the following presentation.]

#### **14. Presentation by Visit Pembrokeshire**

The Chair welcomed Emma Thornton, Chief Executive of Visit Pembrokeshire to the meeting, and she provided an overview of the work of the organisation during its first year.

She reminded Members that Visit Pembrokeshire was the official Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Pembrokeshire and it had been launched in November 2020 as a business led partnership focussed on growing sustainable tourism for the benefit of all.

Her presentation highlighted some of the organisation's activities and achievements over the previous year, and what its marketing activities had aimed to achieve. A significant part of this had been development of the Pembrokeshire Brand and she explained that they continued to build on this via its website and social media presence. A monthly email newsletter had also been developed and opportunities had also been taken to promote the county through the travel press.

The presentation concluded with an indication of the organisation's priorities for the coming year and what it considered to be critical success factors for the longer term.

Thanking her for the presentation, the Chair began by asking Ms Thornton about the organisation's use of the Welsh language as part of the county's unique selling point. She noted that the website was bilingual, however she acknowledged more could be done to reflect Welsh in its marketing material through working with partners. Another Member suggested the use of sound, song and video clips and she agreed that creating such content would lead to greater engagement and a more authentic experience, and these could form part of the brand toolkit.

Another question related to the development of a sustainable tourism model for the county and she agreed that this was a difficult balance, however she believed that tactical marketing was necessary to attract the right type of visitor and keep the area special. The organisation had linked much of its summer marketing to the Authority's Tread Lightly



campaign, and its Destination Marketing Plan would continue to be reviewed to help better manage visitors.

Another Member asked about long term funding of the organisation and engagement with the local communities. Ms Thornton pointed to research in England on the critical success factors for high performing DMOs which had concluded that commitment was needed from both the private and the public sector. Visit Pembrokeshire had obtained a five year commitment from the public sector, and its task was now to grow the private sector contribution. She stated that as part of its public purpose, Visit Pembrokeshire was committed to promoting all businesses in Pembrokeshire whether or not they were members of the organisation, however there was a need to develop enhanced opportunities for those who supported it financially and this was not an easy balance. She hoped that national funding would be made available in the longer term. Community engagement work was currently focused on the organisation's relationship with Planed, however some contact had been made with Town and Community Councils and they would be invited to an event next year to help them understand how they could become more involved.

**Noted.**

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the National Park Authority held on 9 February 2022 without amendment
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