

**MINUTES OF BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY STANDARDS
COMMITTEE HELD AT PLAS Y FFYNNON, CAMBRIAN WAY, BRECON ON
MONDAY, 9TH MARCH, 2015**

PRESENT:

Independent Members

Mr A Bracey (Chairman), Mr I Raynes (Vice-Chair), Dr R Morgan,

Monmouthshire

Cllr A Webb

Rhondda Cynon Taff

Cllr J Ward

Apologies

Mrs M Underwood

In Attendance

Mr J Parsons (Monitoring Officer)

Mrs J Gruffydd (Democratic Services Manager)

115 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

215 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

315 Minutes of last meeting

Members received the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2014.

A member asked the Monitoring Officer about future training, and he advised that he would be delivering training on a day when Authority members were in the building. The format varied according to the subject matter, but he anticipated scheduling this for the Spring.

He also referred to a social media policy which would be forwarded to members of the committee.

A member asked about the quorum for the Standards Committee and referred to the Authority's Standing Orders which referred to the need to have at least one local authority and one Welsh Government appointed member present in a quorum situation. The Monitoring Officer advised that the Standards Committee Regulations (Wales)(Amendment) 2006 provided the statutory guidance on a quorum for Standards Committees and that this outweighed the Authority's Standing Orders. It was noted that a reference to this in the Standing Orders might avoid any confusion.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 3 June 2014 be approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them as a correct record.

415 Dispensation to speak on 14/11208/FUL and 14/11209/LBC

A member sought clarification on whether a member could remain in the meeting to give their views despite having a personal and prejudicial interest, as this was her understanding of the Code of Conduct and the quick guide produced by the Authority in 2008. Officers advised that this was not the case and that the quick guide needed to be updated to reflect this. A member declaring a personal and prejudicial interest was required to leave the room and take no part in the discussion or the vote. The Ombudsman's recommendation to local authorities to adopt a dispensation policy had resulted in this Authority's Dispensation Policy which was being used effectively in this and previous instances. If a member wished to exercise their right as a member of the public to make their views heard they were able to apply under the Authority's Public Speaking Scheme.

Members considered three applications for dispensation to speak on a planning matter at the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee to be held on 10 March 2015. The Monitoring Officer was pleased to see the dispensation policy being used effectively to encourage members to seek the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process. It was noted that all the Powys members had been advised that they could also have applied to speak under the Public Speaking Scheme as members of the public which could provide a further opportunity even if they had declared a personal and prejudicial interest. No member had taken advantage of this option.

Cllr Paul Ashton

Members welcomed the expertise that Cllr Ashton could bring to the application as the local member who had been involved in the Cultural Hub discussions from the outset. The Chairman expressed some concern that his role might be perceived as a conflict of interest and that given his prejudicial interest he should speak under the Public Speaking Scheme.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Paul Ashton be granted dispensation to participate in the discussion and vote on planning and listed building applications 14/11208/FUL and 14/11209/LBC (Brecon Cultural Hub) for a period of 12 months from the date of this meeting.

Cllr David Meredith

Members noted that Cllr Meredith wished to present the views of his constituents, although members were reminded that the role of the Authority member was to represent the Park rather than individual wards.

RESOLVED: That Cllr David Meredith be granted dispensation to participate in the discussion and vote on planning and listed building applications 14/11208/FUL and 14/11209/LBC (Brecon Cultural Hub) for a period of 12 months from the date of this meeting.

Cllr Evan Morgan

Members noted that Cllr Morgan had not been directly involved in the Cultural Hub issue.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Evan Morgan be granted dispensation to participate in the discussion and vote on planning and listed building applications 14/11208/FUL and 14/11209/LBC (Brecon Cultural Hub) for a period of 12 months from the date of this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the nature of Cllr Ashton's and Cllr Meredith's applications required notice to be given to the National Assembly for Wales.

515 Date of Next Meeting

A date would be found for the next meeting of the Committee.

615 Other Business

a) Standards Conference 2015

The Monitoring Officer advised that Cardiff would be hosting the Standards Conference this year and that he would forward more details when he received them. He recommended the event as a useful learning opportunity for members of Standards Committees.

b) Training

The Monitoring Officer would deliver some training to Authority members to highlight the opportunities for making their views known when they had a prejudicial interest. He would include the independent members of Standards in this training and use this as an opportunity to go through various Authority protocols to increase member understanding.

A member felt that it had not been helpful to know that none of the Powys members had applied to speak under the Public Speaking Scheme. The Chairman stated that it was important for all members to understand how the scheme could be applied.

The Chairman thanked all members for attending at short notice to consider the applications for dispensation.

Signed as a correct record
Chairman of the Standards Committee