

**MINUTES OF BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY NATIONAL
PARK AUTHORITY HELD AT CONFERENCE ROOM, PLAS Y FFYNNON,
CAMBRIAN WAY, BRECON LD3 7HP ON FRIDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2021**

PRESENT:

Powys

Cllr Ratcliffe (Chair), Cllr M Jones, Cllr E Roderick and Cllr McNicholas

Monmouthshire

Cllr A Webb

Carmarthenshire

Merthyr Tydfil

Cllr M Colbran

Rhondda Cynon Taff

Cllr G Thomas

Torfaen

Cllr S Evans

Blaenau Gwent

Cllr J Hill

Members appointed by the Welsh Government

Mr Christopher Coppock, Mr James Marsden, Liz Davis, Canon Aled Edwards, Sue Holden and Mr Julian Stedman

In Attendance

Angharad HawkesStephanie Evans, Transition Director
Julia Gruffydd, Democratic Services Manager

Apologies

Cllr James Evans and Cllr A James

43/21 Correspondence

Note: The meeting experienced significant technical difficulties with members losing connection. The meeting remained quorate throughout.

Apologies were noted.

A minute's silence was held in memory of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

44/21 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

45/21 Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 30 March 2021 and authorise the Chair to sign them as a correct record.

46/21 Public Speaking

There were no requests to speak.

47/21 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair lost connection for this item and was unable to give an update.

48/21 Chief Executive's Announcements

The Transition Director had circulated a report to members in advance of the meeting which was warmly received by members.

Members requested updates on new staff appointments with an opportunity to meet them. The Transition Director suggested that a standing item be added to Authority agendas to address this.

49/21 Evidence Position Statement

Members considered a draft Evidence Position Statement, which they noted would need editing for typographical errors.

It was noted that the risk of judicial review should have been included in the risk section.

Members debated the concept of 'lived experience' as evidence when developing policy, with support for the sentiment as well as concern that this did not constitute evidence and required the Authority to make a value judgement. It was also felt that this might become more relevant at the implementation stage as part of engagement with people.

The Transition Director suggested excluding this from the Position Statement as lived experience needed to be considered in context, although could be part of a list of criteria. The Principal Planning Officer advised that its inclusion was in response to work carried out on the Local Development Plan which had been held up as an example of good practice, although not supported as evidence by Welsh Government.

RESOLVED: To defer a decision on the Evidence Position Statement pending further discussion at the next meeting of the Policy Forum.

50/21 Regional Technical Statement 2nd Review

The Chair welcomed Hugh Towns to the meeting, Regional Minerals and Waste Planning Manager with Carmarthenshire County Council, who asked the Authority to endorse the Regional Technical Statement in order to ensure a (reduced) supply of aggregates for the building industry.

The Chair of Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee thanked Mr Towns for his support, particularly in relation to Penderyn Quarry. He suggested the Authority 'noted' the report rather than endorsing it as while they did not want to end extraction, this should be done only when necessary. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the circumstances for extraction were set out by Welsh Government in national planning policy.

RESOLVED:

- a) To note the publication of the Regional Technical Statements for the North Wales and South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Parties 2nd Review, September 2020 Main Document and Appendix B (South Wales);**
- b) Provide delegated authority to the Head of Planning to negotiate on behalf of the National Park Authority in the preparation of a Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration for the Cardiff City sub-region.**

51/21 Placemaking Charter

Members were asked to formally sign the Placemaking Charter as the National Park Authorities for Wales.

Asked whether the Authorities should embed this in their strategic policy documents rather than having a separate charter the officers advised that having approval from individual organisations sent a strong message to raise the bar.

Concern was expressed that the Charter would not help to empower disadvantaged communities and that it risked creating further gaps. The Transition Director advised that placemaking was mandated as part of planning policy and this charter sent a strong message to Welsh Government that the Authority was strengthening its Local Development Plan and other policy making.

RESOLVED:

- a) **To grant approval to sign the charter as one part of the three National Park Authorities;**
- b) **Formally recognise the approach to implementing the charter to complement local and national planning policies.**

52/21 Remote Meetings & Urgent Decisions

The Monitoring Officer presented a proposal to adopt a permanent Standing Order to enable the Authority to continue to meet virtually, or via hybrid means. This would also comply with recent Welsh Government legislation to enable any member or member of the public to attend a public meeting remotely.

Concern was raised that the Authority should not continue to meet virtually, and the Democratic Services Manager advised that this legislation would facilitate good attendance for members who might not otherwise be able to attend, due to other commitments, caring responsibilities or travel arrangements. Hybrid meetings would, however, require further investment in technology, which she was currently exploring.

Asked about paragraph 30.6.4 and the potential need to disclose if a member's family entered the room during an exempt item, the Monitoring Officer advised that this could be addressed by members using headphones.

RESOLVED: To adopt permanent Standing Orders to facilitate (i) decision making using virtual meetings of the Authority, subcommittees, forums and other working groups and (ii) public attendance and speaking.

53/21 Member Reports

Members received a report from the Heritage Champion on progress with the Historic Environmental Action Plan.

54/21 Gifts & Hospitality

No declarations were made.

55/21 Access to Information

The Chair advised that while the exempt paper had been pulled from the agenda, the Transition Director had requested the opportunity to brief members on the reasons for this. It would conclude the public part of the meeting.

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of item 14 in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 12 and 14 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The Monitoring Officer declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting.

56/21 Addition to the Establishment

The Transition Director briefed members on the decision of the Appointments Committee to pause recruitment of the Head of Landscape and Nature Recovery and the Head of People and Communities to enable the incoming CEO to consider the composition and level of the future leadership team. Discussion with the CEO would include consideration of the roles of Monitoring Officer, legal support and Data Protection Officer which had been the subject of the report removed from this agenda. She highlighted some risks associated with this decision.

Members were supportive of her proposals and noted the briefing

57/21 Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Signed as a correct record
Chairman of the National Park Authority