

MINUTES OF BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY HELD AT VIRTUAL MEETING ON FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH, 2022

PRESENT:

Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe, Powys County Council (Chair)
Canon Aled Edwards, Welsh Government (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Gwilym Williams, Powys County Council
Cllr Michael Jones, Powys County Council
Cllr Edwin Roderick, Powys County Council
Cllr Mrs Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Steven Evans, Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr John Hill, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cllr Graham Thomas, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Mr James Marsden, Welsh Government Appointed Member
Mrs Sue Holden, Welsh Government Appointed Member
Mr Julian Stedman, Welsh Government Appointed Member

Members appointed by the Welsh Government

In Attendance

Catherine Mealing-Jones, Chief Executive
Julia Gruffydd, Democratic Services Manager
Sean O'Connor, Monitoring Officer
Miss Naomi Davies, Planning Officer (Policy)

Apologies

A James

32/22 Correspondence

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting. As this would be his last meeting he thanked everyone for their support and their dedication to the National Park.

Apologies for absence were noted.

33/22 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

34/22 Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the following minutes and authorise the Chair to sign them as a correct record:

- **National Park Authority – 11 February 2022**
- **National Park Authority (EGM) - 11 March 2022**

35/22 Public Speaking

There were no requests to speak.

36/22 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed the new Democratic Services Team, Stephanie Davies and Gemma Turner.

He advised that three key staff were leaving the Authority and paid tribute to Elaine Standen (Finance Manager) and Julia Gruffydd (Democratic Services Manager), who were both retiring, and Angharad Hawkes (Democratic Services Officer) who was moving to another job. All of them had given long service to the Authority. He invited former Chair of the Authority, Melanie Doel, to say a few words. The Chief Executive referred to the recent resignation of Liz Lewis (HR Manager) who would be greatly missed.

The Chair presented leaving gifts to officers.

The Chair advised that as per the resolution taken at the last meeting following the discussion of the Audit Wales report into progress in delivering statutory recommendations the Chief Executive had written to the Minister for Climate Change to request help, and a response was now awaited. He acknowledged that the Authority was still in a difficult position.

He reported on meetings he had attended on behalf of the Authority and paid tribute to the respective Chairs of Pembrokeshire Coast and Y Eryri National Park Authorities, who were both standing down.

37/22 Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive agreed that it would take time to address all the issues highlighted in the two Audit Wales reports, and she remained particularly concerned about officer capacity and resilience. She was working closely with Welsh Government and would keep members informed.

She advised that the Authority had received additional funding from Welsh Government to maintain resilience in sustainable tourism, biodiversity and decarbonisation. Members noted the welcome revalidation of the Geopark status, and the award for Small Fleet of the Year, and welcomed the reopening of the refurbished Caffi y Fan at the National Park Visitor Centre.

She added her thanks to the officers who were leaving.

38/22 Revised Governance Documents

The Democratic Services Manager presented changes to the Cost of Care Policy to meet the requirements set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel's published report for 2022-23. These were also reflected in the Schedule of Member Remuneration.

RESOLVED:

- a) To approve changes to the Cost of Care Policy for publication;**
- b) To approve changes to the Schedule of Member Remuneration for publication and submission to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.**

39/22 Summary of consultation responses provided on behalf of the Authority

Members noted the consultation responses sent in relation to the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan and the Water Resources West Regional Plan.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

40/22 Affordable Housing Strategy Update

Members considered proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Strategy to reflect the most up to date housing needs data and funds held by the Authority. Officers confirmed that this was a fully transparent process with regular reports with financial information made to the Planning, Access and Rights Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) That members endorse the **Affordable Housing Strategy (edition 4, March 2022)** for use in the processing of commuted sums collected by the Authority for the purposes of providing Affordable Housing.
- b) That the previous edition of the **Affordable Housing Strategy (edition 3, September 2019)** be revoked).
- c) That members authorise the Authority to transfer the collected **Affordable Housing contribution funds** to the allocated **Unitary Authorities**, as follows:
 - £321,818.00 to Monmouthshire County Council,
 - £234,939.20 to Powys County Council, and
 - £89,172.00 to Carmarthenshire County Council

41/22 Member Reports

No reports were received.

42/22 Gifts & Hospitality

No declarations were made.

43/22 Access to Information

RESOLVED: To exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of item 13 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, 13 and 14 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chair had not been advised of any further business so this concluded the public part of the meeting.

Members and officers thanked him for his support from the Chair over the last three years and wished him well in the future.

44/22 Endorsement of additional Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the Brecon Beacons National Park

Members considered details of additional sites for notification as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the Park.

The officer was congratulated on her comprehensive report and due process.

It was noted that while this represented a small percentage of the total area of the Park it was important. In answer to a question the officer advised that the data would be included in the s6 report to Welsh Government and discussions were ongoing about inclusion in the State of Nature Report.

The officer also confirmed the consultation and ongoing liaison with landowners, and that some funding had been secured to support the work of Algae Wales to work with local authorities. She also agreed to talk to Algae Wales about linking SINCs to the new Sustainable Farming Scheme.

RESOLVED:

- a) That NPA review the attached reports and that NPA agree to endorse the 15 additional Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the BBNP;**
- b) That NPA review the attached reports and that NPA agree to endorse the recommended adjustments to existing Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the BBNP.**

45/22 Any Other Business

Signed as a correct record
Chair of the National Park Authority