

19 July 2005

ITEM 6

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Resources Committee of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 19 July 2005 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

PRESENT

Mr M A Collins (Chairman)
Mr R Morrison-Smith (Vice-Chairman)

Miss A Davis	Miss E I Stacey
Mr W J Dyke	Mr M J Pile
Mr J C Edwards	Mr M E Taylor
Miss A M Foxhuntley	

Observer – Mrs A Amory

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Gammon and Dr J F Travis.

6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared at this stage in the meeting, but see a personal declaration declared by Miss Davis in Minute 16 below.

7. **MINUTES**

(1) **Confirmation**

The Minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 7 June 2005 were signed as correct.

(2) **Matter Arising – Minute 5 – Tithe Barn, Dunster – Loan Guarantee**

The Somerset Building Preservation Trust had provided further information about the Trust overseeing the project, its standing with the building, the element of risk and whether the conditions proposed by the Authority would be met. The name of the Trust was the Dunster Tithe Barn Community Hall Trust (DTBCHT), which comprised Graham Lamacraft (Chairman), John Dore, Joan Nicholson and Michael Pitt and there was also a steering group directly managing the project, lead by Mr Lamacraft. The budget for the project was considered to be sound and, while the building was owned by the Crown Estate, it had no financial interest in the project, and had leased the building to the DTBCHT on a 99 year lease for a nominal sum. The DTBCHT had agreed the conditions proposed by the Authority. The Somerset Building Preservation Trust had total confidence in the project.

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Whilst there was inevitably a risk to the Authority in guaranteeing a loan of up to £40,000 for the project, the Chief Finance Officer felt that, given the restoration of the T ihe Bam was a key objective of the Dunster Action Plan which the Authority was leading on and the Authority's requirements had been met, the loan should be supported. The Authority's Project Officer would be included on the project steering group and regular monitoring reports would be provided by the DT B C H T .

Members supported the course of action taken, which was in accordance with the Committee's resolution at the last meeting.

8. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

9. **THE BUDGET OUTTURN FOR 2004/05 AND POSITION ON RESERVES AS AT 31 MARCH 2005**

The report of the Chief Finance Officer informed members of the Budget Outturn for 2004/05 and the position on reserves at 31 March 2005.

An amendment was made in Paragraph 2.3 of the report to alter the expenditure figure for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) from "£64,250" to "£164,250".

RESOLVED: (1) to note the financial performance for 2004/05; and
(2) to approve the adequacy of reserves at 31 March 2005.

10. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2004/05**

The Committee considered the Authority's Statement of Accounts for 2004/05.

It was noted that the external Auditors report on the Audit of Accounts would be brought to the Committee's meeting on 18 October 2005.

RESOLVED: to adopt the Statement of Accounts for 2004/05.

11. **EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS**

The report of the Chief Finance Officer set out the external audit arrangements for 2005/06.

In response to members' comments on the Audit and Inspection Plan, the Chief Finance Officer explained that:-

- The audit risks identified on page 4 were germane to all authorities and were the areas where the auditors directed their audit.

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- Under 'The new Code of Audit Practice – The main changes being made through the introduction of the new Code', third bullet point, the auditors would need to have a more explicit focus on improvement.

RESOLVED: to note the arrangements for the 2004/05 External Audit and the steps taken to keep the cost of the audit down.

12. **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer on the Treasury Management Performance in 2004/05.

RESOLVED: to note the Treasury Management Outcome for 2004/05.

13. **IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) 2005 MID TERM**

The Committee considered the draft of the of the Authority's IEG return for 2005 mid term.

In response to members' comments, the officers explained that:-

- The Document Management System (DMS) for the Authority was initially being implemented in Business Management (including the Committee Administration element) and Conservation and Land Management. Phase 2 of the rollout would involve Planning and Community in late Autumn 2005, with Phase 3 for the remaining sections taking place by the end of the financial year.
- The National Parks Portal was to be launched formally in the following week, although not all of the proposed content would be incorporated at this stage.
- A demonstration of both DMS and the Portal would be given to all Authority members in the near future, following a Planning Committee meeting.
- The funding allocated by the government to IEG would all be utilised by the end of the financial year. DMS had formed a significant element of the expenditure and the back scanning of all the planning application files would be a major task for future years.
- Changing over to a fully electronic system was a major change for the Authority and there was the need to ensure that it delivered effectively. Members would be able to access DMS and the Portal through Broadband, but there would be restrictions at some levels. However, it was recognised that it would not be possible to communicate with all members by email, as not all had computer access.

RESOLVED: to note the proposed IEG return for 2005, which had been submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

14. **PERSONNEL UPDATE**

RESOLVED: to note recent staff changes as set out on the meeting agenda.

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15. **CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

RESOLVED: to pass a resolution pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business arising and that the following information will be considered which is exempt information as presented in Schedule 12A of the Act:-

8 – The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

9 – Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

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SUMMARY OF MINUTE 16

CAR PARKING

The confidential report of the Head of Business Management updated the Committee on expenditure and contractual arrangements concerning three of the Authority's car parks.

Miss Davis declared a personal interest in connection with one of the toilets in the North Devon part of the National Park as she was a member of the North Devon District Council team dealing with toilets in its area.

The Committee noted and confirmed the arrangements proposed for the three car parks.

(The meeting closed at 3.25 pm)

Chairman