

19 November 2002

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday 19 November 2002 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

### PRESENT

Mr S J Pugsley (Chairman)  
Mrs A Amory (Deputy Chairman)  
Mr J C Edwards (Second Deputy Chairman)

Mr F J Bray  
Mr M A Collins  
Mr J Dallyn  
Mr W J Dyke  
Mrs A M Foxhantley  
Mr M Gammon  
Mr D E Gladding  
Mr M H Knight  
Mrs C M Lawrence  
Mr R J A Martin

Mr R Morrison-Smith  
Mr E Nightingale  
Mr M J Pile  
Mr F Rawle  
Mr M Robins  
Mrs M Russell  
Miss E I Stacey  
Mr M E Taylor  
Mr R J Webber

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Prowse and Mr J Yabsley.

#### 45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

#### 46. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **National Parks Conference, 18-20 September 2002, Northumberland:**  
The Conference had been a success and there would be a presentation from those members who attended at the end of the meeting (Minute 58 below).
- **Ms Clayton:** Ms Clayton, the postholder for a new sustainable development tourism project on Exmoor, funded for three years by the Countryside Agency, was welcomed to the Authority and this meeting.

#### 47. MINUTES

##### (1) Confirmation

The Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 3 September 2002 were signed as correct.

##### (2) Matters Arising

##### (i) Minute 37 – DEFRA Review of English National Park Authorities

The National Park Officer reported that there had been a significant response to the recent consultation on the review recommendations and DEFRA was putting together a programme for reaching its conclusions and implementation.

(ii) **Minute 44 – Common Land Policy Statement 2002**

It was noted that the National Park Officer, taking on board comments from the Member/Officer Working Group, had responded to broadly welcome the proposals in the Statement, subject to adequate representation from commoners on a proposed stakeholder working group and early implementation of a proposal to prohibit the severance of grazing rights from land holdings and the creation of new common rights in gross. Others had also commented on the severance of grazing rights issue. A response from the government appointed Commons Liaison Group was awaited.

48. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Public questions were taken with the items in Minutes 51 and 53 below.

49. **SOMERSET FOOD LINKS STEERING GROUP**

**RESOLVED:** to confirm the appointment of Mr Webber to represent the Authority on the Somerset Food Links Steering Group.

50. **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The Authority received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 5 November 2002.

51. **EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN – FIRST ALTERATION**

The Authority considered a report by the Head of Planning and Community which asked members to examine representations made to the Draft Deposit Local Plan – First Alteration and to agree changes to the Draft Local Plan to be published as a Revised Deposit Plan. Appendices attached to the report set out the Schedule of Representations (Appendix A) and the Schedule of Proposed Changes (Appendix B).

**Public Question Time**

Mr M Hawkins, Exmoor Society thanked the Authority's Chairman for the Local Plan Review Working Group's examination of traffic and transport issues raised by the Society. However, the Society still felt that the quality of the Local Plan suffered by not offering settlements tangible measures on these issues. The Society would give further consideration as to whether it would pursue an objection at the Local Plan Inquiry, but proposed legislative changes in development planning highlighted in the Queen's Speech may make it unnecessary.

**The Authority's Consideration**

There was lengthy discussion on whether: -

- The Local Plan should identify specific sites for new local needs housing development. In response, the officers explained that the Local Plan sought to respond to housing 'needs' rather than be site led. The Rural Housing Enabler was seeking to identify those needs and was working closely with the three local planning authorities in the area. Also, PPG 3 did not permit site allocations for exceptions. In response to comment about the possibility of parishes identifying sites, the Chairman said that this could be considered further at a later date.

- The Authority, working with neighbouring planning authorities, should seek planning gain from developments outside of the National Park, as there would be little opportunity through the non-open market new build proposed for the Park in the Local Plan. In response, the officers said that closer working with other local authorities was possible, and confirmed that the nature and scale of developments within the National Park would never provide sufficient funding for schemes such as the Porlock Relief Road. It would require very large housing estates which would be contrary to National Park purposes and adopted Structure Plan policy. However, the officers acknowledged member concern over traffic problems in Porlock, and indicated that the issue should be pursued through the highway authority.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note and welcome representations in support of the Draft Deposit Local Plan – First Alteration, as set out in the Schedule of Representations;

(2) to note the objections to the Draft Deposit Local Plan – First Alteration, as set out in the Schedule of Representations;

(3) to approve changes to the Draft Deposit Local Plan – First Alteration for publication as a Revised Deposit Plan as recommended in the Schedule of Proposed Changes, subject to the following: -

- Policy CBS1 – include a number at clause (iv) and renumber the following clauses accordingly
- Paragraph 4.12 – add “for owner-occupied dwellings” after “house values” and before “within the terms of these policies”
- Policy H1 – in clause (i) add “and continuous” after “permanent” and before “residence”
  - in clause (ii) add “or” after “homeless” and before “living in accommodation”
- Policy H2 – amend clause (vi) to read: “A planning obligation is secured to ensure that occupancy of the dwelling(s) is confined to persons in local housing need in perpetuity”.

The above change to also apply to Policies H4-H6

- Policy H12 [changed to policy H11} (Extensions to Existing Dwellings) - the re-insertion of an ‘original dwelling’ measurement, which shall be taken from the date of the adoption of the Local Plan Alteration.
- The site identified for Bridgetown Village Hall to remain in the Local Plan, pending the receipt of the Parish Council’s views on the matter (Mr Rawle was asked to encourage the Parish Council to write to the Authority)

(4) to endorse the content of paragraph 2.21 of the Head of Planning Community’s report regarding Porlock Relief Road (appended to the signed copy of these Minutes);

(5) to delegate authority to the National Park Officer to prepare a

framework to confirm how Local Plan policies will be monitored once adopted for inclusion in the Revised Deposit Plan;

(6) to delegate authority to the National Park Officer to correct strictly factual errors to the text and proposals maps of the Local Plan – First Alteration through the remainder of the Local Plan process; and

(7) to thank Mr Webber as Chairman of the Local Plan Review Working Group, and the staff who had prepared the revised Local Plan for their work.

52. **DEDICATION OF EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY WOODLANDS AS ACCESS LAND**

The report of the Head of Conservation and Land Management asked the Authority to dedicate NPA woodlands as Access Land under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. In response to comment, he confirmed that this new open access land could be monitored to ensure there were no detrimental effects on wildlife.

**RESOLVED:** to dedicate the Authority's woodlands as Access Land under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

53. **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Head of Planning and Community's report sought members approval for the continuation and formal adoption of the revised scheme of delegation for the determination of planning applications.

**Public Question Time**

Mr M Hawkins, Exmoor Society said that, whilst he noted the revised scheme of delegation had speeded up procedures enabling targets to be improved, he was concerned about the public's ability to have their objections properly considered where applications were not taken to the Planning Committee. He added that the public was only just becoming aware of the changes made last year.

**The Authority's Consideration**

In response to Mr Hawkins' comments, reference was made to paragraph 2.2 of the report where it was explained that provision existed for the National Park Officer to refer applications to the Planning Committee so that single objectors could have the opportunity to be heard and there was also the ability for individual members to ask for applications to be 'called in' for sound planning reasons.

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the revised scheme of delegation as set out in section 2.1 of the Head of Planning and Community's report.

54. **PUBLICITY FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS: NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION**

The Authority considered the report of the Head of Planning and Community which informed members of the notification requirements for planning applications and sought agreement for the approach to be adopted. An additional summary sheet setting out the recommendations was circulated at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the statutory requirements for the notification of planning proposals; and

(2) to adopt the practices set out in the report and summary sheet in respect of initial notifications and dealing with amendments, and the officers to ensure that neighbour notifications for the same application all occur together.

55. **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The report of the Head of Business Management updated members on the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and on a policy paper issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Copies of the first draft of a Publication Scheme under the Act for the Authority were circulated at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to delegate to the National Park Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, responsibility for the submission of a Publication Scheme as required by the Freedom of Information Act; and

(2) to support the approach being proposed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to continue with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

56. **CREATION OF A LOCAL ACCESS FORUM FOR EXMOOR (UNDER THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000)**

The Authority considered the report of the Head of Recreation and Tourism which sought members approval for the creation of a Local Access Forum for Exmoor in accordance with The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 (Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1836).

Two responses received in response to consultation on the proposed Access Forum were circulated at the meeting.

In response to comment, the National Park Officer advised that parts 4 and 6 of the resolution below would ensure there was input from natural environment/wildlife conservation interests.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to approve the creation of a stand alone Local Access Forum for Exmoor National Park;

(2) to agree that the Exmoor Local Access Forum be comprised of between 14 and 18 members, of which two will be members of the National Park Authority;

(3) to agree that the Local Access Forum be represented by the relevant interests (a), (b) and (c) in paragraph 3.2 of the report, ensuring a reasonable balance between (a) and (b);

(4) to agree that “any other interests” under paragraph 3.2 (c) of the report are defined as: Conservation of the natural and historic environment, tourism, sport and recreation, health, outdoor education and local businesses (this list should not be used to exclude further interests);

(5) to agree that members shall be appointed initially for periods of one, two or three years but, at the end of this first appointment period, they shall be eligible for reappointment on a rolling three years period of appointment and that this ‘staggering’ effect of membership expiry will be split equally between the interests listed in paragraph 3.2 (a), (b) and (c) of the report;

(6) to agree that for the purpose of appointment the National Park Officer may choose to consult professionals in the areas which the applicant wishes to represent (for example, the appointment of a representative of nature conservation may be undertaken in consultation with English Nature);

(7) to appoint Mrs Foxhuntley and Mr Dyke to represent the Authority on the Exmoor Local Access Forum (with substitute members being eligible to attend meetings in their place);

(8) to delegate the selection of further Exmoor Local Access Forum members to the National Park Officer in consultation with the two Authority members appointed to the Local Access Forum; and

(9) to approve the draft Terms of Reference of the Exmoor Local Access Forum set out in Appendix 3 to the report (appended to the signed copy of these Minutes).

57. **COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL PARKS**

The Head of Business Management's report provided the Authority with some background information on the Council for National Parks, whose Director and Policy Officer would be giving a private presentation to members later in the day.

**RESOLVED:** to note the details given in the report.

58. **MEMBERS' REPORTS**

(1) The Authority noted reports from Mrs Amory on: -

- A meeting of the South West Regional Assembly Planning and Transport Advisory Group held on 26 September 2002
- The Europarc Conference held in Snowdonia National Park from 2-6 October 2002
- A meeting of the South West Regional Assembly held on 25 October 2002
- A meeting of the South West Regional Assembly Planning and Transport Advisory Group held on 8 November 2002 (copies circulated at the meeting)
- An ANPA/Forestry Commission Woodland Conference held in Helmsley, North Yorkshire from 12-13 November 2002 (copies circulated at the meeting)

In response to comment, Mrs Amory said that it was important the Authority took advantage of the interest of the Head of the Directorate-General for the Environment, European Commission in receiving more applications for European funding from UK National Parks (see Europarc Conference report). She also mentioned that she had asked for a paper on the Authority's draft Local Plan policies on affordable housing and the stage reached for the South West Regional Assembly (see South West Regional Planning Assembly report, 25/10/02).

(2) Mr Collins reported that he had attended a lecture given by Mr Ian Mercer on 'Reconnecting Consumers and the Countryside' at the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter on 14 October 2002. Two significant points were that people were losing

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contact with where milk and meat came from and there was the need to market foods locally to reconnect people with the countryside.

Mr Collins had also attended a meeting of Somerset County Council's Environment and Transport Policy Panel on 18 November 2002. There had been discussion on: -

- The capacity of the two main rail routes through the County to carry more passengers. As things stood, if more passengers travelled, it would result in less freight being carried.
  - The problems caused by HGVs. Signing had reduced the number of lorries using the A358, but there were still problems as they were re-routing through villages.
  - The Charterhouse Education Centre on the Mendip Hills. Existing accommodation at the Centre was being replaced by a more energy efficient structure and there was also a proposal to erect a wind turbine, similar to Pinkery.
- (3) Those members who had attended the National Parks Conference in Northumberland in September 2002 on 'Bridging Boundaries' gave a visual presentation outlining the issues covered and their experiences.

(The meeting closed at 1.10 pm)

Chairman

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