

23 April 2002

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday 23 April 2002 at 11.00 am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton

**PRESENT**

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

Mr J C Edwards	Mr M Taylor
Mrs A M Foxhuntley	Miss E I Stacey
Mr D E Gladding	Mr R J Webber (Deputising for Mr S Pugsley)
Mr M H Knight	

By Invitation: Mrs A Amory

An apology for absence was received from Mr M J Pile

**40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were disclosed.

**41. MINUTES**

**(1) Confirmation**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 March 2002 were signed as correct

**2) Matters arising**

**(i) Minute 21(2) - Membership of the Exmoor Consultative Forum**

The full details of the changes to the Consultative Forum would be set out in a report for the July meeting of the Committee.

**(ii) Minute 34 Simonsbath Sawmill Project**

The Head of Park Management reported that the Sawmill Project Members' Steering Group had visited the Sawmill on Friday 19 April. The builders had now found as they stripped the roof both nail sickness and timber problems. This had not been identified in the survey and the additional repairs and the cost of felting the roof were likely to cost up to £25,000. While it was hoped to cover this extra cost from the contingency sum set aside within the existing contract, it was intended to ask the Heritage Lottery Fund for an increase in the grant, which had been based on 1997 price levels, as there were now no funds left to cover any other unforeseen work, and costs were still not certain for the water element of the project.

In reply to a question, the Head of Park Management added that the condition of the roof was only apparent once full scaffolding had been erected; he did not expect any more significant additional repairs. He also said that the turbine was not as badly damaged as

expected. He assured members that the Architect was fully aware of the budget ceiling for the project and that all costs were being fully examined by a Quantity Surveyor employed as part of the project.

(iii) **Minute 39 Personnel Update**

The National Park Officer reported that Senior Ranger Mike Leach had been appointed Head Ranger.

42. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

43. **BEST VALUE REVIEW – PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING**

The Team Leader (Education & Interpretation) presented the final draft of the Best Value Review of Promoting Understanding, one of the Authority's major areas of activity.

In general terms, members agreed that it was important to get a positive Inspection report in due course, although no date for this had yet been fixed.

Members were informed that it was important to produce an implementation schedule as this was useful to demonstrate the Authority's commitment to allocating resources in support of the Action Plan.

Members commented that weaknesses identified were not significant issues of service delivery, but the Action Plan should be linked to addressing these weaknesses.

The National Park Officer said that the Walks and Talks provided by the Authority, while appreciated by the users, were questionable value for money, as they were mainly attended by people who clearly understood and already appreciated National Parks and such activities did not accurately reach a wide enough audience.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to adopt the Best Value Service Review for Promoting Understanding; and

(2) to **approve** the Action Plan identified in the report, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes.

44. **BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN/BUSINESS PLAN 2002/03**

Members received for information the draft copy of Part 2 of the Best Value Performance Plan detailing performance of the service areas in 2001/02 as well as activities programmed for 2002/03. The full plan had to be published by 30 June 2002.

The National Park Officer said that it had been presented in a way to demonstrate the clear links between the recently published National Park Management Plan and the implementation of the budget for 2002/03, with all major activities clearly linked to park objectives. However, this made reading the Plan cumbersome, and it was proposed to show all the objectives in a separate appendix when the Plan was published.

The Head of Business Management said that consideration was being given to including a 4 page version of the Authority's Annual Report for 2001/02 in the

23 April 2002

Performance Plan. He also confirmed that the full Plan would be published on the Authority's web-site by 30 June 2002.

A member emphasised the need to offer training on planning issues to Parish Councils. The Head of Park Planning replied that delivery of such training was a resource issue and discussions had taken place to explore whether parishes outside the Park should be included and which organisation was best placed to meet this identified need.

45. **CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

Members received a report to inform them of the Authority's annual financial commitment towards its social and economic duty and to enable members to consider the detailed allocation to specific areas in the light of additional funding requests.

While members accepted that economic development was a primary duty for District Councils, they underlined that the economic condition of Exmoor was key in achieving National Park purposes.

Members were told by the Head of Park Planning that a refund of £1,400 was expected from the LEADER project in respect of funding that was no longer needed, and officers identified a potential saving of £1,500 in total to contributions to the Devon Small Grants Scheme and Somerset Community and Business Chests, to produce a sum of £2,900 towards the additional funding requests received.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to contribute up to £2,500 towards the West Somerset Access and Economic Development Study;

(2) to use the remaining savings identified of £400 towards funding the STEP student placement; and

(3) to set aside £800 from an anticipated underspend on the 2001/02 revenue budget to meet the full likely cost of the STEP student.

46. **BID FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES 2003/04**

National Park Authorities were required to submit bids by 30 April 2002 for additional funding in 2003/04. DEFRA and the Countryside Agency had issued advice to authorities on nationally identified priorities.

The National Park Officer said that the Authority submitted a detailed bid for 2002/03 last year and he proposed to update and submit that bid framed around the current central advice.

**RESOLVED:** that the National Park Officer be authorised to prepare and submit a bid to DEFRA in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority and Chairman of Resources.

47. **PERSONNEL UPDATE**

Members received details of staff changes since the last meeting of the Committee.

In reply to a question, the National Park Officer assured members that the staff changes did not threaten the delivery of any of the Authority's services.

(The meeting closed at 12.55 pm)

23 April 2002

Chairman