

## ITEM 4

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday 7 June 2005 at 10.30 am 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	Mrs A M Foxhuntley
Mrs J Clark	Mrs C M Lawrence
Mrs A M Clitheroe	Mr R J A Martin
Mr M A Collins	Mr R Morrison-Smith
Miss A Davis	Mr M J Pile
Mr J Dallyn	Mr F Rawle
Mr W J Dyke	Miss E I Stacey
Mr I Galloway	Mr M E Taylor
Mr M Gammon	Dr J F Travis
Mr D E Gladding	Mr R J Webber
Ms D Kershaw	Mr B O Windsor

An apology for absence was received from Mr F G H Tucker.

#### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Deputy Chairman (Mrs Amory) presided over the Chairman's election.

On the motion of Mr Dyke, seconded by Mr Taylor, Mr S J Pugsley was re-elected as Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year. In proposing Mr Pugsley as Chairman for a further term, Mr Dyke said that the last year had been a difficult time for Exmoor, particularly the hunting ban and issues surrounding sustaining farming and the local economy. He said that Mr Pugsley had handled the situations arising admirably, which members endorsed.

Mr Pugsley said that he did not wish to remain in the post indefinitely and indicated that he would not seek re-election beyond 2007. This would tie in with his Chairmanship of the English Association of National Park Authorities ending in that year. 2007 was also the year when the Authority's membership was likely to be reduced from 26 to 22.

#### 2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

On the motion of Mr Pugsley, seconded by Mr Martin, Mrs A Amory was re-elected as Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year. In proposing Mrs Amory for re-election, Mr Pugsley said that she brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the post and contributed much to the Authority's work, particularly her connections with the Association of National Park Authorities and the Council for National Parks and her direct contacts with the other National Parks Authorities.

3. **ELECTION OF SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

On the motion of Mr Pugsley, seconded by Mr Taylor, Mr J C Edwards was re-elected as Second Deputy Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year. In proposing Mr Edwards for re-election, Mr Pugsley said that, as a long serving member since the early 1970s, Mr Edwards had a huge amount of knowledge and experience of Exmoor and understanding of how it worked which was of significant benefit to the Authority.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Membership:** Changes in the County Council membership of the Authority were noted, involving from Somerset County Council a new member Mr Ian Galloway (who was welcomed) and the re-appointment of Mr John Dyke, Mr John Edwards and Mr Dave Gladding (the latter for 2 years only), and from Devon County Council two new members Miss Andrea Davis (who was welcomed) and Mr Joe Tucker (who had apologised for this meeting).

It was also noted that Mr Bill Cann had retired from Dartmoor National Park Authority, after being its Chairman for the last 10 years. The new Chairman was Mr Nigel Hoskin, a Secretary of State member.

Members asked for letters of thanks and their best wishes to be sent to Mr Adrian Moore and Mr Jeremy Yabsley who had not returned to the Authority following the recent County Council elections.

- **David Fursdon, Deputy President of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA):** Some members and officers had recently met Mr Fursdon. The meeting had been useful in identifying common issues and how these might be addressed. Mr Fursdon's position (and soon to be President) would enable them to be taken forward through the CLA.

6. **MINUTES**

(1) **Confirmation**

The Minutes of the Authority's meeting held on 26 April 2005 were signed as correct.

(2) **Matters Arising**

- **Minute 84 – Local Businesses Affected by the Hunting Ban**

Subsequent to the discussions with the Rt Hon Alun Michael referred to at the last meeting, the Chairman and National Park Officer and representatives of the District and County Councils covering the National Park area had met representatives of the Regional Development Agency and the Government Office for the South West to see what financial assistance might be available to help businesses affected by the hunting ban. They were unable to give a commitment for any specific scheme or amount of funding, but the Regional representatives drew attention to possible support from Business Link and others. They suggested that better use could be made of existing resources available through these

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bodies. It was intended that the Authority, with West Somerset District Council, would seek improved contacts with these bodies to see what could be achieved. There were a number of initiatives which could potentially be tapped into, but what was required was something simple and direct.

It was also the intention to lobby the new Minister in Defra, Mr Jim Knight, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary (Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity), and it was hoped that an early meeting might be arranged with him. A letter would also be sent to the Rt Hon Alun Michael, MP to remind him of the earlier discussions, as he would be working with the Regional Development Agencies in his new role of Minister of State (Industry and the Regions) in the Department of Trade and Industry. In addition, the annual Exmoor and Dartmoor NPAs Chairman's liaison meeting with the Regional Development Agency presented the opportunity to explore funding issues for the two National Parks further.

The Chairman said that, while the Authority had not been successful in securing Rural Renaissance funding, it may be possible through the Rt Hon Alun Michael, MP in his new role to attract it for Visit Exmoor.

- **Minute 85(2) – Proposed Removal of “Underused” Payphones in Exmoor National Park**

The Head of Planning and Community said that there would be a further report on payphones within the National Park to the meeting of the Planning Committee on 5 July 2005, covering the future of the payphone at Martinhoe and another consultation from BT on making a number of payphones cashless.

- **Minute 87 – Visit Exmoor Ltd**

In response to comment, it was explained that it was permissible for Miss Stacey to deputise for Mr Morrison-Smith on the Board of Visit Exmoor Ltd, as his position as a Director was non-Executive and, therefore, non-voting.

- **Minute 92 – The Exmoor Moorland Initiative**

The National Park Officer reported that an inaugural meeting of the Exmoor Moorland Initiative Board had been held at the end of May 2005. This first meeting had been chaired by Mr Edwards and it had considered the Board's terms of reference, priorities and membership; the details of which would be made available to Authority members in due course. It was proposed to appoint an independent person to chair future meetings and a couple of names had been proposed. There would also be regular reports back to members on progress.

- **The Minutes Generally**

Members asked for their appreciation to be recorded of the concise nature, overall accuracy and quality of the Minutes prepared for the Authority's meetings generally.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

See Minute 15 below for comments from Sir Anthony Acland concerning hedgerow trees.

8. **EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

The report of the National Park Officer proposed a revised structure for the Authority's consultative fora, member advisory groups, task and finish groups and working groups, and also asked for appointments to be made to the bodies listed in Appendix 2 of the report.

In response to comment, the National Park Officer said that:-

- The work of the Social Inclusion Group now ran across the whole of the Authority's work and the Education and Interpretation Team had a specific remit. The Group was, therefore, no longer necessary.
- The proposed re-naming of the Food, Farming and Land Management Panel to Farming and Land Management Group more fully reflected that its main role was land management, which accorded with National Park purposes.
- The Authority had representation at the regional level on the Regional Assembly (a member) and the Regional Development Agency's Rural Board (National Park Officer) but they were by invitation and so it was not possible to make nominations to any other regional bodies at present.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to adopt the revised meeting arrangements set out in the report, subject to the Sustainability Group being retained and its inclusion in the Member advisory and policy development groups part of the revised meetings structure; and

(2) to appoint members to the following bodies as listed in Appendix 2 of the report, together with the Sustainability Group:-

**Statutory Meetings**

**Planning Committee**

All Authority members, under the terms specified in Standing Orders, with the exception of Mr R J A Martin who has chosen not to be a member of the Committee.

**Resources Committee**

Under the terms specified in Standing Orders and statutory requirements:-

Somerset County Council (2) – Mr J C Edwards and Mr W J Dyke  
West Somerset District Council (2) – Mrs A M Foxhuntley and Mr M Gammon  
Devon County Council (1) – Miss A Davis  
North Devon District Council (1) – Dr J F Travis  
National Members (3) – Mr R Morrison-Smith, Miss E I Stacey and Mr M E Taylor  
Parish Members (2) – Mr M A Collins and Mr M J Pile

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### **Standards Committee**

Under the terms specified in Standing Orders and statutory requirements:-

Authority members – Mr D E Gladding, Mr F J Bray and Mr M E Taylor  
Independent members – Mrs C Hodgson and Ms S V Mew

### **Exmoor Local Access Forum**

(a statutory independent local Access Forum administered by the Authority)

Mr J C Edwards and Mr F G H Tucker

### **External Consultation Groups**

#### **Exmoor District and Parish Forum**

Mr M A Collins as Vice Chairman of the Forum, with the Deputy Chairman of the Authority continuing as the Forum's Chairman in accordance with previous practice (All Authority members and representatives of the National Park's Parish/Town Councils, Parish meetings and the two District Councils serve on the Forum)

#### **Exmoor Consultative Forum**

Mr W J Dyke and Mrs A Amory as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Forum

(All Authority members and a range of external organisations and individuals with special knowledge serve on the Forum)

(NB. The June 2005 meetings of the above fora would be asked to consider the principle of a merger of the two bodies)

### **Partnership Boards and Working Groups**

#### **Sustainable Development Fund Independent Grant Advisory Panel**

Mr M A Collins and Mrs A M Foxhuntley (plus external members from a range of interests representing business, the environment and community)

#### **Dunster Working Group**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Mrs A Amory, Mr F J Bray, Mr M A Collins, Mr J C Edwards, Ms D Kershaw, Dr J F Travis and Mrs C Lawrence (plus representation from various external organisations)

#### **Exmoor Moorland Initiative Board**

Mr M A Collins, Mr J C Edwards and Mr M E Taylor (sub Mr F J Bray) (plus representation from a number of other interests)

#### **West Somerset Mineral Railway Executive Committee**

Miss E I Stacey (sub Mr F Rawle) (plus representation from a number of other interests)

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### **Rural Housing Enabler Project Steering Group**

Mr R J Webber (sub Mrs J Clark) (plus representation from North Devon and West Somerset District Councils, local housing associations and the Countryside Agency)

### **Member Advisory and Policy Development Groups**

#### **The Chairman's Group**

The Chairman, Deputy and Second Deputy Chairmen of the Authority, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Planning and Resources Committees and the Chairman of the Exmoor Consultative Forum

#### **Local Development Framework Advisory Group**

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority, Chairman of the Planning Committee, Mr F J Bray, Mr M A Collins, Mr W J Dyke, Mr J C Edwards, Ms D Kershaw, Mrs C M Lawrence, Mr R Morrison Smith, Mr F Rawle, Mr M E Taylor, Mr F G H Tucker and Dr J F Travis

#### **Farming and Land Management Group**

Mrs A Amory, Mr F J Bray, Mr J Dallyn, Miss A Davis, Mr W J Dyke, Mr J C Edwards, Mr M A Collins, Mr R J A Martin, Mr R Morrison-Smith, Mr M J Pile, Mr M E Taylor and Mr R J Webber

#### **Health and Safety Committee**

Mr I Galloway and Miss E I Stacey

#### **Sustainability Group**

Mrs A M Clitheroe and Mr R J A Martin

### **Task and Finish Groups**

#### **Design Guide Steering Group**

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, Mrs A Amory, Mr F J Bray, Mrs A M Clitheroe and Mr D E Gladding

#### **IEG Working Group**

Mrs A Amory (also the Authority's E-Government Champion), Mr W J Dyke and Mr I Galloway

#### **National Park Management Plan Review Group**

Mrs A Amory, Mr M A Collins, Mr J C Edwards, Mr W J Dyke, Ms D Kershaw and Mr M E Taylor

## **9. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Authority considered its annual appointment of members to serve on outside bodies.

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There was discussion about the need for members to be briefed on relevant matters before they attended meetings, so that they were able to get the Authority's messages across, were more able to assimilate information and form judgements. It was particularly important for members attending the South West Regional Assembly and the Somerset Strategic Planning Conference concerning the Regional Spatial Strategy, as this would affect the Authority's work on the Local Development Framework. To this end, the National Park Officer said that lead officers would be identified to whom members could approach before attending the meetings. The lead officers have since been agreed and are set out in the resolution below.

On the Regional Spatial Strategy, Mrs Amory (or Ms Kershaw) would endeavour to report back quickly to the Authority, either at meetings or through Member Information Notes, so that members were kept up to speed on developments, and to enable any necessary discussion to take place at Authority meetings.

**RESOLVED:** to appoint members/National Park Officer to serve on outside bodies as follows (with lead officers identified in bold/italics beside the meeting names):-

**Association of National Park Authorities Executive Committee (*National Park Officer*)**

The Chairman of the Authority, sub Deputy Chairman

**Exmoor Coast and Countryside Partnership (*Head of Planning and Community – Chris France*)**

The Chairman of the Authority and the National Park Officer

**Devon Joint Rural Development Committee**

Dr J F Travis (subject to clarification on the Committee's continued existence)  
**(Subsequent to the meeting it was learnt that this Committee would not meet again)**

**Somerset Public Transport Forum (*Head of Recreation and Tourism – Martin Evans*)**

Mr M A Collins

**Somerset Strategic Partnership**

The National Park Officer

**Somerset Strategic Planning Conference (*Principal Planning Officer (Planning and Community) – John Clements*)**

Mr J C Edwards and Mr R J Webber

**Somerset Food Links (*(Head of Recreation and Tourism – Martin Evans)*)**

Mr R J Webber

**South West Forest Project Advisory Group (*Woodland Officer – Graeme McVittie*)**

Miss E I Stacey

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**Community Council for Somerset Board of Trustees (*Community Planning Officer – Tissie Roberts*)**

Mrs A M Foxhuntley

**Community Council of Devon (*Community Planning Officer – Tissie Roberts*)**

Miss A Davis

**Exmoor Deer Forum (*Head of Conservation and Land Management – Graham Wills*)**

Mr R J A Martin and the National Park Officer, sub Mr J C Edwards

**South West Regional Assembly (*Head of Planning and Community – Chris France*)**

Mrs A Amory, sub Ms D Kershaw

**South West Local Government Association Branch (*Head of Business Management – Charles Burrows*)**

The Chairman of the Authority

**South West Coast Path Forum (*Recreation Manager – Paul Hawkins*)**

Mr J Dallyn, sub Ms D Kershaw

**South West Water Recreation and Conservation Forum (*Recreation Manager – Paul Hawkins*)**

Mrs C M Lawrence

**Lyn Community Development Trust (*Community Planning Officer – Tissie Roberts*)**

Miss A Davis

**Local Government Association's Rural Commission (*National Park Officer*)**

Ms D Kershaw

**North Devon and Exmoor Regeneration Company (*National Park Officer*)**

Mr R J Webber (joint appointment with West Somerset District Council)

**Council for National Parks (nomination) (*National Park Officer*)**

Mrs A Amory

**South West Tourism Consultative Committee (*Head of Recreation and Tourism – Martin Evans*)**

Mr R Morrison-Smith, substitute Mrs C M Lawrence

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**Visit Exmoor Ltd (*Head of Recreation and Tourism – Martin Evans*)**

Mr R Morrison-Smith, substitute Miss E I Stacey

**Visit Exmoor Forum (*Head of Recreation and Tourism – Martin Evans*)**

Mr R Morrison-Smith, substitute Miss E I Stacey

**Regional Environment Network (REN) (*National Park Officer*)**

Mrs AM Clitheroe, substitute Ms D Kershaw

10. **ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES (ANPA) CONFERENCE 2005, 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2005 (THE BROADS) – THEME ‘EXPLORING CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**RESOLVED:** to appoint the following members to attend this year’s Conference:-

The Chairman, Mr Dyke, Mrs Clitheroe, Mr Galloway, Mr Gammon and Ms Kershaw, and also Dr Travis if he is able to secure funding from North Devon District Council to attend.

(Subsequent to the meeting, Mr Galloway withdrew)

(NB. The National Park Officer mentioned that induction courses for new members would be taking place in October and November 2005. The details would be circulated to the four new Authority members in due course)

11. **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

There would be a workshop for members on Friday, 17 June 2005 (timing dependent on whether there was a planning site visit) to discuss, refine and improve the draft version of the self-assessment report. The final version would be despatched to the peer review team at the end of the month.

**RESOLVED:** to delegate responsibility for the “signing off” of the Authority’s self-assessment report to the National Park Officer and the Chairman.

12. **MEMBER TRAINING**

The Authority considered the report of the Head of Business Management which set out a proposed training programme for the next year until June 2006, suggesting possible topics and that training should largely be moved to Tuesdays on afternoons following meetings of the Planning Committee, rather than on alternate monthly planning site visit days on Fridays. Members were invited to comment on their training needs and requirements.

There was a suggestion that separate sessions would not necessarily be needed for each topic, so there could be a doubling up of items. The following were suggested by members as additional topics: Health and Safety, management of the moor (not just ponies), the Design Guide and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill (including rural delivery). On the management of the moor item, the National Park Officer said that this would be picked up in the annual conservation tour.

**RESOLVED:** to agree a Member Training Programme for the period to June 2006, using the dates identified, which will be based on the proposals in the report and other topics identified by members, but to also ask for specific topics to be allocated to the dates.

13. **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The Authority received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 26 April 2005.

14. **EXMOOR LOCAL ACCESS FORUM'S ANNUAL REPORT 2004/05**

The Authority considered the content of the Exmoor Local Access Forum's Annual Report for 2004/05. In response to comment, the Forum's Secretary explained that the Exmoor National Park Rights of Way Improvement Plan Chapter would be updated with an addendum following consultation on it through the Somerset Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It had already been subject to consultation through the Devon Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Annual Report of the Exmoor Local Access Forum for 2004/05 and, as appointing authority, to agree that it be published as a 'stand alone' document.

15. **HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT**

The Authority considered the report of the Head of Conservation and Land Management which updated members on the work carried out by the Authority to promote good practice in the management of hedges and hedgerow trees on Exmoor.

**Public Question Time:** Sir Anthony Acland expressed concern that the visual appearance of Exmoor was altering because changes in hedgerow management were resulting in the loss of single standard trees from many hedges (specific reference being made to beech hedges). He said that the traditional management of cutting to allow tree growth, the proper laying of hedges and making up of the banks was disappearing and being replaced by straight lines of intensively flailed hedges. He believed that activity on removing hedgerow trees was attributable to concerns about trees causing hedge/bank erosion and farmers/landowners taking advantage of payments through Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Agreements to maintain stockproof hedges. He also considered traditionally managed hedgerows to be more suitable for the protection of livestock and hoped that Higher Level Stewardship in the new agri-environment scheme might encourage a return to traditional practice. He concluded by calling for a compromise between the needs of farming/land management and the visual appearance of Exmoor.

The Head of Conservation and Land Management supported the comments made and explained that the Authority tried to encourage good hedgerow management and diversity of species (for example, a leaflet providing advice on hedges had been produced, and copies were available at the meeting) but, apart from Tree Preservation Orders which could be used only in limited circumstances to protect trees that had significant impact on their surroundings, it did not have the powers to require landowners/farmers to adopt particular hedge management regimes. It did, however, seek to influence other bodies, such as Defra and the Forestry Commission, who had more authority over these matters.

Members also sympathised with Sir Anthony Acland's comments. Nevertheless, it was also recognised that there were land management issues and, in the past, many hedges had been neglected and allowed to grow up, which had resulted in trees of a

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size that were too large to cut and lay properly, necessitating felling. There were also potential insurance liabilities for farmers were roadside hedgerow trees to fall into the highway.

The Authority's Team Leader (Moorlands and Wildlife) explained that there was no certainty the new Higher Level Stewardship scheme would assist hedgerow tree protection, particularly in the short term as many farmers/landowners would be ineligible to join in the early years, and some may not qualify for the scheme. A supplementary payment existed under the ESA for traditional hedgerow management, but it did not permit the cutting of the tops of hedges. Many farmers would remain in the ESA for a number of years and be able to obtain the existing hedging grants, enabling tree felling.

Some protection for larger trees was available through Forestry Commission regulations limiting the size of tree that could be cut down, and the Authority was consulted on significant felling proposals (although not all landowners contacted the Forestry Commission). There was also optimism on beech hedges as the proposed changes to the Hedgerow Regulations would provide greater protection for them in North Devon and West Somerset, including Exmoor.

The general feeling of members was that greater protection for hedgerow trees was required and it was suggested that the Authority should seek a more proactive role from Defra, particularly through the new agri-environment scheme, and for the Authority to specifically identify individual trees and high hedges in the landscape which needed to be retained (with members visiting some sites). It was also suggested that the Authority should promote the retention of hedgerow trees in appropriate circumstances/locations through its consultees.

**RESOLVED:** to note the work carried out by the Authority to promote good practice in the management of hedges and hedgerow trees.

16. **THE AUTHORITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004/05 AND PLANS FOR 2005/06**

The National Park Officer's presentation on this topic was deferred to an informal session for members to be held following the Planning Committee's meeting on 5 July 2005.

(NB. The presentation would be given in public at meetings of the Authority's consultative fora later in the month).

17. **MEMBERS REPORTS**

The Authority noted a report from Mrs Amory on a Council for National Parks meeting held on 21 April 2005.

There was reference in the report to the Sandford Principle to be applied if it was not possible to resolve a conflict between conservation and recreation. Mr Martin reported that efforts were being made by non-governmental organisations to require the remit of Natural England (the proposed new integrated rural agency) to give priority to conservation over recreation/economic development of the countryside in all circumstances.

In paragraph 1.3 of Mrs Amory's report there was reference to the Exmoor Society no longer being a member of CNP because of the rise in Council fees. Following

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discussion with the Chairman of the Society she amended it to indicate that it was the way in which it was being done rather than the level of fee.

(The meeting closed at 12.32 pm)

Chairman