

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Public minutes of the meeting held at Yoredale, Bainbridge on Monday, 7th August 2006.

Present:

RA Bird, J Blackie, Mrs A Brooks, SHK Butcher, W Fenten, C Hammond, TRN Harrison-Topham, D Ireton, C Lis, Mrs FG Ramsbottom and W Weston.

Also in attendance: G Dalton and KJ Lancaster.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

33/06**MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

The report of the Secretariat Officer was noted.

34/06**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Having been nominated unopposed, it was –

RESOLVED –

That Mrs A Brooks be elected Chairman of the Committee, to hold office until the first meeting of the Committee following the annual meeting of the Authority in 2007.

MRS A BROOKS IN THE CHAIR

35/06**ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Having been nominated unopposed, it was –

RESOLVED –

That W Fenten be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee, to hold office until the first meeting of the Committee following the annual meeting of the Authority in 2007.

36/06**MINUTES****RESOLVED –**

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2006, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

37/06

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No notifications of public questions or of the intention to make a statement had been received.

38/06

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the consideration of each of the items of business listed in column 1 of the following table on the grounds that each involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 specified in column 2:

Item No on the agenda	Paragraph No
23	3 (and former paras 1, 7, 8 and 9)
24	3 and 5 (and former paras 1, 7, 8 and 9)
25	3 and 5
26	3

39/06

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs D Millward and A Osborne.

40/06

**DECLARATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE
OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

W Fenten declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No 12 in so far as it relates to Langcliffe Quarry.

41/06

DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

No declarations of lobbying were made at the meeting.

42/06

**FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT 2006/07
1ST QUARTER TO 30TH JUNE 2006**

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Finance Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Finance and Resources.

Some concern was expressed that if, as recommended, a 'target' for net salary costs was adopted, it could be seen as a target to be achieved, rather than as being a maximum level to be reached only if needed.

It was suggested that flexibility amongst the workforce and monitoring of core costs could assist in controlling staff costs.

The Chief Executive stated that staffing levels had increased over the years for a number of reasons, including:

- to serve the programmes of work that members had approved;
- to service the Authority following independence in 1997, when a number of activities that had previously been provided through the County Council had been brought 'in-house'; and
- to deal with a growth in the Planning Service, in terms of the number of applications being considered, the enforcement work being processed and the number of searches being requested.

He stated that any 'target' adopted would not operate, as was being suggested, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, but would be there as a flexible guide for managers.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report, and in particular the impact of future salary cost rises and the need to manage these within the budgeting process, be noted;
- (b) for the financial year 2007/08 (and then to be reviewed), the target for "net salary costs to DEFRA grant" ratio of 69.1%, and the indicative target of "Democratic & Core staff costs to DEFRA grant" ratio of 17%, be agreed; and
- (c) the appointment of the Landscape & Conservation Officer be approved.

[Note: J Blackie declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in this item as a Trustee of the Yorebridge Trust.]

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Finance Officer.

Particular concern was raised at the condition of Clapham toilets and it was hoped that the proposed remedial works could be started as soon as possible.

With regard to the publication of 'The Visitor' and 'Dales', a member pointed out that North Yorkshire County Council was to start producing a monthly newsletter and suggested that the Authority might be able to use that document as a vehicle for publicising some of its work.

RESOLVED –

That members' comments being taken into account, the proposals, as set out in the Appendix to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources for spending a proportion of the current Opportunities Fund, be approved, subject to:

- (a) the work to refurbish Clapham toilets to proceed as soon as possible, and
- (b) the spending of any remaining sums so allocated shall not commence until such time as the sale of Yorebridge House has been completed.

45/06

BUDGET PROCESS: 2007/08

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Finance and Resources.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

46/06

MEMBERS' USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) EQUIPMENT

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Secretariat Officer.

Members, in endorsing the proposals contained in the report, pointed out that to seek to extend members use of their existing equipment would be limited by the fact that, at present, not all have access to 'broadband', thereby making the receipt of 'large' documents by email impracticable.

It was suggested that it would be useful if there could be some equipment available for members to use, for example to access their emails, while attending meetings at Yoredale. Comment was also made that some of the Authority's current protocols, which, for example, restricted the use of memory sticks, may need to be re-visited.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) a 'protocol' be established covering email communication between officers and members based on the conclusions set out in the Secretariat Officer's report and be circulated to all members and officers;
- (c) when the current Scheme of Members' Allowances is reviewed in 2007, consideration be given to the appropriateness and level of an allowance for members for IT consumables.

47/06

STAFFING MATTERS

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

48/06

SICKNESS ABSENCE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

49/06

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

50/06

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

51/06

SUMMARY OF EXIT INTERVIEWS 2005/06

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

52/06

EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (AGE) LEGISLATION

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Personnel and Training Officer.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted, and
- (b) the policy on Age Retirement set out in the Annex to the report of the Personnel and Training Officer be approved.

53/06

JOB SHARING SCHEME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted, and
- (b) the revised policy on Job Sharing set out in the Appendix to the report of the Senior Administrative Officer be approved.

54/06

NORTHERN OFFICE SUB-COMMITTEE

CONSIDERED –

The public minutes of the meetings of the Northern Office Sub-Committee held on 11th April, 30th May and 5th July 2006.

RESOLVED –

That the public minutes of the meetings of the Northern Office Sub-Committee held on 11th April, 30th May and 5th July 2006 be received.

The remainder of business was considered in private.

(a) Private Minutes

The Committee confirmed, as a correct record, the private minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2006 that had been circulated with the agenda. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

(b) Northern Office Sub-Committee

The Committee considered and received, the private minutes of the meetings of the Northern Office Sub-Committee held on 11th April, 30th May and 5th July 2006.

(c) Northern Office Project - Update

The Head of Finance and Resources and the Chief Executive informed members of the latest position following recent discussions with the Contractor over final project cost figures.

The Committee authorised final discussions to be entered into with the contractor with a view to reaching settlement of the final contract cost, it to be made absolutely clear to the contractor that no further increase in settlement figure would be considered.

(d) Retail Services: Financial Performance Report

Members were generally very supportive of the Retail Services operation and sought a more detailed report to the Authority to review objectives and future strategy for the operation. It was also decided that the current discount scheme for staff and members should be retained, although the administration of the scheme would benefit from some simplification.