

Minutes of the meeting held at Yoredale, Bainbridge on Tuesday, 25 March 2008.

**Present:**

R Alderson, RA Bird, J Blackie, Mrs A Brooks, WH Brown, SHK Butcher, G Dalton, W Fenten, C Hammond, TRN Harrison-Topham, D Heather, KJ Lancaster, C Lis (in the Chair), SR Macaré, Mrs S Marshall, Mrs D Millward, A Osborne, Mrs Y Peacock, Dr KM Petyt, S Shaw-Wright, Ms N Stedman and W Weston.

***COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK***

**19/08     PETER WALBANK**

The Chairman reported that Peter Walbank, a former member of the Authority, had died recently. The meeting stood in silence as a mark of respect.

**20/08     MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY**

The Chairman drew members' attention to the fact that this would be the final Authority meeting that Cecil Hammond, Nancy Stedman and Andrew Osborne would attend. He stated that Nancy and Andrew would leave the Authority when their terms of office ended on 31 March and that Cecil would be retiring at the time of the local authority elections in May.

On behalf of members and officers he thanked all three for their work on the Authority and its committees.

**21/08     MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2008, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**22/08     PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Five members of the public had registered either to ask a question or make a statement. The Chairman advised that, for those who intended to speak on the future of Wood Lane Car Park, Grassington, there would be no significant debate at the meeting on the future use of that land. He suggested that they may be better served by delaying their statements until such time as the Authority debated the matter in full.

Mr E Rowley asked the following question:

“During the last several years, Grassington Bowling Club have tried to buy the ‘bowling green’ which they rent at Colvend but were told that the YDNP were not in the business of selling land.

At another time when the Grassington Affordable Housing Group, including the Housing Enabler, Home Housing and Grassington Parish Council asked about acquiring a piece of land at Colvend, they were also told that YDNP were not in the business of selling land.

The local Wheel Park were also refused a piece of land.

In view of the Wood Lane Car Park situation at Grassington, I would like to ask the question ‘Does this mean that surplus land at Colvend will have to be offered for Affordable Housing?’”

The Chairman responded as follows:

“First of all can I thank Mr Rowley for his question. The short answer to Mr Rowley’s question is

**Yes.** If the Authority ever considered that we had surplus land at Colvend, then under our existing policies we would consider offering up that surplus land for Affordable Housing.

In relation to the examples he quotes in his question I would say two things. Firstly, the Authority has never said, as a matter of policy, “it is not in the business of selling land.” We own less land than any other National Park Authority in the United Kingdom so we could hardly be said to be ‘land hoarders’.

Secondly, there is a huge difference between the Authority’s requirements at Colvend and those of Wood Lane. Put simply, Colvend is a major asset for the Authority and is used extensively for Visitor Car Parking (more than any other Car Park in the National Park), Wood Lane is not. As the minute from the Finance Committee states, ‘It be confirmed that the Authority has no further use for the site’.

What is still to be determined, and I suspect this is what lies behind Mr Rowley’s question, is what the Authority does want to do with the Wood Lane site. That decision has still to be taken. It will not be made today, as I believe Mr Rowley has been informed by Officers, because Members do not yet have all the relevant information before them.

In today’s papers there is a report from the Chief Executive on the Wood Lane site, with a proposal that a paper dealing with all the issues that have arisen in relation to this matter, be brought to the May meeting of the Authority. We will consider that proposal when we get to it later on the Agenda.”

Of the four members of the public who had registered to make statements, in view of the earlier assurance from the Chairman regarding consideration of the future of Wood Lane Car Park, Messrs Bennett and Jones deferred their statements to the May meeting of the Authority. One speaker was not present and Mr Birdsall made a statement raising a number of issues, including:

- A petition amongst residents had produced a significant critical response of the Authority
- The Authority was an unelected body riding roughshod over the wishes of local residents
- If the land was not available for use as a car park, visitors would not bother to stop in Grassington, and continue on to Skipton
- The land at Wood Lane was believed to have been left for use as car park and was not to be used for housing
- Any meeting at which the matter was to be debated should be well advertised and open to all.

The Chairman thanked Mr Birdsall for his statement.

**23/08**      **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 Item No 21 on the agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**24/08**      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**25/08**      **DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING**

Messrs Blackie, Butcher, Hammond and Lis all stated that they had been lobbied on the issue of the future of Wood Lane Car Park, Grassington.

**26/08**      **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chairman of the Authority, who amended his report to record that the Chief Executive had been unable to attend the meeting of ENPAA in London.

**RESOLVED –**

That the report and further comment be noted.

**27/08**      **MEMBER CHAMPION'S REPORT**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Member Champion for Conservation of the Natural Environment.

Circulated at the meeting was a report from Mrs Peacock, who had attended a meeting in London on 'Affordable Housing in National Parks'. In response to a member question, she stated that there had been no mention at the meeting of the possibility of Parish Councils becoming registered landlords for social housing.

A member reminded the meeting that the Member Champion scheme was still relatively new and had been introduced as part of a package that had seen a reduction in the size of the Planning Committee. He asked the Champion for Conservation of the Natural Environment if her time commitment as a Champion was similar to that of a member of the Planning Committee and was she experiencing any difficulties with her new responsibilities. She stated that at present there was certainly no reduction in her time commitment, as she had attended the last three meetings of the Planning Committee as a substitute member and there were a number of Champion issues that she was having to 'keep up to speed with' in addition to attending several meetings.

A number of other issues were raised by members, including:

- reference to a Rural Affairs Forum meeting in York
- highlighting the need for community based housing needs surveys
- a regional Scrutiny Board examination of climate change
- reporting that Craven District Council was to conduct further housing needs surveys with more local input
- an expression of concern at the interpretation of local plan policy on limitations on agricultural workers' dwellings.

## **RESOLVED –**

That the report and further comments be noted.

## **28/08     CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive who confirmed the earlier comment of the Chairman that he had been unable to attend the ENPAA meeting in London. He added that a letter had been received from North Yorkshire County Council with news that the Authority would receive a contribution from the Council of £50,000 towards delegated highway agreement costs, but which also stated that the Council proposed to withdraw its £20,430 per annum contribution towards the cost of maintaining its collection housed at the Dales Countryside Museum.

Concern was expressed at the late notification by the County Council, particularly of the withdrawal of the Museum collection funding and the Chief Executive was asked to write to the County Council to that effect.

*[Note: Messrs Harrison-Topham, Heather, Macaré and Mrs Marshall each declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the County Council correspondence as members of the County Council. J Blackie stated that he had no personal interest.]*

The Member Champion for Promoting Understanding, in response to a question about concerns about the Tourism Partnership stated that issues had been addressed and a way forward agreed. He would report back to the next meeting of the Authority.

The Chief Executive, in response to a member enquiry, stated that Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) had pulled out of part of the Craven Limeworks Project. He confirmed that the District Council and Yorkshire Forward were still committed to the project and that LMU was still interested in some aspects of the project.

The Secretariat Officer reported that both new Authority members (Messrs Armitage and Charlesworth) had indicated an interest in serving on the Planning Committee, and that Mr Armitage had stated that he would also be 'most interested' in serving on the Standards Committee. The Secretary of State group therefore suggested that both members should take Ms Stedman's and Dr Petyt's seats on the Committee, with Dr Petyt becoming 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute and Mrs Millward 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute for the group. Members were reminded that until Mr Hammond's successor was appointed, his position on the Finance and Resources Committee would remain vacant.

The Chief Executive added that when Ms Stedman's term of office ended there would be a vacancy as the Authority's nominated representative on the Council for National Parks.

With regard to the proposed Members' 'Days Out', a member suggested that it would be helpful if the annual Calendar of Meetings could also include dates for those member events that were arranged each year, such as the Planning Annual Site Visit and the two Planning training dates.

In considering the item on Wood Lane Car Park, Grassington, there was support for full consideration of the issue at the May meeting of the Authority and for that meeting to be held in Grassington. Members requested that a full report be prepared and that it should include reference to usage, details of the covenant for the site, correspondence received including the views of the Parish Council and a map of the location. With regard to the issue of the venue for the May meeting of the Authority, bearing in mind members' decision in January that all future Authority meetings should be held at Yoredale, the Authority's Solicitor explained the process as set out in Standing Orders for the re-consideration of that decision.

## **RESOLVED –**

That subject to the further comments being taken into account:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the following changes be made to Committee memberships to reflect the 'departures' of Ms Stedman and Messrs Osborne and Hammond:

- Planning Committee: Secretary of State members on the Planning Committee to be Messrs Armitage, Charlesworth, Weston and Mrs Brooks, with Dr Petyt and Mrs Millward as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> substitutes respectively; and WH Brown to replace C Hammond when the latter retires from the Authority in May 2008;
- Audit and Review Committee: Messrs Armitage and Charlesworth to replace Andrew Osborne and Ms Stedman;
- Standards Committee: Peter Charlesworth to replace Ms Stedman

all the above appointments to run until the Authority re-constitutes its Committees at the annual meeting in July.

- (c) Dr KM Petyt be nominated as the Authority's representative on the Council for National Parks;

- (c) the four member events listed in paragraph 12 of the Chief Executive's report proceed and the Authority's Calendar of Meetings be expanded to include dates for the Planning Annual Site Visit and Planning Committee Training;

- (d) in accordance with Standing Order 4.3 in respect of the Suspension of Standing Orders, the Authority agreed to suspend Standing Orders and to hold the May meeting of the Authority in Grassington;

*[Note: Mrs Y Peacock, as a member of Richmondshire District Council, declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in that part of the report that related to Car Park passes and discussions with officers of the District Council.]*

## **29/08 TREASURY MANAGEMENT – REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Finance Officer.

**RESOLVED -**

That:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) approval be given to:
  - (i) the Annual Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/09 as detailed in Appendix A of the Treasurer's report; and
  - (ii) the use of the County Council's Annual Investment Strategy, as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the Treasurer's report.

**30/08 CAPITAL FINANCE AND THE PRUDENTIAL CODE – REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

CONSIDERED – report of the Senior Finance Officer.

**RESOLVED -**

That:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) approval be given to
  - (i) the Prudential Indicators as set out in Paragraph 3 of the Treasurer's report
  - (ii) an affordable borrowing limit of £330k for 2008/09 under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 as set out in Paragraph 3(iv) of the Treasurer's report, and
  - (ii) the specific delegations to the Treasurer proposed in Paragraph 3 of his report in relation to day to day management of Prudential Indicators (iv) and (v).

**31/08 CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2008-2011**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

In considering the report, a number of issues were raised by members, including:

- a concern that some of the objectives may be difficult to monitor
- suggestions that some of the objectives would benefit from re-wording
- questioning if an objective 'to tackle invasive species' had been deleted
- suggesting that the Authority itself could encourage its caterers to use locally sourced food and products
- whether a Tourism Partnership target to try to increase spending year on year should be included.

**RESOLVED –**

That subject to members' comments being taken into account, the revised objectives as set out in Annex 1 of the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy, be approved as the framework for driving and monitoring the Authority's performance in 2008/09.

**32/08     ACTION PLAN 2008/09**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

The Chief Executive emphasised to members that this was a draft document.

**RESOLVED –**

That following consideration by Member Champions of the Actions for their respective areas of responsibility within the draft Action Plan, a further report be brought to the May meeting of the Authority.

**33/08     NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Policy and Liaison Officer.

Whilst members commented that the report gave a clear explanation of Local Area Agreements, it was suggested that the Authority's comments for submission to the Government Office should be 'beefed up'.

**RESOLVED –**

That the contents of the report be noted and, subject to appropriate 'beefing up', the comments in paragraphs 10, 15, 16 and 17 be sent to the Government Office.

**34/08     TURNTABLE PROJECT OUTCOME**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of External Affairs.

Members expressed great concern at the outcome of the project insofar as the involvement of external consultants was concerned and it was hoped that Yorkshire Culture, as funder of the project, would make representations regarding the inadequate performance of the consultants.

**RESOLVED –**

That:

- (a) the outcome of the Turntable Project be noted; and
- (b) the member/officer Working Group (made up of the following members - Carl Lis, William Weston, Steve Macaré and John Blackie), together with the Member Champion for the Cultural Heritage, develop proposals for the Dales Countryside Museum and a report on the outcome of those deliberations be brought back to the Authority for further consideration.

**35/08**     **SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2008/09**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Secretariat Officer, who added that further minor amendments should be made to the Scheme to reflect that Member Champions could claim appropriate expenses for travelling and subsistence and the recent introduction of the option for members to submit claims on-line.

**RESOLVED –**

That:

(a)     subject to the further minor amendments in respect of Member Champions' travelling and subsistence claims and on-line claims, the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2008/09 as annexed to the Secretariat Officer's report be adopted; and

(b)     a further report be brought to the Authority as soon as possible including recommendations from Local Government Yorkshire and Humber.

**36/08**     **GUIDANCE ON GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

**RESOLVED –**

That the document attached to the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer be adopted, in place of the existing guidance for members on Gifts and Hospitality.

**37/08**     **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

A member suggested that with regard to Principle 4, "Taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk." there should be a reference to "the need for effective consultation where appropriate".

**RESOLVED –**

That subject to the proposed amendment to Principle 4 to reflect the need for effective consultation, the Audit and Review Committee's recommendation to adopt the revised governance principles set out in the right hand column of the Appendix to the report Solicitor/Monitoring Officer be endorsed.

**38/08**     **STANDING ORDERS**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

Whilst supporting the proposed revisions, it was suggested that the second sentence of Standing Order 2.6(f) should state "Except with the consent of the Chairman.."

**RESOLVED –**

That subject to the word “Authority” in the proposed change to Standing Order 2.6(f) being amended to “Chairman”, the recommendation of the Audit and Review Committee to approve the proposed changes to Standing Orders set out in the Appendix to the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer be endorsed.

**39/08     MEMBER FEEDBACK**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Secretariat Officer.

**RESOLVED –**

That the report be noted.

**40/08     PLANNING COMMITTEE**

CONSIDERED – the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 8 January and 12 February 2008.

**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 8 January and 12 February 2008 be received.

**41/08     ACCESS COMMITTEE**

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Access Committee held on 17 January 2008.

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Access Committee held on 17 January 2008 be received.

**42/08     STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5 February 2008.

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5 February 2008 be received.

**43/08     FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 8 February 2008.

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 8 February 2008 be received.

**44/08     AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee held on 15 February 2008.

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee held on 1 February 2008 be received.

*The remainder of business was considered in private*

**PUBLIC SUMMARY OF BUSINESS CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

**45/08     RETAIL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN**

CONSIDERED – a report from the Head of External Affairs that sought members' approval to the business plan for the Authority's retail services.

Some concern was expressed by members at the potentially over-optimistic projected year-on-year increase in turnover from 2008/09. Members of the Working Group acknowledged that the figures did present challenging targets, but added that, with staff, the Group had looked at minimising risks and the proposals did not commit to extra stock or staff resources ahead of progress.

In response to an enquiry about monitoring, the Head of External Affairs reminded members that currently the Finance and Resources Committee receives an annual report on Retail Services.

**RESOLVED –**

That:

(a) the business plan for Retail Services 2008-2013, as appended to the report of the Head of External Affairs be approved; and

(b) the member/officer Working Group continue to develop proposals and take forward improvements to retail services, including considering the process for monitoring and reporting to members.



**46/08 URGENT BUSINESS**

As this was the last meeting that she would be attending, the Chairman allowed Ms Stedman to raise the following issues, as matters of urgent business:

(a) Highway signs

She expressed concern that, on driving to the meeting, she had noticed a proliferation of what looked like the support poles for large, potentially visually intrusive, highway signs. The Head of Park Management stated that a meeting had been held with Highway Authority officers and there was the potential for some compromise.

(b) Artwork

She stated that the Authority's office at Yoredale was acknowledged amongst local artists as providing an excellent venue for exhibiting work. She congratulated the staff on the progress made with this initiative.