



DRAFT

**National Parks England
 Board Meeting**
 Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 29 January 2025 10am
Teams Meeting

In Attendance		
<p>Directors Tiffany Hunt (TH) David Bence (DBe) Jim Bailey (JB) Ken Smith (KS) Vanessa Rowlands (Chair) (VR) Derek Twine (DT) Pamela Woods (PW) Dennis Mullan (DM)</p> <p>Officers Jayne Butler (Executive Director (ED) and Company Secretary) (JBU) Alison Baxter (Policy & Public Affairs Manager) (ABx) Victoria Peel (Executive Support Officer) Notes</p>	<p>NPOs/ Chief Executives Gavin Capstick (GC) Alison Barnes (ABar) Tom Hind (THi) Phil Mulligan (PM) Sion McGeever (SM) David Butterworth (DBu) Kevin Bishop (KB) Tony Gates (TG)</p>	<p>NPA Lake District NPA New Forest NPA North York Moors NPA Peak District NPA South Downs NPA Yorkshire Dales NPA Dartmoor NP Northumberland NPA</p>

Item	
1	<p>Apologies & Intros</p> <p>Kevin Bishop – apologies</p> <p>VR thanked JBU for raising the NPE profile – Countryfile and Defra film very powerful. Wanted to mark the work JBU has done.</p>
2	<p>Minutes</p> <p>2.1 Correction to minutes of 5 December 2024. Clarify comment from Alison Barnes. JBU attending Authority meetings – consider invite. VR sign off once corrections are made.</p>
3	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>a) Note operational update for information (paper 1) N/A</p>
4	<p>Urgent Business notified to the Company Secretary – JBU</p>



	<p>4.1 JBu – no urgent business</p>
	<p>Discussion and approval of items</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>NPE Q3 Financial Report (paper 2a, 2b) JBu finance report previously circulated. Confirmed the Generation Green money will come in and out fast. Last year made interest, funds sat in bank account longer. No other queries or comments from the group. JBu open for questions. TH would like to see a further breakdown of office running costs. JBu to circulate a detailed version. Vote and approved.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Budget scenarios for 2025/26 (paper 3a, 3b) JBu explained why bringing budget paper for approval to this meeting. Still no clarity on what finances look like. Provided two scenarios, one being the situation we'll be in. Also to update on key risks. JBu opened for questions. PW PLP funding what are the risks to NPs budgets if Defra level up trails and other partners – what are risks in having everyone at same level. JBu interpretation in bringing together PLP space for groups to work together, not been seen as a levelling, not fully aware of discussions trails and landscapes are having with Defra. Work has been done to increase national landscape grants. CSR2 zero baseline spending review. PW asked are we in different funding streams. JBu NP core grant and National Landscape core grant same pot and PLP money different departmental budget line, won't be put across. National Trails UK. Very early days in terms of any discussions. NPs asked to look at capital gains.</p> <p>DMu PLP – NPE still only represents 8 of 10 NPs. JBu two meetings about capital revenue split Exmoor and Broads present, haven't been in most meetings. Exmoor and Broads hearing for first time financial pressures, JBu confirmed they are not being met with separately. JBu highlighted she was invited to the meeting as well. DMu - Defra should be encouraging Exmoor and Broads to come back into the NPE JBu confirmed they are.</p> <p>DBe – if Defra does want Exmoor and the Broads to come back in, is it worth reducing subscriptions. Get Defra to apply pressure. JBu Understanding is that the NPs won't come back. Only if Defra made it compulsory.</p> <p>JBu – value of being hopeful, option to send a letter to invite Broads and Exmoor to the next NPE? Is it worth it? VR supportive of that, looks like we are engaging and be quite powerful. All in agreement.</p> <p>Comms unit updated, JBu isn't paying into the unit for next 6 months. JBu explained the Performance Group meet regularly and are working round scenarios and options and will come back to everyone. VR – subscriptions to NPE anxious about work capacity and the ability what NPE can do for us all, flagged her concerns.</p> <p>Comms Unit – JBu this will currently be staying with PDNPA to continue with Comms Unit JBu confirmed the NPP took possibility of taking over Comms Unit to</p>



	<p>the Board. JBu confirmed if arrangement is to continue need clear plan on its deliverables. £30k is a huge amount, needs to happen this year.</p> <p>JB Comms Unit, do we do our own thing, NPE need for Policy Comms. Would welcome a review of that.</p> <p>PW – we have an SLA agreement – clear expect and responsibility on delivery about the Comms Unit. JBu there is a detailed SLA on Comms Unit – really clear on what’s required.</p> <p>PM Comms unit – acknowledged comments, feel same frustrations and disappointments as well – need to work together to make the comms unit work for us all. Still leading Performance Group every 2 weeks and it’s working well, need to trust the group – will update on further discussion in due course.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>NPE Board meetings – practical arrangements (paper 4) JBu suggested more in person meetings and shift balance. Composed schedule following feedback (see paper). Costs attached to that if meetings are in London or other NPs – wanted to open it out to Group. VR opened to Chairs for comments.</p> <p>JB – agreed in person discussion are more productive. DTw – in person meetings are good to get to know other CEOs / Chairs DT – agreed but if we meet in various Parks, feels time is more effective spent sitting have more informed debates – on agenda rather than a walk out in the park! KS – supporting the idea of more face to face. London is convenient however higher costs – suggested Birmingham may be more cost effective. VR – agreed face to face is important TH – agreed to the idea. Vary venues. Need to be flexible. Make sure agendas are substantive. PW – in agreement.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>AOB PM asked for further details to the April visit to South Downs. JBu is working with Michelle in Souths Down who will contact EAs with details.</p> <p>FUNDING – JBu No updates since Monday, checked in with Amber at Defra same position past 3 weeks. Defra can’t send any information. Every area facing considered revenue cuts, unconfirmed rumor, will have a huge impact on operations.</p> <p>In additional there are talks about police cuts and health cuts and every government depart facing this. Few favorites getting looked after – what the government wants to fund well – everyone lost out. Not being deliberately targeted.</p> <p>Actions NPE taking. DN and TG met with the Minister. Real risk is that NPs aren’t seen within the big picture. Asked the Minister to look at that. ABa and JBu hoping to get time with Mary Creagh but has since cancelled.</p>



	<p>Writing to Mary Creagh ask for round table follow announcement 75th anniversary that will be post financial year. Two suggested letters from Chairs to cover specific MP funding to the Times also to write to another media outlet about what NP deliver for the Nation. Poss opportunity to draw attention to ourselves. NPE draft letter to treasure re NI contributions for distribution. JBu must keep putting positive messages out.</p> <p>TH – important we use constructive tone in letters. Government is under pressure with negative stories. Feels whatever we say to who we say it won't make much difference. Will it make a difference to write to the Times.</p> <p>KS – Fully in accord what's been expressed. Support the submission of two letters, Worth reminding we didn't get Covid support. Drafting letters, use the issues of NPs created by a Labour government. JBu it is the approach NPE has been using.</p> <p>VR – helpful if we did an audit of all MPs to see if anyone on Health Dept. JBu can do that at NPE.</p>
	Summary of Actions from this meeting

Next Board meeting: 8 April 2025