

**NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND**

**Draft Minutes of meeting held on 7 July 2025 10:00 – 12:00**  
**Venue: online meeting**

	<p><b>Present</b></p> <p><b>Directors</b></p> <p>Tiffany Hunt                  David Bence                  Jim Bailey                  Ken Smith                  Vanessa Rowlands (Chair)                  Derek Twine                  Will Dracup                  Denis Mullan                  Andrea Davis</p> <p>Victoria Peel, PDNPA (Notes)                  Alison Baxter, Policy &amp; Public Affairs Manager</p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Jayne Butler (Company Secretary)                  Cat Hawkins, NPP                  Harry Blathwayt</p> <p><b>NPOs/ Chief Executives</b></p> <p>Gavin Capstick                  Alison Barnes                  Tom Hind (acting Company Secretary)                  Phil Mulligan                  Sion McGeever                  David Butterworth                  Kevin Bishop                  Tony Gates                  John Packman                  Sarah Bryan</p> <p><b>NPAs</b></p> <p>Lake District NPA                  New Forest NPA                  North York Moors NPA                  Peak District NPA                  South Downs NPA                  Yorkshire Dales NPA                  Dartmoor NPA                  Northumberland NPA                  Broads Authority                  Exmoor NPA</p>	
<b>Item</b>		<b>Agreed Actions</b>
1	<p><b><u>NPE BOARD MEETING – Part One</u></b></p> <p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>1.1 VR opened the meeting with a warm welcome, extending a heartfelt greeting to Exmoor NPA and the Broads Authority. The Chair welcomed. Will Dracup, the new Chair of Dartmoor, and expressed sincere thanks to Pamela, who has recently stepped down from the role. The Chair conveyed her best wishes to Jayne Butler who was absent through illness and welcomed Ali Baxter from NPE.</p>	<p><i>Exmoor not showing as Members on Website. NPE Secretariat to amend</i></p>
2	<p><b>Approval of new Members</b></p> <p>2.1 The Directors approved the admission of both Exmoor NPA and the Broads Authority as NPE Members in accordance with NPE’s Articles of Association. All votes were recorded, with unanimous approval.</p>	
3	<p><b>Approval of acting Company Secretary</b></p> <p>3.1 The Directors unanimously approved a resolution enabling Tom Hind to act as Company Secretary for the AGM in line with NPE’s Articles of Association.</p>	
	<p><b><u>NPE Annual General Meeting</u></b></p>	
1	<p><b>Election of Chair for NPE – Company Secretary to preside</b></p> <p>1.1 THi took the chair to preside over the election of chair until the AGM in 2026. He</p>	

	confirmed one valid nomination had been received for Vanessa Rowlands no other nominations. Directors confirmed their approval of VR as Chair.	
	NPE Chair now takes the Chair	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Election of Deputy Chair for NPE</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> VR took the chair for the election of Deputy Chair. <b>THi</b> had received one valid nomination duly seconded, for Tiffany Hunt. Directors confirmed their approval for <b>THu</b> to serve as Deputy Chair for the next year.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> Noted above.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> No new declarations of interest were reported.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Approve minutes from the AGM held on 5 June 2024</b> (attached)</p> <p><b>5.1</b> A point was raised regarding the live document intended for circulation. Some Chairs who joined after the AGM did not currently have access to it. VR confirmed that the document is located in the Board Folder and will check access permissions.</p> <p>The minutes were <b>approved</b>. Signed off by VR.</p>	<i>Folder access to be reviewed.</i>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Chair's review of 2024/25</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> A verbal report was shared. VR reflected on the year since the 2024 AGM. Jan meeting with Steve Reed - some optimism noted. The past year had two distinct phases with early engagement with Ministers post General Election and increased momentum following the anniversary. VR thanked staff, Directors and CEOs for the input to the Great National Parks Plan. She acknowledged the difficult Grant Settlement with a 9% revenue cut, noting the increase in one-off capital allocations. Positive developments in DEI &amp; Belonging - despite past criticism, there's been strong progress and diverse candidate interest for SoS Member roles, thanks to CNP and partner efforts. April Board was held in the South Downs and seen as informative, with focus on governance changes and visioning work. First meeting held for the Protected Landscape Partnership (funding secured). VR concluded by reflecting on recent letter to CEOs from Mary Creagh MP, thanking staff &amp; CEOs for the joint response that had just been submitted.</p> <p><b>ABar</b> – wished to acknowledge the contributions of NPE &amp; NPA staff, notably <b>Briony Fox</b>, <b>Claire Kerr</b>, and <b>Jayne B</b> to the Team Nature approach. She expressed thanks to the CEOs of the ENGOs for coming together in this effort. Our collective work had made a real impact.</p> <p><b>DB</b> – Noted the need to stay realistic. Investment in rural communities overall as well as Core Grant was declining. Progress in EDI alone isn't going to help deliver nature and climate improvements.</p> <p><b>KB</b> – Noted the extension to FiPL &amp; wished to thank to Sue Fletcher from the Peak District and Adrian Shepherd of the Yorkshire Dales who is due to retire.</p> <p><b>WD</b> – Highlighted the Secretary of State numbers – 2 days of interviews – calibre of</p>	

	<p>interviews poor, out of 12 only 1 or 2 were appointable – need to work on this. as quite a disheartening process.</p> <p><b>THu</b> – noted Lake District SoS interviews were better, however, found a number of applications from people that live miles away – something to look at re the logistics. There is a need to be clearer about expectations on SoS Members.</p> <p><b>DT</b> – SoS appointees a lot can be discussed collectively. He supported a collective response from NPE to Defra on the experience of the recent recruitment round.</p> <p><b>SMc</b> – Was interested to see how we can come together a bit more once next core grant settlement is confirmed. A conversation is needed to look at funding overall and how NPAs become less reliant on Government.</p> <p><b>ABar</b> – thanked <b>SMc</b>– New Forest is facing an existential threat, both to the Authority and way of life &amp; communing traditions.</p>	<p><i>NPE to prepare joint submission to Defra on SOS recruitment – DM/ ABax</i></p>
7	<p><b>Approve NPE’s Accounts 2024/25</b> (attached)</p> <p>7.1 Papers circulated. Directors approved NPE’s accounts for submission.</p>	
8	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>8.1 None</p>	

**AGM Closed at: 10.50am**  
**Next AGM:**

4	<p><b><u>NPE BOARD MEETING – Part Two</u></b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>4.1 None notified</p>	
5	<p><b>Approve minutes of meeting held on 8 April 2025</b> (attached)</p> <p>5.1 Meeting Minutes – <b>DM</b> asked for an update on the pro-bono work on NP funding. Kevin Bishop agreed to send a note to Directors explaining the brief for the work that <b>McKinsey</b> had agreed to undertake. This will need to be routed through a National Park charity.</p> <p><b>DM</b> – noted that NPE had agreed to hold its own comms. How did this sit with information regarding NPP taking over the Comms unit. VR confirmed no change to NPE comms. Ali confirmed Tom Marshall has been engaged by NPE to act as comms office in a 3-day role.</p> <p>Minutes signed off by VR</p>	<p><i>KB to share brief of McKinsey work on NP funding</i></p>
6	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>6.1 <b>THi</b> – review the actions from the last meeting. He agreed with VR to check that the action relating to the subscription model had been closed off (<i>post-meeting note – confirm Directors received follow-up email &amp; attachment and from Jayne on 10 April</i>).</p>	

7	<p><b>Urgent Business notified to the Company Secretary</b></p> <p>7.1 <b>THi</b> – noted one item for Directors post meeting.</p>	
8	<p><b>Call for Evidence on Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery – Cat Hawkins, NPP</b></p> <p>8.1 Cat Hawkins had sent apologies through illness. A separate session relating to the call for evidence will be arranged with Cat.</p>	<p><i>Meeting with Cat Hawkins on call for evidence to be arranged</i></p>
9	<p><b>Role of National Parks in Lifting the Nation’s Health &amp; Wellbeing – Tom Hind</b></p> <p>9.1 <b>THi</b> gave a presentation on the role of National Parks in lifting the nation’s health and wellbeing, setting out the context, NPE’s 3x3 action plan, SWOT analysis and key policy lines. He raised a number of open questions with Directors and CEOs about NPE’s involvement in the issue. <b>VR</b> noted that NPE can’t do everything, that officer time is stretched and that building relationships in this area takes time. The ability to tell our story through effective communications was seen as an essential action going forward.</p> <p><b>DT</b> –Was keen to ensure the subject formed part of next week’s visioning session, noting that H&amp;W was a crucial area where the potential of National Parks isn’t being realised. We needed to be clearer on where NPAs add value.</p> <p><b>JB</b> – NPE could co-ordinate a working party at Director level to give us the momentum to strengthen our work on H&amp;W.</p> <p><b>DB</b> – supported DT. It was important to establish where we want to be in 12 months’ time, pick up on pockets of excellence. He highlighted work with the veterans outreach community as a gold standard of a model that we can deliver.</p> <p><b>KS</b> – contrasted the enthusiasm for initiatives with the decline in resources at NPAs. It might be better to attach our wagon to resources like NT / Natural England – piggybacking those organisations offering what we can through the landscapes we champion.</p> <p><b>SMc</b> – Noted the work on Green Social Prescribing in Defra. He asked whether there might be an opportunity in Devolution, where we can provide the physical space to support social prescribing activity. He noted that the NHS has significant resources that could be deployed to support.</p> <p><b>ABar</b> – Shared a link about the placements of doctors funded by NHS England in the New Forest, showcased recently by H&amp;W officers at the Annual Conference of the Psychiatric School. The presentation highlighted how small contributions can accumulate and demonstrate the benefits of timely support. <b>ABar</b> also posted a blog featuring a study on the natural capacity value of 999 nurses, emphasising the significant impact and strength they bring as valuable assets to their communities</p> <p>Links below  <a href="https://www.greenhealthhub.org.uk/">https://www.greenhealthhub.org.uk/</a>  <a href="https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/green-halo-conference-national-parks-for-health-a-natural-health-service/">https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/green-halo-conference-national-parks-for-health-a-natural-health-service/</a>  <a href="https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/blog/the-value-of-natural-capital-to-health-and-wellbeing/">https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/blog/the-value-of-natural-capital-to-health-and-wellbeing/</a></p> <p><b>THi</b> – summarised the discussion responding to some of the points raised, notably relating to the hyper-local nature of delivery which means that most impact is likely to come through local relationships between NPAs, NHS providers, social practitioners, link workers and third sector bodies. Nonetheless, having a greater national profile and</p>	<p><i>THi circulate presentation to the group</i></p>

	presence would help leverage opportunities and ensure that landscapes are seen as players on the pitch. He noted the lack of curiosity from Defra about the role of National Parks, commenting that the NHS 10-year plan had one reference to Defra about reducing air pollution.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Look ahead to visioning session</b>  <b>10.1</b> David French will send round the Agenda for Visioning session to be held on 15 July. Dinner Monday evening / 1 day workshop on Tuesday.	<i>DF/ABax to share details of visioning session</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>AOB</b>  <b>11.1</b> DM will co-ordinate a common response on the appointment process – everyone forwards comments to DM and work with Ali Baxter in NPE. 8 NPs	
<b>12</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>  <b>12.1</b> 23 Sept 2025 (in-person). Denis Mullan noted that he was able to offer meeting room space at offices in East London. Invitations from National Parks to host were welcomed.	<b>Check all the meeting invites have Exmoor and Broads in.</b>