

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

Friday 31 May 2024

Present: Members
Mrs S Morgan (Chair), Mr W Dracup, Mrs G Hill*, Mr P Sanders

* Mrs Hill attended as observer, as not appointed to this sub-committee.

Independent Persons
C Shewan, C Farrell

Officers
K Bishop (Chief Executive)

N White (Head of Organisational Development & Monitoring Officer)

Apologies: P Woods, P Harper, J Nutley, A Cooper, M Renders

259 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 November 2023

The Monitoring Officer advised that a further minor amendment was required to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2023, approved at the meeting held on 3 November 2023, in that the following sentence:

“She is impressed with the standard of critical challenge of conduct of the Committees”.

be replaced with the following sentence:

*“She is impressed with the standard of critical challenge **and** conduct of the Committees”.*

This further amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2023 and the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2023 were AGREED and were signed as a correct record.

260 Declarations of Interest

None.

261 Public Participation

None.

262 Monitoring Officer's Update

There have been no formal complaints relating to Members of the Authority since the last meeting.

The current Member Code of Conduct was adopted in 2012 and work is ongoing to introduce a new Code of Conduct that will be presented at the Authority meeting to be held on 28 June 2024. There will be training for all Members later this year to support the implementation of the new Code of Conduct. We are also updating the Member appraisal process which will be in place for the next round of Member appraisals in the autumn. There will be two new Authority members joining the Authority in the coming weeks. An induction programme has been developed and this will be offered to all Members as a refresher training opportunity.

RESOLVED: Members noted this update.

263 Standards Sub-Committee Annual Report

RESOLVED: Members noted this update.

264 Observation Reports

The Head of Organisational Development (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that he regularly received observation reports from the Independent Persons following each formal meeting. These are carefully reviewed and are available for inspection if required.

No significant concerns have been identified.

The Monitoring Officer thanked both Independent Persons for their support and valued feedback to the Authority; appreciation of their role was echoed by the Members of the Sub-Committee.

Mrs Catherine Shewan addressed the meeting and was grateful for the invitation to attend these meetings. She hoped her actions as an Independent Person provided a preventative role to reduce the likelihood of complaints being received by the Authority. Observation reports are completed for every meeting attended. Conduct issues do not arise often and those that do are minor. Mrs Shewan added that the Monitoring Officer picks up issues raised, deals with them appropriately and reports back.

Mrs Shewan highlighted an observation regarding the ability of some Members to concentrate and fully commit to the work of the Authority, in light of the attendance record and some behaviour. It has been observed and reported recently that some Members, at times, are not giving their full

attention and concentration to the meeting in hand, for example, checking emails on mobile devices.

Mrs Shewan stated that she understood some Members are appointed by other local authorities and, with competing commitments, this may be difficult to balance. Mrs Shewan advised that before people accept public roles, such as being a Member of the Authority, it is very important that they carefully consider whether they have time to commit fully to that role.

Mrs Shewan went on to express her gratitude to the Authority for the opportunity to attend an external training course which dealt with complaints where she was able to network with Independent Persons from other authorities.

Mrs Farrell agreed that she had mostly observed good practice, with only a few minor issues. She was pleased that her comments had been picked up by the Monitoring Officer, handled sensitively and effectively and that ultimately, action had been taken. Although the issues were minor, it is reassuring that observations are acted upon.

Mrs Farrell also attended the recent training for Independent Persons and also found it useful and interesting.

Members expressed their appreciation for the Independent Person role and the time given by Mrs Shewan and Mrs Farrell.

Members advised that prior to appointments being made to the Authority, the expected time commitment is clearly understood, including preparation for and attendance at formal meetings, workshops and other meetings.

The Chief Executive added his thanks to the Independent Persons and agreed it is an important role involving scrutiny, observation and feedback. The Chief Executive also welcomed any further suggestions relating to how meetings are conducted by the Authority.

265 Date of Next Meeting

Friday 1 November 2024.