

STANAGE FORUM STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of 19 January 2014 held at the Memorial Hall, Hathersage

Present

Members: Jacque Bevan, Jean Hodgkinson, Adam Long, John Dalton, Scot Thornhill, John Horscroft, Neil Porter, Richard Entwistle, Julian Dunk, Stella McGuire, Jean Monks

PDNPA and Attendees: Mary Bagley, Rebekah Newman, Bill Gordon, Peter Stone

Apology: Jane Marsden

Welcome and Introduction

1. Jacque welcomed everyone to the meeting which met the schedule given at the AGM on 1 November 2014. She introduced Peter Stone who had been invited by Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) to give a presentation on Trusts.

Introduction to different options for forming Trusts

2. The power point slides Peter spoke to are attached at Appendix 1. This prompted a lively discussion. Amongst the point raised were:

- (a) what would a Trust be for?
- (b) we were being written into a corner
- (c) setting up another tier was perverse when there already was a Trust willing to manage North Lees called the National Trust
- (d) North Lees was in public ownership and nothing which could dilute that should be contemplated
- (e) the role of the Forum was, and remained, to write a practical Management Plan. The priority was to take that task forward, not start talking about Trusts;
- (f) how would any Trust relate to the Forum's role: would it supplant the Forum?
- (g) personal experience, and the evidence presented today, suggested the preferred option should be for a Charity Limited by Guarantee or for a Community Interest Organisation;
- (h) we needed to separate in our minds and in practice the Steering Group from any Trust or Friends group. What representation would the Forum and stakeholders have on any Trust?
- (i) PDNPA was looking at ways of encouraging giving. Experience at the Botanical Gardens, and at 8 or 9 other sites in Sheffield where Trusts had been established, was that somewhere had been provided for people to make donations. Trusts could provide a mechanism through and by which money could be raised for North Lees or legacies left; grant applications would be more likely to succeed if made by a Trust;
- (j) Money could deliver added benefit, but where would that leave residual responsibility;
- (k) but why? We need to understand what the money would be for;
- (l) within the Steering Group we had gone over all this before. Why was the possibility of management by the National Trust dismissed;
- (m) most users think North Lees is alright as it is;

- (n) there was concern over control: would ownership be transferred to a Trust? What would happen if 15 years down the line PDNPA had a change of view and a Trust was used to employ people and became a money sink;
- (o) this discussion was the wrong way round: we should be developing the Vision first, and devising the Management Plan. There might then be a question as to whether a Trust should be part of a delivery mechanism;
- (p) a driver for the discussion was an inherited commitment to go to ARP Committee in March to present ideas on visitor giving;
- (q) utter confusion by a back to front discussion. Would a Trust deliver a small scale function or have a far wider remit;
- (r) set up costs would probably be in the region of £3000 with running costs in the order of £2000pa – though these might be much lower;
- (s) it was imperative we should see any business plan. This had been kept from us. All PDNPA seemed to be interested in was maximising giving. Around Hathersage there were many other requests for giving for one thing or another. The bucket was empty;
- (t) the way forward for North Lees was through an holistic approach across all the assets and aspects of the estate, and through enhanced partnership working within the context of the Sheffield Moors Partnership, and across the wider landscape. One virtue of the National Trust was that they alone could declare land inalienable and so keep it in safe hands for ever for everyone. There was no confidence PDNPA could be trusted. All they seemed concerned about was money;
- (u) there was nothing specific to define what a Trust would be for. In the case of the Botanical Gardens there may well have been, but there was no valid comparison between North Lees and the Botanical Gardens which were very different entities;
- (v) the point was reiterated that the discussion was the wrong way round. There was no way there could be any agreement to set up any sort of Trust at this time. What was needed was a Management Plan;
- (w) the conversation had started to go round in circles, and there was a need to move on;
- (x) the March ARP paper should make the recommendation that any consideration of establishing a Trust should follow, not precede, the completion of an agreed Management Plan. One option then could be considering a Trust as an agent for the delivery of that plan.

Budget Situation

3. Rebekah presented budgetary information

- 2013 – 2014: Appendix 2
- 2014 – 2015: Appendix 3
- 2015 -2016: this was handed out during the meeting
- A response to a Freedom of Information request in April 2014: Appendix 4
-

4. Astonishment was expressed at the central overheads cost of £47k in Appendix 2.

5. Current arrangements regarding the Vivat Trust were queried. These are subject to positive ongoing review. A further question related to the Cruck barn and associated buildings, and their potential for income generation. A briefing paper Traditional

Farm Buildings that had been prepared for ARP Committee in September 2014 was circulated, and is attached as Appendix 5.

6. Two comments were that there had been under investment in the Estate for years, and that a budget was not a Business Plan. The latter should be made public and not secreted as a Part B paper. Confidential information regarding individual staffing arrangements need not be exposed. Concern regarding transparency remained. PDNPA were still keeping their cards very close to their chest.

Giving North Lees its special identity

7. Three options for an Estate logo, to double as a car park permit sticker, were circulated, and the preferred option agreed – though a preference for an altogether different design, perhaps that used by Vertebrate Graphics in the BMC's Stand Up For Stanage campaign, was also expressed.

8. A proposal for erecting carved gritstone markers alongside, but away from, the road to indicate the Estate boundary, akin to guide stools, received guarded support. The need for one at Searchlight was queried, whilst Stanedge Pole was suggested as an appropriate location.

9. There was unease at anything which might amount to urbanisation of the Estate.

Update on recent progress

10. Rebekah introduced a summary of a Paper on the future of the camp site which was scheduled for determination at the ARP Committee Meeting on 23 January 2015. There was strong support for Option 6 which proposed retention of the camp site in house with sufficient investment to bring it up to market standards.

11. JB and JH agreed to represent the Steering Group's wishes to Committee, whilst HF said he would be speaking on behalf of the BMC. (In the event Committee agreed to Option 6 with a minor amendment that the sum authorised for investment should be 'up to £60k' rather than '£60k'). Appendix 6 refers.

Towards a refreshed Management Plan

12. Rebekah outlined a series of one to one meetings she has in prospect with representative user groups, the local community, special needs groups, and on cultural heritage and wildlife. She would report back on these to a single future meeting of the Steering Group, rather than hold a whole series of meetings. The February Steering Group Meeting might propose some guiding principles.

13. She went on to describe a series of 11 planned Ranger led walks covering a range of topics.

Other points from Members

14. Discussion during the meeting had been wide ranging and Members did not wish to raise points they had not already aired.

Date, time, place for next meeting

15. The next meeting would be towards the end of February, preferably in Hathersage. Some Members preferred an afternoon time, whilst others found evenings fitted better with their working arrangements.

16. Key topics would be agreeing a forward agenda for meetings, and consultation on pricing options for the car park permit.