

STANAGE FORUM

A chance to have your say

Future Management Options
PDNPA Meeting with Stanage Forum Steering Group
representatives to discuss latest recommendations

Date: 08 June 2006, 6:00 - 8:00p.m.

Venue: Hathersage Memorial Hall

Attended by: PDNPA: John Lomas (Director of Conservation & Development), Jane Chapman (Head of Conservation), Chris Manby (Conservation Properties Manager), Matthew Croney (Stanage/North Lees Estate Manager).

Steering Group: Henry Folkard (British Mountaineering Council), Jean Hodgkinson (Outseats Parish Council), Wendy Thomson, (Sheffield Bird Study Group), Bill Gordon (Estate Warden), Julian Dunk (Local resident).

PDNPA had taken into account comments from the Steering Group concerning future management options for the Estate and presented recommendations to its Resource Management Team (RMT) on 24 May 2006. A copy of this report was sent out to all Steering Group members prior to the meeting (and is available on the website or on request from Matthew).

John Lomas, representing RMT, gave a brief introduction:

- The Authority's asset management principles essentially require us to look at whether we can dispose of our interest in any property, unless we need to hang on to them in order to achieve National Park objectives.
- RMT agreed in principle with the recommendations that we should retain the in-bye and moorland and re-let them together on a 5 year Farm Business Tenancy. They also agreed that we should investigate trust/partnership issues for the longer term future of the Estate. With regard to the buildings, they approved that we could look to sell some of the buildings (the Hall, Farmhouse and Cruck Barn), hopefully to the Vivat Trust but with two important caveats:

1. We obtain a commercial appraisal of the buildings
2. We must comply with regulations on best value, fairness and open competition

The Steering Group representatives made the following comments (some of which repeat those expressed at the last meeting on 24 April but most of which are additional). These views were expressed individually and not necessarily agreed by all members attending:

- The BMC is against the government policy that the Authority should dispose of its property wherever possible and will challenge that elsewhere.
- The PDNPA should own more than other National Parks, as it is different to the others, with high visitor numbers and increasing risks to conservation.

- Woodlands and their current conservation management and use for volunteers (2/3 times per month in winter) are understated in the report.
- The Authority should give greater consideration to whether it could put the buildings to greater use for its own purposes, such as a Ranger Base
- The position concerning the campsite and car parks should be made clearer and we must come back to them.
- The moorland and campsite are linked, e.g. rough camping on the moorland
- I support the recommendations for the land, as they take a staged approach, keeping options open for as long as we can and there is a wisdom to that.
- I am against selling at all, as the previous owner thought that the Authority was the right organisation to manage it.
- This Estate is the jewel in the Authority's crown, surely there are other less important things we could sell.
- The issue of setting up a Trust should have higher status in the report, as it has been agreed by all stakeholders as worth pursuing.
- I still have concern over giving up control of the land to another farm tenant, as good ones who can achieve all of our agreed objectives will be hard to find.
- The agreed farm objectives must be built into the new farm business tenancy.
- Getting a good tenant for the farm is the most crucial thing, in terms of impact on the Estate as a whole and its conservation and recreation.
- The covenant that the Hall must be open to the public once a year must stay in, if the Hall is sold. There should be other covenants to protect against things not covered by planning control, such as no barbed wire, etc.
- If the in-bye were to be sold (against the recommendation), the informal access to the Mill Pond area should be protected.
- It is important to keep options open on the farmhouse and barn.
- We shouldn't do anything to close future options.
- I would prefer the Authority leased the buildings on, rather than sell them.
- If sold on, there should be provision for buy-back.
- Explore disposing of the buildings on a very long term lease, so that they can still raise a mortgage, rather than sale.
- The farm and farmhouse rent must be affordable.
- Any new owners/tenants must fit in with the ethos of the Stanage Forum.
- The historic context is understated in the report. If the Authority sold much of the Estate, there would be a terrific public backlash.

Next steps

The Authority will take these comments into account in finalising a report for its Services Committee, which is to be held at Bakewell Town Hall on Friday 30 June at 2p.m.

The meeting will be open to public participation. Any member of the public can speak at the meeting for 3 minutes. It was suggested that it might be best for the Steering Group to nominate 1 or 2 people to speak, giving different perspectives, rather than have a large number of people saying very similar things.

Please follow the guidance and inform our Democratic Services Team before noon on Weds 28th if wish to speak.

The outcomes of the committee will then be implemented as soon as possible, to try to get new farm tenants in place by 29 September 2006.

Once the new management structure is known for the major properties on the Estate, the Authority will review how the other parts (campsite, car parks, woodlands, Estate Warden's residence, etc) should fit into that wider picture. John Lomas gave his assurance that the Authority will involve the Steering Group in those decisions.

For further information: Visit the website: www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stanage or contact: Matthew Crony, PDNPA, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AE. Email: matthew.crony@peakdistrict.gov.uk Tel: 01629 816351.