

General Committee of Council

Unconfirmed minutes of the twenty-seventh meeting of the General Committee of Council held on 25 June 2003 at the Chesterfield Hotel, Chesterfield

Present: Sir Martin Doughty (Chair)
Ms M Appleby
Dr A Brown (Chief Executive)
Mr T Burke
Dr A Clements (Director)
Ms S Collins (Director)
Dr K Duff (Director)
Prof E Gallagher
Dr S Gubbay
Prof M Hart
Mr S Hockman
Mr D Hulyer
Mrs A Kelaart
Prof D Macdonald (Items 1-10)
Dr M Moser
Dr A Powell
Ms C Wood (Director)

In attendance: Mr J Wray (Corporate Business Team, Minuting Secretary)
Ms A Hope (Item 5)
Ms J Hanna (Item 6)
Mr P Grice (Item 7)
Mrs M Bull (Item 9)
Mr B Keith (Item 11)
Mr S Thomas (Item 18)

Mrs Katharine Bryan, Chair of JNCC, addressed the meeting during Item 14.

1. Apologies and welcomes

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and general public. The Committee's field trips had been well organised and extremely interesting and enjoyable. The strong partnerships in the area had been clearly exhibited. There was a strong message that future June meetings of Council should be held where field trips at that time of year would best demonstrate key interests in the area.

Action: Mr Tither

- 1.2 The Committee **agreed** that the Chair should write to Mr Tony Hams, Chair, Peak District National Parks Authority to thank him and his staff for their contribution and hospitality during the field trips.
Action: Chair
- 1.3 The Committee **thanked** Tom Moat and his staff in the Peak District and Derbyshire Team, together with Richard Leafe, General Manager, for providing such excellent field trips.
- 1.4 The Chair **welcomed** Katharine Bryan and Deryck Steer of the JNCC to the meeting and invited Katharine Bryan, as the new Chair of the JNCC, to speak to the Committee during Item 14.
- 1.5 There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of the twenty-sixth meeting of the General Committee of Council held on 19 March 2003 (GC M03 01)

- 2.1 The minutes were **confirmed**.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 **Paragraph 14.1** – Professor Hart asked for an update regarding the situation over Cuckmere Haven. There still seemed to be some public concern over the issue. Dr Clements would write to Professor Hart and inform him of the latest developments.
Action: Dr Clements
- 3.2 The Committee **noted** the Action Points table and the following points were raised:
- 3.2.1 Action Point 7.3 Dr Moser asked about status of the Science Action Plan. Dr Duff said that the plan was still in preparation but should be circulated within the next two weeks.
Action: Dr Duff

4. Draft Position Statements

4a. Draft Position Statement on Access on NNRs (GC P03 18)

- 4a.1 Dr Clements introduced the paper. The general format of Position Statements had been previously discussed. All three of today's papers were in a consistent format which was more user friendly. This was part of a general review of position statements which will include consultation with Council Members.
- 4a.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- 4a.2.1 This position statement was designed to provide more of a contract between English Nature and the public, it reflects the rights and responsibilities of citizens together with an indication of what they can expect on NNRs. The dual role of NNRs as SSSIs, the need to achieve favourable condition on them together with their role as a place to demonstrate and experience nature and to investigate management techniques, was included in the position statements. The position statement deliberately did not address the issue of the dedication of NNRs as access land.
- 4a.2.2 The position statement must be put into practice, particularly regarding the aspects of interpretation, however, care must be taken not to raise expectations as, we are constrained by resources and expertise. Links to Nature-On-Line would however address some of these immediate concerns due to the planned provision of the virtual tours of NNRs. There should be some mention of the Spotlight NNRs. If access to NNRs was to be encouraged as part of education then it was important to engage school children.
- 4a.2.3 There needed to be clear priorities set on the ground to ensure that the ideals of the position statement could be achieved. Spotlight NNRs and those NNRs near urban areas were particularly important in this respect.
- 4a.2.4 The general development of the format was improving. This was good but care was needed when the position statement was placed on the internet. The text still needed to be enlivened in places and tested for plain English.
- 4a.2.5 The position statement was aimed specifically at the accessibility to NNRs rather than about the issue of NNRs in general and their role. It was important not to forget the latter and also the English Nature policy regarding acquisition of NNRs.
- 4a.3 The Committee **agreed** that the text should be redrafted, put to the Plain English Campaign and considered by the Committee again through a postal consultation before being signed off by Chair.

Action: Dr Clements

4b. Draft Position Statement on Sustainable Development (GC P03 14)

- 4b.1 Ms Collins introduced the paper. The position statement reflected the issues raised at the last meeting. The audience for this position statement was primarily specialist and so particular thought was being given to the formatting of this position statement, especially regarding its form on the web.
- 4b.2 The Committee **considered** the position statement and raised the following points in discussion.
- 4b.2.1 The first paragraph needed revising further as it was still not inspiring enough. The environment provided a major opportunity for achieving sustainable development and English Nature should be looking to encourage the achievement of major gains rather than just environmental protection. The benefits of a healthy environment, as written in the position statement, needed

some revision. A healthy environment was important to everyone, not just those living in a rural setting. Reference was also needed to what benefits could be obtained from the old mineral extraction sites.

4b.2.2 It would be appropriate to include our intention to work with Government to promote the greater understanding and the adoption of sustainable development.

4b.2.3 It would be helpful if the position statement had some mention of English Nature's policy regarding land use and planning in relation to designated sites and the sometimes irreplaceable features they contain. Dr Clements and Ms Collins would liaise to redraft point 3.1a in the position statement to achieve this.

Action: Dr Clements & Ms Collins

4b.2.4 The role of biodiversity as a measure of sustainable development needed clarification. Biodiversity itself was sometimes hard to quantify and it could be one of several measures of sustainable development.

4b.2.5 It was important to recognise that English Nature has legal duties and these needed explaining, but in a neutral way. Our view must not be seen as being overly restrictive or negative.

4b.3 The Committee **agreed** that the text should be redrafted and sent to the Plain English Campaign before being signed off by Chair.

Action: Ms Collins

4b.4 The Chair **congratulated** Council, Ms Collins and staff in the work done to date on this position statement.

4c. Draft Position Statement on Sustainable Tourism (GC P03 17)

4c.1 Ms Collins introduced the paper. Essentially it had two parts, the first was that of sustainable tourism and how tourism could reduce its footprint on the environment. The second part addressed the issue of how the environment provided opportunities for sustainable tourism in particular that of enjoying nature.

4c.2 The Committee **considered** the draft position statement and raised the following points in discussion.

4c.2.1 The field trips had shown the need for public financial support for a high quality environment in certain areas. The support could include helping landowners diversify into environmental tourism and interpretation.

4c.2.2 The position statement could be enhanced by including some of the information in the cover note in particular paragraph 1, the tourism toolkit and detailing some of the organisations we work with. There was, however, too much use of the word sustainable. Definitions were important and alternative

words needed to be found. The position statement should link to the position statement on sustainable development.

- 4c.2.3 The audience for the position statement was not clear. Tourism was hard to define as it included active pursuits which did not seem to be recognised in the position statement. There was a rural focus that needed addressing and English Nature could inspire developments that lead to the enjoyment of the natural environment.. The links to the People and Nature work needed clarifying.
- 4.3 The Committee **agreed** that the text should be redrafted and be brought back to a future meeting for further consideration.
- 4.4 The Committee **acknowledged** the important work on tourism done by Stephen Warman in the South-West Region.

5. Discussion paper on Biofuels (GC P03 26)

- 5.1 Dr Duff introduced the paper which was intended as a discussion paper to show English Nature's current thinking on this fast moving area with which we must engage. Defra and industry have been developing the use of biofuels. However there were issues for English Nature, particularly regarding the impact on biodiversity and water demand. English Nature has the opportunity to stimulate the debate and influence future thinking. Area Teams were already dealing with biofuel powerplant applications and guidance was being proposed. The paper concentrated on the issues surrounding the large scale use of biofuels.
- 5.2 The Committee **noted** the issues raised in the paper and the following points were made:
 - 5.2.1. Paragraph 7 of the paper described English Nature's current role. In addition to the points listed, English Nature should encourage a renewables strategy that puts alternative fuels within the context of sustainability.
 - 5.2.2. The taxing of biofuels could be an issue affecting their use. Calls for a reduction on biofuels could reduce government income. A compensating increase in the tax on non-renewable fuels might be helpful. The tax issues needed further consideration.
 - 5.2.3. There was a need to look for alternatives for transport fuels but beware of unexpected outcomes such as the destruction of much of Brazil's rain forest to be replaced by sugar cane for fuel production. Fuel costs were unpredictable and it was unclear what the main drivers would be for biofuels whose energy efficiency varied widely.
 - 5.2.4 Demand management was a related issue. The need for fuels could be reduced overall by better planning, for example, by building shops closer to residential areas thereby reducing the need for vehicle use.

- 5.2.5 English Nature should set its position on biofuels in the light of agriculture and energy policies. It may need to be sceptical due to the implications of biofuels on land use and water demands. There would be huge implications for ground water demands in the UK if large scale biofuel production was adopted. We should encourage the use of waste materials in fuel production.
- 5.2.6 English Nature engages with many farm business issues and a general paper on our approach to farm business and what we wanted from farmers could be beneficial.
- 5.3 The Committee **agreed** that English Nature's approach to biofuels should be as set out in the paper and **noted** that there would be early discussions with Defra to help identify the next steps.

Action: Dr Duff

6. Connecting Social Policy to English Nature (GC P03 15)

- 6.1 Ms Collins introduced the paper. Social policy did not obviously link with nature conservation. This paper is an analysis of the social policy sector which identifies the links between policy makers and nature conservation with the aim of increasing support for nature conservation from sectors with different agendas. Health was an important example where the benefits to human well being from accessible greenspace were well known. In addition it was important to dispel the image that nature conservation was the prerogative of only small sectors of society.
- 6.2. The Committee welcomed the paper and **commented** on the issues set out in it. The following points were raised in discussion:
 - 6.2.1 The paper showed that nature conservation was not an end in itself but could help address a variety of social issues. The contacts that had been made with various public health promotion organisations had been beneficial. Some Teams were already involved with much of this at local level. Making the proposed connections should also benefit biodiversity in the longer term. English Nature's contribution to meeting Government's social policy should be highlighted together with its leverage. Details of the work of Area Teams in this area should be collated and disseminated across English Nature.
 - 6.2.2 Some Council members were concerned that English Nature should do more to engage with education; contact with nature can be an important driver of the learning process as well as contributing to health and well-being. The low priority given to developing field skills through the formal education process was a problem. Chair asked the Executive Committee to consider these issues and report back to Council on the scope for engaging effectively with the education sector.
 - 6.2.3 There was still a need to attract into nature conservation people who would not normally have opportunities to become interested. English Nature needed to draw the experience of such schemes as "Wildspace!" to get a feel of how to

Action: Directors

take forward future developments. The Chair asked the Executive Committee to investigate the possibility of developing “Spotlight Local Nature Reserves” with special links to local communities and areas of high social exclusion.

Action: Directors

- 6.2.4 In terms of resourcing, English Nature had done much in adjusting its own resources and looking for opportunities to help direct other organisations’ resources. Further attention to this was needed including feeding in our views to the Strategic Review of Lottery Funding.

- 6.3 The Committee **agreed** the initial set of priority actions and **asked** for a progress report at a future meeting.

Action: Ms Collins

7. Defra’s delivery plan for the PSA target on farmland birds (GC P03 13)

- 7.1 Dr Duff introduced the paper, which was largely for information. English Nature was contributing to Defra’s Delivery Plan for the PSA target on farmland birds. English Nature together with others, especially RSPB, had spent many years studying the issues affecting farmland birds and then successfully engaged with decision makers which has led to changes in several policies. The challenge was to make the changes happen. Phil Grice had been very influential in taking forward English Nature’s contribution to Defra’s work and was the principal author of Defra’s leaflet shown in Annex 1. The farmland bird work was an important part of English Nature’s Wider Environment work.

- 7.2. The Committee **noted** the production of Defra’s Delivery Plan and the following points were raised in discussion:

- 7.2.1. There was a need to acknowledge the necessity for some predator control in the management of bird populations.

- 7.2.2. The delivery of the PSA target was a hands-on activity but it was important to be flexible and not micromanage. There was a need to show specific projects where owners and occupiers had been successful and to encourage others that partnerships with conservation worked. Area Teams needed to be clear that they had resources for this.

- 7.2.3. The ESA visited on the field trips the previous day suggested there was little evidence that Countryside Stewardship and Agri-Environment Schemes were actually contributing to an increase in the bird populations. The paper highlighted the need for more quantitative information. The areas where bird populations were increasing might be acting as sumps, drawing in birds from outside. Review of SSSI guidelines will consider the need to include a farmland bird assemblage within the ornithological guidelines. The qualitative information would take several years to compile but the Arable Stewardship pilot is giving useful information. The Breeding Bird Survey was the main monitoring system and would give population trends down to regional level.

7.2.4 There was concern that the PSA target looked backwards. There was a need to look forward to see how farming will be in the future.

7.3 The Committee would be updated on progress at a future meeting.

Action: Dr Duff

8. Performance Report : April 2002 – March 2003 (GC P03 16)

8.1 Dr Brown introduced the paper. It had been a difficult year due to the long illness and sad death of the previous Chief Executive but English Nature had remained focussed and stable and produced a very creditable performance. The paper highlighted the main areas of achievement.

8.2 The Committee **discussed** the report and the following points were raised:

8.2.1 The finances had been handled in an exemplary fashion. There had been significant in year changes to budgets and progress, partly due to the Pay Review. The changes had been handled well. There had been considerable amounts of external funding to deploy, sometimes at short notice and this had been done well.

8.2.2. Despite the successes the Directors were not complacent. The favourable condition target was just missed, more work needed to be done on communications and environmental accreditation and more influencing was needed at the regional level. In the current year, targets will be sharpened, Programme Board business plans will be prioritised and there will be more active management of the staff resource.

8.2.3 The NNR Spring Conference was considered a great success and the Committee **congratulated** the staff involved in its organisation.

8.2.4 The achievement of the SSSI condition assessment was very significant and welcome.

8.2.5 The target to increase the number of statutory plans at regional and local level that included policies of sufficient quality to protect priority habitats and species was only partly achieved. This should have extra emphasis in the current year.

8.3 The Committee **congratulated** the Directors and staff on an excellent performance in a difficult year.

9. Human Resources Annual Report : 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003 (GC P03 19)

9.1 Ms Wood introduced the paper. The format had changed slightly in that there was now an executive summary attached to the normal paper. The paper included the emerging Human Resources Strategy Framework that sets the context for Human Resource Management following the direction set by

Council and the Chief Executive. In addition to everyday work, Human Resource staff were continually looking at new issues to ensure English Nature remained a good employer.

9.2 The Council **noted** and **welcomed** the report and raised the following points in discussion:

9.2.1 English Nature was clearly a very flexible organisation. The Human Resource Strategy Framework was important in supporting efforts taking forward the new agenda work including aspects of leadership, delivery, skills, knowledge and behaviour.

9.2.2 Staff turnover was low but a sizable proportion who did leave, left because they felt there was little opportunity for career development. The increase was partly due to the fact that English Nature was the last of the Country Agencies to review its pay and conditions so discontent had risen. Additionally many staff did not recognise that career progression could also be horizontal, rather than vertical, and indeed often needed to be so.

9.2.3 The awards for the Reward and Recognition Scheme seemed relatively low on the face of it. However these were being reviewed but the emphasis was on the recognition aspect rather than financial reward.

9.2.4 Workloads still seemed an issue yet many staff were so committed to nature conservation they were self motivated and worked hard. There might be requests for too much detail from senior management, exemplified by the length of several of the papers coming to the Committee. Workload needed to be tackled at every level from the strategic down to the individual, where some staff put too much pressure on themselves. There was constructive engagement with the unions on workload and the Health & Safety Committee will be bringing issues to the Whitley Committee. The Executive Committee had discussed workload in its recent strategy workshop. The lessons were also being developed from some pilot workload management workshops.

9.2.5 The Committee **congratulated** all those who had been involved in the successful negotiation and implementation of the pay review.

9.2.6 The Welfare Officers report showed some potentially worrying trends. It would be helpful if there could be comparisons done with other organisations in future reports.

Action: Ms Wood

9.2.7 There was a range of employment legislation such as the Age Discrimination Act and racial legislation that would have an impact on English Nature. A small group of staff led by Mrs Bull were looking at diversity issues.

9.3 The Committee **congratulated** the Human Resources staff on a good year.

10. Audit and Risk Management Committee's Annual Report to Council (GC P03 23)

- 10.1 Ms Wood introduced the paper which was a report from the Audit & Risk Management Committee. The internal auditor had stated that English Nature statement of internal control was “adequate and effective” this was, in fact, a very good rating from the auditor. The Audit & Risk Management Committee were not complacent. Next year English Nature would strive to keep its high reputation for corporate governance; a harder look would be taken at projects that received external funding’ and a close watch kept on the implementation of the IT and IS strategies.
- 10.2 The Committee **noted** the report and Professor Gallagher (Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee) then raised the following points:
- 10.2.1 The auditor’s report was a very good one. This was particularly pleasing as English Nature had a high level of internal devolution. The conclusions of the report had been supported by the National Audit Office.
- 10.2.2 The previous year the Audit & Risk Management Committee had sent a wake-up call to English Nature as several areas needed to take note of audit recommendations. This had been done. The internal auditors themselves had been challenged to improve their own effectiveness. This had also been addressed.
- 10.2.3 The Audit & Risk Management Committee had looked for the first time at issues relating to the deployment and effectiveness of external funding and the delivery of projects done on English Nature’s behalf.
- 10.2.4 Risk management was developed well in English Nature and the Audit and Risk Management Committee had looked hard at developing project management. English Nature was considered by NAO, the internal auditors and others to be very proficient in its risk management and corporate governance work.
- 10.2.5 Professor Gallagher **thanked** the Audit and Risk Management Committee, which was now entirely non-executive, and those staff which had supported its work.
- 10.3 The Chair **thanked** Professor Gallagher for his role in Chairing the Audit and Risk Management Committee and encouraging the adoption of best practice.

11. Achievement Report on National Nature Reserves (GC P03 21)

- 11.1 Dr Clements introduced the paper which focussed on achievements in this area on National Nature Reserves over the past year. The dual purpose of National Nature Reserves were the aims of achieving favourable condition and improving the quality of the visitor experience.
- 11.2 The Committee **noted** the report and raised the following points in discussion.

- 11.2.1 English Nature was not on target to achieve favourable condition on NNRs. This was not acceptable. A mechanism was now in place to achieve this. Currently 67% of the NNR area was in favourable condition as opposed to the milestone target of 75%. The target for this year would be 80%. The assessment of coastal erosion on NNRs was being investigated to ensure there was consistent approach. Many NNRs were subject to common grazing rights and this affected the overgrazing on NNRs. Grazing rights on some NNRs were being bought out and this should lead to an improvement in condition.
- 11.2.2 The Nature On-Line material on NNRs would be published in the autumn. It was of high quality and was based on the skills and experience of NNR staff.
- 11.2.3 The NNR Conference had been an outstanding success. The Committee **thanked** the organisers in particular Rachel Lockwood, Claire Dixon and Stewart Lane. The Conference Report had just been published and copies would be sent to the Committee.
- 11.2.4 The NNR signage project was welcomed however it was not intended as an alternative to a fuller interpretative approach. There was room for further improvement in both signage and interpretation and the Committee **accepted** Mr Hulyer's offer to help with this. An English Nature Interpretation Strategy workshop had been organised for September 2003.

Action: Dr Clements

12. Nature for People : Mid Project Review (GC P03 20)

- 12.1 Ms Wood introduced the paper. £10m had been received from the Capital Modernisation Fund to help tackle the PSA targets and increase the public benefits from reserves and other sites of high wildlife interest.
- 12.1.1 The funds had been deployed to tackle issues in a number of novel ways including the buying out of grazing rights, farmland restoration work and the addressing of issues relating to the extractive minerals industry. The website was being refurbished through Nature On-line.
- 12.1.2 The CMF monies were available for two years and English Nature was confident that the projects would be delivered on time and to budget.
- 12.1.3 Two visual reports had been sent to Defra and Treasury, showing before and after photographs of various projects and this had been well received. A joint Defra/Treasury field trip to see some of the projects had been very successful. All the projects had exit strategies. Some of these had highlighted the need for ongoing expenditure and the project was looking at those costs and building them into the next planning round.
- 12.2 The Committee **noted** the report.

13. Chair, Chief Executive and Directors' Topical Report (GC P03 24)

13.1 Chair introduced the paper.

13.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. **Humber Estuary Designation Project** – Informal briefing for Council would take place early in 2004 if the Executive Committee considered the site for notification.
- b. **Breckland Judicial Review** – The review had taken place. The importance of the Bramshill Judgement was clear throughout the hearing as was the fact that Council's discussion to confirm the notification of the Breckland's site was taken immediately after the Bramshill confirmation. Judgement is awaited.
- c. **Shellhaven (London Gateway)** – The Committee **commended** the work done by the staff in this case.
- d. **National Volunteers Project** – Volunteers must now retire on their 81st birthday to comply with insurance policy.
- e. **Sustainable communities plan** – English Nature feels the plan is misnamed. English Nature has told the ODPM Select Committee that there is no evidence that sustainability issues were being seriously addressed. English Nature was working constructively with Defra on this issue.
- f. **All- party Parliamentary Group on Earth Sciences** – Professor Hart had attended the meeting. Colin Prosser had made an excellent presentation. There had been some criticism from one source that English Nature did not do enough for geomorphology.
- g. **Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund** – The October 2003 event will highlight to Ministers and others the benefits that have come out of the grants to date and the value of having the scheme extended.
- h. **Biodiversity (Para 30.1)** – The Committee **congratulated** the English Nature team, led by Keith Porter, on their input to the Perth conference.
- i. **Knowledge management** – The IBM narrative database was just one way in which English Nature was working on knowledge management. English Nature is getting a good reputation in the field with Ron Donaldson being regularly asked to speak to external audiences on the subject. Council will discuss knowledge management in due course.

Action: Ms Wood

- j. **Planning Policy Statement (PPG9)** – The importance of PPG9 in dealing with compensation issues and planning gain needed highlighting. Mr Hockman would be included in the preparation of drafting comments to ODPM.

Action: Ms Collins

- k. **PRO4 Paragraph 18.3** – If schemes are statutory then they have to be carried out. OFWAT's challenge to this was worrying but not unexpected. English Nature was resisting this challenge together with the Environment Agency.
- l. **"New wildwoods"** – The Dutch experiment had been controversial however the proposal in Sussex was not comparable. Several farmers were looking to manage their land jointly and allow more free range grazing.
- m. **Pennington Cliff, Sidmouth (Paragraph 25)** – The engineers overseeing the coastal protection proposals had adopted the most damaging option. English Nature and the World Heritage Site staff were maintaining a watching brief. There was a renewed threat to Durlston Bay where engineering works that would extend the present damage are contemplated.

14. Unconfirmed minutes of the Fifty-Eighth meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (GC P03 25)

14.1 The Chair introduced the paper.

14.2 The following topics were **raised** in discussion:

- a. **Marine SACs** – It was good to see this work going forward. However it was important to base the identification of the sites on science but it was important to look at the broad level and not be overly detailed with the scientific criteria. There was considerable thought over these issues by Dr Pentreath's groups. However there was a lot of information that could be issued in a simple form to indicate important areas for birds and help Defra and DTI deal with wind-farm applications and other issues. Hopefully this could be issued by the Autumn.
- b. **JNCC Marine Priorities 2003/04 to 2005/06** – There was no reference to the earth science issues within the marine priorities. However those issues would be addressed as the JNCC strategy was developed. In the meanwhile whilst marine sites were being set up it was important to also address the related work looking at ecosystems management, spatial planning, fisheries and other aspects of the wider environment that related to the sites.

14.3 The Chair formally welcomed Mrs Bryan, Chair of the JNCC, to the meeting and invited her to give her view of the JNCC's future over the next few years. Mrs Bryan raised the following points:

- 14.3.1 The emphasis of the JNCC's work was a partnership. Mrs Bryan and Mr Steer, JNCC's Managing Director, were visiting all the Country Agencies to see how their business was done.
- 14.3.2 This was a time of change for the JNCC. The FMPR action plan was underway and the necessary JNCC strategy was being developed and English Nature will be contributing to that.

- 14.3.3 The strategy was needed to help the JNCC play a stronger role in the nature conservation community. The Members of the JNCC felt there were gaps in its work and those needed filling. The JNCC's draft vision, role and draft aims and objectives had been approved for consultation.
- 14.3.4 The JNCC and the Country Agencies needed to pull together. The Government should have a UK vision for nature conservation that was supported by the visions of the JNCC and the Country Agencies.
- 14.3.5 The JNCC had a support unit of 100. These staff must support and own the JNCC so its strategy and plans were also their's and Mrs Bryan would be seeking the support of the Country Agencies, Defra and the Scottish and Welsh administrations and would like to visit the Committee later in the year to discuss the JNCC strategy in greater depth.
- 14.4 The Chair **thanked** Mrs Bryan and formally invited her and Mr Steer to lunch with the Committee.
- 14.5 Professor Hart asked the purpose of a questionnaire on marine geological sites that had recently been issued. Dr Duff would find out and report back to Professor Hart.

15. Other Business

- 15.1 The Committee **approved** Dr Gubbay's appointment to the Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- 15.2 Following the procedure set out in the Corporate Governance Manual the Committee **noted** that the Chair had authorised Dr Moser to be paid for an extra six days work due to the large amount of time Dr Moser had spent on English Nature business in excess of his contracted hours.

Closed session (minuted separately)

16. Review of Council Members Assignments to Teams (GC P03 28C)

The Committee discussed the review.

17. Chief Executive's Performance Objectives for 2003/04

Officers left the meeting and **Council** discussed the Chief Executive's Performance Objectives.

18. Review of Rural Delivery – Briefing (GC P03 27C)

The Committee were updated on the review of rural delivery arrangements led by Lord Haskins.

