

Recreation Management Strategy Working Group
Notes of Meeting held at Brockenhurst Village Hall, 13 September 2012

Members Present:

Alastair Duncan	New Forest Access Forum	Ann Sevier	Commoners Defence Association
Richard Deakin	Verderers	Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre	New Forest National Park Authority
Graham Baker	New Forest Association	Ruth Croker	Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society
John Durnell	Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust	Richard Frampton	New Forest National Park Authority
David Stain	New Forest Cycle Working Group	Stephen Lorton	New Forest Tourism Association
Simon Smith	Forestry Commission	Sam Jones	Hampshire County Council
Phil Marshall	National Trust		

Members Absent:

Tina Cant	New Forest Equine Forum	Mark Larter	Natural England
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Non-Members Present:

Steve Avery	Director of Park Services, New Forest NPA
Sarah Manchester (notes)	Countryside Access Officer, New Forest NPA

1. Apologies

1.1 The Working Group had no Chair at the start of the meeting, and Sarah Manchester welcomed the new members to the Group: Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre and Richard Frampton representing the National Park Authority, and Simon Smith standing in for Nick Tucker for the Forestry Commission. Sarah also welcomed Steve Avery to the meeting; Steve will be attending Working Group meetings in his capacity as an officer of the National Pak Authority.

1.2 Apologies were received from Heather Gould (New Forest Dog Owners Group), Malcolm Palmer (Royal Yachting Association) and Martin Devine (New Forest District Council).

2. Election of Chair

2.1 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre was the only member who had expressed in interest in standing for Chair. Richard Frampton nominated Oliver, this was seconded by several members including Richard Deakin, and Oliver was the elected to the position of Chair by a show of hands.

2.2 Oliver took over as Chair, reminding members that they are assumed to have read all meeting papers prior to meetings, and the meeting would be conducted on that basis.

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 The meeting paper details the work of the task and finish group and the changes it proposed to the Terms of Reference. The task and finish group's recommendation was agreed by the Working Group, as follows:

Agreed: That the Group approves the revised Terms of Reference, the proposed changes being highlighted in yellow in the meeting paper.

3.2 It was further confirmed that, as recommended by the task and finish group, meeting notes will be agreed with the Chair before being circulated to members, and will be formally agreed at the next Working Group meeting.

3.3 The Working Group also underlined the necessity for sub-groups, in their reports to the Working Group, must make clear what their recommendations are.

3.4 In respect of the membership of the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), it was agreed that this should follow suit from Wiltshire Council, and that the RYA would remain a voting member of the Group, would be kept informed via future meeting Agendas and papers, and may attend future meetings when it appears that it would be of benefit.

4. Actions from the previous meeting

4.1 Following a discussion on the procedure followed when an application to join had been made in the past, the two options proposed in respect of 'Group membership' were agreed. These were:

Agreed: That no further action needs to be taken in respect of the membership of a representative of people with disabilities and other access needs.

Agreed: That the interest of cycling should be represented by a single organisation.

Action: The two cycling organisations (i.e. Cycle Working Group and Hampshire Cycling) will be invited to agree between them which will be a member of the Working Group.

4.2 There was a long discussion on the Off-road cycling proposal. It was noted that when previously voting on which actions were important for the Working Group, the action to make changes to the cycle network (Action 6.2.4) only received one vote. It was further noted that only 8 of the total 18 Group members voted at that time. There was a general agreement that the prioritisation of RMS actions for the Working Group to take forward should be revisited within the near future; no timescale was set.

4.3 The Group was asked for a show of hands on who disagreed that the issue should be shelved for 12 months. 4 members indicated that they disagreed with this proposal.

Agreed: That the issue of off-road cycling on the Crown lands would be put to one side, and reviewed in 12 months time.

4.4 There was further discussion on the options for introducing monitoring, and the use of marshalls.

Action: The Verderers (via Richard Deakin) were asked to define more exactly what they meant by 'monitoring' when they said in response to the Group's earlier presentment that they wished the Working Group to design and introduce a robust system of monitoring.

Action: All members will ask their own organisations if they would be willing to train and deploy cycle marshalls.

4.4 Further clarification was requested on the legal framework through which decisions about permissions for cycling on the Crown lands are made.

Action: Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre to meet separately with David Stain to clarify the framework for decision making.

5. Achievements

5.1 Ann Sevier reported on the success of the 'Sally the Pony' booklet; investigations are progressing as to whether more copies can be printed.

5.2 Ann raised the idea that a sub-group could be set up to organise a public event, such as a 'sustainable user day'.

5.3 Sam Jones reported that funding has been secured for the resurfacing of multi-user routes, and asked anyone who was aware of a public right of way that was in need of resurfacing to contact him.

6. Core Routes Sub-group

6.1 Sarah Manchester reported that the bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund had been successful, and it was hoped that work on the (renamed) New Forest Community Routes would be progressed through a revenue and capital allocation from this fund. Sarah's view was that the sub-group would remain involved with the work.

7 Research sub-group

7.1 John Durnell and Alastair Duncan summarised the Erosion Study, which is now complete with a two volume report produced, and informed the Group of recommendations for future work.

Action: Copies of the report will be circulated to all members via email.

Agreed: That the report is endorsed and will be made available on the Group's web pages, and that the Forestry Commission will be asked (a) to repeat the monitoring in approximately 5 years time, and (b) subject to funding availability, to undertake remedial works on the remaining areas of erosion.

7.2 Alastair suggested that the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme would present a good opportunity for funding remedial and preventative work on the Open Forest, as this work would meet two of the scheme's five objectives.

7.3 John summarised the sub-group's work on tranquillity, and its recommendations that a bespoke tranquillity study based on a modified version of the CPRE methodology should be undertaken for the New Forest, and that ground-truthing of the outputs was essential. The sub-group felt that it should retain a consultative role in this, but that it should be led by an organisation such as the National Park Authority. The reasons for this are that a) the National Park Authority has sufficient resources in place, b) 'tranquillity' is one of the Special Qualities of the National Park, and c) tranquillity is likely to become a factor in development control through the new National Planning Policy Framework.

Action: To recommend that the National Park Authority takes forward the tranquillity work based on the recommendations of the sub-group.

7.4 The Research sub-group is now in a position to take on some new work, and requested that the Working Group considers some options.

Action: All members of the Working Group to (a) find out whether their own organisations are able to undertake any of the suggestions put forward by the sub-group; and (b) report back before the December meeting with specific suggestions of work for the Research sub-group and/or thoughts on the suggestions made by the sub-group.

8. RMS Review

8.1 The Group was given an update report on progress made against the priority actions in the Recreation Management Strategy.

Agreed: The Group endorsed the report as written.

9. Outcomes to be communicated more widely

9.1 It was confirmed that this is a standard item on the Agenda, and includes publicity and promotion of the Group and its work.

Agreed: That the National Park Authority issues a Press Release briefly summarising the work of the Group over the last two years.

9.2 The valuable work of Vicky Myers as Chair of the Group was unanimously acknowledged, and the Group expressed its gratitude for her contribution over the last two years.

Agreed: That Vicky Myers should be formally thanked from the Working Group for her work for the Group.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 13 December, Brockenhurst Village Hall