

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 5 September 2016*

Agenda Item 12: *Visit to South Downs LAF, 22 October 2016*

Five members of the New Forest LAF together with Mark Holroyd attended the October meeting of the South Downs LAF. We were made very welcome.

Discussion included:

1. A review of the open access direction/restriction at Cheriton Wood.
2. The coast path and its relationship/link to the South Downs Way. The two need to be combined in places so there is only 1 not 2 National Trails.
3. Permissive Paths within the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The large number of permissive paths in the LAF area had previously been allocated to all LAF members. All had been involved in checking out the usefulness of these paths and their ease of use and all reported back at the meeting. An interesting and useful discussion ensued.
4. Online Shop. This provides income generation. Fingerposts are among the items sold.

After a sandwich lunch provided by the LAF we went on a site visit to the Meon Valley Trail.

Meon Valley Trail.

This 10 mile trail, an old railway line has recently had a makeover. The SDNPA and HCC have both been involved.

The work was desirable as the route was very muddy in parts and there was a lot of vegetation, including trees, encroaching on the path from the sides. Cutting back the vegetation has opened up views and improved habitats. The muddy area has been resurfaced with mixed size stones which are now bedded into the paths surface.

New signage and information boards are in place. The fingerposts have a logo carved on them and state where the path goes and gives distances.

The route is wide and for use by walkers horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers. It will become a restricted byway with preventive measures taken to prevent use by motorised vehicles.

It provides a safe environment for users and as well as providing a route along the old track the opportunity has been taken to provide additional paths to some nearby places.

This was an interesting and worthwhile visit.

Ruth Croker
Chairman
November 2016