

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: Monday 13 March 2017

Agenda item 2: Election of Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair for 2017

At the last meeting in December Alastair Duncan stood down as Vice-Chair, having very kindly extended his tenure for 6 months pending the proposal of a new candidate for the role.

In the absence of any such proposal and as an interim measure, Ann Sevier (who as many will know chaired the Forum for a number of years) has kindly offered to step in and take the role in support of Ruth as Chair. On 13 March the Forum will be asked to endorse Ann's appointment as Vice-Chair, unless another suitable candidate has come forward.

If any member would like to see a formal election and/or would like to stand, please inform petronella.natgrass@hants.gov.uk by Monday 6 March.

Please note that in the interests of balance this should ideally be a member representing either landowners and occupiers or 'other interests' (i.e. not recreational users).

The national and local background is provided below.

National guidance

The national guidance incorporates the requirements of the national regulations www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20070268.htm, together with more informal advice:

5.2 Chairman and Vice-Chairman

5.2.1 *The Regulations require forum members to elect from amongst their number a chairman and vice-chairman, taking such steps as may be necessary to ensure as far as practicable that they are drawn from members representing different categories of interest [categories being access user, land manager, 'other' - they may both represent 'other interests' provided they do not represent the same interest]. Members of the appointing authority should avoid offering themselves to these posts if possible.*

5.2.2 *The length of time to be served by the chairman and vice-chairman is for the forum to determine, but will be constrained by the maximum term of their appointment as a forum member.*

5.2.3 *The precise role of the chairman and vice-chairman should be determined locally by the forum and should not be unduly onerous. Much will depend on the time which the chairman and vice-chairman are prepared to devote. An effective secretary and supportive appointing authority will certainly reduce the call on their time, and there is no reason why other forum members cannot undertake certain tasks if it will help to share the burden.*

5.2.4 *In chairing a meeting the chairman and vice-chairman should adopt an inclusive approach, actively seeking to ensure that all relevant views are heard, and should steer the forum, as far as possible, towards a clear and agreed line. The chairman and vice-chairman should not feel constrained from contributing to the discussion by expressing their own views. It is for the person chairing the meeting to decide whether to allow observers or members of the public to participate in discussions on specific agenda items.*

5.2.5 *Outside of forum meetings the chairman and vice-chairman should work with the secretary in preparing the forward work programme and annual report, finalising the meeting agenda, liaising with the appointing authority(ies) on administrative, training and logistical matters, and dealing with matters that arise between meetings*

Local background

The New Forest Access Forum 'Structure and Remit' states that:

7.1 The Chair and Vice-chair will be drawn from Forum members and elected annually by separate secret ballots. In the interests of balance, the chair and vice-chair should represent different categories of interest, the categories being principally (i) landowners and occupiers, (ii) recreational users, and (iii) any other interests; members of the appointing authorities are not eligible for either position. In the event that either post becomes vacant, elections will be held having regard to the balance of interest on the Forum.

Petronella Natrass
February 2017