

## **NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM**

**Meeting:** *Monday 4 September 2017*

**Agenda item 3:** *Chair's report*

### **Report on National LAF Conference Birmingham 23 June 2017**

#### **1. An introduction to the day – Steve Jenkinson**

This included:

- The importance of good sustainable access to politicians. Coastal access was mentioned in this context.
- The use of dogs to get people active.
- The importance of the health of humans, ecosystems and animals.
- The need for projects that make a difference.

#### **2. Natural England update – Bruce Cutts**

Including:

- Statutory access. Definitive not permissive access required.
- Partnerships with Local Authorities challenging.
- National Nature Reserves. 68 of them have dedicated rights of way.
- Map Review, this has been delayed again.
- Coast Path, by the end of July work will have started on all stretches. Some are completed.

#### **3. Health and the Natural Environment – Sarah Preston**

- Improving health and making the natural environment more mainstream in the process.
- Use data in MENE. Look at health, quality outdoor room space, obesity, longer life and mental health.
- Connection to nature. Informal walking is vital. Carers emphasise this. Walking alongside rivers, on the coast and in parks. There are social aspects as well as physical and mental wellbeing advantages.

A Dementia Awareness Project was praised.

Green Prescriptions reduce the costs of primary care.

Quality assurance is important.

Increase capacity.

Raise awareness with the health sector,

- Green Gyms.

#### **4. Defra Deregulation Act – Dave Waterman**

This will not be operative before April 2018. There is still work to do with the Treasury on charging aspects.

There is an option to extend the 2026 cut off date. The working group involved have to agree any change.

#### **5. ROWIPs and Access in the Future – Pippa Langford**

These 10 year plans should be ambitious.

In these need to consider: MENE, health, active transport, tourism and EU exit.

Tourism: Visit England say people don't know what is on offer.

Need: great signposting, well drained robust surfaces, well maintained structures. These should be close to where people live.

## 6. Workshops

I attended the following 2 optional workshops.

i. **LAFs in Changing Times** – presented by Shropshire Council (*Claire Tiles and Margaret Rutherford*)

Having had funding halved it was necessary to consider how to bring in more funding and how to make their LAF more effective.

To achieve this they rebranded, recruited new members and it seemed to me that they now have the equivalent of a strategic and an advisory membership.

£200,000 has been obtained from Public Health.

£600,000 from other sources.

We did not discover if the LAF or the Council held the money.

The need for a good and relevant rights of way network was emphasised and the need to make sure its benefits are recognised and people are made aware of them.

Marketing is needed and a broadened remit .

Appointment of a Patron is being considered.

The name LAF is disliked.

Would like a new constitution.

ii. **Post Brexit** (*Terry Robinson and Phillippa Langdon*)

There mantra was "Public Money for Public Benefit"

There was encouragement to think big re access.

Permanent not permissive access is needed.

### **A31 Consultation 30 June 17**

I also need to report that I attended the public consultation on the A31 Ringwood improvement scheme, as did Joan Cundill and Alastair Duncan. We were able to speak to a number of highway engineers and together discuss the proposals. We were in general agreement but suggested a few improvements we considered desirable.

Ruth Croker, Chair  
August 2017