

## NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

**Meeting:** Monday 5 September 2016

**Agenda Item 6:** NFAF Structure and Remit

This is an opportunity for Members to review the New Forest Access Forum's Structure and Remit and to consider how the Forum can most effectively engage with the 'section 94(4) bodies' that it is appointed to advise.

The following documents are attached:

- a) NFAF Structure and Remit
- b) Potential areas of work 2016-17

**Please take some time before the meeting to review these and consider the following questions, which will form the basis for discussion:**

**1. NFAF Structure and Remit:**

- Does this document make sense?
- Is it fit for purpose?

**2. Potential areas of work:**

- What areas of work should the Forum to be looking at in the future?

*Please think about how proactive you think the Forum should be, and whether you are aware of any new topics that the Forum should be engaging with.*

**3. Profile of the Forum:**

- Does the Forum want to raise its profile, and if so how could this be done?

*taking account of the following extract from Defra 'Guidance on Local Access Forums in England':*

### **4.10 Networking and raising awareness**

4.10.1 Forums are expected to improve liaison and understanding with, and between, local interests involved with access and open-air recreation. Networking can help forum members to perform their role more effectively. For example, forums and their appointing authorities might consider:

- producing a forum newsletter, publicity leaflet, or website to communicate and engage with the wider public, and particularly with socially excluded or disadvantaged groups; and/or
- hosting an annual event or meeting to highlight the forum's work, or displaying information at a county show.

4.10.2 Individual forum members also have a role to play in providing information to, and engaging with, the interests which they represent. Many forum members will have links with local organisations and networks which can help in this, although they should not overlook those organisations to which they do not belong.

4.10.3 Forum members who are members of a local council or National Park authority can act as an "ambassador" or "champion" for the forum within the authority as well as help to improve the quality of forum advice by explaining the authority's policies and constraints to fellow forum members. However, such members need to avoid prejudicing the independence of the forum's advice (see 6.5.8).

#### 4. **Training:**

- Are there any specific skills that Forum members feel they lack or need to improve?

*bearing in mind this section of the Defra Guidance:*

##### **4.9 Training**

4.9.1 Appointing authorities should recognise that forum members may require training (e.g. to develop particular skills and to improve their technical knowledge). Authorities are encouraged to help members identify training needs, to find ways of meeting those needs, and to provide resources accordingly. The forum should take responsibility for:-

- identifying their own training needs; and
- discussing with the appointing authority(ies) how best to meet those needs.

4.9.2 The forward work programme should take account of any training which forum members believe will help them and/or which has been agreed with the appointing authority.

Petronella Natrass  
Forum Officer  
24 August 2016

# **New Forest Access Forum: Structure and Remit**

**(December 2012)**

## **1 Status**

- 1.1 The New Forest Access Forum is the Local Access Forum for the New Forest National Park and South West Hampshire (New Forest District Council area), as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The appointing authorities are the New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council.
- 1.2 The New Forest Access Forum is an independent advisory body, operating on a statutory basis. Membership of the New Forest Access Forum is voluntary.

## **2 Aim**

*The main aim of the Forum is to:*

- 2.1 Provide guidance on, and contribute towards, improving opportunities for all to enjoy the countryside and coast of the New Forest and South West Hampshire.

## **3 Remit**

*The remit of the Forum is to:*

- 3.1 Fulfil the statutory duty to advise on the improvement of public access to land in its area for the purposes of open-air recreation, the enjoyment of the area, and any other lawful purpose, as described in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).
- 3.2 Contribute in an advisory capacity to the implementation of Hampshire County Council's and Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plans as they apply to the New Forest and South West Hampshire.
- 3.3 Provide a source of local expertise and advice on a wide range of recreational access issues, not just those related to the CRoW Act, whilst having regard for the needs of land management and the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.
- 3.4 Advise on the promotion and improvement of appropriate use and enjoyment of the countryside and rights of way by all, whilst having regard for the needs of land management and the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.
- 3.5 Form links with Highway Authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset.

## **4 Geographic Area**

- 4.1 The New Forest Access Forum will consider access issues relevant to the area within the New Forest National Park boundary and the New Forest District Council area.

## **5 Other Local Access Forums and Organisations**

- 5.1 The Forum will seek to establish and maintain links with the neighbouring Local Access Forums.
- 5.2 A representative of the Forum should attend, as an observer, all meetings of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, and meetings of other neighbouring forums whenever possible.
- 5.3 The Forum will seek to form links with other relevant local organisations and bodies, and will seek representation at meetings of these if appropriate.

## **6 Operation of the Forum**

- 6.1 Forum members will, through consultation, represent an area of interest rather than the views of any specific organisation they belong to.
- 6.2 Meetings will be held at least quarterly. Meeting dates and times will be determined by Forum members.
- 6.3 The meeting shall be deemed quorate when 50% of Forum members are present, with at least one representative from each of the categories of interest described in paragraph 7.
- 6.4 Specific issue groups will be established by the Forum, as and when required.
- 6.5 The Forum shall produce and distribute an annual report.
- 6.6 Members who have a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, in a matter to be discussed by the Forum should disclose that interest at the meeting. A personal interest is defined as one which might affect a member's well-being, financial position or business, or that of a relative or friend, to a greater extent than that of other council tax payers, ratepayers or other inhabitants of the area. Personal interests will be recorded in the minutes but will not necessarily prohibit that member from taking part in discussion of that item.

## **7 Chair and Vice-chair**

- 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) land owners 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.

## **8 Observers**

- 8.1 The following observers may attend and take part in discussion but cannot vote or take part in decision-making:
  - Officers from New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council
  - Representatives from neighbouring Local Access Forums
  - Government bodies such as Natural England, Forestry Commission and Defra
  - Such other representative bodies or interest groups as may be called from time to time
- 8.2 The list may be amended by decision of the Forum, with due regard to the desirability of maintaining a balance of interests during discussion.

## **9 Public Access to Meetings**

- 9.1 All meetings are open to the public.
- 9.2 There will be a period available for representations from members of the public at the start of each Forum meeting. Representation will be at the discretion of the Chair. Anyone wishing to make a representation must submit their written representation to the officer responsible for the administration of the Forum at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. Copies of the representation will be circulated to members for information. The representative will be given a

maximum of five minutes at the meeting to introduce their representation. A limited period will be available, after representations have been introduced, to deal with any issues raised.

- 9.3 The public may attend any Forum meeting but may not speak other than at the Chair's express invitation unless they have made prior representation as described above.
- 9.4 Agendas, minutes and reports relating to the New Forest Access Forum will be available to the public at the offices of the appointing authorities and via the New Forest National Park Authority website.

## **10 Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix 1: Members' Roles and Responsibilities and Appendix 2: Authorities' Roles and Responsibilities are attached.

## **11 Review**

- 11.1 This document is to be reviewed on an annual basis or as required.

**December 2012**

## **KEY DOCUMENTS**

- National information and guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/local-access-forums-participate-in-decisions-on-public-access>
- The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 - [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20070268.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20070268.htm)
- Hampshire County Council's Countryside Access Plans - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-countryside/access-plans.htm>
- Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan - [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/rightsofway/improvementstotherightsofwaynetwork](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/rightsofway/improvementstotherightsofwaynetwork)
- New Forest National Park Authority's Recreation Management Strategy - [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/about-us/our-work/recreation-management-strategy](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/about-us/our-work/recreation-management-strategy)

## **APPENDIX 1: MEMBERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members should:

- Be representative of access land and Rights of Way users, owners or occupiers of land, or other related interests especially relevant to the New Forest area.
- Provide an independent view, rather than reflect the delegated views of any particular organisation(s).
- Actively pursue opportunities to publicise the work of the Forum and obtain feedback through newsletters or other means, within that member's own organisation(s), if any, and also others with similar interests active within the area covered by the Forum.
- Be expected to attend all meetings (4 meetings a year anticipated), and training events; deputies will not be allowed. Members who are absent from all meetings in a one year period may have their appointment to the Forum terminated by the appointing authorities.
- Be willing to serve on the Forum for the period of their initial appointment. The Forum is appointed every three years – interim appointments last until the next full appointment process. There is no limit on the number of times a member can be re-appointed to the Forum.
- Allow a brief biography to be available to members of the public and other interested parties on publicity, including the Forum web pages.
- Regularly check and respond to email and written enquiries and include other Forum members when appropriate.

## **APPENDIX 2: AUTHORITIES' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council will between them:

- Have regard to the Forum's advice when making their decisions. Provide a venue and refreshments for Forum meetings.
- Provide a secretariat and on-going support, advice and training to the Forum as a whole and to individual Forum members.
- Publish and make available an annual report on the work of the Forum.
- Attend, at least once a year, a meeting of each of the adjoining Local Access Forums and obtain agendas and minutes of every meeting; occasionally relay material to the New Forest Access Forum.
- Reimburse Forum members for out-of-pocket expenses, principally travel and child-care but including other reasonable expenses if agreed in advance.
- Relay the advice given by the Forum to the relevant committees and/or members of each authority at appropriate times.

Promote the work of the Forum through available means including press releases and web pages.

**NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM: potential areas of work 2016-17 Meeting Dates:** 07 March, 06 June (AGM), 05 September, 05 December

Lead	What	When
NFAF	<i>Cycling working-group</i> – reports from meetings (coordinated by MH)	Ongoing (NB working group now meeting less frequently)
National Park Authority	<i>Local Plan Review</i> – NFNPA will be consulting on Local Plan during the course of 2016	Consultation response for <b>December</b> meeting?
	<i>Recreation Management Strategy</i>	Work continuing within NPA
	<i>Future external funding</i> , including <a href="#">HLS agreement</a> on Crown Lands (NFAF should be lobbying for Access to be considered within any post-2020 HLS or equivalent)	Paul Walton/Julie Stubbs to be invited to <b>December</b> Forum?
	<a href="#">Our Past, Our Future</a>	Completed – but Historic Routes element due to start in <b>November 2016</b> , led by Gareth Owen – potential sub-group project?
NFDC	<i>Local Plan Review</i> – NFDC consulted in July 2016	Forum response drafted for <b>September</b> meeting
Natural England	<a href="#">Coastal Access</a>	Ongoing – routine update from Coastal Access sub-group (and/or NE as appropriate) at <b>every meeting</b>
Hampshire County Council	<i>CAP implementation</i> – including Strategic Network development	HCC to provide briefings and seek Forum input as appropriate – <b>December 2016</b> or <b>March 2017</b>
	<i>Volunteering</i> – how the Countryside Service intends to develop its work with volunteers with the appointment of local Community Engagement Rangers	<b>December</b> meeting
	<i>Planning</i> – paper/presentation to inform the Forum what HCC is doing to try and get access into planning policy etc.	<b>March 2017</b>

<b>Forestry Commission</b>	<b><i>NPA Recreation Management Strategy</i></b>	FC very engaged with the work of the NPA
<b>Other</b>	<b><i>National Trust</i></b> – update on Foxbury, where the Trust have done extensive replanting after felling but made very limited provision for public access.	Dylan Everett to be invited to give an update at one of the 2016 meetings – <b>December?</b>
	Proactive engagement with different local and national initiatives	Possible presentation from Mark Adams (British Cycling) at <b>December</b> meeting
	<b><i>Other?</i></b>	
<b>Training</b>	Forum Structure and Remit	<b>September</b> meeting
	Learning points from other LAFs, e.g. SDLAF	MH organising visit to SDLAF, possibly for meeting on <b>21 October</b> (Midhurst)