

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting – 9 September 2013
Fordingbridge Town Council Office's

Present

Members: Alastair Duncan (Chair) Ann Sevier
 Lynden Bowen Joan Cundill
 Ruth Croker Tracey Churcher
 Heather Gould Gordon Garrett
 Ben Rayner Chris Lagdon
 Gary North Peter Walsh

Officers: Cath Hart (Hampshire County Council)
 David Illsley (New Forest National Park Authority)
 Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)
 Sam Jones (Hampshire County Council)

In attendance: Eric Clarke (Wiltshire CAF MENE)
 Gillie Hayball (New Forest National Park Authority)
 Ali Stewart (Wiltshire CAF)
 Peter Scott (New Forest Ramblers)
 John Cartwright (Snr Ranger HCC)

1 Apologies and minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 Apologies were received from members Alison Russell, Bobbie Lawrence, Rachel Pearson, Pat Thorne and Steve Rippon-Swaine.
 Pat Thorne has stepped down as a Verderer and can therefore no longer represent them on the Forum it is expected that a new nominee will be forthcoming later in the month. Bobbie Lawrence has resigned due to pressures of work, and we now have a vacancy representing business interests.
 Alastair Duncan welcomed Chris Lagdon as NPA representative.
- 1.2 The minutes from the last New Forest Access Forum meeting of 3 June 2013 were agreed as a true record, subject to paragraph 14.3 regarding the Community Toilet Scheme being amended to read "Lymington Town Hall have also agreed to sign up to the scheme."
 Ann Sevier also advised that she was in attendance at the last meeting, although she was omitted from the minutes.

2 Matters arising from the last meeting

- 2.1 Item 2.2 – It was advised that currently there had been no further updates regarding charges for blue badge holders, it is due for further consultation in November
- 2.2 Item 15.2 – A training course had now been arranged for ROW legislation in Winchester on 30th September, if you would like to attend please contact Vicki Gibbon on 01590 646647 as soon as possible
- 2.3 Gordon Garrett commented that there had recently been a change to the one way system in Calshot, there had been the removal of some car parking spaces on the road and white lines had now been put in to aid pedestrians. However halfway up

the road the lines for the pedestrians disappear which created a dangerous traffic hazard.

Action: Gordon to draft a letter on behalf of the chairman highlighting the danger to pedestrians and send to Hampshire County Council Highways.

3 Brief Update on NFAF Support Officer – David Illsley

3.5 David Illsley advised forum members that the New Forest National Park Authority was currently going through a restructure, and therefore had not been able to replace Sarah Manchester as Access Forum Officer. David reported that the Authority was fully aware of its responsibilities with regards to facilitating support to the Access Forum and, until the restructuring had been completed, an agreement had been put into place for Hampshire County Council to provide support for both the September and December meetings of the Forum. Cath Hart was consequently welcomed to the Access Forum as the HCC support officer.

4 Officers Report – Cath Hart (*paper 33/1*)

4.1 Cath Hart presented her report to the forum emphasising the main points.

4.2 Cath requested that should forum members wish to comment on the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan to send their comments to either Vicki Gibbon or Ruth Croker by 30th September, Ruth would be collating the comments and submitting a response.

4.3 Forum Members were invited to join a new sub-group to be set up by Hampshire County Council which would be tackling long term obstructions of rights of way. Ruth Croker, Lynden Bowen and Tracey Churcher agreed to attend the first meeting of this group would be 10th October 2-4pm.

4.4 Cath advised forum members that Hampshire Highways were currently reviewing its policies on traffic management, highway maintenance and regulations. A public consultation had been launched and the Access Forum had been asked to make comments.

Action: Alastair Duncan to read through the consultation and highlight points that Access forum members may wish to comment on via email.

4.5 It was brought to the attention of forum members that the Forestry Commission were currently running a consultation with regards to the 'Woodland Policy Enabling Programme' the deadline of which would be 25th September, members who may like to comment on this were requested to please email Alastair Duncan who would send in the consolidated response.

Action: Members to send comments to Alastair who would then form a response.

4.6 Alastair informed the forum that NFAF members had been invited to take part in further site visit consultations for the restoration of mires, the following members agreed to attend

- Tracey Churcher 23 September North Sluffers Inclosure
- Lynden Bowen 24 October Wootton Riverince Woodland
- Heather Gould 13 November Amberwood

5 MENE – Eric Clarke, Wilts CAF (*paper 33/2*)

- 5.1 Eric Clarke gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on MENE, explaining how local findings were interpreted and how his LAF have used these to ensure funding for access. He explained that Wiltshire believed that there is a strong relationship with health benefits and the rights of way network which justified health funding being channelled towards rights of way betterment. Commenting that with the findings it was noticed that many over 65's were not walking due to structures such as stiles on the rights of way network. Eric confirmed that although his presentation had focused on the links between health and the public rights of way network, the information gathered through MENE was wide ranging and could be interrogated for a number of different purposes.

6 Hampshire County Council Update – Sam Jones

- 6.1 Sam updated forum members on the current job cuts at HCC, it was hopeful that these would not affect the Countryside Service.
- 6.2 Sam introduced John Cartwright who had recently joined the Countryside Service team as Senior Ranger.
- 6.3 Sam invited members to join a sub-group which would be looking at 'value' of the public's access; an email would be circulated following the meeting to register interest.
- 6.4 It was advised that Sam and his team would now be responsible for minor bridges and not the Highways department.

Action: Sam Jones to set up a sub-group to explore 'value' of the public's access and would be sending an email to forum members to attend.

7 Department for Transport cycling fund and LSTF – David Illsley (*paper 33/3*)

- 7.1 David Illsley presented his report highlighting that Hampshire County Council and partners (including the New Forest National Park Authority) had been awarded £3.81 million from the Local Sustainable Fund (LSTF) to deliver the 'Sustainable transport solution's for the two National Parks'. Early indications are that around 60% of the available funding would be spent on projects in the South Downs and around 40% spent in the New Forest.
- 7.2 David advised forum members that during 2013/14 the NFNPA delivery highlights were - a new tour route (the Blue Route) which would be serving the coast and south west of the Forest. The launch of the Beach Bus, operating between Lymington, Lepe, Exbury and Bucklers Hard, this service ran between 27 July and 1st September. Members were advised that further information on the above services was available on the NPA website.

- 7.3 David also commented that at the end of January the Department for Transport (DfT) launched a new £17m grant fund to support cycling in National Parks. The NFNPA was one of four national parks that were successful in receiving the grant. More information on how the NFNPA would be spending their grant can be found on the NPA website.

Action: NFNPA to update the NFAF at each meeting with regards to the two funds.

8 Recreation Management Strategy Working Group – Alastair Duncan (*paper 33/4*)

- 8.1 Alastair Duncan notified forum members that there had recently been a proposal change the way that the RMS working group operated. The suggestion was that it would change to a two tier system, one being the steering group which consists of the NPA, Verderers, Forestry Commission and Natural England. The second group would be known as the advisory group and would consist of all other interested parties. There had also recently been a change of chair, the chair now being Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre.
- 8.2 Following discussion forum members agreed that the proposed make-up of the steering group did not properly reflect the geographical jurisdiction and spread of interest and responsibility within the boundaries of the National Park. It should include as a minimum, representation by NFDC and HCC. It was also felt desirable the Chief Executive of the Authority should attend on a frequent basis.
- 8.3 Alastair Duncan agreed to draft a letter to the Chair of the RMS steering group commenting on the fact that NFAF members would like to see more representation on the steering group and that the advisory group should be looking forward towards a vision of what they would like to see in the forest in 10/20 years' time.

Action: Alastair Duncan to draft a letter to the RMS steering group and circulate to all forum members for comments.

9 Cycling Codes of Conduct – Peter Walsh (*paper 33/5*)

- 9.1 Peter Walsh presented his report on the 'Cycling Codes of Conduct' and all members agreed to note the report, Peter commented that he felt Nigel Matthews from the NPA had given a good opportunity for all attendees at the meeting to contribute and be heard.
- 9.2 Alastair Duncan commended the forum members to take note of an excellent resume by Peter Walsh of the differences between the various types of cycle events.

10 Forestry Commission Update – Gary North

- 10.1 Gary informed forum members that the management of car parks during pony drifts had changed this season. A greater number had been closed temporarily and adjacent car parks manned by volunteer Rangers to advise members of the public of the dangers associated with the drifts. Alastair commented, as one of those volunteers, that the opportunity to speak to members of the public had proved an

excellent system, and with only one exception members of the public had accepted the reasoning.

- 10.2 Winter car park closures had now been updated on the website and these would be closed for the period of Nov-March. Members asked why these car parks were closed in the winter and were told this was due to a more limited number of visitors in the winter months, these closures have now been the same for the last 8 years. During the spring meeting Gary would like members to comment on their thoughts for the winter car park closures.

11 Reports from representatives

- **Small Grants Scheme – Joan Cundill (*paper 33/6*)**
- **Hythe Ferry Consultation – Joan Cundill (*paper 33/7*)**
- **Hampshire Countryside Access Forum – Heather Gould (*paper 33/8*)**
- **Wiltshire CAF – Ruth Croker (*paper 33/9*)**

- 11.1 Members agreed that the above reports would be taken as read.

12 New Milton Long Meadow – Alastair Duncan & Gordon Garrett

- 12.1 Alastair indicated that there is a current proposal to naturalise the existing stream on the New Milton Long Meadow site, Gordon would be keeping an eye on the developments and would report back to the forum.

14 AOB / Items for next meeting

- 14.1 Alastair informed forum members that the NFNPA annual report is now available to be viewed online.
- 14.2 Joan Cundill expressed her thanks to Gillie Hayball and the NPA for help with the community toilet scheme

The meeting ended at 12:55pm

Date of next meeting: Monday 2 December 9.30am – 1.00pm at Lyndhurst Community Centre