

**Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting – 9 June 2014**  
**Lymington Town Hall**

**Present**

Members: Alastair Duncan (Chair)  
Lynden Bowen  
Ruth Croker (Vice Chair)  
Joan Cundill  
Heather Gould  
Gary North  
Steve Rippon-Swayne  
Alison Russell  
Ann Sevier  
Peter Walsh

Officers: Marilyn Meeks (Hampshire County Council)  
Sam Jones (Hampshire County Council)  
Gillie Hayball (New Forest National Park Authority)  
Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

In attendance: Nigel Matthews (New Forest National Park Authority)  
James Silvester (Senior Transport Planner Hampshire County Council)

**1 Apologies, introductions and minutes of last meeting**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from members Gordon Garrett, Rachel Pearson and Chris Lagdon.
- 1.2 The minutes from the last New Forest Access Forum meeting of 3 March 2014 were agreed, with one amendment, namely that Gillie Hayball would be recorded as present at the meeting, this would be amended.

**2 Matters arising**

- 2.1 Future support of NFAF - Alastair Duncan advised forum members that he would be meeting with Nigel Matthews to discuss the future support of the NFAF and that he would advise forum members of the outcome in due course, currently the September meeting would be going ahead as usual.

**3 HCC Cycling Strategy – James Silvester**

- 3.1 James Silvester from Hampshire County Council provided a PowerPoint presentation to Forum members advising of the Council's Cycling Strategy consultation which would be made available to key stakeholder's in July.
- 3.2 Mr Silvester advised Forum members that HCC's vision is to make cycling safe and simple, to promote the benefits of cycling on both health and the economy.
- 3.3 Following discussion it was agreed that Forum Members would meet to discuss the consultation prior to making comments.

Action: Vicki to arrange an appropriate date for forum members to meet to discuss the consultation.

#### **4 Progress on NFNPA Cycling Charter – Peter Walsh / Nigel Matthews**

- 4.1 Peter Walsh updated Forum members on the charter for cycle event organisers which had been put together by the Cycling Liaison Group. He commented that a cycling sportif had recently taken place and that this had been an improvement on previous sportives in terms of general behaviour and organisation. Peter commented that the 2 issues that had yet to be sorted with the cycling code for organisers are the total number of riders at the event and the rear numbers on riders.
- 4.2 Mr Walsh advised members that feedback from town and parish councils and local residents around the Forest was that the charter did not go far enough and that the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) should get more involved.
- 4.3 Nigel Matthews (NFNPA) commented that this was a draft charter at the moment and that negotiations were still ongoing. It was a voluntary charter of best practice and could not be enforced. Nigel was continuing to receive comments on the charter which would be collated and fed back to the Cycling Liaison Group. A report on the cycling charter would be taken to the NPA AGM in June.

#### **5 Officer's report (paper 34/1)**

- 5.1 Marilyn Meeks briefly went through the Officer's report and highlighting that Defra had published its summary of responses to the CAP consultation and that could be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/267987/cap-reform-sum-resp-201312.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/267987/cap-reform-sum-resp-201312.pdf)
- 5.2 Marilyn advised forum members that Natural England was currently working on 15 sections of coastal path; of those 3 were now open in Dorset, Hartlepool and Cumbria. A map showing what Natural England was currently working on was circulated with the agenda.

#### **6 HCC Update – Sam Jones**

- 6.1 Sam Jones advised Forum members that the storms caused significant damage to the coastal access routes, with particular damage along the Barton Cliff tops. As well as working to resolve these local issues, the Access Team are monitoring the roll out of the Coastal Access Bill elsewhere in the Country and working to introduce best working practices ahead of its predicted introduction to Hampshire in approximately 6 years.

Sam commented that a number of problems had arisen on ROW along the clifftops, which had taken a battering from the recent storms. The main area of work had been carried out at Barton where a substantial amount of cliff had been lost; they would currently be contacting landowners to look at a rolling movement of fencing.

- 6.2 There were currently 3 community routes being invested in, 3 bridleways - 2 in Minstead and 1 in Fawley to enable a year round accessible route.
- 6.3 Sam commented that HCC is currently working closely with NFDC who need to plan for 1000 houses to be built. NFDC are currently looking at changes that could be made to try and limit the amount of people going into the Forest, the Council was looking at networks, routes, signage and education. More detail on this would follow at the September meeting.

## **7 FC Update – Gary North**

- 7.1 Gary North updated the Forum on the car park closures which were initiated under the Progress Project which runs from March to the end of July. Where car parks were closed, surveys were carried out with the people who still turned up, 78% of which were dog walkers. The Forestry Commission would pass this information onto Heather Gould to assist with future newsletters.
- 7.2 The Forestry Commission had recently received funding from the NFNPA's sustainable transport fund, this will enable them to look at 3 projects which should be completed this year. These were - the old railway route where the FC would be looking at vegetation management and opening up the track to make it safer. Surfacing improvements would be carried out at Castle Hill lane and the FC would like to install a bridge at the ford at Fletchers stream, since the recent restoration works this had been difficult to pass.

## **8 Paths to Partnership – Conference Alastair Duncan / Ruth Croker**

- 8.1 Alastair Duncan updated the Forum on the recent Paths to Partnership conference which was held at Victoria Park in Southampton, there were around 150 delegates who attended. One particular workshop which Alastair found interesting was the CAMS (Countryside Access Management Systems) stand. This enabled users to go online and report any issues that they encountered with ROW. Once reported, users could then monitor the progress. It was suggested that at the next meeting laptops could be used to look at how this works.

Sam Jones commented that this facility had primarily been for officers' use but were now ensuring that it worked well before rolling out to the public.

Action: Vicki to obtain laptops for use at the next meeting.

## **9 Asserting and Protecting the public right – draft policy following HCAF sub-group recommendation – Sam Jones**

- 9.1 Sam Jones advised the Forum that the biggest number of issues that were faced were obstructions and blocked gates, which had now become a priority and should landowners not co-operate, enforcements could be issued. This has recently been reviewed to ensure that HCC was in line with the rest of the country and to ensure that this was more streamlined and fair.
- 9.2 HCC were currently looking at producing the first draft of the HCC enforcement policy to ensure that this is consistent across the country.

## **10 Report from South East LAF Conference – Alastair Duncan**

- 10.1 Alastair commented that during this conference there were many presentations including, multi user access, managing dogs and their owners in the countryside, LAF's and the planning process and closure of level crossings by British Rail.
- 10.2 During the conference Tim Squires from SDNPA reported that the Authority was looking at formulating a common system on ROW for people with disabilities. Joan commented that she had completed a lot of work on this already and would continue to be in contact with Mr Squires.

## **10 Waymark – IPROW (Institute of Public Rights of Way Journal)**

- 10.1 Marilyn Meeks asked Forum members if they found the Waymark publications useful and of relevance to themselves as a member of the LAF. It was requested that members sent any comments they may have to Vicki Gibbon who would then circulate back to Marilyn.

## **11 Reports from representatives**

- 11.1 Small Grants Scheme – Joan Cundill ran through her report as attached.

## **12 Election – Alastair Duncan**

- 12.1 It was proposed by Ann Sevier that Alastair Duncan remained as Chairman for a further year with Ruth Croker as Vice Chair, all forum members agreed.

## **13 AOB**

- 13.1 Alastair Duncan commented that the permissive footpath at Mill Lane, Brockenhurst through parkland had now been revoked, Tracey Churcher requested that this would be needed in writing as currently it was showing still available – Gillie would obtain this information and confirm with Tracey.
- 13.2 The NPA had recently been looking at the definition of tranquillity and areas in the Forest that needed to be safeguarded for the future. A consultant had now been employed who would put forward a consultation with the findings. The next stage would be asking volunteers to go out ground-truthing. Tracey Churcher and Ann Sevier agreed they would like to help in this, Gillie would contact them with dates.

**Date of next meeting:** Monday 8 September 9.30am – 1.00pm