

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting – 1 June 2015
Terrace Room, Beaulieu Motor Museum

Present

Members: Alastair Duncan (Chairman)
Ruth Croker (Vice Chair)
Sally Arnold
Lynden Bowen
Joan Cundill
Sam Dovey
Gordon Garrett
Heather Gould
Hallam Mills
Rosemary Mitchell
Gary North
Steve Rippon-Swaine
Alison Russell
Peter Scott
Ann Sevier
Peter Walsh

Officers: Amanda Hull (Hampshire County Council)
Sam Jones (Hampshire County Council)
John Lynn (New Forest National Park Authority)
Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

In attendance: Nick Evans (New Forest National Park Authority)
Sarah Manchester (Hampshire County Council)
James Silvester (Hampshire County Council)
Brian Ross Tarnoff

1 Apologies, introductions and minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 An apology was received from Tracey Churcher.
- 1.2 The minutes from the last New Forest Access Forum meeting of 2 March 2015 were agreed as a true record.

2 Introductions – Members and Officers

- 2.1 The Chairman introduced the new forum members Ross Mitchell and Peter Scott, forum members then introduced themselves and gave a brief synopsis on what they bring to the access forum. The Chairman extended congratulations to Tracey Churcher who had recently got married.

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 As per paper

4 Forum Officer's Report

- 4.1 Amanda Hull ran through her report highlighting that the ROW problem reporting website should be live by July and that a link would be sent to members. It was requested for a demo to be provided at the next meeting.
- 4.2 A member information pack was circulated with the agenda with some useful information for LAFs including a list of acronyms. This will be a working document and if members would like anything added let her know. The structure and remit section of the document would be discussed at a future meeting.

5 Chairman's Update

- 5.1 The Chairman updated forum members that resources in Natural England are limited and that many of its staff had been put onto coastal access, therefore the service for other areas of work may be reduced.
- 5.2 Alastair Duncan commented that the cycle working group had now been in existence 3/4 years, they had recently met following a 9 month break. Alastair felt that the meeting went well and that the group were more constructive and fresh. It had been valuable to meet the new NPA Inclusive Cycling Officer Jolyon Whaymand who would be promoting inclusive cycling throughout the forest.
- 5.3 It was advised that Ruth Croker would attend the next RMS meeting.
- 5.4 An invitation had been received from the Police Commissioner for a member of the forum to attend a meeting this week on how rural policing could be taken forward in light of the recent cuts. Hallum Mills stressed the importance of engaging with the police and of the work done by volunteers to assist with rural policing. Hallum urged all members to complete the [National Rural Crime Survey](#).

6 Countryside Access Plan

- 6.1 Sarah Manchester advised the forum that following the recent consultation the Countryside Access Plan (CAP) was now at the final draft stage and should be signed off by the middle of July. Sarah thanked members for the comments they had previously submitted and advised how they had been incorporated into the revised draft. A link would be sent to forum members when the plan was published.
- 6.2 It was agreed that it would be useful to receive a summary of CAP achievements in the New Forest over the last three years.

Action: Sam to compile a list of the New Forest CAP achievements over the last three years and present to the Forum at a future meeting.

7 Deregulation Act 2015

- 7.1 Sarah Manchester informed members of the forum that the Deregulation Act which had been going through parliament achieved royal assent in March. The legislation is yet to be operational as some sections were still being written however this should be in operation by April next year.
- 7.2 The overall reason for the rights of way clauses in this Act is due to the complex, slow and resource intensive legal processes for recording public rights of way. This Act is intended to simplify the process, for example by introducing a preliminary sift of applications to relieve the burden on local authorities of dealing with poor or spurious applications. Other measures include cutting the number of cases which are referred to the Secretary of State for resolution; they would now be referred to the local magistrate's court.. Further information can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk
- 7.3 Sarah Manchester advised the forum that she would be leaving HCC at the end of September. All members wished her well in her future endeavours.

8 Hampshire Cycling Strategy - Consultation

- 8.1 James Silvester reminded the forum of the purposes of the Hampshire Cycling Strategy, these were a clear statement of HCC aspirations, a strategic framework for partners, a means to prioritise funding and a way to attract new investment. The document addressed the key challenges that HCC face with regards to cycling including protecting cyclists, improving safety and managing the growing interest in cycling.
- 8.2 Mr Silvester thanked the forum for the comments they had submitted in August last year on the cycling strategy and advised that the current public consultation will end on 29 July 2015 with formal approval in September. HCC is now looking at developing a walking strategy; more details would be sent to the forum in due course.
- 8.3 A few points were raised by members about the strategy, however there was general agreement that it was a quality document. Following discussion it was decided that a sub-group would not be required to review the consultation document, however if members had any specific comments they should send them to Vicki who would in turn forward them to the Chairman.

Action: All members to forward comments on the Hampshire Cycling Strategy to Vicki.

9 National Park Management Plan - Consultation

- 9.1 Nick Evans reiterated that the National Park Management Plan was first published in 2010 and contained the vision and objectives designed to guide the long term management of the National Park. The recent amendments to the plan had been submitted following a 'call for views' consultation which had now concluded, Nick thanked forum members for their contributions. The formal consultation is currently taking place and would end on 22 June with the final report going to the NPA AGM on 16 July 2015.
- 9.2 It was agreed that a formal sub-group would be set up to discuss this further with Nick Evans being present. Members who agreed to be included were – Ross Mitchell, Ann Sevier, Heather Gould, Alastair Duncan and Ruth Croker.

Action: Vicki to arrange a meeting with the above members and Nick Evans to discuss the management plan. Any members who would not be attending the sub-group would be invited to email comments to Alastair or Vicki.

- 9.3 Nick Evans presented members with a copy of the tranquillity map which had been produced, commenting that this is the final version following ground truthing and is very similar to the one that was produced in 1996.

Action: Alastair Duncan indicated that he would like this to be a future agenda item where the forum could look at the background on how this was put together with a possibility to ask Sarah Kelly to attend the meeting.

10 Regular Updates

- **HCC Countryside Access – Sam Jones**
Sam Jones ran through his paper (as attached)
- **NPA Update – John Lynn**
John Lynn gave his National Park update to forum members commenting that an RMS advisory group meeting would be taking place on Thursday 4 June, this would be attended by Ruth. During the meeting the group would be commenting on the RMS steering group document which outlines how the 6 statutory organisations plan to work together, a report would be brought to the next meeting.

Work had now been completed on the map of ground nesting bird distribution throughout the forest. The results of which could be found on the HLS New Forest website. A further piece of work is a report that Footprint Ecology is producing which would consider the impact of recreation on these species; this is due to be completed by summer.

John thanked forum members for the sub-group which formed to discuss the 'give each other breathing space' project and confirmed that many ideas and suggestions were received. However this was no longer a joint project with the South Downs National Park, and the project was slightly delayed. A tender for a supplier to create and produce a short film was currently underway which would then be the centrepiece for the campaign.

The NPA had recently been assisting the Ordnance Survey (OS) in its verification of data capture for identifying tracks and pathways, the NPA would like to work with users of the data and encourage them to add extra responsible walking information such as the ground nesting bird season etc.

A member of OS had been invited to attend the September meeting of the forum to discuss this further.

- **Forestry Commission – Gary North**

Gary North updated the forum on the work that the Forestry Commission had been working on recently this included surface improvements to seven key cycle networks which were nearing completion. The team were currently working on planned car park improvements, surfacing, access and vegetation management.

There are two HLS bids currently in progress at Boldrewood and Blackwater, the forum would be updated on these later in the year.

Gary advised the forum that the access to Moors Valley Country Park had recently changed to a new ticketless barrier system using number plate recognition. This did have some teething problems at first but was now working well.

- **Small Grants Scheme – Joan Cundill**

Paper taken as read

11 Reports from other LAF's

- **Hampshire Countryside Access Forum**

Paper taken as read

- **SELAF**

Paper taken as read. It was agreed that LAFs should make representation to the Natural England Area Team Managers reinforcing the value of meeting with other LAFs in the region.

12 LAF Annual Report

12.1 Alastair Duncan invited comments on the draft Annual Report which was circulated with the agenda papers. This report follows a standard format used by all LAFs to feed into the National LAF Annual Report compiled by Natural England.

12.2 Suggested amendments to the first two sections were noted (reference to New Forest Access For All; excluding references to specific organisations in the challenge relating to the cycle track network).

Action: Alastair to amend the Annual Report; Amanda to submit Annual Report to Natural England.

13 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- 13.1 Alastair Duncan stepped down as Chairman for the Forum and thanked all Members for the help and support that he had received. Ruth Croker was elected unopposed as Chairman of the Forum with Alastair Duncan as Vice Chairman.

14 Any Other Business

- 14.1 No other business was recorded on this occasion

Date of next meeting: Monday 7th September 2015 at 9.30am – 1.00pm Lepe Country Park