

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting – 4 September 2017
Lyndhurst Community Centre

Present

Members: Ruth Croker (Chairman)
Ann Sevier (Deputy Chairman)
Mark Cowling
Sam Dovey
Alastair Duncan
Hallam Mills
Ross Mitchell
Gary North
Leo Randall
Alison Russell
Peter Scott

Officers: Petronella Natrass (Hampshire County Council)
Sam Jones (Hampshire County Council)
Mark Holroyd (New Forest National Park Authority)
Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

In attendance:
Holger Schiller (New Forest National Park Authority)

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Paul Brockman, Joan Cundill, Gordon Garrett, Heather Gould and Rachel Pearson.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Leo Randall to the Forum as the elected representative from the National Park Authority.

2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true record and all matters arising from the last meeting had been completed.

3 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 The Chairman reported on the recent National LAF Conference she had attended in Birmingham. She advised that the conference had been very interesting however she was disappointed that there had been a cost for the conference and found disability access was difficult.

Full reports from the conference can be found on Huddle.

- 3.2 The remainder of the report was taken as read

4 Forum Officer's Report

- 4.1 Petronella Natrass ran thorough her report highlighting that a recent consultation had been brought to her attention regarding the Revision of British Standards

BS5709, Gaps, Gates and Stiles. Forum members were asked if they would like to respond to the consultation and agreed that this would not be necessary.

- 4.2 The Forum then discussed the recent changes in locks and catches which the Forestry Commission were introducing in the forest. Gary North agreed to check where the new gates were located and bring additional information to the next Forum meeting. It was remarked that it would be beneficial for Forum Members to visit the gates to comment further.

Action: Gary North to confirm where the new gates and latches are located and bring further information to the next meeting.

5 Update on NPA Partnership Plan – Holger Schiller (NFNPA)

- 5.1 Holger Schiller introduced himself as the new Partnerships and Community Officer for the National Park. He informed the Forum that part of his role was looking at the Partnership Plan, which was a collective document with organisations throughout the forest. He advised that he was currently working through the actions to establish what had been achieved and what was still outstanding. Holger advised that the community part of his role in the Authority was working closely with parish councils to help produce parish and neighbourhood plans, he would also be looking at fundraising and what opportunities were available.

6 Coastal Access Update

- 6.1 Due to John Truswell currently being on annual leave a written update was provided.
- 6.2 It was highlighted that the date for the consultation was likely to be put back even further due to the challenging nature of the route. The Forum agreed that when the consultation was published the sub-group would need to reconvene in order to submit representation. While the delay is frustrating it was seen as important that Natural England submit the strongest report possible.
- 6.3 The Forum had received an email from the New Forest Association expressing disappointment at the timeline for publication of the Coastal Access Report and concern about the potential for the route to disturb sensitive habitats.

Action: Mark Holroyd to respond to Brian Tarnoff of the New Forest Association on behalf of the Forum encouraging patience while we await publication of the proposed route.

7 Recreation Management Strategy

- 7.1 Mark Holroyd updated the Forum on the recent Recreation Management Strategy consultation which concluded on 4 August. The NPA received nearly 1600 responses 81% of which had not taken part in an NPA consultation before. Mark commented that the responses were currently being analysed and an update would be provided at the December meeting.

8 Planning Principles

- 8.1 Petronella Natrass updated the Forum on the planning principle guide the sub-group had recently drafted, this was still in the very early stages and she asked if the Forum believed this was heading in the right direction and if the guidance would help to respond to consultations.
- 8.2 Following discussion members made the following comments –
- encouraging more educational facilities in SANGS
 - more information boards at SANGS
 - as a guidance document this would need to be non-specific
 - possible reference to the countryside access improvement plan
 - would be a useful document to circulate to Planning Committee
 - helpful to engage with local architects and developers e.g. Fawley Waterside
 - a 1 page checklist would be helpful as the full document is quite 'wordy'
 - the views of planning officers would be helpful before sending out
 - the document would need to be kept independent as an 'Access Forum' document and therefore should have the ability to amend as necessary
 - worth noting that RoW can be diverted and upgraded, and that there are opportunities to improve the network as well as to protect it

Action: Petronella to amend the document as per the comments.
Mark to speak to NPA & NFDC planning officers to discuss their thoughts

9 National Environment and Rural Communities Act Consultation

- 9.1 The Chairman advised the Forum that Mark Holroyd had drafted a response to the consultation which would need to be submitted by 12 September. Ruth commented that as a Forum we would not need to respond to the whole consultation and she asked for the Forum's views on the document.
- 9.2 Following discussion the Forum agreed the letter was an accurate representation, however they would like to see more inclusion on a strategic approach.

Action: Mark to make some amendments to the document and submit to the committee

10 Work Programme for 2017-18

- 10.1 Petronella Natrass introduced the draft work programme for 2017/18 bringing members attention to the meeting dates for 2018, which would be Monday 12 March, Monday 11 June, Monday 3 September and Monday 3 December venues for the meetings would be confirmed in due course.
- 10.2 Forum members commented that they were happy with the draft work programme however they would like to see more on education and signage, they also asked if it would be possible for Alison Barnes to attend a future meeting to discuss work on the health agenda and other issues.

11 Regular Updates

11.1 a) New Forest National Park Authority
As per paper

b) HCC Countryside Access
As per paper

c) Forestry Commission

Gary North gave a brief overview on work which had recently been carried out by the Forestry Commission, this included the upgraded car park and access at Godshill Inclosure. Gary commented that a verge restoration officer would soon be in place whose role would be funded by the HLS scheme, the officer would be working closely with parish councils and the verderers. Gary also highlighted that as part of the mitigation strategy for Broomy Plain he had been tasked with looking at areas to reverse back to grazing. A plan was also underway to look at car parks in the north and north east side of the forest to ensure they were more user friendly and safe.

d) Rural Communities Fund (formally Small Grants Scheme)
As per paper

e) Historic Routes
Currently no further information – Mark Holroyd to chase

13 Regular Updates

13.1 a) *Hampshire*
As per paper.

b) *Wiltshire*

The Chairman updated the Forum on the recent meeting of the Wiltshire LAF she had attended, the main items were:

Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) – Wiltshire currently have 232 applications for DMMOs on their list. At present between 4 and 5 are being processed each year, so the CAF have been reviewing and prioritising applications. NFAF asked what criteria are being applied.

Action: Petronella to find out about Wiltshire CAF criteria for prioritising DMMOs
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Salisbury Plain military area – MoD seem to be happy to have volunteers doing work, e.g. surfacing and signage work being done by trail riders and 4x4 drivers.

Obstructions – many paths are being obstructed by landowners (e.g. with fallen trees) to stop hare coursing.

14 Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman

- 14.1 Ruth Croker and Ann Sevier were proposed and seconded for Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively and were duly elected for another year.
- 14.2 Mark Holroyd added that the Forum would soon be recruiting for one new member representing the tourism industry.

Date of next meeting:

4 December 2017, 9.30 – 1.00, Venue: Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall