

**Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting – 13 March 2017**  
**Fordingbridge Town Council**

**Present**

Members: Ruth Croker (Chairman)  
Ann Sevier (Deputy Chairman)  
Paul Brockman  
Mark Cowling  
Joan Cundill  
Alastair Duncan  
Gordon Garrett  
Heather Gould  
Ross Mitchell  
Gary North  
Steve Rippon-Swaine  
Alison Russell  
Peter Scott

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

In attendance: Nigel Matthews – New Forest National Park Authority  
Owen Devine – Hampshire County Council  
John Truswell – Natural England

**1 Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Lynden Bowen, Sam Dovey, Hallam Mills and Rachel Pearson.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Paul Brockman to the Forum; Paul would represent Youth in place of Tracey Churcher.

**2 Election / appointment of Deputy Chairman**

- 2.1 Alastair Duncan officially stepped down as Deputy Chairman of the Access Forum; Ann Sevier agreed to on take this role but insisted that it would be on a temporary basis.

**3 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

- 3.2 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true record.
- 3.3 All matters arising from the last meeting had been completed.
- 3.4 Joan Cundill referred the Forum to minute item 9.2 of the last meeting, the New Forest Visitor Centre and asked for an update on this.

Mark Holroyd replied that the Visitor Information centre (not to be confused with the New Forest Centre) was now closed and that staff who remain would deal with any enquiries as they occurred. During the summer the NPA would provide a member of staff in the centre between 9am – 4 pm to assist visitors and direct them to the tour buses.

#### **4 Chairman's Report**

- 4.1 The Chairman brought the Forum's attention to a recent letter which had been received (included in the reports). Unfortunately the letter was not signed and the Forum was unable to reply directly therefore a response is detailed below.
- 4.2 Gary North, Forestry Commission had looked into the issues as detailed in the letter and found that this was due to routine maintenance in the area. Standard procedure was to lock gates whilst work was carried out, signage to this effect was available on site. Once the area has dried out and is suitable for public access all gates would be re-opened.
- 4.3 The New Forest Access Forum support the work of the Forestry Commission and their work to protect the Forest for the future. The Forum discourages members of the public to send anonymous letters and would request that in future all letters be signed to enable the Forum to reply directly and assist where required.
- 4.4 Ruth Croker advised that she had received an email regarding an upcoming consultation for the A31; the Forum would be notified in due course. Steve Rippon-Swaine commented that this is for proposed work on the westbound carriageway of the A31.

#### **5 Forum Officer's Report**

- 5.1 Petronella Natrass reminded the Forum of the dates for the forthcoming meetings – 12 June Lymington Town Hall, 4 September Lyndhurst Community Centre and 4 December Lymington Town Hall.
- 5.2 The remainder of the report was taken as read.

#### **6 New Forest Recreation Management Strategy – Nigel Matthews (NPA)**

- 6.1 Nigel Matthews advised the Forum that the NPA would soon be updating the Recreation Management Strategy and would welcome the Access Forum's input. Ideally this would be a two stage consultation, the first to gather the public's views through a 6-8 week consultation period which would incorporate the New Forest Show in July and the second a consultation on the draft document. Forum members agreed that a sub-group would be required to discuss further.

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| Action: Vicki to set up a sub-group meeting |
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#### **7 Cycling – Mark Cowling (NFAF)**

- 7.1 Mark Cowling updated the Forum on the recent letter he had received from Mike Renouf which described the deterioration of the cycle path at Culverly Green where it's so narrow cyclists were using the grass which was causing it to be an eyesore

the letter also detailed the lack of cycle links and networks. It asked the Forum to consider on road cycling in the forest, safety and how to link on and off road cycle links.

- 7.2 Mark Holroyd commented that the RMS would be looking at on and off road cycling shortly. He suggested that the Forum write to the Forestry Commission to advise them of the issues surrounding Culverly Green.

Action: Mark Holroyd to draft a letter to the FC.

## **8 Planning and Access – Owen Devine (HCC)**

- 8.1 Owen Devine gave an overview of the planning system and encouraged the Forum to get involved especially at local plan level.
- 8.2 It was suggested that the NFAF write a short statement of what they would like to be included with regards to access for new planning applications, which could then be referred to by NFDC.

Action: Petronella Natrass and Sam Jones to draft a statement and circulate to Forum Members.

## **9 England Coastal Path – John Truswell (NE)**

- 9.1 John Truswell updated the Forum on the progress of the England Coastal Path; the Highcliffe to Lymington section is relatively straightforward although significant erosion had occurred at Barton Cliffs this had been taken into account with roll back. Good progress had been made on the Lymington to Calshot route however there was a number of areas which were not close to the coastline, tweaks were still being made to the route predominantly around the north of Beaulieu where further discussion need to take place with the Verderes and the Forestry Commission. The Calshot to Gosport route was progressing but would most likely be the last to be completed. John was in discussion with Fawley Waterside who was aware of the coastal path and would be submitting a planning application for the PowerStation development later in the year.
- 9.2 Joan Cundill asked how much of the route would be suitable for wheelchair users. John replied that this was not one of the primary functions set out however they would try to ensure there would be no styles, when looking at the path John does consider the implications for those less able.

It was suggested that a sub group meeting should be arranged before May.

Action: Vicki & Petronella to arrange a sub-group meeting.

## **10 Local Plan Review – Mark Holroyd (NPA)**

- 10.1 Mark Holroyd thanked the Forum for their response to the Local Plan and advised formal consultation would take place during November / December.

The remainder of the report was taken as read.

## **11 HCC Countryside Access Update – Sam Jones (HCC)**

- 11.1 Sam Jones ran through his report highlighting the loss of access between Barton and Milford on Sea, Barker Mills had realigned the fence in order for this permissive route to be re-opened however due to further extensive erosion the route had become extremely dangerous and had to be closed. The NFAF agreed to write to Barker Mills to thank them for their continued support for the permissive route.

The remainder of the report was taken as read.

Action: Petronella to draft a letter to Barker Mills and circulate to the Forum for comments.

## **12 Plaitford Common Update – Mark Holroyd (NPA)**

- 12.1 Mark Holroyd updated the Forum on the recent issues that had surrounded Plaitford Common, discussions were still taking place and the National Trust would shortly issue a letter explaining their position.

## **13 Regular Updates**

- 13.1 a) New Forest National Park  
As per paper

b) Forestry Commission

Gary North gave a brief update for the Forestry Commission, Shave Wood had been closed this year as part of the winter closures to enable extensive vegetation clearance works. These works were part of the process to reduce anti-social behaviour in the area, the Forestry Commission had also been working with both the police and parish council to reduce these activities. The car park would re-open in March.

HCC had replaced the cattle grid and installed a box gate at the entrance to Ashurst campsite unfortunately this had led to a lot of complaints due to access being aligned onto a muddy wet area, remedial works had been undertaken to alleviate this.

Gary highlighted that the FC hosted six litter picking events at the beginning of March which saw hundreds of volunteers braving the wind and rain to collect over 250 bags of litter, this was in conjunction with the 'Great British Spring Clean' a national campaign led by 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

The planning stages of this year's recreation maintenance had now been signed off and work would shortly be carried out, a HLS Conservation Officer had been recruited in order to progress this programme of works.

- c) Small Grants Scheme  
As per paper.

- d) Cycling Working Group

e) Historic Routes  
Nothing to report.

**14 Regular Updates**

14.1 a) *Hampshire*  
As per paper.

b) *Wiltshire*  
As per paper.

**16 Any Other Business**

There was no further business

**Date of next meeting:**

12 June 2017, 9.30 – 1.00, Venue: Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall.