

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 4 December 2017*

Agenda item 4: *Forum Officer's Report*

1. HCC Countryside Service update

- ***Rural Communities Fund***

A number of applications are in progress, though not yet submitted, but overall the number of applications is down compared to last year. A review meeting has been arranged with the Community Engagement Rangers to identify and address possible reasons for this.

A short guidance document for applicants has been drafted, which incorporates Panel comments on earlier Small Grants Scheme proposals. This is being sent to Panel members for comment.

2. HCAF

- ***Engagement with Hampshire Highways***

Following a presentation from Graham Wright (HCC Strategic Transport) at the September meeting, a workshop has been organised for the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and officers from HCC Highways and Countryside Service. The aim of this session is to identify ways for the Forum and Highways to work together to achieve road improvement schemes that are appropriate to the needs of all road users.

- ***Appointment of new Forum***

The majority of HCAF members have reached the end of their 3-year term of appointment. During the summer, vacancies were advertised and existing members were also invited to re-apply. A recommendation has gone to the Executive Member's Decision Day on 30 November to appoint 16 existing and 3 new members for a 3-year term. If approved this will bring the total membership of the Forum to 21 (and including 2 elected Member representatives for HCC and Portsmouth City Council).

3. National LAF news

- ***Annual reporting***

Earlier in the year I contacted Natural England to ask what was happening about LAF annual reports as we had not received the usual notification and template. NE has responded with a circular to all LAFs, as follows:

We are writing to you concerning the submission of your annual report for 2016/17 - i.e. up until April 1st of this year. Natural England is currently reallocating responsibility for operational work and, due to this process and limited resource, we decided not, as in previous years, to run the usual LAF reporting process. However, we would gladly receive any completed reports (as per previous years' format/s) but, given the lateness of the request, we leave it to your discretion as to whether to submit one or not and we will look to implement an updated process for next year 2017/18.

I would recommend that, for its own purposes, it would be useful for NFAF to continue to keep an annual record of activity and on that basis propose (with the Forum's approval) to work with the Chair and National Park Authority to complete a report for 2016/17.

4. Consultations

- ***Fawley Waterside*** – Ruth Croker, Alison Russell and Heather Gould all reported back following the recent consultative exhibitions. Based on their feedback and approved by those who attended, the attached response was sent on behalf of NFAF.

Petronella Natrass
November 2017