

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 02 March 2015*

Agenda item 4: *Chairman's Report*

1. Consultation on New Forest National Park Management Plan

I would like to thank those of our members who came together as a sub-group to consider the NPA draft Management Plan. The over-all impression of the document was that there was little mention of specific objectives within it. True to past form the sub-group came up with a number of useful and imaginative comments which were forwarded to the NPA as our response. We have since had acknowledgement of receipt and we await the next consultation.

2. Sustrans Consultation

A response was made to Sustrans in response to their consultation document with regard to their proposals on improving access for cyclists approaching the Forest from the north. Whilst generally welcoming the proposals we noted that the document mentioned that risk assessments would be carried out on the proposed routes, and we endorsed the need for these in view of members' knowledge of the area.

3. Forestry Commission site visits

I would like to thank Lynden for representing the Access Forum so ably on a number of consultation visits to sites where the Commission is proposing wetland restoration works to streams in the Crown lands. Lynden has put up with a combination of bad weather, long hours and boggy conditions in representing us. The end result of these site visits, attended by all interested parties, is that the Commission has carried out an excellent consultation process and paved the way for hopefully trouble-free Planning Applications.

4. Communications and staff liaison with NPA

Ruth and I recently had a useful meeting with Nigel Matthews, NPA Head of Recreation Management and Learning, together with Gillie Molland (formerly Hayball) and John Lynn of the NPA. We discussed lines of communication with the Park Authority and agreed that with effect from April 1st, John Lynn would be our support officer within the Authority. Gillie would continue to cover the Small Grants Scheme and "Historic Ways and Pathways" issues. We also learned that the RMS Steering Group is nearing a point where the Advisory Group will be re-called.