

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting
Hoburne Bashley Holiday Park– 12 March 2018

Present

Members: Ruth Croker (Chairman)
Ann Sevier (Deputy Chairman)
Paul Brockman
Fran Carpenter
Mark Cowling
Joan Cundill
Alastair Duncan
Jacqui England
Gordon Garrett
Heather Gould
Rachel Pearson
Leo Randall
Peter Scott

Officers: Petronella Nattrass (Hampshire County Council)
Gillie Molland (New Forest National Park Authority)
Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

In attendance:
Nigel Matthews (New Forest National Park Authority)
Jonathan Woods (Hampshire County Council)
Bruce Rothnie (Forestry Commission)

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Sam Dovey and Hallam Mills.
- 1.2 The Chairman advised that Alison Russell had resigned from the Forum due to ill health.

2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were approved with matters arising having been completed apart from the Annual Report, which would be finalised shortly.

3 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 As per paper.

4 Forum Officer's Report

- 4.1 Petronella Nattrass presented her report to the Forum advising that Sam Jones (Access Team Manager, HCC) had been seconded to the post of Rural Programme Manager for a year and would therefore not be attending the Access Forum meetings. Jonathan Woods subsequently informed members that Alison Perry had been appointed to cover Sam's role and recruitment would be taking place shortly to replace the Community Engagement Ranger role which Natalie Hands had recently left.

4.2 The remainder of the report was taken as read.

5 Recreation Management Strategy – Nigel Matthews, NFNPA

5.1 Nigel Matthews updated the Forum on the Recreation Management Strategy reminding members that a consultation was carried out last year. Using the responses two reports had been produced; one a summary of what was said and the second a 'next steps' report, both of which had now been considered and 'signed off' by partner organisations.

5.2 Mr Matthews advised that the RMS steering group is currently drafting a new set of actions that would raise awareness and understanding of what makes the National Park special and address situations where recreation impacts negatively on the Forest. These actions would be discussed at the next RMS steering group meeting on 9 April and a further consultation would be launched in the summer.

6 Managing Recreation – Bruce Rothnie, Forestry Commission

6.1 Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor at the Forestry Commission provided an interactive session with the Forum and looked at how to manage recreation activity in the New Forest. The Forum had the opportunity to consider; what was appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in the Forest, the challenges which are faced dealing with these and how behaviour could be influenced.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the website.

7 Hatchet Pond – Response to Consultation

7.1 Petronella Nattrass had drafted a letter, which was approved by the Forum at the meeting and would be sent to Footprint Ecology the following day to meet the agreed deadline

8 Woodlander Hoburne Bashley – Paul Brockman

8.1 Paul Brockman gave a brief overview of the Hoburne Bashley 100 acre site, 20 acres of which was woodland. This woodland had previously been neglected however following a presentation to Hoburne by Paul which demonstrated how the land would be of benefit to both holidaymakers and the public the land had been turned around and now provided a range of activities. Mr Brockman advised that they teach a lot of schools and provide a basic introduction into woodland management which gives students the skills to continue into further education.

9 England Coast Path Update

9.1 John Truswell was unable to attend the meeting however Gillie Molland advised the Forum that the Coastal Path consultation would be released shortly and that an eight week consultation period would follow. It was decided that the sub-group would meet on 29 March at 10am at the NPA offices to discuss the consultation.

10 Brexit

- 10.1 The NFAF had recently received a consultation from Defra on 'Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit' the Forum Officer asked how the Forum would like to respond to this consultation. It was agreed that Forum members should send their responses to the chairman who would collate and respond.

Action: Forum members to send responses on Brexit / Defra consultation to Ruth Croker by 9 April who would then collate and draft a response.

11 Jonathan Woods

- 11.1 Jonathan Woods, Hampshire County Council gave a PowerPoint presentation which focused on Hampshire's desire to put into place a more dynamic approach for the management of the byway open to all traffic (BOAT) network. He explained that they aspired to bring byways into a position where they would be maintained at a sustainable level which provided access for all. It was explained that these routes would be accessed on their own merit and categorised according to the action required.
- 11.2 Mr Woods advised that he would send a copy of the presentation along with the operational and procedural documents to the Forum to enable them to make any further comments, Petronella would collate the responses.

Action: Forum members to send responses to Petronella Natrass on the Byway operational and procedure documents by 2 April.

12 Planning Guidance

- 12.1 Petronella Natrass advised that the Guidance on Access for Planners and Developers had now been updated in line with feedback and comments which had been received. Joan Cundill suggested that the summary table (as the key section of the guidance) should be brought to the front of the document to serve as an Abstract. Members agreed that subject to this further amendment, the document should now be forwarded to the NPA who would add graphics, It was agreed that the document would be reviewed annually.

13 Regular Updates

- 13.1 a) New Forest National Park Authority
Gillie Molland gave a brief update of the events which had recently taken place at the National Park Authority, this included the re-scheduling of the spring clean due to snow, the ranger team were currently looking ahead to the ground nesting bird season and responsible dog walking. Two new apprentice rangers had been appointed; Peter Dovey and Martyn Meaker who would also be working closely with partner organisations. The NPA were creating a new Access Ranger post which would be advertised shortly.

b) Forestry Commission

Gary North updated the forum on work that the Forestry Commission had recently carried out this included car park toilet improvements, regular litter picks across the forest and the resurfacing of footpaths at Bolderwood.

c) Rural Communities Fund (formally Small Grants Scheme)

Joan Cundill advised the Forum that this would be her last meeting, she added that she had thoroughly enjoyed her time on the forum and would ask that when considering access that the forum always remember scooters and those with disabilities.

There had not been any recent applications to the Rural Communities Fund from within the New Forest National Park. Gillie Molland confirmed that the National Park Authority would continue to provide an additional 25% funding to future schemes within the National Park boundary.

d) Historic Routes

Alastair Duncan informed the Forum that a meeting had not taken place, however Gareth Owen had been circulating emails regarding the project.

Gillie commented that the project was well underway with volunteers currently looking at rights of way across the forest and their historical context.

14 Reports from other LAF's

14.1 a) Hampshire

The minutes from the last meeting would be published in due course.

Date of next meeting:

11 June 2018, 9.30 – 1.00, Venue: Lepe Country Park, followed after lunch by a tour of the new visitor centre.