

## **NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM**

**Meeting:** *Monday 3 September 2018*

**Agenda item 3: *Chair's Report***

### **A31 Consultation**

I was approached as a walker in the Ringwood area and asked in a telephone conversation to a series of set questions about walking on the route alongside the A31 where widening of the road is to take place.

Many other groups whose members may walk or cycle on the route are being contacted.

I mentioned the need to minimise noise from the road, that sufficient width was needed to accommodate mobility buggies and to allow for separation or sufficient width for safe multi user use.

I was told that the questionnaire I responded to was the first of a number.

I asked that the LAF should be included in future consultations.

### **Recreation Management Strategy Consultation**

The sub group met to discuss the proposals. A response to the questionnaire was written and circulated to members for comment. After minor amendments It has been submitted.

### **Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project**

The National Grid has held further consultations on their proposals.

Heather Gould deputised for me at 1 meeting (she had previously attended for NF Dog) when I was on holiday and Ann Sevier was unable to attend.

Heather has written a report.

I have since met with a number of National Grid staff at a drop in meeting.

I do not think access will be adversely affected by the changes and the vista will be much improved. There will need to be a short diversion to 1 right of way at the western end. This will probably result in an improved route.

### **A Year In The New Forest**

I expect many of you will have watched this recent Channel 4 TV programme. It was very informative and sometimes amusing.

Well done to Ann Sevier who was one of its stars.

If you have not seen it I suggest you watch it on I catch up.

*Ruth Croker*  
*August 2018*

## **NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM**

**Meeting:** *Monday 3 September 2018*

**Agenda item 3:** *Visual Impact Provision consultation (Heather Gould)*

### **Report on meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

#### **National Grid gave an update on the project to bury power lines as part of their Visual Impact Improvement (VIP) scheme**

The meeting was well attended and many groups were represented, especially the local parishes close to the project site and on the route across the Forest from Cadnam.

The slide show is available to view. It dealt mainly with the route chosen and the way the project would be managed:

- The preferred route now is to the north of the current power line path, mainly because they could not find a way of successfully crossing the mires to the South which would have been necessary with the first 3 preferred routes. This new route crosses heathland and they are now employing specialists at heathland restoration.
- The phase 1 group of surveys is continuing – no badgers or newts found – bats, breeding birds were found and door-mice and reptile surveys are still ongoing as are archeology, socio economics, noise, visual impact, hydrology, agriculture and soils and traffic.
- The aim is to minimise disruption so that the Forest stock and recreational users can retain access. There will be four sections of work, giving not more than 1000 m between crossing points. Sections will be opened for work in sequence, then closed when finished and paths will remain open throughout. Each section will take about 6 months to complete. Work will continue all year round.
- The haul road will not be fenced but open trenches and stored turves (removed prior to digging) will be fenced for protection.
- When finished there will be 12 'link' boxes above ground for maintenance purposes, much like the green boxes that can be seen at the edge of roads.

There was a lot of talk about engineering and technology but most of the questions throughout the meeting were about traffic movements, the details of which are not yet available but will have to be completed before planning permission is sought.

The National Grid will come back to this forum with further detail for discussion before the planning application goes in. There will be further consultation in the Autumn before planning is submitted early in 2019. If all goes to schedule, the current power lines would be removed early 2022.

The underground infrastructure is guaranteed for 40 years but is likely to last a lot longer than that.

To round off the meeting, we were told of the Landscape Enhancement Initiatives that are being sponsored by the National Grid. These give much smaller grants, perhaps to hide pylons or to destroy rhododendrons, basically enhancing the landscape around pylons that cannot be buried. There are one or two around the new forest area. There has been woodland improvement and a wild play area built near Holbury Manor.

Heather Gould  
August 2018