

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 3 December 2018*

Agenda item 10: *Regular updates*

a) **New Forest National Park Authority** – *report from Adam Vasey, National Park Access Ranger*

The New Forest LAF

- Three new members representing Easy/Disabled Access, Equine interests and Conservation/Landowners have been recruited.

Recreation Management Strategy

- The public consultation is still being analysed and a report will be released soon.

England Coast Path

- The Highcliffe to Calshot section has been proposed and is awaiting the secretary of state to deal with the representations before the route can finally be determined. Once determined we move onto Phase 5 which is open.
- If the path sections reach Phase 5 by 2020 then the coast path will be funded via the EU, if after this date then money will come from the UK Treasury Department and could be significantly less.
- Coast Path access infrastructure is being designed and will be shown to LAF members for consultation when ready.

The Lepe Loop

- The online Mend Our Mountains campaign for the Lepe Loop has gone well and we are waiting on the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) to let us know how much money was raised for the New Forest.
- Currently the amount raised sits below the £20000 target therefore the BMC will be let us know of other funding streams to which we can apply.
- Other fundraising efforts include a raffle being hosted by Lepe Country Park and also a local Tesco Carrier Bags appeal which could see up to £3000 of donations.

Warren Copse Forest Trail and Wildplay Walk

- The Wildplay area in Warren Copse, near Holbury, is being further enhanced with the addition of a nature trail and a walking trail through the woods.
- Surface works have already been completed and the next stage is to harvest timber from the copse and use a local chainsaw artist to create waymarker posts.
- This project is being funded by the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

Historic Routes and Past Pathways

- Parish Councils have been contacted and engaged with. Volunteers have been trained and are collecting data.

b) HCC Countryside Access (South Access team) – report from Alison Perry, HCC Area Countryside Access Manager (South and West)

1. England Coast Path:

HCC Access Team is continuing to work with Natural England (NE) on 3 sections of the ECP - Calshot to Gosport, Gosport to Portsmouth and South Hayling to East Head. The team are currently reviewing the detailed maps with infrastructure and routes prior to them going out to consultation.

Discussions concerning the Trail Partnership are on-going and yet to be finalised.

2. New Forest Mitigation Partnership:

The Lymington and Pennington circular walk had a successful opening event with Cllr Heron and members from NFDC, Ramblers, Disabled Ramblers amongst others in attendance.

Procurement has been completed on 2 projects – One in New Milton and the other at Buttsash Wood.

New Milton Improvements:

Works include surfacing, clearing vegetation and upgrading barriers and signage on parts of Footpaths 705b and 728 in New Milton, plus other paths on New Milton Town Council land near Ballard Lake, Ballard Water Meadow and in adjacent woodland.

Work started on site 29th October 2018 at Footpath 705b and will take approx. 8 weeks to complete.

Buttsash Wood Improvements:

Works include surfacing, clearing vegetation, replacing steps with a ramp, upgrading boardwalks, kissing gate, barriers and signage on Footpaths 501 and 503 in Hythe and Dibden, plus other paths on New Forest District Council land in Buttsash Wood Due to start on site January 2019 and expected to take approx. 9 weeks.

The next project is likely to be some improvements in Ringwood, however this has yet to be confirmed as the next priority for delivery.

The partnership now sits within the HCC Countryside Projects Team rather than the South Access Team, although the project officer (Esther Smeardon) continues to work closely with the South Access Team

3. Network management:

The Area Team is at almost full capacity (ACAM role is part-time and will continue until Sept 2019). Ria Loveridge (Community Engagement Ranger) and Brad Brown (Access Ranger) are now up to speed and making a difference on the network.

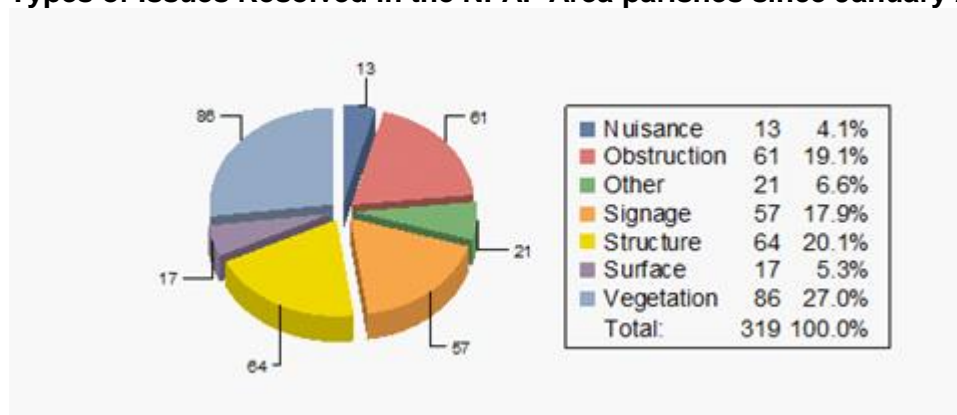
Ria held the first 2-day community volunteering event in Lymington in October which was attended by a few hardy souls who helped clear and cut back the re-growth on the Lymington Green Way following its official opening (see above).

The seasonal vegetation program has now been completed with our contractors and ranger team having completed 142km of cutting this summer. As usual we will be reviewing each path on these cutting lists to ensure that we are doing the work that most benefits the users next year – this will be with input from Parish Councils and our own in-house knowledge.

Results from The Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) are below:

	Received	Resolved	%
Total number of Issues in the NFAF parishes Since 1 st Jan 2018	317	319	100%
Total number of Issues in the NFAF parishes Since Nov 2017	410	422	103%
Total Number of Issues across South Area since 1 st Jan 2018	825	760	92%
Total Number of Issues across South Area since Nov 2017	983	957	97%
Total Number of Issues across Hampshire since 1 st Jan 2018	2836	2770	98%
Total Number of Issues across Hampshire Area since Nov 2017	3305	3372	102%

Types of Issues Resolved in the NFAF Area parishes since January 2018



The above figures continue to show the positive received: resolved trend in the New Forest area. It also shows that vegetation issues continue to be our most reported issue.

c) **Forestry Commission** – verbal report from Gary North

d) **England Coast Path update** – report from John Truswell

Highcliffe to Calshot (HCS) stretch of the ECP progress is ongoing within the determine stage of the process. NE are collating all the representations and objections to send to DEFRA.

The completion of this work is still several weeks away, this in part due not only to the complex aspect of this stretch but also to a recent case judgment regarding the Habitats regulations where NE and DEFRA are agreeing a response to a European court judgment.

Due to this we are looking at January 2019 before they are sent, however should guidance come to us sooner from DEFRA this date may change. Determination can take many months and due to the complexity of HCS this is very likely.

Whilst this process is ongoing, work is continuing on the **Calshot to Gosport (CCG)** stretch of the ECP.

Much of this stretch is aligned over existing rights of way, so it is in part is less complex than HCS. I have presented our outline alignment to Ruth Croker and Gordon Garrett recently (and the Ramblers) and am continuing consultation with Hampshire County Council and other key stakeholders. (This outline route is embargoed as we have not consulted with all landowners yet and have not informed them of our outline route)

We are aiming to schedule second letters to land owners before Christmas, but as this is an ongoing iterative process this date may change.

Should any members wish to contact me, please email john.truswell@naturalengland.org or telephone 07717694247 / 02080267747

John Truswell
November 2018