

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 11 March 2019*

Agenda item 4: *Forum Officer's Report*

a) Forum Officer's Report – *report from Adam Vasey, National Park Access Ranger*

The New Forest Access Forum

- The service level agreement between the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) regarding the running of the New Forest Access Forum has changed. NFNPA are taking back their responsibilities and are directly supporting the Forum through the appointment of Adam Vasey as the new Forum Support Officer.
- The Access Forum has always been jointly supported by HCC and the NFNPA and it looks forward to work closely with both organisations within the New Forest District boundary.

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 be determined.
- The Calshot to Gosport section is in the process of being proposed and has sought consultation from the NF Access Forum on the draft route.

Recreation Management Strategy

- A report commissioned by the RMS steering group has estimated visitor numbers for 2018 at 15.2 million day visits. The majority of the visits are from local people exercising their dogs. This further strengthens the need for action to mitigate damage to the protected habitat.

The Lepe Loop

- The online Mend Our Mountains campaign for the Lepe Loop has ended. We raised £1,500 on our local page which will be topped up from the central fund to an estimated £10,000.
- Our Tesco Carrier Bags appeal was successful raising £2000 and other monies were raised by HCC staff at Lepe Country Park via a raffle and other events.
- We have also applied for additional funding through the Charlotte Bonham-carter Charitable Trust and are waiting for a response.

Rural Communities Fund (NFNPA inputs)

- For 2018/2019 we are supporting Brockenhurst Parish Council to improve the surfacing and replace a hunting gate and small section of fencing on footpath Brock501.
- For 2019/2020 we are in talks with Lyndhurst Parish Council to support their village walk, with surface repairs, leaflet printing and waymarker discs.
- For 2019/2020 we are looking to work with the Pondhead Conservation Trust about improvements to their short circular walk.

Other Access & Rights of Way Projects

- Felling is planned in Warren Copse, near Holbury and, once we have the timber, two trails will be waymarked. This project is being funded by the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.
- The Historic Routes project currently has about 20 draft trails, with the aim of whittling these down to the 10 finalists over the next few months and then select the five to progress once enhancements have been costed. The final five will then have the works progressed over the rest of this year.