

## **NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM**

**Meeting:** *Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2019*

### **Agenda item 4: *Chair's Report***

#### **a) Forum Officer's Report – *report from Ruth Croker, New Forest Access Forum Chair***

##### **1. The Cranborne Chase AONB.**

The AONB has been formally recognised by the Dark Sky Association as an International Dark-Sky Reserve, an honour the AONB has been trying to achieve for several years. It is the 14th Dark-Sky Reserve in the world and it is the largest at almost 1000 sq kms.

##### **2. Sense of Place Workshop.**

I attended a workshop "The New Forest Special by Design". It aimed to find out what the workshop participants thought about the New Forest in order to get "under the skin" of the area and tell the Forest's Story.

The workshop was run by Peter Anderson Studios and Thinking Places. They will write up their findings. These should help inform the Recreation Management Strategy and eventually be used to engender greater understanding and respect for the Forest from both locals and visitors.

##### **3. Walking for those with disability.**

Because I lead walks I was contacted to see if I could help the recruitment of walk leaders. The project was set up by individuals linked to a private therapy establishment in Fordingbridge. The "walking" participants all had considerable disability and a desire to get out onto local Fordingbridge paths . Disabilities included lung disease necessitating using and carrying oxygen, severe stroke meaning the participant was confined to a wheelchair and a lady with a guide dog .

There was no charge to participants one of whom was loaned a wheelchair by the clinic. Besides leaders helpers are required.

I was very impressed with the project and will try to recruit walk leaders for them. I will feed the information I have gained into our work on access for those with a disability.

Ruth Croker.