

**Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting**  
**Hoburne Bashley, Sway Road, New Milton 2 September 2019**

**Present**

Members: Ruth Croker (Chairman)  
Ann Sevier (Deputy Chairman)  
Paul Brockman  
Fran Carpenter (Local Authority Rep – HCC)  
Peter Scott  
Mark Cowling  
Heather Gould  
Jane Horton  
Ross Mitchell  
Gary North  
Richard Taylor (Local Authority Rep – NFNPA)

Officers: Adam Vasey (New Forest National Park Authority)  
Dawn Rayment (New Forest National Park Authority)

In attendance:  
Gareth Owens (New Forest National Park Authority)

**1 Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from Alastair Duncan & Henry Mellor.

**2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Action: Adam to chase HCC for the horse-riding document mentioned in 5.1 minutes from the previous meeting.
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**3 Chair's Report**

3.1 The Chair introduced her report reporting on key notes from the Impacts of Recreation Workshop. Strategies for mitigation for the impacts of new housing developments are being considered and that it has been agreed that an LDO has been agreed as the best way forward but will need to go to public consultation before being adopted.

The remainder of the report was taken as read.

**4 Forum Officer's Report**

4.1 Adam Vasey explained that Nick Tomlin of the RSPB Franchises Lodge has tendered his resignation. The post with the RSPB is currently unfilled. Three forum positions are now vacant.

- 4.2 Adam was able to confirm funding from the British Mountaineering Council, this is in addition to Tesco Bag For Life funding and £200 raised by raffle. It was suggested other supermarkets may also be worth approaching.

Action: Adam to look into other supermarket local funding such as Waitrose and Co-Op.

- 4.3 The Forum Officer's report was taken as read.

## **5 Additional Reports**

- 5.1 Gary North introduced the Forestry England Report highlighting the news that Sam Jones (previously of Hampshire County Council) would be joining Forestry England as the Head of Recreation and Public Affairs in late September.
- 5.2 There was a discussion regarding the issues facing Forestry England around enforcement actions for illegal activities and how they can be tackled more effectively in the future. Forum members were encouraged to report incidents to Forestry England as it helps provide evidence to where resources are needed, and how this would form part of the RMS work program.

Action: Request for regular updates on RMS work program.

- 5.3 The rest of Forestry England's Report was taken as read.
- 5.4 Wiltshire and Swindon CAF Report was discussed.  
The forum commented that many AF are under-staffed and acknowledged that the New Forest is in a lucky position.  
The rest of the report was taken as read.
- 5.5 There was no report from the Dorset LAF.
- 5.6. Ross Mitchell have a verbal report on Hampshire County Council Access Forum.
- 5.7 Adam Vasey Reported that he was setting up a Volunteer Path Warden Scheme within the National Park to look at path issues that have been reported. This will allow for an assessment of need for further work so reduce pressure on officer time.
- There followed a discussion about other organisations which may be able to get involved and offer resources, and a request that a joined approach is adopted.
- 5.8 Report from Alastair Duncan was taken as read and it was agreed that this was for information, and that it was not for the Access Forum to comment on at this stage

## **6 Any Other Business**

- 6.1 It was noted that no response was sent from the Forum to the HCC paper on 'Balancing the budget' mentioned in the previous minutes, but Ruth Croker had sent a personal response.

## **8 Site Visit – Hoburne Bashley Site Visit – Paul Brockman**

- 8.1 Following the site visit the Forum confirmed that the site visits were an important element of the Forum meetings and thanked Paul Brockman for today's visit and acknowledged the quality of the education opportunity and service that was being provided at the site.

## **9 Presentation 2 – An update on cycling in the forest and the cycling working group – Mark Cowling**

- 9.1 Mark Cowling updated the Forum on work to identify gaps in the cycling network. Work is ongoing but 16 sections have been identified for further visits by members of the group to identify if they are viable routes worth taking forward to the RMS.
- 9.2 NF cycle Trails Map has been very successful and is nearly out of stock. The leaflet content will be reviewed before reprinting.

## **7 LEI project introduction & Accessibility Update – Adam Vasey (NFNPA)**

- 7.1 Adam reported that Landscape Enhancement Initiative funding from the National Grid was available to reduce negative impacts from the High Voltage powerlines. This funding source has been used to fund rhododendron removal around Franchises Lodge. A future project to improve the PROW near Marchwood is now being considered. Expressions of interest must be received by December.
- 7.2 Six accessible walks linked to the 'Miles without stiles' project have been graded for levels of accessibility. These are now all available on the NFNPA website. The aim is to increase this number to 12 walks covering Crownland, Coast, Avon Valley and Villages, each with one 'Suitable for all' 'Suitable for many' and 'Suitable for some' graded walk.
- 7.3 Adam reported that along with Jim Mitchell (NFNPA Officer) – they will spend 5 days working with Open Sight Eastleigh, to identify what areas we are currently doing well for people with visual impairments, and what areas we can do better.

## **10 Presentation 3 – The Historic Routes Project update. From ten paths down to five – Gareth Owen**

- 10.1 Gareth Owen presented an update on the project work to date; and the aim of the project is to find five potential new self-guided walking trails using existing ROW. With the aim to use old routes and tap into the history and stories connected with that route.

Desktop surveys of 268 sifted rights of way have taken place and 82% have been field surveyed, by the 16 volunteer surveyors. From these 10 routes were taken to the last steering group meeting and seven potential routes have now been identified.

Information has been sent to local history groups, some landowners and all parishes have been contacted.

There was a discussion about varying degrees to which representatives have engaged with the project. However, it was confirmed that there is still time to input

to the remaining trails. Gareth is keen to speak with parishioners that may have memories (first, second, third hand etc.) of these old routes being used e.g. drove ways (moving livestock), smuggler routes, old 'roads' that are now footpaths, military manoeuvres during WWII etc.

Action: Forum members to promote the project and encourage their PCs and parishioners to input and get involved with the project, by contacting Gareth Owen.

**Date of next meeting:**

2 December 2019, 9.30am – 1.00pm, Venue: Town Hall Chambers, Lymington