

June
2019

New Forest Access Forum

Advising on how to make the New Forest countryside more accessible



The New Forest Access Forum is the Local Access Forum for the New Forest National Park and South West Hampshire (New Forest District Council area), as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The appointing authorities are the New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council.

The New Forest Access Forum is an independent advisory body, operating on a statutory basis. Membership of the New Forest Access Forum is voluntary.



Public Access to Meetings

We have four meetings a year, two of which are at various places in the national park and the other two are held at the New Forest National Park Authority headquarters at Lymington Town Hall.

All forum meetings are open to the public. Please bear in mind that only LAF members can participate in discussions.

If you wish to make a representation to the forum then please submit it in writing to the Forum Support Officer two weeks before the meeting date (you will have a maximum of five minutes). All representations will be at the discretion of the chair.

Consultations

The forum regularly responds to various consultations from many different organisations including;

-  The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
-  The New Forest National Park Authority.
-  Hampshire and Wiltshire County Councils.
-  Local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Achievements and consultations 2018/19

There have been 4 meetings of the full LAF during the year and a number of sub groups have met.

The full LAF considered the Local Plan Reviews for both the National Park and New Forest District Council. We have and continue to take a particular interest in the plans for a large development in the Fawley/Calshot area.

We have produced "Guidance on Access for Planners and Developers". This has been published online. While recognising the need for additional housing we seek to protect the special habitats of the New Forest.

To this end we have taken a particular interest in the Mitigation Strategy and a new Dog Walkers Charter as well as having a keen interest in the Development of the Recreation Management Strategy. The Recreation Strategy in particular has been the subject of considerable debate.

The development of a route for the England Coast Path has involved a sub group as well as being a subject of debate by the full LAF.

Additional concerns have been the Wetlands Restoration and the possible undergrounding of pylons in Hale.

Ruth Croker
Chair of the Local Access Forum



Ruth Croker

The Future Forest consultation **New Forest National Park Authority**

A survey asking a wide range of questions regarding the future actions to manage recreation within the National Park.

Support for a Heritage Lottery Fund bid

Cranborne Chase AONB

The £2.5 million pound project will celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the area, promoting places to visit and the towns that surround it to help people learn, appreciate and enjoy this important landscape.

Support for Section 38 consent **Martin Down National Nature Reserve**

Works include erection of two sections of fence line, a corral for cattle and the restoration of a dew pond and associated protective fencing on registered common land.



Presentations and discussion topics

Implementing the Green Way New Forest Habitat Mitigation Strategy

**Esther Smeardon,
Hampshire County Council**

The Green Way project is New Forest Districts Council's work to ensure new housing development does not impact negatively on the New Forest Special Protected Area.

People and Wildlife Ranger

**Dawn Rayment,
New Forest National Park Authority**

Dawn introduced herself to the Forum as the People and Wildlife Ranger for the National Park Authority. Much of her engagement work is to help mitigate the potential impacts in the Forest by dog walkers.

HCC Draft Enforcement Policy

**Jonathan Woods,
Hampshire County Council**

Jonathan explained that HCC was looking at bringing forward an enforcement policy as over the last three years there had been a considerable increase in officer time being taken up with negotiating with land owners and developers.

National Grid's Visual Impact Provision Project

**Sarah Kelly,
New Forest National Park Authority**

Sarah reminded the Forum that OFGEM (via National Grid's Visual Impact Provision project) was providing £500 million to mitigate the visual impact of the high voltage transmission infrastructure in England and Wales' protected landscapes (National Parks and AONBs).

Public Rights of Way and Access in the New Forest

**Adam Vasey,
New Forest National Park Authority**

Adam gave a short summary of the state of PRow and how they can be improved by targeted allocation of resources and better partnership working.

Transformation at Lepe Country Park

**Stephanie Rogers,
Country Parks Transformation Programme Manager**

An overview of the Country Parks Transformation project at Lepe, followed by a guided tour of the new facilities.

Fawley Waterside Development Proposals

**David Illsley,
New Forest National Park Authority**

David advised the Forum that a Fawley Waterside Access and Nature Conservation Plan had been produced as part of the supporting documents for the site proposals which detailed the proposed green infrastructure provision and access improvements that would be provided.

An introduction to the draft Professional Dog Walkers Charter

**Dawn Rayment,
New Forest National Park Authority**

Dawn presented the draft of the charter which seeks to promote best practice amongst the many professional dog walking businesses who operate in the National Park.





Project updates and training workshops

Small Grants Scheme Update

Petronella Natrass, Hampshire County Council

Petronella explained that the small grants scheme is being replaced by the Rural Communities Fund which will be curated by Community Engagement Ranger Ria Loveridge.

Historic Routes and Past Pathways; Project Update

Adam Vasey, New Forest National Park Authority

The project is going well, with twenty potential routes being highlighted. These routes will be checked by volunteers for their suitability and eventually whittled down to five.

Health & Harmony; an update on new governmental agricultural policy

Adam Vasey, New Forest National Park Authority

Adam gave a presentation to show the results of the government's recent Health and Harmony consultation.

NFNPA Local Plan Review

David Illsley, New Forest National Park Authority

David updated the Forum on the progress of the Authority's Local Plan 2016 – 2036 which was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in May 2018.

Accessibility Workshop

Adam Vasey, New Forest National Park Authority & Henry Mellor, New Forest Access Forum Member

The workshop harvested ideas from previously successful schemes to aid planning for future accessibility improvements.





Looking forward

Our priorities for the year ahead are:



Improving accessibility within the New Forest National Park.



Continue to advise Natural England on the establishment of the England Coast Path.



Take an active interest in the future of agri-environment schemes as they pertain to countryside access.

We will look to both appointing authorities to provide all necessary support and training to assist us in achieving these priorities.



Our Members

Forum members represent a wide range of relevant interests and expertise. Members are selected in an individual capacity to represent a particular interest. They do not represent any specific organisation or group. Forum members should recognise the validity of the views of others and work together to achieve consensus.

Members of LAFs are volunteers and include a range of people from the local community, including:

-  land owners and land managers
-  access users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders
-  those representing other interests, such as health and conservation

Members are usually appointed for a three year term. Members are unpaid, although reasonable travel expenses and a carer's allowance may be claimed for attending meetings and training events.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the New Forest Access Forum then please contact the Forum Support Officer.



Access Forum Member	Representing
Paul Brockman	Youth & Education
Mark Cowling	Cycling
Ruth Croker	Walking
Alastair Duncan	Conservation & Volunteering
Jacqui England	Tourism
Gordon Garrett	Countryside Access
Heather Gould	Dog walking
Hallam Mills	Landowning & farming
Rosemary Mitchell	Health & wellbeing
Gary North	Public land management
Rachel Pearson	Estate management
Peter Scott	Coastal access
Ann Sevier	Commoning
Nick Tomalin	Wildlife and Conservation
Jane Horton	Equine interests
Henry Mellor	Easy Access / Accessibility

If you would like the New Forest Access Forum to consult on your organisation's access plans then please contact the Forum Support Officer



Forum Support Officer

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