

New Forest Access Forum Meeting 5 December 2022

Chair's Report.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL)

Regular meetings continue.

A review of the FIPL Programme. Its work seems to be appreciated by DEFRA. The application process for a grant is time consuming. The National Park is becoming the applicant for a grant for hedge planting. A collaborative arrangement which means many farms can benefit from 1 application.

Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum.

A number of Access Forums in the South West have joined together to express concern at the lack of support for LAF's by Natural England. They believe that there is a need for Natural England, on behalf of Central Government, to engage with LAF's.

Guidance for LAF's has not been updated since 2009.

The Deregulation Act may be enacted in April 2023. This is long awaited. When implemented its hold be easier and hopefully quicker to make Map Modifications easier by speeding up the legal process.

Recreation Management Strategy Advisory Group.

Cycling. There had been a hold up in preparing the document about the off road gravel tracks network and the LCWIP.

Agreement is needed on the management of cyclists.

A consultation in the New Year is the aim.

Public Space Protection Orders. The next step forward us a public consultation

The New Forest Association undertook a Byelaw Watch in the summer.

There was a "static watch" at 9 popular visitor locations and a "free range "watch. Littering and dog fouling were the commonest breeches of the byelaws.

New Forest and Wetland Restoration Forum.

A new Chairman David Rumble has been appointed,

Natural England gave an interesting and informative talk on climate change.

The next steps in producing the final Restoration Plan were discussed by Footprint Ecology who hope to produce a draft plan by next spring.

Amendments to the Constitution were discussed and approved by a majority vote.

Approaches to the Forum.

1. Michael Harrison a NFDC Councillor would like us to take the lead in producing a walking route across the New Forest. He would like this to be a National Trail.

I have reservations about this.

Is any member/s willing to take on this project?

2. Cycling . A couple of keen cyclists have approached the Forum because they would like more opportunities to cycle on approved off road routes particularly in the Beaulieu, Dibden Purlieu area and beyond. They have pointed out the importance of outdoor exercise. This couple are 80yrs of age and have orthopaedic issues. I understand their frustration and difficulties. How can we help?

Ruth Croker.