

2021

New Forest Access Forum

Helping to make the New Forest more accessible for everyone

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

Giving Advice

Section 94 of the CROW Act makes it the statutory function of forums to give advice to a variety of government departments including:

- Our appointing authorities
- Local councils
- Natural England
- Forestry England
- English Heritage
- Various other Government Department.

All of these bodies are required, under section 94(5) of the CROW Act, to "have regard, in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them" by a forum.

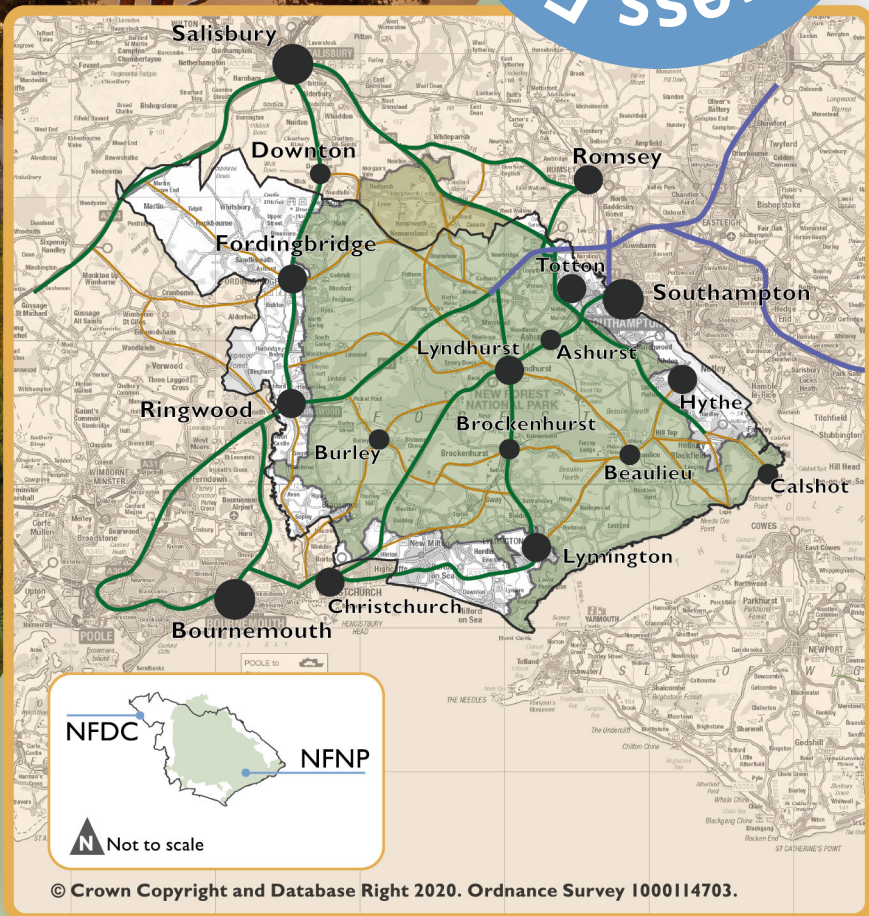


Public Access to Meetings

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.



Word from the Chair, consultations and site visits

Despite Covid-19 we continued to meet regularly. We used Teams to facilitate this when necessary. The majority of Access Forum members came to the end of their 3 year term in the spring. Applications for membership were welcomed from newcomers as well as those wishing to continue their membership. The posts were "advertised" widely and the appointing authorities had to scrutinise and interview a large number of applicants. This has resulted in nine new members and for the first time we have a carriage driver. The new LAF has met twice and we continue to work to make the New Forest more accessible to all. Most significantly through the LCWIP and the Recreation Management Strategy."

Ruth Croker,
Chair of the Local Access Forum



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.

New Forest LCWIP

Formal consultation

The forum attended a bespoke mapping session with Jim Mitchell to identify key walking and cycling routes within the New Forest National Park. This feedback will assist in the creation of a draft document which will need further consultation.

Waterside Transport Strategy

Formal Consultation

This was a Hampshire County Council consultation about various transport plans for the waterside. Members were encouraged to spread the word of this consultation and also to respond as individuals. An official response was also sent.

Access To Water

Informal Consultation

Members discussed the increasing demand for access to blue space in addition to green space. Bird Aware Solent are working on a map which details the best places in the New Forest to access water for paddleboarders and kayakers.

Presentations & discussion topics

Post lockdown pressure

Erika Dovey, Ranger,
New Forest National Park Authority

Erika talked about the partnership response to the post lockdown pressure as National Park and Forestry England rangers worked together to enforce the BBQ ban, chat about the New Forest Code and encourage people to enjoy themselves responsibly.

Planning in the National Park

David Illsley, Policy Manager,
New Forest National Park Authority

David gave an update on the Fawley development and a brief overview of the new planning white paper which proposes a radical change to the current planning system.

Recreation and access project update

Sam Jones, Head of Recreation and Public Affairs,
Forestry England

Sam gave an update on a variety of works including the works to Hatchett Pond and the Longslade Bottom bridges.

The New Forest LCWIP

Jim Mitchell, Interpretation & Outreach Manager,
New Forest National Park Authority

Jim talked about the concept of the LCWIPs (local walking and cycling infrastructure plans) and explained that the National Park Authority, Forestry England and Hampshire County Council were working together to produce and LCWIP for the New Forest.

A Sustainable Cycle Network

Richard Burke, Programme Manager – Recreation
Management Strategy, Forestry England

Richard gave a presentation on his vision of a sustainable cycle network across the central crown lands and wider New Forest area. This was followed by a discussion on the place of cycling in the New Forest.

Responsible Access to Water

Gemma Stride, Project Officer, Freshwater Habitats
Trust

Gemma joined us to give an overview of the work of the Freshwater Habitats Trust in improving water quality and promoting responsible access to water. This was followed by a discussion about the high levels of demand for access to blue spaces.

The role of the Verderers

Richard Deakin, Verderer, Verderers of the New
Forest

Richard gave an excellent presentation on the history of the Verderers of the New Forest and about their current role and responsibilities here in the New Forest.

Training and site visits

Online resources workshop

Adam Vasey, Access Ranger,
New Forest National Park Authority

We ran a workshop and discussion on the NFAF website and the new NFAF Members SharePoint site. These two online resources and available for our members to use and to help them achieve the aim and objectives of the access forum.

The history and role of local access forums

Adam Vasey, Access Ranger,
New Forest National Park Authority

After recruiting nine new members we took an opportunity to remind and refresh the entire forum on the role of Local Access Forums in the UK and, more specifically, what the Access Forum can achieve here in the New Forest.

Site visit to PEDALL

Gareth Jones, Ride Leader, PEDALL

Gareth introduced PEDALL, the inclusive cycling charity, and explained their work engaging people with additional needs. We had a tour of the various types of cycles and then went out for a ride through the New Forest.

Looking forward

Our priorities for the year ahead are;

To provide both formal and informal advice and guidance on countryside access to New Forest groups and organisations.

To improve our website and other avenues of education and information provision.

To focus on making the New Forest more accessible for those with additional needs.

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.

Current members are

Ann Sevier – Commoning
Ruth North – Public land management
Ruth Croker – Walking
Paul French – Local Business
Sarah Hammett – Dog walking
Bob Dampier – Cycling
Peter Armstrong – Volunteering
Trudi Lloyd Williams – Access To Water
Kristie Clark – Health & Wellbeing
Paul Ames – Tourism
Richard Taylor – New Forest National Park Authority
Henry Mellor – Disability
Richard Shirley – Estate Management
Richard Manley – Farming
Julian Sheppard – Wildlife & Conservation
Pippa Hutton – Equestrian

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



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