

NFAF Chair's Report

Monday 11 March 2024

This has been a quiet period. Some meetings have been cancelled.

1. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL)

Applications continue to be received. Most projects need to provide additional information before a decision on funding can be made.

Oure New Forest FIPL Group and Defra are concerned about the number of deer and there is very likely to be a project monitoring there numbers and location.

2. HCC Countryside Access Forum.

I attended an online meeting. It was held in a Village Hall with some attendees in an HCC building.

Audio was variable.

- De Regulation Bill. The law on this has been passed but the regulations have not been published/agreed.

This Bill stems from the "Right to Apply". It should simplify the way of dealing with rights of way extinguishment and diversion orders. There is likely to be an "evidential" test. The evidence will need to exceed a given bar.

Some rights of way will be exempted from this law. A list of those exempted has not been published.

Further information is not expected to be known before May 2025.

- Grant Scheme overview. Money can be applied for by Parishes for projects relating to safety, access or those outlined in the Countryside Access Plan. Matched funding is desirable. The maximum contribution by HCC is £5000.

Landowner permission is required for any work.

- Byway Consultation. Our LAF has been invited to participate.

- AGM. Points raised.

Desire for a more diverse membership.

Both the Chairman and Vice Chair resigned from their roles.

The CAF officer is going on 1 years Maternity Leave in March.