

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY MEETING – 18 MAY 2006**

**NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL REPORT  
Summary of the meeting on Thursday 4 May 2006**

**Report by:** Nick Evans, Senior Planning Officer (Management Plan)

**Summary:**

This report outlines the various issues discussed by the Consultative Panel on 4 May 2006.

**Recommendations:**

1. That members note issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 4 May 2006, and in particular points relevant to the Authority under paragraph 6.
2. That members note that the date of the next Panel meeting is Thursday 6 July 2006.

**Resources:**

None.

**Other major considerations:**

None.



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**Main agenda items**

1. Panel Constitution

Members considered updated wording of parts of the Constitution to reflect the establishment of the National Park and National Park Authority. In general the changes were agreed, but a further draft of the Terms of Reference section was requested for the next meeting.

2. Forestry Commission

Panel Tour. It was noted that 29 people were currently attending the Tour on 10 May. (*All National Park Authority members have also been invited*).

LIFE3 public event. There will be an 'end-of-project' event on 2 June 2006, with a marquee and site visits from the Blackwater car park, Rhinefield Drive. All are welcome to drop in at any time during the day.

New Forest Visitor Survey. Bruce Rothnie summarised the main findings of the recent survey. The full report will be available shortly on the Forestry Commission web-site.

Amalgamating the various survey methods used, the report suggests:

- 13.5m visits are made annually to the National Park. The Forestry Commission believes a further 2-3m visits were probably not captured by the methodology (ie a total of 15.5 – 17.5m visits)
- 35% of visits are by local people (living within or immediately adjacent to the Park); 25% by day visitors from outside the New Forest area; 40% by staying visitors
- Visitors contribute £150m annually to the local economy

3. National Park Authority meeting reports

A report of the 14 March meeting had been circulated. A verbal summary was given of the 25 April meeting. Members raised the matter of 'upgrading' footpaths and bridleways to Byways Open to All Traffic. It was noted that this was not a particular issue within the National Park.

**Additional items discussed included:**

4. Highways issues

Hampshire County Council reported that major road works were planned on the A338 north of Ringwood later in the summer. Panel members (including tourism interests) would be kept informed. There was no further news on the Ashurst-Lyndhurst cycle route. Further cutting of verge vegetation on the A326 would be carried out after the bird breeding season.

5. Amenity use of grazing land

The New Forest Equestrian Association pointed out that pony paddocks were not necessarily detrimental if well-managed. Other members were nevertheless concerned that this use was leading to a gradual 'urbanisation' of Forest villages.

6. English Nature representation

The Chairman reported that he had written to English Nature requesting that the organisation supply a representative to attend Panel meetings (as it had in the past). He expressed disappointment that no reply had been received. The Panel asked that this matter be brought to the attention of the National Park Authority, in the hope that the latter could encourage English Nature to respond positively.

(Note: following the meeting English Nature have responded and will be sending a representative to future meetings.)

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