

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 28 JUNE 2007

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM REPORT
Summary of the meeting on Monday 4 June 2007

Report by: Sarah Manchester, Countryside Access Officer

Summary:

This report outlines the proceedings and issues discussed at the meeting of the New Forest Access Forum held on 4 June 2007.

Recommendations:

- 1. To note issues of interest discussed at the meeting of the New Forest Access Forum on 4 June 2007.**
- 2. To note the date of the next New Forest Access Forum meeting is Monday 3 September 2007.**

Resources:

Routine.

Papers:

NFNPA 194/07: Cover paper

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Main Agenda Items for Discussion

1 Matters Arising

Access to Inland Waterways Bill

The Bill has still not had its second reading; this is now scheduled for 29 June.

National Park Authority's Recreation Management Strategy

Olive Collins will represent the Forum on the Key Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Hampshire Countryside Access Forum Task Groups

Ruth Croker will represent the New Forest Access Forum on the group looking at finishing the Definitive Map. Gordon Garret and Chris Marshallsay will be on the group looking at Local Transport Plan funding.

Hampshire Policy on Motor Vehicles in the Countryside

Sarah Manchester represented the Forum at the final meeting of the task group. The draft policy was further amended to incorporate comments received from members of both Forums. The draft policy should be approved at the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum meeting on 27 June. Once approved, it will go to the Council members for consideration.

2 Recruitment

Richard Reeves has stepped down from the Forum. New members have been appointed as follows: John Durnell (Nature Conservation), John Pemberton (Land Owners/Managers), Mike Bowles (Access to Water) and Pete Brown (Camping and Caravanning).

3 Strategic Cycle Network

The Cycle Working Group has received copies of the draft cycling map being published by Walking Distance. Peter Walsh represents the Forum on this Group, and can collate comments from Forum members.

The Lymington-Ampress cycle route is under construction, as is the Ashurst-Lyndhurst route. It is hoped that the route at Keyhaven will be rolled to create a flatter surface which will be more suitable for road bikes.

Sustrans is hoping to receive public support in the form of telephone bids for lottery funding. If successful, it is hoped that the Holmsley crossing of the A35 can be match funded.

The New Forest Tour Official Guide was circulated for information.

4 Consultations

The Defra consultation on Access to the English Coast is now expected to be issued on 19 June. The names of members of the Coastal Access sub-group of the Forum will be circulated, and new Forum members will be invited to join. The sub-group will consider the consultation paper and prepare a draft response which will be discussed at the next Forum meeting.

The Defra consultation on the Right to Apply (a consultation on the implementation of the right to apply for orders to extinguish and divert public rights of way, and associated rights of appeal) has been issued. The consultation can be found at:
www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/row-rights/index.htm.

The closing date for responses is 31 August. The Forum requested that officer advice be made available after the Forum Workshop on 20 June. The Forum decided to call a special meeting to agree their response to the consultation.

5 Forestry Commission Ranger Team

The Ranger Team gave an illustrated presentation on their work. The many roles of the rangers were described, and there was further opportunity for members to meet the rangers individually during the coffee break.

6 Cycling Signage and Access Issues

Peter Walsh gave a report on a paper he and Alastair Duncan had submitted to the Cycle Working Group. The paper highlights the difficulties in accessing the off-road cycle routes from the village centres, and recommends the use of appropriate signage. The Forum agreed to write to the National Park Authority to recommend that the report be considered by the Boundary Markers and Signage Advisory Group.

7 Election

Ann Sevier was re-elected as Chairman, and Alastair Duncan was re-elected as Vice-Chairman. Both appointments are for one year.

Additional Items

8 Additional items included:

- a) reports from meetings of neighbouring access forums in Wiltshire and Hampshire, and of the Cranborne Chase Access Topic Group;
- b) information about the Authority's staff restructuring;
- c) an update on the progress of the Authority's project on gathering preferences for how accessibility information should be portrayed;
- d) information about the progress of the Authority's Recreation Management Strategy;
- e) a summary of the recent Guidance on Local Access Forums issued by Defra;
- f) an update on the PROGRESS project;
- g) information about the content and structure of the Forum's Workshop to be held on June 20;
- h) a request from Hampshire County Council to submit ideas for Local Transport Plan funding at the next Forum meeting;
- i) a report from Chris Marshallsay on the progress made on the A35 horse crossing;
- j) agreement that it was not necessary for the Forum to hold an Annual General Meeting as it holds no budget;
- k) suggestions for items for the next agenda.

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