



New Forest Access Forum Annual Report 2008-2009

The New Forest Access Forum is an independent body that gives strategic advice on improving access to the countryside and coast of the New Forest National Park and south west Hampshire. The Forum's area stretches east-west from Calshot to Martin Down, and north-south from Whiteparish Common to Hurst Spit.

The Forum has been very busy over the period of this report, which is June 2008 to December 2009. This document describes our main areas of work during this period. We have had 6 ordinary meetings, 1 extra meeting, 2 workshops and a number of sub-group meetings with stimulating and interesting access topics.

Parish Councils, access and highway authorities, landowners, interested groups and individuals were all invited to attend our workshops. The first workshop at Brockenhurst was to look at access improvements to the central part of the Forum's area; the Crown Lands and the adjacent villages and hamlets of the Forest. Some of the areas of concern raised were increased verge parking on the open forest and the need for safer and improved walking, cycling and riding to and from the local villages.

The second workshop was held at Milford on Sea and looked at the provision of access on paths, tracks and open spaces in southern part of our area, including the coastline between



Barton on Sea and Calshot. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 has now been passed by Parliament and will give increased rights to the public to walk along the coastline. The workshop looked not only at the present provisions to walk along the Solent but also the cycling routes and paths used by the residents and visitors to access the coast. After the workshop the Forum had a better understanding of the industrial sites, wildlife conservation, recreation, private property and the present provision of access on the coastline.

The Forum has held four workshops in the New Forest in the last few years (the waterside and the east; the western downlands and the north, the central forest area;

and the coastline and the south). In 2010 we will be holding a workshop to look at access to and in the Avon Valley. The workshops have brought forward a large number and range of suggestions for local improvements to access. All suggestions have been discussed by the Forum and for those that are considered to be desirable and achievable, a request has been sent to the appropriate authority along with advice that we would support these improvements. A sub-group of the Forum has been formed to monitor and follow up these proposals, many of which it is hoped can be achieved through the local Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

Much of our work in the past 18 months has been replying to consultations. The New

Forest National Park Authority's Recreation Management Strategy has been our main focus. The first draft strategy was revised following extensive public consultation and the Forum considers that the final draft, which will be published in early 2010, better reflects the present access provision and highlights issues that may develop in the future. It aims to anticipate and plan for any significant increases to visitor numbers due to population growth and changing leisure patterns. The Strategy recognises that better understanding and information about the special qualities of the New Forest will enhance and improve access for local communities and visitors.

The Forum has also replied to consultations from Natural

England on the proposals for new Coastal Access and for Long-distance Trails and Routes, from the Forestry Commission on the Long Term Role of the Public Forest Estate in England, from the National Park Authority and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire AONB on their Management Plans, from Hampshire County Council on its Rural Delivery Strategy. We have also responded to a number of local consultations on access matters.

Forum membership is voluntary. Our members are very active in their specialist areas of expertise and also give their time to attend Access Forum meetings in neighbouring counties, other topic groups and meetings.

Ann Sexier

Chair



Membership of the New Forest Access Forum 2008/2009

Forum member	Representing
Louis Bonney (from June 2009)	Youth and Diversity
Lynden Bowen (from June 2009)	Tourism & Camping/Caravanning
Mike Bowles	Access to Water
Pete Brown (until May 2009)	Camping and Caravanning
Cllr Nigel Clarke (until May 2009)	Hampshire County Council
Ruth Croker	Walking
John Cropp	Dog Walking
Joan Cundill	Disability
Sam Dovey	Farming
Alastair Duncan (vice chair)	Volunteering
John Durnell	Nature Conservation
Gordon Garrett	Horse Riding
Wendy Hughes	Education
Chris Marshallsay (until May 2009)	Local Business (Equestrian)
Vicky Myers	New Forest National Park Authority
Rachel Pearson	Land Management
John Pemberton	Land Management
Simon Pollock (from June 2009)	Local Business & Camping/Caravanning
Bruce Rothnie (until May 2009)	Land Management
Ann Sevier (chair)	Commoning
Pat Thorne (from June 2009)	Commoning / Verderer
Peter Walsh	Cycling
Brian Way (until May 2009)	Tourism
Helen Wood (June - November 2009)	Land Management

All members can be contacted via the Forum Secretary on:

Telephone: 01590 646665 **Email:** access.forum@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Address: New Forest Access Forum, South Efford House, Milford Road, Lymington, SO41 OJD

More information and all papers relating to the Forum can be found on the New Forest National Park Authority's website **www.newforestnpa.gov.uk**
Select *Looking After* and then *New Forest Access Forum*.

All Forum meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak at a meeting, please contact the Forum Secretary at least two weeks in advance.

The New Forest Access Forum is the Local Access Forum for the New Forest National Park and Southwest Hampshire, and is a requirement under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.