

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 28 MARCH 2007

**NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL REPORT
Summary of the meeting on Thursday 1 March 2007**

Report by: Stephen Trotter, Director of Conservation and Enhancement

Summary:

This report outlines the issues discussed by the Consultative Panel on 1 March 2007.

Recommendations:

- 1. To note issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 1 March 2007.**
- 2. To note that the date of the next Panel meeting is Thursday 10 May 2007.**

Resources:

None

Paper:

NFNPA 175/07: Cover paper

Contact:

David Stone
Tel: 01590 646645
Email: david.stone@newforestnpa.gov.uk

NFNPA 175/07

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Main agenda items:

1 Matters Arising

Steve Trotter gave the Panel an update on the Southampton Laser Gateway, which was discussed at the previous Panel meeting. At a Cabinet meeting at Southampton City Council on 5 February 2007, plans were approved to carry out trials which would assess any adverse impacts of light pollution from the beams, including impacts on the tranquillity and ecology of the National Park.

Concerns were raised by the Panel about the design of proposed vehicle safety barriers adjacent to the railway line at Ashurst. These would be passed to Hampshire County Council (Highways) for a response at the next meeting.

2 Rural Safety Partnership Project

Jim Green of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service gave a presentation on the role of the Rural Safety Team and the importance of their newly established partnership with the Forestry Commission in raising awareness for fire safety. The Rural Safety Team also focuses on animal rescue and works closely with the Agisters and the RSPCA in order to share skills and resources.

3 Crown Lands Management Plan

Jane Smith of the Forestry Commission gave a presentation on the Crown Lands Management Plan and informed Panel members that an "Issues, Policies and Actions" paper will be sent out to each of them over the next three weeks for feedback.

4 Presentation on a New Forest Bat Project

Colleen Mainstone from the Hampshire Bat Group gave a presentation on current research that the group is undertaking on two species of bat (*Bechstein's* and *Barbastelle*) within the New Forest. The research has been funded from several sources, including the Authority's

Sustainable Development Fund which granted £18,000 to the project. Colleen Mainstone described the techniques used to carry out the research and summarised the results so far. She said that the project had been very successful and several bats had been radio-tracked so that they could be monitored over a period of time.

5 'Future Matters' Consultation

Nick Evans (New Forest National Park Authority) gave an update on the joint consultation between New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority in which 429 individuals and about 150 organisations were consulted on New Forest Issues. He told the Panel that the results are currently being compiled and will be posted on the website when completed.

6 What makes the New Forest so Special?

As part of the New Forest National Park Authority's "Special Qualities" consultation, Steve Trotter gave the Panel the opportunity to raise and discuss any issues that they had regarding the special qualities of the National Park. He explained that it is vital that the Authority hears people's views and informed the Panel that there had been over 200 responses so far. One issue raised by the Panel was the importance of preserving the 'wild' parts of the Forest and how this should be considered when introducing new access and signage within the Park.

Recommendations:

- 1 To note issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 1 March January 2007.**
- 2 To note the date of the next Panel meeting is Thursday 10 May 2007.**