NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

Report by: Alison Barnes, Chief Executive

Summary:

This report covers the period since the last Authority meeting on 24 June 2010

Recommendation:

To note the report

Paper:

NFNPA 353/10: Cover paper

Contact:

Alison Barnes
Tel: 01590 646633
Email: alison.barnes@newforestnpa.gov.uk
NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Report by: Alison Barnes, Chief Executive

Introduction and overview

This summer period has seen a number of important milestones reached and the delivery of a successful events programme enabling all important contact with a very wide range of people and dissemination information about the special qualities of the Forest.

Amongst the highlights is the announcement of the first tranche of projects for Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, setting in motion a 10 year, £20M programme that will support commoning and enable many special projects to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Forest over the next decade.

Another important milestone was the Examination in Public of our Core Strategy which was held between 7–9 September, with sessions attended by a wide range of interests talking on a variety of issues. The Inspector’s report is currently expected in November 2010.

The New Forest Show was also a real highlight, with the NPA stand doubling the number of visitors from 2009 and staff and members working together to engage people in discussions about their ‘model national park’ through the media of modelling clay. It was both fun and informative. The New Forest Marque stand also won Best in Show, further helping with promotion of this unique Forest brand for local produce. Other events, including our Coastal Heritage Project and the use of the mobile unit and marquee have secured a high level of contact with people over the summer. Our education team reported at the end of the academic year that the number of direct contacts through formal school and youth group work had reached 5608. In addition, an estimated 3,000 young people have been reached through the events programme.

The Recreation Management Steering Group held its inaugural meeting in July, with all key interest groups and partners represented. On this theme, The New Forest Tour has had its most successful season ever, with passenger journey numbers and revenue from ticket sales rising for the fifth consecutive year.
The new Chief Executive has continued to prioritise meeting, making and consolidating contacts with a wide range of people and key partners. She has had the opportunity to visit and talk at more than 10 Parish Councils and at meetings attended by all Parishes (NFALC) and stakeholders, in particular at the two Consultative Panel meetings held since the last Authority Meeting. These contacts have been invaluable in helping her to begin to develop all important understanding of the Forest. She addressed the NFDOG AGM, attended two Equine Forum meetings as well as meeting with a number of partners to develop understanding of issues and move forward projects, including the local councils (NFDC, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Christchurch), Natural England, New Forest Business Association, Verderers, Forestry Commission, Beaulieu and Cadland Estates, New Forest Trust, the New Forest Association and New Forest Trust. Contact with local MPs has also been established in this period, with a visit to see some of our education and archaeology work attended by Dr Julian Lewis MP in August.

As well as working to get to know key partners and contacts, getting to know staff and members and develop relationships remains a priority. The passion and dedication of the staff has enabled a very diverse and challenging programme to be delivered over the summer period and at the same time work has been initiated to assess impacts and plan for the likely cuts within the Comprehensive Spending Review due to be announced in October. The accommodation project has moved forward well, with plans to co-locate with New Forest District Council at Lymington Town Hall being finalised delivering a cost effective solution to accommodation needs.

Finally, the development of Local Enterprise Partnerships has gathered pace over the summer and the Chairman and Chief Executive have sought opportunities to ensure the importance of the New Forest as a unique living, working landscape of the highest quality right in the heart of the wider area is recognised.

DELIVERY OF NATIONAL PARK PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS

This report is organised under the five key themes reflecting the agreed priorities for the Authority for 2010/11. They are:

- Build our intellectual capital
- Champion the Forest
- Foster economic and social wellbeing
- Deliver a quality planning service
- Achieve efficient organisation management
1 **Build our intellectual capital**

*Coastal Heritage Project*

- The New Forest Coastal Heritage Project began in May 2009 and is a three phase Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey (RCZA) being undertaken with the use of volunteers.
  - Phase 1 – Desk Based Survey (DBS)
  - Phase 2 – Fieldwork (Underwater and Terrestrial)
  - Phase 3 – Dissemination

- Phase 1 was completed early 2010, and we are now approaching the end of the practical part of the fieldwork phase. The project is due to be completed by May 2011. Terrestrial Fieldwork with volunteers aims to be completed by mid October. So far there have been approximately 55 days for volunteers. Underwater fieldwork with volunteers surveying known wreck sites, whilst also using geophysical equipment to locate unknown sites is also taking place. The findings have been very exciting, including the discovery of a WWII Tank Landing Craft.

- Other work in progress includes an underwater heritage trail and production of a coastal heritage DVD. Talks have been given to schools, local societies, diving clubs and various local interest groups to promote the project. Wessex Archaeology have been commissioned to produce an education resource for schools that will be widely available throughout the area.

- During the Festival of British Archaeology (17 July to 1 August) volunteers were given the chance to participate in a two week open excavation at the salt boiling houses in Pennington. The event was well subscribed, with volunteers getting involved in all aspects of the excavation from pre-disturbance works to finds processing.

*Landscape and wildlife consultation*

- Consultation on the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and a National Park Landscape Strategy took place with five road shows across the National Park. The draft information was put together with other organisations including the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the National Trust and Hampshire County Council. This was a preliminary step in asking people to get involved in shaping the future of how we care for our spectacular landscape and wildlife. The road shows were attended by 139 people.
During the summer we have been in discussions with staff at the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, People’s Trust for Endangered Species and Bournemouth University to discuss other partnership projects, including research opportunities to support biodiversity action.

**Climate change adaptation**

- Work is progressing on a climate change adaptation plan for the New Forest. The long term aim of the adaptation plan is to reduce the vulnerability of the National Parks special qualities to the effects of climate change. The scope and process for adaptation reporting was determined by the ENPAA climate change group, following an invitation from Defra to National Park Authorities to report on their climate change adaptation planning. A risk and opportunities assessment of the likely impacts of climate change on the New Forest National Park will be carried out, followed by the development of an action plan for the park to address these risks and opportunities.

2 Champion the Forest

July and August have been exceedingly busy, especially with events, local fairs and schools – all giving opportunities to celebrate what makes the Forest special.

**New Forest Show**

- Almost double the number of people came to this year’s New Forest National Park stand at the New Forest Show this year compared with 2009. Visitors were asked to create their ‘model national park’ out of modelling clay which gave the education and visitor services teams an opportunity to discuss issues around caring for the national park. An exhibition about ground-nesting birds was also well-received and the Authority’s shop merchandise, which will mainly be sold on-line, was trialled at the Show.

- The Chief Executive was interviewed at the New Forest Show media briefing day by Rural TV, the Country Channel, Wave 105, and Radio Solent and gave a live broadcast on Julian Clegg’s Breakfast Show on Radio Solent during the New Forest Show itself.

**Summer events and outreach**

- Events attended with activities and information included the D-Day event and Marine Wonders (Lepe, where the NPA also laid a
wreath); Discover the National Park, New Forest Archaeology Discovery Day and New Forest at War (New Forest Centre); Summer Forest Fun day (Blackwater); Coastal Critters at a variety of locations and Southampton Mela (as part of the Mosaic Project)

- The mobile unit and mini-marquee have been invaluable resources enabling information dissemination and discussion with a wide range of people at a number of locations across the Forest (e.g. Bolderwood, Calshot, campsites, Blackwater, Milford on Sea and Hythe) and at local events at Sway, Nomansland, Avon Tyrell, Frogham, Alderholt, Beaulieu and Pennington.

- This summer’s Date with Nature project at the Reptile Centre (focusing on birds of prey and ground-nesting birds) ended with over 17,000 visitors and excellent feedback via a questionnaire. 76% of visitors scored their increased understanding about what makes the New Forest special as five or six out of six.

- Between May and August the Coastal Heritage Project was supported by some 185 volunteer days in a variety of capacities. It has also generated talks, guided walks and good publicity – especially for the excavations at Creek Cottages, south of Lymington.

Biodiversity action

- National Park staff from a variety of teams supported a day of partnership action with the New Forest non-native invasive plants project. This helped to achieve control of Himalayan balsam on a number of sites where it is threatening important habitats along the Lymington river. The day also provided the opportunity for staff to understand how the project relates to their professional areas and liaise with relevant staff contacts from the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and Natural England. The project is a good example of the type of community partnership actions being considered as part of the New Forest Biodiversity Action Plan.

New animal accident warning signs

- Four new animal accident warning signs have gone up on the B3054 between Lymington and Dibden Purlieu; their messages will be changed every three months to catch the attention of local drivers. Nine old warning signs were taken down.

Media coverage

- Since the last Chief Executive’s report, 25 press releases have been issued. Highlights include ITV’s Countrywise programme on
the New Forest broadcast in August interviewing Director of Information and Visitor Services Martin O'Neill; coverage of the archaeological excavation at the last remaining salt-boiling houses by BBC South Today, Radio Solent, and local newspapers.

Publications

- Leaflets highlighting safety when horse-riding out on the Forest (with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance) and for a campaign to reduce dog mess (with NFDOG and FC launched at the NF Show) have both been well-received.

Education: end of academic year report 2009-2010

- This year the education service made a record number of 5608 direct contacts through formal school and youth group work. In addition an estimated 3,000 young people have been reached through the events programme. This combined total of 8,608 indicates the importance of education in getting national park messages and campaigns out to young people both from within the local area and from further afield (92% are local students or from Southampton and Bournemouth). Feedback has been extraordinarily positive with education a highly valued aspect of the Authority’s work amongst our audiences and 95% of Education groups awarding us 6/6 for satisfaction. Over half of the sessions (55%) focus on Authority campaigns such as litter reduction, animal accidents etc, and 45% meets demand for National Park specific curriculum topics. There has been an excellent spread of ages across all National Curriculum levels as well as Early Years and University courses.

- In addition to the 1.4 days dedicated Education officer time there has been a large increase in the number of education groups utilizing skills from the wider ranger team enabling us to meet demand for larger and more diverse sessions. We have also extended our existing partnership work with the New Forest Centre to offer a very well received GCSE day focusing on the impacts of tourism and recreation on the National Park. This year has also seen a rise in the number of Discovery Days and other events at which we have supported the New Forest Centre Education Officers.

- The Travel Grant Scheme continues to be extremely well received. It addresses one of the key barriers to accessing the Park and last year enabled 2154 young people from more socio-economically deprived areas in and adjacent to the Park to understand and enjoy the New Forest.
This year four work experience students join the Authority for a week’s placement. We also hosted a further six placement students from higher level courses including two officer shadowing days. This work placement programme is an important link with the local community and the additional work by the higher level placement students has been of great value to the Authority.

Championing the Forest through electronic media

The Authority has been reaching new audience using electronic media: Together with New Forest District Council we have launched an application called ‘New Forest UK’ in the iTunes store for use on iPhones, iPads and the iPod Touch. The application is free to download and includes a growing range of publications as e-books including the New Forest Today magazine and the National Park Pocket Guide. We now have 1,000 regular users of our Twitter site, engaging new audiences in the work of the Park. The National Park on-line shop, the Forest Store, was also launched in August.

3 Foster economic and social well being

New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

The first year projects of the 10 year, £20M, HLS programme were agreed, getting this largest scheme in Europe off to a very good start with coverage in local press. Initial projects include:

- A scheme to upgrade the Beaulieu Road Sale Yard (without these improvements the current basic facilities would soon be in breach of trading standards regulations);
- Continuation of the grazing payment scheme where commoners are supported in putting their stock on the Forest and to help manage the landscape and preserve traditional practices;
- Reflective pony collars;
- New stock trailers for the Agisters;
- A grant towards a Land Advice Service to help land managers increase environmental measures.

The Consultative Panel was fully briefed on the HLS at its September meeting and Parishes invited to put forward projects meeting the objectives. This engagement will be vital for ensuring a good stream of relevant projects over the 10 years of the scheme.

The NPA has been supporting the development of a number of projects which will benefit the historic environment. This year
LIDAR survey data will be collected for the Open Forest (light detection and ranging - a pulsed laser beam that is scanned from side to side as an aircraft flies over the survey area, measuring up to 100,000 points per second) to build a detailed digital model of the landscape and its features. This will assist in achieving a detailed understanding of surviving archaeological features which is essential where land restoration work is to take place.

**Recreation Management**

- The first meeting of the Recreation Management Steering Group took place on 1 July. Organisations involved in the steering group represent landowners, statutory bodies and user groups. The remit of the group will be to advise and assist the Authority in prioritisation and implementation of actions in the strategy, ensuring full engagement and involvement of stakeholders. The group agreed that their first activity was to identify priority areas to focus joint action.

**New Forest Marque**

- The New Forest Show provided a great opportunity to raise awareness of the New Forest Marque and the prestigious Best Stand in show was awarded to the food demonstration area where a number of very well attended food demonstrations using New Forest Marque produce were scheduled each day.

- Other events have also raised the profile of the Marque, including the Wood Fest at Royden Woods, where 11 Marque members took the opportunity to run a market for visitors, and a Countryside Education Day at Beaulieu, with over 250 children from local schools attending and the New Forest Marque providing the fruit and vegetables. A local food festival also took place at the Master Builders hotel at Buckler’s Hard with a day concentrating on local food. In addition, a series to be launched in the autumn on BBC2 about local food tours around the country ‘The Camperman Van’, filmed in the area and an episode will include a New Forest goat dairy.

- During the last three months 15 member audits have been completed to ensure adherence to the New Forest Marque criteria. Four new Members joined the scheme, bringing the total to 129 members. Two newsletters have been produced, one for the members and one for the general public.
New Forest Land Advice Service

- Building on the success its first few months, the summer period has seen the Service logging an additional 40 to 50 contacts; a total of 120 people have made contact during the first 7 months of the project. These contacts have led to a wide range of work with customers in the field including:
  - Advice on SSSIs and SINCs including surveys, management plans; presentations to user groups and owners (e.g. Town and Parish Councils).
  - Encouraging entry into Environmental Stewardship and/or English Woodland Grant Schemes;
  - Carrying out Farm Environment Plans and Entry Level Stewardship/Higher Level Stewardship applications on behalf of applicants;
  - Ensuring local people are aware of other grants available to them on their holdings;
  - Helping local farmers and small holders with paperwork relating to the land management of their holdings;
  - Working with partners to streamline processes and work in a co-ordinated way through a range of complex cases;
  - Administering the Small Grants Scheme which aims to spend £20,000 this winter on hedge restoration and planting, fencing to enable grazing, invasive plant removal and eyesore removal.

Transport

- Despite an unusually wet August, the New Forest Tour has had its most successful season ever, with passenger journey numbers and revenue from ticket sales rising for the fifth consecutive year.

- Officers met with Wiltshire Council to explore the possibility of extending the New Forest speed limit zone into Wiltshire, to cover roads within the National Park. This would have the benefit of allowing repeater signs to be marked as roundels on the carriageway, therefore reducing the landscape impact of speed limit signage. Wiltshire Council is supportive of the proposal in principle and will be liaising with the Department for Transport regarding the necessary permissions.

- The Authority continues to support and work with Hampshire County in its bid to the Department for Transport’s ‘Plugged in Places Fund’. This a practical bid aimed at significantly increasing the demand for electric vehicles in the bid area as well as raising the awareness of electric vehicles (EV) opportunities amongst both residents and businesses. A successful bid would be the catalyst for the installation of a comprehensive network of electric...
vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in the bid area over the next decade leading to a much greater uptake of EVs.

- Officers were made aware of new bus stops that had been installed along the route of the Wilts and Dorset service 56 between Southampton and Lymington. We are working with Hampshire County Council to revisit the design on the waiting facilities, offering specialist landscape design expertise to help reduce the impact on the landscape.

- The Landscape Officer has also been involved with the proposal of the Highways Agency’s contractor to clear the length of the A31 dual carriageway of vegetation both on the verges and central reservation. The Highways Agency considers that the clearance is long overdue and needs to be done for safety reasons (e.g. improving visibility for drivers, avoiding overhanging branches, reducing fire risk if vegetation becomes very dry). However, there are concerns that in removing trees and shrubs the screening of the A31 is being reduced from the surrounding landscape increasing noise and visual impact and reducing tranquillity. Using LIDAR, aerial views of a section of the A31 are being analysed to see where the road can be seen from in the surrounding landscape, and to assess the effect that vegetation has on screening the road, both visually and buffering some of the road noise, especially the noise created by vehicle tyres at road level. This is an exciting application of the recently acquired technology and is enabling us to play a key role in finding a solution working together with The Highways Agency, Verderers, Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

Green Tourism

- The Rural Development Programme for England funding bid to promote green tourism packages in protected landscapes of the south-east including the New Forest National Park has been approved to move to the next stage and is awaiting final confirmation by Defra.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- The development of Local Enterprise Partnerships has gathered pace over the summer and the Chairman and Chief Executive have sought opportunities to ensure the importance of the New Forest as a unique living, working landscape of the highest quality right in the heart of the wider area is recognised.
4 Deliver a quality planning service

Planning Policy

- Following submission of the Authority’s Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at the end of May, the majority of the Policy and Plans Team’s work has been focused on the examination hearing sessions. A Pre-Hearing Meeting was held at the Forest Lodge Hotel in Lyndhurst on 14 July where the Authority set out its response to a series of procedural questions relating to the legal compliance of the document and its preparation.

- The examination hearing session themselves were held at South Efford House between 7–9 September and the Authority was supported by officers from Hampshire County Council, Natural England and New Forest District Council. A number of other organisations participated in the hearing sessions including the New Forest Association, the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, the New Forest Business Partnership, RSPB, Brockenhurst Parish Council, Esso and ABP as well as local residents and businesses. The Inspector undertook a series of site visits throughout the National Park in early September linked to the examination. The Inspector’s report is currently expected in November 2010.

- Work is continuing on the State of the Park indicators with internal and external partners which will provide baseline information on the condition or ‘state’ of the National Park. The Team has also continued work on developing an Action Plan to support the implementation of the adopted National Park Management Plan 2010 – 2015.

- The Policy and Plans Team continues to liaise with colleagues at New Forest District Council as they develop their Sites and Development Management Policies DPD. The team has input into the consideration of development sites in the District outside the Park and continues to liaise with the District Council on planning policy issues.

- Officers represented the Authority at a number of meetings over the summer including the Shoreline Management Plan meeting at the National Oceanographic Centre in Southampton in August, as well as the meetings of the New Forest Equine Forum and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Officers Group in July.
• Work on Village Design Statements (VDS) has continued, with the VDS for Wellow completed, Landford reaching a final draft and initial interest from Boldre, Ashurst and Brockenhurst.

• Arrangements for quadrant parish meetings have progressed with dates now agreed for the North East (7 October) and South West (28 October) quadrants. It is hoped that the quadrant meetings will be a useful forum for closer working with local Parish and Town Councils. The initial meetings will include a presentation on ‘Forest Watch’ and discuss proposals for a training programme covering all aspects of National Park planning, designed to meet the needs of Parish and Town Councils.

Development Management

• During June – August, 280 planning applications were registered and 277 applications were determined. As of 31 August (and since 1 June 2010) 82% of householder applications and 75% of minor applications had been determined within the eight week target. The approval rate for this period stands at 84%

• 14 new appeals were received in this period and nine appeals were determined, seven of which were dismissed. The team’s appeal record since 1 April is an improving picture with the majority (72%) of appeals being dismissed.

• The enforcement review has progressed since the last Authority meeting (with a Member workshop held in August) and this is reported as a separate item on this agenda.

• During June – August, 172 new enforcement cases were opened and 187 cases were closed. 13 enforcement notices were issued and there are currently 371 ‘live’ enforcement cases.

• Progress on the case concerning the illegal waste on land at Copperfields, Pollards Moor Lane, Copythorne continues to be reported to the monthly meetings of the Planning Development Control Committee. Officers are still working closely with the Environment Agency and New Forest District Council and are currently awaiting confirmation as to whether a bid for Defra funding to carry out a further site investigation has been successful. In the meantime, a prosecution of the site owner has been pursued in the Magistrates’ Court where he pleaded guilty and was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £650 costs.
Conservation Areas

- Proposals for developing a pilot management plan for looking after the special qualities of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area are progressing. The first meeting of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group took place and will be followed by three public drop in sessions on 21, 24 and 29 September at Ellingham Church Hall, Woodgreen Village Hall and Hyde Memorial Hall to involve residents and other interested in the work at an early stage.

Building Design Guide

- Work on the Building Design Guide for the National Park is progressing well and it is planned to brief members on the proposed content soon. This will then be developed into a draft document for public consultation. The final guide will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

‘My Property’ web-based GIS package

- The ‘My Property’ website is due to go live later this month, which will allow members of the public to carry out their own planning searches and find out other information related to their property.

5 Achieve efficient organisation management

Performance and Administration

- Work has continued and gained pace on the accommodation project. The team has inputted into discussions and negotiations with NFDC and contractors around office layouts, internal service requirements and the development of work items to be included in the service charge.

- Analysis continues into the propensity to share services with other organisations.

- Preparations are underway for half year performance and financial reporting. This will be done against the 5x5 framework in the 2010/11 corporate plan.

- The first internal audit visit of 2010/11 has occurred. Items under review were Health and Safety, Performance Management, Data Quality and Policies and Procedures.
**Human Resources**

- As at 31 August 2010 there are 80 members of staff or 71.63 full-time equivalents, of whom 22 are part-time and 11 are on a fixed-term contract.

**Congratulations to:**
- David Illsley, who after following an internal recruitment process, was confirmed as the permanent Head of Policy and Plans. We would like to thank David for covering this post over the past year and wish him continuing success in the role.
- Claire Gingell (SDF Officer) who, after following an internal recruitment process, was successful in being appointed as the Interim Head of Sustainable Development whilst the current post holder is on maternity leave. We wish Claire every success in her new role.

**Welcome to:**
- Vicki Gibbon who will be covering reception on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- Richard Pugh who commences a one-year contract supporting the Planning team.

**Work placements:**
- In August, we said goodbye to Sophie Locke who initially joined us for 4 weeks as a placement student to gain experience in a Planning environment. Sophie has returned to university to complete her degree in Planning. We wish her well in the completion of her studies.
- The Maritime Archaeology Assistant work placement through Hampshire County Council’s “New Jobs, New Futures” scheme, funded by the Department for Work and Pension’s Future Jobs Fund has been in post for three months of the six month placement. These placements and are aimed at 16-24 year olds who have been claiming job seekers allowance for 6 months or more. The post has been taken by an archaeology graduate who has been assisting in the fieldwork phase of the Coastal Heritage Project.

**ICT**

- Pilot testing of the Electronic Corporate File Plan (using Microsoft SharePoint) is continuing for HR, ICT and Business Support teams. Following a successful outcome to these trials, roll out to other teams will begin.
- The Server Infrastructure Refresh project is progressing well, with all the new equipment now installed. The process for migrating our servers and data on to the new systems is approximately 70% complete, but there is still some significant work to complete.
External Funding

- The Authority has submitted a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund application for a World War II themed project which will:
  - Collate all existing data, records and photographs about wartime sites in the New Forest.
  - Comprehensively survey the New Forest area to ensure that all wartime sites are recognised, recorded and interpreted. This will include carrying out LiDAR surveys of all areas not included within the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and completing field surveys involving trained volunteers.
  - Record memories and collect photographs and artefacts from those New Forest residents (past and present) who can still remember Forest life during the wartime, those who were evacuated to the New Forest, those in the air force or navy and those working in one of the many airfields or boatyards.
  - Increase the understanding and awareness of the role of the New Forest in World War II, by providing an activities programme, teaching resources and a suite of interpretation materials that will reach a broad audience and will act as a long-term legacy of the project.

The application requests a grant of £473,300 to carry out the project.

- Officers attended a meeting of the Decision Making Group of the RDPE (Leader) Programme to discuss the Authority’s application for funding to deliver a project to support training for local businesses in a range of traditional building conservation skills, such as repairs to timber-frame buildings, cob walling and using lime plasters and renders. If successful the project will run for 2 years from October 2010 and will provide subsidised training opportunities to between 20-30 local businesses.

- Officers attended the opening of the new Milford Community Centre and the self-catering cottages in Upper Kingston, two projects which had received advice and assistance with their funding applications from the Authority. Milford Community Centre also received funding support from the Sustainable Development Fund for the installation of its biomass boiler.

- Officers attended a meeting with Community First New Forest to discuss proposals for joint funding workshops to fulfil the demand for specific funding information from many of the local community groups and parish councils seeking project funding.
- Officers have been putting forward a wide range of ideas for income generation and investment possibilities for the Authority. These are now being assessed to see which are appropriate for further investigation and appraisal.

6 Members

Member Services

- The Member Services team has supported meetings of the Authority and its Committees and have followed up on actions arising. Provisional meeting dates have been set for next year. During this period, the team has, on request, continued to provide advice and assistance to the Member Services Officer at the South Downs National Park Authority.

- As part of its support service to the New Forest Consultative Panel, Member Services has sought input from Panel members as to what they would like to see on future Panel agendas. NPA members are reminded that they are welcome to attend Panel meetings should they wish to do so – the next meeting will be held on 4 November 2010 in the Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel.

- Member Services has now collated information received on members’ preferences for the new member champion programme. A member session will follow this NPA meeting to confirm the champion programme, following which Member Services will work with each individual member and lead officers to create a programme around which the championing function can be delivered, for a trial period of six months.

Member meetings and events

Some members were involved in some or all of the following meetings and events:

- New Forest Consultative Panel meeting, 8 July
- Sustainable Development Tour, 12 July
- Planning Development Control Committee meeting, 20 July
- Resources and Performance Committee meeting, 16 August
- Planning Development Control Committee meeting, 17 August
- Enforcement Workshop, 19 August
- New Forest Consultative Panel meeting, 2 September
- Planning Development Control Committee meeting, 21 September
Forthcoming activities include:

- Session on member champions, following the NPA meeting on 23 September
- Resources and Performance Committee meeting, 28 September
- Standards Committee, 4 October
- Joint Members’ Advisory Group meeting, 14 October
- Planning Development Control Committee meeting, followed by session on PDCC structure and format, 19 October

7 Recommendation

To note the report.