

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 257th Meeting held in the Pine Room, Lyndhurst Community Centre on THURSDAY, 19 April 2018

Those present: Clive Chatters (Chairman)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)

Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received

Also in attendance:

1 Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Edward Heron (NFDC)
Patricia Banks (Milford on Sea Parish Council)
Rob Dewing (New Forest Business Partnership)
Brian Tarnoff (Friends of the New Forest/NFA)
Frank Weller (Ramblers Association)
Melchet Park & Plaitford Parish Council
Dudley Baker-Beall (Redlynch Parish Council)

1.2 Substitutes:

Alison Hoare would now replace Edward Heron as representative for NFDC

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017

2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes

4 Election of Chairman

4.1 The Secretariat advised that applications for Panel Chairman had been received from Peter Hebard, Ann Sevier and Harry Oram. Each candidate then addressed the Panel for a period of two minutes in motivation of their application, after which the election of Chairman took place by secret ballot. Following counting of the votes received, it was announced that Harry Oram was elected as the new Panel Chairman.

4.2 On behalf of the Panel, Alison Barnes thanked the outgoing Chairman, Clive Chatters, for his hard work and commitment since becoming Chairman of the Consultative Panel in March 2014. She said that some of the issues debated

by the Panel during this time had been flooding in the Forest, cycling and the Cycle Charter, wetland restoration and the installation of Broadband. Her appreciation was echoed by the new Chairman who wished Clive the very best in his future endeavours in the Forest.

5 New Forest National Park Authority Update – Alison Barnes

- 5.1 Alison Barnes presented her report to the Panel highlighting that the Government had launched its '25 Year Plan' in January, Authority officers were looking at the Plan to establish what it would mean to the Forest. The main strands of the Plan included a natural capital approach, rewarding landowners for delivery of public goods for public benefit and the importance of education. Ms Barnes advised that the National Planning Policy Framework consultation was launched on 5 March with responses due by 5 May; National Parks still maintained the highest level of protection and the Authority had drafted its response. The Authority would also be responding to Defra's 'Health & Harmony' consultation which centres on the future of farming following Brexit. Following consultation the Authority had now completed its 'Local Plan' and submitted it to the Inspectorate.
- 5.2 With the visitor season now upon us Ms Barnes advised that the Authority's Rangers were out connecting with people to spread messages on how to care and look after the Forest. New publications had also been launched and would be sent to parishes in due course. The Authority would once again have a stand at the New Forest Show in the summer - this proves to be a fantastic opportunity to connect with people to spread the NPA's purposes and values.
- 5.3 Alison Barnes advised the Panel that the RMS consultation had now been completed and two reports had been compiled; one focusing on the findings of the consultation and the other looking at the next steps. The team were currently drafting a set of proposed actions drawing on these reports and a further consultation would begin 18 June. Nigel Matthews would attend the next Panel meeting to update Panel members.
- 5.4 Finally Ms Barnes was pleased to announce the recent acquisition of Franchises Lodge by the RSPB, which the Authority was supporting with £200,000 and extensive input and support by Authority staff.

6 Forestry Commission Update – Bruce Rothnie

- 6.1 Bruce Rothnie highlighted some of the campaigns which the Forestry Commission was currently undertaking, these included;
- Refreshed 'Do Not Feed The Ponies' signs
 - Seasonal awareness of protecting ground nesting birds
 - New signage out on the open forest warning users when they are entering vulnerable habitats suitable for ground nesting birds
 - Information briefing days for campsite wardens to ensure they are sharing and spreading the right and consistent messages for their visitors

- 6.2 The Forestry Commission had recently recruited 12 new Volunteer Rangers taking the total number up to 70. Mr Rothnie said that these volunteers provide a tremendous additional resource and some of their time is spent patrolling the Forest meeting, guiding, advising and supporting visitors. They will now undergo a period of training and induction but will be operating within a few weeks. The team of Volunteer Rangers delivered over 9000 hours last year and the volunteer programme continues to go from strength to strength.
- 6.3 Mr Rothnie was pleased to announce that Moors Valley, which was run in conjunction with East Dorset District Council, had recently become a finalist in the Visit Britain - large visitor attraction of the year, this was a fantastic achievement and the results would be announced soon.

Following the meeting it was announced that Moors Valley had won bronze in the 'Visit Britain' competition.

7 Any other business

- 7.1 The following items of urgent business were raised at the meeting:

New NPA Website

Alison Barnes advised that the Authority had recently set up a new website which provided enhanced accessibility and functionality to users. She asked members to contact the Communications Team at the NPA regarding any queries they might have in using the webpages and new information on the site. A member mentioned that they had been unable to access the Consultative Panel pages on the website and Ms Barnes undertook to refer this to the officers concerned.

Park Life

Mike Moriarty (Copythorne Parish Council) referred to Park Life (a twice yearly newsletter published by the NPA) and mentioned that, some time ago, the NPA had arranged for copies to be made available at Parish Council offices and other places frequented by the public. He advised that neither Copythorne nor some of the other parishes in the New Forest had received Park Life and he had also had difficulty in locating a copy. On speaking to the NPA's Communications Team, he had been advised that there had been delays in distribution over Easter and the team were taking steps to address this. Alison Barnes advised that copies were distributed at Parish Quadrant meetings and invited Panel members to contact the Communications Team regarding any requirements they might have regarding distribution but added that the Authority needed to consider the efficiency of its resources in achieving the effective distribution of its publications. Through a show of hands, the majority of those present confirmed that they had received a copy of the current edition of Park Life.

Flooding

Mike Moriarty referred to Section DB12 of the NPA's Draft 2016 – 2036 Local Plan which indicated that coastal areas were at most risk of flooding in the New Forest. He expressed concern that residents in areas such as Cadnam, Copythorne and Bartley had significant difficulty in insuring their properties due to the flood risk assessments

carried out in their areas by the Environment Agency even though they had not previously submitted a claim and had no incidents of flooding. If insurance cover was offered this was at a very high premium.

Rob Waite (Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor – Solent & South Downs Area, Environment Agency) advised that Flood Risk Management Plans had been set up by the Environment Agency and its partners which set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities can work together to manage flood risk. He offered to discuss the flood risk in the above areas with Mr Moriarty after the meeting as well as the impact on insurance premiums in individual cases.

Broadley Inclosure

Ailsa Farrand (New Forest Equestrian Association) referred to the adverse conditions inside and outside Broadley Inclosure which restricted access to the area by riders. She said that this was apparently caused by the stream filling works upstream which also included tree and shrub clearance. She advised that the stream was now flowing quickly through the area as a result of this work and there was a significant amount of standing water and the risk of a permanent bog developing which riders could not get through. Bruce Rothnie asked Ms Farrand for details so that some investigation could take place.

Cycling

Ms Farrand also raised the issue of the recent Wiggle Cycle event and advised that at Pilley, cyclists had filled the road in a large group and would not give way to passing vehicles. During discussion by Panel members, it was learned that normally arrangements were made at Wiggle events for cyclists to be released at intervals, however on this occasion there had been an emergency closure of the main road through Pilley which had caused the traffic problems and resulting grouping of cyclists. Alison Barnes advised that Nigel Matthews would be present at the next Panel meeting to update members on arrangements for cycling events. In the meantime, she requested that specific concerns regarding cycling be raised through the Safety Advisory Group website:

<http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/15466/Public-Events-and-the-Safety-Advisory-Group>

These comments would be taken into account in the planning of future Wiggle events.

Feeding of ponies

Ms Farrand said that the feeding of ponies continued to be a problem and she had witnessed ponies being fed through a car window. She had taken a photo of the car concerned and asked Sue Westwood of the Verderers Office to take the matter up with the police who unfortunately had taken no action. Panel members agreed that awareness was key to stopping the feeding of ponies by visitors; there was also a significant amount of signage in the Forest advising against the feeding of ponies.

Appointment of Inspector Korine Bishop

Alison Barnes reported that, during the coming week, she would be meeting with Korine Bishop, Strategic Rural Policing Inspector, Hampshire Constabulary who had recently been appointed to this position in the New Forest. She advised that she would speak to Inspector Bishop regarding the possibility of her attending the next meeting of the Panel on 7 June to update members on the work of her team. Members supported this approach.

8 Date of the next meeting

8.1 The Panel noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 7 June 2018 at 7.30pm at Lyndhurst Community Centre

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm