

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 232nd Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 1 March 2012

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Support Officer)
Rosalind Alderman (Panel Secretariat)
Jo Murphy (Panel Secretariat)
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

ITEM 1

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 David Stone informed the Panel that one nomination had been received, this being for the current Chairman, who had indicated that he was happy to continue in the position. No other nominations were put forward from the floor and Tim Greenwood was subsequently re-elected on a show of hands.
- 1.2 Tim Greenwood thanked members for their vote of confidence and stated that he hoped to serve them well over the coming year.

ITEM 2

2.1 APOLOGIES

Cllr Peter Turner, Breamore Parish Council
Mrs Ros Cooper, Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes
John Durnell, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Cllr Allan Bollom, Hordle Parish Council
Cllr Sophie Beeton, Milford on Sea Parish Council
Mark Bridle, Minstead Parish Council
Mrs Millar, New Forest Hounds
Christine Ford, Ringwood Town Council
Cllr Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council

2.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Mr Bernard Austin, CPRE
Mark Larter, Natural England
Ms Joan Cundill, New Forest Access For All
Mr Barry Olorenshaw, New Forest Business Partnership
Mr Julian Johnson, New Forest National Park Authority
Cllr Ted Fleet, Sway Parish Council

2.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Cllr. Mrs. Janette Duke is the new representative for New Milton Town Council.
- Reminder to Panel members to announce their name and organisation before speaking.

ITEM 3

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5 January 2012)

- 3.1 Tim Greenwood advised members that John Thackray (Ramblers' Association) had also volunteered to join the working group to prepare the itinerary for the visit by the Independent Panel on Forestry (minute item 4.4).
- 3.2 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to the above amendment.

ITEM 4

MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Minute 4.4 (Chairman to contact the New Forest Access Forum and Natural England regarding the working group): covered under minute item 7 below.
- 4.2 Minute 6.2 (The NFNPA to take forward recommendations from the Task and Finish Group on future role of the NFCP): Julian Johnson advised members that the NPA was liaising with Defra in connection with the proposals and an update would be provided at the next Consultative Panel meeting.
- 4.3 Minute 7.3 (David Stone to circulate Park Life distribution list to Panel members for feedback): A list of sites where copies of Park Life were delivered was circulated with the agenda and copies have also been sent to all Parish Council clerks. Cllr Moriarty (Copythorne Parish Council) expressed concern that most households in Copythorne do not receive the New Forest Post and that the number delivered to Copythorne Post Office was insufficient to meet the demand. Alison Russell (British Horse Society) believed that there were no copies available in Wellow and suggested the Post Office would be a suitable place.

Action: NFNPA to liaise with Copythorne Parish Council to arrange for more copies to be made available in future and to liaise with Wellow Post Office as a possible site.

ITEM 5

FORESTRY COMMISSION ITEMS

- 5.1 Kevin Penfold gave an overview of the Forestry Commission's policy on cycling. He explained that events taking place on the public highway were outside the Forestry Commission's remit however when the route used the forest tracks event organisers needed FC permission. He emphasised that the FC worked closely with organisers to promote responsible cycling, employing techniques such as publishing results in alphabetically rather than league tables to discourage racing.
- 5.2 He explained that there were over 100km of cycle routes in the forest and that despite there being a general acceptance that routes could be linked up more effectively, the current policy was to encourage visitors to cycle or walk rather than use their cars. To this end he informed the Panel that the FC were designing a new way marker and proposing improvements to the cycling map to reduce the incidence of visitors accidentally straying from the designated route.
- 5.3 Several Panel members asked why there seemed to be reluctance by FC staff to challenge those individuals riding off the network, but Mr Penfold indicated that there were not enough rangers to effectively police the entire area. He advised Members that where staff did come into contact with offenders they engaged with them to educate and encourage them to cycle responsibly.

- 5.4 Panel members gave suggestions on improvements that could be made, such as the camp sites actively promoting responsible cycling, providing better maps and information, improving signage in car parks to help visitors comply with the rules and using no cycling signs at key access points to the forest. Mr Penfold commented there was a Steering Group already investigating the issues, and that cycle counters were being employed to better understand the numbers involved. He also advised that a mobile phone App was also being investigated.
- 5.5 Kevin Penfold drew attention to the river restoration project at Latchmoor where local residents had expressed concern about the works. There had been a public meeting but he explained that unfortunately time had been limited so it had not been possible to fully address all the concerns raised. If anyone had unanswered queries they could find more information on the HLS website.
- 5.6 Finally Mr Penfold advised Members that he had with him copies of the revised boundaries for the FC in this area and invited Members to approach him after the meeting if they wished to receive a copy.

ITEM 6

PRESENTATION BY HYTHE FERRY USERS GROUP

- 6.1 Ted Vaughan, Chairman of the Hythe Ferry users Group, addressed the Panel on the activities of the Hythe Ferries Users Group. He explained that the organisation had been in existence for 15 years and been created when White Horse Ferries had taken over the running of the service.
- 6.2 He informed the Panel that at their public meeting in the autumn they had been investigating two questions; how to increase the number of passengers using the ferry and how the ferry could facilitate pedestrians from Southampton accessing the Forest. He suggested that there was scope for either a third bus route for the New Forest Tour or a volunteer led minibus service to link the Hythe ferry terminal with the New Forest.
- 6.3 Stan Wade (Hythe and Dibden Parish Council) explained there were existing mini bus services operating from the Community Centre and a cycle route which formed part of the national cycling network. He offered to contact Mr Vaughan to update him on the initiatives going on in Hythe.

ITEM 7

INDEPENDENT PANEL ON FORESTRY – REPORT ON NEW FOREST VISIT ON 28 FEBRUARY 2012

- 7.1 Tim Greenwood (Chairman) explained that the visit by the Independent Panel on Forestry had been a success. He believed that the key messages about the New Forest had been taken on board; namely the importance of commoning to the area, that there was a significant amount of heath as well as the wooded areas and that long term planning was complex due to the varying life cycle of the different trees.
- 7.2 He described the afternoon visit to Setley Pond, where they had come across a group of volunteers working on a project and said that this had been a particular highlight of the day. He reported that he had been able to promote the role of the Consultative Panel and put forward the broad consensus that its members believed that the New Forest should remain under the guardianship of the Forestry Commission.

- 7.3 Mr Greenwood thanked all those who had helped organise the visit and recorded particular thanks to Rosalind Alderman (New Forest NPA) for her hard work. He explained that since the visit he had received a very positive letter from Mike Seddon, Deputy Head of Secretariat, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

ITEM 8

NPA DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN

- 8.1 Julian Johnson (NFNPA) stated that NPA Members were being briefed on the Operational Plan on 12 March 2012 and that the final version would be debated at the Authority meeting on 28 March 2012. He explained that Alison Barnes (NFNPA) would report details and outcomes to the next Consultative Panel meeting on 3 May.

Action: Alison Barnes to update the Panel at its meeting on 03 May 2012 on the NPA's Operational Plan.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 On this occasion there were no items.

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 10.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 3 May 2012** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 20.55 hrs.