

## **NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

### **Minutes of the 236th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 10 January 2013**

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)  
Jo Murphy/ Debbie Copping/ Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)  
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

#### **ITEM 1**

##### **1.1 APOLOGIES**

Edward Heron - NFDC  
Peter Turner - Braemore Parish Council.  
Ros Cooper – WI  
Christine Ames – New Forest Tourism Association  
Peter Dovey – Ramblers Association  
Mike Chilcott – CPRE  
Tony Gentle – Wellow Parish Council

##### **1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Richard Lemon – Natural England  
Robert Clarke - Burley Parish Council  
Heather Gould - NFDOG  
Peter Stammers - Godshill Parish Council

##### **1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman announcements on this occasion.

#### **ITEM 2**

##### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** (1 November 2012)

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

#### **ITEM 3**

##### **MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 There were no matters arising at this meeting.

#### **ITEM 4**

##### **FORESTRY COMMISSION ITEMS**

4.1 Mike Seddon gave an update on the situation with the Ash dieback disease (Chalara). He explained that the Government was still researching the disease and will be reviewing the situation during 2013. No traces of the disease had been found in the New Forest to date, however this might be a temporary reprieve as there would be a possibility of the disease re-occurring during the Spring. Government policy at the moment was not to fell mature trees with the hope that the trees would then become more tolerant to the disease. In the meantime further research would continue.

- 4.2 Mike Seddon advised the Panel that the Forestry Commission had been facing some budget cuts and had taken the unfortunate decision to close Burley workshop. Staff from there had either taken voluntary redundancy or would be redeployed.
- 4.3 Mike Seddon advised that the Government response to the report of the Independent Panel on Forestry would be made public by the end of January. He would report on this to the March meeting of the Panel.

## **ITEM 5**

### **UPDATE ON FOREST WATCH – CHIEF INSPECTOR TONY ROWLINSON AND SERGEANT LOUISE HUBBLE**

- 5.1 Chief Inspector Tony Rowlinson introduced himself as the new head of police for the New Forest explaining that they have the following priorities –
- Protecting our community
  - Catching criminals and managing offenders
  - Providing excellent service
  - Active presence in neighbourhoods
  - Making the most of our resources

He explained that it was found that the same criminals are committing certain categories of crimes and that the Police were focusing on that at the moment. Currently overall crime rates within the New Forest was down 12%. However; non dwelling burglaries have crept up slightly by 16% and this would be something that the Police would be focusing on this year. The Chief Inspector also commented that over 70% of people were satisfied or very satisfied with the service that they have received.

- 5.2 Louise Hubble then gave a presentation. Louise is the Western Country Watch Sergeant for the New Forest. She explained that Forest Watch was launched in April 2010 and was originally designed to be a 2 year project. However; it would be continuing as it was working so well. Forest Watch employed a partnership approach which tackled issues within the rural communities throughout the New Forest National Park. It worked in conjunction with the following organisations: Hampshire Constabulary, National Park Authority, Natural England, National Farmers Union, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Hampshire Fire and Rescue and NFDC.

Louise explained that Forest Watch has 4 main priorities that they would currently be working on. They were rural theft, poaching, fly tipping and unlawful Forest use. Louise explained that there had been a significant reduction (49%) in thefts from vehicles parked in Forest car parks. This was due to the Forestry Commission redesigning car park layouts, ensuring visible posters were put up around the car parks and high visibility patrols being carried out by rangers from both the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission.

Louise then explained that the future of Forest Watch would be to continue meeting on a bi-annual basis and that the next meeting would be deciding on a project area to focus on within the next six months. Forest Watch would also be producing a leaflet to be distributed to both residents and visitors to highlight issues that occur within the Forest and to give an indication on what is and isn't acceptable.

- 5.3 Both Louise Hubble and Chief Inspector Rowlinson thanked the Panel and commented that everyone should work together to alleviate rural crime. They then responded to various questions raised by Panel members.

- 5.4 It was requested that should any of the panel wish to receive the Country Watch newsletter to email Louise Hubble – [louise.hubble@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:louise.hubble@newforestnpa.gov.uk)
- 5.5 Mike Moriati commented that he believed currently there was a 6 month waiting list for a shotgun licence; Chief Inspector Rowlinson advised the Panel that a formal apology had been issued and the back log had now been cleared.

## **ITEM 6**

### **REPORT ON NFNPA PEER REVIEW – ALISON BARNES**

- 6.1 Alison Barnes brought to the attention of the Panel the peer review findings (a copy of which was tabled and is attached to these minutes). Members were asked to read through the findings and should they wish to give any feedback to do so using the following email address – [feedback@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:feedback@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

## **ITEM 7**

### **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Alison Barnes drew Panel members' attention to the report on the NPA meeting on 13 December 2012 which had been circulated with the agenda. There were no questions from the Panel who noted the report.

## **ITEM 8**

### **PANEL AGENDA SETTING AND CONSULTATIONS LOG**

- 8.1 It was suggested that future panel agenda items could be –
- Information regarding the LSTF project by Chris Gregory
  - Asking the Transitions group who are currently working at the New Forest Centre to give details on their current projects.

## **ITEM 9**

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 Janette Duke (New Milton Town Council) asked Mike Seddon from the Forestry Commission to comment on the welfare of the deer following the recent bad weather.

Mike Seddon advised that the bad weather does have an impact on the deer and some are looking particularly unhealthy at the moment. Rangers are being deployed to look at the deer and to make decisions on whether these should be culled.

- 9.2 Roly Errington (Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council) commented that he had noted that the Highways Authority had been granted an additional £6 million worth of funding.

Richard Bastow (HCC – Highways Department) explained that the figure was correct and that they were looking at resurfacing roads and repairing drainage problems. Highways were currently asking via their website what the public thought of the roads.

- 9.3 It was mentioned that the Forestry Commission often discuss what work they are doing with regards to water courses. However; it was asked if this work had been successful and if it had helped with reducing flooding in the Forest.

Mike Seddon advised the Panel that he could not really comment on flooding throughout the Forest as the work they are carrying out is more habitat management. The Forestry Commission would be looking at the various sites and produce a snagging list of any work that would need to be carried out following the recent bad weather.

- 9.4 Sue Bennison (Bramshaw Parish Council) asked the Forestry Commission if they were currently running a programme where roadside ditches were being cleared to ensure water would not be running onto the roads.

Mike Seddon replied that the Forestry Commission were currently working with the Highways Authority to address this problem.

Richard Bastow also commented that this was an ongoing problem, as it was not just the roadside ditches that would need to be looked at it would also be the ditches leading from these.

- 9.5 Sue Bennison also commented that the National Trust had recently had problems with travellers driving onto the Forest and suggested that the ditches may possibly need to be deeper, however not deep enough that animals would be injured.

Mike Seddon responded that they would not dig ditches deep enough to injure animals and that they were currently looking at prioritising which parts of the Forest were most at risk.

- 9.6 Peter Stammers (Godshill Parish Council) reported that there were several areas in the Forest which were currently impassable due to flooding, it was requested that when designing future habitat management schemes that the Forestry Commission would need to keep walkers in mind.

Mike Seddon answered that there were parts of the Forest which were flooded at the moment and this it was beyond the control of the Forestry Commission due to the weather. However when they design future schemes they would discuss the with the local communities. He explained that there are currently 250-300 separate bridges across the New Forest which the Forestry Commission maintain.

#### **ITEM 10**

#### **DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING**

- 10.1 Date of the next meeting would be **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 7 March 2013** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21.25 hrs.