

## **NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

### **Minutes of the 227<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2011**

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)  
Rosalind Alderman, Rachael Bowen and Debbie Copping (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**

Cllr. Sue Bennison, Bramshaw Parish Council  
Cllr. Peter Turner, Breamore Parish Council  
Burley Parish Council (currently no representative – see paragraph 1.3 below)  
Mr. Ian Mason-Smith, Community First New Forest and HCVYS  
Mrs Ros Cooper, Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes  
Cllr. Christine Ford, Ringwood Town Council  
Cllr. Edward Heron, New Forest District Council  
Mrs. Jenni Tubbs, New Forest Friends of the Earth  
Mrs. Millar, New Forest Hounds, Combined Hunts  
Mrs. Pat Thorne, Verderers  
Cllr. Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council

##### **1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Mr. Nick Tucker, Forestry Commission  
Ms Rachael Bailey, Natural England  
Cllr. Bill Dunn, Redlynch Parish Council

##### **1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman paid tribute to long standing Verderer and one time Panel member Jeff Kitcher, who, sadly, had recently passed away. He would be much missed in the New Forest.

Kevin Penfold, who had taken over from Mike Seddon as Acting Deputy Surveyor and the Forestry Commission's Panel representative, was unfortunately unable to attend the current meeting or the July Panel meeting, but Nick Tucker, the Forestry Commission's Head of Recreation and Community Engagement, was attending as a substitute.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Kevin Holmes as the new representative for East Boldre Parish Council, and explained that Eddie Holtham was now the representative for Denny Lodge Parish Council as well as Fawley Parish Council.

The Chairman also explained that Veronica Johnstone had retired from Burley Parish Council; as yet no new representative had been appointed. Tim Greenwood passed on a message to the Panel from Veronica, to the effect that she had enjoyed her time on the Panel and wished the Panel continued success.

Tony Gentle explained that Mr Ray Noble was the new Panel representative for Wellow Parish Council.

The Chairman also reminded members to announce their name and organisation before speaking.

## **ITEM 2**

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** (3 March 2011)

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

## **ITEM 3**

### **MATTERS ARISING**

- 3.1 Minute item 5 - The Chairman informed Panel members that he had written to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Consultative Panel inviting the Chairman of the Independent Panel on Forestry, who had not at that time been appointed, to attend a Consultative Panel meeting; copies of his letter had been tabled for Panel members at the current meeting. Following a suggestion received in response to his letter, Tim Greenwood had subsequently discussed this matter with Kathryn Packer of the Independent Panel on Forestry's secretariat, who had explained that the Bishop of Liverpool, the then newly appointed Chairman of the Forestry Panel, would bear this invitation in mind. The Forestry Panel had received many invitations from organisations around the UK. The new Chairman was expected to take a keen interest in the work of the new Forestry Panel and was expected to have a very 'hands on' approach.
- 3.2 Julian Evans added that the Institute of Chartered Foresters had been very pleased to be asked to be one of the bodies represented on the new Panel. He explained that the Panel was particularly keen to hear the views and input of individuals as well as organisations; further information could be found on the website including the Panel's terms of reference and information relating to meetings.
- 3.3 Minute Item 6 - Ken Hubbard, New Forest Access for All, updated Panel members on the outcome of NFAFA's application for funding from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Fund, which had not been forthcoming, but explained that fortunately the organisation had subsequently obtained lottery funding instead for the amount requested.

## **ITEM 4**

### **FORESTRY COMMISSION**

- 4.1 Nick Tucker explained that Kevin Penfold would be the Acting Deputy Surveyor during Mike Seddon's absence working with the secretariat for the Independent Panel on Forestry. He also explained that there would be no further sales of Forestry Commission land pending the report of the Independent Panel.

## **ITEM 5**

### **HLS UPDATE**

- 5.1 Chris Caswell updated the Panel on the work of the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, outlining the scheme's successes to date during its one year cycle of Board meetings and working group meetings. Three specialist groups had been formed on monitoring, education and communication, and the scheme continued to adhere to its founding principles of ownership, accountability and transparency. He explained that the scheme had recently passed its first annual health check by Natural England (which had pointed out that wetlands restoration should be a key priority). He then ran through a summary of the scheme's projects, and explained that further information could be found on the scheme's new website at: [www.hlsnewforest.org](http://www.hlsnewforest.org). It

was intended to seek to increase community engagement, especially through the Parish Councils in the Crown lands. He also updated the Panel on car free ditching activities. In response to a query, Chris Caswell said he would investigate and come back to Peter Stammers (Godshill Parish Council) regarding projects on specific ponds and ditches in the north of the Forest.

## **ITEM 6**

### **EXPLORING OFF THE NEW FOREST COAST**

- 6.1 James Brown, Maritime Archaeology Education and Outreach Officer, explained to the Panel that for the last two years the National Park Authority had been hosting a project to record, promote and preserve the archaeology of the New Forest coast and beneath the Solent. James Brown gave a brief project update, outlining the geographic scope of the project and explaining his own focus, as an education outreach officer, in promoting coastal heritage to residents, visitors and schoolchildren. He then showed the Panel a fascinating short film, which had been one of the project's education outputs, entitled '*Shipwrecks of the Western Solent*'.
- 6.2 In response to a query from Martina Humber (Lymington and Pennington Town Council), James Brown explained that it was not known how many wrecks there were in the Solent but that the total number could be in the thousands. The Solent was a dynamic environment and wooden vessels therefore tended not to be preserved for long. Maps of known wrecks were held by the UK Hydrographics Office; however, the focus of the project currently under discussion was not to find new archaeological sites but to investigate and promote sites that were already known.

## **ITEM 7**

### **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Alison Barnes, NPA Chief Executive, updated Panel members on the meeting of the NPA on 24 March 2011, a report on which had been circulated with the agenda. She gave the Panel some further detail on the National Park Authority's local development document preparation work that was mentioned in the summary, explaining that these supplementary planning documents would, once prepared and adopted, support the National Park Authority's recently adopted Core Strategy. She also drew Panel members' attention to the Landford and Wellow Village Design Statements (VDSs) that had recently been adopted by the NPA; members looked forward to receiving others. In response to a query as to whether the NPA would provide funding to help parishes develop VDSs, Alison Barnes explained that the NPA would mainly give assistance through officer time and input although it was possible that small amounts of funding might be made available for these projects. She advised Parish Councillors to contact Nick Evans, Senior Policy Officer, at the NPA (on 01590 646679 or by email to [nick.evans@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:nick.evans@newforestnpa.gov.uk)) if they required further information or assistance with regard to developing VDSs.

## **ITEM 8**

### **UPDATE ON NPA STAFF STRUCTURE PROCESS**

- 8.1 Alison Barnes updated Panel members on the National Park Authority's new staff structure, which had been implemented to address budget cuts. An outline copy of the organisation chart had been circulated with the agenda for the current meeting.

## **ITEM 9**

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 Eddie Holtham drew the Panel's attention to the recent project by Hampshire County Council to erect signage on verges indicating the presence of sites of special interest; these signs had now been removed from the New Forest, which as Eddie Holtham pointed out, was all a designated area for the purposes of nature conservation.
- 9.2 David Richardson, Hampshire County Council, concurred that these signs had now been removed within the Park's boundaries. He explained that, in areas of Hampshire outside the National Park, these signs were used to indicate to contractors areas of special ecological interest, to prevent grass and foliage from being cut back too severely. Alison Barnes commended the use of these signs elsewhere in Hampshire, which she felt would have a beneficial effect.
- 9.3 Ailsa Farrand (New Forest Equine Association) brought to the Panel's attention the recent events near Latchmoor Shade, where a tree felling and stream filling project had been instituted without prior local knowledge or consultation. Both Nick Tucker (Forestry Commission) and Rachel Bailey (Natural England) would investigate what had happened in the area; it was unusual that consultation and engagement appeared not to have been carried out at the site prior to a project of this sort taking place.

**Action: Nick Tucker and Rachel Bailey to report back to Panel regarding works undertaken at Latchmoor Shade; and to ensure that Parish Councils would be consulted in future regarding similar projects and that lists of forthcoming projects would be brought to the Consultative Panel.**

- 9.4 Peter Stammers congratulated the NPA on the recent Greener Living Show that it had supported. He also told the Panel that his parish had collected twenty four bags of litter on a recent occasion, but that sadly by the following day further littering had occurred in the area.
- 9.5 Rachel Bailey told the Panel about recent staff changes at Natural England, as part of which the organisation's recent representative to the Panel, Jackie Kelly, had unfortunately taken voluntary redundancy. In response to a query from the Chairman, she reassured the Panel that despite budget cuts and increased workloads she or another officer would always endeavour to attend Consultative Panel meetings.
- 9.6 Alison Barnes updated the Panel on the recent Minister's visit to the New Forest, which had been very successful. She also invited Panel members to participate in the forthcoming Bioblitz project.

## **ITEM 10**

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

- 10.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2011** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21:10 hrs.