

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 241st Meeting, held in the Main Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall on THURSDAY, 1 MAY 2014

Those present: Clive Chatters (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)
Frances Connolly (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

Nick Clarke – Newforce
Ian Mason-Smith – Community First New Forest
Cllr Christine Ford – Ringwood Town Council
Dylan Everett – National Trust
Stan Wade – Hythe and Dibden Parish Council

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Mark Carter substituted for Julian Evans on behalf of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.
Ray Miles substituted for Frank Weller on behalf of the New Forest Ramblers.
Paul Ames substituted for Christine Ames on behalf of the New Forest Tourism Association.
David Harrison for Alison Barnes on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (6 March 2014)

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

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 With reference to minute item 5.1, Clive Chatters advised Panel Members that he had written to the Minister regarding changes to permitted development rights, a copy of the letter is available with the minutes.

ITEM 4

WINTER STORMS – WESLEY JONES ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

4.1 The Chairman introduced Wesley Jones from the Environment Agency to the Panel, Wesley then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the recent winter storms, a copy of which is available with the minutes.

4.2 Wesley Jones introduced himself as the Partnership and Strategic Overview Team Leader for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight from the Environment Agency. He commented that during

the month of December 75% of the annual rainfall fell, with record breaking levels on both the Itchen and the Test rivers.

The Environment Agency worked with all relevant authorities as well as the emergency services in diverting rivers and setting up sandbags; protecting over 5,000 properties in the process.

- 4.4 Mr Jones advised Panel Members that the Environment Agency were now planning ongoing maintenance works for damaged structures in the New Forest, including the Lymington gates, Hurst Spit and the Pennington sea walls in Keyhaven. It was also advised that this year the Government have asked the Environment Agency to bid for a six year programme of work, they had therefore bid for central government funding to improve sea walls in Lymington and a bid for an improvement scheme in Calmore.

Panel members were invited to let the Environment agency know of any issues they may have by contacting Wesley or one of his team.

ITEM 5 **NFNPA UPDATE – DAVID HARRISON**

- 5.1 David Harrison updated panel members on the recent New Forest National Park Authority meeting which took place on 27 March. He commented that there had been much debate, both nationally and in the Forest, in relation to the proposed changes to Permitted Development (PD) rights for agricultural buildings to be converted to housing. He was pleased to report that concerns raised by the NPA's had resulted in National Park's being exempt from this ruling.
- 5.2 David also commented that the recent stormy weather had resulted in 160 emergency tree works notices being received by the Authority between October 2013 and January 2014, compared to only 30 in the same period last year.
- 5.3 It was highlighted to panel members that there had been increased focus on 'App' based information which allows visitors to use their smart phones to discover more information about their current locations in the Forest.
- 5.4 David Harrison brought to the attention of the panel that the recent volunteer fair had been opened by Julian Lewis MP and that 30 organisations had been represented with 254 visitors attending.

ITEM 6 **PAUL WALTON, NFNPA HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL ECONOMY INTRODUCTIONS**

- 6.1 David Harrison introduced Paul Walton from the NFNPA, as the new head of environment and rural economy.
- 6.2 Paul Walton advised Panel members that in his new position he would be involved with the protect and prosper side of the Authority's work, members of this team include Julie Melin-Stubbs Wildlife and Conservation, Ian Barker Ecologist, Kathryn Boler and Andy Brennan Funding and Sustainability, Frank Green Archaeology and Sarah Kelly Landscapes. He has had 20 years' experience in protecting landscapes and had now been in his position at the NFNPA for 4 weeks.

Currently Paul was going out into the Forest to meet various people and organisations and extended an invitation to panel members to get in touch with him.

Paul's contact details are – paul.walton@newforestnpa.gov.uk Tel: 01590 646631

ITEM 7

CYCLING CODE UPDATE – NIGEL MATTHEWS NFNPA

- 7.1 Members were advised that the Cycling Charter had now been agreed by the Cycle Liaison Group and the draft Charter was available on the NPA's website. The Cycling Code which had previously been agreed was also available on the website.
- 7.2 He said that the Charter was aimed at event organisers and the approach was to focus on ensuring that events were held safely and responsibly. He explained the role of the Public Events and Safety Advisory Group which was the body responsible for advising organisers of cycling events particularly larger events of 100 or more riders - an events calendar is also being set up to avoid clashes between events taking place in the Forest.
- 7.3 Responding to a query from a Panel member, he said that the Charter stressed the importance of rider identification for timed events, with riders displaying their identification numbers ideally both front and rear. He referred to the last cycling event in April 2014 and advised that this had been better organised than in the past and that feedback on the behaviour of those concerned had been more positive. He encouraged members of the Panel to look through the Charter to see if anything had been missed. Parish Councils were also an important link in monitoring events and reporting any concerns to the Safety Advisory Group.
- 7.4 A concern was raised with regard to the bright lights worn by some cyclists on their helmets when cycling at night. Nigel Matthews said that two members of the Cycling Liaison Group had agreed to raise this issue with cycle clubs.
- 7.5 Nigel Matthews advised that a review of both the Code and Charter would take place in due course with the Safety Advisory Group collating feedback about cycling events including any bad behaviour or other concerns expressed by members of the public, parishes or cycling and other organisations.
- 7.6 Members responded positively to the approval of the Charter and emphasised the importance of increasing communication and mutual understanding between cyclists and other road users. A concern was however expressed by the Commoners Defence Association who felt that the NPA had not done enough to ensure sufficient control over cycling events. David Harrison responded that the NPA was not a police force nor the Highway Authority and the success of future events needed the goodwill of everyone who lived in the New Forest.
- 7.7 Nigel Matthews advised that the NPA would continue to monitor the success of the Charter and if changes needed to be made these would be discussed with the Safety Advisory Group – the web page of the Safety Advisory Group is: <http://nfdc.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=8426>

ITEM 8

HLS RIVER RESTORATION VIDEO

- 8.1 Members viewed a short HLS film on the restoration of the original river meander of Fletchers Stream. Restoring the original river course reduced the incidence of flooding, improved landscapes, provided temporary reservoirs and increased nutrients for both plants and wildlife.

ITEM 9

PANEL AGENDA SETTING

- 9.1 The Chairman updated members on the meeting he had held with Alison Barnes and Mike Seddon regarding future agenda setting and advised that the Forestry Commission and NPA would be briefing members on wind throw of timber and the ancient forest resulting from the severe weather over the last winter.
- 9.2 He said that Alison Barnes would co-ordinate a suite of presentations/consultations on initiatives relating to the enclosed landscape which would be linked to HLF stakeholder engagement.

- 9.3 Members learned that the Forestry Commission would brief Panel members towards the end of the year on their forthcoming Forest Design Plan and invite members to provide feedback on the broad principles of the Plan.
- 9.3 Clive Chatters advised that many of the decisions of neighbouring authorities impacted on the New Forest and he was in the process of writing to these organisations to invite them to consult and receive input from the Panel on such issues.

ITEM 10

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 Mike Seddon advised that the Forestry Commission would shortly be drawing up a planning application with regard to Latchmore Brook which would be processed through the NPA as the planning authority towards the end of the year. The Forestry Commission would be undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment in connection with the application and would determine topics to be included in the EIA. The topics proposed to be included were displayed on the Forestry Commission website and he invited members to view these topics and use the link on this webpage to comment on the topics. The opportunity to comment would continue for a further two weeks.

ITEM 11

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 11.1 Date of the next meeting would be **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 3 July 2014** in the **Main Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall, Brockenhurst** .

The meeting closed at 21.15 hrs.