**NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

**Minutes of the 235th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 1 November 2012**

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)

David Stone (Panel Support Officer)

Rosalind Alderman/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**

Tony Barnett, Caravan Club

Richard Lemon, Natural England

Mrs Ros Cooper, Hampshire County Federation of Women’s Institutes

Cllr Jannette Duke, New Milton Town Council

Cllr Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council

David Horne, Environment Agency

Cllr Robert Lintonbon, Godshill Parish Council

John Durnell, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Cllr Christine Ford, Ringwood Town Council

Cllr Edward Heron, New Forest District Council

1.2 **SUBSTITUTIONS**

Graham Baker, CPRE

Nick Tucker, Forestry Commission

Sam Dovey, NFU

1.3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

* He extended a welcome to Richard Bastow who was replacing David Richardson for HCC Highways.
* The Chairman referred to the successful Panel Tour which had taken place on 19 September and thanked the Forestry Commission officers involved.
* He reminded Panel members to announce their name and organisation before speaking.

**ITEM 2**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** (6 September 2012)

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

**ITEM 3**

**MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 Minute Item 3.2 – Tim Greenwood referred to an e-mail from Vicky Myers giving details on the distribution of Park Life. He also advised that copies of the latest edition of Park Life had been tabled at the current meeting. Alison Barnes advised that copies would also be sent to all Parish Clerks. Alison Russell asked that Wellow Post Office be included in the distribution.

3.2 Minute item 8.2 – Tim Greenwood drew Panel members’ attention to a tabled report from the NPA’s Policy Team in response to concerns raised by Sally Owen of Bransgore Parish Council at the previous Panel regarding residential development at Roeshot Hill, Burton and Christchurch.

**ITEM 4**

**FORESTRY COMMISSION ITEMS**

4.1 Nick Tucker responded to a query from Jenni Tubbs (New Forest Friends of the Earth) enquiring what action was being taken by the FC in the New Forest to combat dieback ash a fungus disease affecting ash trees. He said that the Forestry Commission was working closely with colleagues at the Plant Health Section at Defra and a comprehensive countrywide impact survey would be completed within the next week. In the meantime, ash plant imports had been stopped and movement of plant materials had been suspended. He said that the incidence of Ash trees was only 0.05% of the total tree species in the Crownland Estate of the New Forest.

4.2 In response to a query, he advised that the disease had only recently found its way to the United Kingdom but had been present in Europe for some time. An information sheet would be made available to the Panel Secretariat providing the Forestry Commission website address where more information could be found on symptoms of the disease as well as a list of key contacts for reporting suspected cases (a copy of the information sheet is included with these minutes).

4.3 Referring to the report of the Independent Panel on Forestry, Alison Barnes advised that she had attended the Forestry Stakeholders Forum on 31 October which had been called to discuss how best to deliver the panel’s recommendations and initiatives to increase accessibility not just to the Crown estates but all woodland areas.

**ITEM 5**

**POND CONSERVATION IN THE NEW FOREST – NAOMI EWALD**

5.1 Naomi Ewald from Pond Conservation made a presentation to the Panel on Freshwater Biodiversity in the New Forest and said that the aim of her organisation was to protect and increase the freshwater biodiversity of landscapes, using ponds as a major focus.

5.2 She said that the freshwater biodiversity in the New Forest was exceptional and supported approximately 30% of England’s threatened freshwater species through its clean water habitats. Freshwaters in the New Forest comprised everything from tiny headwater streams to larger rivers, thousands of small ponds and the larger lakes which extended into the coastal waters.

5.3 She then updated the Panel on three projects which had been initiated in the New Forest – the New Forest Pondscape Project (producing a strategy which can be implemented within existing frameworks to protect, enhance and create ponds for wildlife), the New Forest Catchment Pilot Project (working with stakeholders to identify issues and agree actions to protect and enhance the unique nature of freshwater and coastal habitats in the New Forest) and PondNet (a volunteer led initiative to monitor the state freshwater habitats). The Chairman thanked Naomi Ewald for her very interesting and informative presentation.

**ITEM 6**

**STATE OF THE PARK REPORT – NICK EVANS**

6.1 Nick Evans, Policy Officer with the NPA made a presentation on the State of the Park report 2012 which comprised key facts and figures about the National Park and contained headline indicators to monitor change.

6.2 The report covered such areas as landscape, communities, economy and local distinctiveness and would act as a source of interest for local organisations. The evidence in the report would inform the forthcoming review of the Management Plan, identify trends and indicate where future resources should be directed. He added that the report contained a manageable number of indicators (18) which were related to the Management Plan objectives.

6.3 The report was a ‘living document’, subject to change and currently available on the Authority’s website with more data to be added as this became available. He said that thus far he had spoken to a number of New Forest organisations and parishes (through Quadrant meetings). He invited Panel members to comment on the report or input by forwarding relevant data which could be included in the report. He then responded to a number of queries raised by Panel members on the detail of the report and the nature of the indicators.

6.4 Nick Evans then reminded members of the Ancient Trees display which had been set up to highlight some of the significant trees in the New Forest. Access to the display at the New Forest Centre was free and the project had been sponsored by Exxonmobile.

**ITEM 7**

**NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

7.1 Alison Barnes drew Panel members’ attention to the report on the NPA meeting on 27 September 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 The Panel did not discuss any items for future meeting agendas and noted the content of the current consultation log.

**ITEM 9**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 Concern was expressed at the number of grit bins which were being used by the public for litter and enquired whether there was a programme in place to clear these out ahead of the winter months and to restock the bins with grit. Richard Bastow (HCC, Highways) confirmed that by agreement with the New Forest District Council the bins were regularly cleaned and restocked. He asked Panel members to contact him if they were aware of any bins which still posed a problem in this regard.

9.2 Mike Moriarty advised that new bus schedules would be introduced by Blue Star bus services through the New Forest as from Monday 5 November 2012.

9.3 Sue Benison raised a concern that the current contractor responsible for litter picking on the B3079 was not undertaking this work effectively. Nick Tucker advised that he would liaise with the contractor to ensure that this situation was remedied.

9.4 Tim Greenwood noted that Rosalind Alderman, who had been an invaluable member of the Panel Secretariat for the last six years, had significantly reduced her working hours and he wished her well with her higher education plans.

**ITEM 10**

**DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING**

10.1 Members agreed that the next Consultative Panel meeting would be postponed by one week and would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 10 January 2013** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel**, **Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21.10 hrs.