

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 229th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Support Officer)
Rosalind Alderman (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. Val Thorpe, Burley Parish Council
Mr. Tony Barnett, Caravan Club
Mr. Ian Mason-Smith, Community First New Forest /HCVYS
Mr. David Richardson, HCC
Mrs. Ros Cooper, HCFWI
Cllr. Alan Bollom, Hordle Parish Council
Cllr. Mark Abbott, Lyndhurst Parish Council
Mr. Chris Whitlock, National Farmers' Union
Mr. Ian Taylor, newforce
Mrs. Millar, New Forest Hounds
Dr. Ron Pearson, NFD OG

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Mr. Julian Johnson, NPA
Cllr. Bill Dunn, Redlynch Parish Council

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Cllr. John Hutchins was the new representative for New Milton Town Council, replacing Cllr. Steve Clarke.
- The Chairman welcomed Kevin Penfold, Forestry Commission.
- The NPA's headquarters, as of 7 November, would be at the Town Hall in Lymington.
- The Chairman also reminded members to announce their name and organisation before speaking.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (7 July 2011)

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

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There were no updates from the Forestry Commission on proposed restoration works on this occasion. A detailed summary of works for 2012 would be brought to the next Panel meeting.

- 3.2 Julian Johnson (NPA) read out an update on the management of verges and the programme of verge-cutting, to the effect that the NPA would be working with Hampshire County Council to progress matters and to identify areas where the National Park could assist with botanical surveys and/or facilitate liaison.
- 3.3 The Chairman explained that David Richardson (Hampshire County Council) was not present to respond on the action point regarding the removal of the lay-by at Applemore and the broken gate at Roughdown, but had responded directly to Eddie Holtham who had raised the query; however, Eddie Holtham said that there were further issues he would like to pursue with Hampshire County Council.
- 3.4 The Chairman reported that a reminder letter had been sent to the Environment Agency regarding attendance at Panel meetings. Julian Johnson reported back to the Panel regarding the results of the environmental survey that had carried out at Copperfields. Mike Moriarty, Copythorne, explained that he still did not know who was responsible for the flood mapping of the area and whether this was the responsibility of the Environment Agency; this question could not be answered because no representative from the Environment Agency was present at the meeting.
- 3.5 Eddie Holtham (Denny Lodge Parish Council) complained that the ragwort on the A326 had not been pulled for a considerable period of time and asked that the NPA work with Hampshire to take this forward. It was explained that as a trunk road the A326 was in fact the responsibility of the Highways Agency rather than the County Council.

ITEM 4 **FORESTRY COMMISSION**

- 4.1 Kevin Penfold gave a brief update to the Panel members on the Forestry Commission restructuring, explaining that a reduction would be made from 11 to 6 districts; the local headquarters would remain at Lyndhurst. It was hoped that no compulsory redundancies would be necessary.
- 4.2 In response to a query, he confirmed that he would distribute a plan of the winter car park closures to Panel members.

ITEM 5 **OVERVIEW OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHITE PAPER**

- 5.1 Ian Barker (NPA) and John Durnell (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) gave a presentation on the Natural Environment White Paper, drawing Panel members' attention in particular to opportunities for partnership working. The White Paper had been published at the beginning of June and represented a new attempt to address the ongoing loss of biodiversity and improve the condition of the natural environment by 2020. The White Paper emphasised that improving the natural environment was key to achieving prosperity for people and it was important to remember that ecological value lay at the heart of economic value. As part of this, the White Paper encouraged local people to work together to create (i) nature improvement areas, which were intended to be voluntary and local in nature and to involve all those in the local community with an interest in the natural environment; the application deadline for bids for nature improvement areas was 30 September, and (ii) local nature partnerships, which were intended to encourage and develop a shared community vision for the area which would feed into local planning rules and policy; these

partnerships would be funded for two years and the deadline for application was 31 October, so help was required from local organisations if an application was to be made in respect of the New Forest area by the deadline. A workshop was planned for 20 September at Brockenhurst Village Hall, to which all interested parties were invited.

- 5.2 In response to a comment that the funding available was minimal, John Durnell explained that the funding was intended to get the projects up and running; after the initial period the partners were expected to pursue alternative sources of income. Members commented on the short timeframes that were involved, and discussed the likely merits of local bids for the projects; John Durnell explained that it was difficult to predict what criteria would be used to assess applications but that there was likely to be merit in schemes that linked 'high value' natural environments together. It was pointed out that even if a local bid was not successful, much value would derive from the application process itself, and the work carried out would not be wasted.

ITEM 6 **OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE VERDERERS**

- 6.1 Pat Thorne gave Panel members an overview of the work of the Verderers, running through the Verderers' statutory authority and purposes, their capacity to make and amend bye-laws affecting the New Forest area and to regulate commoning on the Forest, and their aim to restrict detrimental activities and to develop and restore the natural beauty of the area. Open Court sessions, at which members of the public could make presentments to the Verderers, were held on the third Wednesday of every month except for August and December. Much of the Verderers' work was done by small subcommittees, several of which were associated with the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and the Verderers' grazing scheme. The Verderers were also consultees on any matters that would affect the open Forest, such as highways and railways proposals. They conducted a welfare tour twice a year.

ITEM 7 **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Julian Johnson (NPA) gave an update on the NPA meeting 25 August 2011 which had considered the Audit Commission's governance report, the recommendations of which had been implemented.
- 7.2 Bill Dunn (Redlynch Parish Council) raised the draft National Planning Policy Framework. It was suggested that this be an agenda item for a subsequent meeting.

Action: Agenda item on the draft National Planning Policy Framework to be placed on a forthcoming Panel agenda.

Note – the consultation closing date for feedback on the Framework (17 October) is well before the next meeting of the Panel (3 November). However, the NPA is including the document as an agenda item in its round of quadrant meetings. A copy of the NPA's final submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government is attached to these minutes for the information of other Panel members.

ITEM 8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 8.1 Members discussed the Panel tour that was to be arranged by the Forestry Commission. Further details would be circulated in due course.

ITEM 9

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 9.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2011** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21:10 hrs.