

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 225th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 6 JANUARY 2011

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Support Officer)
Rosalind Alderman (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Jo Murphy (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

ITEM 1

1.1 APOLOGIES

Sally Owen, Bransgore Parish Council
Leo Randall, Melchett Park and Plaitford Parish Council
Mark Oakley, Netley Marsh Parish Council
Ian Taylor, newforce
Sam Dovey, New Forest Pony and Cattle Breeding Society
Christine Ames, New Forest Tourism Association
Robbie Roberts, RSPCA
Arthur Westmacott, Sopley Parish Council
Kathy Gulliver, Sway Parish Council

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

David Bryant, Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council
Geraint James, Copythorne Parish Council
Mike Chilcott, New Forest Association

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that Chris Aldhous had stepped down from the Panel as the representative of the New Forest Equestrian Association; and that for the time being he would be replaced by Ailsa Farrand.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (4 November 2010)

- 2.1 Sue Bennison (Bramshaw Parish Council) explained that she had found the anniversary balloon referred to in minute item 7.5 in Bramshaw Wood and not at her property as stated in the minutes. It was agreed that the minutes should be amended accordingly.
- 2.2 Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Minute item 4.4 - The Chairman had written to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Panel regarding proposals re Forestry Commission land and copies of his letter and the reply had been circulated to Panel members. Mike Seddon, Forestry Commission, explained to members that the Consultation document had not launched yet, however he would write to Panel members when it did and the

Forestry Commission would be running a local consultation event to help with the response.

- 3.2 Minute 7.2 – Alison Barnes, NPA, updated the Panel regarding her report back to Copythorne Parish Council. She explained that she and several NPA officers had attended the Parish Council meeting in November which had been a good forum to go through the issues. She confirmed that at the last Authority meeting agreement had been gained to part fund the investigative work at the site and that it should commence towards the end of this month or early next month. She also reminded the Panel that the NPA were pursuing a judicial injunction on the ongoing Enforcement Action.
- 3.3 Minute 7.4 - David Richardson reported back to the Panel that the wood used for the wooden posts in the traffic calming scheme on the Burley Road was Douglas Fir, sourced from the Cowdray Estate in Petworth and was FSC certified.
- 3.4 Minute 7.5 – Alison Barnes, NPA, reported that the issue of balloons was on the agenda of the Forest Watch meeting that had taken place that afternoon to raise awareness of the issue with partnership organisations. A campaign is planned for the spring to educate people on the implications and dangers of using Chinese lanterns.

ITEM 4

FORESTRY COMMISSION

- 4.1 Dave Morris, the Forestry Commission's Open Forest Manager, made a presentation on the annual management of the open forest. He explained that there were three main objectives, firstly to maintain habitat and conserve the character of the Forest, secondly to support commoning and thirdly to deliver economic returns. He discussed in detail the types of management used such as gorse burning, heather burning, gorse swiping and bracken control, and explained the reasons why different methods were used in different areas and some of the procedures used to ensure public safety and protection of wildlife, particularly ground nesting birds.
- 4.2 He explained that volunteers, Forestry Commission staff and contractors were all involved in various projects such as birch felling to restore forest lawns, pine seedling pulling and ragwort pulling. He also spoke about the ongoing maintenance that was carried out to pathways to maintain access.
- 4.2 Panel members raised questions about the cost of the work, which Mr Morris explained was good value at £50 per hectare, which he said was achievable owing to the economies of scale gained from such a large area. In response to concerns raised regarding the welfare of the wildlife, specifically the rare Dartford Warbler, Mr Morris replied that they sought the advice of local FC beat officers so as not to disrupt or endanger the wildlife.

ITEM 5

NEW FOREST MARQUE

- 5.1 Sarah Richards introduced the New Forest Marque explaining that it currently had 132 members and that it was a guarantee of local produce and also of high animal welfare standards. She introduced Jim Greenwood of NF Produce and Natasha Moore, a NF Marque holder. Ms Richards explained that NF Marque products included 3 cheese makers winning national awards in 2010 and that there was

much interest both nationally and internationally in the rearing of pigs in the area and pannage rights. More information regarding the NF Marque could be found at www.nfproduce.com.

- 5.2 Jim Greenwood gave a presentation on the origins of the Marque and explained that as it had become established local hotels and retailers now recognised that it had a positive effect on their business.
- 5.3 Natasha Moore of Perfect Preserves and a NF Marque holder told Panel members how the gaining of the Marque had helped her to develop her business and move from her kitchen to a business unit. She now sells her preserves to local hotels and Bed and Breakfasts throughout the Forest.
- 5.4 The panel were invited to taste some of the products available and asked questions regarding the evidence there was supporting the claims that the Marque was good for business, and also whether the Marque was self sustaining or whether it would continue to need funding. Ms Richards responded that at this stage there was no opportunity to increase membership fees and therefore funding was still required to keep the scheme going.

ITEM 6

UPDATE ON THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 6.1 David Illsley, NPA Head of Policy and Plans, made a presentation to the Panel on the review of the governance of National Parks. He explained the current membership arrangements for National Parks and also the consultation process which was currently happening. He reminded the Panel that there were still 3 weeks left to comment and that Defra were expected to announce the outcome in March.
- 6.2 Diverse views were expressed by Panel members as to whether NPA members should be directly elected to the Authority rather than be appointed by either their parent Authority or the Secretary of State as was currently the case.
- 6.3 Panel members agreed that the Chairman should write to DEFRA on behalf of the panel explaining the Panels role within the New Forest and giving some feedback on the nature of the discussions regarding the governance of National Parks.

Action: Tim Greenwood to write to DEFRA on behalf of the panel.

NB: Letter sent 17 January 2011 and attached to these minutes.

ITEM 7

UPDATE ON THE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 Ian Barker, the NPA's Ecologist, and Sarah Kelly, NPA Landscape Officer, updated the Panel on the progress with the New Forest Biodiversity Action Plan and the New Forest Landscape Strategy. They highlighted the many projects which were currently ongoing and explained that they had held roadshows over the summer which had been attended by 150 people. They explained that a workshop was planned for the spring and that they were keen for local people to get involved to influence the strategies.

- 7.2 For information please contact Ian barker on ian.barker@newforestnpa.gov.uk or Sarah Kelly on sarah.kelly@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

ITEM 8

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS

- 8.1 A report on the meeting of 9 December 2010 had been circulated with the minutes of the last Panel meeting. Alison Barnes, NPA, highlighted the two key discussion points. Firstly that the Core Strategy had been adopted at the meeting and that the NPA were supporting the parishes in the use of the new policies. Secondly that DEFRA settlement had been confirmed as 21.5% over 4 years and that significant savings had already been identified with the planned relocation of the NPA offices to Lyminster Town Hall and following a review of business processes.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Sue Bennison, Bramshaw Parish Council, explained that there were rumours that a new mix of salt/grit containing molasses was being applied to the roads owing to the recent very icy conditions. She explained that concerns had been raised that this was encouraging ponies to stand in the road and lick the surface. Edward Heron, NFDC, explained that molasses were used in some parts of the county as it helped the salt to stick to the surface; however, he confirmed that this mixture was not used in the New Forest. Several Panel members confirmed that ponies do often stand in the road to lick the salt on the surface and that this has been a problem over many years.
- 9.2 Mark Abbott, Lyndhurst Parish Council, asked whether following the announcement that the Camping and Caravan Club would be managing the forest campsites on behalf of Forest Holidays whether it was necessary to be a member of the club to use the campsite. Mike Seddon, Forestry Commission, advised that it was not necessary to be a member and that the campsites were open for anyone to use. Members of the Camping and Caravanning Club receive a discount on the pitch fee and have done since the Club became a partner in Forest Holidays..

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 21.30 hrs.