

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 228th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 7 JULY 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. Paul Turner, Breamore Parish Council
Mr Mike Chilcott, CPRE
Prof. Julian Evans, Institute of Chartered Foresters/ Royal Forestry Society
Mr. Sam Dovey, New Forest Pony and Cattle Breeding Society
Mr. Chris Whitlock, NFU
Mrs. Christine Ames, New Forest Tourism Association
Cllr. Christine Ford, Ringwood Town Council
Cllr. Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Mr. Nick Tucker, Forestry Commission

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced the appointment of a number of new representatives as follows:

- Cllr. Paul Tanner was the new representative for Boldre Parish Council, replacing Cllr. Arthur French.
- The new joint representatives for Hordle Parish Council were Cllr. Alan Bollom and Cllr. Marian Still, in place of Cllr. Roy Bowring.
- Mr Gerald Lewis was the new representative for Sopley Parish Council, in place of Cllr. Arthur Westmacott.
- Cllr. Penny Jackman was the new representative for Lymington and Pennington Town Council, in place of Cllr. Martina Humber.
- Cllr. Robert Lintonbon was the new representative for Godshill Parish Council, replacing Cllr. Peter Stammers.
- Cllr. David Bryant was the new representative for Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council, replacing Cllr. Peter Sopowski.
- Cllr. Stan Wade was the new representative for Dibden Purlieu Parish Council, replacing Cllr. Alex Wade.

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

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12 May 2011)

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

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Minute item 9.3 – Rachel Bailey, Natural England, explained that a draft protocol for wetlands restoration projects would be considered by the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme Board at its meeting on 19 July 2011, and a new list of proposed wetlands restoration bids would also be signed off at that meeting. Nick Tucker, Forestry Commission, explained that consultation was undertaken with many people prior to works but primarily with the statutory bodies such as the NPA, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Verderers. The tree felling works which were the subject of Ailsa Farrand's original concerns had to be submitted to the Forestry Commission for approval who undertook a statutory consultation with NPA (Planning), Natural England and the Parish Councils. This happened on an annual basis and reliance was placed on the Parish Councils picking up these applications and informing their parishioners. Nick Tucker added that significant further dissemination had been carried out through various fora including a public meeting at Godshill where details of the scheme were made available and discussed; but it was not possible to consult every interested party about every operation. The Forestry Commission was willing to provide more information about activities to the Panel, to the NPA for dissemination via Parish Council quadrant meetings or via the website.
- 3.2 Ailsa Farrand explained that her concern regarding the works undertaken at Latchmoor Shade related to the lack of local consultation or knowledge, and explained that a nesting site for Wheat-Ears had been affected, leading to the birds abandoning it. Nick Tucker explained that if people were aware of matters of significant interest on a particular site they should make the Forestry Commission aware straight away so that it could be added to the data set in their GIS system, which was the first place they would consult when planning works. He also offered that more information about restoration works could be brought to the Panel, following a request that Panel members be kept directly informed of any upcoming projects through the Forestry Commission's standing agenda item at Panel meetings. It was also suggested that the local Parish Council should be invited to attend the site visits in respect of any future projects.

Forestry Commission to bring further information regarding proposed restoration works to the Panel on a regular basis.

- 3.3 Minute items 9.1 and 9.2 – Jenni Tubbs raised the question of the management of roadside verges by Hampshire County Council on both fenced roads and around village greens, which she felt was unsympathetic, often being cut at the wrong times of year, too severely, and with grass cuttings left in situ, leading to the loss of insect habitat and food sources. David Richardson, Hampshire County Council, explained that certain verges were listed to be cut at particular times of year according to the species to be found there, and asked that if Panel members had concerns about particular sites or suggestions for additions to this list, they should let Hampshire County Council know. He explained that for safety reasons it was important to maintain visibility on the highways. One Panel member said that it was important that the Council did not seek to widen single track roads by extending the area treated with asphalt. John Durnell, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, suggested that the starting presumption with verges be that they should not be cut unless there was a safety imperative in favour of cutting, but David Richardson explained that

there was a public right of access along the highways, including for pedestrians, and it was therefore necessary to cut back to a certain width on most roads to render the verges passable, in addition to which it was necessary to cut verges back fully every three years to prevent scrub from becoming established. Alison Barnes suggested that she would work with Hampshire to see whether matters could be improved.

Alison Barnes, NPA, to work with Hampshire regarding the management of verges and to report back to the Consultative Panel.

- 3.4 A number of Panel members also raised concerns over the prevalence of ragwort this season, both under this agenda item and Any Other Business, and asked whether Hampshire could prioritise ragwort pulling. David Richardson explained that the ragwort programme was in progress but asked that if Panel members knew of areas causing particular concerns that they notify the County Council directly.

ITEM 4 **FORESTRY COMMISSION**

- 4.1 Nick Tucker gave an update on revisions to the Forestry Commission's structure arising from the recent government spending review.

*NB: an updated note in respect of this item is attached to these minutes as **Annex 1**.*

ITEM 5 **UPDATE ON INDEPENDENT PANEL ON FORESTRY**

- 5.1 Nick Tucker read out a statement updating the Panel on the work of the Independent Panel on Forestry, in particular calling attention to the closing date for the Call for Views at the end of July. Peter Roberts told Panel members that the New Forest Association would shortly be posting its response to the Call for Views on its website and suggested that Panel members might find this interesting. Alison Barnes explained that the NPA's discussions so far on this issue could also be followed on its website. Panel members were also informed that the Independent Panel had now confirmed that it would be conducting a site visit to the New Forest in the forthcoming months.

ITEM 6 **LAND MANAGEMENT ADVICE SERVICE**

- 6.1 Julie Stubbs, Land Management Advice Service Manager, gave an update on the work of the Land Management Advice Service to date, explaining that since February 2010 more than 200 landowners had sought advice from the service on land management issues. She summarised the services offered, including land management advice, training, advice on legislation, grants, and assistance to landowners in applying to various other organisations, including the Woodland Grant Scheme. Following the presentation John Durnell commended the service on its work to date, which he felt made a positive contribution to the area.

ITEM 7 **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Alison Barnes, NPA Chief Executive, updated Panel members on the meeting of the NPA on 23 June 2011, a report on which had been tabled. She told Panel members that NPA member Clive Chatters had recently stepped down from the NPA and his contribution would be greatly missed. She also explained to the Panel that a six week

period of consultation on the draft Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document was currently in progress and Parish Councils and other relevant organisations would have received a letter inviting them to comment on the consultation. The Chairman requested any consultees who had not received this notification to contact the Panel secretariat.

ITEM 8

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 In response to a query from Roly Errington, Nick Tucker gave the Panel an update on Red Band Needle Blight and the Forestry Commission's programme for attempting to deal with it.

*NB: Notes on Red Band Needle Blight are attached to these minutes as **Annex 2**.*

- 8.2 John Durnell raised the Natural Environment White Paper that had recently been published, explaining that it contained a provision regarding local nature partnerships in respect of which small amounts of funding would be available. A more substantive item on the White Paper would be included on the September Panel meeting agenda.
- 8.3 Eddie Holtham asked why Denny Lodge Parish Council had not been consulted regarding the removal of the lay-by at Applemore; its removal had resulted in a number of unofficial lay-bys being created on the verges along this road. Eddie Holtham also said that in April and again in May he had reported to Hampshire County Council Highways that the gate beside the cattle grid at Roughdown was not opening properly, and that there was a sharp edge where the diagonal supports had been welded to the top rail, which was potentially hazardous. David Richardson would follow up these queries.

David Richardson, Hampshire County Council, to investigate the removal of the lay-by at Applemore and the broken gate at Roughdown and report back to Eddie Holtham.

- 8.4 Mike Moriarty, Copythorne Parish Council, raised the question of flooding in Copythorne. Initially Bartley Water had been under the management of New Forest District Council but this had subsequently passed to the Environment Agency and currently there was a consultation underway regarding whether maintenance should be carried out by the District Council after all; in investigating this matter Mr Moriarty had discovered that the Environment Agency's flood map had been amended in 2011 and the Parish Council had not been notified; he questioned whether this had happened to other Parishes. The Chairman noted that the representative of the Environment Agency was not present at the meeting again, and requested the Panel Secretariat to write to the Environment Agency to emphasise the need for a representative to attend Panel meetings.

Panel Secretariat to write to Environment Agency regarding attendance at Panel meetings.

- 8.5 Mike Moriarty also asked whether the environmental survey of the potentially contaminated land at Copperfields had been finalised. Alison Barnes said that this had not been completed but she would report back to him as soon as the results were available.

Alison Barnes, NPA, to report back to Mike Moriarty with results of environmental survey at Copperfields as soon as the results become available, and to report back to next Panel meeting.

ITEM 9

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

9.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2011** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21:05 hrs.