

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 238th Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 7 November 2013

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Support Officer)
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

Chris Whitlock – NFU
Ros Cooper – WI
Tony Barnett – Caravan Club
Richard Roberts – RSPCA
Peter Turner – Breamore Parish Council
Sue Brown – Hordle Parish Council
Bill Dow – Hyde Parish Council

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Paul Glover substituted for Mark Bridle on behalf of Minstead Parish Council.

It was announced that Bob Chapman would now take over as Panel representative for John Durnell on behalf of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust.

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements on this occasion.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5 September 2013)

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

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Item 4.1 – The Chairman thanked Mike Seddon of the Forestry Commission for organising the recent tour.

3.2 Item 9.5 – Concern was raised that the Forestry Commission had granted consent for the upcoming 'Fallen Leaves' cycle event on 8 December.

Mike Seddon advised Panel members that the Forestry Commission had yet to sign permission for this event and was still in negotiations with the organisers; however the event had been agreed in principle. Currently routes were being discussed and which waymarked cycle paths would be used, the organisers had now capped this event as a maximum of 600 participants.

ITEM 4

NEW FOREST RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ENGLAND (RDPE) – SALLY IGRA

- 4.1 Sally Igra gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Panel on New Forest Rural Development for England advising that this was an EU initiative to provide rural communities with the funding to find 'local solutions to local needs'. A Local Action Group (LAG) had been set up which made decisions about grants which were awarded and priorities for funding.
- 4.2 Sally advised panel members that the LAG had a budget of £1.4 million (2008-2013) to support New Forest rural businesses and communities.
- 4.3 Sally explained that the LAG had identified 4 main priorities to award funding which were – Farm diversification, the forestry sector, micro-businesses linked to land and local produce and community facilities and services.
- 4.4 Sally then highlighted some of the New Forest LAG achievements these included - £1.4 million allocated to 78 projects. Forty nine rural businesses had benefited from grants totalling £800,000; 86% supporting farming, commoning and forest. Local communities had received £604,000 to improve their village facilities, with the grants benefitting 232 rural businesses, helping to create 23 new jobs and safeguard 190 jobs.
- 4.5 Sally commented that the current RDPE funds had now been fully allocated and that the programme would be ending in December 2013, however there would be another Rural Development programme due to begin in 2015, help and support would be required to bid for the funding in 2014. For further information Panel members were asked to contact Sally Igra on 02380 285588 or email sally.igra@nfdc.gov.uk. A full copy of the presentation is available on the NPA website at http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/298/new_forest_consultative_panel.

ITEM 5

LYMINGTON & SALTERNS NATURE RESERVE – PETE DURNELL

- 5.1 Pete Durnell gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Lymington and Salterns Nature reserve explaining that this runs from the Lymington River down to Hurst spit. Much of the reserve is owned by Hampshire County Council as this is the best way to protect and nurture the land, the County Council would continue purchasing land when it became available to ensure that it was adequately protected.
- 5.2 Pete Durnell elaborated on the historic value as saltmarsh's. However in the 19th century the saltmarsh's were abandoned but they was still physical evidence of their existence today.
- 5.3 The reserve is a wildlife haven for both butterfly's and birds with some of the most common being the black headed gull and oyster catcher. Pete advised Panel members that during the spring months, signs were put up around the reserve to advise the public of the presence of ground nesting birds and to exercise caution when dog walking in the area.
- 5.4 It was explained that there were 25 miles of footpaths on the reserve and that these were now fully accessible to both wheelchair and pushchair users. Over 250,000 people visit the reserve during the year.
- 5.5 For more information on the reserve contact Pete Durnell at pete.durnell@hants.gov.uk a full copy of the presentation is available on the NPA's website at http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/298/new_forest_consultative_panel.

ITEM 6

NEW FOREST TRANSITIONS – JONATHAN BLEASE

- 6.1 Jonathan Blease gave a presentation on New Forest Transitions explaining that this initiative had commenced in 2008 and that its main objective was looking at how to preserve the Forest, how to change our behaviour to be more productive and how to make the Forest more resilient in today's challenging times.
- 6.2 Jonathan Blease advised Panel members that the group was volunteer based with some funding from the NPA, NFDC, Sustainable Development Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. During 2014 an exhibition would be held at the New Forest Centre to showcase what had been achieved so far and how to develop further funding for the initiative.
- 6.3 Should Panel members require further information on New Forest Transitions they were asked to contact Jonathan Blease at jonathan@stories4change.com a full copy of the presentation was available on the NPA's website at http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/298/new_forest_consultative_panel

ITEM 7

HIGHWAYS UPDATE – RICHARD BASTOW

- 7.1 Richard Bastow gave Panel members an update on highways in the New Forest commenting that the County Council was currently ensuring that potholes were being filled in preparation for the coming winter. Operation Resilience was also well under way carrying out major maintenance to the County's roads i.e. resurfacing roads in preparation for the winter months.
- 7.2 Richard advised Panel members that a consultation was currently in progress asking for views on two proposed policy documents which affect how the county's highways are managed more information can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/consultation-highway-management.htm>
- 7.3 Richard then answered questions put forward by Panel members relating to local roads within the New Forest

ITEM 8

PANEL AGENDA SETTINGS

- 8.1 A member referred to New Forest District Council's consultation on its draft Local Plan and the draft Habitat Mitigation Strategy which was due to close on 15 November and suggested that the Panel receive an update on the outcome of the consultation and the timetable for the next stages in the process.
- 8.2 This proposal was supported by members and the Secretariat were accordingly requested to contact the District Council with a view to making arrangements for an update to be provide at the January Panel meeting.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 The Chairman advised members that an illustrated book titled 'God's Trees' written by Professor Julian Evans. This book which was available to purchase at the meeting was a both a reference guide and a study of trees in the New Forest.
- 9.2 The Chairman referred to the letter circulated to members regarding the change in venue for future Panel meetings. He advised that the Brockenhurst Village Hall would accordingly be the venue for the next Panel meeting on 16 January 2014.
- 9.3 Mike Seddon mentioned that he would be updating Panel members regarding the Public Forest Estate at the January meeting of the Panel.
- 9.4 Mike Seddon also advised members that the Forestry Commission intended to undertake improvements to a number of car park bellmouths by extending the tarmac road surface into the bellmouth.
- 9.5 Julian Johnson updated members regarding the success of the NPA's Landscape Partnership application to the Heritage Lottery Fund providing a £2.9 million boost to landscape initiatives in the New Forest
- 9.6 Sue Bennison referred to concerns regarding cycling events in the New Forest. Richard Bastow advised that there was nothing the Highway Authority could do in connection with such events which were permitted under the current regulations, however, this issue was now being looked at. Sue Bennison undertook to forward a copy of the letter to Richard Bastow for his attention.

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 10.1 Date of the next meeting would be **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 16 January 2014** in the **Main Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall, Brockenhurst** .

The meeting closed at 21.45 hrs.