

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 242nd Meeting, held in the Main Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall on THURSDAY, 3 JULY 2014

Those present: Clive Chatters (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Rachael Bowen (Panel Secretariat)
Rachel Pardey (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

Sam Dovey – Cattlebreeders Society
Stephanie Stokes – Community First

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Julian Johnson for Alison Barnes of the New Forest National Park Authority
Brian Tarnoff for Graham Baker of the New Forest Association
Kay Harrison for Cllr Sue Bennison of Bramshaw Parish Council

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (1 May 2014)

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record with the exception of Jenni Tubbs's apologies not being recorded. Additionally, Eddie Holtham had raised an item under AOB but the details had not appeared in the minutes. Mr Holtham had written to the Forestry Commission regarding the poor ground conditions at Fawley Inclosure but was still not satisfied with the response.

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Brian Tarnoff, speaking for both the NFA and the Verderers, expressed concern regarding a potential clash between the Balmer Lawn Drift and a Wiggle cycle event in October. The Verderers had published and distributed their Drift list at the beginning of the year so were hopeful there would not be a repetition of last year's issue and resulting Drift cancellation. To date, the Verderers had not heard from the Wiggle event organisers.

3.2 Nigel Matthews was disappointed that this particular issue was still to be resolved but was confident that it would be addressed by the event organisers. By way of an update on the Cycle Charter, Nigel briefly explained the process by which the (advisory) charter was produced and who was involved. Nigel added that in common with other feedback, not all NPA members were in agreement with the Charter without the inclusion of a cap on rider numbers at 1000 and rider numbers being clearly visible on the reverse of the rider.

- 3.3 In addition to the Charter, the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) was in place to offer advice and safety information for public events. A new feedback mechanism, which will be available for up to 28 days after each event, features on their website. <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=8426> (or search safety advisory group <http://www.newforest.gov.uk>) for further details.
- 3.4 The Chairman informed members that a letter had been sent to the new Area Manager of Natural England inviting him to attend the meetings and reminding him of the importance of Natural England's position on the Panel.
- 3.5 Eddie Holtham reiterated his concerns about bridleway 36, including access and the condition of the gravel track. The Chairman concluded that the situation would remain the same and there appeared to be no consensus.

ITEM 4

NFNPA UPDATE – JULIAN JOHNSON

- 4.1 Julian Johnson offered Alison Barnes' apologies and thanked Nigel Matthews for attending and updating the Panel regarding the latest cycling news. Julian highlighted some recent activity including the NPA's attendance at the D-Day veteran celebrations at New Town Park; the recent lottery funding awarded to further progress the WWI project; faster broadband secured for a further 4000 homes and businesses; the New Forest Tour returning on 28 June and that with the agreement of the Beaulieu Estate, a new cycle route had opened between Beaulieu and Bucklers Hard funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 4.2 The NPA had appointed a new head of Environment and Rural Economy, Paul Walton, who previously worked for the National Trust in Cornwall.
- 4.3 Further to the Queen's Speech, it was announced that direct elections to National Parks would be looked at again although the pilot would not commence until May 2017.
- 4.4 Julian summed up by saying that the NPA had appointed a new Chairman, Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre. He added that health promotion and engaging with nature was high on the agenda for all National Parks.
- 4.5 The Chairman thanked Julian for his term as NPA Chairman adding the Forest had benefitted from what was a busy and rewarding position.

ITEM 5

WIND THROW OF TIMBER CROPS & OTHER TREES OVER THE WINTER – MIKE SEDDON

- 5.1 Mike Seddon introduced a presentation that focused on South England Forestry Commission land and resulting damage from the storms earlier in the year. Mike explained in some detail about how many trees had fallen over this period and the procedure used for removal, including access to the sites. Mike explained a different approach was taken for ancient and ornamental woodland compared to inclosures. The FC plan for handling unexpected events was inspected following the storms as a matter of course. Mike thanked all the FC staff for their efforts and who went out into the Forest at all times of the day and night.
- 5.2 Cllr Beaton asked about the Forest Design Plan and how different tree species would be safeguarded into the future in light of changing climate and other factors. Mike confirmed that some pre-cursory work had already taken place. This item would appear as a future agenda item along with the FC policy on deadwood.
- 5.3 Cllr Glover thanked the FC for their quick response in dealing with fallen trees near the A31 and discussion turned to whether the fallen trees would become available to buy. A number

of Panel members suggested that the fallen trees should be left in situ for habitat reasons. Mike added that the FC, working alongside Natural England, follow guidelines regarding sale of fallen trees taking into account the SAC Plan and things such as accessibility and commoning.

ITEM 6 **NFPA MANAGEMENT PLAN – NICK EVANS**

- 6.1 Nick Evans offered some background and provided a brief update on the current progress of the NPA Management Plan. The Management Plan, published in 2010, needed a refresh to the introduction and a number of actions updating.

ITEM 7 **HIGHWAY PLANNING – MARK HOLROYD**

- 7.1 Mark Holroyd, Transport and Tourism Manager for the NPA, spoke about aspects of Highway planning in the National Park including, areas of responsibility and joint initiatives between the local highway authorities and the NPA.
- 7.2 He also elaborated on some of the on-going projects which Hampshire County Council was currently working on including the Quiet Lanes initiative, a highway maintenance strategy, a local distinctiveness scheme to improve highway design and work to improve enforcement of the Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCV) area weight limit. Several members spoke in support of these initiatives and Mark Holroyd mentioned that Richard Bastow (Highways area manager) would be attending the Consultative Panel meeting in September to provide more information on some of these projects
- 7.3 The Chairman invited members to raise any specific concerns with regard to roads and verges in the New Forest so that Highway Authority officers could be appraised of these issues ahead of the September meeting with a view to their preparing responses to share with the Panel as well as how these issues were being addressed. He also suggested that Panel representatives report back to their respective parent bodies on this matter and refer any further concerns identified to the Chairman or Panel Secretariat:
- 7.4 The following areas of concern were then raised during the discussion which followed:
- Proliferation of out of date road signs, i.e. signs which had still not been removed well beyond the event date such as signs warning of road chippings, road closures, etc – these should be removed for road safety reasons.
 - Obstruction of road verges, i.e. by logs or fences causing a dangerous hazard to riders and walkers. Efforts should be made to keep these areas clear.
 - Road verges were of ecological importance and should be treated sensitively taking into account the range and diversity of flora in these areas.
 - Large signs were an eye sore but also reflected glare back at drivers at night.
 - In areas of restricted speeds such as through villages, notify the 30 mph speed limit on the roads rather than on verge signs.
 - Bushes and trees encroaching into the roads. Although the Council had cut vegetation back in some cases, in other areas they protruded into the roads and were a danger to road users.

ITEM 8 **PANEL AGENDA SETTING**

- 8.1 Following discussion, Panel members agreed to retain this as a standing item on future agendas.

- 8.2 The Chairman invited members to submit any topics for future agendas. Mike Moriarty, Copythorne Parish Council, mentioned the annual Panel tour organised by the Forestry Commission. Suggested site visits to be included in the tour were river restoration works and areas of the New Forest directly affected by windblow. Mike Seddon undertook to refer a suggested itinerary for the tour to the September Panel meeting for consideration and approval with the tour taking place shortly thereafter.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Julian Evans, Institute of Chartered Foresters advised that he would be stepping down after representing the Institute on the Panel for 9 years. He advised that, from the September Panel meeting, Mark Carter would represent the Institute of Chartered Foresters and Harry Oram the Royal Forestry Society on the Consultative Panel.

The Chairman advised that the Secretariat would update the Panel's records with this information and thanked Professor Evans for his input and involvement on the Panel.

- 9.2 Sally Owen of Bransgore Parish Council, advised of two houses in the parish which the Parish Council believed deserved to be listed and enquired as to the process which could be followed to achieve this.

The Chairman advised that David Illsley, Policy Manager for the NPA had been approached for any information on this process. Mr Illsley had prepared a note giving information and links to English Heritage as the responsible agency for listed buildings. The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council write to English Heritage and draw the relevant buildings to their attention and make a case for them to be listed. He also requested that the Parish Council copy David Illsley into the letter and that, whatever the reply, the Parish report the outcome back to the Panel.

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 10.1 Date of the next meeting would be **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 4 September 2014** in the **Main Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall, Brockenhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21.10 hrs.