

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 221st Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 4 March 2010

Those present: Tim Greenwood (Chairman)
Rosalind Alderman (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Jo Murphy (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Debbie Copping (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

1.0 APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 APOLOGIES

Mike Chilcott, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Peter Whapham, East Boldre Parish Council
Lord Montagu, English Heritage
Simon Moody, Environment Agency
Ian Mason-Smith, Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Sylvia Pender, Landford Parish Council
Mark Abbott, Lyndhurst Parish Council
Bryan Trimmer, Melchett Park and Plaitford Parish Council
Peter Frost
Edward Heron, New Forest District Council

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

John Korbey, Brockenhurst Parish Council
Bridget Taylor, Burley Parish Council
Rachael Green, Natural England
Stephen Lorton, New Forest Tourism Association
Bill Dunn, Redlynch Parish Council

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Panel were advised that Lord Montagu had retired as the representative of English Heritage. The Chairman announced some new representatives and he welcomed them to the meeting. They were: Dr Ron Pearson for the New Forest Dog Owners' Group; Mark Oakley for Netley Marsh Parish Council; Richard Reeves for the New Forest History and Archaeology Group and Pat Thorne for the New Forest Verderers.

Barrie Foley (Interim Chief Executive, NPA) informed the Panel that Steve Trotter had left the NPA and that his replacement on the Panel was Paula Freeland who had been appointed as the Interim Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development.

2.0 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5 November 2009)

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

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Apart from a follow up query raised on minute item 5 of the last meeting there were no matters arising.

4.0 FORESTRY COMMISSION

4.1 Open Forest Design Plan

Mike Seddon (Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission) explained that the Forestry Commission makes on average 50 Felling Licence Applications each year and the purpose of the new Design Plan was to move consent to a five year programme. He indicated this approach would reduce the amount of bureaucracy and enable a more strategic approach to forest management. Mr Seddon informed members of the Panel that a new graduate would work alongside the existing team to draw up the draft plan.

- 4.2 Various Panel members asked questions about the scope of the project, specifically, if it would include access for wheelchair users and permissions for controlled burning. Mr Seddon pointed out that at this stage it was predominantly about tree felling. Cllr Humber (Lymington and Pennington Town Council) asked if it would affect the retention of certain tree species, such as the Scots Pine. Mr Seddon replied that it would make it easier to manage habitat corridor issues because of its strategic nature.

5.0 COMMUNITY FIRST NEW FOREST – APPLICATION TO JOIN PANEL

- 5.1 Several members of the panel voiced their support, with none against the proposal. It was therefore decided that Community First New Forest be invited to appoint a representative to the Panel.

Action: The Panel Secretariat to notify Community First New Forest of the Panel's decision and provide them with the relevant paperwork and meeting dates.

6.0 UPDATE ON THE RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (RMS)

- 6.1 Barrie Foley explained that following the additional 3 week consultation, the RMS had been approved, subject to some minor amendments, by the NPA members at the Authority meeting on the 25 February 2010. He commented that the "Drop-in" session had been a success and was a rich source of discussion. Mr Foley reported that the main topics of discussion by members were: the make up of the proposed "Steering Group"; the proposed relocation of Hollands Wood Camp site and which locations were considered to be the "Gateways".
- 6.2 One member raised concerns that if Hollands Wood campsite were relocated away from the railway station and the village of Brockenhurst there was a potential for it to create traffic issues. There was then much discussion on cycling on the open forest, the dangers for cyclists using the roads and the need for cycle routes to link the villages. Mike Seddon agreed that there was a need to join up the cycle network to reduce the number of cyclists using the open forest as a way of getting from A to B. Ian Taylor (Newforce) remarked he was looking forward to a more constructive debate on the extension of cycle routes throughout the forest.

7.0 LIFE DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE NEW FOREST

- 7.1 This agenda item was postponed as Frank Green, Archaeologist for the NPA, was unable to attend.

8.0 BOUNDARY MARKERS UPDATE

- 8.1 Nigel Matthews (Head of Visitor Services, NPA) gave an update on the Boundary Marker progress to date. He pointed out that there were now 50 markers in total; 37 made of Oak on the main roads, 9 made of Douglas Fir on the long distance paths and a further 4 metal ones, which were to be sited on the trunk roads later this year.
- 8.2 Mr Matthews recalled that following representations from the public and Parish Councils further sites had been identified and suggested that any Panel members who felt that a location had been missed should get in touch with him.
- 8.3 Some Panel members expressed concern that some of the markers were already looking “a bit shabby”. Mr Matthews stressed that the plan had always been to allow the wood to age naturally but that a maintenance contract existed with the Forestry Commission to repair them and repaint the logo as required.

9.0 LAND ADVICE SERVICE

- 9.1 Julie Stubbs introduced herself as the newly appointed Land Advice Manager at the NPA. She explained that the new Land Advice Service had arisen from the Forest Friendly Farming Project and its primary function was to give independent and free advice to landowners, commoners, grazers, farmers etc in the New Forest area and Avon Valley. She explained that the team of three brought together a range of skills and that the service was a partnership between the NPA, Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.
- 9.2 Ms Stubbs requested that the members of the Panel made their organisations aware of the existence of the new service and advised that there was a “drop-in” session to be held between 09.30 and 17.30 on 23 March at the Cottage, Queen’s House, Lyndhurst. Julie can be contacted on Julie.stubbs@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

10.0 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS

- 10.1 Barrie Foley explained that the RMS was the only substantive agenda item at the February Authority meeting, the details of which had been covered in agenda item 6.

11.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 The Chairman told the Panel that he had only learned that night of the death of Colonel Peter Sweet. He remarked that Colonel Sweet had been a great champion for the New Forest and that his presence at the Consultative Panel would be missed. It was agreed that the Chairman should contact the family of Colonel Sweet on behalf of the panel and express their condolences.

Action: On behalf of the Chairman and the Panel the Secretariat have passed the condolences of the Panel to Colonel Sweet’s daughter.

- 11.2 Eddie Holtham (Fawley Parish Council) raised his concerns regarding the recent press coverage on the retirement of the some of the New Forest Keepers and expressed his support for the good work they do and asked why the Forestry Commission did not employ trainee Keepers to learn the trade. Mike Seddon said that the reported demise of the New Forest Keeper role was premature and that as long as he had the budget he would aim to keep the role. He explained he did not have enough resources to employ trainee keepers.

- 11.3 Eddie Holtham also expressed concern over the damage caused by static tents at Roundhills Campsite and asked whether Forest Holidays were in breach of their agreement in providing static tent holidays. Mike Seddon confirmed that the static tents were in line with the lease agreement and that the Verderers had been involved in the discussion. He accepted that the tents had not been moved frequently enough this year and that there was a plan in place for more frequent rotation in the future. He said that 8 static tents at Holmsley Campsite were on concrete pitches.
- 11.4 Cllr Bennison, Bramshaw Parish Council, raised concerns about the land fill site at Pound Bottom. She believed that the composting facility there had ceased and that it was now being used as a waste transfer station. Barrie Foley said that the NPA enforcement team would investigate.

Action: The NPA Enforcement Team to investigate the activities at Pond Bottom landfill site.

- 11.5 Rachael Green, Natural England, explained that Peter Frost had now reached the upper limit permitted to serve as the Verderer appointed by Natural England. She therefore drew the Panel's attention to the advertisement for a new Verderer which had been tabled.
- 11.6 Kevin Fuller, Hampshire County Council, announced that after 40 years in Highways he was retiring. He explained that his ambition had always been to leave the roads in a better condition than they were in when he started! He said that he had tried to serve local interests and respond promptly to issues but that this winter had left the highways particularly fragile. He thanked the Panel for their support over the years and said he would advise on who would his replacement would be.

12.0 DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 12.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 6 MAY 2010** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.