

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**Minutes of the 207th Meeting, held in the Council Chamber, New Forest District
Council offices, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, on
THURSDAY, 6th September 2007**

Those present: Tim Greenwood (Chairman)
Nick Evans (Panel Technical Officer)
Rosalind Alderman/Carolyn Hoole (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

ITEM 1 **APOLOGIES**

Tony Barnett (Camping and Caravan Club)
Lord Montagu (English Heritage)
Alex Wade (Hythe & Dibden Parish Council)
John Thackray (Ramblers' Association)
Mike Womersley (Redlynch Parish Council)
Richard Roberts (RSPCA)
Chris Willard (Solent Protection Society)
Cathy Gulliver (Sway Parish Council)
Tony Gentle (Test Valley Borough Council)

SPECIAL NOTE

The Chairman welcomed the following new representatives:

Peter Turner for Breamore Parish Council
Peter Whapham for East Boldre Parish Council
Carol Gates as a joint rep for Sway Parish Council (with Cllr Gulliver)
Jacqueline Shaw for Totton and Eling Town Council

The Chairman announced that Nick Evans, the Panel's Technical Officer, was retiring from this role and the current meeting would be his last in that capacity. The Chairman and the Panel thanked Nick Evans for all his hard work and wished him well for the future.

ITEM 2 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** (5 July 2007)

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

ITEM 3 **MATTERS ARISING**

3.1. In response to a request made at the meeting on 5 July 2007 (Min No. 3.4) that the New Forest National Park Authority provide boundary maps of the National Park to the Parish Councils, Steve Trotter (New Forest National Park Authority) informed the Panel that the maps would be available on request but that parishes should ensure that maps would be used only for internal parish business, and they would need to sign an Ordnance Survey sub-contractors' agreement.

- 3.2 The Forestry Commission's 'Issues, Policies and Action' paper had been provided to the Panel member who had requested it at the last meeting (Min 4.2).
- 3.3 Steve Trotter updated the Panel on the National Park Authority's response to the National Air Traffic Services consultation on proposed airspace changes (Min 7.5), which was available on the Authority's website, and explained that the National Park Authority had commissioned an independent noise assessment survey which had also been submitted to NATS. He summarised the National Park Authority's response which argued that the proposed expansion would lead to the long term, potentially irreversible, erosion of the special qualities of the New Forest National Park, contrary to the requirements of the Environment Act 1995. The NATS proposals also failed to demonstrate how the statutory National Park purposes had been taken into account in recommending the airspace changes (as required by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). NATS would now collate and analyse all the consultation responses received, and decide whether their proposals would require any changes. A summary of the comments made, together with the NATS response to any issues raised, would be e-mailed to respondees at the end of the consultation period. The NATS proposals (and all consultation responses) would be submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as part of the Airspace Change Process. The CAA would notify all interested parties of their decision – most likely in January or February 2008.
- 3.4 In response to a query by Eddie Holtham (Fawley Parish Council) who had asked who was responsible for gravel lay-bys and car parks on the Forest (Min 9.1), it was established that Hampshire County Council and the Forestry Commission each had responsibility for a number of sites. Eddie Holtham would provide the names of the relevant sites to these bodies so that responsibility for the sites could be identified.

Note: the Forestry Commission subsequently passed details of the car parks in question to their engineers, who would repair them.

- 3.5 Panel members would have the opportunity to raise any queries on the seasonal pitching of caravans at Forestry Commission campsites (min 9.2) with Forest Holidays at the Panel Tour on 12 September. A presentation had been made to members of the National Park Authority on 28 August 2007, a copy of which was available from the Panel clerks.
- 3.6 In connection with the issue of mock battles in Boldre, a note of which had been circulated to the Panel, Arthur French (Boldre Parish Council) mentioned that the Verderers had not been notified of the event, and that a "dive bombing" flight had been made over the open Forest, causing mares and foals to bolt.

ITEM 4

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION EVENTS

- 4.1 Nick Evans (New Forest National Park Authority) reminded Panel representatives that they had been invited to a series of events beginning in October 2007, to assist with the production of the National Park Management Plan, Local Framework Core Strategy and Recreation Management Strategy. The Authority was keen that as many as possible attend.

ITEM 5

FORESTRY COMMISSION

- 5.1 Mike Seddon (Forestry Commission) confirmed the final arrangements for the Panel Tour on Wednesday 12 September.
- 5.2 Mike Seddon said that a map of the Forestry Commission's seasonal car park closures was available from the Panel clerks.

ITEM 6

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

- 6.1 John Ward (New Forest National Park Authority) explained that the Community Planning Memorandum, which had been distributed to Panel members in response to the queries raised in the meeting on 10 May 2007, had been produced by Penny Velandar at New Forest District Council on behalf of both authorities.
- 6.2 In response to a query from the Panel Chairman, John Ward explained that Village Design Statements would eventually have the status of Supplementary Planning Documents, once Government amendments to the Local Development Framework process had been made and the relevant Village Design Statement had been through the process of adoption by the Authority. In order to be adopted, a Village Design Statement would need to (i) include a sustainability appraisal and (ii) ensure there was no conflict with policies in the local plan; but parishes would be able to prepare their statements in consultation with the Authority. The content of each Village Design Statement could be as broad or detailed as the relevant parish thought fit: this was a matter for local choice.
- 6.3 Initially the preparation and approval of statements would be a lengthy process, but this would be streamlined once a number of the statements had been approved. The draft Hyde Village Design statement would be considered at the next meeting of the Authority on 13 September 2007, although it could not yet be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Authority was also in the process of producing its own Building Design Guide, which would be a Supplementary Planning Document, and officers hoped the Parish Councils would contribute to that process.

ITEM 7

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN THE NEW FOREST

- 7.1 Kevin Fuller (Hampshire County Council) made a presentation to the Panel on the management and maintenance of the highways. He explained that the Council's responsibility was limited to the edge of the 'black top' or tarmac section of the road, but that under an agreement with the Forestry Commission the Highways Authority also had responsibility for the edge of the roads. A current recurring problem was that the gravel edging of roads was being washed away during heavy rain; there were currently proposals that a 'cementitious' mix be applied to the gravel to bind it loosely. He pointed out that this was not concrete and would not have the appearance of it. However, because the Forest soils were acidic and a cement mix would be alkaline, it would be necessary to consult with and to obtain agreement from Natural England and local stakeholders. The verges were a huge reservoir of biodiversity that it was important to preserve. One alternative method, which had proved quite controversial in the past, was to use concrete blocks at the edge of roads.

- 7.2 Several members expressed concerns about potential road widening as a result of the solutions proposed. Alternatives to highway edge treatment, including banking up of the verge to reduce erosion, were proposed. Kevin Fuller also noted the broken fence at Setley which was pointed out by a Panel member. In response to a query on Hampshire County Council's policy on cutting back verges, Kevin Fuller asked for details of any specific places that required attention.
- 7.3 Members could give their comments on the draft New Forest Maintenance Plan and Specification for Routine Highway Operations between now and January 2008.

The draft strategy is accordingly circulated with these minutes.

ITEM 8

SAFETY OF HORSES ON ROADS IN THE NEW FOREST

- 8.1 Chris Aldhous (New Forest Equestrian Association) made a presentation on behalf of the New Forest Equestrian Society and the British Horse Society on issues relating to the safety of horses on roads in the New Forest and said that a number of leaflets on this subject were available. He covered topics including the dangers of traffic to horses, appropriate speeds for motorists passing horses on the roads and road surfaces, and summarised the results of a survey of horse riders as to their opinions on road safety.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 The Chairman advised the Panel members that he had received a letter from Hampshire County Council stating that a scrutiny review of the case for prioritising the proposed Lyndhurst bypass would be carried out, which would consider evidence from stakeholders. Panel members had been invited to take part in this process; the closing date would be at the beginning of October, with details available on the Hampshire Country Council website.
- 9.2 The ban on heavy goods vehicles using minor roads in the north of the National Park would come into force on 24 September 2007 and some preparatory works would take place for the alternative route on the A338.
- 9.3 In response to a query, Steve Trotter (New Forest National Park Authority) indicated that the National Park Authority had appointed consultants to update the survey of the pony paddocks that the New Forest Committee had commissioned in the 1990s. Steve Trotter said that interested parties would be invited to a meeting to discuss the results of the survey.
- 9.4 In response to a request from Sally Owen (Bransgore Parish Council), Mike Seddon (Forestry Commission) said that he would ensure that keepers paid regular visits to those car parks which had been the subject of overnight camping. The Forestry Commission had a number of signs which were placed in car parks on a seasonal basis stating that overnight camping was prohibited.

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 10.1 The Chairman reminded the Panel that the date of the next meeting had been changed from that previously scheduled.
- 10.2 The next Consultative Panel meeting will be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2007** in the Council Chamber, New Forest District Council offices, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst.

The meeting closed at 21.30 hours.