

## **NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

### **Minutes of the 217<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held in the Council Chamber, New Forest District Council offices, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 7 May 2009**

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

#### **ITEM 1**

##### **1.1 APOLOGIES**

John Davison, Hampshire County Council  
Mary Barnes, Hampshire Federation of Women's Institutes  
John Durnell, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Alex Wade, Hythe and Dibden Parish Council  
Chris Whitlock, National Farmers' Union  
Jenni Tubbs, New Forest Friends of the Earth  
Christine Ames, New Forest Tourism Association  
Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council

##### **1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS**

Chris Lemon for Pauline Ludlow (New Forest Dog Owners' Group)

##### **1.3 NEW REPRESENTATIVE / ANNOUNCEMENTS IF ANY**

Mary Lewis had resigned as Chairman of New Forest Access For All. Olive Collins, Vice Chairman, would be representing the group for the time being.

#### **ITEM 2**

##### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** (5 March 2009)

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

#### **ITEM 3**

##### **MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 None

#### **ITEM 4**

##### **FORESTRY COMMISSION**

###### **a) Open Habitats in England Consultation**

4.1 Mike Seddon (Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission) drew members' attention to the national consultation on the formation of policy on the restoration of open habitats. Some of the issues under consideration included the costs of implementing an open habitats policy, the potential carbon impact of reducing woodland areas and the biodiversity benefits of open habitats. Community engagement in the consultation process was critical and members were encouraged to respond; the deadline was 5 June 2009 and details could be found on the Forestry Commission website at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats).

- 4.2 Panel members warned against the dangers of the introduction of invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam. Steve Trotter (National Park Authority) advised that a study of non-native species would be conducted shortly by a number of partner organisations including the Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Forestry Commission, the National Park Authority and the Environment Agency. He was invited by the Chairman to organise a presentation on this subject to a future Panel meeting.

**Action: Steve Trotter to organise a presentation to a future Panel meeting on the forthcoming study of non-native species in the area.**

**b) Crown Lands Management Plan**

- 4.3 Mike Seddon announced that the Management Plan was complete and was on the Forestry Commission website at [www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest). Copies were also available on CD, and paper copies were available at the offices of the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority.

**c) Forestry Commission Finance**

- 4.4 Mike Seddon outlined the Forestry Commission's income and expenditure streams, explaining that although the Forestry Commission generated some income its budget deficit was funded by central Government. The Commission was therefore subject to direction from Government, including the current efficiency programme that sought to ensure the Commission maximised local income streams. It was felt that the Forestry Commission delivered exceptional value for money.

**d) Presentment to Verderers' Court regarding mobile shop(s) for camp sites**

- 4.5 Mike Seddon gave information about a presentment that would be made to the Verderers' Court, seeking agreement to a mobile shop to visit Forest Holidays' campsites at Hollands Wood, Roundhills and Ashurst twice daily (Forest Holidays was a joint venture partly owned by the Forestry Commission). The van would stock local produce and New Forest Marque foods, and would be branded with the Marque logo; a further advantage would be to reduce car journeys made by campers to purchase goods. However, some members expressed concerns at the potential impact on local shops, particularly in view of the current economic climate, and invited anyone who was concerned to attend the Verderers' Court meeting.

**ITEM 5**

**ANIMAL ACCIDENTS**

- 5.1 Jonathan Gerrelli, Head Agister, gave an interesting update on animal accidents in the New Forest, following on from his presentation to the Panel the previous year. Most accidents occurred on commuter routes between 5.00 and 7.00 pm, particularly after the clocks were changed in Autumn. Accidents did not appear to be caused solely by people travelling at over 40 mph; other factors included volume of traffic and numbers of stock in particular areas. Accidents were also caused by drivers failing to adjust their speed where stock were present at the roadside.
- 5.2 Jonathan Gerrelli explained that the Agisters had met with some success in reducing accident numbers through a number of methods, including those set out below:
- speed indication devices, which collected data that could be used by police in managing and directing their enforcement activity;
  - signage where recent accidents had occurred;
  - improved data collection including equipping the Agisters with GPS and digital cameras;

- the provision of reflective collars; and
- educational talks and general awareness raising, particularly of seasonal messages such as the special dangers encountered in foaling season.

5.3 Kevin Fuller (Hampshire County Council) commended the work of the Agisters and the Animal Accident Reduction Group. Panel members suggested that reflective material be displayed at animal crossing points. Jonathan Gerelli said that post and rail fencing was often installed at blind corners and crossing points to prevent animals from walking straight on to the road. Members also asked that signs be reinstated advising the public not to feed the stock, including some signs in French; it was believed some of the relevant bylaws no longer applied.

*NB: Kevin Fuller has since confirmed that the relevant bylaw is New Forest Bylaw 17, which prohibits the feeding of animals in the New Forest by anyone other than their owner or manager or their agents. The New Forest Bylaws are made by the Court of Swainmote (Verderers' Court) under powers granted to them by the New Forest Act 1877 (as amended) and confirmed by order of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The current order was made in 2003.*

## **ITEM 6** **NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

6.1 The report from the 26 March 2009 Authority meeting had been circulated with the minutes.

## **ITEM 7** **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 In response to queries, Kevin Fuller commended the 'Village 30' initiative and agreed to look at whether speed limits could be further standardised within villages. He would also look into the replacement of the cattle grid at Dibden Purlieu.

7.2 Eddie Holtham (Fawley Parish Council) asked the Forestry Commission to investigate the potholes around laybys at Kings Copse Inclosure and to consider opening a car park at Ipers Bridge; Mike Seddon said that there were currently no plans to open a car park in that location but confirmed that the area was on the repair list. Cllr Holtham also asked for a consultation on creating a tarmac layby on the A326; Kevin Fuller said that the County Council was currently reviewing layby provisions in the area.

## **ITEM 8** **DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING**

8.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 2 July 2009**. For future meetings the meeting venue would be changed to the Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel on a trial basis, starting with the Panel meeting scheduled for July.

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm.