

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 222nd Meeting, held in the Louisa Suite, Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst, on THURSDAY, 8 July 2010

Those present: Tim Greenwood (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Support Officer)
Rosalind Alderman (Panel Clerk/Secretary)
Jo Murphy (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

Sheila Campbell, Whiteparish Parish Council
Chris Whitlock, National Farmers' Union
Suzanne Fewings, Environment Agency
Ros Cooper, Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes
Arthur French, Boldre Parish Council
Ian Taylor, newforce
Veronica Johnstone, Burley Parish Council
Mrs Millar, New Forest Combined Hunts

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Peter Stammers, Godshill Parish Council
Bill Dunn, Redlynch Parish Council
Anne Sevier, Hyde Parish Council
Ray Miles, Ramblers' Association
Pete Durnell, Hampshire County Council

1.3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Alison Barnes, the new Chief Executive of the National Park Authority. He advised Panel members that Barrie Foley, the previous Interim Chief Executive, was present and that he would like to say a few words under AOB at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that David Richardson was now the representative for Hampshire County Council Highways Department.

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (6 May 2010)

- 2.1 The Chairman reminded members that he had not been at the last meeting but thanked them for their support in re-electing him as Chairman of the Panel for another year.
- 2.2 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Mike Seddon (Forestry Commission) updated Panel members on minute item 5.2 and the arrangements in place with the local Ordnance Survey Office (OS) to establish a system of notification of relevant changes to land use. He advised that

he had met with Ordnance Survey officers and NPA officers and he reported that the OS revise their mapping on a rolling basis every 2 to 10 years, with the urban areas being revised most frequently. At any one time 180,000 changes were being considered.

- 3.2 The New Forest area is surveyed from the air approximately every 4 years and was last flown in May 2010, to inform the changes for the planned revision of OL22 in summer 2011. The 2009 revision was based on data collected in 2006 and therefore there were some anomalies, but it was hoped that the 2011 revision, because it was based on more recent data and also included input from the Forestry Commission on current projects that it would be more accurate, although 100% accuracy would be very difficult to achieve.
- 3.3 The Chairman advised that, further to the letter circulated with the agenda papers, owing to the limited interest in developing a Consultative Panel logo, no further action would be taken (minute item 6).
- 3.4 David Richardson (Hampshire County Council – Highways) updated members on the major maintenance work on the A326, minute item 9.2. He explained that the rolling programme of structural surveying had picked up that the structure of the road was deteriorating and remedial work was required to prolong the life of the road. He explained that the work involved overlaying the existing surface to make it thicker and therefore there was a need for deeper curb stones and replacement drain covers.
- 3.5 Mr Richardson explained the temporary 30 mph speed limit currently in force was to protect the workforce and some night time closures were necessary. The work was scheduled to be completed by 22 July 2010, and more information could be found on Hampshire County Council's website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-transport/transport-schemes-index/a326-major-maintenance-scheme.htm>; however, this site was only available whilst the work was in progress.
- 3.6 Mike Moriarty (Copythorne Parish Council) expressed disappointment that the NPA had called for another report at the Copperfields site at Copythorne (minute item 9.1). He drew Alison Barnes' attention to this long standing enforcement issue and requested that the NPA do everything in its power to resolve it.
- 3.7 Alison Barnes explained that NPA members had received an update on outstanding enforcement cases from Steve Avery, Director of Strategy and Planning, at the last NPA meeting on 24 June and that he would be reporting back to the next NPA meeting. She also advised that Copperfields was a standing item on the Planning Committee agenda every month, so the committee could monitor progress.
- 3.8 Edward Heron, New Forest District Council, highlighted that at the NPA meeting on 24 June 2010 the members had approved a recommendation which gave officers greater powers in emergency situations so that more robust action could be taken sooner if a situation like Copperfields happened again.

ITEM 4 **FORESTRY COMMISSION**

- 4.1 Mike Seddon (Forestry Commission) explained that he had last talked to the Panel about Forestry Commission finances back in May 2009 and that he wished to update members on the current situation. He advised that the FC was a non-ministerial government department that generated some income mainly through timber, recreation and "Estate activities" (e.g. mineral extraction royalties), but that it

also received some funding from DEFRA to meet the shortfall between expenditure and income. He pointed out that the current budget was approximately £6.8m, with income of £3.2m, leaving a deficit of £3.6m.

- 4.2 Mike confirmed that similar to many other government departments the Forestry Commission's budget had already been subject to a 5% cut and that they were meeting this with a recruitment freeze, decreased expenditure and raising funds by selling land. He stated that he didn't believe there would be much clarity on longer term budgets until Christmas, as it would take a while for the information to cascade down following the spending review planned for October.
- 4.3 Mike Seddon requested that Panel members feed back to him the things that they believed were critical and should not be scaled back and what they would be prepared to let go. In response to a request for more detail regarding the current income and expenditure a breakdown is attached as **Annex 1**.

ITEM 5

LIFE DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE NEW FOREST

- 5.1 Frank Green, the NPA's Archaeologist, described the current project which he hoped would raise public awareness of how important the New Forest was to the World War II effort. He explained that a main part of the project was to capture the stories of a generation who had personal memories of the war, many of whom were now in their 80's and 90's.
- 5.2 He explained that the project was not funded by the NPA, but by external grants such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Funding had also been committed through the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme for LIDAR surveying which captured the ground profile and could identify archaeological data from all periods even when there was screening from woodland. LIDAR studies already carried out on 34 square kilometres between Woodgreen and Burley had identified 260 new sites and along the coast 1000 new sites had been discovered.
- 5.3 There were 3 stages to the project: outreach which involved working with museums, schools, and visitor centres etc.; fieldwork such as ground surveys, LIDAR and interviews with those who were in the New Forest during the war; and finally the interpretation and conservation stage. Several Panel members spoke of either their personal memories or volunteered information about how their locality had been affected. Anyone who had information that might be relevant to the project could send it to frank.green@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

ITEM 6

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

- 6.1 Unfortunately Chris Caswell was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies; he was due to address the Panel at the September 2010 meeting so this item would be followed up then.

ITEM 7

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETINGS

- 7.1 There were no matters arising regarding the report from the NPA meeting on 27 May 2010 that was circulated with the agenda.
- 7.2 Alison Barnes gave a verbal update on the Annual NPA Meeting of 24 June 2010. She confirmed that Julian Johnson had been elected as Chairman of the NPA and

that Vicky Myers had been elected as the Deputy Chairman. She also confirmed that the NPA was subject to a 5% budget cut and that further news on the longer term budget would not be known until after the October spending review.

ITEM 8

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 Tim Greenwood reminded Panel members that if they had issues that they wished to discuss they should advise the Panel Secretariat so that these items could be added to future agendas.
- 8.2 Heather Gould (New Forest Dog Owners' Group) gave a detailed presentation on the initiatives that the group was taking to encourage responsible dog ownership and specifically to address the problem of dog fouling in and around car parks and "honey pot" sites within the Forest. She explained that the Forestry Commission and NPA were supporting the initiative and that the main launch of the initiative would be at the New Forest Show.
- 8.3 There were some questions about the number of 'dog poo' bins in the Forest and whether they had reduced in number. Mike Seddon explained that at the last audit there were a few less bins as the bins were subject to deterioration over time. He said he was encouraged to see NFDOG taking the initiative on this issue. An overview of NFDOG is attached as **Annex 2** and a copy of the presentation is attached as **Annex 3**.
- 8.4 Chris Aldhous (New Forest Equestrian Association) made the Panel aware of his concerns regarding the increasing cost of hay. He explained that following a hard winter and a very warm and dry start to the summer hay yields were much lower than usual. He explained that over the years much of the land surrounding the New Forest that had supported equestrian activity had been lost to urbanisation and gravel extraction, and that limited supply and the rising cost of diesel were all compounding the problem. Mr Aldhous wished to make the Panel aware of this non-sustainable situation and the potential threat it represented to the keeping of New Forest ponies.
- 8.5 Edward Heron (NFDC) explained that NFDC had had policies to protect back-up grazing. Ann Sevier (Hyde Parish Council) told the Panel that much of the hay came from the Avon Valley and there was a risk of the hay meadows flooding because the weeds had not been cut.
- 8.6 Alison Barnes (NPA) agreed to take the issue back the NPA's Land Management Service for advice that could be given to landowners to alleviate the problem. She also said that she would raise the issue with bordering authorities when she met them and she confirmed she had already discussed the issue with Wiltshire Council.

Action: Alison Barnes to raise concerns regarding the loss of back up grazing land with neighbouring authorities and to liaise with the Land Management Service on possible solutions to alleviate the problem of limited hay supplies.

- 8.7 Professor Evans (Institute of Foresters) asked whether there would be a Panel tour in September. Mike Seddon recommended that since the most recent tours had been in the autumn there might be more scope to look at some different aspects of the Forest if it took place in the spring instead. The Panel supported this suggestion.

Action: Mike Seddon to organise Panel tour in spring 2011.

- 8.8 Sophie Beeton (Milford on Sea Parish Council) thanked Frank Green for his help with the archaeology project in Milford.
- 8.9 Barrie Foley (former Interim Chief Executive of the NPA) thanked the Panel for their support during his time in office and wished them well for the future.

ITEM 9

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 9.1 The next Consultative Panel meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2010** in the **Louisa Suite at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst.**

The meeting closed at 21.25 hrs.