

Recreation Management Strategy Advisory Group Brockenhurst Village Hall, 2 July 2019

Attendance:

Richard Black, RSPB
Rachael Bowen (notes), New Forest National Park Authority
Richard Burke, Forestry England
Ruth Croker, Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society & Access Forum
Barry Dowsett, Verderers
John Durnell, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Heather Gould, New Forest Dog Owners Group
Stephen Lorton, Go New Forest
Nigel Matthews, New Forest National Park Authority
Gary North, Forestry England
Harry Oram, New Forest National Park Authority
Leanne Sargeant, Forestry England
Ann Sevier, Commons Defence Association
Brian Tarnoff, New Forest Association
Claire Upton-Brown, NFDC
Jake White, National Trust
Roger Worthington, Forestry England

Apologies:

Jenny Thomas, Natural England, Graham Smith, Test Valley Borough Council, Estamion, Forestry England

1 Welcome / Introductions

- 1.1 NM welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

2 Election of Chairman

- 2.1 Both Nigel Matthews and Ann Sevier were nominated; a vote was taken and Ann Sevier was elected as Chair for the coming year.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

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

4 Update on process for updating the Recreation Management Strategy

- 4.1 The Findings Report for the 2018 consultation summarised the responses, of which there had been over 1,000. The results were largely positive, with clear support for all the actions suggested.
- 4.2 The 25 draft actions originally considered by this Group (and put out to consultation) had now been reduced to 22 clearer actions, taking account of the consultation responses and changes to actions relating to *where* recreation takes place (within Objective 4).
- 4.3 The most significant development in recent months was the proposal (from the RMS Steering Group) that the National Park Authority should investigate the use a Local Development Order (LDO). This could enable car parking to be

relocated to more appropriate sites (to protect the most vulnerable parts of the Forest) and give a better recreational experience. The LDO would include a 'spatial strategy' for the New Forest and surrounds. Carefully considered criteria would be used to establish which changes would be appropriate and whether individual planning applications would still be necessary. The LDO would take around a year to be developed, including the relevant consultations.

- 4.4 The Verderers and Natural England had already expressed in principle support for developing an LDO and the proposal was going to the Authority meeting on Thursday 11 July for approval by members.
- 4.5 There was a lively debate during which a range of views were expressed. Some members of the Group felt there was a lack of data to inform a spatial strategy and that suitable alternative sites had not been identified. There was also concern about the housing proposal of 10-15,000 new houses bordering the National Park and how this increase in recreational pressure could be managed. SMART targets were suggested as a method of measuring success into the future. Others stressed the importance of ensuring there is sufficient car parking provision to cope with recreational demand; without this there is a risk of driving the wrong behaviours.
- 4.6 In considering the criteria for the LDO it was important to note the legal obligations with regards to wildlife and to ensure there would be considerable net environmental gains.
- 4.7 It was confirmed that significant visitor survey work is currently being carried out: mapping visitors, where they have come from, what transportation they used, where they were staying etc. This work will help inform how recreational impacts should be managed. NM suggested that use (and pooling) of developer contributions from neighbouring planning authorities could make a big difference to what is affordable. He also confirmed that there are ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders about topics such as verge parking and enforcement.
- 4.8 The Group were supportive of the principle of an LDO, subject to appropriate criteria being agreed. There was also support for more regular meetings of the Group (twice/year) and for further information and discussion about progress being made against the 22 actions.

5. AOB

- 5.1 None.

6 Date of next meeting

- 6.1 Suggested to be in six months' time, to discuss progress on the LDO and delivery of the RMS actions.

Action: NPA to circulate Terms of Reference of the RMSAG