Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group
The Annex, Queen's House, 13 February 2020

Attendance:
Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (New Forest National Park Authority)
Diane Andrews (New Forest District Council)
Richard Burke (Forestry England)
Lord Manners (Verderers)
Nigel Matthews (New Forest National Park Authority)
Allison Potts (Natural England)
Graham Smith (Test Valley Borough Council)
Claire Upton-Brown (New Forest District Council)
Jonathan Woods (Hampshire County Council)

Apologies: Sam Jones (Forestry England), Alison Appleby (Natural England)

1. Election of Chairman

1.1 Election took place at the previous meeting, Oliver thanked the Group and was pleased to continue in the role.

2. Welcome and introductions

2.1 Apologies were noted. Claire Upton-Brown has replaced Colin Read on the Steering Group as NFDC's representative.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (29 November 2019)

3.1 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

4.1 The Group were reminded of the Footprint Ecology presentation taking place on Friday 28 February, 10am at the Scout Hut in Brockenhurst which will share the results of the New Forest Visitor Surveys. The full reports are being finalised and will be published after the workshop.

4.2 A paper was taken to a HCC meeting in December for the 22 strategic actions to be endorsed but unfortunately the meeting was cut short. It is hoped that endorsement will be forthcoming without the need for the paper to go back to another meeting.

Action: JW to provide regular updates on HCC's progress with endorsing the actions

5. Updates on strategic actions

5.1 Mandy Ware is currently writing a paper regarding verge parking and traffic management. The paper was delayed but is now expected around mid to end of April.

5.2 The Special by Design Steering Group is due to meet on 14 February to agree the next steps.

5.3   The group that discusses illegal recreation-related activities met recently. There is steady progress including on topics such as byelaws and signage relating to the feeding of ponies, communication between organisations about dogs that are out of control, use of cameras to gather evidence about illegal fungi picking, letters given to people who park overnight and signage about livestock worrying.

5.4   The feasibility work is continuing on a Local Development Order to help determine where parking is best provided. It is not yet possible to say when the process will be complete – the original estimate was the autumn of 2020. There was further discussion about car parks and verge parking, and the need to develop criteria and thresholds for new or extensions to car parks. Rangers plan to work together on the busiest days to reduce car park overflow.

5.5   To help people better understand the impacts of recreation, it was suggested that an infographic be produced summarising the key facts.

Action: NM to draft a summary of the impacts of recreation and the benefits of the recreation management work

5.6   Work to review the network of cycle routes has restarted. A more functional network is needed, taking into account where people live and where they want to cycle. There is scope for improved signage and way markers. FE and the NPA plan to gather more data and be proactive in talking with cyclists in the coming year. Ordnance Survey is helping HCC with some mapping on their app (GetOutside) so there may be an opportunity to work with them in the Forest. There are also discussions with a business called Daizy which offers counters and monitoring technology that could help.

5.7   Suggestions for recreation management actions to be included in the new Partnership Plan were discussed.

Action: All to feedback to NM by 6 March about actions for the Partnership Plan

Action: GS / NM / RB to liaise over a communications plan and news release to accompany the release of the final Footprint Ecology reports

6.   Date of next Steering Group meeting

6.1   End of April 2020.

7.   Liaison with Advisory Group

7.1   To be arranged for May 2020.

8.   AOB

8.1   None