

Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group 2 July 2020 via Teams

Attendance:

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (New Forest National Park Authority)	Lord Manners (Verderers)
Diane Andrews (New Forest District Council)	Nigel Matthews (NFNPA)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)	Allison Potts (Natural England)
Richard Burke (Forestry England)	Graham Smith (Test Valley Borough Council)
Patrick Heneghan (NFNPA)	Claire Upton-Brown (NFDC)

Apologies: Sam Jones (Forestry England), Jonathan Woods (HCC)

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Patrick Heneghan introduced himself to the Group.

2. Minutes of the last meeting (13 February 2020)

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

3. Matters arising

3.1 HCC has still not endorsed the 22 strategic actions. A paper from HCC about traffic management options is still awaited.

Action: OCE to ask the Leader of HCC about progress on HCC's endorsement of the strategic actions and when the paper on traffic management will be circulated

3.2 The Group would like to portray positive and negative impacts of recreation in a simple, eye-catching way, e.g. through an infographic or diagram, or case studies with before and after photos.

Action: NPA to produce an infographic or similar document showing positive and negative impacts of recreation

3.3 FE is setting up an internal board to enable more effective integration of RMS actions with other work streams and help more FE staff understand the RMS.

4. Impacts of Covid-19

4.1 Recreation across the National Park had changed markedly in recent months, with very quiet months followed by unprecedentedly numbers of people (both local and from further afield) and ongoing discussion about recovery (including economic and health and wellbeing). FE has commissioned research on breeding birds and vegetation to try to show how these have been affected.

4.2 FE, NPA, Police and Fire Service have been working hard together to deal with increased litter, risk of fire through BBQs, petting of ponies, verge parking etc. The NPA is talking with parishes about how local people can be enabled to help, for example through provision of free litter picking tools.

4.3 Although the benefits of people returning to the Forest (and visiting for the first time) were recognised, and although the majority of people were behaving responsibly, some felt that people are not being educated sufficiently or simply don't care about the Forest – and that rules were unknown and unenforced.

5. Updates on strategic actions

- 5.1 The completed Footprint Ecology reports provide a foundation on which to build a coordinated habitat mitigation scheme with all neighbouring planning authorities to address new housing development. There is also a wealth of information that will be used to inform wider recreation management work.
- 5.2 Short- and long-term options for resolving car parking issues were considered, and that feasibility work on a Local Development Order (LDO) had progressed more slowly than had been hoped. Further clarity was needed on the nature and scale of potential changes to Forest car parks before decisions could be made on the habitats regulations assessment process.

Action: SA to liaise with NE about the LDO so that the way forward can be clarified.

- 5.3 New measures to limit verge parking are needed. If the delayed HCC paper on traffic management options is not provided soon, the Group favoured asking a consultant to provide advice. The Group was confident that enforcement could be jointly funded.

Action: RB to look at work previously done for FE regarding car parks

Action: CUB to forward list of potential consultants to NM

- 5.4 Special by Design work is ongoing but has been delayed due to Covid-19.
- 5.5 FE has been looking nationally at enforcement, including body worn cameras and 'ticket and tow' proposals to help enforce the byelaws.
- 5.6 NM proposed that NPA and FE rangers work together over the summer to engage with cyclists, and gather data and information to inform options for the management of cycling. All agreed with this initiative.
- 5.7 CUB explained the benefits of developing a Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the New Forest (linked to the one being prepared for the Waterside). All agreed that a LCWIP for the New Forest should be further explored, including involvement of Forestry England.
- 5.8 Potential recreation management actions for the Partnership Plan were considered – any further suggestions should be sent to NM.

6. Date of next meeting

- 6.1 To be arranged for September 2020.

7. Liaison with RMS Advisory Group

- 7.1 Agreed to arrange a virtual meeting as soon as possible.

8. AOB

- 8.1 A new chairman will be needed for the next meeting as OCE will be leaving the NPA at the end of August. NPA representation on the RMSSG and RMSAG will be decided at the July Authority meeting.
- 8.2 OCE expressed his enjoyment at being part of the Group for at least six years and wished the Group well for the future. Members of the Group thanked OCE for all his work with the Group.