

**Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group
24 November 2020 via Teams**

Attendance:

Diane Andrews (NFDC)	Sam Jones (Forestry England)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)	Lord Manners (Verderers)
Rachael Bowen (NFNPA)	Nigel Matthews (NFNPA)
Richard Burke (Forestry England)	Allison Potts (Natural England)
Patrick Heneghan, Chair (NFNPA)	Claire Upton-Brown (NFDC)

Apologies: Jonathan Woods (HCC).

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 PH welcomed everyone. His position on the Group was ratified by the Authority on 15 October 2021, as was Richard Taylor on the RMS Advisory Group (RMSAG).

2. Minutes of the last meeting (21 September 2020)

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

3. Matters arising

3.1 HCC endorsement of the strategic actions should be resolved within two months

Action: AP to discuss HCC endorsement in a forthcoming meeting with Jo Heath

3.2 Following a request from the RMSAG it was agreed to set meeting dates further in advance, roughly quarterly and alternating. Discussion at the last RMSAG focused on mapping styles that could appear in the Partnership Plan and on positive and negative impacts of recreation. Cycling will be discussed at its next meeting.

Action: RBo to set next two meeting dates for RMSSG and RMSAG

3.3 It was agreed to keep the proposed webpage on positive and negative impacts of recreation clear and simple. An app to help manage recreation could be useful in the future but any work on this should not hold up current priority tasks.

3.4 Forestry England (FE) is considering 'Special by Design' suggestions for inclusion on its proposed newly branded signs. A web-based toolkit is being developed along with a refreshed Design Guide.

3.5 Rangers from National Trust, HCC, RSPB, NPA, FE, Police and Fire Service met and will continue to meet regularly to see how they can work more effectively together.

3.6 Joint funding has been secured to develop a Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the New Forest over the next year. It will identify safe on and off-road routes for walking and cycling and where improvements could be made.

3.7 Local landowners/managers and health and safety experts have met to discuss how risks of incidents between cattle and people/dogs can be assessed and reduced.

3.8 The Group discussed the recently produced Friends of the New Forest report on recreation, why the work was done and what changes to the current recreation management strategy are envisaged. Further discussion with Friends of New Forest is being arranged.

4. Updates on strategic actions

- 4.1 The Verderers have requested further information from FE before renewing permission for the existing cycle network. A plan to better manage cycling is being developed, based on the agreed RMS actions.
- 4.2 Having been delayed due to Covid-19, the Professional Dog Walkers' Charter will be launched in December. It sets high standards for commercial dog walkers. FE's current byelaws do not allow for mandatory licencing so the effect of the Charter will be monitored to see what more should be done.
- 4.3 FE is reviewing its habitats regulations assessments (HRAs) for activities it permits, including changes to reduce impacts on designated habitats.
- 4.4 FE hopes to appoint consultants in December to provide independent advice about traffic regulation order (TRO) options to control verge parking. Requests to HCC Highways officers for temporary TROs where parking issues are worst have so far been unsuccessful. The Group agreed that it may help in future to invite other senior HCC officers to discuss specific items such as this.

Action: RB to email Edward Heron and cc WM about the request for a TTRO

- 4.5 Current feasibility work on a Local Development Order to enable small changes to car parks is focussing on the need for HRAs and an overarching strategy that could be included within the next Partnership Plan.
- 4.6 A briefing session with politicians and senior officers was suggested as a way for local authorities to understand the issues and the requirements needed from their organisations to take forward RMS objectives.
- 4.7 The need for increased funding to manage recreation and maintain facilities was discussed. FE is developing a national scheme to encourage voluntary donations for parking (through texting) and other options are listed in the RMS strategic actions. The Group stressed that resolving car parking distribution and verge parking were critical.

5. Date of next meeting

- 5.1 The next meeting should be in late February / early March

6. Liaison with RMS Advisory Group

- 6.1 The RMSAG will be discussing cycling. Concerns raised about the England Coast Path (ECP) at the last meeting could be addressed by inviting someone to attend from the Natural England ECP team.

Action: AP to check who could talk about the ECP at the next RMSAG meeting

7. AOB

- 7.1 The Countryside Code is being reviewed. National Parks are contributing to the consultation and NM offered to take views from other organisations if required.

Action: NM to send out information regarding the Countryside Code consultation