

AM 598-21

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 1 JULY 2021

FRANCHISES LODGE UPDATE JULY 2021

Paper by: Jim Mitchell, Interpretation and Outreach Manager NFNPA

1. Introduction

The RSPB acquired Franchises Lodge within the National Park in 2018 with the financial and organisational help of the National Park Authority. The NFNPA contributed £200,000 of reserves to the purchase of the northern part of the reserve, of the further majority of which is made up of a large area of gifted land, so that this unique opportunity for landscape-scale nature conservation for the Forest could be taken. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2018 by the NFNPA and RSPB, we agreed to update the Authority on progress and to enable members to inform and shape the management of the site.

2. The past two years

There has been excellent progress at the site since July 2019 when we last brought an update to the Authority:

2.1 The RSPB is running a campaign to fund the purchase of land at Horse Common which abuts the Franchises Lodge reserve. It helps provide further connectivity with the Loosehanger Copse Site of Special Scientific Interest and Langley Wood National Nature Reserve to the north and the New Forest SSSI to the south.

<https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1397839/Green-Britain-campaign-Climate-crisis-RSPB-ancient-woodlands>

2.2 'Cameron's Cottage' outreach centre for educational visits is due to launch this summer. www.cameronbespolka.com/cameron-s-cottage

2.3 The NPA archaeology team worked with the RSPB site team and volunteers to bring three barrows, which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, back into good condition so they can be removed from the Heritage At Risk register:

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/uncovering-the-secrets-of-franchises-lodge/>

2.4 Our fundraising team has further secured grants of £200,000 from the National Grid LEI fund to enable works on site including rhododendron removal. We continue to work together to identify joint funding opportunities.

A more detailed report has been provided by the RSPB and is attached in **Annex.1**.

2.5 As detailed in the MoU, RSPB and the NPA have developed a communications protocol to help guide partnership working. This is attached as **Annex 2**. A more detailed communications plan which helps guide joint working. has also been drafted.

3. The coming year

The priorities for the future remain to be:

- 3.1 To continue to work together to improve the site for nature and heritage, for people (volunteering, education and access) and to identify joint funding opportunities.
- 3.2 To promote the site as an exemplar of nature recovery; of how the reserve sits within the wider New Forest context including its role in ensuring habitats are bigger, better and more joined-up; and to promote the NPA/RSPB investment and partnership.
- 3.3 To work with partners to investigate opportunities to provide more access for people. This is highlighted in the MoU as working together to achieve a net decrease in recreational impacts on the adjacent New Forest SPA/SAC/SSSI with the implementation of the reserve bringing further appropriate opportunities in the area.

Recommendation

To note the report.

Papers:

AM 598-21 Report

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising out of this report

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