

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**Minutes of the Meeting held at the Linden Hall, Lyndhurst Community Centre,
Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY
on THURSDAY 1 JUNE 2023 at 7.30 pm**

Those present:

Andrew Gilruth (Chair)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)
Lucy Andrews (FE)
Graham Ferris (Verderers)
David Russell (NFDC)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)
Alison Bolton (Boldre Parish Council)
Sue Bennison (Bramshaw Parish Council)
Melissa Shepherd (Bransgore Parish Council)
John Korbey (Brockenhurst Parish Council)
Robert Clarke (Burley Parish Council)
CPRE
Peter Brown (Camping & Caravan Club)
Sylvia Wiggins, Graham Chilcott (Copythorne Parish Council)
Ian Moyse (East Boldre Parish Council)
Roly Errington (Ellingham Parish Council)
Diana Kitcher (WI)
David Horne (Hordle Parish Council)
Brice Stratford (Lyndhurst Parish Council)
Mike Proctor (Marchwood Parish Council)
Tim Cook (Netley Marsh Parish Council)
Brian Tarnoff (Friends of the New Forest)
Janet Bache (NF Dog Owners Group)
Ailsa Farrard (NF Equestrian Association)
Jenni Tubbs (NF Friends of the Earth)
Frank Weller (Ramblers Association)
Redlynch Parish Council
Gareth Deboss (Ringwood Town Council)
Charles Payne (Wellow Parish Council)
Richard Taylor (NF Cycle Working Group)

1 Apologies for absence

Craig Harrison (FE)
Alexa Carcas (Fawley PC)
Martin Fletcher (Royal Forestry Society)
Rob Waite (EA)

2 Approval of Minutes from the meeting held on 2 March 2023

2.1 The minutes were approved.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising on this occasion.

4 New Forest Tour and More – Aynsley Clinton (NFNPA)

4.1 Aynsley Clinton advised that the open-top double-decker was operated by Morebus in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority. Most present were familiar with the New Forest Tour, so Aynsley gave a summary of the benefits, namely: three overlapping routes; flexible hop-on/off format; audio commentary delivering Forest-friendly messaging and other information; free carriage of bikes; free connecting buses/ferry which meet with Partnership Plan objectives around carbon reduction. It was encouraging to note that a key motivator for customers was the car-free aspect. Operating dates are 1 July to 17 September 2023.

4.2 In keeping with the Partnership Plan about increasing our welcome and widening our engagement with more diverse groups and urban communities, the Tour has featured in NPA outreach days, enabling those who need extra help to access and learn about the New Forest, e.g., how to get here without personal vehicle, how to responsibly enjoy the New Forest National Park. The NFDC resident's discount continues this year after first being introduced in 2022. Aynsley responded to queries as to why residents outside the NFDC area but within the National Park boundary are excluded. Aynsley explained that this was only year two of this ticket type, that it was an evolving process, and that the question had already been posed to the operator. Aynsley advised that these concerns would be fed back once more to the operator for consideration with a view to identifying a solution and workaround in the resident identification verification process, which is managed by a third party.

4.3 Aynsley mentioned the extension of the government's £2 single fare price cap until 31 October 2023, which will hopefully enable more people to travel (for less) to and around the New Forest. Aynsley acknowledged the challenge of a robust bus network in this rural area, not helped by the reduction in the Department for Transport's allocation of money for the first round of BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) and HCC not being allocated any funds.

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- 4.2 In keeping with the Partnership Plan objective of widening the Tour's engagement with more diverse groups and urban communities, the Tour has featured in NPA outreach days, enabling those who need extra help to access and learn about the New Forest, e.g., how to get here without personal vehicle, how to responsibly enjoy the New Forest National Park. The NFDC resident's discount continues this year after first being introduced in 2022. Aynsley Clinton responded to queries as to why residents outside the NFDC area but within the National Park boundary are excluded. Aynsley explained that this was only year two of this ticket type, that it was an evolving process, and that the question had already been posed to the operator. Aynsley advised that these concerns would be fed back once more to the operator for consideration with a view to identifying a solution and workaround in the resident identification verification process, which is managed by a third party.
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5 Matters for Reporting

5.1 Forestry England Update – Lucy Andrews

Lucy Andrews (substituting for Craig Harrison from Forestry England) introduced herself and provided an update to Members.

Lucy gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting various aspects of work which had recently been carried out by Forestry England. This included the successful breeding season for goshawks, the HLS wetland restoration programme, the reopening of campsites and rhododendron management on the forest.

Forum members asked Lucy several questions, which included lack of notification of the commencement of wetland restoration schemes and she advised she would source the answers to, and a report would be attached to these minutes (Annex 1)

A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

5.2 NFNPA Update – Steve Avery

Mr Avery began his PowerPoint presentation by highlighting HCC's public consultation on the Waterside Transport Strategy and associated Schemes, which includes dualling and upgrading the northern section of the A326 within the National Park (which would be the subject of a future planning application to the NFNPA and HCC). Mr Avery advised that a consultation was running until the 7 June on short term holiday lets. The Public Spaces Protection Order's (PSPO) would come into force on 1 July and the emphasis for the

enforcing authorities (NFNPA, FE and the Verderers) was very much based on the 4 E's – engage, explain, education and only then enforce.

A member requested that HCC attend a future meeting to provide further information on their consultations.

A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

5.3 Verderers – Graham Ferris

Graham Ferris, (Verderer), updated the Panel on changes and initiatives impacting on the economics of Commoning.

- Post Brexit, the Government announced that The Basic Payment System of agricultural support payments which was the EU system would be gradually phased out with payments, being reduced this year by 35% to 55%, depending on the size of the claim and the last payments will be made in 2027.
- For Commoners claiming BPS, the value has been significantly higher than the payments from the New Forest HLS, via the Verderers Grazing Scheme.
- The HLS has in recent years averaged approximately 2million pounds of which roughly 30% has financed the Verderers Grazing Scheme for payment to Commoners and for other items in support of commoning, e.g. Rebuilding Pounds and sight line fencing on the unfenced roads.
- The costs of keeping cattle which are kept in during the winter months are significantly higher than ponies.
- Whilst pony numbers have remained relatively stable over recent years, the economics of keeping cattle are under severe pressure and there is real concern that more commoners will decide to stop keeping cattle and cattle play a vital role in the ecology of the Open Forest.
- In recognition of this the VGS has introduced a modest supplementary payment to commoners turning out cattle.
- The longer term issue of agri-environmental payments to support the New Forest under newly evolving Government schemes is being actively pursued by the Forest Farming Group.

6 Statutory Consultations – Steve Avery

Mr Avery advised that current consultations were –

Technical Consultation on the Infrastructure Levy -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-consultation-on-the-infrastructure-levy>

HCC Waterside Transport and Strategy Schemes - [Waterside Transport Strategy and Schemes | Transport and roads | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

7 Any other items the Chairman feels urgent

There were no further items.

8 Dates of next Panel Meetings.

8.1 Thursday 7 September 2023, Thursday 7 December 2023.