

**Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group**  
**The King's House, Forestry England, Lyndhurst**  
**27 February 2023**

Attendance:

Diane Andrews (NFDC)	Sam Jones (FE)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)	Willie Manners (Verderers)
Charlotte Bartlett (FE)	Gillie Molland (NFNPA)
Richard Burke (FE)	Graham Smith (TVBC)
Tim Guymer (NFDC)	Jonathan Woods (HCC)
Patrick Heneghan, Chair (NFNPA)	

**1. Welcome / apologies / introductions**

1. PH welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Graham Horton (NE) and Claire Upton-Brown (NFDC). Tim Guymer was the new representative on the Group following the departure from NFDC of both Louise Evans and Claire Upton-Brown.

**2. Matters arising from the recent RMSAG meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes from the recent RMSAG meeting were noted and there were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.

**3. Proposed Public Spaces Protection Orders**

- 3.1 The related public consultation had recently closed and had received around 1500 responses. Initial review indicated the vast majority were supportive of the proposals, but a more detailed analysis is currently being undertaken by a specialist consultant.
- 3.2 There was discussion regarding the enforcement of PSPO's and in particular the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's). Partner organisations have recently submitted lists of nominated 'Authorised Persons' to NFDC, totalling roughly 30 names. Those nominated include Rangers, Agisters, Keepers and a small number of others. It was recognised that enforcing a PSPO would be a new area of responsibility for many AP's and careful and comprehensive training would be required. This is planned for the end of April, with a second session in early May. Training would include the importance of staying safe and minimising any risk of confrontation with members of the public. It was reiterated that FPNs would only be issued as a last resort and that the current response of engagement and education would remain the initial approach. It was further agreed that regular refresher training would be needed. Forestry England are establishing a working group to oversee the needs and training requirements of their staff.

Action: RB to organise an additional date in May for further PSPO training

It was agreed a consistent approach to enforcing the PSPOs was needed using the following processes:

- Engage
- Educate
- Encourage
- Enforce

- 3.3 The Group discussed further issues including the need for a clear policy in respect of those AP's who carry licensed firearms as part of their day-to-day work (e.g. Keepers and Agisters), how to measure PSPO effectiveness and the safety of staff generally.

Action: RB to speak with Corrine Bishop (Police) in advance of the training for advice regarding the carrying of weapons and whether the police can issue FPNs without specific authorisation from NFDC

Action: RB to speak with Grainne O'Rourke to check if the Police Logo can be added to the enforcement signs

- 3.4 Approximate timescales:

- April – report going to NFDC Cabinet
- April – 1<sup>st</sup> training session
- May – 2<sup>nd</sup> training session
- June – PSPO comes into force
- Refresher training before the full summer season starts.

- 3.5 Some draft signs have been prepared which will need agreeing with contributing partners, including the text and the colour. It is hoped there will be alignment with the existing New Forest Code style. Consideration will also need to be given to the number of signs, their location, what information is required legally and what logos can be added (Police and possibly Hampshire Fire & Rescue). It is likely that every car park will need a sign, along with other popular areas such as Boltons Bench, the perambulation, NFDC car parks and campsites. Messages can also reach visitors through B&Bs and other public facing outlets through Go New Forest.

Action: SA to help RB with the perambulation outside of the crown lands

Action: RB to draft a paper about signage and circulate to the Group for comments

Action: RB to circulate costs of signage for further discussion

## **4. Progressing other RSM Strategic Actions**

- 4.1 The updated list of RMS strategic actions mapped against the Partnership Plan themes had been circulated with the Agenda. As agreed in 2019, the preparation and circulation of a spatial plan showing where recreation should take place in the National Park is critical. This would include the distribution of car parks, their capacity, links with the off-road cycle network and how these tie in with existing walking routes. Campsites will also feature in the future. An

audit had already been completed on the Crown Lands by Forestry England over the last few years, taking account of the Footprint Ecology Survey, New Forest Design Plan and the Wetland Restoration Plans. The spatial plan is now ready to be considered in the context of the Habitats Regulations and Planning before being taken forward.

- 4.2 There was discussion around how to progress this work, including how to engage the public and clearly explain the rationale behind the proposals that will be contained in the spatial plan.
- 4.3 Discussion at the next meeting RMSSG meeting would include a refresher on the spatial plan, how it can be moved forward including developing evidence, listing some specific locations, and wider engagement. The participation of Natural England is critical to moving the discussions forward. It might also help to receive comments from the RMSAG and the NF Consultative Panel.

Action: Invite senior Natural England staff to the next RMSSG meeting

## **5. AOB**

- 5.1 Car park charging was briefly discussed. Forestry England Board had given full support in taking this forward, along with looking at verge parking which may be able to be picked up through a future PSPO. Consideration would need to be given to the technology and mobile signals to support any pay machines and mobile phone use. RB asked for any help or suggestions in taking this forward.
- 5.2 PH thanked Willie Manners, Diane Andrews and Claire Upton-Brown for their contributions to the Group as this was their last meeting. PH also wanted thanks to be given to all of the staff in partner organisations who support and take forward all of this work in the background. Finally, PH thanked FE for kindly hosting the meeting

## **6. Date of next meeting**

- 6.1 Late May, but to be discussed with the Chair of the RMSAG.