

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the 245th Meeting, held in the Forest Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall on THURSDAY, 28 MAY 2015

Those present: Clive Chatters (In the Chair)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)
Rachel Pardey (Panel Secretariat)
Members as shown on the Official List, with the exception of those listed below for whom apologies were received.

ITEM 1

1.1 APOLOGIES

Ted Fleet (Sway Parish Council)
Tony Barnett (Caravan Club)
Robbie Roberts (RSPCA)
Graham Baker (NFA)

1.2 SUBSTITUTIONS

Ann Sevier substituted for James Young on behalf of the Commoners Defence
David Whitehead substituted for Ian Wallington on behalf of Hyde Parish Council

1.3 NEW REPRESENTATIVES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the new Members to the panel, these were:
Mark Rollè – Lyndhurst Parish Council
Mike Proctor – Marchwood Parish Council
Ian Wallington – Hyde Parish Council
Jo Florance – New Forest Dog Owners Group (NF Dog)
Allan Glass – Fawley Parish Council
Jacqui Hartas – Hale Parish Council
Melissa Shepherd – Bransgore Parish Council

ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12 March 2015)

2.1 Mike Moriarty (Copythorne PC) emphasised earlier comments on the importance of accurate reporting of flooding of properties. The initial reports of the Environment Agency would benefit from updating. This matter was of particular concern to the parish council as it affected future investment in flood management as well as having implications for household insurance.

2.2 The minutes were then agreed as a true record.

ITEM 3

MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Bruce Rothnie (Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission) advised panel members that the Forestry Commission was currently working with the National Park Authority to look at measures on how they could control fungi picking in the autumn and to ensure that the groups which were carrying this out were made aware of the damage caused by largescale fungi picking in the Forest.
- 3.2 Minutes from 12 March, Item 7. Edward Heron (New Forest District Council) updated members on the Broadband project which was currently being rolled out through the Forest. Mr Heron advised that there had been some issues in various locations however these were currently being resolved.
- 3.3 Mark Holroyd (Transport & Tourism Manager, NPA) updated panel members on the recent Sustrans Salisbury to New Forest cycle route consultation, the deadline for this had now been extended until 10 June, for further information members were invited to contact Wiltshire County Council directly.
- 3.4 Mr Holroyd commented that Hampshire County Council would be developing a cycle route for the Godshill area, members who would like to be consulted on this should email the Secretariat in the first instance, who would forward their details to Mark Holroyd.
- 3.5 Mr Holroyd also brought the Consultations Log (circulated with the Agenda) to the attention of members which contained the recent Hampshire County Council cycling strategy which was currently out for public consultation until 29 July 2015.
- 3.6 Bruce Rothnie reminded panel members that the Panel Tour would be taking place on Thursday 4 June, details would be forwarded to those attending.

ITEM 4

NFNPA UPDATE – ALISON BARNES

- 4.1 Alison Barnes (Chief Executive, NPA) advised the Panel that Rory Stewart (MP for the Lake District) was the new Minister for National Parks. The National Park Authority was hoping that he would attend the New forest Show during the summer.
- 4.2 The National Park Authority had recently submitted their 'Our past, Our future' HLF bid, a substantial amount of work had been put into this by officers and partner organisations. Confirmation of whether the bid had been acceptance was expected in September.
- 4.3 Ms Barnes commented that a workshop had recently taken place, 'Healthy Park, Healthy People' where discussion was focused on what the National Park could do for the wellbeing of our local communities. A fascinating presentation was given by William Bird, on prevention of serious illness which could be found on YouTube.
- 4.4 The National Park Authority had recently launched two new bus routes in the Forest. Mark Holroyd commented that work was being done to try and increase the viability of local bus services in the area and were trying to increase usage for the Blue Star 6.

ITEM 5

MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

- 5.1 Alison Barnes advised the Panel that following the 'call for views' consultation, many comments had been received with regards to the Management Plan and that it had now been amended to reflect these. The Management Plan was now out for formal consultation until 22 June with a view to be signed off by NPA members at the AGM on 16 July.

ITEM 6

FORESTRY COMMISSION UPDATE

- 6.1 Bruce Rothnie advised Panel members that summer was a period where the Forestry Commission undertook site visits to plan work for later in the year or for future work programmes in the years ahead. As it was currently bird nesting season this might limit some of the preparatory work on land management.
- 6.2 He explained that now was the time when visitor pressure grew significantly on the Forest, and therefore the Ranger team would be working closely with NPA Rangers to manage public access and would be running an extensive programme of events where visitors were informed and educated about Forest issues. He also informed the Panel that this time of year was also the time when less acceptable activities started to emerge including wild fires, rave parties and parking on verges.
- 6.3 Mr Rothnie updated the Panel that they had currently been clearing trees that had blown down during the winter storms in 2014. He explained that many affected areas had taken 18 months to reach, and that most of the wood would be going to local firewood markets. A programme of restoring lost lawns which had been overgrown with scrub was also taking place.
- 6.4 Mr Rothnie advised that a programme of Inclosure fence replacement had recently taken place where fences were not fit for purpose or where vandalism had occurred, and that roadside ditches and dragons teeth were being reinstated to discourage vehicle access to the Forest.
- 6.5 The Forestry Commission Keepers had recently completed their annual deer census in preparation for the winter cull.
- 6.6 Mr Rothnie informed the Panel that a number of sites were currently going through planning processes at the moment for wetland restoration projects. The aim of which was to reinstate wetland stream and mire systems. Restoration of the site at Broomy Inclosure was currently underway and a further site at Harvestslade was planned to start in late August. An environmental impact assessment for the work at Latchmore was being prepared and the Pondhead scheme was back in the planning system. *(NB this matter was discussed further by the Panel under agenda setting – Minute 9.1 refers)*
- 6.7 Panel members were then reminded of the Panel tour which would take place on Thursday 4 June which would commence at 12.30pm meeting in Lyndhurst car park.
- 6.8 Following Mr Rothnie's update members of the Panel were given the opportunity to ask questions, some of these included –
- Sue Bennison (Bramshaw Parish Council) commented that litter on the B3079 was a frequent problem and felt that litter picking should be conducted on a regular basis. Mr Rothnie assured Ms Bennison that the Forestry Commission did have a contract with NFDC to carry

out litter picking but that she should contact Gary North (Forestry Commission) if she felt that this was not carried out effectively.

- Trevor Johnson (Hythe Parish Council) stated that he felt the level of dog mess in the Forest near paths was at an unacceptable level and would like to know what could be done to improve this. Mr Rothnie said this was a difficult problem to address as it's a personal responsibility issue for the dog owner and that the Forestry Commission could only educate people, as bins would be unsightly across the Forest and would require a lot of maintenance. The Forestry Commission was aware of where 'hot spots' were and periodically sent Rangers to try and increase awareness of this problem. *It was agreed that this would prove to be a useful discussion topic on a future agenda.*

ITEM 7

THE COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME FOR THE NEW FOREST

- 7.1 Hannah Thacker from Natural England updated Panel members on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (presentation attached), highlighting that the scheme provided incentives for land managers to look after the countryside and combined financial incentives with advice.
- 7.2 Ms Thacker commented that applicants should reflect the Countryside Stewardship priorities and show that they provide value for money. Applicants would be scored on the priorities highlighted in the national scheme targeted framework.
- 7.3 It was advised that the Countryside Stewardship scheme was open to land managers who are owner occupiers, tenants, landlords or common land rights holders. For more information Panel members were requested to contact Hannah.Thacker@naturalengland.org.uk

ITEM 8

PANEL AGENDA SETTING

8.1 *Wetland Restoration projects – planning applications*

The Panel supported a request that wetland restoration schemes be placed on a future Panel agenda in order for members to better understand when a planning application was required to be made, as well the nature of the consultation process allowing interested parties to input their comments and views on the application. It was agreed that Natural England/Forestry Commission and the Verderers would be asked to put together a joint presentation to either the next or the following Panel meeting.

8.2 *Efficiency savings – Panel support*

The Chairman drew attention to the current method of sending agendas and other documentation to members by post which was not cost effective or efficient in terms of advising meeting or agenda changes at short notice. He accordingly asked members to liaise with their respective appointing body to consider other more efficient methods of circulating information. Members agreed for this to be included as an item on the agenda of the next Panel meeting.

8.3 *Consultation on policy changes*

Members considered a request for there to be increased consultation around business operations which generated significant transport through the New Forest which led to an increase in traffic congestion on roads. Members supported this proposal and noted that

neighbouring authorities made decisions which impacted on the New Forest including changes to their planning policies – the Panel should be consulted before any decisions were made.

ITEM 9

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Referring to earlier discussion on wetland restoration, Robert Clarke of Burley Parish Council enquired what threshold required submission of a formal planning application and referred specifically to Studley Wood in this regard. Bruce Rothnie undertook to obtain the required information and e-mail this through to Robert Clarke.
- 9.2 Alison Barnes advised that Parish Quadrant elections for appointment on to the National Park Authority were currently taking place and were being facilitated by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils. She requested that Panel members contact David Stone or HALC (Hampshire Association of Local Councils) for any further information on the elections.
- 9.3 Members were informed by Mike Moriarty (Copythorne Parish Council) that some property owners were being charged additional insurance premiums if they lived near rivers notwithstanding that their properties had never been flooded. He advised that cost effective insurance policies could still be negotiated through brokers.

ITEM 10

DATE OF NEXT PANEL MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting would be held at **7.30 pm on THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2015** in the **Forest Hall, Brockenhurst Village Hall, Brockenhurst.**