

Minutes of the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group meeting held on 27 September 2023 (via Teams)

In attendance:

Patrick Heneghan, Chair NPA
Steve Avery, NPA
Gillie Molland, NPA
Tim Guymer, NFDC
Richard Burke, FE
Charlotte Bartlet, FE
Graham Horton, NE
Graham Smith, TVBC
Jonathan Woods, HCC

Apologies:

Edward Heron, OV
Sam Jones, FE

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023 were agreed. Any matters arising would be picked up in the agenda items.

PSPOs review

Anecdotal evidence suggests that people are responding positively to the PSPOs since their introduction on 1 July 2023.

There had been some 400 engagements with the public about the PSPOs and all felt they were a 'useful tool to have in the toolbox'.

RB reported that the fire service had noticed a growing public awareness of the risk of fires; there had certainly been a lot less fires this year although some of this could be attributed to a much wetter summer.

All felt the PSPOs had generated good publicity; the messages were getting out and there was a good level of awareness.

GM reported that there had been good support from the police in undertaking joint patrols.

The training had gone well and over 200 PSPO signs had been erected. RB reported the costs of the signs had been in the order of £7,000+ although this did not include labour costs. A 'wash-up' meeting with all the partner organisations is planned for later this year. TG suggested that there should be a follow-up communications strategy and this was already on the agenda for the review meeting. JW added that a forward communication strategy would be helpful to keep the PSPOs a 'live' topic of conversation in the Forest.

ACTION: RB to circulate up to date PSPO related public engagement figures.

Cycling update

It was noted that there had been good progress of late in looking at the off-road cycle network, with positive conversations held between the Verderers and the Cycle Working Group (CWG). The CWG are looking at an extended off-road network using existing gravel tracks and a draft map is now emerging.

There is a need to 'tune up' the messaging about the use of the network whilst the CWG, shops and hire providers can all play their part in promoting positive messages.

RB reported that FE are reviewing the information shared on the 'open street map data platforms' that route people across the Forest, such as that hosted by [Kamoot](#). Being clear on what routes are allowed and which form part of the official network are important considerations in supporting any extension of the off-road cycle network.

The response from Kamoot has been positive and they can help further with way-pointed information to better manage access. There had also been some progress in finalising the Forest Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). JW suggested that the LCWIPs should look at the leisure network as well as the commuting network; JW commented there was some doubt about how much engagement there had been with the leisure groups to date.

TG asked if NFDC could see a draft map of the extended off-road network to help them progress the LCWIP outside the Forest.

ACTION: JW offered to make internal enquiries regarding HCC progress with LCWIP review.

Progressing a spatial plan for where recreation should be accommodated

Progressing a spatial plan for where recreation takes place in the Forest and surrounding areas is a top priority in the National Park Partnership Plan. SA reported that a recent meeting of the Partnership Plan Leaders Panel endorsed having a clear spatial plan for managing recreational pressures. RB advised that FE are advancing a spatial plan for the crown lands; having a plan in place was key to managing all the other recreation related issues. GH confirmed that he would be the Natural England lead for liaison on the spatial plan.

CB updated the group on the feasibility work being carried out to introduce parking charges in FE car parks. A key strand of this work will be to agree measures that prevent verge parking. CB is looking again at the feasibility of TROs and PSPOs. JW offered to meet with CB offline to see how HCC can assist. Highways is now part of HCC's universal services team which is looking into civil enforcement. Others commented that the signage needs to be right for the Forest.

TG welcomed this work and believes that car parking charges in the Forest would help the viability of alternative green space destinations in the areas outside the National Park (which do charge for car parking).

JW suggested that a senior level (Council Leader?) briefing or meeting could be held to build high level awareness of the issue and the opportunity to make progress.

ACTION: It was agreed that any further discussion on the spatial plan by the RMSSG would benefit from a bespoke, face-to-face meeting and having maps/earlier plans to hand.

New Forest Strategic Mitigation work

SA had already shared the paper that David Illsley presented to the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) meeting earlier in the week. There had been some concerns raised by both Eastleigh and Fareham councils about the zone of influence and whether it was necessary for development within these areas to contribute to habitat mitigation in the New Forest.

GS felt the PfSH paper might have had a better hearing had it not been the last item on the agenda. There was perhaps more work needed to explain the rationale on the zone of influence as peripheral local planning authorities remain unconvinced. TG suggested that NE could take a stronger lead on this work.

ACTION: GH will be having a follow up meeting with Alison Potts to discuss how NE role might take a greater leadership role in this work. It was agreed that the Lay-By discussion would be rolled over to the next meeting.

AOB

SA advised that the NPA were now making a new Article 4 Direction to ensure there was a degree of planning control over temporary recreational campsites following the introduction of the new permitted development right in July 2023 for 60 day/50 pitch campsites.

TG reported that NFDC's [Cabinet](#) was to consider a report next week (4 October) to agree to the proposed introduction of a framework for CIL expenditure to align funds to identified infrastructure needs, which could include infrastructure in the National Park.

JW advised that HCC were looking to start work on a new updated [Countryside Access Plan](#) (CAP). Over the coming months HCC would be speaking to local access forums. The CAP is the only statutory document that HCC countryside services produce; one area of focus in the new Plan will be the Avon Valley Walk and looking to make this much more of a destination in its own right.

RB will provide JW with locations of those new gates leading onto protected areas that incorporate dog access. Concern that the gates lead dog walkers to believe access is permitted.

Date of next meeting: Week commencing 27 November (tbc) 2023, The King's House, Lyndhurst