

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**Minutes of the Meeting held at the Linden Hall, Lyndhurst Community Centre,
Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY
on THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024 at 7.30 pm**

Those present:

Brian Tarnoff (Chair)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)
Craig Harrison (FE)
Graham Ferris (Verderers)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)

Panel members as per the signed register

1 Apologies for absence

Margaret Bunyard – CPRE
Derek Tipp – NFDC
Gordon Bailey – Test Valley Borough Council
Helen Schneider – Sway Parish Council
Janet Bache – NF Dog Owners' Group
Kevin Hinton – Fordingbridge Town Council
Dylan Everett – National Trust,
Sylvia Wiggins, Graham Chilcott – Copythorne Parish Council,
Habib Ghahramanizadi – Hythe & Dibden Parish Council
Rob Waite – Environment Agency
Alexa Carcas – Fawley Parish Council
Martin Fletcher – Foresters

2 Approval of Minutes from the meeting held on 23 September 2023

2.1 The minutes were approved.

3 Matters Arising

- 3.1 The Chair thanked everyone for attending on D-Day and for voting him in as Chair.
- 3.2 The Chairman advised that currently all email correspondence to members was through the Secretariat. For GDPR reasons the Secretariat was unable to distribute a list of members' contact details without receiving individual consent from all Panel members. Members discussed this issue and noted that correspondence to members would be forwarded by the Secretariat but agreed that, in the event of a member e-mailing the Chairman, there would be no restriction on the Chairman replying to this correspondence.

- 3.3 The Chairman informed members that he had contacted Natural England with a view to them being present at meetings of the Panel. Although this had not been possible for the current meeting, Natural England had given a commitment for a representative to be present at future meetings.
- 3.4 The issue of fly tipping was still outstanding, and as Craig Harrison explained, the main difficulty was in securing funding.
- 3.5 There was still no news regarding the current status of the plans for Fawley Waterside, an update from the developer was still awaited by the NPA and NFDC.

4 Matters for reporting

4.1 Forestry England Update – Craig Harrison

Craig Harrison provided an update on projects and work undertaken by Forestry England since the last Panel meeting. He advised that there may be some aspects of his update or responses to questions which cannot be discussed due to the impending general election.

His update centred around wildlife, people and climate and activities and the balancing act required between the three. His presentation is available on the NPA's website under:

[Consultative Panel 06/06/24 - New Forest National Park Authority
\(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://newforestnpa.gov.uk/consultative-panel-06/06/24-new-forest-national-park-authority)

Wildlife

Activities included nature recovery, habitat creation, restoration and maintenance, ancient woodland projects, open habitats and wetlands. FE's open forest team had worked in 11 different woodlands this spring to cut back dense holly growing alongside ancient trees to ensure lichens have enough light to thrive.

Ground-nesting bird surveys update. Mr Harrison said that FE had worked with over 100 volunteers from Hampshire Ornithological Society to carry out a new survey looking at Woodlark numbers across 291 one kilometre squares across the New Forest, including in those areas that are being restored from conifer plantations back to heathland.

A Pine Marten survey has been carried out - beginning the fourth year of this work with Wild New Forest, and collecting DNA samples to help understand the size and origins of the population.

People

Despite an incredibly wet winter and spring FE had now been able to start in earnest car park and trail repairs. Thirty of FE's 130 car parks had been

completed using 190 tonnes of gravel so far. FE had also been improving tracks including the Tall Tree Trail to make this accessible for all users.

Climate

10,000 native trees have been planted in the New Forest this planting season. This planting was part of a long-term plan to restore 4,500 hectares of native woodlands in the New Forest, which can thrive despite changes in climate and provide vital homes for wildlife.

Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

Mr Harrison said that this played a significant part in growing the future of the Forest. He listed the HLS achievements from April 2023 – March 2024 which included a wide range of restoration projects across the Forest and upcoming wetland restoration programmes.

A number of questions were raised by Panel members regarding tree-planting in the Forest. Concern was expressed when it was noted that all tree planting took place in the woodland inclosures whilst the number of trees in the open Forest were diminishing. Members felt it was accordingly imperative to look at woodland management and tree-regeneration in the Open Forest.

4.2 NFNPA Update – Steve Avery

Steve Avery started his presentation with an update on the Local Plan Review for the National Park with a report scheduled to go to the Authority meeting on 25 July 2024. Mr Avery commented that the Forest remains under intense pressure, particularly from new residential development and recreational impacts. A timetable for the review will be published in July. The updated Local Plan will also need to address new permitted development rights, habitat mitigation, local transport plans and the challenges faced by commoning amongst other things. A recent Green Links Study commissioned by the NPA has looked at improving connectivity for people and nature on the Waterside (in response to planned new development for the Waterside). New and tighter enforcement rules came into force in April. There are two new Neighbourhood Plans (Ringwood and Wellow) that will go to a public referendum (4 and 11 July respectively) and the Green Halo Conference is taking place on Wednesday 12 June in Beaulieu.

Mr Avery added that the Partnership Plan Leaders Panel and partner organisations were taking a tour in the north of the Forest in the coming week.

There were a number of comments and questions, including a suggestion that there was a loss of back up grazing land due to pop up campsites that were far more lucrative.

It was requested that when new development is taking place, all forms of active transport be considered and that all relevant green groups be

consulted, especially on the future plans for the A326 (with a planning application expected in Spring 2025).

There were also comments about strengthening the light pollutions rules, suggestion of a new country park on the Waterside and the need for a clearer definition of 'back up grazing'.

A copy of the presentation is available on the website as follows:

[Consultative Panel 06/06/24 - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://newforestnpa.gov.uk)

4.3 NFDC Update

Cllr Derek Tipp from NFDC had submitted an apology for the meeting but have provided a written update that will be circulated to members.

A copy of the presentation is available on the website as follows:

[Consultative Panel 06/06/24 - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://newforestnpa.gov.uk)

4.4 Verderers – Graham Ferris

Graham Ferris advised that he will provide a written report that can form a basis for discussion around the Agri-environment scheme.

A copy of the document is available on the website as follows:

[Consultative Panel 06/06/24 - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://newforestnpa.gov.uk)

He reported that the foaling season was in full swing and there has been no reports of any issues and the recent welfare tour attended by the relevant welfare organisations expressed how well the livestock were.

5 Statutory consultations

- 5.1 The draft LCWIP will be out for consultation soon and all members will be emailed a link. The Countryside Access Plan is also due however the time frame is unknown.

6 Any other items the Chairman feels are urgent

- 6.1 By a show of hands the Chairman agreed with members in principle that if a meeting was cancelled, this information be added to the website and an online meeting be held instead.

AOB

- 6.2 It was proposed that an update on the SAM (Strategic Access Management) work would be a good use of the Consultative Panel's time.
- 6.3 A Panel tour was requested as this had not happened for a number of years.

7 Date of next panel meetings

- 7.1 5 September 2024
5 December 2024