

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**Minutes of the Meeting held at the Linden Hall, Lyndhurst Community Centre,
Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY
on THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2025 at 7.30 pm**

Those present:

Brian Tarnoff (Chair)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)
Craig Harrison (FE)
Anthony Pasmore (Verderers)
Derek Tipp (NFDC)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Vicki Gibbon (Panel Secretariat)

1 Election of Chair

David Stone (Panel Secretariat) opened the meeting and conducted the election of Chair, Brian Tarnoff was elected unopposed as Chair for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies for absence

Janet Bache – New Forest Dog Owners
Melissa Shephard – Bransgore Parish Council
Pete Brown – Camping and Caravanning Club
Jack Smith – Minstead Parish Council

3 Approval of Minutes from the meeting held on 5 December 2025

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

4 ‘Direction of Travel’, New Forest National Park Local Plan Review consultation – David Illsley (NFNPA)

4.1 David Illsley gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the first steps in the Local Plan review which the National Park Authority were currently carrying out. He began by advising that the current Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and government recommended that a review should take place every 5 years. In March 2024 Authority members resolved to commence a partial review of the Local Plan and in July 2024 they agreed the timetable for the review.

He explained that there were pillars of the current Local Plan which remain consistent with national planning policy and legislation. There are several areas which have been identified as being ‘in scope’ for review. These include the most appropriate way to address the nature and climate emergency, the approach to supporting appropriate renewable energy within a nationally

protected landscape, protecting tranquillity and the scope for new residential development within the National Park to meet identified local housing needs.

The 'Direction of Travel' consultation document was launched on 4 February for a 6-week consultation, which closes on 18 March 2025. This included a variety of drop-in sessions across the National Park to get a wider public input into the review and to seek their views on what planning matters should be 'in scope'. Mr Illsley encouraged panel members to respond to the consultation.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the website.

5 Matters for Reporting

5.1 NFNPA Update – Steve Avery

Steve Avery began his presentation by advising that just before last Christmas there had been a plethora of government announcements, these were to speed up the planning process and encourage growth. Details of these can be found in the presentation on the website. The Hampshire and Solent devolution consultation had begun and runs until 13 April, this was looking to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Southampton. The National Park Authority will be responding to this consultation following consideration of a report at the full Authority meeting on 27 March.

Mr Avery advised that the Authority had recently received an indication of their overall grant settlement for 2025/26 from Defra, which would likely result in an immediate 9% reduction in core funding and would have a significant effect on resources. On a positive note, there had been a year extension to the Farming in Protected Landscapes and Access for All grant schemes for National Parks.

The New Forest Awakening Festival had now begun with a series of events across the forest, details of which can be found on the website and the National Park celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

Finally, Mr Avery told panel members that he would be leaving the Authority at the end of April and that this would be his final meeting. Panel members thanked Steve for his commitment and time over the years.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the website.

5.2 NFDC Update – Derek Tipp

Derek Tipp updated Panel members on the Government's devolution proposals and the linked process of local government reorganisation. The two processes would affect New Forest District Council and 14 other local authorities in Hampshire and the Solent and are likely to see the setting up of a new mayoral strategic authority. Initial proposals for the governance of the

new strategic authority for Hampshire would be that it would comprise a mayor and six representatives on the new body. The authority would be given significant powers covering transport, strategic planning, nature recovery and economic development. In addition, local authorities in Hampshire are going through a process of local government reorganisation, with the national Government looking to replace city, district and borough councils with a smaller number of unitary authorities (with each unitary authority covering a population of at least 500,000 people). The timeframe for the submission of initial proposals is 21 March 2025. Existing councils – including New Forest District Council - are currently holding discussions on plans and possible partnerships to form the new unitary authorities.

Councillor Tipp then gave details of the review of the New Forest District's Local Plan. The Local Plan, once adopted, would cover a five-year period. The initial public consultation on the issues and scope of the District Council's revised Local Plan runs from Monday 17 February to Friday 4 April 2025 and includes a series of drop-in sessions to make it easier for members of the public to give their views.

5.3 Forestry England Update – Craig Harrison

Craig Harrison reported on the operational activities of Forestry England which included:

- Continuing FE's tree planting programme
- Heathland restoration and protection of ground nesting bird season (FE's survey with Hampshire Ornithological Society revealed the highest ever numbers of woodlark recorded in the Forest),
- fly tipping (FE continued to work with local partners including NFDC and the police on random spot checks on vehicles carrying waste)

Mr Harrison reported that less than 15% of FE's core funding now comes from the Government with the costs of materials, damage caused by changing weather patterns, visitor numbers and levels of landscape and recreation management increasing.

He said that more sustainable funding will support retaining access to a network of car parks, maintaining FE's core work, a bigger ranger presence and engagement, more interventions to prevent informal parking (on verges and overnight) and develop a long-term solution to irresponsible parking and additional resources to carry out more regular maintenance at car parks.

In this latter regard, Mr Harrison updated members on a proposed car parking charging scheme by Forestry England for all 130 car parks in the New Forest to assist with the cost of car park maintenance which had increased significantly and had affected FE's ability to maintain such a large network. FE would be working with statutory bodies and stakeholders on the details of the proposed scheme in the coming months.

A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

5.4 Verderers Update – Anthony Pasmore

Mr Pasmore informed the panel that the Verderers were extremely worried about the amount of development around the forest as this was leading to a lack of back up grazing which was in turn damaging the forest and having issues on commoners. He also advised that the Encroachment Committee had recently met where parking charges had been considered, there was unanimous agreement that it should not go ahead until it had been properly planned and verge parking had been fully looked into.

6 Consultations

Following the meeting Mr Avery advised that on 31 January the Government launched a consultation on a new approach to Land Use in England, more information can be found here - [Land use in England - GOV.UK](#)

7 Any other items the Chairman feels urgent

7.1 There were no further items of business.

8 Dates of next Panel Meetings.

8.1 Thursday 5 June 2025, 4 September 2025, 4 December 2025.