

Consultative Panel Meeting – Minutes

Date: Thursday 11 June 2026

Time: 7:00pm - 9:20pm

Location: Linden Hall - Lyndhurst Community Hall, Lyndhurst

1. Attendance and Apologies

Apologies Received:

- Pete Brown - Camping & Caravanning Club
- Alexa Carcas - Fawley Parish Council
- Martina Humber - Lymington & Pennington Town Council
- Pamela Keen - Norleywood Society
- Tim Kermode - Solent Protection Society
- Hannah Marsh - British Horse Society
- Ken Kershaw - Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council

SWAP:

Cllr Paul Anstey (Fordingbridge Town Council) attended in place of a standing member.

2. Key Updates & Presentations

2.1 Hampshire County Council (HCC) - A326 Improvement Scheme

Presenter: Martina Olley, Scheme Development & Programme Manager

- Ongoing delays linked to funding and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- Project unlikely to commence before **Spring 2029**.
- Planned improvements include widening two sections and adding a second carriageway.
- Final decision to be made by the Department for Transport; delivery expected under the new Unitary Authority.

2.2 New Forest Together Campaign

Presenter: James Hartley Binns

- Petition now at **26,000 signatures**.

- Continued legal and political efforts to challenge the decision and process.
- NFDC Cabinet members opted not to contest the decision following legal advice.

2.3 New Forest District Council (NFDC)

- **CIL Grants:** Applications open for organisations, community groups and businesses.
- Funding available through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Community Grant Scheme and Supporting Local Business Grant Scheme.
- **Deadline:** 8 August 2026.

2.4 New Forest National Park Authority (NPA)

- **Senior Structure Reorganisation:**
 - Three functional heads: Alison Barnes, Nigel Stone, Paul Walton.
 - David Ilsley appointed Head of Planning.
- **Local Plan:**
 - Further consultations are ongoing.
 - To be presented at the July NPA Authority meeting.
 - Public comments encouraged.
 - Submission to the Planning Inspector planned.
 - Final draft expected **December 2026**.
- **Major Planning Applications:**
 - A326 (jointly determined with HCC)
 - Fawley Power Station
 - Solent Gateway 2
- **Vernon Dene:** court of appeal decided in favour of the applicant (and against the National Park). A separate Planning Enforcement Case is continuing based on other rules broken outside those considered in the Park's primary enforcement.
- **Youth Board (Ages 18-30):** Active engagement continues across the New Forest.
- **Species Survival Fund:** Reported as highly successful, with visible improvements now evident.

2.5 Forestry England

Presenter: Craig Harrison

- Richard Burke has moved to a new role.
- Charlotte Belcher introduced as new Recreation Management Lead.
- Ranger teams expanded.
- Car parking charges: No significant issues reported; full update expected in September.

- Ongoing repairs and temporary closures of forest car parks.

2.6 Verderers

Presenter: Edward Heron

- Equine flu is present in the Forest.
 - Limited actions possible; stables and showgrounds may receive advisory notices.
 - Vaccination strongly encouraged.
 - Equine flu guidance reiterated.
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3. Any Other Business (AOB)

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Presenter: Brice Stratford

- Reported positive progress following a recent meeting.
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4. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday 3 September

Time: 7pm
