

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting
Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall, Lymington
8 June 2026

Present

Members: Caroline Rackham (Chair)
David Bennett
Ruth Croker
Bob Damper
Sarah Hammet
Pippa Hutton
Lucy Kennedy
Ann Sevier (Deputy Chair)
Richard Shirley
Brian Tarnoff

Officers: Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

1 Apologies

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Adam Vasey (NPA).

2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting on 9 March 2026 were agreed as a true record.

3 Member & Officer Reports

3.1 As Adam Vasey was unable to attend this meeting his NPA update was taken as read.

3.2 Lucy Kennedy provided the Forum with an update on the work undertaken by Forestry England. She reported that, despite ongoing advice and awareness campaigns, some visitors continue to disregard guidance regarding fires and barbecues within the forest. Fly-tipping remains an ongoing concern, along with incidents involving burnt-out vehicles. Lucy also advised that it was currently the ground-nesting bird season and that a number of car parks would be temporarily closed during this period to help protect these sensitive habitats.

4 Car Parking Charges

4.1 Lucy Kennedy advised that the recently introduced car parking charges have, to date, been operating successfully, with a significant number of visitors opting for the car park membership scheme. While there had initially been some confusion regarding the available payment methods, this appears to have improved over time.

A discussion subsequently took place regarding the new charging arrangements, and it was requested that a further update be provided at a future meeting.

5 LGR Discussion

- 5.1 Caroline Rackham, Chair, provided a brief overview of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the proposed future division of district areas. She explained that the campaign group New Forest Together was currently seeking to prevent the proposed changes and retain the New Forest as a single entity, rather than having areas such as the Waterside incorporated into Southampton. The Chair then invited members to share their views on the proposals.
- 5.2 Members discussed the potential merits and implications of the proposed LGR arrangements and considered how the new structure might operate in the future. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the Chair would write to all mayoral candidates to provide an overview of the Access Forum and its role within the New Forest.

6 Cycling Updates

- 6.2 Jim Mitchell advised the Forum that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) had now been approved by both the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) and Hampshire County Council (HCC), with funding support provided by Active Travel England. He explained that Phase One of the proposals would focus on improving road safety along the A35, including the provision of safer crossing points. Phase Two would consider safety improvements along routes between Lymington and Lyndhurst, particularly in the Brockenhurst area. Further details would be provided as the project progresses.
- 6.3 With regard to the current A326 proposals, Jim Mitchell advised that a number of options for improving pedestrian crossing safety were being considered. These proposals were currently under review by the planning authority. He further reported that the NPA and HCC were working collaboratively to explore opportunities to improve access and provide safer crossing points along the former Breamore railway line.

7 AOB

- 7.1 None

Date of next meeting:

Monday 14 September 2026, 9.30am – 1.00pm – The Beach House, Milford-on-Sea