

Minutes of the New Forest Access Forum Meeting
Council Chamber, Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington SO41 9ZG
10 March 2025

Present

Members:

Caroline Rackham (Chair)
David Bennett
Gordon Bird
Ruth Croker
Erika Dovey
Bob Damper
Paul French
Sarah Hammett
Lucy Kennedy
Theresa Monks
Richard Shirley
Brian Tarnoff

Officers:

Adam Vasey (New Forest National Park Authority)
Vicki Gibbon (New Forest National Park Authority)

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Paola Palma, Pippa Hutton and Ann Sevier.

2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 2 December 2024 were agreed as a true record.

3 Member and Officer Reports

3.1 Forum Officer's Report

3.2 Adam Vasey gave a National Park Access update highlighting the Access for All funds, volunteering, Access improvements at Copythorne Common and the Breamore Railway Line project.

3.3 The full report can be found on our website.

3.4 Forestry England Report – Lucy Kennedy

3.5 Lucy Kennedy gave a brief update on work which had been carried out by Forestry England this included Ground nesting birds, animal accidents, fly tipping, car park maintenance and tree safety checks.

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

4 Public Representations

4.1 None.

5 The New Forest SAMM Report – David Illsley (NFNPA)

5.1 David Illsley gave an update on the Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM) work that planning authorities in and around the New Forest are jointly working on. The work aims to address recreational impacts arising from new development on the New Forest's internationally designated nature conservation sites. The Footprint Ecology research reports (2020-2023) identify a range of potential impacts from the projected increase in visitors arising from planned development. The report recommends a strategic, proportionate and co-ordinated approach should be developed across local authorities within the defined 13.8km 'zone of influence', with several benefits to a strategic approach compared to the current situation where each planning authority has their own mitigation strategy.

Mr Illsley advised that any new developments (such as housing and other forms of overnight accommodation) permitted within the defined zone of influence must address recreational pressures on the New Forest's designated sites. Footprint Ecology's SAMM report (2023) sets out a costed package of strategic access management and monitoring measures for the New Forest designated sites to ensure a consistent approach to SAMM provision; and to identify a consistent methodology for setting developer contributions. It was explained that this was an on-going process involving 9 planning authorities, Natural England and Forestry England and Mr Illsley would advise the forum of the outcome shortly.

A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

6 Local Plan Review – David Illsley (NFNPA)

6.2 David Illsley gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the National Park Authority's current Local Plan consultation. The current Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and there are benefits from updating the plan to ensure it remains consistent with current national planning policy. He advised that the initial consultation on the review began on 4 February and would run for 6 weeks ending on 18 March; and that Forum members were encouraged to respond. More details on the consultation can be found here - [Planning for the future of the New Forest National Park: Have your say on the Local Plan Review - New Forest National Park Authority](#)

Following discussion the following actions were agreed –

Actions – all forum members to send any words to Adam that they would like to include in the forum's response.

Gordon Bird to formulate a response on sustainable transport and forward to all members.

Brian Tarnoff to formulate a response regarding mitigation.

7 Charging for Forestry England Car Parks

7.1 Caroline Rackham, Chair, informed forum members that car parking charges would be brought into Forestry England car parks within the next few years. The forum were asked for their views on this. Following an in-depth discussion the following questions / comments were given:

- Would volunteers i.e. litter pickers have an exemption?
- Concern was raised over method of payment, didn't want to see unsightly infrastructure
- Would there be a permit scheme?
- Would commoners get exemption?
- Was there evidence to show it was worth it?
- There is difficulty with Wi-Fi on the forest so could prove difficult to pay
- The public need to buy into this and feel safe on car parks
- Impact on verge parking
- Policing
- Profit generation / ring fenced funds

It was suggested that Forestry England come to a future meeting for further discussion.

8 Consultation systems review and clarification

- 8.1 Adam Vasey ran through the current mechanism for how the forum deals with consultations and asked for any suggestions on how this could be improved. It was agreed that this currently works well, however more ad-hoc teams meetings and / or in person sub groups may be beneficial.

9. AOB

Adam advised that an updated communication policy had been produced and that he would forward this to members shortly.

Bob Damper requested that Network Rail attend a future meeting to discuss the closure of a number of rail crossings and at the next meeting look at sustainable transport.

Members were concerned that the website had not been updated with the minutes and agenda for the meeting, the secretariat apologised for this oversight and advised that this would be addressed.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 9 June 2025, 9.30am – 1.00pm – Location TBA