

NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**Minutes of the Meeting held in the Linden Hall, Lyndhurst Community Centre,
Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY
on THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2025 at 7.30 pm**

Those present:

Brian Tarnoff (Chair)
Nigel Stone (NFNPA)
Richard Burke (FE)
Anthony Pasmore (Verderers)
David Stone (Panel Secretariat)
Rachel Bonathan (Panel Secretariat)

Apologies for absence

- Mandy Preece (Natural England)
- Patricia Banks (Milford-on-Sea Parish Council)
- Mary Davis (Minstead Parish Council)
- Derrick Tipp (New Forest District Council)
- Craig Harrison (Forestry England)
- James Young (Commoners Defence Association) – substituted by Michael Eccles at the current meeting

1. New Forest Commoners as a National Minority

- 1.1 Brice Stratford of Lyndhurst Parish Council updated members on the above matter. He said that efforts were being made for New Forest Commoners to be recognised through the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This was an international treaty that had been ratified by the United Kingdom. If successful, the proposal for the NF Commoners to achieve National Minority Status might produce practical, useful outcomes by giving NF Commoners, and their vital role in the preservation of the Forest, a clear standing and recognition in local decision making.
- 1.2 He responded to queries from Panel members who then noted his presentation.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 These were reported as set out above in the minutes.

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

- 3.1 The minutes were approved.

4 Discussion – should future Panel meetings start at 7.00 pm or remain at 7.30 pm

- 4.1 The Chairman asked members to express a preference for a start time for future meeting of the Panel. Following brief discussion, members voted by consensus to start the next meeting of the Panel at 7.00 pm on a trial basis.

5 Matters for Reporting

5.1 Forestry England Update – Richard Burke

Mr Burke reported that with the hot summer, there had been an increased use of stoves and campfire incidents compared to the previous summer and as well as routine patrols from FE Rangers there had been regular joint patrols between FE Rangers and volunteers from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire Service. He advised that the engagement on Public Space Protection Orders was ongoing and there had been many visitors spoken to and a total of 4 fines issued for fire related incidents.

Mr Burke reported that there had been a recent increase in dumped and burnt-out vehicles which were costly and complex to remove. There were joint FE and police patrols in car parks to address anti-social behaviour and theft from vehicles. On fly-tipping he advised that there had been 95 fly-tips on the Crown Lands within the previous 5 months.

He then reported on FE's participation in the New Forest Show in July. Other community engagement work included speaking to 8,300 people via FE's information cabin at Bolderwood, regular community walks led by Forestry England and local police, Verderers Court Open Days (staffed and supported by FE volunteers) and planning for FE volunteer led conservation work for the autumn and winter.

FE were continuing to work with statutory bodies to develop an approach to address sustainable funding to continue FE's care for the New Forest.

Referring to the restoration of timber plantations, Mr Burke advised that some of the inclosures were being thinned and planted with native trees to create more biodiverse woodlands and others were being returned to heathlands or wetlands as detailed in the Forest Plan. One Hundred and seventy hectares of heathland had been restored since 2019 and it was planned to restore a further 190 hectares over the next 5 years. This work was supported by the Verderers of the New Forest, and the National Park Authority under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

On boosting biodiversity, he said that restoration was a long-term process, but there were already signs of nature returning and the Hampshire Ornithological Society's Woodlark survey had found that this ground-nesting bird species was returning to recently restored sites. The survey results would be shared later in September.

Referring to FE's works programme taking place in the autumn and winter months, he said that this year, FE would be focussing on approximately 12 heathland sites and work activities which would include plantation felling or thinning, infilling artificial drains and maintaining restored areas (bracken cutting and pine seedling pulling).

A copy of the presentation is available on the website.

5.2 NFNPA Update – Nigel Stone

Nigel Stone began his presentation by reminding the Panel of the current interim arrangements following Steve Averys departure in the spring, advising David Ilsley was leading the Planning and Place team on an interim basis, Nigel Stone was leading on Health and Safety, Quadrants and the Consultative Panel and Paul Walton was leading the Ranger team and Recreation Management Team. Mr Stone also advised that Gareth Hale had joined the Authority as the new Legal & Monitoring Officer and that 3 new members will be joining the Authority in September.

Nigel Stone informed members that a partial review of the Local Plan was continuing with a range of input to update the document going forward as well as adding a new chapter concerning climate change. Once completed the Plan will undergo a 6-week consultation with further consideration in 2026.

The Verne Dene campsite high court case in North Ripley was still awaiting a hearing date following the owner's appeal on the original decision.

HCC was engaging with the NPA ahead of a formal planning application later in 2025 concerning the A326.

Partners, MPs, stakeholders, have been hosted by the NPA over the summer including officers from Defra and Baroness Taylor. He reported on a successful NF show which saw celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of the NPA which included the Youth for Climate and Nature who played a prominent role.

The NPA continued support for the Farming in Protected Landscape Scheme and agreed its national landscapes targets.

The NPA continued to monitor any developments concerning Devolution and Local Government reorganisation and will work with outcomes following this.

A copy of this presentation is available on the website.

5.3 NFDC Update – Derek Tipp

It was noted that Derek Tipp had submitted an apology for the meeting and his update would be added to the Consultative Panel website. Derrek Tipp's update to the Panel can be found using the following link:

5.4 Verderers Update – Anthony Pasmore

Anthony Pasmore (Verderers) introduced himself and advised that FE had been in discussions with NFDC regarding residential refuse bins in the Forest after several issues with livestock eating out of bins put out for collection, which had caused significant problems.

Mr Pasmore shared the ongoing issues of farmer grazing sites being divided and sold on, especially when they accessed open woodland. Mr Pasmore requested that this be investigated by the NPA. Nigel Stone noted this and agreed to investigate further.

He mentioned that a small number of ponies were out of condition in one particular area of the Forest and requested that this be investigated.

6 Any other items the Chairman feels urgent

- 6.1 Sue Bennison (Bramshaw Parish Council) raised an issue regarding unregistered land as she has recently been contacted regarding the condition of a tree which appeared to be on an unregistered site. She asked whether unregistered land was something for further consideration by the Panel. Following brief discussion, the consensus of the Panel was that this was not currently a matter for consideration by the Panel.

7 Date of next Panel Meeting.

- 7.1 Thursday 4 December 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm