

New Forest Association (Registered Charity No: 260328)

Annual General Meeting

To be held at 10.30 am on Saturday 21st April 2018 at The Barn, Foxlease, Lyndhurst, SO43 7DE

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the President, Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the 2017 AGM – to approve the minutes (A)
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. To adopt the Annual Report (B)
6. Treasurer's report - to receive and adopt the Annual Accounts and appoint the independent accounts examiner
7. Election of Trustees – Brian Tarnoff and William Ziegler are due to retire and have been nominated to stand for re-election.
8. Election of Council members – Clive Chatters, Jonathon Cox, Roly Errington, Eve Gilmon, Richard Reeves, Neil Sanderson and Jenni Tubbs are due to retire and have been nominated to stand for re-election. Ann Sevier has been nominated to stand for election
9. Election of Officers: There are the following nominations
Chair: John Ward
Vice Chair: Gale Gould
Honorary Secretary: Vacant
Honorary Treasurer: Brandy Gill
- 10 Election of President: Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre has been nominated
- 11 Election of Vice-President: Peter Frost has been nominated

A Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association

Held at Minstead Village Hall on Saturday 22nd April 2017

Seventy-six members attended, their names being registered in the attendance book.

1. Welcome by the President. At 10.30am the President, Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence. Received from eleven members, namely Rosemary Billett, Margaret Deem, Mrs. Heathcote-Hacker, David Humbert, Graham Long, Rollo and Anne Malcolm- Green, Pamela Marlow, Bob Morris, Neil Sanderson, Jenni Tubbs.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 16th April 2016. The meeting approved the minutes unanimously.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes. The meeting agreed any matters could be included in the later discussion.

5. To Adopt the Annual Report. The meeting agreed the Annual Report unanimously.

6. Treasurer's Report. Brandy Gill told the meeting that income was much the same as in 2016 at £15,307, the difference being a gratefully received legacy of £2000.

Expenses were higher following then rebranding of the Association, including, for example, the new website design and build and the redesign of the leaflets.

More grants had been given this year, including £11,500 to sponsor the Apprentice Rangers Scheme and for restoring lost landscapes. Another £3000 went to the New Forest Trust for a smooth snake survey.

Cash funds had reduced by £10,000 and transfers between accounts had taken place in order to attract better interest rates. Overall, the New Forest Association was in a comfortable position.

Before closing, Brandy noted that payments totalling £25,000 for the Rockford Farm project had commenced, but only in the present financial year. The meeting unanimously voted to approve the Financial Report and to re-appoint the independent accounts examiner.

7. Election of Trustees. Keith Braithwaite, Brandy Gill, Gale Gould, Dionis Macnair and Peter Roberts, having been previously nominated and seconded, were elected unanimously as Trustees by the meeting.

8. Election of Council Members. Council members Bernie Austin, Keith Howe, David Humbert, Graham Long and Bob Morris, having been previously nominated and seconded, were re-elected unanimously by the meeting.

9. Election of President. Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre had been previously nominated and seconded to the position and was subsequently re-elected unanimously by the meeting.

10. Election of Officers. John Ward had been previously nominated and seconded as Chairman, Gale Gould as Vice Chair, Brandy Gill as Treasurer and Keith Braithwaite as Honorary Secretary.

The meeting re-elected the candidates into the appropriate offices unanimously.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.50am.

B Annual Report 2017

Patron: Belinda, Lady Montagu **President:** Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre

Chair: John Ward **Vice-Chair:** Gale Gould **Hon Secretary:** Keith Braithwaite **Hon Treasurer:** Brandy Gill

TRUSTEE BOARD MEMBERS (WHO WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL) IN 2017

Graham Baker	Brandy Gill	Peter Roberts	John Ward
Keith Braithwaite	Dionis Macnair	Brian Tarnoff	William Ziegler

COUNCIL MEMBERS during 2017

Bernie Austin	Jonathan Cox	David Humbert	Richard Reeves
Maureen Bromley-Smith	Roly Errington	Graham Long	Neil Sanderson
Clive Chatters	Eve Gillmon	Bob Morris	Ann Sevier (co-opted)
Michael Chilcott	Keith Howe	Leo Randall	Jenni Tubbs

Trustees and Council Report

Formal meetings of Council were held six times and for the Board of Trustees four times during 2017. In addition there were regular meetings of the Habitats and Landscape Committee and the Planning and Transport Committee; and also ad hoc meetings of the Education Working Group. At the end of 2017 there were eight trustees and sixteen non-trustee members of Council.

We have continued to share issues and experiences with other National Park Societies and as a Council member of the Campaign for National Parks (CNP): and have collaborated with them to co-ordinate responses to government and other national consultations and draft proposals that will affect National Parks. Examples of national consultations and draft proposals with implications for the New Forest that have crossed our desks in 2017 include:

- Department of Transport consultation on the future of strategic roads
- Emergency Services Network (ESN) – mobile communications
- Campaign for Better Transport Report
- Ofgem open letter on RIIO-2 Framework
- Electricity transmission owner stakeholder consultation
- Government Housing White Paper
- Government proposals for Permitted Development Rights
- Proposed UK Minerals Strategy

We have held informal liaison meetings with the National Park Authority and Forestry Commission; and attend various New Forest forums and working groups including the Consultative Panel and meetings of the Verderers Court.

The Friends of the New Forest were in evidence on stands at the New Forest Show and at Roydon Woods Woodfair. Sponsorship funding support was given for the animal accident 'advert' on the back of the New Forest Tour bus through 2017; and also for the 'Our Past Our Future' projects for ranger training and for habitat restoration.

The Association had previously committed to support the project to develop housing for commoners at Rockford farm and during 2017 we contributed to the costs of preparing drawings and making a planning application. On the research

side we made a funding contribution to the New Forest Curlew Project.

2017 was, of course, our 150th Anniversary year. At the end of 2016 we launched "Saving the New Forest", the book written by Peter Roberts telling the story of our Association. It has been selling well throughout 2017.

The story of the Association and the New Forest from the mid 19th century until today was put together into a slide show presentation. This has been given to more than 20 groups, reaching over 1,000 people most of whom had not previously heard of us and gaining donations to support our work to protect the Forest.

We organised and hosted the National Parks Societies annual conference, held this year in October at Balmer Lawn Hotel and attended by 50 delegates from other national parks, the Campaign for National Parks, other national bodies and New Forest organisations.

During the year our Anniversary programme provided 16 events. Walks and visits included, the Verderers Court and Lyndhurst Church, Archaeology in Sloden Inclosure, Caring for Pondhead Inclosure, Needs Ore, Rockford and a Fungi Walk at Rans Wood. Following the AGM there were options to visit Furzey Gardens or Minstead Study Centre.

Two events were held specifically to celebrate the 150-year anniversary:

- Lunch at MJs restaurant was attended by our Patron, Belinda Lady Montagu, and President, Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, together with NFA members and trustees, affiliated Parishes and representatives from the Forestry Commission, Verderers, Commoners and National Park Authority.
- Council members and invited guests gathered at the Crown Hotel in Lyndhurst on the 22nd of July to raise a glass and mark the day on which the New Forest Association was founded.

We held two receptions and exhibition private views – The New Forest Open Art Exhibition at the New Forest Centre, and New Forest Bird Sculpture by Geoffrey Dashwood at St Barbe Museum and Gallery.

Purely social events proved to be less popular with Friends of the New Forest and a summer garden party and an autumn golf day were cancelled due to lack of support. Unfortunately the intended Frohawk Walk was also cancelled at short notice due to a gypsy drive-in clashing with this event. Ours was not the only anniversary this year. It was the 800th anniversary of the New Forest Charter and panels about the New Forest Association were included in a display at the New Forest Centre. In November we hosted a small delegation from the Anglo-Portuguese community who visited the New Forest in November to mark the 100th anniversary of the arrival of 150 Portuguese troops to assist with timber production for the war effort.

Two large events for 200 people, both of which were booked out with waiting lists, provided the bookends for the Anniversary Year.

The first was "What Future for the New Forest – A Foot in the Past and an Eye to the Future", with a keynote address from Council member, Clive Chatters followed by responses from Alison Barnes, Chief Executive of the New Forest National Park Authority, Bruce Rothney, Deputy Surveyor for the New Forest and Dominic May, Official Verderer, together with the audience. Clive identified the management of

recreation in the Forest as being a key issue, and concluded that 'this generation's responsibility to secure the future of the Forest now lies with us'. By the end of the evening there seemed to be an emerging consensus, particularly with respect to recreation management, that it feels like '**one of those moments for bold decision making**'.

Recreation management continued to be a major issue for us through the year. There have been several presentations to the Verderers Court echoing similar concerns, and at the New Forest Show the National Park Authority launched a consultation on reviewing their Recreation Management Strategy. We responded to this consultation and also opened up a dialogue on the subject with the Forestry Commission. We believe this is the most pressing issue needing to be addressed within the Forest and significant action must be taken to review and change the recreation infrastructure within the Forest. To succeed this must be driven by the statutory authorities with as much vision as those who implemented the 1971 Conservation of the New Forest proposals and not just end in fine words but with little tangible effect.

Chair - John Ward

Planning & Transport Committee Report

It is difficult to read the 2016 planning report and not to conclude that 2017 has been a largely wasted year. You will therefore excuse any frustrations that show.

There remains little between our Association and the National Park Authority (NPA) over individual planning applications. In the defined villages we are succeeding in coping with the need to increase central housing densities without disturbing the spacious nature elsewhere and coping with the reduction in retail outlets without losing the vitality of High Streets. Residents agree that the type of housing required is modest, suitable for younger people starting out and older people downsizing. But we are challenged by developers' desire to build what is most profitable without regard to local need; currently this is managed flats for old people who can afford high charges.

Second home ownership and short-term letting are growing at a rate that could exceed the planned increase in housing numbers. This sometimes requires planning permission and it is always worth knowing the extent of the problem, so please let us know if it happening near to you.

In the countryside problems remain dispersed but accumulatively erode character and traditions. Commoning properties are sold to the extremely well off who then seek to convert their humble holding into something else. Extensions are maximised, tatty outbuildings are replaced by three car garages with fully equipped offices above, large loose boxes are replaced by a row of pretty stables, ménages replace a pleasing adjacent paddock and elaborate electric gates or cattle grids replace five bars. Any common grazing land owned outside the new fence is "tidied" - this usually means easing the entry of the Land Rover Evoque by dumping tonnes of gravel on common grazing land. Often

these activities do not break planning rules. Where it does we seek first to have the applicant reconsider and secondly seek refusal.

Discussions continue on the revised Local Plans of the National Park and NFDC. We have achieved protection for the NF Special Protection Area broadly similar to that of the Thames Basin Heaths. This caused several proposed housing sites to be withdrawn, but rather than reduce numbers, NFNPA sought more sites, previously considered unsuitable, to keep the likely new dwelling numbers at around 35 per annum. The average house price in the Park is £581,000, over 15 times average earnings and there is a desperate need for affordable homes for local people. The NPA recognise the problem but their solutions lack ambition. We believe a straightforward policy that all new housing should be affordable stands the best chance of resisting incessant government meddling and developer manipulation and that the NPA should accept a greater role in securing under-utilised publicly owned land in the villages for development.

Since we have become a National Park, the NPA's own data reports that the success of many species of ground and low nesting birds has suffered a "marked decline". The universally agreed cause is disturbance from recreation and the extra dwellings being built around the New Forest will result in an additional million visitors per annum, considerably worsening the problem. Despite this it is difficult to find any action stemming from the NPA's 75 page Recreational Management Strategy since its publication in 2010. The planning committee will do all it can to ensure the emerging Local Plans recognise recreational pressure on the National Park as the primary problem facing the New Forest and that compensation from developers is used in forthright measures to reverse the problem. The relocation or closure

Forestry Commission car parks will be one of the most effective management tools in reducing disturbance and we have developed sophisticated mapping techniques to measure levels of disturbance from them.

In 2017, planning volunteers have scrutinised over 1,000 planning applications, responded to a dozen consultations,

Habitat & Landscape Committee Report

Once again I am full of gratitude and amazement at the generous contributions of our committee members this year. This included countless hours volunteered to pour over one of the most vital consultations we've seen in some time, and days spent trudging the Forest in all weathers on site visits for works proposed by the Forestry Commission on the open Forest.

The Forest Design Plan - Consultation continued this year. Our ecologists took part in round table discussions on this year's draft, a palpable improvement over the March 2016 version. The detail, which had concerned us previously, now was much more in line with the commitment from the 1999 Minister's Mandate (strongly supported by subsequent policy) to restore pasture woodlands, heathlands, valley mires and Ancient and Semi-Natural native woodland, and favour broadleaves over conifer. In these meetings, Forestry Commission staff expressed sound underlying principles that would serve this plan, both in its current form, and going forward, to manage towards these goals.

Our main quibble is that the documentation of the plan does not adequately express those principles. This may seem a small thing, given how close the detail plan is to delivering many of our Association's goals, but without them in place the plan may not be able to show its logic adequately to stand on its own against Habitats Regulations Assessment, or possible changes in future management of the Forest which could veer away from the promise this plan holds.

After the public consultation on the plan, the Forest Services review determined that consent under EIA regulations is required for the deforestation proposals (some areas being returned to open Forest habitats). Forest Enterprise has been tasked with producing an Environmental Statement for consideration, and we are amongst the stakeholders invited to a scoping exercise in January 2018. DEFRA have agreed to roll forward some elements of the FC's expired felling license, which was dependent on the now unknown date for approval of the plan by the Inspectorate for renewal.

Wetland Restoration Strategy - In a similar spirit of openness the Forestry Commission proposed a Wetland Restoration Strategy at a well-attended December workshop including representatives across the spectrum of the debate. In addition to more constructive engagement with all stakeholders, we hope this will lead to a monitoring program that is apt, affordable and will adequately support future efforts.

England Coast Path - Understandably our section of Coast, with a nearly uninterrupted series of very protected habitats (some garnering between four and five layers of designation, nationally and internationally), has been a very thorny

developed maps, maintained good relationships with the parishes, plotted aircraft routes and surveyed overhead cable routes (with some success the line south and west of Burley is to be buried in 2018). Our thanks go to them all.

Chair - Graham Baker

problem for Natural England, who have nudged the consultation forward throughout the year. Once mooted for March 2017, now February 2018 (the original target date for *implementation* was March 2018).

Although a habitat adjacent inland route may be viable, the coastal margin created by the default spreading room designated in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 would potentially create up to 3,500 acres of new access land on these easily disturbed habitats, where it would cause irreparable damage. We hope that Natural England will exclude these, but even if they do, the Ordnance Survey will not show those exclusions. Our main role currently seems to be to remind one and all of the immense importance of our Coast with greater fragility and importance than the precious habitats of the Crown Lands that typically draw our focus.

Recreation Management Strategy - The welcome review of the NPA's Recreation Management Strategy has been mentioned above in this annual report. Unfortunately the public survey reiterated paragraphs from the current strategy alongside each potential subject heading, leaving some confused as to whether to respond to these remarks or implicitly approve them? For our response we asked that the next RMS should feature priority projects with clear objectives and timeframes. We proposed a comprehensive review of recreation infrastructure within the park, including surveys of habitats, campsites and parking, with actions leading to a provision that is 'Fit for Purpose'. We proposed initiatives to raise the profile of the National Park so the decision makers of adjacent Authorities and communities become more aware of their impacts on the Forest and 'Section 62 Duties', create adequate, proportional mitigation, and petition Central Government for more strategic targets to take pressure off the Forest. We also asked for clearer messages in Education that would easily highlight the Forest's need for protection as a National Nature Reserve, Working Farm and Working Forest.

Going Forward - Other areas of concern to address in 2018:

Along with Associated British Ports revisiting their goal of a deep-water container port at Dibden Bay, our Association and the whole of the Forest will be facing many challenges for renewed development of the already heavily urbanised Waterside. This includes the proposal by Fawley Waterside Ltd for the development of a new town, with an estimated population of 3,500 on the site of the Fawley Power Station. The development on the brownfield portion of the site, originally exempted from the National Park, might be hard to resist, but the current proposal includes a 'village' built out into the National Park on Tom Tiddler's Ground, which is a young coastal grazing marsh and forms a rough habitat that is prime for rehabilitation.

Chair - Brian Tarnoff

