



New Forest Association (Registered Charity No: 260328).

Annual General Meeting 2024

To be held at 10.30 am, Saturday 20th April 2024
at Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, SO42 7RY

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM – to approve the minutes (A)
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. To adopt the Annual Report (B)
5. Treasurer's report - to receive and adopt the Annual Accounts (C)
6. Appoint Alan Hamilton to be the independent accounts examiner
7. Election of Trustees – John Ward and William Ziegler have been nominated.
8. Election of Officers: The following persons have been nominated - Chair: Sarah Nield, Vice Chair: Sarah Richards; Hon Secretary: Tracy Gribble
- 10 Election of President: Lord Manners has been nominated

A Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association (Friends of the New Forest)

Held on 8th April 2023 at Minstead Village Hall

1. **Present:** 40 members in person and by proxy
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Susan Bishop, Mr Combes, Tara Demsey, Gerry Edwards, David Humbert, Michael Page, Christine Parkhouse, Ann Sevier, Laura Taylor and William Ziegler.
3. **Minutes of the 2022 AGM**, held at Lyndhurst Community Centre on 28th April 2021, were approved.
4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes** - none.
5. **The Trustees 2021 Annual Report** was received and adopted.
6. **The Treasurer's 2022 Annual Report and Annual Accounts** were received. And the Annual Accounts were adopted
7. The Board of Trustees was authorised to appoint an Independent Accounts Examiner.
8. **Election of Trustees** - Clare Gouldstone, Christopher Counsell and Sarah Richardson were elected
- 9 **Election of Officers** - The following were elected to the stated posts:
Chair - John Ward, Vice Chair - Vacant, Hon Secretary - Sarah Nield,
Hon Treasurer - Christopher Winter
10. **Election of President** - Vacant
11. **Election of Vice Presidents** - Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre and Peter Frost were re-elected as Vice Presidents.

B ANNUAL REPORT for 2023

President: Vacant **Vice-Presidents:** Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, Peter Frost

Chair: John Ward; **Vice-Chair:** Vacant

Hon Secretary: Sarah Nield; **Hon Treasurer:** Chris Winter

Trustees: Bernie Austin; Christopher Counsell; Clive Chatters; Clare Gouldstone; Brian Tarnoff; William Ziegler

Council Members: Jonathan Cox; Tara Dempsey; Roly Errington; Tony Hockley; Keith Howe; Jo Ivey; David Humbert; Gale Pettifer; Richard Reeves; Neil Sanderson; Ann Sevier; Julie Stubbs; Jenni Tubbs

At the end of 2023 there were 603 Association memberships with 706 members, which is a membership drop of 7% compared with 2022

Trustees and Council Report

Formal meetings of the Advisory Council were held six times and for the Board of Trustees six times during 2023. In addition there were regular meetings of the Habitat and Landscape Committee and the Planning and Transport Committee. At the end of 2023 there were nine trustees and thirteen non-trustee members of Council. We attended open court meetings of the Verderers Court throughout the year and made Presentments on various issues.

Thanks to the efforts of two volunteers we have continued to reach many local community groups by giving illustrated talks. These include The story of our Association from the mid 19th century until today; The many aspects of the New Forest coast; and Mysteries, histories and nefarious goings on in the New Forest through time. One of our trustees, Clare Gouldstone, has successfully put new life into our programme of events for FoNF members.

Like most other years, 2023 saw our trustees and Council dividing their time between delivering planned campaigns and reacting to what turns up. There never seems to be a shortage of 'issues' appearing in the Forest, many of which would be more harmful rather than beneficial.

Most of the work of our Association is carried out by our committees – Planning and Transport (P&T), and Habitats and Landscape (H&L), whose reports follow

This year we have followed up our Byelaw survey by conducting a survey amongst commoners to find out how the disregard of byelaws affects commoning. Dovetailing with this work is our monitoring of progress of the much-publicised Public Space Protection Orders and whether they can help secure respectful enjoyment of the Forest.

While there are still divided views on whether being a National Park is an overall benefit to the Forest or not, we have continued to make the most of our role as a Council member of the national Campaign for National Parks (CNP). Working with them and other national parks we have lobbied government on a number of issues, including wild camping in national parks, and have responded to consultations on national legislation that will affect the New Forest. Zoom virtual meetings have made it much easier (and cheaper!) for us to engage in national discussions – for example we attended a CNP roundtable meeting to discuss National Marine Parks and Freeports. We attended the annual Park Protector Awards in the House of Commons, taking the opportunity to talk to the minister and shadow minister with responsibilities that include national parks. Both government and the opposition expressed their wish to increase access to the countryside and in particular to national parks. We also

participated in the National Parks Societies Conference held this year in Kendal and hosted by the Friends of the Lake District.

As reported in last year's Annual Report we became very embroiled in the tendering of campsite management by Forestry England (FE) and at one point seemed to be in an ongoing dialogue exchanging letters with the Chief Executive of FE. We are pleased to now work with Camping in the New Forest, a subsidiary of the Show Society, to explore whether it is possible to reconcile the expectations of contemporary campers with the Forest's special qualities, but we shall stand by our views seeking long term commitments as set out in the Special Area of Conservation Management Plan.

We were pleased to be able to support the Commoners Defence Association's launch of Crowd-Funding at the New Forest Show and our trustees committed funds to support the work of the CDA in their objection to the encroachment at Shobley. In particular we were pleased to welcome Julie Stubbs as a new member of our Council and to support her in reconvening a working group to consider encroachment issues and co-ordinate action.

While historically we have always been a supporter of commoning in the Forest it was good to be able to formalise our dialogue with the CDA, with their chairman now being regularly in attendance at our Council meetings.

As well as reacting to immediate crises, we have invested in long-term strategies including the Environment Agency's review of our dynamic coast along with strategic priorities for nature conservation through the Wildlife Round Table. (You may have read about the latter in our Forest Matters magazine). As well as discussing the higher-level aspects of conservation strategy, the Round Table enabled us to welcome the RSPB- now a major landowner- and explore with them how their estate at Franchises Lodge may contribute to the conservation of the whole Forest.

And finally, but not least, we are very pleased to be able to announce that Lord 'Willie' Manners has agreed to become our President from our next AGM in April this year. We worked closely with him on the issue of camping while he was the Official Verderer and his knowledge and support for the Forest is invaluable.

Chair – John Ward

Planning & Transport Committee Report

2023 was a busy year for the committee with multiple government consultations and other issues to respond to, in addition to the core business of checking planning applications made to the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA). The committee makes representations on matters where there is concern about the impact on the National Park (NP).

The committee meet every other month to discuss matters of local interest in addition to having occasional guest speakers join the meeting. This year we have been joined by Steve Avery, NFNPA Executive Director Strategy and Planning and Lucy Cooper, Head of Enforcement at NFNPA. These guest speakers have been very generous with their time in answering a wide range of questions posed by members of the committee and for the committee to understand more about the work of the planning team at NPA and how to liaise with them. These sessions have also been a good opportunity to have informed discussions about matters that concern members including residential use of outbuildings, affordable housing, close boarded fenced boundaries, telecoms facilities and environmental mitigation.

Over 1,000 applications have been submitted to NFNPA this year. Many of these are not controversial and are largely domestic in nature including both building work and tree work applications. Members of the committee review the weekly application lists and identify those of interest for discussion. This year there were a few that were of particular interest and on which the committee submitted representations. These included a proposal for an 'eco home' at Home Farm, Emery Down. The committee raised a substantial objection to the proposal. The application was refused.

A major site identified in the local plan for housing, located on the edge of the National Park (NP) south of Lymington (Land between Lower Pennington Lane and Ridgeway Lane), has also been the subject of objections from the committee both to NFDC and NFNPA. This is an interesting application as no development is proposed in the NP but the committee considered in detail the impacts of the proposal for 82 houses on the boundary of the park. There are real concerns about the change in character of the area, impacts on local ecology and traffic generation. However, the site was identified in the NFDC local plan and a development will take place there in future. A decision is still awaited.

Progress is being made with issuing planning permission for other sites identified in the local plan: Whartons Lane, Ashurst and Church Lane, Sway. Proposals for Ashurst Hospital continue to be discussed.

In June Hampshire County Council (HCC) consulted on the proposed widening of the A326 (Marchwood bypass) between 'Morrisons' roundabout to south of Marchwood. This proposed widening, which has been discussed for a number of years is in connection with the development of the Solent Freeport part on Waterside. Members of the committee attended HCC public consultation events and substantial objections were raised to the impact of the proposed widening on the NP. A response to the consultation, and modified plans, are awaited.

The government has been reviewing aspects of planning guidance particularly the part that sets out what development can be carried out without the need for planning permission. There have been two significant government consultations during the year. The first consultation was about relaxing Permitted Development Rights (what can be done without planning permission). The second was a consultation on the use of homes for short term lets (Airbnb type accommodation). In both consultations it was proposed that the current protections given to all national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) would be relaxed. The committee response to government made strong objection to the proposed weakening of protection for National Parks in both consultations. The response to the consultations is awaited.

The supply of affordable housing in the NP continues to be a matter of concern for members. Negotiations have continued on a site for 10 new homes on New Inn Road, Bartley. A member of the committee spoke in support at the NFNPA meeting where the application was being considered. The item was deferred and a decision was made at a subsequent meeting in January 2024, when permission was granted in 2024.

The pressure for development on the edges of the Forest continue. This pressure, leading to significant new housing, roads and other facilities brings with it increasing population growth and increased pressure on the finite capacity of the New Forest to absorb more use for recreation. The committee is keen to continue to explore with other organisations how this pressure can be managed and mitigated through neighbouring areas developing new parks and areas for informal leisure as part of increased housing development. 2024 will

see the introduction of new legislation to ensure that new development effectively mitigates its impact on biodiversity (Bio-diversity net gain – BNG). This will be an important part of the interest of the committee in 2024.

Chair of Planning and Transport Committee

Sarah Richards

Committee members: Bernie Austin, Graham Baker, Phillip Butt, Alison Bolton, Ann Sevier, Mike Thomas.

Habitat & Landscape Committee Report

The past year brought opportunities for the committee to focus its attention on where we can make a difference. We continue to be a voice for conserving the Forest on numerous local committees, including the New Forest Consultative Panel, the Open Forest Advisory Committee, the Freshwater Forum.

Working through the Campaign for National Parks we gave evidence to the Office for Environmental Protection, a new government agency, who were interested in our understanding on the performance of Forestry England in conserving the Forest, as was the Forestry Stewardship Council. The combined knowledge of the committee and other active members of FoNF meant we were able to submit full, nuanced contributions to these debates.

Never a year passes without pressures on the Forest's landscape and the quality of its habitats. We have been delighted to work with Wild New Forest and the Freshwater Habitats Trust in seeking to quantify whether the Forest's wetlands are being contaminated by veterinary products. We also offered out stalwart support for the Commoners' Defence Association's resistance to encroachment on the Open Forest, notably those on privately-owned commons.

Somethings never seem to change, such as the felling of veteran trees for 'safety' purposes and our frustration at statutory bodies not enforcing bylaws designed to protect the Forest from abuse.

We look forward to meeting members at forthcoming walks and talks, and can be contacted by email at habitat.fonf@gmail.com

Chair Habitat and Landscape Committee

Clive Chatters

Committee members: Jonathan Cox, Tara Dempsey, Naomi Ewald, Clare Gouldstone, Sam Haynes, Ade Parker, Richard Reeves, Neil Sanderson, Julie Stubbs, Brian Tarnoff, Jenni Tubbs, Russell Wynn

The Trustee Board and Council thank all members of the committees for their time, interest, support and valuable local knowledge. We also wish to thank Bernie Austin, former chair of the Planning and Transport committee who stood down this year, for his work for the committee.

We would welcome new members to either committee, so if you have an interest in planning or environmental matters please contact the committee chair or the Hon Secretary.

C Treasurer's Report 2023

Income - Total income of £16,469 is an increase from last year's £13,488. The variations include an increase in membership subscriptions and donations along with an increase in dividends from our holding of M&G charity bonds, offset with a slight reduction in bank interest.

Payments - Total payments of £17,542 are higher than last year's £10,343. This is due to:

- a donation of £6,868 towards legal fees incurred by commoners in defence of the enclosure at Forest Oaks, Shobley
- an increase of £499 in subscription costs to the Campaign for National Parks.

The Association does not have any employees and no fees are paid to Trustees or Council members. The only fee we pay is for bookkeeping and Administrative services.

Deficit - Due to the donation towards legal fees for Forest Oaks we have generated a small deficit of £1,073.

Assets/Liabilities - Our cash holdings of £110K, is now held in two banks to increase the interest to be earned in 2024. Our investment in M&G charity bonds showed an increase of £2,786 as a result of modest increases in the stock and bond markets.

Thank you for your support.

Hon. Treasurer – Christopher Winter

Bookkeeping & membership administration: Juliet Lynn

The 2023 Financial Accounts are attached at ANNEX 1

ANNEX 1

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity 260328) RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS YEAR END DECEMBER 31st 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
INCOME		
Charity Activities		
Members' Subscriptions	7847.00	8063.00
Donations	3253.33	1467.68
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim (for previous year/s)	1709.91	1654.42
Trading Activities (book sales & Event tickets)	199.50	70.00
	13009.74	11255.10
Other Receipts		
Bank Interest	302.16	496.38
Charibond Dividends	3157.64	1736.68
	3459.80	2233.06
TOTAL RECEIPTS	16469.54	13488.16
PAYMENTS		
Charity Activities		
Council Expenses (travel, meetings, conferences)	1062.73	903.11
Insurance	512.17	347.13
Office Supplies and Postage	1605.31	1704.95
Newsletters & Reports (Printing)	1484.55	2112.06
Subscriptions (Campaign for National Parks)	1118.00	619.00
Bank / Paypal Charges / GoCardless Fees	61.23	68.25
Admin & Bookkeeping Expenses	3600.00	3600.00
Advertising, Public Relations, Website	1161.65	798.32
Safeguard Training	69.00	0.00
Legal Fees (Forest Oaks)	6868.25	0.00
Events & Shows	0.00	191.00
	17542.89	10343.82
Other Payments		
Grants Given:		
Mycological Remediation Pilot Project	0.00	1500.00
	0.00	1500.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	17542.89	11843.82
Net Receipts	-1073.35	1644.34
Cash Funds Opening Balance	111142.73	109498.39
	110069.38	111142.73

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity 260328)**STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES YEAR END DECEMBER 31st 2023**

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash Funds		
Lloyds Current Account	88971.08	14578.92
PayPal	1074.11	922.86
Shawbrook Bank 1	0.00	22661.54
Shawbrook Bank 2	0.00	53067.65
Virgin Bank	20024.19	19911.76
	110069.38	111142.73
Investment Assets		
M&G Charibond: Opening Value	85500.79	95652.58
Increase/Decrease in value	2786.61	-10151.79
	88287.40	85500.79
Assets for the Charity's Use		
New Forest Embroidery	100.00	100.00
Stock for Retail Sales		
Stock for Retail Sales: Opening Value	641.64	662.76
Less: value of goods sold or given away	-310.76	-21.12
	330.88	641.64
Other Monetary Assets		
Gift Aid Receivable*	1616.63	1707.88
	1616.63	1707.88

* Gift Aid on subscriptions & donations reclaimed but not yet received.

Notes on the Accounts

1. The Receipts and Payments Account has been prepared as a summary of receipts and payments made during the year by the New Forest Association.
2. These Accounts have been prepared in a format which complies with guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Approved on behalf of the Trustees

(Name) CHRISTOPHER WINTER (Date) 21/03/2024



(Name) W. JOHN WARD (Date) 21/03/2024

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the New Forest Association

I report on the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on the previous pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;

to follow the procedures laid down in the general Direction given by the Charity

Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act, and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present 'a true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

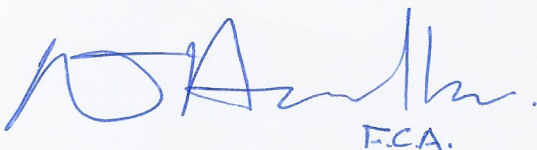
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Acts; and

to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Alan Hamilton

Address

Date

7 AVENUE ROAD, NEW MILTON, BH25 5JP
20th March 2024.