

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association of Local Councils
Held at the Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington on 24th July 2014 at 7.00pm

Parish/Town Council	Name
Ashurst & Colbury	Sally Arnold
Bramshaw	Sue Bennison
Bransgore	Richard Frampton
Brockenhurst	Russell Horne Harry Oram
Burley	Neal Martin
Copythorne	Mike Derrick (Treasurer)
Denny Lodge	Mo Dawkins
Hordle	Sue Bown Marion Still
Hyde	Jane Arigho
Hythe & Dibden	Brenda Smith
Marchwood	Alison Hoare
New Milton	Goff Beck – Chairman Graham Flexman (Clerk) David Hawkins (Mayor)
Redlynch	Bill Dunn
Whitsbury	Peter Kirby
New Forest District Council	Dave Yates
New Forest District Council	Rosemary Rutins
New Forest National Park	Steve Avery
New Forest National Park	Nigel Matthews
Apologies	
Ann Sturgess	Ashurst & Colbury
Peter Turner	Breamore
John Korbey	Brockenhurst
Emma Lane	Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley
George Bisson	Lyndhurst
Neil Gulliver	Sway

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed representatives from towns and parishes, Dave Yates and Rosemary Rutins from NFDC together with Steve Avery and Nigel Matthews from the National Park.

1. Annual Report - 2014

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report, per copy attached to these minutes.

2. Election of Chairman

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Cllr Goff Beck (New Milton Town Council) be elected Chairman of the Association until the next annual meeting.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Cllr John Korbey (Brockenhurst Parish Council) be elected Vice Chairman of the Association until the next annual meeting.

4. Appointment of Co-ordinator

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Graham Flexman (Clerk, New Milton Town Council) be appointed Co-ordinator of the Association until the next annual meeting.

5. Appointment of Treasurer

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Mike Derrick (Clerk, Copythorne Parish Council) be appointed Treasurer of the Association until the next annual meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Association's current bank balance is £3,462.58, with all subscriptions up to date.

There was a need to agree subscription rates for 2014/15. Councils who are members of HALC/NALC are entitled to free membership of the Association, while non-members pay a membership fee according to their size. The following scale was agreed by those present:

- Councils with electorates up to 1000 £20
- Councils with electorates between 1001 and 5000 £50
- Councils with electorates 5001 and above £100

The following councils are currently non-members of HALC/NALC:

- Fawley
- New Milton
- Totton & Eling

On the basis of the present scale, the fee for each of these Councils would be £100.

HALC advises that New Milton is a "training partner". Under this arrangement, New Milton pay HALC a negotiated subscription to gain local advice and attend training events as they don't wish to be part of the national structure. Last year HALC agreed to pay the non-member fee for New Milton and may well agree to do so again this year.

There was also a need to identify an Independent Examiner to "audit" the Association's accounts for 2013/14. Bill Andrews from Minstead has kindly undertaken this task since the new Association was formed and agreed to do so for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman noted that this concluded the Annual General Meeting aspects of this meeting.

7. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2014 were approved by those present, noting that Peter Kilbey from Whitsbury was in fact present at that meeting.

8. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Rosemary Rutins who would talk about Electronic Elections.

9. Reports of Ambassadors

In the absence of Mike Steele, the Chairman asked the Coordinator to introduce this item. Hampshire County Council needs to save £1.25 to £1.5 million from public and community transport spending by 2015/16. The authority recently undertook a county-wide review of subsidized bus and community transport services, together with a review of the discretionary elements of the Hampshire Concessionary Travel Scheme. Members were reminded savings could be achieved by a mixture of the following options:

- Reducing or ceasing support for Sunday services
- Reducing or ceasing support for evening services after 7pm
- Ceasing the 9am early start for the older persons bus pass
- Reducing the frequency and/or days of service
- Replacing bus services with taxi-shares or community transport services
- Reducing the amount of printed publicity with a greater use of electronic information

The review only looked at those bus and community transport services which receive financial support from the County Council. The County Council asked for the views and preferences of individual users and organizations to aid the decision-making process and the consultation closed at the end of May. According to Neil Beswick, who presented at our last meeting in April, the consultation responses have been analysed, and tenders for services in the New Forest have been issued and are due back mid-August. The consultation responses (over 3,200) indicated residents desire to retain Monday to Saturday day time services. A full report to HCC Executive Member Decision Day towards the end of October, with any revisions to bus services starting in the New Year.

10. Reports of Focus Groups

- a) **Dibden Bay** – Alison Hoare gave an update, noting that the intention following valuations / negotiations was for a sale to take place in March 2015, with a stipulation that it must be run as a port by a port operator for 20-35 years. Chris Elliott of NFDL is taking the lead on planning issues, with NPA input. (See article on next page).
- b) **Broadband** – In the absence of Jim Mitchell, this was deferred until the next meeting.
- c) **Cycling Liaison** – Neal Martin has compiled a detailed summary of the replies received from those Town & Parish Councils who provided feedback on the Charter and in brief, the two big issues identified were the need to cap the numbers and to provide rider identification i.e. numbers to be displayed on the back. Neal presented to the NFNPA last week, highlighting these two issues. Subsequently the NPA passed a motion insisting that in order to obtain NPA support these two items had to be included in the Charter. Neal Martin and Nigel Matthews updated members per the briefing note attached and it was agreed by those present, and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That NFALC endorses the Charter put forward by the Cycling Liaison Group.

- d) **Planning** – It was agreed by those present to terminate the planning focus group.
- e) **Light Pollution** – In the absence of Emma Lane, it was agreed to defer this matter.



Residents fighting for a say over port plans Monday 28th July 2014

Campaigners calling for residents to be consulted over the future of [Marchwood](#) Military Port are taking their fight to Downing Street. Parish councillors have launched a petition urging the Government to seek the views of people living near the 330-acre base. It follows a behind-closed-doors meeting last month at which civic chiefs were updated on plans to sell the port.

As reported in the Daily Echo, councillors leaving the meeting said the Ministry of Defence should carry out a “proper” public consultation exercise. The petition has already been signed by about 400 people and is due to be handed into 10 Downing Street next month.

[Associated British Ports](#) (ABP) has expressed an interest in the port, sparking fears that road and rail traffic in the area will increase if the company is allowed to take over the facility. Marchwood is home to 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, which is due to remain. But ABP is keen to use part of the site as a car storage facility, creating up to 400 jobs in a scheme similar to multi-storey car compounds at [Southampton](#) Docks. Liverpool-based Peel Ports is also eyeing up the facility, which occupies a prime site on the western shores of Southampton Water.

Parish council chairman Keith Petty said: “We are not NIMBYs. We just want to ensure that any new development is managed in such a way that it does not have a major impact on the lives of Waterside residents.” County councillor David Harrison added: “Plans to develop the port for commercial use will likely have far-reaching impacts for many years to come.

“It’s ironic that the MoD exists to defend democracy in this country but appears to have a blind spot when it comes to this part of the [New Forest](#). “They need to engage with us. That means taking on board our concerns, not merely briefing us on the bits they think are important.”

Campaigners are determined to collect more than 1,000 signatures by the time they take the petition to London. Parish councillors have also written a letter that the MoD has agreed to present to all potential buyers of the port, known as the Sea Mounting Centre. The letter highlights the council’s concerns over a potential rise in road and rail traffic in the Marchwood area. It adds: “The Sea Mounting Centre borders the New Forest [National Park](#) and [Dibden Bay](#), a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

“Any change of use needs to take into account the environmental impacts on these protected areas.” A MoD spokesman said: “The MoD continues to work with the local council planning team. It will be the responsibility of any future Marchwood port operator to comply with any planning requirements.”

11. New Forest District Council

Dave Yates, Chief Executive of NFDC explained the new Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which will come into force at the beginning of August.

Clerks and councilors may already be aware of the new legal right for members of the public to photograph, film or audio record meetings of towns and parish councils, as these regulations apply to a wide list of public authorities. The District Council has drafted a protocol that is attached to these minutes and may be amended for use by local councils.

These regulations also obligate Town and Parish Councils to record on a formal written basis, certain decisions taken by officers acting under delegated authority. These decisions include decisions to grant permission or a licence; anything affecting the rights of an individual; an award of contract or where material expenditure is to be incurred. Written decisions must include:

1. The decision and the date it was taken
2. A record of the decision along with reasons
3. Details of alternative options considered and rejected

DCLG has issued guidance for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343182/140812_Openness_Guide.pdf

Rosemary Rutins, NFDC Democratic Services Manager introduced the Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in Great Britain and how this will modernise the way people register to vote, help to tackle electoral fraud and improve confidence in the electoral register. The next step towards a voting system fit for the 21st century sees Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) contacting voters about the changes to the electoral register.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) will give people more control and ownership over the process and increase the accuracy of the register – with the new system able to verify that everyone on the register is who they say they are. This will ensure that there is greater trust in the legitimacy and fairness of our elections. This change gets rid of the outdated 'head of household' registration system and places electoral registration in the hands of individuals. Members of the public will be contacted by their local ERO to inform them of what, if anything, they need to do next.

Under the new system, around 80% of those already on the electoral register will be automatically added after their name and address is matched against existing government records. Those people who are not successfully matched may need to provide additional information to be registered, but thanks to the new online electoral registration system, this is now a quick and easy process that takes as little as 3 minutes.

- i. Letters will be sent from EROs in England and Wales during July and August. This will inform the public of the changes to the electoral system brought in under IER, how these changes affect them, and whether they need to do anything. The majority of people (around 80%) who are registered to vote at the moment will transfer automatically to the new system. Some people will need to provide extra information – their National Insurance number and date of birth – and their letter will tell them how to do this.
- ii. The Electoral Commission is running a public awareness campaign to help make sure people respond to the letter they receive.
- iii. Cabinet Office recently provided £4.2 million funding to local authorities to help improve registration among certain groups of electors, such as students or home movers to help make the register as accurate and complete as possible. The new system, in particular the online application, will make it easier and more convenient for young people in particular to get onto the register.
- iv. The new online electoral registration system is the third of the government's 25 digital exemplars to go live. To find out more, visit erodelivery@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

12. New Forest National Park

Richard Frampton referred to a Task and Finish Group that was set up to look into a public bike share scheme, like the one introduced in London.

The Task & Finish Group met three times. Officers collected public feedback on local support for the scheme. All of the businesses who had expressed an interest in hosting a bike docking station were re-contacted to confirm their interest. A map was produced showing where the proposed scheme would be located and how it could link settlements, attractions and existing transport links.

Post meeting note:

In the New Forest, a major anti-cycling sentiment has come to the fore in the wake of large-scale cycle sportive events which have impacted on local people with a fresh wave of concern about the safety of on-road cycling. Concerns about safety featured prominently in the responses to the recent questionnaire about the proposed scheme, especially amongst those who live and work in the Forest. Members therefore questioned whether the time was right to introduce more cyclists onto New Forest roads and the scheme was officially rejected by the NPA on 19 August 2014, as attached.

Steve Avery announced the NPA had recently elected former Official Verderer Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre as its new Chairman, and Edward Heron a HCC and NFDC Councillor was elected Deputy Chairman. Steve mentioned the NPA has recently published its Annual Report for 2013-14, with reduced funding of £4.5m last year, and referred to Government plans for direct elections to the NPA from 2016.

With support from NFALC, nearly 2,000 extra homes and businesses in the New Forest will benefit from access to superfast broadband following a successful £1m bid to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This is on top of the 59,000 premises already in the programme to receive access to faster broadband speeds in the current Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme.

Hampshire County Council and its partners including the New Forest National Park Authority secured the funding to extend the coverage to some of the county's hardest-to-reach areas. The work will take place between June and December next year.

13. Hampshire Association of Local Councils

The Chairman attended the HALC Board meeting on Saturday 14 June, 2014 in Winchester which included National Proposals for the Review of CiLCA and revised Accreditation Scheme for Local Councils. The Chairman also referred to Police Crime Commissioner Simon Hayes' offer of £1,000 to each parish wishing to join a SpeedWatch scheme, noting Bramshaw had trouble attracting enough volunteers to make it worthwhile.

14. Any Other Business

Mention was made of fracking, and the Chairman said this could be a future agenda item.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the New Forest Association of Local Councils will be held on Thursday 18 September 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst SO43 7PA.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.00 pm.

Chairman

Date



£2m 'Boris bikes' scheme is rejected after thousands call for New Forest bosses to back it

Tuesday 19th August 2014

PLANS for a £2million bike rental system in the New Forest have been rejected to the dismay of thousands of supporters. The [New Forest National Park Authority](#) tweeted: "Members have voted not to proceed with the public bike system at this time. We will release a statement on this later today." The crunch meeting today was held to decide whether plans for a 'Boris-bike'-style share scheme would go ahead.

Despite a mass of support for the scheme, which came about as a result of £2million funding from the Department for Transport, the New Forest National Park Authority members were recommended to reject the project. Members have voted not to proceed with the public bike system at this time. We will release a statement on this later today.

Concerns over 'major anti-cycling sentiment' caused by mass cycling events and sponsorship were cited as the main reasons for the unpopular recommendation. Hundreds of people, including Olympian Chris Boardman, took to social media urging the scheme to go ahead. Two thousand people signed a petition willing National Park bosses to back it.

And Graham Bright of B-Cycle, who has been awarded the contract to run the hire scheme, said the scheme was not the same as mass cycling events, and the bikes would only be travelling up to 7mph. Around 250 bikes were planned for implementation around 20 different locations around the New Forest. The contract was due to be signed in June, but postponed as a result of the concerns.



£2m 'Boris Bike' scheme thrown out

Tuesday 19th August 2014

A HOTLY-DEBATED £2million public bike scheme for the [New Forest](#) will not go ahead, it has been decided today.

The New Forest Public Bike Scheme had been backed by a 2,000 signature petition and supported by professional cyclists Jens Voight and Chris Boardman. But at an extraordinary general meeting New Forest [National Park Authority](#) members voted to discontinue the scheme.

Proponents of the plans, based on the Boris Bike scheme in London, argued it would reduce pollution and have health benefits, while opponents said proposals were not financially viable and did not have enough public support. Members voted 12 to two against the plans with three abstentions.