

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NFALC)**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association
of Local Councils held at ATC, Lyndhurst on 20 July 2023 at 6.00pm**

<u>Parish/Town Council</u>	<u>Name</u>
Bransgore	John Spinks
Copythorne	Jackie Rhodes
	Sherri Johnstone
East Boldre	Michael Husband
Fordingbridge	Rachel Edwards
Lyndhurst	George Bisson
Minstead	Brice Stratford
Netley Marsh	Adrian Johnstone
New Milton	Graham Flexman-Coordinator
Ringwood	Gareth DeBoos
Sway	Peter Dance
New Forest District Council	Dan Poole Portfolio Holder – Community, Safety, Wellbeing
New Forest National Park	Steve Avery – Exec Director
Hampshire Association of Local Councils	Robert Pettigrew Policy, Engagement and Communities Lead
Apologies:	
Brockenhurst	John Korbey
Fawley	Stephanie Bennett
Ringwood	John Haywood
NFDC	Kate Ryan, CEO

1. Annual Review

Chairman referred to Appendix 1 - Annual Review that was approved by those present.

2. Election of Chairman

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Cllr Brice Stratford (Lyndhurst Parish Council) be elected Chairman of the Association until the next annual meeting.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Having put himself forward, it was resolved that Cllr John Korbey (Brockenhurst Parish Council) be elected Vice-Chairman of the Association until the next annual meeting.

4. Election of Deputies to HALC Board

Cllr Brice Stratford was elected to HALC and John Korbey re-elected to continue to attend.

5. Appointment of Coordinator

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

6. Appointment of Treasurer

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

7. AGM Closing Remarks

Cllr Brice Stratford thanked George Bisson for his sterling work as Chairman of NFALC over the past 4 years, and for his commitment, dedication and service to Lyndhurst Parish Council over the last 28 years. George's knowledge of the parish and the New Forest as a parish member on the National Park Authority will be greatly missed by his colleagues. George said he had enjoyed it all and was passionate about the New Forest.

The Chairman led applause closed the AGM and opened the quarterly meeting at 6.15pm.

8. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman said he had been on Lyndhurst Parish Council since 2019, and also on Minstead Parish Council since May. Last month, he was duly elected to the National Park Authority as Representative for the Southeast Quadrant and is currently waiting for that to be ratified by DEFRA, John Sanger the candidate for the Northwest Quadrant being a member by co-option.

The Chairman has experience in planning matters, heritage, localism and the building of strong communities. As NFALC Chairman, he believes that the time is right to reassess our purpose and our role, and to engage with the Forest parishes and towns to determine how best we can serve them. As a Forest-wide body with a legitimate democratic mandate, NFALC has real potential to be a valuable and influential institution for the area, and an important supporter of Parish and Town Councils.

The Chairman welcomed 14 attendees to the meeting including Cllr Dan Poole of NFDC.

9. Minutes

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 being the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 April 2023. The minutes were approved by those present and agreed as a correct record. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

10. New Forest District Council

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Dan Poole, NFDC Portfolio Holder who talked about 4 items:

Community Forum

New Forest residents can already access additional cost of living support at five weekly community hubs, located in Calshot, New Milton, Totton, Pennington, and Fordingbridge.

NFDC are now looking to introduce a Community Forum to meet twice a year, looking at the continuing cost of living crisis with local councils (Towns and Parishes) in October to look at other ways of helping local residents. Cllr Dan Poole cited the cookery lessons in New Milton as one example, teaching others to cook healthily and cheaply, as below.

New Milton Town Council have successfully secured further funding for the Socially Prescribed Cookery Classes they helped run last year. This year South-Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) have awarded £15,000 funding to continue the classes for another year until March 2024. This will support Coastal Medical Partnership to provide low-carb cookery classes to key at risk patients within New Milton.

Ringwood queried the benefit of a Community Forum, but Cllr Poole said it is worth trialling.

CCTV District-wide

As part of the 23/24 budget, the District Council agreed a capital sum of £300,000 to be spent over the next 2-3 years on extending the existing public network of CCTV cameras. **Right now, expressions of interest are being sought from local Towns within the district.**

As our New Forest Safety partners know, the New Forest District remains a safe place to live, work and visit with 96% of our residents reporting that they feel safe in our local area (Resident Insight Survey 2022), however nearly a quarter say they have a fear of crime. One way which the District Council wishes to address this fear and prevent crime is to extend the existing public network of CCTV cameras in the District. These cameras have the ability to pick up incidents of crime and disorder and actively provide a deterrent.

PSPOs

From 1 July 2023, local people and visitors are being encouraged to make sure they know about new measures in the New Forest to ensure they have a safe and enjoyable time here. We have introduced two new Public Space Protection Orders supported by Forestry England, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Verderers of the New Forest.

The use of BBQs and fires in the Forest and feeding and petting ponies or donkeys are all banned, with those failing to comply liable to a fixed penalty fine or prosecution. Their introduction follows repeated fire damage to the Forest caused by campfires and BBQs, and the growing risk of wildfires due to increasingly hotter and drier conditions. The PSPO bans the lighting of fires of any type including BBQs and any outdoor cooking facilities or equipment. It also makes it an offence to place, throw or drop items likely to cause a fire such as lit cigarettes. **Cllr Dan Poole advised people to dial 999 if they see this happening.**

Concern over the safety of the public and Forest animals, following injuries to the people and animal deaths resulting from being fed human food, created the need to better manage public interactions with these free-roaming animals. The PSPO relating to this activity bans feeding and petting ponies or donkeys on the Forest. Teams from Forestry England, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Verderers of the New Forest will be patrolling and engaging with the public to explain more about the new rules. Signs and information will be in place across the Forest. **Steve Avery is aware of sign proliferation.**

Appletree Careline

This facility is currently being upgraded, and **Cllr Dan Poole recommended people sign up.** The lifeline service uses a two-way speech system linked to our team in the emergency control room at Lyndhurst. It currently delivers a service to more than 2,500 customers.

11. New Forest National Park

Steve Avery referred to the NFNPA meeting held on 13 July and to the Chief Executive's report that is available to view on their website. <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/>

Local elections on 4 May 2023 resulted in vacancies for the National Park Authority. Overall, there are 22 NPA members, 12 nominated by local authorities, 6 by the Secretary of State and 4 by local councils. New appointments to the National Park Authority have now been made by the appointing local authorities. The remaining three NPA members appointed by Hampshire County Council, both NPA members appointed by Wiltshire Council and NPA member appointed by Test Valley Borough Council, remain unchanged.

The outgoing Parish members' appointments as Authority members continue for a period of 3 months from the elections unless notification is received from the Secretary of State. For members information, HCC has appointed 2 new NPA members (Louise Parker-Jones and Mel Kendal) and NFDC 3 new NPA members (Dan Poole, Derek Tipp and Joe Reilly).

External funding secured for projects includes £45,000 from Arts Council England to extend our artist in residence programme with the SPUD charity in Sway for a further three years. Pedall cycling charity also attracted grant funding of £67,000 its Ashurst community hub including help from the South-Western Rail Community Fund (£44,000).

Farming in Protected Landscapes was showcased at the recent National Parks All Party Parliamentary Group. The scheme, which NFNPA deliver on behalf of Government, now UK has left the EU, has completed 22 projects this year, including 10 to help increase carbon storage. Nationally, over 5,000 farmers and landowners have benefited from HLS.

Planning Team has seen a high volume of applications this quarter and we were pleased to end the previous year exceeding all performance targets for determining applications. The enforcement team has been working with temporary campsites to ensure they comply with the Habitats Regulations and that applications are submitted where necessary. Meanwhile our policy team has responded to Government consultation on proposals to introduce new national permitted development rights for temporary recreational campsites.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to ban feeding/petting of forest animals; and a ban on BBQS (including primus stoves) came into force for 3 years from 1 July. Staff from NPA ranger and planning teams have joined staff from other organisations for training to engage – explain – educate – enforce approach and as necessary issue £100 fixed penalties. Signs have been put up around the Forest and the New Forest Code has been updated to reflect the PSPOs alongside spring campaigns to protect ground nesting birds.

Nature Recovery is now set out in the Government's Environment Improvement Plan published in January, there is an increased recognition of the role National Parks can and should play in the UK response to the shared international commitment to the target of protecting 30% of the planet for nature by 2030.

New Forest Show preparations are in hand, visitors to the NPA stand will be able to discover the Forest's nature story with models of giant species and family friendly activities, plus a TV screen showing Our Nature Story submissions. The NPA are also supporting the Verderers with content for their stand about the achievements of the HLS Scheme and announcing the winners of the **10th Anniversary National Park Awards**. www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/winners-of-2023-new-forest-awards-announced/

The winners were:

- Young Farmer/Commoner: Ben Mansbridge from Longdown
- Best Supporter of Local Produce: Daisy Meadow Dairy, Botley
- Rural Diversification: Popell Barns Mobile Farm, Botley
- Sustainability Champion: Hockey's Farm Shop, South Gorley
- Farming and Nature Champion: Richard Stiles from Titchfield
- Young Environmental Champion: Jamie Ward from Lymington

12. New Forest Cycling

It was noted Richard Taylor from Minstead was the NFALC cycling representative who arranged Notification Procedures for Sportive Cycle Events in the New Forest district. When applications for cycle sportive events came in to the NFDC Safety Advisory Group (SAG) they were forwarded to Richard for comment, several months before the events.

NFALC Cycling Rep arranged for NFALC to circulate these to all parish and town councils. If local councils had concerns on the proposed routes they emailed the event organizer with copies to Richard Taylor and the SAG team at NFDC (events@nfdc.gov.uk). There is a 28-day deadline for comments notified to the SAG. If communication with the event organizer is problematic, they previously got in touch with Richard.

NFALC encourages all event organizers to follow the New Forest Cycle Event Organizers Charter. This can be found on the NFNPA website - [New Forest Cycle Event Organiser's Charter - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk). This charter, or code of practice is very worthwhile and to date organizers agreed to follow the code and have always been helpful in Richard's discussions with them. There have been changes to routes as a result of parish and town council comments.

Ben Stockley – NFDC lead for the SAG – put together a one-page summary of the SAG attached to these minutes. Following an event, you can comment on it via the SAG register of events for 28 days. Feedback is used to then improve future events.

The Chairman said this item will be deferred to the October meeting pending nominations. Anyone interested should let the NFALC Coordinator know, as it's an important role that is best served by someone who is a keen supporter of cycling generally.

13. Hampshire Association of Local Councils

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 asking Robert Pettigrew, HALC Policy Engagement & Communications Lead to explain the NPA Election Results and other issues.

So far, one parish member, Stephen Tarling (Sway PC) has been appointed by the Secretary of State as an Authority member. However, the remaining 3 Parish member appointments have not yet been confirmed by the Secretary of State, being Brice Stratford (Lyndhurst PC), John Sanger (Godshill PC) and Mary Davies (Landford PC). The outgoing Parish members' appointments continue for a period of three months from the elections. There are still two vacant places from New Forest District Association on the Hampshire ALC Executive, should any volunteers wish to come forward (or be nominated).

Robert explained how HALC operates, with a Board of Directors, gleaned from 7 District Associations, being set up as a limited company 13 years ago, noting it is "owned" by the local councils that it serves. He is thankful that NFALC will continue to provide 2 deputies to the HALC Board, confirming HALC is keen to work with local councils and other ALCs, looking to create a County Forum to discuss some wider policy issues, eg integrated care.

14. Any Other Business

Cllr Brice Stratford said he will be writing to all towns and parishes as the newly elected Chair of NFALC, describing it as a Forest-wide body with a legitimate democratic mandate, that has real potential to be a valuable and influential institution for the area, and an important supporter of local councils. He hopes NFALC will become a far more active organization, one which offers real value to the parishes and towns it covers.

15. Next Meeting – To be held on Thursday 19 October 2023 at 6.00pm at NFDC Lyndhurst

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the Meeting just before 7.00 pm.

Chairman

Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

What is SAG?

The Safety Advisory Group is a collective of agencies with a function or interest in public safety that come together to assess plans for events where there might be issues for public safety.

The SAG offers advice to ensure high standards of public safety at events and to encourage the wellbeing of those affected by such events – both those attending or participating, and those in the surrounding area.

It is not a legal requirement for organisers to participate, but it is good practice, and event organisers are recommended to use the expert advice of the SAG wherever possible. It is important to reiterate that the SAG is advisory and does not have any legal status of itself, although individual members of the group can take their own action if deemed necessary.

What Events does SAG apply to?

The SAG process is not designed to consider all events; in the New Forest it is reserved for larger events in terms of expected attendees, events with the potential hazards such as firework displays, and events which may impact local people – such as cycling events. Consideration is also given to the profile of the audience. In addition to events notified to the SAG using an online form, other events will come to the attention of a SAG via other means. Should events come to the attention of individual agencies, the SAG process acts as a focal point to ensure details of events are collated.

Membership

Membership of a SAG varies according to the type of event being considered. However, core members of the SAG in the New Forest include the police, fire and rescue, ambulance service, licensing, traffic/Highways Agency, New Forest National Park Authority and New Forest District Council Environmental Health. Local Councils are notified of cycling events, via NFALC.

The SAG group is operated by New Forest District Council which is responsible for circulating event information between the agencies, sharing agency responses and if necessary, chairing a meeting between the event organiser and agencies.

SAG and Cycling Events

It is important to remember that the group does not have authority to either approve or to ban cycling events, and ultimately the overall responsibility for the safety of persons at events lies with the event organiser, venue operator and management team. In addition to encouraging high standards of health and safety at events, the SAG encourages arrangements to be made to minimise disruption to local communities – this may be in the scheduling of events to avoid conflict with other events, routing to avoid roadworks and trunk roads where possible, and the management of the event to reduce the impact on other road users.

In the New Forest, the SAG is coordinated and chaired by New Forest District Council: events@nfdc.gov.uk or telephone 023 8028 5411.

A public register of events in the New Forest can be found at the following link: <https://newforest.gov.uk/article/1378/Public-events-Safety-Advisory-Group#h26>