

NEW FOREST ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS
& ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NFALC)

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting of NFALC
held on Zoom Monday 30 September 2024 at 7.30pm

<u>Parish/Town Council</u>	<u>Name</u>
Ashurst & Colbury	Caroline Hubbard
Beaulieu	Sami Reece
Copythorne	Graham Chillcott
East Boldre	Michael Husband
Hordle	Maggie Hill
Lymington	Tom Brindley
Lyndhurst	Brice Stratford – Chairman
New Milton	Graham Flexman – Clerk
	Joy Bean
	Sam Welch
Ringwood	Gareth DeBoos
Sway	Katie Walding – Clerk
Totton & Eling	Alison McGowan – Dep Clerk
New Forest District Council	Joe Reilly Ashurst Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh
NFDC	Neville Penman - Totton North
	Richard Knott - (Link Officer) NFDC Strategic Director –
NFNPA	Steve Avery - Exec Director
Christchurch Cycle Club	David Orme – Invited Guest

Apologies:

Bramshaw	Sue Bennison
Brockenhurst	John Korbey
Netley Marsh	Mike Welbourn
New Milton	John Adams

1. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed 16 attendees from 12 councils within the New Forest district, plus Richard Knott from NFDC and Steve Avery from NFNPA, plus David Orme guest.

2. Minutes / Matters Arising

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 being the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1 August 2024, noting they will be signed off at the next live meeting to be held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at Appletree Court in Lyndhurst.

3. Foxlease / Foxie's Future

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 and was pleased at New Forest East MP Sir Julian Lewis' intervention in this matter.

Foxies Future is now the "preferred bidder" for the Foxlease Girlguiding facility at Clay Hill near Lyndhurst. While now an opposition MP, his influence in gaining a U-turn has resulted in a change of fortune for the campaign group.

The Chairman reminded members of the presentation from the Foxie's Future group at our October 2023 meeting when garnering support to retain this popular activity centre. Foxie's Future formed a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and registered Foxlease as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) helping them in their bid to buy it.

4. Cycling Representative

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 and was pleased to welcome David Orme to the meeting. David thanked the Chairman and explained his involvement with cycling.

It was not until 2011 that he joined Christchurch Bicycle Club – a friendly club of around 200 members that he will have been chairman of for ten years by March next year. Over the last few years, David has had various meetings with New Milton Town Council regarding cycling and is nominally part of their Green Routes initiative.

David joined the New Forest Cycle Working Group in 2020, working with the NPA, Forestry England, NFDC, HCC and various cycling bodies, being greatly encouraged by Government initiatives to make cycling and walking the norm for half of all local journeys, and by the changes to the Highway Code to encourage Active Travel.

David is passionate about making cycling in the New Forest a safe and effective means of transport for all ages – improving physical and mental health, reducing pollution, making the streets less congested, giving independence to those who can't drive and providing an affordable means of transport for those on a budget. He said a significant cultural change is needed in the New Forest District in order to achieve this.

Recently working with the Lymington Transition group – aiming towards sustainable living – in extending their cycle 'Tube Map' to the New Milton area and applying it to assist local councils in the current LCWIP consultation, he said he would work in partnership with others.

The Chairman referred to the January 2024 NFALC meeting where it was agreed NFALC Representatives need not be Cllrs, and David's appointment was proposed and seconded.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED: That David Orme be appointed the NFALC Cycling Rep from 1 October.

5. LCWIP Consultation

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 and asked David Orme to lead on this agenda item, stating a recent Consultative Panel meeting suggested it was worth engaging with this consultation. David said he had been very encouraged by the attention recently received.

New Forest residents and bodies representing cycling interests are being asked to have their say on proposals to create an “extensive network” of walking and cycling routes through the district over the next 10 years, referred to as the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

An eight-week consultation is being held by Hampshire County Council, running until 3rd November, on a draft plan to enable “greener ways of getting around”. Over the next 10 years, the council is proposing to create a “network of cycle routes across the area together with walking zones for the main residential settlements”.

In the wider context, as part of a proposed national network of such routes, HCC is preparing its New Forest Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This process starts with HCC as the lead partner preparing a ‘bid document’ which if successful would release DfT funding for infrastructure improvements for cycling and walking routes.

Post Meeting Note:

New Milton asked “What are the expected funding sources for implementing the LCWIP” Below is Ben Kennedy’s (HCC Principal Transport Planner for south Hampshire) response.

The funding used to deliver LCWIP networks will be from a variety of sources, as follows:

- Schemes delivered on site or adjacent to a new development via Section 278 agreements with the developer
- Contributions secured from a developer as mitigation for the impacts of a development off site via a Section 106 agreement
- Successful Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bids to planning authorities
- Funding allocation grants from Active Travel England (arm of Department for Transport) as part of funding for delivering the National Cycling & Walking Strategy
- Funding allocated annually to each Transport Authority in England via the Integrated Transport Block
- Successful bids to Government competitive funding programmes (e.g. Transforming Cities Fund, Levelling Up Fund, Cycle Access Grant, Air Quality Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Rural Development Fund, Safer Roads Fund, National Highways)
- Lottery funding via National Park or third parties such as Sustrans for routes like the National Cycle Network
- Public Health Departments and the NHS also offer funding for active travel schemes in recognition of the long-term cost benefits to them in terms of improving people’s mobility and health
- HCC Capital and Revenue budgets (these have been cut so much the amount going towards transport and active travel is relatively small)

The Government’s second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2), originally published in 2020, states “Active Travel is one of the best return on investment decisions governments can make, which is why this government has committed an unprecedented £2 billion of funding for active travel over 5 years.”

DoT analysis shows “The typical benefit-cost ratios are considerably greater than the threshold of 4:1 which is considered by the Department for Transport as ‘very high’ value for money”. In other words, spending budget on cycling infrastructure actually reduces the overall cost to the taxpayer.

6. New Forest National Park

Steve Avery from NPA referred to the LCWIP Consultation ending on 3 November 2024.

The Solent CO2 pipeline non-statutory consultation launched by ExxonMobil ended today, noting any planning application would be called in and determined by the Government.

Post Meeting Note: ExxonMobil will not now be progressing this project (as per attached).

The NPA responded to the proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes as attached.

In regard to future A326 improvements, these have been delayed following withdrawal of outline planning applications with NFDC and NFNPA due to 'wider economic pressures and increased construction costs' but Fawley Waterside will continue to work with planning authorities to consider the most appropriate development strategy for the site.

Re threatened closure of Waste & Recycling Centres at Somerley and Marchwood, the NFNPA lodged a strong objection. Final decisions will be made on 14 October on the future of local services delivered by HCC as part of a package of savings proposals spanning areas including household waste recycling centres. But they are likely to reject officer advice as far as these proposed closures are concerned, as it would just leave Efford near Lymington as the sole New Forest Waste Recycling Centre.

HCC are also considering charges at two forest car parks, again to be determined on 14th. This may have a knock-on effect as far as Forestry Commission car parks are concerned.

7. New Forest District Council

Richard Knott said NFDC will be taking a similar stance to the NPA on the CO2 Pipeline.

Town and Parish Clerks are meeting tomorrow with Kate Ryan, NFDC Chief Executive for their latest 6-month meeting, with updates on the Local Plan Review (consultations in March and October 2025), Community Forum Update (20 November), Corporate Peer Challenge (10-12 December), Key Issues from the Cabinet Meeting (2 October), CCTV roll-out, and NFDC responses to NPPF consultation and Exxon-Mobil CO2 consultation.

In regard to the Community Resilience Forum follow up meeting - to include an interactive workshop involving Emergency Exercise (impact of weather scenario) - invitations shortly. ICT are in the process of renewing the SLA covering GIS Mapping Agreement for 2024-25 and in regard to the Local Plan Review there will shortly be a Call for Sites not just for housing but for employment sites, and infrastructure including Public Open Space.

Key Issues for NFDC Cabinet on 2 October include revised Waste Program including Wheelie-bin roll out in 3 phases beginning with Lymington in June 2025, then Ringwood depot in October, followed by third phase from Hardley depot in March 2026. Also, Climate Change & Sustainability will be considered, working to reduce environmental impact, and preparing for challenges and opportunities brought about by climate change.

Other Cabinet matters include Waste & Recycling Centres where NFDC will take a similar stance to NPA; Planning Reports including 52-page Statement of Community Involvement (how NFDC engages with others); funding, from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), will help deliver key projects around the district, including town centre improvements, developing recreation grounds, walking routes, and supporting flood defence work.

Reference to community grant scheme awards and discretionary grants to support a range of voluntary and community organisations, covering the following: a) community, voluntary and registered charitable organisations; and b) not-for-profit organisations. There are 2 types of community grants available, being capital grants and revenue grants.

Graham Chilcott from Copythorne asked if their Parish Hall could apply for such funding, even though the majority of Copythorne lies in the National Park, Richard said it could.

8. Any Other Business

The Chairman referred to two items mentioned on the agenda:

- a) **Exxon-Mobil Solent** - Proposed CO2 pipeline, per Appendix 5, sees all 3 routes cross the Forest from Lepe to Fawley, as mentioned at the well-attended (with 26 attendees) Emergency on-line NFALC meeting held on Friday 27 September 2024 at 2.00pm.

NFDC and NFNPA had both indicated they weren't in a position to recommend a preferred route due to the "limited amount of engagement and information available to date".

The Chairman agreed to send a response to the consultation (by 30 September 2024 at 6.00pm) highlighting concerns over the need for the project, its rationale for the selection of corridors, and consideration of alternative route corridors – including underwater.

Members also wanted more information on air quality, fracking, emissions, noise, vibration disturbance, and safety associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the pipeline, along with more in-depth details on biodiversity and ecology impacts. According to ExxonMobil it had not yet confirmed a route for the project, but added:

"Currently, two corridors on the Isle of Wight are favoured, but the mainland corridor is still being considered. The Lepe corridor, south of Fawley, is included in all three options. Our consultation, open until September 30th, aims to gather feedback to help us decide and we will share updates once a route is selected."

As previously stated, ExxonMobil will not now be progressing this project, as per attached.

- b) **Solent Freeport** – Members noted this is now expected to create fewer jobs and less money for the area than first thought, a report to New Forest District Council has revealed. Per Appendix 6, the Freeport which locally includes areas in Marchwood and Fawley, as well as Southampton, was officially designated at the end of 2022. Hailed as a once-in-a-generation opportunity, the status of Freeport brought the promise of tax relief, simplified customs procedures, streamlined planning processes promoting regeneration / innovation.
- c) In addition to the above, Graham Chilcott of Copythorne asked about NFALC working with and advising the NPA on certain matters, as previously mentioned. It was suggested Graham Chilcott form a Working Party to consider the matter, and that it reports back to the next NFALC meeting on 13 November 2024.

9. Other Meetings

- a) An item for the HALC AGM at the Holiday Inn at Eastleigh on Saturday 19 October 2024: The Chairman mentioned HCC is likely to withdraw its funding of circa £50k per annum to HALC completely next year, and this would have repercussions on HALC membership fees, although it is concentrating on increasing income from training courses.
- b) The Chairman also referred to the next County Forum meeting scheduled to take place at the Holiday Inn, Winchester on Thursday 28 November 2024. Further details TBA.

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst SO43 7PA

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.30pm.

Chairman

Date