

## Meeting Notes 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 at South Efford House

**Present: Clive Chatters (Chairman, NFNPA), Richard Lemon (Director of Strategy & Planning, NFNPA), Rob Govier (One Voice), Sue Baillie (One Voice)**

Clive Chatters opened the meeting by asking for more background of how One Voice was founded. Rob Govier explained how One Voice was formed and how membership has grown, and that the group was concerned with the overall draft documents – not flying the flag for particular groups or opposition views. We see our role as being lay-advocates for the inclusion of the general public in the decision making process. Sue Baillie explained that the two purposes of One Voice was (a) to lobby for an extension to the consultation cut-off date, and (b) lobby for full public consultation meetings.

Sue asked those present to remove ourselves from the current situation to the time when the notion of a National Park was in its early infancy and at a time when most forest residents went about their business quietly and at a sedate pace. Members of the public read local press articles over many years on the various stages being reached in the process but it all seemed a long way off before it became real. They were perhaps not aware of how the forest was previously run in terms of legal documentation and processes needed to enable this to happen – it was always there and it worked well. The consultation documents, and resulting emotive media interest came as a shock! Richard noted these comments.

Q Is the timetable for approval of the revised plan still May 09?

A Clive said they were still aiming for May but are aware that this may slip in order to facilitate the working groups and collation of conclusions etc., and it may mean that they will need to make representation to DEFRA for more time.

Q How will the NPA feed back information from the working groups?

A Each working group will have conclusion documents circulated to participants shortly afterwards

Q How did you choose the participants on the working groups?

A By the responses received to the consultation documents

Q When will the revised park plan and the Consultation Report be available to the public?

A They will both be available at around the same time prior to the authority meeting for approval (currently May, but could slip). NOTE: The June Authority Meeting is actually the AGM and I will need to look into their terms of reference to find out if the approval can take place at the AGM or if it will need to go to a separate Authority Meeting (the next one scheduled after the AGM is 24 September).

Q Why have Campaign for National Parks been invited on some working groups when they had no input at the original stakeholder meetings?

A They put in a comprehensive response to the consultation drafts – not all comments were supportive of the plan.

PC hosted meetings: we advised the NPA that these may not be the best forums for the general public and explained that whilst there are several well organised and 'switched on' PC's this model is not replicated by the majority of PC's. Clive said that it was not the

place of the NPA to tell PC's how to organise these. We asked him to consider suggesting that PC's helped the NPA to achieve public meetings – no commitment was forthcoming

Public Meetings: all agreed that it was not too late to organise these and Clive asked what format we had in mind. Sue suggested, for example, four meetings at accessible venues within the National Park that were held outside working hours. Several NPA members who are conversant with the draft plans and therefore able to answer questions from the floor should attend these. She also suggested that the meetings should have a neutral/independent facilitator to ensure two-way conversation. Clive warmed to this model saying that he would prefer to have a "conversation rather than a bun fight". No commitment given, but the concept was noted by Richard.

We have made a suggestion that the revised park plan should in some way identify those policies that would be fed into the Core Strategy document and other DPD's that will be put forward at the Public Enquiry stage. This was noted by Richard.

Letter from Lindsay Cornish:

We were pleased that Ms Cornish has accepted there was ambiguity on the web page in question and this has now been corrected to make it clear that anyone wishing to ask questions will need to follow the NPA's Terms of Reference – and this has been given a clear link to a full page of the ToR

Our request for lists of Invitees to each working group was discussed. We made it clear that the purpose was to make a comparison between the current participants and the participants on the original workshops. This would have given us an idea of those groups/organisations/individuals who were able to participate for the first time and an indication that negative responses to the consultation were being addressed

Observer Status:

It was discussed that Ms Cornish had taken this out of context and had misconstrued the purpose of having an observer on the working groups. We were hoping there might be room for discussion on developing a protocol to be used that would be seen as open and transparent and would give confidence in the process. Clive made it clear that the NPA make the terms of reference with no input from others outside of the membership.