The New Forest Consultative Panel

1971-2011
Background

- The Battle of Rushpole Wood
- Illegal exploitation of timber on the Open Forest under guise of conservation fellings

“But in one way it’s an amenity improvement madam - on a clear day you can see the Isle of Wight”

- Resolved by a visit from the Minister of Agriculture who issued a mandate for the future management of the Forest.
With the issue of the Minister’s Mandate the Chairman of the Forestry Commission in consultation with the Minster of Agriculture, decided that a Consultative Panel was necessary.

The inaugural meeting was held at 7:30pm on Thursday 21\textsuperscript{st} January 1971 at the Crown Hotel, Lyndhurst under the chairmanship of Sir Dudley Forwood, Bt.
The First Phase

- Administered by the Forestry Commission 1971-90
- 46 bodies at inception
- Chairmen:
  - Sir Dudley Forwood 1970-82
  - Maldwin Drummond 1982-98
- Secretariat:
  - J.R. Ward 1975-81
  - Eileen Tilling 1983-90
Founding principles

- that the unique and ancient character of the New Forest is maintained and safeguarded.
- that the long-established Laws and Customs that are acknowledged, and kept in usage, are enforced and not transgressed.
- that the Rights and Privileges enjoyed by persons who are in possession of common rights are maintained and encouraged for the long term interest of the Forest.
- that the overall ecology of the “open” forest should be conserved, so that the wild flora and fauna may survive and flourish.
Minister’s Mandate

- This ‘... is the Forestry Commission’s “licence to operate” in the Crown Lands ...’

- ‘The New Forest must be regarded as a national heritage and priority given to the preservation of its tradition character.’
Conservation of the New Forest

This is a good example of a detailed consultation on core forest management issues, continued through much of the Forestry Commission’s oversight of the Panel.
Later in the First Phase

- Administered by the New Forest Committee 1990-2005
- expanded membership
- Chairmen:
  - Maldwin Drummond 1982-98
  - Ted Johnson 1998-2006
- Secretariat:
  - Carol Seymour 1990-92
New Forest Review
The Second Phase

- Administered by the New Forest Committee 1990-2005
- expanded membership
- Chairmen:
  - Maldwin Drummond 1982-98
  - Ted Johnson 1998-2006
- Secretariat:
  - Carol Seymour 1990-92
Terms of Reference
(New Forest Committee)

To provide a forum for representatives of the appropriate organisations and bodies within the New Forest Heritage Area to debate in public matters of concern to the Heritage Area, and to discuss with the New Forest Committee policies and management strategies for the conservation of the Area’s traditional character.
The New Forest Heritage Area

- The New Forest Committee was first formed as the New Forest Heritage Area Committee, one of its first major works.
The New Forest Strategy demonstrated a move towards debate on big issues on the wider area as well as within the Forest.
The Third Phase

- Administered by the New Forest National Park Authority

- Chairman:
  - Tim Greenwood, esq. (elected)

- Secretariat:
  - Rachel Bowen 2005-06
  - Rosalind Alderman 2006-present
Problems?

- A plethora of consultation exercises has reduced the importance of the Panel.

- Detailed consultation has been replaced rubber stamping presentations.

- Consensus models lead to a lack of debate on important issues; these are rarely debated.
Ending thoughts

- Everyone wants their slice of the New Forest, but there are not enough servings to go around and the Forest is materially diminished thereby.

- Everyone is part of the problem and those who think they are not are a bigger part of the problem.

- We need to revive the ‘Forest First’ principle.