

Notes from the NFTA Members' Day EGM

22nd November, 2.10pm at Paultons Park

Paul Sherry (PS), Chairman of NFTA, welcomed those attending the meeting and presented an update on Go New Forest's (GNF) progress, together with a presentation as to why the EGM had been called.



Members' Day
Presentations.ppt

PS proceeded to take a Vote on the Proposal.

Mark Clayson, The Bay Trees, interjected to request that questions be put forward and answered prior to the vote taking place.

Mark Clayson stated that he broadly supported the proposal but had a few reservations:

- The Company name, Go New Forest, has no mention of Tourism in the title.
- The smaller business B&B sector would not be fully represented. Without the B&B's people visiting the New Forest area would not be able to find accommodation to attend local attractions.
- The lack of Assessment requirements for accommodation businesses
- On a positive note: Membership costs would be lower.

PS asked Anthony Climpson (CEO of GNF) (AC) to respond. AC confirmed that a lot of time had been spent identifying the most appropriate name for the new arrangements. GNF had two meanings – to encourage people to “go” and visit the New Forest, and also so local people could celebrate a great place to visit is also a great place to work and live. GNF membership will be open to include all local business thereby creating a stronger economy, not limited to just the direct provision of tourism services. AC asked the EGM attendees if they were happy with the name and there were no objections.

In answer to the second point PS confirmed that GNF would retain the current NFTA group structure to ensure all sectors in tourism were equally represented.

Christine Ames (CA) answered the point regarding the Assessments. She confirmed that nowadays everyone researched ratings reviews with TripAdvisor etc. AC stated that with new enquiries for Membership, the additional high Assessment charges put new businesses off joining. Currently businesses have to be nationally graded or assessed by NFTA. As an example, it was noted that Cornwall CIC have an Accommodation Charter (which includes all the statutory requirements). Following a successful merger, Members not wanting a formal assessment would be asked to sign a Charter, to confirm that they are compliant with statutory requirements, such as Fire and Insurance. If negative reviews are made about individual businesses, it would be the decision of GNF to review and either keep the business in Membership or carry out an Assessment prior to confirmation. In the future businesses would therefore have to be either members of AA/Visit England/ NFTA Assessed or sign a GNF CIC Charter, confirming compliance.

Nina Toyne asked a Rating question, stating that she was unable to search by assessment. AC interjected to confirm that New Mind (who built the new website) would be presenting shortly and all web related questions could be answered separately following the EGM.

David Danby (DD) was concerned that accommodation businesses needs and requirements may become subservient to the wider New Forest Visitor economy.

PS thanked DD for his comments and confirmed that the structures would not change and additional representation from the sector groups would be encouraged by the GNF Board. He asked Members and Sector Chairs to take their requests to the Board, if they felt their needs were not being met.

Guy Smith (GS), St Mary's Garden Cottage, stated that the NFTA Chairman had presented a series of benefits in favour of the merger and asked whether the GNF Board had identified any negatives. PS responded that the Board had not identified any but that moving forward, if the merger was to take place, there would be a proactive sustainable organisation which would not be reliant on government grants. He also confirmed that the Board and Sector Group Chairs would be active in ensuring that Members views were fully taken into account.

The Chairman of NFTA, then read out the Proposal, prior to the room vote, as follows:

“For New Forest Tourism Association (NFTA) to merge with Go New Forest CIC (GNF) and for NFTA to be dissolved with effect from 31st December 2017”

GNF Board Chairman, Steve Lorton, confirmed that 8 Postal Ballot Votes had been received: 7 Votes for the Proposal, 1 Vote against the Proposal. These votes were added to those made in the room to give the following totals:

- FOR: 54
- AGAINST: 1
- ABSTENSION: 1

The Proposal was therefore carried.