



Welcome

to the New Forest National Park

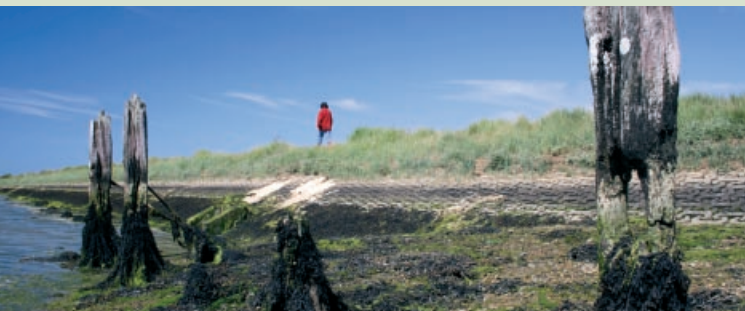
Welcome to a unique landscape of ancient woodland, heather-covered heath, wide lawns, boggy mires, gentle farmland, picturesque villages and coastal saltmarsh, lagoons and mudflats.

The National Park is one of the last places in the south of England to offer a sense of wildness and tranquillity. It is the largest remaining area of lowland heath in Europe and gives the flavour of a landscape that was once much more extensive.

William the Conqueror set aside the Forest for hunting more than 900 years ago and centuries of grazing by deer, ponies and cattle have shaped the landscape; William would probably still recognise much of the Forest today.

It is a wonderful area to explore on foot, by bike or on horseback. It is especially rich in wildlife and you can enjoy a host of sights that make a visit special including ancient oaks, fungi and pigs in the autumn, deer, reptiles, birds of prey and, of course, the famous New Forest pony roaming free.

Why not use the train or New Forest Tour bus to get around and help to keep the New Forest National Park a special place?



Why is the New Forest so special?

The New Forest National Park's landscape is a 'living' and working remnant of medieval England with an overwhelming sense of continuity, tradition and history. It is the survival of not just one special quality but a whole range of features that brings a sense of completeness and integrity.

These features include:

1. The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty: the sights, sounds and smells of ancient woodland with veteran trees, heathland, bog, autumn colour and an unspoilt coastline with views of the Solent and Isle of Wight.
2. An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals of international importance.
3. A unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage from royal hunting ground to ship-building, salt-making and 500 years of military coastal defence.
4. An historic commoning system that maintains so much of what people know and love as 'the New Forest' forming the heart of a working landscape based on farming and forestry.
5. The iconic New Forest pony together with donkeys, pigs and cattle roaming free.
6. Tranquillity in the midst of the busy, built-up south of England.
7. Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery in one of the last extensive, gentle landscapes in the south including unmatched open access on foot and horseback.
8. A healthy environment: fresh air, clean water, local produce and a sense of 'wildness'.
9. Strong and distinctive local communities with real pride in and sense of identity with their local area.



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Caring for the New Forest

People and nature live together harmoniously in the New Forest National Park. To ensure that we continue to do so, please follow this simple code of behaviour:

Access: Keep to tracks to avoid disturbing wildlife. Plan your route to be out of Forestry Commission car parks by dusk.

Dogs: The New Forest is a great place to walk dogs but please keep them within sight and under control at all times. To help birds rear their young safely keep dogs on the tracks between March and July. Some beaches are out of bounds to dogs during the summer; look out for local restrictions.

Parking: Use a designated car park and lock your car, taking any valuables with you.

Driving: The 40mph speed limit on unfenced roads greatly reduces the number of accidents involving animals. Slow down and give ponies and other forest animals a wide berth; they have little road-sense! Be especially careful at night.

Fire: Because uncontrolled forest fires are a great threat, campfires are generally not allowed in the New Forest. Barbecue sites are provided for hire at Wilverley and Anderwood car parks by the Forestry Commission (023 8028 3141 or

www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest) and at Lepe Country Park by Hampshire County Council (please book in advance: 023 8089 9108 or www.hants.gov.uk/lepe).

Cycling: Keep to the waymarked tracks. Give way to walkers and horse riders, and call out a warning when approaching them. Ride in single file on narrow roads and never more than two abreast. Wear bright colours to be visible and always use lights in the dark.

Forest management: Take notice of any warning signs and keep a safe distance from work sites. Only pass a vehicle loading timber when told it is safe to do so.

Litter: Please take your litter home.

Ponies: Please do not feed the ponies. They may look friendly but they can bite and kick – especially mares with foals – and hand-fed ponies tend to gather near roads and become aggressive with other visitors. There is plenty of natural forage for them in the Forest.



What is a National Park?

A National Park is an area of exceptional natural beauty with great opportunities for outdoor recreation that needs special protection and management – just like the New Forest.

The purposes of the New Forest National Park are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and
- to promote understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

In addition, the National Park has a duty to foster the social and economic well-being of communities within it.



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