



New Forest National Park Authority
Annual Review
2014 – 2015





CEO Alison Barnes; Chairman Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre

Chairman's and Chief Executive's statement

As a National Park Authority we have duties both to protect the New Forest and promote people's enjoyment and understanding of it.

This can only be achieved properly if it is done in a way that does not threaten the conservation of the Forest. When weighing up a decision, we must take the 'Forest first' approach and prioritise the landscape – the very thing that makes the area so attractive to visit, live and work in.

Although the National Park faces many pressures, there is a great deal of positive work being undertaken across the Forest.

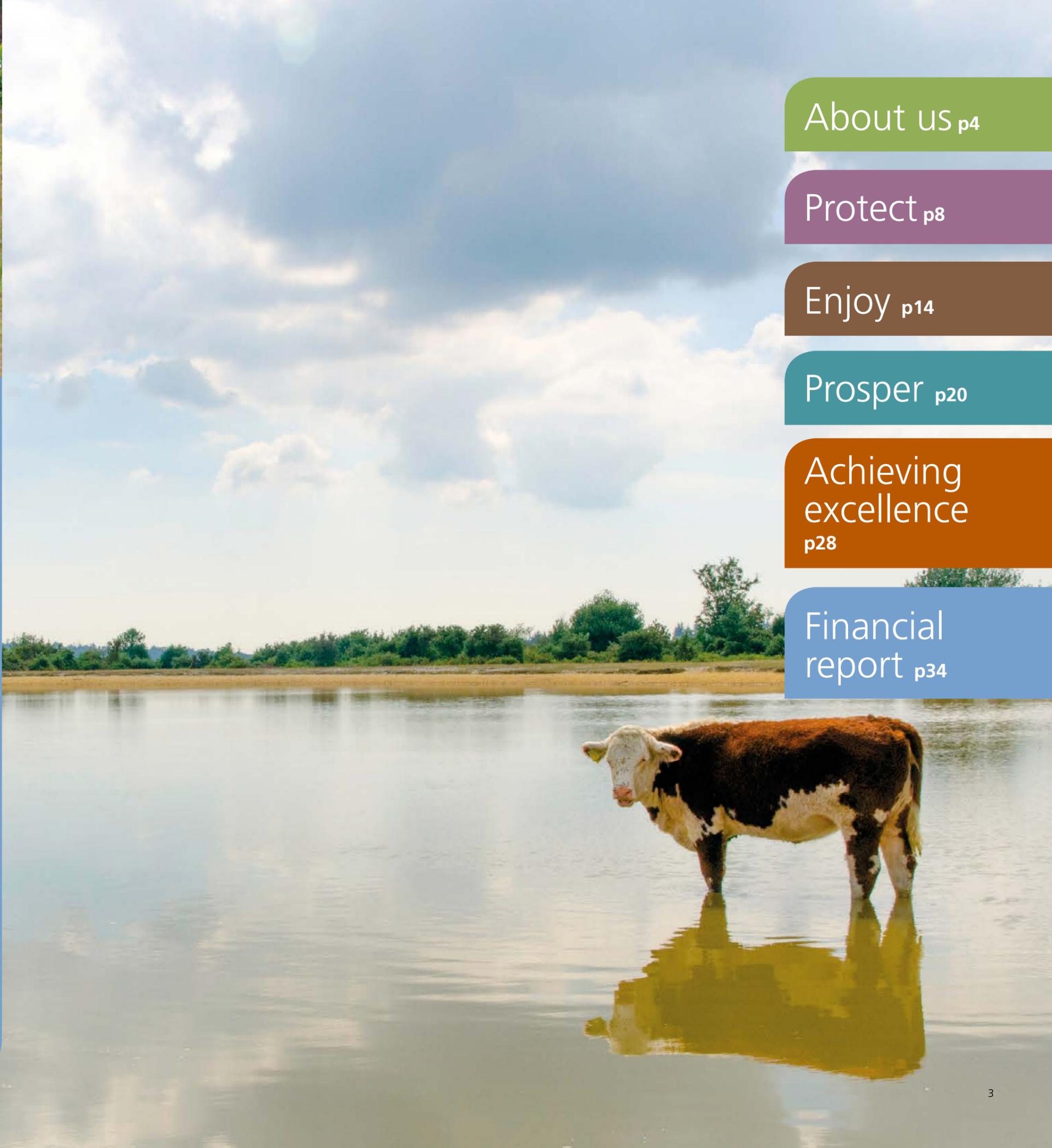
In 2014/15 we began the process of updating the Management Plan for the National Park – the overarching strategy which outlines how the different bodies and local communities will continue to work together to ensure the Forest's fragile habitats are protected and appreciated. It is important that we all work together to look after this exceptional place, and we are pleased that this update is very much a joint venture involving many of the Forest organisations.

Over the past four years we have undergone a 40% reduction in real terms of our core grant from Government. With reduced resources for us all, partnerships with other organisations, businesses and communities have become increasingly vital in delivering for the Forest.

Our thanks go to our partners, staff and members for their work this year in ensuring this precious place is cherished and protected for years to come.

**Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre,
Chairman**

**Alison Barnes,
Chief Executive**



About us p4

Protect p8

Enjoy p14

Prosper p20

Achieving
excellence
p28

Financial
report p34

About the New Forest National Park Authority

Our vision

The Vision for the National Park in 20 years' time is of an area which has a unique and immediately recognisable sense of place, where:

- tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the Park
- the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats are all of the highest quality and a great variety of wildlife is able to flourish
- there is a strong sense and understanding of the heritage and living culture of the Forest
- all visitors can gain inspiration, health and well-being and enjoy the extensive areas of land with open access
- the far reaching consequences of climate change are taken into account in all policies and future plans
- people live and work sustainably and contribute to the care of the Forest
- local, regional and national organisations recognise the value of the National Park and there is a shared understanding of its role within the wider area
- everyone contributes in appropriate ways to keeping the National Park a special place for present and future generations.

Our mission – National Park purposes

As guardians of a national park the New Forest National Park Authority has statutory purposes and socio-economic responsibilities as specified in the Environment Act of 1995:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

Working in partnership with other organisations it is also the Authority's duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.

We like to sum this up as:

Protect
Enjoy
Prosper



Right: National Parks, Britain's breathing spaces
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Our Authority board members

National Park Authority members have overall responsibility for making decisions. They are responsible for setting policies and priorities, ensuring efficient and effective use of resources, and that money is well spent. It is their job to represent the interests of the National Park and to balance out any conflicting pressures.

Local authority appointees

					
David Harrison, Deputy Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee	Edward Heron, Deputy Chairman of the Authority	Ian Hibberd, Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee	Maureen Holding, Chairman of the Standards Committee	Penny Jackman	Julian Johnson
					
Chris Lagdon	Keith Mans	Leo Randall, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee	Barry Rickman	Ken Thornber	Pat Wyeth, Chairman of the Planning Committee

Secretary of State appointees

					
Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre, Chairman	Phil Marshall	Alex Neill	John Pemberton, Chairman of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee	Marian Spain	Judith Webb

Parish appointees

			
Sally Arnold	Richard Frampton	Clive Maton	John Sanger

Our 22 members do not represent any particular political group. Driven by the National Park purposes and duty, they work with officers to establish and then deliver our work programme, with operational aspects delegated to officers.

- 12 are appointed by the county, district, and borough councils with land within the National Park
- six are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- four are selected from the Parish Councils within the National Park.

10 years of top-level protection for the New Forest

Wildlife films celebrating the world-class landscapes of the New Forest have been produced to mark the 10th anniversary of the National Park.

Broadcaster Simon King, best known for presenting Springwatch and Big Cat Diary, has produced three fascinating films, looking at the rich wildlife of the National Park's internationally-important patchwork of ancient woodlands, lowland heaths and diverse coastline.

The films celebrate the ancient system of commoning and the New Forest's many rare species. They will enable better understanding of the Forest's natural beauty and will help people appreciate and conserve its special qualities into the future.

National Park status offers the highest form of landscape protection in the UK, helping to conserve 220 square miles of fragile habitats, more than 200 ancient monuments and 17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the New Forest.

The three films have been produced by Simon King Wildlife TV, with thanks to Natural World UK. They are available on our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/newforestnpa](https://www.youtube.com/newforestnpa)

'The New Forest is a haven for wildlife and rare plants, but it's also a working forest with vibrant communities, and a place to enjoy the beauty and tranquility of nature. National Park status helps ensure the New Forest's fragile landscapes will be protected and appreciated by future generations.'

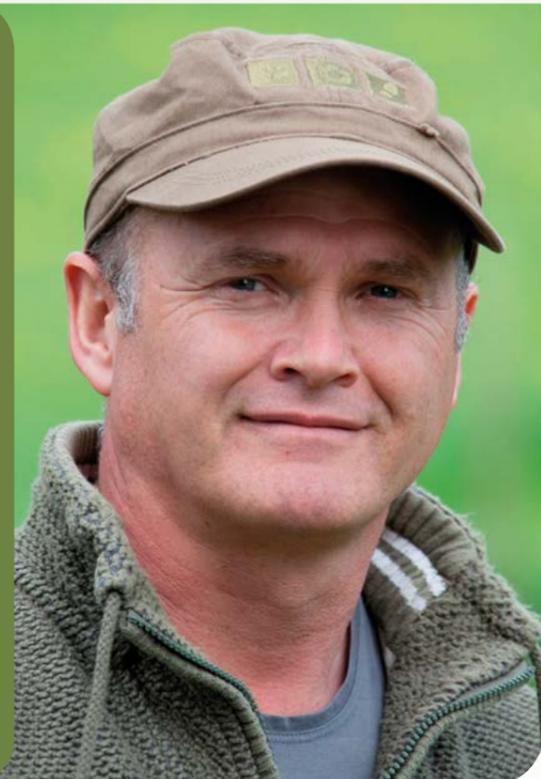
New Forest National Park Authority
Chairman Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre

'Ever since I was a child, the New Forest has held an unparalleled magic for me. The remarkable mix of ancient, natural and human history is a compelling cocktail for all lovers of the outdoors.

It's made all the more tangible through giant relics in the form of mighty trees and swathes of heathland. This patchwork of habitats offers wild creatures a broad choice of homes and resources, enriching the New Forest with an extraordinary variety and density of life.

This wild community, together with a working model of sustainable human use of forest resources, makes the Forest a shining jewel in Britain's natural crown.'

Naturalist, broadcaster and author Simon King OBE



10 years
2005
2015



10 / 10
achievements / years

- 1 Land management**
Nearly **100 landowners and managers** each year receive advice from the New Forest Land Advice Service on how to manage their land to benefit wildlife.
- 2 Conservation**
We are working with the Verderers and Forestry Commission to deliver a Higher Level Stewardship scheme worth **£19m of funding over 10 years**, to support commoning and improve habitats.
- 3 Supporting communities**
Since 2006 our Sustainable Communities Fund has awarded **£1.45m in grants**, funded **132 projects**, secured **£3m** from other sources and benefitted **58,000** people.
- 4 Planning**
Since 2006 we have received **9,752 planning applications** and approved around **88%** of them.
- 5 Sustainable transport**
The open-top New Forest Tour is run by us with Go South Coast. Since 2011 it has attracted more than **142,000** passenger trips, saving almost 750,000 private car miles from New Forest roads and generating around **£2.2 million** for the local economy.
- 6 Supporting commoning**
We joined Hampshire County Council and others to buy nearly **16 acres** of land at Rockford Farm near Ringwood, to provide back-up grazing for Forest livestock and help support the future of commoning.
- 7 Education**
Around **10,000 students** a year from more than **100** education establishments receive free learning sessions.
- 8 Rangers**
Our rangers speak to on average **14,000 people** every year about the National Park's special qualities and encouraging people to care for the Forest.
- 9 Volunteering**
We set up the New Forest Volunteer Fair which is attended annually by over **30 organisations and 300 people**. People have undertaken 3,228 days of volunteering in our projects since 2011.
- 10 Heritage**
More than **3,500 new archaeological sites** have been discovered in the New Forest National Park, thanks to high-tech 'Lidar' laser mapping.

Protect



Updating the Management Plan for the National Park

The New Forest National Park Management Plan contains a strategic and aspirational approach designed to guide the long-term management of the National Park by a wide range of organisations, landowners and interest groups.

First published in 2010 following widespread public consultation, the long-term vision and objectives remain relevant today. However it is time to update the actions in the plan looking ahead over the next five years to 2020.

There was a good response to the public drop-in sessions and initial 'call for views' consultation on proposed updated actions in Autumn 2014.

Following a final, formal consultation period in May/June 2015, the updated plan is due to be adopted in July 2015 and will help guide the work of a wide range of bodies which have an influence over the future of the National Park.

Using our planning powers to protect the Forest

Our planning work is an important element of our drive to protect and enhance the National Park. Over 900 planning applications have been received this year and around 88% of applications were approved.

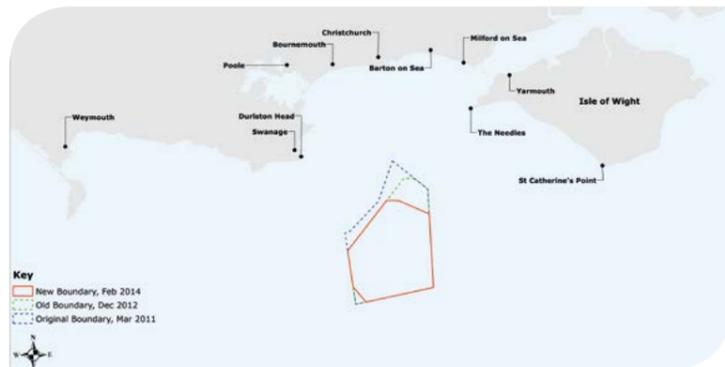
We are also one of the few planning authorities to process all major applications within the Government-prescribed timetable of 13 weeks.

Advice from our planning officers before applications are submitted ensures high quality schemes are brought forward for decision. We have noticed an increase in 'pre-app' enquiries and a number of high profile sites have been acquired, reflecting an improved confidence in the property sector.

Meanwhile around 300 enforcement cases will have been investigated this financial year, with the team ensuring that planning permission is applied for and adhered to.



Above: View from Milford on Sea looking towards the Isle of Wight
Right: Navitus Bay location map



Influencing major planning applications and policies

Navitus Bay Development Ltd is proposing to construct an offshore wind park of up to 194 wind turbines off the Hampshire and Dorset coast.

The wind park would include an underground cable connection to the National Grid running through the New Forest National Park to an onshore substation at Mannington, north of Ferndown.

As one of the planning authorities involved, the National Park

Authority submitted a detailed Local Impact Report with input from our experts in landscape, ecology and archaeology, setting out our concerns about the significant visual impact the turbines are likely to have on the coast and the likely landscape impacts of the onshore cable route. We also gave evidence at an Examination in Public into the application by the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

The Secretary of State is due to make a final decision on the wind park application by September 2015.



Above: Woodland stream, Highwater near Brockenhurst © Mark Heighes

Protecting tranquillity

We undertook a tranquil areas study to map the different levels of tranquillity across the National Park, looking at the impacts of roads, railways, built up areas, pylons, airports and recreational activity.

The resulting tranquil areas map clearly shows the influence of the major roads and the larger

settlements, while the most tranquil areas are those which are more remote and less easily accessed.

The map will help in making planning decisions and will be one of the factors taken into account when looking at recreation management in the National Park.

Improving the view

National Grid approached us to help investigate the possibility of reducing the visual impact of overhead power lines near the village of Hale. This included running a drop-in session in the village, where more than 100 people came to give their views on undergrounding or screening the pylons. National Grid will make a final decision on this section of power line later in 2015.

'National Grid's electricity network is vital to our way of life, but this project provides a real opportunity to help reduce its impact on treasured landscapes like the New Forest National Park.'

Hector Pearson, National Grid Visual Impact Provision Project Manager

Our Past Our Future

Restoring lost habitats, developing Forest skills and inspiring a new generation to care for the New Forest are the aims of our Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid.

Over 18 months we have joined with 10 other organisations to develop 20 projects for the final application round of the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Research has included identifying sites in need of better woodland management and a survey on attitudes to outdoor play.

HLF will decide in September 2015 whether we will receive the full £2.9m grant, which with match-funding will mean a £4.5m injection to make the Forest more robust to face future challenges.

Our Past, Our Future
Working together for the New Forest



Pylons at Hale Purlieu © National Grid

100+ people gave their views on the pylons



Woodlark at nest. © Mike Read

Delivering the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

Worth £19m of European funding over 10 years, this is the largest agri-environment scheme in England.

We work with the Verderers and Forestry Commission to restore habitats, support commoning, protect archaeology and inform the next generation about the New Forest way of life. The scheme relates to the Crown lands in the centre of the National Park and covers 20,000 hectares of open heathland unequalled in Europe for the complexity and range of fauna and flora. The scheme has now reached its half-way mark.

Highlights of the projects led by our staff this year include:

- Restoring 10 monuments ranging from prehistoric barrows to WWII bunkers and 19th century rifle targets

- Surveying 2,370 hectares using Lidar laser scanning from an aircraft and 153 volunteer days checking the data on the ground.

- Conducting surveys of important New Forest bird species including woodlark, Dartford warbler and breeding waders, the results demonstrating the New Forest continues to be a stronghold for these special species. We are continuing to work with partners to further understand the challenges faced by these key bird populations.

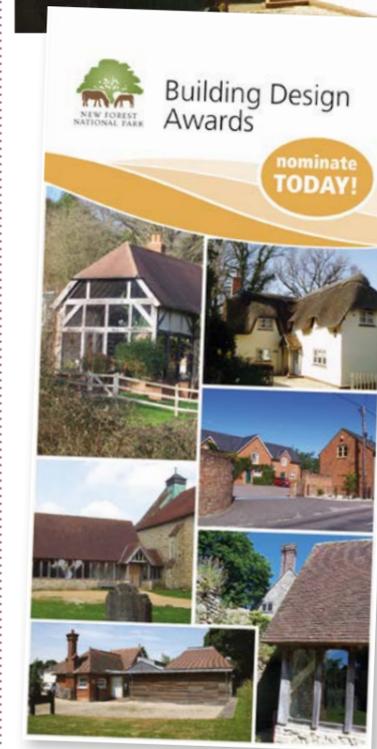
- 2,495 children aged seven to 16 benefited from a total of 50 visits to the New Forest led by our staff and the New Forest Centre team between April and December 2014.

Helping to inspire good building design

Our planners continue to work with local communities, applicants and architects to raise the design standard of new development. As part of this, a Building Design Awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park has been prepared this year and will be launched in summer 2015 following further awareness-raising with local communities and planning agents. www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/building_design_awards

'The buildings of the Forest are one of the precious assets which make the National Park so special and is one of the main reasons why people love to live and visit here.'

Pat Wyeth, New Forest National Park Authority Planning Committee Chairman



Building Design Awards leaflet



The New Forest Land Advice Service Team

Marking five years of the Land Advice Service

The New Forest Land Advice Service supports rural businesses with advice on land management and nature conservation, access to rural skills training courses, and help when applying for grants.

With funding and supported from the Authority, the service's notable achievements over the last five years include:

- Reintroducing ponies and cattle to sites in Milford on Sea and New Milton for the first time in over 50 years, to encourage wildlife and support local farmers and commoners
- Running the Better Boundaries project, which created more than 600m of laid hedges, 1,000m of hedgerows and 1,600m of wildflower field margins to act as wildlife corridors
- Leading volunteers in a national pilot study of water quality on the River Blackwater in the north of the New Forest, and removing more than 2,000m of the invasive Himalayan balsam plant from its river banks.

'Having the Land Advice Service at the end of a phone is very comforting indeed for commoners facing increasingly tight regulations and more administration in their efforts to continue rearing stock.'

Commoner Oliver Cook, from Brockenhurst



Ponies released at Barton Common. © Neil Tungate



A world capital for

WILDLIFE

50%

of the National Park is internationally-important for wildlife – a higher proportion than any other English National Park.

It is home to:

- ALL 6 SPECIES OF UK DEER
- THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF ANCIENT TREES IN WESTERN EUROPE
- 1,000 PONDS SUPPORTING RARE PLANTS AND WILDLIFE
- RARE GROUND NESTING BIRDS INCLUDING NIGHTJAR, WOODLARK AND DARTFORD WARBLER
- 3/4 OF THE UK'S RAREST POND INVERTEBRATES

10,000 HECTARES OF LOWLAND HEATHLAND – THE MOST EXTENSIVE AREA REMAINING IN EUROPE

75% OF THE BOGGY VALLEY MIRES IN NORTH-WESTERN EUROPE

THE ONLY POPULATION OF THE WILD GLADIOLUS IN THE UK

2,700 SPECIES OF FUNGI

70% OF BRITISH DRAGONFLIES

ALL 6 OF THE UK'S REPTILE SPECIES

Discover more: www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wildlife

Enjoy



School party on bridge

Inspiring the next generation

Our education officers and rangers worked with over 10,000 school students over the last financial year, running litter assemblies in local schools and hosting events in the Forest.

We also organised the first 'Our Forest, Our Future' education conferences, where 70 pupils from local schools gave presentations on their ideas and opinions after taking part in workshops addressing challenges facing the New Forest.

Over 1,000 people attended two wild play days, where they enjoyed activities that helped them learn more about the National Park and the pleasure of playing outdoors.

Children were also encouraged to visit the Forest to learn more about the area on school trips. Grants of around £7,000 were awarded to 43 schools in and around the National Park to help them with their travel costs.

We have continued to add content to the New Forest Curriculum website, which will act as a one-stop-shop for education materials about the New Forest: newforestcurriculum.org.uk

Previous page: School party on bridge
Above: Wild play toad



Above: Ashurst walk
Left: Walks leaflet launch

Promoting walking

We have expanded the range of walking route guides we offer and made them easier to access, which has resulted in visits to the walking section of our website tripling this year.

We produced a range of 11 printed heritage walk leaflets, which will be on sale across the

Forest, and continue to use the Viewranger mobile application to make our routes even more widely available.

Our Walking Festival goes from strength to strength, with nearly 350 walkers taking part in 31 walks during last autumn's two-week festival.



Walking Festival at Whitemoor

Improving health and wellbeing

We are becoming a 'dementia-friendly' organisation and to date have carried out three training sessions for staff to learn how best to tailor our services to people living with dementia and their carers.

A workshop will be held in April 2015 with Forest organisations and health professionals to discuss how nature and closer collaboration could help improve people's health and wellbeing.



Encouraging people to care for the Forest

Our rangers spoke to over 14,700 people about our campaigns which include reducing animal accidents, not feeding the New Forest ponies, reducing litter, protecting rare ground-nesting birds and encouraging responsible dog walking.

With nearly 10,000 Facebook followers (up 240% this year) and the same on Twitter (up 22% this year), we are finding social media a key channel for spreading our messages about looking after the Forest, with our online communities commenting on and sharing our campaigns. Informative videos are also proving popular with nearly 192,000 views of our YouTube channel (a 618% increase).

Reducing animal accidents

We coordinate the Animal Accident Reduction Group which helps protect the commoners' stock and is constantly reviewing its initiatives.

Road signs saying 'expect it to step out' have been installed on the accident-prone B3054 either side of Beaulieu to attract the attention of local drivers who become immune to long-term signs.

Over 100,000 animal accident cards are distributed each year with details about who to call in an emergency.

Social media, press and TV coverage have been used to increase driver awareness, with one particular Facebook post about an

animal accident reaching over 38,000 people.

Take your litter home

An anti-litter campaign and poster competition with New Forest District Council reached 4,800 children this year. Winners Noadswood School student Holly Flynn, 12; Gabriel Oram, nine, from Beaulieu Village Primary; Laura-Jane Kells, nine, from Hythe Primary and Jazmin Ramus, 13, of Testwood Sports College, will have their designs displayed on the lorries. They were congratulated by the council's vice-chairman Councillor Alison Hoare.

We worked with New Forest District Council to install pony-proof bins at visitor hotspots, helping to protect ponies and donkeys from potentially harmful food litter.

The latest bin, which prevents animals from pulling out waste, was installed outside Brockenhurst C of E Primary School and means a total of 40 are now in use across the district. The bins also carry an anti-litter message to keep the area clean and tidy.

'Ponies are well adapted to living in the forest and there is more than enough food for them; a diet of gorse, grass and holly suits them best.'

'Unfortunately ponies can become used to human food and some become aggressive when fed, or when people refuse to feed them. After eating human food, ponies can also easily develop colic which is sometimes fatal.'

Nigel Matthews, Head of Recreation Management and Learning

Clockwise from top left: Expect it to step out sign
New Forest Show
Brockenhurst pony proof bin
Litter campaign poster winners
Northern lapwing a – rare ground nesting bird © Mike Read



Increasing volunteering

Around 300 people attended our Volunteer Fair in Lyndhurst in January, finding out about volunteering opportunities from 35 different organisations in the New Forest area.

Over 900 volunteering days were recorded from people taking part in our work this year.

Activities included recording wildlife and improving habitats as part of the Community Wildlife Plans project; recording the New Forest's archaeology and helping people understand more about the bird life of the Forest in a joint 'Date with Nature' project with the RSPB and others.

'I've met so many nice people through volunteering. I like talking about wildlife and I think visitors like talking to a young person about nature.'

Dominik Reynolds, 14, from Totton, who has been volunteering for six years at the New Forest Reptile Centre near Lyndhurst



Working with communities

We awarded a total of £64,350 to improve around 12 miles of footpaths, several of which are gateways to the National Park and had become badly eroded.

At Hamptworth almost two miles of byways were rebuilt, with drainage, surfacing and signage by Wiltshire Council. One of the routes is a key link between Salisbury and the New Forest.

In Redlynch, this included renewing surfacing at Kiln Alley and our rangers helping South Wilts Footpath Group clearing paths and installing kissing gates at Gills Hole.

A two-mile path linking Beaulieu and Buckler's Hard was repaired and resurfaced and made suitable for cyclists.

Resurfacing and clearance also took place at Burley Road, Brockenhurst; in Hyde; and towards the Burrard Neale Memorial at Walhampton, Lymington. The Hamptworth and Beaulieu schemes were funded by our Local Sustainable Transport Fund from the Department for Transport. The other schemes were from our small grants programme.



New summer ranger makes camping in the Forest fun

A new ranger helped campers have fun in the New Forest whilst encouraging them to protect the National Park's animals and landscapes.

Chris Marshall led bug hunts, forest games and craft activities exclusively for families at four Camping in the Forest campsites throughout the summer of 2014, helping 1,500 people and leading 39 educational events.

Campers at Roundhill, Ashurst, Holmsley and Hollands Wood were treated to a wild time of adventure and discovery, with walks from the campsites to learn more about the flora and fauna, how the New Forest got its name and why ponies have played such an important role in shaping the landscape.

The fun activities also show visitors how to care for the Forest and be responsible campers, reinforcing important messages such as not feeding the animals and leaving the forest as it was found.

The new role was supported as a joint partnership between the New Forest National Park Authority, Camping in the Forest and the Forestry Commission and will be extended to two rangers in 2015.

'We're dedicated to helping holidaymakers learn more about the Forest and their natural surroundings, so we're delighted to work with the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission.'

'The National Park Authority Rangers have a fantastic knowledge of the New Forest and we hope those that stay with us take the opportunity to learn more about this unique area.'

Rob Ganley, Camping in the Forest's Senior Communications Manager

'By helping campsite families to explore the Forest and discover its natural wonders, they will be better able to appreciate its fragility and help protect its special qualities during their stay.'

Gillie Molland, Lead Ranger at the National Park Authority

Above: Seasonal Ranger Chris Marshall leading activities with camping families at Hollands Wood campsite near Brockenhurst

A scenic landscape at sunrise. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. A large, dark silhouette of a tree stands prominently on the right side. In the background, a house with a gabled roof is visible, partially obscured by the tree. The foreground shows a body of water with mist rising from it, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Prosper

Mist rising over Beaulieu
Mill pond at sunrise
© Sue Knight

Supporting sustainable communities

Projects that help people live more sustainably in the New Forest have received a welcome boost from a community grants scheme.

Nearly £160,800 of funds were allocated by our Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF), bringing in an additional £176,800 of match funding to the National Park area from other sources.

The SCF helps promote sustainable living and working within the National Park, with grants available for up to 75 per cent of a project's cost.

Some of the 20 projects helped this year include:



Shipwright's school at Buckler's Hard

Grant allocated: £20,000

We provided support for a new replica timber frame 18th century shipwright's workshop, which was built at the historic shipbuilding village of Buckler's Hard, on the banks of the Beaulieu River. Training will be provided at the site to help to ensure the continuation of much-needed skills for restoring historic ships and supporting the traditional boatbuilding industry.

Top: Shipwrights School construction
Above: Shipwrights school launch



Hyde Church centre

'The hall is at the centre of the community and the grant will enable us to renew the heating system and provide a more sustainable method of keeping the hall warm and comfortable for the large range of our users.'

Dai Morgan, Chairman of Hyde Village Hall Trustees

Hyde Church community centre

Grant allocated: £11,000

We funded the installation of an air source heat pump and LED lighting in a new community centre at the Church of the Holy Ascension at Hyde to make the building more energy efficient. The new system will use about one third of the electricity used by more conventional systems – a big environmental gain.



Pondhead Conservation Trust

Grant allocated: £23,426

Pondhead Conservation Trust has been set up to manage Pondhead Inclosure near Lyndhurst under licence from the Forestry Commission, using traditional woodland skills.

We helped the volunteers buy a charcoal burner to produce high quality charcoal on site to sell locally. The group will also undertake a variety of conservation tasks to benefit wildlife and local people, including coppicing areas of hazel trees.

Above: Charcoal burning at Pondhead Conservation Trust near Lyndhurst



Helping property owners go green

Our biannual open house weekend showcasing environmentally-friendly technology attracted hundreds of visits from people interested in reducing their bills and saving energy around their home.

Working with New Forest Transition, the Green Open Doors event over an October weekend saw 273 visits to New Forest properties by people interested in viewing eco-measures such as solar panels, biomass boilers and air source heat pumps in action.

We also produced a series of video profiles of sustainable homes in the New Forest, with hints and tips for saving energy around the home, that are available to watch online.

Visitor Mike Bundock from Dibden Purlieu: 'We loved Green Open Doors. We managed to see eight houses and learnt a

few tricks that I will use on my projects. The folk were wonderful and some good contacts were made. I hope my property will be one of the open houses next year.'

Fiona Rogers, owner of participating property Efford Mill, near Lymington: 'It was comforting to meet others with the same desire to do something positive about energy-saving in our homes, and we enjoyed sharing useful ideas.'

Top: The Rogers family halved their £5,000/year energy bills at Efford Mill near Lymington after installing eco-friendly measures
Below: Green open doors poster





'The New Forest Tour, Beach Bus and Travel Concierge have all played an important role in reducing the impacts of congestion and carbon emissions on the National Park's landscapes. By encouraging visitors and residents to travel without a car, we can help protect its fragile beauty for future generations.'

Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Chairman of the New Forest National Park Authority

Encouraging car-free travel

We are in the second year of delivering projects as part of a £3.8m sustainable transport fund from the Department for Transport, which is shared with the South Downs National Park. The aim is to encourage 370,000 people to get out of their cars and use greener transport by the end of March 2015.

Providing new transport options

We saw a record year for green transport in the New Forest after 50,000 visitors and residents switched from cars to buses.

The New Forest Tour attracted 41,877 passenger journeys on its three routes during its 11-week season this summer, beating last year's record of 40,653. This saved around 226,000 private car miles. It provided a boost to local businesses, contributing an estimated £680,000 to the local economy.

The Beach Bus attracted 7,993 passenger journeys during its five week season to Hythe, Lepe, Beaulieu and Lymington – a 35% increase from 5,898 passengers in 2013.

The New Forest Travel Concierge gave car-free travel advice to 4,441 visitors and residents, selling 1,445 New Forest Tour tickets and handing out hundreds of car-free leaflets and 1,200 cycling route maps.

The services are run by the New Forest National Park Authority in partnership with operators More bus and Bluestar, as part of a Department for Transport (DfT) funded campaign to encourage more people to travel without a car in the National Park.

Other initiatives this year include:

- Finalising plans to extend the 40mph zone into the Wiltshire area of the National Park with 40mph roundalls on the road
- Working with Hampshire County Council and bus operators to find new ways of securing local bus services.

Promoting green travel

An exhibition 'Transport Through the Ages' at the New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, saw 6,000 visitors in two weeks – one of the most successful events at the venue to date.

The autumn **Walking Festival** tripled in size in its second year, with over 300 walkers out across 31 different guided walks highlighting the special qualities of the New Forest landscape, heritage and culture.

We launched the world's first 'tech crèche' encouraging people to leave their gadgets and car keys for a time, and reconnect with nature and their families on car-free experiences in the Forest.

The campaign stimulated a wide debate about mobile use and getting outdoors, as well as highlighting green travel options such as the New Forest Tour and Beach Bus.

The campaign generated:

- over **67,400** views of the accompanying YouTube video
- interviews on BBC Radio 4, Radio 2 and Five Live with a reach of **28m**
- **12** national press articles with a reach of 10.8m
- **32** regional press articles
- coverage by **19** regional radio stations
- a social media reach of **3.6m**.



Right: Transport Through the Ages exhibition

Improving cycling

The Department for Transport (DfT) has awarded us two funds which together will deliver by March 2016:

- Nearly 90kms (55 miles) of upgraded cycle routes in and around the New Forest
- 6kms (3 miles) of new off-road cycle routes in and around the New Forest
- 400 additional bikes for hire in the National Park
- 10 new jobs and at least 22 others safeguarded.
- The funding has also enabled us to provide grants so far of more than £480,000 to 20 local organisations to improve cycling facilities and routes.

Projects this year have included:

1. Beaulieu to Buckler's Hard cycle route

Cycling projects manager John Lynn with Buckler's Hard characters mark a 10-year agreement with the Beaulieu Estate. Cyclists are now able to ride a two-mile footpath from Beaulieu to Buckler's Hard, where ships for Nelson's navy were built. With our £20,000 funding, the route was repaired and resurfaced by the Beaulieu Estate.

2. Family Cycling Campaign

Families enjoyed cycle hire discounts, 5,000 free activity packs and 1,000 'I'm a forest friendly cyclist' badges in May 2014. Nearly 4,000 people viewed the campaign video.

Forestry Commission

£140,000 funds to improve the network of off-road cycle tracks maintained by the Forestry Commission. Improvements on five of the seven tracks have been completed this year.

Applemore College, Dibden Purlieu

Over £9,000 provided a new bike storage unit and shower facilities for students and staff to help them cycle to College.

3. UK Youth Avon Tyrrell Activities Centre, Bransgore

Grants totalling £98,650 towards upgrading mountain bike trails, creating trails for off-road wheelchairs, adapted bikes for people with disabilities, plus a cabin for bike storage, maintenance, and base for instructors.

Friends of Sway Station

Over £7,500 to help fund 10 cycle racks at Sway rail station, an information board and leaflets highlighting cycling and walking routes from the station.

4. Forest Leisure Cycling, Burley

Grants totalling nearly £50,300 to expand the cycle hire centre, replace the delivery van, and buy additional hire bikes.

5. Burley Parish Council

Over £1,400 towards cycle racks in Burley.

Hampshire County Council (Keyhaven Marshes)

£12,000 towards resurfacing part of the seawall path at Keyhaven Marshes. More than 60,000 cyclists and walkers use this section annually.

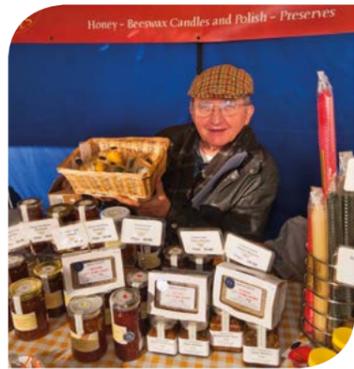
6. Cottage Lodge Hotel, Brockenhurst

Over £7,700 towards bikes and tandems for guests at Cottage Lodge to hire, particularly during peak holiday times when demand can exceed supply at local cycle hire companies.

Royal Oak, Fritham

Nearly £2,300 towards bike racks, cycle storage and a cycle hire scheme.





Far left: Marque member Pauline's Pantry at the Christmas Fair
 Above from top: Christmas Fair; Marque members New Forest Oak and Howatt's Hives (left) both at the fair

Supporting New Forest food and crafts producers

We support the New Forest Marque local produce scheme, which has more than 120 members producing and selling locally-sourced food, drink and crafts.

The high quality of Marque produce has been recognised over the last year with several prestigious awards.

At the Hampshire Life Food and Drink Awards four members walked away as winners:

- **Food Product of the Year**
Oak Smoked Pate from New Forest Smokery and Trout Farm, Fordingbridge
- **New Forest Marque Award**
Hatchett Herd of Pedigree Dexters, Beaulieu
- **Customer Service Award**
Rosie Lea Tea House & Bakery, Brockenhurst
- **Hampshire Food Hero**
Mike Smales from Lyburn Farmhouse Cheesemakers.

There was also success for member **Cyril's Soap Shed** in the Country Landowners Association and New Forest National Park Authority Awards. Owner Catherine Shutler was named Best Supporter of Local Produce. The year ended with national recognition for Kerry Witt, owner of **Chocolate by Miss Witt**, who triumphed at the Academy of Chocolate Awards, taking home an award for her sea salt caramel chocolate.

We helped organise and promote the two-day Christmas Fair which saw over 7,000 shoppers enjoy more than 90 stalls of local crafts and produce at Hoburne Bashley holiday park, New Milton.



Working with businesses

Planning and Transport Conference

Key decision makers in the New Forest debated how to balance the impact of economic growth whilst protecting the unique character of the Forest, at the first New Forest Business Partnership Planning and Transport Conference, held at Hangar Farm Arts Centre, Totton, in October.

Crucial planning policy and transport developments were outlined by speakers including our Executive Director of Strategy and Planning, Steve Avery.

Left to right: Rob Dewing (NFBP Chairman); Chris Elliott (New Forest District Council); Stuart Irvine (Turley Associates); Steve Avery (New Forest National Park Authority); Barry Olorenshaw (New Forest Business Partnership)



New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards

WP Group, a fuel and lubricant specialist with expertise in fuel for heating, aviation, marine and motorsport, won the prestigious New Forest Business of the Year Award as well as claiming the New Forest National Park Authority Sustainable Business Award.

Harriet Phillips from the Hardley-based company received the top prize from the Hon. Ralph Montagu of Beaulieu, President of awards organiser The New Forest Business Partnership, at the

New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards, which took place at Carey's Manor Hotel in November 2014.

Back Row L-R: Steve Vigar (Silclear); Matthew Lawson (Escape Yachting); The Hon. Ralph Montagu; Harriet Phillips (WP Group); Bernadette Mills (Bluebird Care (New Forest)); Chris Tabb (Burley Fudge)
 Front Row L-R: Sophie Gates (Sophie's Pet Care); Sian Smith (WP Group); Alison Slingo (Paw's Deli)



Working with landowners

A joint meeting was held with the CLA (Country Land and Business Association) at the Hinton estate in April 2014 to discuss current land management issues and planning reforms, and to hear CLA members' input.

CLA landowners view renewable energy initiatives at the Hinton Estate

'At WP Group, sustainability isn't just an initiative but a company-wide commitment to ensuring future generations are not compromised by the actions we take today.'

Harriet Phillips, WP Group Marketing Manager

'The high standard of entries to the awards again highlights the quality of business and innovation taking place within the New Forest, making it such an exciting place to do business.'

New Forest Business Partnership Chairman, Rob Dewing



Achieving
excellence

Championing the New Forest at a regional and national level

Environment Minister Lord de Mauley visited the New Forest during National Parks Week and saw a showcase of life in the National Park.

Lord de Mauley heard about our work to encourage green transport in the Forest, reducing car journeys while helping to protect the iconic landscape.

He met business and community leaders who support National Park projects such as the New Forest Tour.

The New Forest National Park is among our greatest natural assets, and a huge contributor to the local economy and tourism industry, which is why it's important to celebrate its success. I'm grateful to the local businesses, farmers and forest authority officials who I met at the show to discuss how we can protect this unique environment and grow our rural economy to help boost opportunities for the local community.'

Natural Environment and Science Minister Lord de Mauley



Environment Minister Lord de Mauley (centre) with New Forest National Park Authority Member Julian Johnson and Chief Executive Alison Barnes at the New Forest Show, Brockenhurst

Working with partners

National Trust Director General Dame Helen Ghosh met key stakeholders at the New Forest Centre for a discussion about the future direction of the Trust and working in partnership across the New Forest.

Dame Helen and National Trust colleagues were then taken on a tour of New Forest projects including: a visit to Keyhaven to discuss planning; Pilley to see an affordable housing scheme; Hatchet Pond to hear about a scheme to improve the water quality of rivers and streams; and Beaulieu to find out about the heritage project capturing the history of World War II in the National Park.



Above: National Trust DG Dame Helen Ghosh (second bottom right) meets New Forest organisations



Right: National Trust visit at Hatchet Pond Beaulieu

Engaging with online communities

There was a 45% increase in website visitors this year thanks to more referrals from our social media channels, new content such as walking routes which saw a 378% increase in page visits, and digital campaigns.

We also updated our suite of forms and online guidance notes on our website to help residents and developers before they apply for planning permission.

Our YouTube channel now has 42 films, many of which are produced in-house, and saw a 618% increase in views. Nearly 10,000 people have liked our Facebook page (a 240% increase this year) with our community sharing messages about reducing animal accidents, litter, not feeding New Forest animals, and other 'caring for the Forest' campaigns.

92% of website survey respondents said they were satisfied with the service.



Commoner Genette Byford daughter Yasmin Cook grandson Sam Cook with Doll the donkey. Doll's snowy-white daughter Jo-Jo was knocked down and killed in Brockenhurst. The story reached 32,000 people on Facebook

92% of website survey respondents were satisfied with the service

Celebrating New Forest champions



Lyndsey Stride receives her New Forest National Park Authority/CLA award from VisitEngland Chief Exec James Beresford

'The Young Commoners group aims to inspire the next generation to keep the ancient tradition of commoning in the New Forest alive. Running the group takes plenty of hard work, so to have this recognised by the award is a genuine honour.'

Commoner Lyndsey Stride

People who have shown real dedication and commitment to the New Forest National Park were celebrated at a joint awards ceremony with the Country Landowners Association (CLA).

Presented at the New Forest Show by the Chief Executive of VisitEngland James Beresford, the winners were:

Young Farmer / Commoner
Lyndsey Stride

Best Supporter of Local Produce
Catherine Shutler, owner of Cyril's Soap Shed

Sustainability Champion
Margaret Richens from Milford Community Centre

Agricultural Building Designer
Wendy Perring on behalf of Warborne Farm.



Working towards sustainability

National Park Authorities report their Greenhouse Gas emissions following Defra Guidelines. Monitoring emissions allows us to identify areas for improvement. Data is collected from staff mileage claims, train ticket bookings, fleet records and energy bills. Overall there was an increase in emissions by 2.51 tonnes of CO2e in 2014-2015, a rise of 1%.

17% of staff regularly commute to work car-free by walking, cycling or using the train. To encourage staff to access work sustainably we provide cycle parking, lockers and showers. 50% of staff took part in the commuter challenge saving 1.3 tonnes of CO2 and 90 miles were cycled on the national Cycle To Work Day.



A team from B&Q – one of our corporate partners – helps with woodland coppicing

Securing savings and efficiencies

With a 40% cut in real terms in our Defra budget over the past four years, we are focussed on finding new ways to generate income and savings.

We have been successful in selling our expertise including ecology, trees and archaeology to other organisations and buying in support services such as HR and finance from neighbouring public sector organisations.

We are currently finalising service level agreements on building conservation and GIS mapping services and this means we will have the highest level of service level agreements of any of the National Park Authorities in the UK.

40% cut in our budget over four years



New Forest National Park tree officer Liz Beckett helps collect beech seeds with Simon Kallow, Kew's UK National Tree Seed project officer. These and other seeds will be included in Kew's Millennium Seed Bank to ensure that the species is safe for the future.



Financial
report

Financial Information

We are continuing to see significant reductions in our core National Park Grant from Defra which equated to a further 8% cut this year (£288,000).

The savings were successfully achieved through increasing use of shared services, an internal staffing review and restructure and other general cost efficiencies. We also utilised £3,000 from our reserves and generated substantial external partnership funding to ease the impacts on services and delivery; on average, for every £1 we contributed to joint projects, it generated a further £13 from partner organisations.

We received around:

£3.1 million from Defra

£341,000 in statutory fees for planning and related applications

£155,000 for shared services with other Local Authorities (trees, ecology, rangers and administration)

£22,000 interest on our investments

£75,000 in other income generation (such as talks, guided walks, New Forest Tour advertising and charging of expert advice)

Significant external funding totalling £1.2m was secured for the Forest, including:

£448,000 from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

£293,000 for New Forest Family Cycling Experiences

£161,000 for the Our Past, Our Future: Landscape Partnership Scheme

£112,000 from the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

£50,000 for the New Forest Remembers – untold stories of WWII project

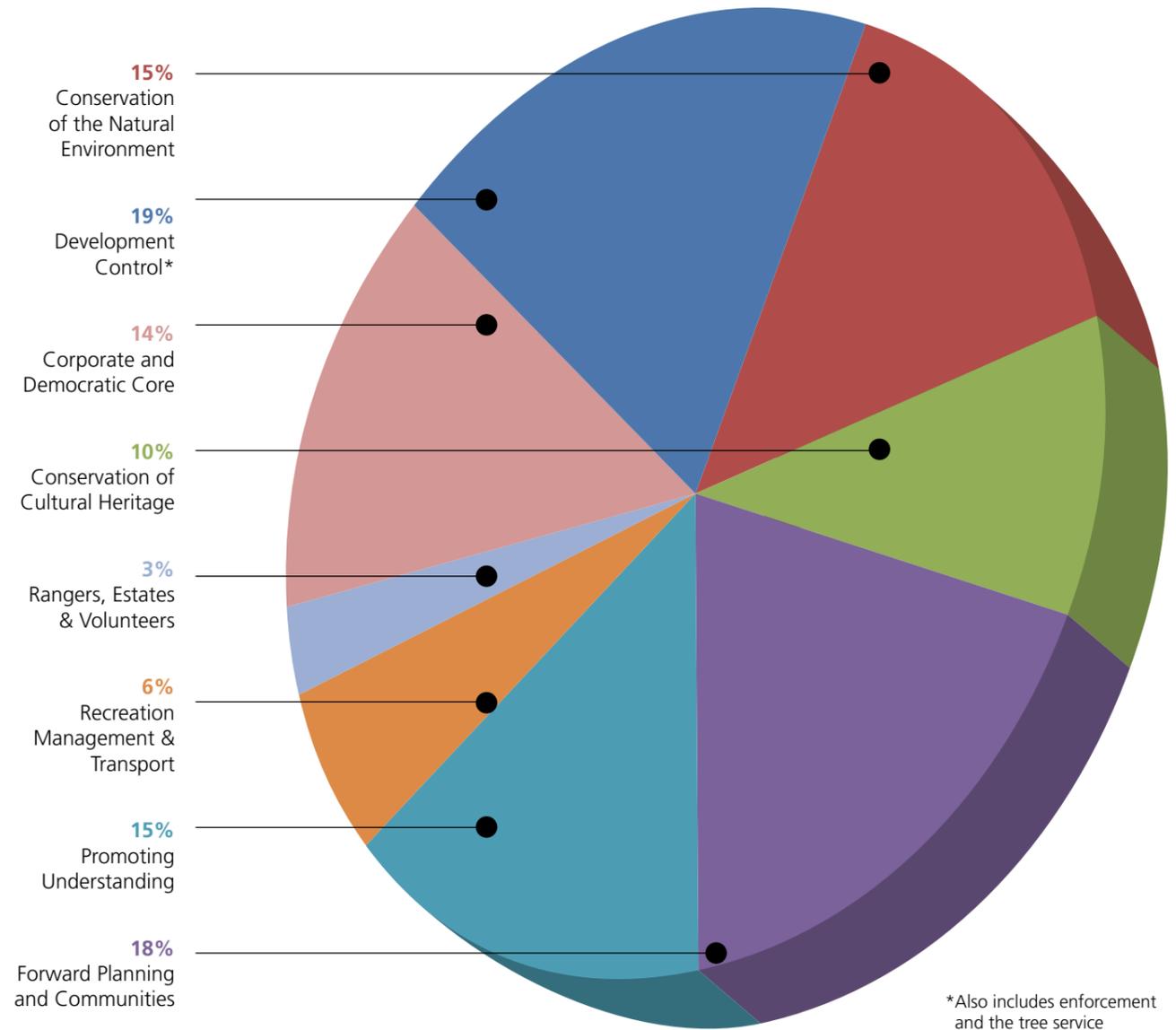
£42,000 to support the New Forest Local Produce

£35,000 for the New Forest Land Advice Service

£30,000 for the Community Wildlife Plans project

Plus many more smaller projects.

2014-15 Net Expenditure





Contact us

We welcome your views and comments about this Annual Review or any other aspect of our performance or services. For regular updates, please sign up to our email newsletter via our website.

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Hurst Castle lighthouse