



New Forest National Park Authority

# Annual Review 2013 – 2014







Julian Lewis MP, Alison Barnes CEO, Julian Johnson Chairman, at New Forest Volunteer Fair 2014

# Chairman's and Chief Executive's statement

This year has seen us successfully attracting additional funding from a range of sources to boost our role in protecting the New Forest.

Of particular note is that following our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund a £2.9 million Landscape Partnership Scheme grant has been earmarked for the New Forest and match-funding will take this to £4.5 million. The scheme will work to ensure the National Park is fit to face future challenges.

We are now in the 'development phase' – working with 10 organisations to develop specific projects, and will hear in September 2015 if the money will be allocated.

Continuing the theme of protecting the Forest for the future, our education team is focussed on bringing the wonder of the New Forest to the next generation. They are embedding the Forest in the national curriculum so lessons can take place in the New Forest. Nearly 9,000 children this year have heard about how they can help care

for the Forest, through lessons, campaigns and events, with a website of resources for teachers currently being developed.

As a National Park we work to ensure key decision-makers and a national audience are aware of the Forest and the issues we are trying to tackle. We have had a number of opportunities this year and have made an impact in terms of planning reforms and also bringing stories about the Forest during war-time to an international and national audience. This continues to enable us to put the Forest and its issues centre-stage on a national level.

We would like to thank all our partners, staff and members for a successful year, with much work ahead to continue to protect and enhance this world-class landscape.

**Julian Johnson, Chairman**  
**Alison Barnes, Chief Executive**



A large deer with prominent antlers stands in a field of autumn foliage. The deer is facing forward, looking slightly to the left. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The deer's fur is a mix of brown and tan, and its antlers are dark with some lighter tips.

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Achieving  
excellence  
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# The New Forest National Park in numbers

Over 900  
years old

1079: William the Conqueror creates his Royal Hunting Ground or 'Nova Foresta' and marks the start of Forest Law

10,000

hectares of heathland  
– the most extensive  
area of this habitat  
remaining in Europe

Land use:

39%  
woodland

75%

of the boggy valley  
mires in north-western  
Europe (90 out of 120)

4

railway  
stations

235km  
of public  
footpaths

214

Scheduled  
Ancient  
Monuments

37

parishes

13,500,000  
visitor days/year

Over 500

practising commoners

Home to  
17 out  
of 18

UK bat species

5,120  
ponies

339  
pigs

Over 9,000  
animals graze the  
Forest (2013):

220  
square miles

Over 1,000  
ancient and veteran  
trees – the highest  
concentration in  
western Europe



34%  
Open  
Forest

25%  
farmland

2%  
coast

15  
million  
people  
within a  
90  
minute  
journey

2,300  
businesses

56%  
of the National Park is  
designated of international  
value for nature conservation  
(a 'world capital' for wildlife)

622  
listed buildings

34,500  
residents

38,000 hectares  
(67%) covered by the historic  
'perambulation' where  
commoners' animals roam free

165  
donkeys

3,491  
cattle

113  
sheep



# 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 members

## Local authority appointees



David Harrison,  
Deputy Chairman of  
the Resources, Audit  
and Performance  
Committee



Edward Heron



Ian Hibberd,  
Deputy Chairman  
of the Standards  
Committee



Maureen Holding,  
Chairman of  
the Standards  
Committee



Penny Jackman



Julian Johnson,  
Chairman of the  
Authority



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,  
Deputy Chairman  
of the Authority



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 are the people with overall responsibility for making decisions. They are responsible for setting our strategy, our policies and priorities, ensuring efficient, 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.

- 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.





Protect p9



# How we used our planning powers to protect the Forest

Planning is a vital tool for managing the impact of development on landscape and biodiversity and a key part in conserving all that is special about the New Forest.

## Planning reforms

Part of our work involves responding to Government consultations on proposed changes to the planning system, especially those which are likely to affect the New Forest.

So when the Government published proposals last year to allow farm buildings to change to housing without planning permission, we worked closely with other Forest organisations to make the case for a National Park exemption. Our worry was that in an area like the New Forest, there would be a real impact on the landscape, the rural economy and future provision of affordable housing.

We were therefore very pleased when the Government announced that this new planning rule would not apply to protected landscapes like the New Forest, which coincided with the Planning Minister's visit to the New Forest in March.

## Opinion formers

Our planning work also has a key role to play in supporting local businesses and sustaining rural communities. We invited the Planning Minister to visit the Forest to show how we're open for business whilst protecting what is special about the Forest.

## Built heritage

We published a building design guide and an online toolkit of good design case studies to give guidance to property owners and architects on how they can help protect the unique built environment of the Forest.

We continue to work with parish councils to help them produce plans for their areas to promote local distinctiveness. Three more Village Design Statements were adopted this year for Sway, Boldre and the parish of Ashurst and Colbury, bringing the total to six.

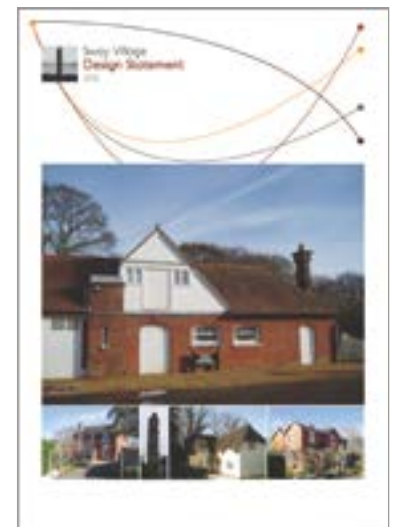
We held a planning tour for our Members to view high quality and recently completed developments around the Forest and share good practice on design in our special landscape.

'I was delighted to visit the New Forest and see the work the National Park is doing to protect this part of the country in a way that allows communities to thrive. They are showing how it's possible to support businesses that will provide much-needed jobs in a way that safeguards the magical landscape of the New Forest.'

**Planning Minister Nick Boles MP**



Planning Minister Nick Boles (centre) at Beaulieu



Sway Village Design statement





Hatchet Pond © Luke Parkinson

## Planning applications

We provide pre-application advice to planning applicants, working to achieve the best possible development schemes for both applicants and the New Forest landscape and communities.

- Over 87% of planning applications were approved
- 79% of applicants were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the planning service
- All small scale and large scale major planning applications were processed within 13/16 weeks respectively; 88% of householder and 74% of minor applications were processed within eight weeks.

## Enforcement planning controls

Following consultation, we published our Local Enforcement Plan – setting out the enforcement powers available to the National Park Authority, how to best resolve breaches of planning control, and the most common type of breaches we deal with.

We followed up on developments which had not complied with planning permissions and whilst

most cases were resolved by agreement, we took swift enforcement action where necessary.

## Shaping regional policy and planning

We have been working to link in with the strategies and plans for other areas and making sure that new development planned in neighbouring authorities takes account of the Forest's special environment. This often involves providing for additional green space close to new planned developments to help off-set further recreational pressures on the New Forest.

## Protecting the New Forest's trees

Our tree team provided an exceptional service during the storms in late 2013/early 2014, responding to record levels of calls as a result of the unprecedented weather and issuing over 160 notices for work to protected trees, compared to 30 in the same period the previous year. The team also manned the phone lines over Christmas and led on getting information out to residents through the local media.

'We want to ensure the right scheme is developed for the right place and which will ensure the Forest is a living and working landscape for generations to come. With the help of pre-application planning advice, over 80% of applications have been approved this year.'

National Park Chairman Julian Johnson

over **87%** of planning applications were approved

# How we protected and enhanced the New Forest landscape and supported commoning

Two major schemes – one focussed on the core Crown lands and one around the edges of the National Park – will ensure the Forest is protected for the future. We have supported and driven aspects of the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and are now hoping to secure funding for areas outside the open Forest. These major schemes will enable us to work at the landscape scale, rather than having to focus on small areas in isolation.

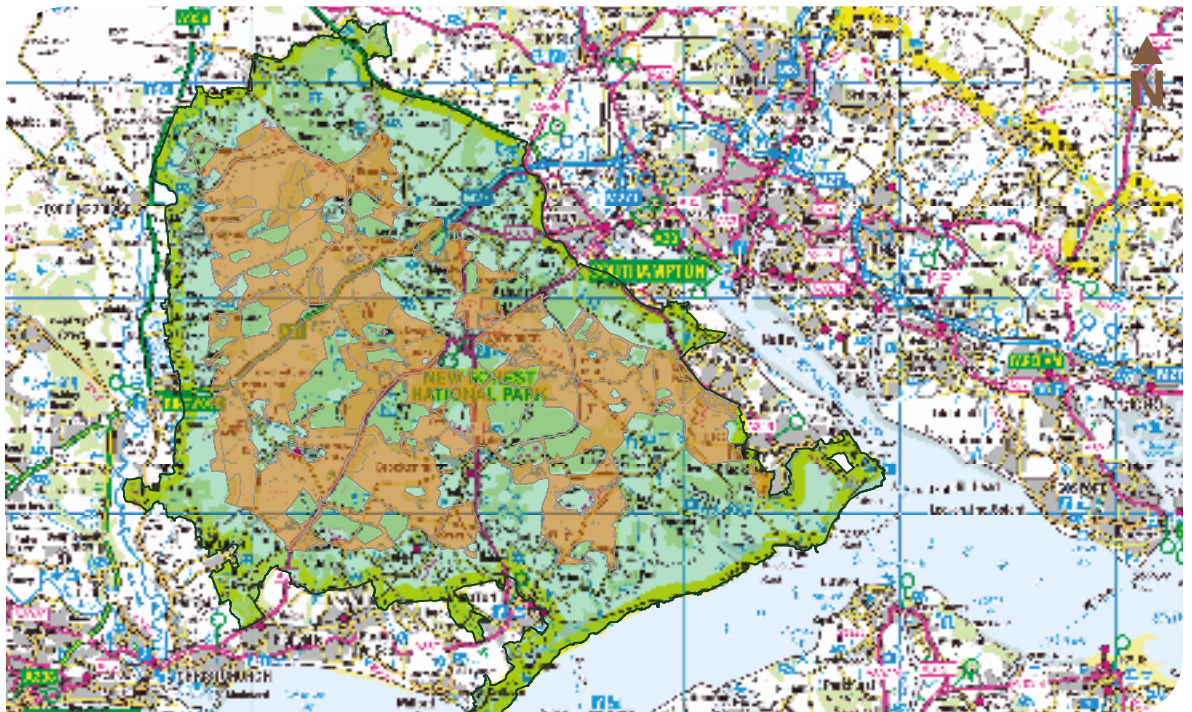
New Forest National Park map showing areas under different funding schemes

## Key:

Land in the Higher Level Stewardship scheme;

Land earmarked for Landscape Partnership Scheme funding

Not to Scale; © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2014. Ordnance Survey 1000114703.



## Our Past, Our Future – landscape partnership scheme

The Heritage Lottery Fund announced £2.9m was earmarked for the National Park after we applied for a Landscape Partnership grant. We are now in the development phase of the project and we are hopeful that with match-funding bringing the total to £4.5m, we will be in a position to lead 10 partner organisations in delivering a range of projects to make the Forest fit to face future challenges.

The projects aim to:

- restore lost habitats
- develop Forest skills
- inspire a new generation to champion and care for the New Forest.

This scheme relates to land around the edges of the national park, linking the core Crown lands with surrounding farm land.

## Higher Level Stewardship scheme

Worth £19m of European funding over 10 years, this scheme is the largest 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.

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

### Historic environment:

- 13 monuments were restored back into favourable condition



- 7,640 hectares (nearly 19,000 acres) was surveyed by Lidar – laser scanning from a plane – to discover new archaeological features and help plan the wetland restoration programme
- 175 volunteer days were undertaken towards the project over the last year and a number of these volunteers were given certificates in recognition of their contribution.

#### Education:

- 2,248 children aged seven to 16 benefited from a total of 48 visits to the New Forest led by our staff and the New Forest Centre team.

#### Landscape:

- We are producing an advisory leaflet giving guidance on boundaries for properties facing the open Forest.

#### Bird surveys:

- We worked with contractors to complete a survey of the breeding population of the rare nightjar. Results show that numbers have remained relatively stable since the previous survey 10 years ago.
- We started to plan surveys of woodlark, Dartford warbler and breeding waders – bird species under threat and for which the New Forest is a stronghold.

### Valuing the National Park

- We promoted the role of the New Forest National Park and the surrounding 20km, a so called 'Green Halo', in providing economic and social benefits for people. These 'ecosystem services', such as flood alleviation and health and wellbeing, have been mapped and will help guide initiatives to protect the Park and surrounding area.
- We helped compile and publicise a National Parks England report, 'Valuing England's National Parks', which shows the importance of National Parks not just as iconic landscapes and part of our

national identity, but as thriving rural economies contributing to national prosperity and wellbeing through their special qualities. English National Parks contribute between £4.1 – £6.3bn to the economy through economic activity within their boundaries. That's equivalent to the UK aerospace industry. In the New Forest, 2,330 businesses generated £0.6 – £1bn Gross Value Added in 2012.

### Rockford Farm

We worked with Hampshire County Council and others to buy nearly 16 acres of land at Rockford Farm north of Ringwood. This will provide back-up grazing for Forest livestock and help support the future of commoning.

### Landscape Action Plan

Following extensive consultation with residents, we published a Landscape Action Plan which considers key themes that may affect the New Forest landscape and suggests ways of managing them, alongside a series of Landscape Character Assessment that identifies its special qualities. A Landscape Action Plan working group is being convened with local stakeholders to take this work forward.

Issues addressed include conserving tranquillity and dark night skies, the impacts of climate change, integrating settlements, roads and access provision and future woodland management.

The plans also look at what has defined the historic character of the New Forest landscapes and villages, in order to better preserve their qualities, and the features that make them unique.

### Beaulieu Road Salesyard

The historic sales yard for New Forest commoners' ponies was brought up to date thanks to a final £48,000 investment for a new roof from the New Forest RDPE (Leader) Programme.



The launch of the new roof and other improvements at the Beaulieu Road Salesyard

The completion of the roof was the final stage of a range of improvements at the Salesyard which New Forest organisations hope will provide a boost for the ancient practice of turning out ponies on to the Forest.

The previous improvements included the installation of mains water and mains electricity, providing wash-down facilities, toilets and removable lighting to bring the yard up to modern health and safety and trading standards.

The funds came from the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, the New Forest National Park Authority and a range of other Forest organisations.

'Commoning has been instrumental in shaping the Forest landscape and wildlife habitats and also its cultural history. The continuation of commoning is the only sustainable way of maintaining the nature conservation value and landscapes of the Forest. It is therefore important to develop the sales yard so that it is fit for use for future generations.'

New Forest Livestock Society Chairman  
Lucinda Lang

# How we worked to protect wildlife

## Studland Common

We worked with the local community to introduce grazing cattle to the Common at Milford on Sea for the first time in 60 years.

Dexter cows – the smallest British breed of cattle – will help manage scrub, encourage species-rich grassland, improve the landscape and wildlife of the area and provide more space for walking on the Common.

## Community wildlife plans

Seven local communities recorded, mapped and conserved wildlife in their local area as part of our Community Wildlife Plans Project. We helped Hordle, Landford, Godshill, Wellow, Marchwood, Milford-on-Sea and New Milton set up groups of volunteers and experts to create an action plan for their areas and establish groups to do the work.

## Wildlife Forum

We brought together over 70 wildlife specialists from the New Forest and surrounding areas to look at ways of making Forest habitats bigger, better and more joined up.

The New Forest Wildlife Forum saw representatives from local wildlife organisations discussing their ongoing work to help improve the extent and quality of local habitats and provide habitat links to the area surrounding the National Park.

'We are so lucky in Milford to have an area of unimproved grassland which is rich in wild flowers. This type of habitat is one of the most threatened in the UK and we are anxious to increase and improve the area that we have.'

**Anne Jenks, Milford Conservation Volunteers Chair**



## Nightjar survey

We oversaw a survey funded by the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme to see how the rare nightjar bird population is faring. The New Forest is a vital habitat for one of our most mystical summer visitors, following historic declines in the rest of the UK. Results show that nightjars are returning to the New Forest in good numbers each spring from the wintering grounds in Africa with 550 breeding males recorded, endorsing the importance of the conservation work being funded by the HLS scheme.



Right from top: The rare nightjar;  
Nightjar survey in progress



# How we worked with landowners



Above: Land Advice Service team: Georgie Watson, Julie Stubbs, Angela Peters and Rhys Morgan  
Top right: Heavy horses at Roydon Woods, Brockenhurst  
Right: Hedgelaying at Walhampton, Lymington



## The New Forest Land Advice Service

The Land Advice Service provides training, grants advice and support to landowners and managers in and around the National Park to help them manage their land for the benefit of the environment. We host the Service as a joint project with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Verderers. This year 118 land managers and commoners received help. The Service organised 10 training events attended by 277 people.

## Heavy horses help

Landowners and managers took part in a course to learn how the traditional skill of heavy horse logging is beneficial for woodland.

They used one-ton Percheron draft horses to clear timber from wooded sites which are often inaccessible for modern machinery. The horses also cause less damage to the soil.

## Hedgelaying tips

Courses run by the New Forest Land Advice Service were aimed at providing members of the commoning community with the skills needed to maintain their own hedges. Managing hedges using traditional techniques instead of mechanical methods encourages vigorous regrowth and ensures hedges live longer. Mechanically managed hedges can develop gaps at their base through which livestock can pass, further damaging the hedge.

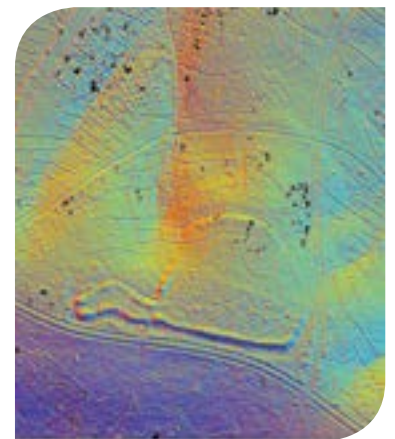
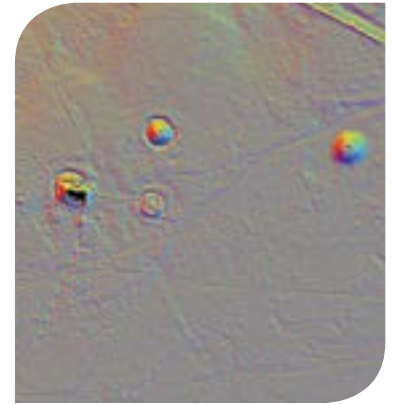
'My family has been in the New Forest for many generations and it has long been a dream of mine to contribute in some way to the continued close relationship between the Forest and its inhabitants. 'With this in mind it is my plan to move into some area of woodland management and this course was invaluable for widening my skills.'

**Trainee James Humphries,**  
from Ashurst Bridge

# How we used new technology to protect the historic environment

'This has improved our knowledge of the history and archaeology of the New Forest exponentially. There is so much more for us to be looking at and we are far from having the whole picture, but as a way of moving forward it's really exciting.'

**Lawrence Shaw, Heritage Mapping Officer**



More than 3,500 new archaeological sites have been discovered in the New Forest National Park, thanks to high-tech laser mapping technology.

Using images beamed back by lasers from aircraft, this Lidar (light detecting and ranging) technique has helped our researchers find previously unrecorded sites and monuments. These include an Iron Age fort,

Bronze Age burial mounds and a World War II decoy-bombing site.

Over the next seven years, with the help of volunteers we will check all the sites on the ground and work to preserve them.

Top left: Heritage Mapping and Data Officer Lawrence Shaw (left) and volunteers use Lidar data to survey archaeology

Top right: Lidar image of Bronze Age barrow at Beaulieu Heath

Centre: Aerial photo of Iron Age hill fort

Bottom: Lidar image of Iron Age hill fort



# New Forest tree expert retires after nearly 30 years

The New Forest National Park's Senior Tree Officer Bryan Wilson has retired after nearly 30 years protecting trees in the New Forest.

Bryan's first role in the area was as head of the tree team at New Forest District Council just two weeks after the Great Storm of 1987 had hit.

'I arrived to 400 handwritten notes on my desk to deal with and it meant I travelled all round the district so I got to find my way around quickly,' he said.

'I had been working for the Royal Borough of Kensington and the London Borough of Sutton before that and wanted to get out of the capital and what better place than the New Forest?'

Bryan moved to the New Forest National Park Authority when it was set up in 2006 and the role came full circle in 2012 when he and his team began providing tree services for the District Council as well as the Authority.

Their latest challenge was the recent series of storms and floods when the team had to issue 160 notices for urgent work to protected trees in the four months between October 2013 and January 2014 as a direct result of the bad weather, compared to 30 notices in the same period the previous year.

The New Forest is believed to have the greatest concentration of ancient and veteran trees in western Europe, although only half the National Park is woodland. Bryan's role has included helping people understand more about the Forest through exhibitions, walks and talks, plus visits from foreign national parks keen to learn about the New Forest experience.

'We are always learning something new about trees,' he said. 'The extraordinary connections that trees have with every aspect of life you can possibly think of – climate change, they breathe out oxygen,

they help conserve water, they provide us with shelter, fodder for cattle, food for humans, charcoal for fire – everything that established modern civilisation comes from trees. Then there is the wildlife that lives in them and the fascinating world of fungi that until recent years we have had very little appreciation for. Fungi live utterly in association with trees without which the trees can't survive and the fungi can't survive.'

The relationship and interaction between people and the Forest over thousands of years has its benefits and challenges, Bryan said.

'We are in an area of extraordinary historical interest – the landscape has been preserved in a manner where other parts of the country have not and so has a ring of continuity about it,' he said. 'The Forest has the whole panoply of environment – from valley mires to heathland, ancient woodland and coniferous woodland.'

'Trees have suffered every pest and disease since time immemorial but nature has a way of dealing with adversity – we might not have elms for a hundred years... but the main threat is the pressure from people living in, working in and visiting the Forest and the myriad of conflicting priorities.'

Much of Bryan's role has been about negotiating with landowners and householders to get the best for them and for trees.

He said: 'The most satisfying aspect of the job is when you persuade someone who originally saw trees as just a nuisance and expense that there are other options and that they then actually quite like trees and even might plant some in the future.'

Bryan is clear about his favourite trees in the New Forest. 'I think



the most startling tree feature within the New Forest is the 1km long avenue of limes leading down to Hale Park, which is totally man-made and a few hundred years old. Elsewhere, the ancient oak and beech look spectacular. The Forest has been preserved as such deliberately by man for a very long time – long before William the Conqueror designated it as his New Forest in 1079. So it has a number of extraordinary facets which are unique as they are all found here together.'

Chairman of the National Park's Planning Committee Pat Wyeth, who is also a District Councillor, said: 'I have known Bryan for many years. His love of trees and commitment to detail has served him well. One could always have confidence in his decisions, whether it was a major issue or small garden tree. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his many years of service and wish him well for the future.'

Bryan has worked with 10 different tree officers during his roles in the New Forest. Nik Gruber, who worked with him for 10 years in the 1990s at the District Council, now takes over his role as Senior Tree Officer.

In retirement Bryan will continue his role as Church Warden for St Nicholas Church in Brockenhurst, which is believed to have one of the oldest trees in the Forest – a 1,000-year-old yew.

Retiring New Forest National Park Authority Senior Tree Officer Bryan Wilson visits one of the oldest trees in the New Forest – a 1,000-year-old yew at St Nicholas Church, Brockenhurst







Enjoy p19

# How we helped people to learn more about caring for the Forest



## Bringing the wonders of the New Forest to a new generation

We worked with the Geography Advisor from Hampshire County Council's Education Service and the New Forest Primary Headteachers Group to develop a New Forest Curriculum for local schools.

Children across the New Forest are now using the National Park as an outdoor classroom, for case studies and in their lessons. New school sessions in Maths, English, A level Biology and Physics linked to the National Curriculum have already been developed with schools and are being used.

The first New Forest Curriculum Conference, which we facilitated, was attended by headteachers, governors and teachers from 17 local schools. All delegates requested a similar conference next year. We started work on a New Forest Curriculum website of teaching resources.

Our education officers and rangers led sessions for 8,923 students from 105 education establishments, as well as 48 preschool sessions for 1,244 young children.

## Supporting young people

We helped the Campaign for National Parks to launch its Youth

Mosaic project to provide skills and opportunities for young people in the New Forest.

The initiative provides a way for 16 to 25-year-olds to get involved in National Parks across England, using them to improve their health and employability and get a bigger say in decisions that are made in National Parks. 'Young champions' learnt new skills and helped with footpath maintenance, bird identification, regular volunteering at the Countryside Education Trust and attended a residential event at Exmoor National Park with Mosaic young champions from other national parks.

## New hotline cards for responsible dog owners

In collaboration with the New Forest Dogs Forum we produced hotline cards and window stickers with information designed to encourage responsible dog walking. The campaign aims to help keep the forest clean of dog mess, protect Forest animals and birds, and provide a safe and considerate environment for everyone.

The code for dog walkers includes picking up after their dog, especially where people walk, play, park or picnic, and taking the bagged waste home or using

a litter or dog bin. It also says dogs should be under control and not allowed to approach or chase livestock, deer or other wildlife.

## Caring for the Forest

Our rangers spoke with over 14,300 people throughout the year about the National Park's special qualities, attending events and assisting with campaigns to prevent litter, reduce animal accidents, encourage responsible dog walking, help protect ground-nesting birds and discourage people from feeding and petting commoners' animals. A new twitter account – @NewForestRangers – has been launched, allowing rangers to advertise their events and locations plus tweeting messages about caring for the Forest.

Top: Window sticker  
Below: Craig Burnett at the Youth Mosaic launch





# How we encouraged volunteering in the National Park

Volunteers are central to many of our projects but also to life in the Forest in general.

We organised the third Volunteer Fair with 30 organisations showcasing opportunities to volunteer and around 260 people attending the event, which was opened by Dr Julian Lewis MP.

A celebration at Hurst Castle recognised the 940 days of work by nearly 100 volunteers contributing to our World War II project, while people who had helped with our Lidar archaeology project were presented with certificates at the Verderers Court in Lyndhurst.



Clockwise from above: Volunteer Poster; Chatting at the volunteer fair



# How we celebrated the National Park's special qualities



## A Date with Nature

People were invited to make 'a date with nature' to meet the New Forest's most secretive inhabitants, the goshawk. In a joint project with the RSPB, the Forestry Commission and Carnyx Wild the aim was to raise awareness of these 'silent phantoms' of the New Forest that were once hunted to extinction. People could watch exclusive live footage from a nest-cam of the birds feeding and rearing their chicks online and at the Reptile Centre near Lyndhurst where volunteers were available to explain more about the challenges that face these birds face.

## Open art

The New Forest is world-renowned for its stunning landscape, picture postcard views and magnificent wildlife. To celebrate this unique place we teamed up with the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst and

ExxonMobil at the Fawley Refinery and Park Culture Magazine to launch a joint open art competition with a popular exhibition of the winners throughout the summer.

New Forest Centre Manager Hilary Marshall: 'We were overwhelmed by the response. Not only did we have a tremendous number of pieces of artwork but it was all of an incredibly high standard. There really is a wealth of artistic talent in the Forest and surrounding areas.'

## Seasonal snaps

In autumn and spring we launched photo competitions on social media to celebrate the special qualities of the New Forest National Park. Over 300 people entered with images of landscapes, ponies, wildlife and people enjoying exploring the Forest.

Top left: Female goshawk  
Left: Open art competition winner Barry Peckham (second left)



# How we discovered untold stories of World War II

Over two years we set out to reveal and record the incredible untold stories of World War II which changed history – and the Forest.

The Forest provides a unique snapshot of what World War II was like in Britain. This mass activity resulted in a long-lasting legacy for the people of the New Forest and the landscape itself.



Some of the war-time activity in the New Forest

Not to Scale; © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2014. Ordnance Survey 1000114703.

## Key:

1. RAF Ibsley, one of the 12 war-time airbases
2. Ashley Lodge US military personnel here
3. Spy schools hosted in private houses in the Beaulieu area
4. Setley prisoner of war camp
5. Bomb testing at Ashley Walk
6. Influx of evacuees at Lyndhurst School
7. Wilverley Plain planted with crops – part of the Dig for Victory effort
8. Beaulieu road block – ready to be defended by the Home Guard in the event of an invasion
9. Floating Mulberry Harbours constructed at Lepe and troops embarked here for D-Day invasion
10. Needs Ore Advanced Landing Ground – anti-aircraft gun site which was excavated as part of the New Forest Remembers project.



With £750,000 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and ExxonMobil at Fawley, archaeologists and volunteers collected the memories of more than 130 military personnel, residents and prisoners of war, unearthing previously-unseen photos, secret documents and maps, and surveying World War II archaeological sites from the air using lasers. There were 280 known World War II sites at the start of the project and a further 1,000 archaeological features were discovered.

Nearly 100 volunteers recorded over 80 hours of oral histories as well as taking part in archaeological field surveys to record and archive research.

A digital online archive, the Interactive Portal, has been created to make all the information available to the public, with over 1,300 publicly-donated documents, maps, photos and audio interviews, plus animated 3D reconstructions. Educational resources and a permanent exhibit at the New Forest Centre have been created. Archaeology has been discovered and recorded so plans can be put in place to manage these important sites.

Here are some of the New Forest Remembers stories which, thanks to the project, have now been told.

'I was coming home from school one day when someone said our farmhouse had been accidentally hit. In fact the bomb had fallen about 500 yards away, but it blew out all the windows and it shook the roof. The church next door was also badly damaged.'

**Edwina Bright, 78, from Bramshaw**

## TV historian unveils the people's story of World War II



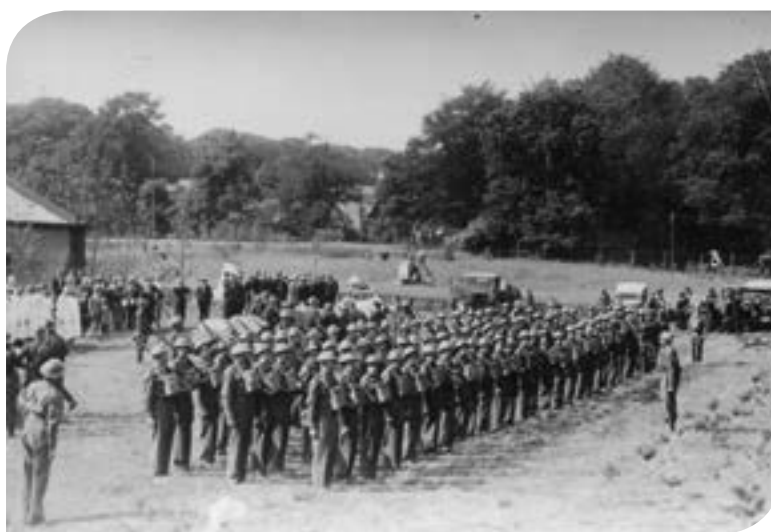
'The story of places like Beaulieu, Buckler's Hard and particularly the Second World War is of interest to us because it's local history. But by quirk of fate and geography, what happened here in the New Forest matters not just for us but is globally significant. That's what we're here to celebrate today – the stories of these people, because they were playing their part in one of the greatest struggles against tyranny the world has ever seen.'

**TV historian Dan Snow, who lives in the New Forest**

BBC TV presenter and historian Dan Snow opened a new permanent exhibit at the New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst, which tells the people's story of how the New Forest was turned into a military camp during World War II.

Dan (centre) was joined at the opening in June 2013 by (from left to right) New Forest National Park Authority Chairman Julian Johnson and Chief Executive Alison Barnes and re-enactor Dale Johnson.

As well as the permanent exhibit, a temporary exhibition in April 2013 attracted 9,000 visitors in four weeks – a record number for the New Forest Centre.



Home Guard on parade © St Barbe Museum & Art Gallery, Lymington

## Life in a New Forest Prisoner of War Camp



Setley POW Camp sketch © Mueller Family

A scrap book of sketches, poems and Christmas greetings by German prisoners of war interned in a camp at Setley near Brockenhurst was unearthed thanks to the project.

The unique collection includes evocative sketches of the camp, as well as four wooden figures carved for the main gate.

The camp originally housed Italian prisoners of war before German prisoners were moved in after the Normandy landings in 1944. The scrap book was compiled for Christmas and includes etchings of camp life, snowy scenes

as well as seasonal greetings to each other. It also includes some photos of the 300 to 500 prisoners held there from 1945 to 1947.

The book was given to the German camp leader Max Mueller who later settled in the New Forest at the end of World War II and were donated to the project by Mr Mueller's widow Molly and their son Mike.

He said: 'It was a Christmas present from the prisoners in the camp to my father. He didn't talk much about his time there, so it's remarkable to have this record.'

## Secrets of the real 'Dad's Army' revealed



Re-enactor Dale Johnson, Hugh Crofton (one of Sir Morgan Crofton's sons) and WWII project officer Gareth Own at Beaulieu



Crofton – Hants 28 Battalion HG at HQ New Milton with Lieutenant Colonel Sir Morgan Crofton (front row, centre)  
© Crofton family

A scrapbook of top secret orders, letters and hand drawn maps by a war-time Home Guard commander has revealed rare insights into the real 'Dad's Army' of the New Forest.

The scrapbook compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Sir Morgan Crofton was brought to light by one of his sons, Major Edward Crofton.

It contains secret defence plans and orders showing how the 9th (Forest) and 28th (Bay) Battalion would have harassed

and hindered an invading German force including machine gun posts, tank traps, road blocks, snipers and mine field.

Major Edward Crofton, from Petersfield but who grew up in Brockenhurst, said: 'A lot of the documents in the book were marked top secret so they probably shouldn't have been kept. But knowing my father I don't think many would have questioned him hoarding them. I'm very glad they were not binned.'



The Crofton scrapbook at the Montagu Arms in Beaulieu  
© Crofton family



## Scars of bouncing bombs discovered



The Grand Slam bomb crater and 'sub pen' (top left) at Ashley Walk  
© Crown Copyright

Our archaeologists used innovative techniques to discover the remains of a World War II target range where the biggest bomb ever dropped by British forces was first tested.

Weighing 22,000 lbs, the earthquake bomb Grand Slam was designed by bouncing bomb inventor Barnes Wallis to penetrate the ground and send shockwaves to damage enemy bunkers.

The tests at the Ashley Walk bombing range included a unique

target building, nicknamed the 'sub pen' by locals because of its likeness to German submarine pens.

After the war the structure was buried, hidden from view underneath the landscape for more than 60 years. As part of the project, a range of geophysical survey techniques were used to discover what remains of the 'Sub Pen', confirm whether chambers inside still exist and whether the structure needs future conservation.

'When the Americans arrived you couldn't see across the Lymington River for all the landing craft. One of the captains, Bob Horton, always allowed us on board for a run around and we had doughnuts and fruit cocktails which we'd never had before.

'Then one night we heard this tremendous noise and when we looked the following morning all the planes from the airfield and all the ships in the river and Solent had all suddenly vanished. They'd all gone to Normandy.'

**Terry Gittoes, 81, from Sarisbury Green, near Fareham**









Prosper p27



# How we worked to develop a wood fuel market



'It was great to see Good Woods in action in Honeylake Woods and to see first-hand what a difference the project is making on the ground. The ultimate aim of Good Woods is to invigorate the current generation's appreciation of trees and woods and realise the potential that British woodlands can play in all of our lives, both now and in the future.'

**Julia Griffin, B&Q Corporate Social Responsibility**

(Left to right): Julia Griffin, B&Q Corporate Social Responsibility; Georgianna Watson, New Forest Land Advice Service Advisor; Alison Barnes, New Forest National Park Authority Chief Executive; Alistair Yeomans, Sylva Foundation Chief Operating Officer

We promote responsible woodland management, in particular for the 40% of New Forest woods which are privately-owned and unmanaged.

This will help the National Park's woodland become resilient to disease and more productive, thereby boosting the wood fuel market in the New Forest. Owners of managed woods will then be able to provide a sustainable, local and carbon-neutral energy source, which will benefit local communities, habitats and wildlife.

## Harvesting Energy conference

We organised a day of talks, walks, presentations and site visits attended by over 100 people to encourage wood fuel production in the New Forest National Park.

The 'Harvesting Energy' conference was attended by local woodland owners, businesses, foresters and those with an

interest in wood fuel production and biomass boilers.

Experts in the areas of wood fuel production and biomass boilers explained to delegates the opportunities and practicalities of wood as a renewable energy source; how coppicing for wood fuel can create thriving woodlands; and how the New Forest Marque can connect the wood fuel supply chain.

## Celebrating Good Woods

We marked the end of the Good Woods project in the New Forest which has seen eight woodlands receiving help.

The ground-breaking national project brought together B&Q, sustainability charity BioRegional and forestry charity The Sylva Foundation to revive woodlands to provide environmental, social and economic benefits. The project was administered by the

New Forest Land Advice Service within the New Forest and surrounding areas.

Representatives from the Sylva Foundation and B&Q met local people carrying out coppicing and general woodland management at one of the sites – Honeylake Wood, New Milton.



Bill Peach of Sway with his wood pellet boiler.



# How we supported communities with funding

We launched the Sustainable Communities Fund, to combine our grant funds and make the application process easier.

The Sustainable Communities Fund provides a one-stop shop for projects that promote sustainable living and working within the National Park, with grants available of up to £50,000 and 75% of a project's cost.

The new Fund combines existing sustainable transport grant schemes with the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). Up until 2014, the SDF supported projects ranging from a woodlark survey to community allotments and since April 2006:

- funded 132 projects
- awarded £1.45m of grants
- secured £3m from other sources
- benefitted 58,000 people.

Since April 2006, the Sustainable Communities Fund has awarded

## £1.45m of grants

# How we backed local producers



Christmas Fair 2013

We fund and provide support for the New Forest Marque scheme, which has 135 members ranging from food producers to craftspeople, restaurants and retail outlets using New Forest produce.

The scheme:

- gives businesses a distinctive 'New Forest' banner under which to sell their goods and services
- helps customers identify quality New Forest produce
- encourages people to 'buy local' and reduce the environmental impact of transporting food long distances
- helps sustain the New Forest's local economy, supporting local businesses and employment.

## Christmas Fair

Over 9,000 people supported local businesses at a Christmas Fair organised by the New Forest Marque – double the number who attended the previous year.

Visitors were treated to over 100 stalls of local crafts and produce, a visit from Santa, carols from a brass band and the chance to buy their Christmas tree in the heart of the New Forest National Park.

Over 100 stalls at New Park, Brockenhurst, showcased local crafts and produce. Businesses reported excellent trading with some having to go back to base to re-stock.

## Award-winning produce gains Royal approval



The Earl of Wessex presents Jane Overall and Andy Alvis, of Setley Ridge Vineyard and Farm Shop, with an award for Best Supporter of Local Produce. The Countess of Wessex gave Lee Winter the award for Best Young Commoner/Farmer. The inaugural Country Land & Business Association (CLA) and New Forest National Park Authority awards were presented at the New Forest Show.



This year New Forest Marque members also won seven out of the 11 categories in the Hampshire Life Food and Drink Awards. Marque member Naked Jam won the Sustainable Business Award, plus two others including Overall Winner at the New Forest Business Partnership's 'Brilliance in Business Awards'.

# How we worked to bring superfast broadband to the Forest



Beaulieu is one of the villages to benefit from the Rural Communities Broadband Fund

We helped parish councils to submit a successful funding bid which will result in around 2,200 properties and business premises in the National Park gaining superfast broadband by the end of 2015. The areas to benefit from this Rural Communities Broadband Fund are spread around 10 parishes, and speed in nearby areas will also be improved markedly.

Our partnership with Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council has resulted in new areas also being made available for State assistance for broadband by 2017 which otherwise would not have been included in the roll-out.

The successful bid will make a huge difference to those selected rural parishes of the New Forest, who are too small to be commercially attractive and in danger of being left in a communications desert. A good broadband service will have a significant impact on the ability to conduct business and increasingly importantly the delivery of social and public services.

We are hugely indebted to the New Forest National Park Authority for their support and Hampshire County Council who have done a magnificent job bringing together all the detailed statistics for the overly complex Defra bidding process which would have been beyond the capacity of Parish Councils.

**Chairman of Exbury and Lepe Parish Council Peter Hayward-Broomfield**

## How we encouraged people to travel car-free

New travel services were launched as part of our drive to encourage 370,000 people to get out of their cars and use greener transport by the end of March 2015, with the aim of reducing the impact of traffic on the Forest. The initiatives were supported in part by a £3.8m fund from the Department of Transport.

### New Forest Tour

Record numbers of residents and visitors hopped on the New Forest Tour this year, with 40,000 passenger journeys – up 32% on 2012 figures.

The open-top Tour was boosted by the good weather, increased marketing activity and the successful launch of a third 'blue route' covering the south west of the National Park.

The Tour now covers the entire National Park, contributing over £600,000 a year to the local economy and saving over 350,000 private car miles.

New Forest Tour blue route at Milford on Sea





## Beach Bus

In its first season the Beach Bus attracted nearly 6,000 passenger journeys during a five-week run during the school summer holidays.

The bus linked the Southampton-Hythe Ferry to the beach at Lepe Country Park, and called at popular stops such as Exbury Gardens, Buckler's Hard, the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and Lymington.



Beach Bus at Lepe Country Park

## Travel Concierge

We launched an innovative 'New Forest Travel Concierge' service with staff greeting over 2,000 visitors at Brockenhurst train station, guiding them onto car-free journeys and making recommendations about the best places to visit.

NF Travel Concierge service based at Brockenhurst station



## Walking Festival

Our first New Forest Walking Festival offered free or discounted for those who travelled by bus, rail, bike or on foot.

All but two of the 11 walks were fully booked, with expert guides featuring information on wildlife, archaeology and local history. 89% of walkers travelled car-free.



New Forest Walking Festival poster



## Boost for family cycling

Our innovative scheme for everyday family cycling in the New Forest was awarded £3.6m by the Government, which will help create jobs and provide a boost to the local economy.

The Department for Transport investment is expected to create more than 30 new jobs

and generate income for local businesses as well as improve cycling facilities and management for residents and visitors. The proposed projects will promote active family lifestyles, respect the sensitive character of the New Forest and replace an estimated 127,000 car journeys with bike trips every year.

Family cycling at Brockenhurst

'Being on the New Forest Tour new blue route has been great for both our guests and us as a company... It's been fantastic for our guests looking to explore the area without having to use their cars, but we have also had great feedback from local families who have seen the Parks, and all we have to offer, possibly for the first time.'

**Rosie Kennar, Chairman of Hoburne Holiday Parks**





A photograph of a white cow in a grassy field at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, red, and pink, with wispy clouds. A single tree stands in the background. The cow is in the foreground, looking towards the camera.

# Achieving excellence

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# How we championed the Forest at a regional and national level

'Preserving our country's rich biodiversity is vitally important, not just for us, but for future generations. This is exactly the sort of project that will make this happen. I hope the New Forest National Park Authority will share their experience so that this time next year many similar projects will also be under way.'

**Fisheries and Natural Environment Minister Richard Benyon MP**



NPA Chief Executive Alison Barnes, Environment Minister Richard Benyon, Bisterne Estate owner Hallam Mills

## Leading on nature conservation

We hosted a visit by the Environment Minister to meet national leaders in nature conservation.

Richard Benyon MP joined the England Biodiversity Stakeholder Group to tour the Bisterne Estate near Ringwood.

The Group includes national representatives of the Environment Agency, Forestry

Commission, Natural England, Defra, National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks and Wildlife and Countryside Link.

They looked at the work the New Forest Land Advice Service has done with the Bisterne Estate to connect the habitats of the New Forest with the Avon Valley to benefit wildlife and to show how we are leading the way nationally in this area.

## Showcasing the rural economy

Farming Minister David Heath visited our stand at the New Forest Show, to hear about our role in the rural economy. He praised the value of the New Forest National Park in supporting local businesses and in particular the 130 members of the New Forest Marque scheme, which has helped create local jobs and gives businesses a distinctive 'New Forest' banner to sell their goods.

'National parks like the New Forest are some of the most treasured places in the country and 90 million people visit them every year to enjoy what they have to offer. This supports thousands of businesses, such as the New Forest Marque food producers, which is great for the local economy.'

**Minister for Food and Agriculture David Heath MP**



NPA Chief Exec Alison Barnes, Farming Minister David Heath, NPA Chairman Julian Johnson





## Planning for the future

Planning Minister Nick Boles and John Glen MP saw the thriving and unique Forest economy and the role of National Park planning.

The Minister visited Beaulieu Motor Museum and heard about other tourism businesses such as Limewood Hotel and the New Forest Tour open top bus. He saw buildings converted into offices including the Old Fire Station at Beaulieu, viewed a number of new developments in Lyndhurst and heard how we use planning to support the diverse economy.

## Supporting commoning

We welcomed senior Defra official Sarah Hendry to the Forest and she attended the opening of the Beaulieu Road Salesyard roof, which marked the final phase of the Salesyard upgrade.

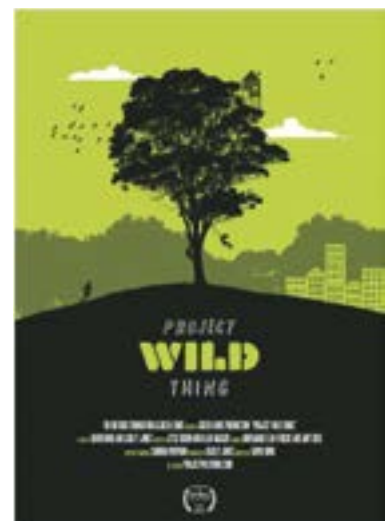
Pony sales  
© Chris Balcombe

## Liaising with other National Parks

We hosted a visit by all the National Park CEOs to the Forest to develop joint working and at the same time experience the Forest on an inclusive cycling session, plus meeting stakeholders at a special screening of 'Project Wild Thing' – a film to encourage children outdoors swapping 'screen time' for 'wild time'.

'I was delighted to welcome my colleague Nick Boles MP to the New Forest to meet with local members and see first-hand the vibrancy of the local economy and the way the National Park deals with planning issues. I know the meeting will help inform the Government's approach to protecting national parks whilst enabling them to provide for future generations.'

MP for Salisbury John Glen



Project Wild Thing film poster



### Discussions on cycling events

We brought together over 20 organisations to form a Cycling Liaison Group to discuss contentious mass cycling events in the New Forest. The Group developed a code for responsible cycling in the New Forest and began work on a charter for event organisers.



Ponies at Swan Green

### Management Plan review

A range of statutory organisations have come together to consider how to take forward an update of the Management Plan for the New Forest, due in 2015. The existing Plan includes a comprehensive long-term vision for the area and 10 objectives covering everything from conserving the landscape and its wildlife to supporting local communities and the economy. The update of the current version, which was published in 2010, will include an overview of what has been achieved over the past five years, a description of any major changes that have affected the Forest during that time and renewed pledges to work together in partnership for the benefit of the Forest.

### Reaching new audiences

Our Facebook and Twitter channels have grown in reach and engagement with 7,745 Twitter followers on our corporate account and 2,920 Facebook likes. We also launched New Forest Travel social media accounts and Twitter feeds for the ranger team, archaeologists and education staff to help them reach specialist audiences. Our monthly email newsletter is received by 1,500 subscribers.

Video is an increasingly important tool in conveying our work and the special qualities of the Forest and we are now producing film clips in-house. Our YouTube channel now has had 22,500 views, up from 8,000 in the summer.

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## How we worked with communities

We revised our document which sets out how we work with local communities, organisations and other interest groups.

Like all planning authorities across the country, we have a 'Statement of Community Involvement' and the new document updated a 2007 version.

It sets out how people can get involved in our work, including developing local planning policies, the determination of planning applications and the preparation of other documents and strategies in the National Park.

We already use a wide range of methods to involve and update local people and groups in the New Forest, including regular liaison meetings with all town and parish councils within the National Park, hosting the Consultative Panel of 80 organisations to discuss local issues, using social media, and through eight Local Information Points across the New Forest.



Sophie Countess of Wessex finds out about the New Forest landscape at the New Forest Show





# Financial information

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# Financial Information

We are continuing to see significant reductions in our core National Park Grant from Defra which equated to a further 6% cut this year (£216,000); in total the savings required for 2013-14 were c£300,000.

The savings were successfully achieved through increasing use of shared services, an internal staffing review and restructure in the Autumn and other general cost efficiencies. We also utilised £50,000 from our reserves and generated very 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 £16 from partner organisations.

## **We received around:**

**£3.4 million** from Defra

**£227,000** in statutory fees for planning and related applications

**£123,000** for shared services with other Local Authorities (trees, ecology, rangers and New Forest Trust)

**£27,000** interest on its investments

**£15,000** from income generation (such as talks, guided walks and sales)

## **Significant external funding was secured for the Forest, including:**

**£534,000** for New Forest Family Cycling Experiences

**£455,000** from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

**£214,000** from the Higher Level Stewardship scheme

**£165,000** for the New Forest Remembers – untold stories of WWII project

**£61,000** for the New Forest Land Advice Service

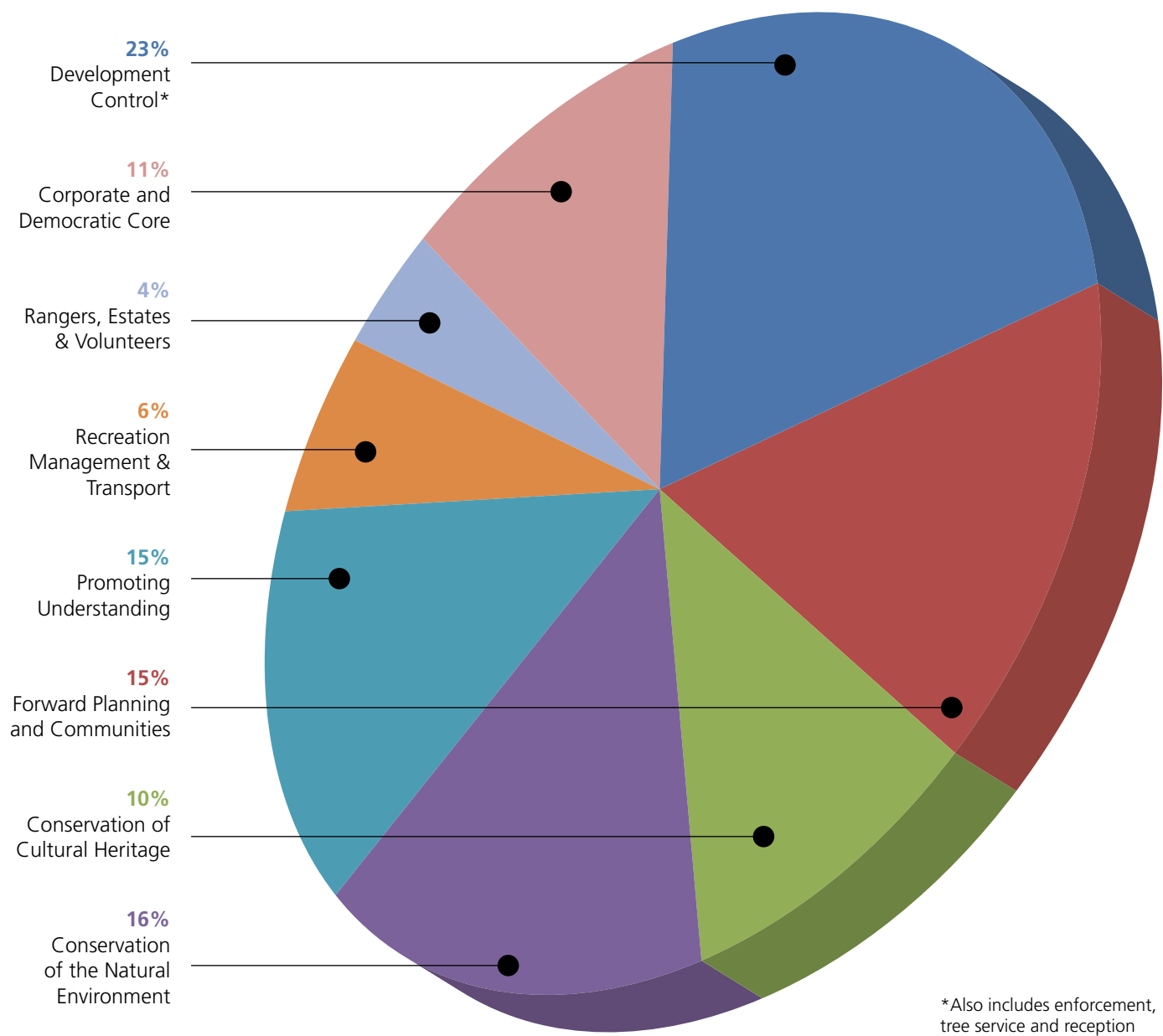
**£40,000** to support New Forest Local Produce

**£30,000** for the Community Wildlife Plans project

Plus many more smaller projects.



2013-14 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.

## Write to us at:

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