



New Forest National Park Authority Annual Report Summary 2012/13





Muntjac deer

About the New Forest National Park Authority

The unique landscape of the New Forest National Park has been shaped over the centuries by grazing ponies, cattle and pigs which roam free.

Majestic woodlands, rare heathland and a spectacular coastline provide fabulous opportunities for quiet recreation, enjoyment and discovery.

The National Park Authority's purposes are to:

- **Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park**
- **Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public.**

We also have a duty, in taking these purposes forward, to: **seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities within the National Park.**

Put simply, this translates into three programmes of work:

Protect – Enjoy – Prosper

A fourth theme of **Aiming for Excellence** relates to the Authority remaining an efficient organisation that provides the highest quality of service.

This annual report has been prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority Members and covers the period April 2012 to March 2013.



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Stag beetle

The New Forest's unique landscape has been shaped over the centuries by grazing ponies, cattle and pigs which roam free.

The New Forest National Park was created in 2005.

Summary

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Autumn leaves

Chairman and Chief Executive's Statement

We are pleased to present this year's annual report summary which brings together highlights of the work of the Authority over the previous 12 months. We have made good progress across all four of our themes, Protect, Enjoy, Prosper and Aiming for Excellence, continuing to engage strongly with communities and partners and successfully managing the sustained reduction in our grant.

A particular focus has been the work to protect our iconic landscape. Our projects have included involving communities in conserving ponds and improving river catchments, as well as creating and restoring habitat corridors. These have been essential elements of our work at a landscape scale, seeking to link with surrounding areas to ensure joined up management across the wider area for the benefit of the Forest.

Our rangers have continued to engage communities and visitors to increase understanding of the New Forest National Park's special qualities and how to care for them, talking to nearly 16,000 visitors a year. Our education team has received outstanding feedback working with schools across the park and beyond, as well as developing a specific New Forest curriculum.

Our planning teams have continued to provide a high quality service, ensuring the New Forest retains its distinctive character, while we have put increased effort into working with neighbouring councils on their plans to ensure they work to relieve pressure on the Forest rather than increase it.

We have worked at a regional and national level to champion and gain support for the Forest on important issues, including planning reforms, engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, and the Independent Panel on Forestry's report on the future of forestry which, following a visit to the National Park, resulted in recognition of the New Forest's importance.

Our track record in bringing in additional funding to the Forest remains strong with £14 of funding secured for every £1 we put in to projects. Of particular note, the 'New Forest Remembers' World War II project has generated huge interest and an immense wealth of records of untold stories of the war. We were honoured that the Queen visited our World War II stand at the New Forest Show and even contributed the private diary pages of her father's visit to the New Forest during the war.

In November we had our 'peer review', a five year review of how the Authority is performing. We were delighted with the positive feedback we received and acknowledgement of the progress we have made towards our purposes and duty, recognising our work for the Forest over the past few years.

Finally we would like to thank our staff and Members of the Authority who have worked so hard over the year and also to thank our many partners who we have worked so closely with and without whom much of what we have achieved wouldn't have been possible. It is an uncertain time financially but the dedication and professionalism of our team has never wavered and allowed us to continue to deliver for the New Forest.

Julian Johnson, Chairman

Alison Barnes, Chief Executive



Julian Johnson,
Chairman



Alison Barnes,
Chief Executive



Majestic woodlands, rare heathland and a spectacular coastline provide fabulous opportunities for quiet recreation, enjoyment and discovery.

Cobwebs at dawn

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Putting the National Park on

Read on to find out more detail



1. Godshill community wildlife

1 Godshill – One of seven areas taking part in our community wildlife project to chart wildlife in their area and devise an action plan to help improve habitats.



2. Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan

2 Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley parish – We supported residents of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area around Fordingbridge and Ringwood in drawing up an action plan to preserve the character of the area.



3. Woodgreen Local Information Point

3 Woodgreen – We opened another four new Local Information Points in existing businesses across the National Park, taking the total to nine.



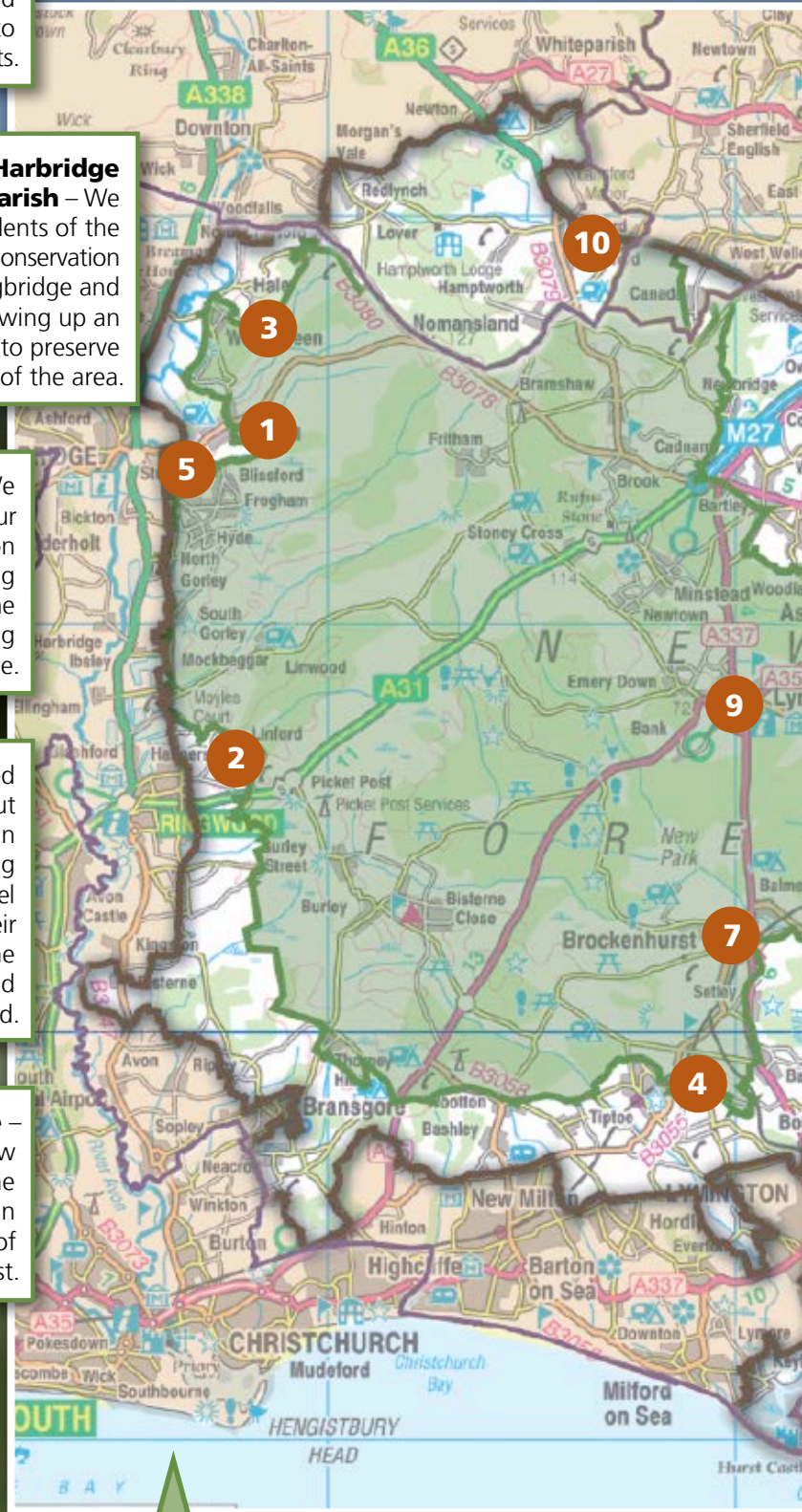
4. Sway Village Design Statement

4 Sway – We helped four villages to put together Village Design Statements, capturing what communities feel is special about their village and how the character should be protected.



5. Fordingbridge New Forest Tour red route

5 Fordingbridge – We launched a new red route for the New Forest Tour in the north west of the Forest.



N Not to scale

the map

s of our projects



6
Norleywood – Our Sustainable Development Fund gave a grant to Hampshire Bat Group to protect rare bat species in the New Forest.



6. Norleywood bat boxes

7
Brockenhurst – Around 300 people were joined by the region's top wildlife experts to carry out a 24-hour wildlife census.



7. Brockenhurst BioBlitz

8
Calshot – Our Sustainable Development Fund supported the Calshot Nature Club providing fun, interactive nature activities, in a rural area of high deprivation.



8. Calshot Nature Club

9
Lyndhurst – Families, veterans and residents shared their war-time memories at a World War II exhibition in the New Forest Centre.



9. Lyndhurst WWII exhibition

10
Lover – Our rangers helped villagers create nature improvements at Lover Green.



10. Lover nature improvements



Dartford Warbler – one of the Forest's rare ground nesting birds under threat

'We will work to ensure that the qualities that make the National Park a unique and special place are strengthened and made more resilient, bringing benefits for both people and wildlife.'

Protect Achievements 2012/2013

We will work to ensure that **the qualities that make the National Park a unique and special place are strengthened and made more resilient, bringing benefits for both people and wildlife.**

- Wrote to the Independent Panel on Forestry during its review of the future of forestry in England to champion the future of the New Forest and suggest ways the public estate could be managed in the National Park.
- Published the first State of the Park Report for the New Forest, containing a wealth of information about the National Park. This will enable us to track changes in the condition of the Forest over time to build up an overall picture of the changing health of the Forest, showing both where positive changes are taking place and also where there are areas of concern.
- Worked with local communities to identify where there are opportunities to improve the health of our streams, rivers and lakes, as a national pilot scheme.
- Carried out a range of projects to improve the natural environment, focussing on creating wildlife corridors between the Forest and surrounding farmland, a wildlife project involving seven communities, and schemes to support commoning.



Hedge laying at Hazel Copse Farm in Beaulieu



New Forest Land Advice Service

- Our Design Guide sets out high standards of design in new developments while retaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the natural and built environment. Adopted in 2011, a series of new case studies have been developed to further illustrate the guidance to applicants, agents and others so they can design their proposals in keeping with what makes the New Forest special.
- A two-year project to provide training in traditional building conservation skills saw 29 people attend a variety of courses including lime plastering and rendering, repairs to cob buildings and repairs to historic timber structures.
- The Land Advice Service provided advice to over 90 land managers and 25 young commoners over the year, increasing knowledge about environmentally sustainable land management.
- A total of 21 ancient monuments have been brought back into favourable condition in the last year, approximately 10% of all the scheduled monuments in the Park with four other sites conserved through vegetation clearance. 12 other non-scheduled sites on the Open Forest have been identified as needing conservation work.
- A joint event with the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), hosted by the Bisterne Estate, saw National Park officers and Members meet representatives from local private estates, exchanging ideas for joint working into the future.
- An action plan for the Western Escarpment Conservation Area was approved in June, led by a community steering group to help preserve the area as a special, distinctive place for future generations to enjoy.

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Linking habitats through better boundaries

The Better Boundaries project aims to restore, enhance and create habitat corridors across the farmed landscapes around the New Forest, linking fragments of existing habitat and improving existing connections to better enable species to move across the forest.

The pilot project was carried out on Bisterne Farm south of Ringwood. It was the culmination of 18 months of project development and design, working with partners and consultants. With the financial support of Natural England and partnership working with the local Natural England team, thousands of metres of hedgerow, nectar and pollen-rich seeded field margins, native trees and woodlands have been planted, created and enhanced across an intensive dairy farm, linking the Avon Valley with the New Forest across the farmed landscape in between.

The aspiration is to roll out similar projects in this location where a scoping report identified potential opportunities to make links across the landscape, and also to look at other areas for opportunities as well.



Replacing conifers with native trees



New Forest Land Advice
Service manager Julie
Stubbs, Bisterne Estate
owner Hallam Mills and
Environmental Land
Management consultant
Jane Nordstrom
inspecting a field which
will be transformed into
a copse of native trees
as part of the Better
Boundaries Project



The Millings Chandelier sculpture unveiled at The Mill, Gordleton, to launch the catchment project

A new approach to rivers and streams

We received a Defra grant to devise a way for whole communities to work together for the benefit of their local rivers, streams and coastline, with the results contributing to a nationwide rollout.

The New Forest River Catchment Project trialled a new, locally-based approach to working with stakeholders to achieve a greater appreciation of the water environment and commitment to joint projects to improve it.

The pilot areas focused on the Becton Bunny at Barton-on-Sea and the Sowley and Hatchet streams with their associated small lakes near Beaulieu.

Similar work is planned for 2013-14 after a further £34,000 in funding was secured.



New Forest catchment pilot area

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Working for wood fuel

Wood fuel will become increasingly popular in the future as fossil fuel prices rise and the Government's Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement in January stated it would 'explore with National Parks the possibility that they might pilot locally-focused wood fuel initiatives'.



Wood fuel boiler at Ipley Manor

Developing a productive wood fuel market in the New Forest is a practical option as managed woods will be able to provide a sustainable, local and carbon neutral energy source which will benefit local communities, habitats and wildlife.

'Grown in the Forest' is a pilot study which aims to increase communication between the timber supply and local demand and promote the use of local timber within the New Forest.

Building links with local timber businesses will enable the right timber to reach the appropriate market and provide a financial incentive for currently uneconomic management, such as thinning.

The project targets owners of smaller, fragmented and neglected woodlands and aims to increase the age and species diversity present to improve woodlands resilience to disease outbreaks and a changing climate.

Over 100 people attended a day of talks, walks, presentations and site visits to encourage wood fuel production in the New Forest National Park. They heard from experts in the industry, found out how to combat issues of timber quality and site access and saw wood fuel production in action.



Wood fuel conference poster



Community Wildlife Plan, Keyhaven

Communities together for wildlife

Local communities are recording, mapping and conserving wildlife in their local area thanks to a Community Wildlife Plans project.

Paid for by a European fund, it focusses on working with seven communities: Hordle, Landford, Godshill, Wellow, Marchwood, Milford-on-Sea and New Milton.

A practical woodland management event was organised, in partnership with a new community group and New Milton Town Council, to generate local interest. A biodiversity policy and wildlife management plan have been written for New Milton Town Council.

Workshops to train people in wildlife monitoring and recording have included a focus on amphibians, woodlands, meadows and veteran trees. Community and volunteer surveys and pulling events of Himalayan balsam and other invasive species on the River Blackwater in Wellow and Landford have been organised. Local wildlife experts have also been helping to train communities.

Angela Peters with residents at New Milton Community Wildlife Plan



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Focus on the Forest through planning

Small scale changes to the local landscape, buildings and settlements take place almost daily. The planning system is therefore a vital tool for managing the impact of development on landscape and biodiversity and a key part of conserving all that is special about the New Forest. Planning also has a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities: communities that will stand the test of time, where people want to live and have access to a range of facilities that meet their day-to-day needs.

We deal with some 1,000 planning applications each year and strive to work proactively with applicants and their agents to achieve the best possible outcome for the Forest and for applicants. This is reflected by the high standards of design in new development and fact that over 80% of all planning applications submitted to us are approved.



Members planning tour



Reviewing some recently completed restorations of listed buildings in the Forest

Through the adoption of our 'Development Standards Supplementary Planning Document' in September 2012 we have established a clear framework through which new residential development within the National Park contributes towards community well-being in terms of affordable housing and open space as well as a package of mitigation measures designed to protect the Forest's internationally important habitats.

Just as important is what happens outside but close to the National Park. We have continued to engage with our neighbouring authorities by responding to consultations on their own plans with the aim of ensuring they take account of any potential impacts of new housing on the Forest. Over the last year Test Valley Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, New Forest District Council, East Dorset District Council and Christchurch Borough Council have all been developing their plans and we are pleased that these emerging documents recognise the importance of the National Park.

At a national level, Government planning reforms have continued apace throughout 2012-13 and there have been a number of important changes with the advent of the Localism Act, the new National Planning Policy Framework and the temporary relaxation of certain planning controls. Working through the English National Parks Authorities Association, we have sought to ensure that any changes to the national planning system take account of the special status of protected areas like the New Forest, such as excluding National Parks from larger and more permissive house extensions. As part of this work, we were pleased to welcome the Government's Chief Planner Steve Quartermain to the New Forest in January 2013 to discuss these proposed reforms and a host of current planning issues, in particular affordable housing.

Higher Level Stewardship scheme

Europe's largest agri-environment scheme is designed to restore and enhance internationally-important habitats in the New Forest.

The Higher Level Stewardship scheme (HLS), worth £16m over 10 years, started in March 2011. The National Park Authority plays a key role as a member of the Board with the Verderers and Forestry Commission, supported by Natural England.

The scheme funds:

- The maintenance and restoration of internationally-important habitats for wildlife
- The historic practice of commoning and the Verderers, who administer the Forest's unique agricultural commoning practices which maintain the New Forest landscape
- Improved access to, and education about, the area's environment.

The National Park Authority leads the historic environment aspects of the scheme. This includes providing archaeological data to support all HLS work; overseeing work to scheduled and other monuments; and a programme of management of existing and newly identified historic features. The scheme also part-funds the New Forest Land Advice Service.

Successes this year include:

- On-going wetland restoration, restoring stream meanders and bringing habitat into favourable condition
- Support of commoners in putting their stock out on the Forest, to help manage the landscape and preserve traditional practices
- Works to upgrade the Beaulieu Road Sales Yard where commoners auction their ponies
- The Land Advice Service has helped more than 300 farmers, commoners and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of the environment
- Procurement of a comprehensive breeding survey of the nightjar on the Crown Lands.



Beaulieu Road Sales Yard



Land Advice Service team:
Georgie Watson, Julie
Stubbs, Rhys Morgan

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New Forest National Park Authority year in numbers



£14

the amount of partnership funding generated for every £1 of project money the National Park Authority invests

6,250

volunteer hours organised or supported by the Authority

17,200

people attended National Park Authority events

£650,000

amount of match-funding generated by the £178,000 of Sustainable Development Fund grants given to projects boosting the New Forest environment, community and economy

£865,000

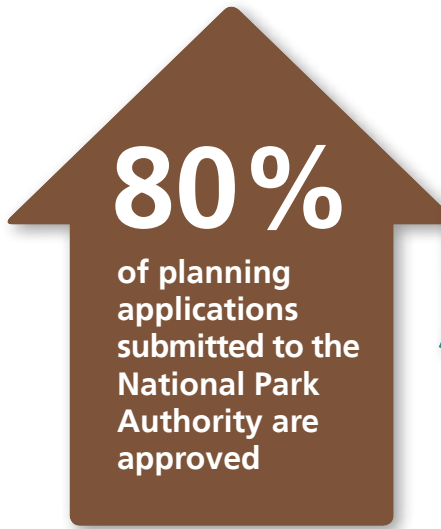
external funding attracted for National Park Authority projects (more than double the previous year)

£1,500,000

saving efficiencies achieved

£4.1bn – £6.3bn

contribution by English National Parks to the economy through economic activity within their boundaries (equivalent to the UK aerospace industry)





People from black and minority ethnic communities discover the New Forest as part of the Mosaic project

'We will work to champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities.'

New Forest Ranger team



Enjoy Achievements 2012/2013

We will work to champion **the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities**

- We have continued to improve and promote public access to the Forest, delivering five access projects this year improving rights of way and supporting the New Forest Access Forum.
- The Education Team worked closely with schools in developing sessions to embed the National Park in the curriculum. Over 7,500 pupils received education sessions from National Park Authority staff and over 1,700 pupils in areas of deprivation received financial support to visit the New Forest through the Travel Grant Scheme. A new initiative with pre-schools resulted in 26 sessions involving nearly 470 children and gained excellent feedback.
- Rangers helped to improve an area at Tatchbury Mount Hospital, Calmore, for the benefit of wildlife, staff and service users; developed a nature area at the recreation ground at Lover; and started plans with Ringwood groups to improve habitats and access to Dell Wood.
- Working with New Forest dog owners and landowners, a code to encourage responsible dog walking was launched with car stickers and information cards.
- A new Local Information Point providing visitor information within existing businesses was launched in Milford on Sea, bringing the total to nine across the National Park. Over 20 people attended training sessions for visitor-facing staff plus two training sessions for 60 volunteers from the St Barbe tourist information centre in Lymington.
- Rangers spoke to over 15,800 local people and visitors, sharing messages about caring for the Forest and its special qualities.
- Hosted and supported over 60 events during 2012-13 including the Greener Living Show, ranger events, the New Forest Show and Olympic-themed events, attended by a total of over 17,000 people.

New Forest Remembers: untold stories of World War II

The 'New Forest Remembers – untold stories of World War II' is a Heritage Lottery Fund project hosted by the New Forest National Park Authority, and supported by a wide range of organisations, including ExxonMobil at Fawley and English Heritage.

The two-year project aims to record the archaeology, history and living memories of the New Forest during the war years and make this information available to the public.

Research

A huge variety of sources have been interrogated, such as heritage databases, aerial mapping, an airborne infra-red LiDAR survey (light detection and ranging), and war diary research, not to mention the local input. This information has been collated into a database that lists approximately 40,000 individual records for structures and sites across the Forest. It is now up to volunteers to survey as many of these as possible.

Wartime memories and family histories are a crucial part of the project, adding personal stories to the archaeology, and volunteers have been trained to help record these oral histories.

Outreach

An interactive website portal has been launched, full of recorded interviews, photos, letters, diaries, film footage and animated 3D reconstructions. Members of the public can also add their stories and memories.

As part of her Jubilee Year tour, Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip visited a display about the World War II project in the National Park Authority marquee at the New Forest Show. An estimated 12,000 people saw the display and took part in family activities linked to the New Forest Remembers project.

A record number of people visited a free exhibition at the New Forest Centre, with nearly 9,000 people visiting the display during April 2013 – about three times as many as would normally be expected for a month-long exhibition.

A permanent World War II exhibit is now being created within the main museum at the New Forest Centre, revealing even more fascinating stories about what it was like to live through the conflict. Teaching resources and educational activities will also be developed to link World War II archaeology with the National Curriculum.



Case Study



Wartime map at the New Forest Show



The Queen at the New Forest Show



Replica spitfire at the New Forest Show

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Reducing animal accidents

New Forest ponies are known as the 'architects of the Forest' because their grazing activity helps shape the landscape and as such, they are free to roam across most of the National Park.

Road traffic accidents involving commoners' animals are frequent, especially on busy roads, resulting in deaths and injuries to the animals, as well as work and distress for those who deal with the aftermath and the animals' owners.

The number of animals killed and injured on New Forest roads in 2012 (82) was the lowest since records began in 1956.

The highest number of deaths caused by road traffic accidents was 313 in 1962, and even as recently as 1991 there were 181 deaths.

We help coordinate the Animal Accident Reduction Group which meets twice a year to review recent accident records and consider what more can be done about them.

Initiatives include:

- Road signs with changing warning messages on high risk roads between Lymington and Dibden Purlieu
- 'I go slow for ponies' car stickers and information cards for drivers
- Reflective collars for ponies and donkeys provided free to commoners
- Trial collars for cattle
- Hit and run reward scheme (up to £1,000 for information leading to a conviction)
- Speed enforcement operations targeted at speed hot spots
- 40mph zone marked by signs at entrances to the zone and by painted 40 roundels on the road
- Education work through schools and colleges
- An advert on the rear of the New Forest Tour bus warning drivers that 'ponies don't dent they die'.



Animal Accident Hotline Cards

'I go slow for ponies' car window sticker



Animal accident sign



Archaeology excavation at Bucklers Hard

Getting involved through volunteering

More and more volunteers are finding new skills and experiences by getting involved with National Park projects, resulting in 6,250 hours organised or supported by the Authority.

Volunteer initiatives have thrived through work such as the Volunteer Fair, Bioblitz, New Forest Remembers, Mosaic Champions and Ancient Tree Project.

Nearly 500 volunteer days were undertaken as part of the WWII – New Forest Remembers project, highlighting the crucial role the Forest played in the war effort. Volunteers helped with archaeological excavations, field surveys, recording oral history, archival research and education activities.

Our third annual volunteer fair took place in Lyndhurst in May, with 26 organisations promoting their volunteer schemes in and around the National Park. Around 300 people attended and over 90 people signed up on the day for volunteering opportunities with more taking literature away.

A 'Mosaic' project overseen by the Campaign for National Parks helped people from black and minority ethnic communities to discover the New Forest. As the project came to an end in 2012, 22 'community champions' transferred to become NPA volunteers.

Looking further forward, a 'Volunteer Vision' was produced in March 2013 to create fully established systems for recruitment, support and use of National Park volunteers.



Vicky Myers from the Forestry Commission, Oliver Reichardt and Pat Wyeth from the National Park Authority, Kerrie Wallace from the Scouts at the Volunteer Fair, Lyndhurst

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Paul Hocking from the
New Forest National
Park Authority

A day in the life of... Paul Hocking

Enforcement Manager

What is your day-to-day job?

The Enforcement Team investigate breaches of planning control in the National Park. These are brought to our attention by parish councils, members of the public and through our programmes of work which monitor sites and new development. We investigate some 500 sites each year made up of a combination of alleged breaches and monitoring. I'm responsible for managing the Enforcement Team and assign new cases to the Enforcement Officers to investigate. If we identify a breach we collectively work with the people concerned to resolve the matter which, depending on the circumstances, would be to stop or remove the development or apply for planning permission. In cases where we are unable to reach a satisfactory outcome we will serve a Notice to formally require the development to stop or be removed.

What are the essential skills/qualifications?

Being able to understand how and why a particular situation has arisen and negotiate an appropriate solution. Whilst holding qualifications provides a good basis, having the determination to succeed and ability to work with people is essential.

How does your job make a difference to the New Forest National Park?

We resolve complex and sometimes emotive issues in the interests of protecting so many things ranging from the environment, landscape and trees to buildings, amenities of residents and local businesses.

Why is the Park special to you?

We live and work in a protected landscape and our objective is to protect and enhance the area for both current and future generations. That makes the Park and in turn our jobs special.



Lyndhurst

Prosper

Achievements 2012/2013

We will work to support **a way of life in the National Park that continues to centre around strong and distinctive communities with a clear cultural identity and a vibrant local economy**

'We will work to champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities.'

- The Sustainable Development Fund supported a further nine projects this year totalling £178,000 and generated an additional £650,000 in match-funding for the Forest; a plan to combine and update our community grant funding into a single scheme was approved in March 2013, establishing the Sustainable Communities Fund.
- We supported the work of National Parks England in producing its study on Valuing England's National Parks published in May 2013.
- We supported the New Forest Trust in relaunching a Visitor Gift Scheme to raise awareness and generate income for projects to benefit the Forest.
- Criteria for releasing developer contributions were agreed this year and £60,000 has already been released to support an affordable housing scheme in Ashurst.



Selling local produce,
Woodgreen Community Shop



New Forest Twizy



Family cycling

Sustainable Transport

The Department for Transport awarded £3.8m to Hampshire County Council, the New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park - together with the neighbouring highways authorities of Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey and Wiltshire – for initiatives to reduce the impact of traffic on the two national parks.

The two-year initiative ending in 2015 aims to encourage 370,000 residents and visitors to leave their cars at home and get to and around the New Forest by train, bike, bus or electric car.

The funding will focus on:

- Improving key public transport services into the two National Parks
- Making it easy to reach visitor attractions within the two National Parks
- Promoting travel by cycle, bus and rail to and around the National Parks
- Managing traffic effectively with the Parks, so that it does not detract from the visitors' experience.

A key part of the project is the New Forest Tour. With a second route introduced in 2012 and a third planned for 2013, residents and visitors will be able to explore the whole of the New Forest car-free.

Passengers can hop on and off the open top buses where they like, and bring their bikes, to enjoy the breath-taking scenery of the New Forest National Park. All buses are equipped with fascinating audio guides, explaining the culture and history of the New Forest.

The Tour is run as a partnership between operators Go South Coast and the New Forest National Park Authority. Recent figures showed the existing red and green routes of the Tour saved an estimated 147,000 private car miles, and contributed an estimated £500,000 to the local economy. It has been so successful that it has become self-funding and the normal June to September operation period was extended in 2012 to October.

The Tour was also awarded highly commended at the 2012 Virgin Holiday Responsible Tourism Awards – the Oscars of the 'responsible tourism' world.



New Forest Tour

Supporting a vibrant economy

We are working closely with organisations and local businesses to help provide opportunities for promotion and growth during these tough economic times.

In the last year we have:

- Worked in partnership with Hampshire County Council, the Verderers and other Forest organisations to acquire nearly 16 acres of land at Rockford Common, near Fordingbridge, to provide back-up grazing and help support the future of commoning.
- Successfully bid for £3.8 million with the South Downs National Park Authority to encourage 370,000 visitors travelling to each Park to use environmentally friendly transport.
- Worked with local parishes Beaulieu, Denny Lodge, East Boldre, Exbury and Lepe on a bid to the Rural Communities Broadband Fund to increase broadband speed in rural areas.
- Supported the New Forest Marque which gives businesses a distinctive 'New Forest' banner under which to sell their goods and services, with a new emphasis on marketing products and a tasting stand touring events.
- Promoted the New Forest Tour which generated £500,000 to the local economy, benefitting accommodation providers, shops and restaurants across the Forest.
- Managed Our Land, an accommodation website for tourism businesses that has contributed £750,000 to the local economy of nine protected landscapes across the south east since 2011.
- Championed New Forest issues at the new regional Local Economic Partnerships, including working together on bringing improved broadband connections to the National Park.
- Supported the work of National Parks England in producing their study on the economic value of England's national parks.
- Brought together local woodland owners and wood fuel producers to discuss business opportunities to create a sustainable wood fuel market.
- Held a business breakfast with New Forest District Council to discuss with local companies how we can support them.



Brockenhurst train station



New Forest Marque sausages

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Our Land sustainable tourism

Despite 2012's poorest tourist season for a decade, sustainable tourism website Our Land created nearly 5,000 overnight stays in the New Forest last year. In the first 16 months of operation it also more than doubled the return on public investment by Defra over the same period, generating £750,000 for rural economies.

Over 100 New Forest businesses are benefitting from the free marketing opportunities after signing up to environmental pledges.

Our Land was launched in October 2011 by the New Forest National Park Authority, South Downs National Park Authority, and seven Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the South East and it currently represents 16 protected landscapes across the country.

The initiative champions Britain's countryside and rural responsible tourism. Set up to develop and promote locally distinctive experiences it ensures the rural economy simultaneously receives a crucial boost.

National Park and AONB managers work with local businesses to help develop their commitment to tourism that benefits their local community and landscape. Once

successful, businesses feature on www.our-land.co.uk – a website offering visitors a selection of 800 hand-picked holidays.

The Our Land initiative has been funded for three years (2011-2014) with nearly £1million from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which is administered through Defra.



Our Land member
Daisybank B&B,
Brockenhurst



Our Land businesses find out
about the New Forest Tour

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Volunteer Fair, Lyndhurst

Aiming for Excellence

We will work to champion **the highest quality of service for local people and visitors and work closely with organisations and communities in championing the National Park**

- We now provide tree and ecology services to New Forest District Council, offering better value for money and a more streamlined service across the whole of the wider New Forest district.
- People were asked to comment on our draft Enforcement Plan in March 2013, setting out the enforcement powers of the National Park Authority, how to resolve breaches in planning control, and the most common type of breaches experienced by the Authority. Compliance was secured with 28 existing enforcement notices, compared to 14 last year. A total of 25 new notices were issued during the year.
- We underwent a National Park Performance Assessment (Peer Review) in late 2012 with clear recognition of successes in improvement and a number of useful recommendations arising from it.
- Stakeholder engagement was comprehensively reviewed this year and opportunities for improving engagement identified. Early outcomes included sharing our consultation log with the Consultative Panel so Forest organisations are aware of our views on major plans and reforms within the National Park, regionally and nationally.



Executive Leadership Team



Consultative panel group tour, September 2012

Case Study

Helping you find out more about the National Park

Keeping our visitors, residents and partners informed and consulted in the work of the National Park is vital to protecting the future of the Forest.

Our press office handles 300 media enquiries a year and issues 100 press releases.

Our resident's newspaper Park life was awarded Gold in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Awards for the Wessex region for best external publication. Produced with the Newsquest newspaper group, the newspaper is issued within the New Forest Post twice a year, with additional copies printed to be handed out at events and within local community outlets. It has increasingly attracted advertising to off-set the production and distribution costs.

Visitors are also encouraged to help care for the Forest with information in a handy Pocket Guide and a joint visitor publication The Essential Guide to the New Forest published with the Forestry Commission.

Our new website was launched in January 2013 and provides a much-improved experience for customers as well as saving officer time as a first port of call for National Park information. The up-to-date design has greater integration with social media and is adaptive to viewing on all modern mobile devices. It is packed full of events, walks, activities, information on making a planning application and consultations. A well-used community events calendar allows local groups and businesses to submit events free of charge.

Social media helps us reach new audiences and provide immediate feedback with online conversations with around 800 followers of our Facebook page and nearly 6,000 followers on Twitter. New Twitter accounts have been set up for the archaeology team and sustainable transport officers, to provide immediate information out on the ground to followers, generating further interest and engagement in our work for the Forest.



Chartered Institute of Public Relations gold award for Park Life

Award winning Park life newsletter



Love your National Parks

Championing the New Forest National Park

We work with over 90 local organisations to achieve the best possible outcomes for the landscape, visitors, businesses and communities in the Forest.

We see our role as bringing organisations together to champion our views at a local, regional and national level. We do this by inviting decision-makers to the National Park to see our unique landscape and gain a greater understanding of the pressures it faces; by bringing all parties together to combine resources and work for the good of the Forest; and by representing the National Park on a range of issues.

Initiatives to champion the Forest last year included:

- Writing to the Independent Panel on Forestry as it compiled its recommendations to Government on the future of forestry in England, to highlight the special circumstances of the New Forest. Attending the launch of the Government's response in January.
- Asking the Government for a planning exemption to protect office space from being turned into housing without the need for planning permission. We said the new proposals should not apply to areas outside the main National Park villages as it would have an adverse impact on local business opportunities and jobs, and compromise our ability to deliver our duty to foster the socio-economic wellbeing of New Forest communities. We also suggested that the new homes which would be generated would not be affordable housing. The application, supported by the New Forest Association, was declined.
- The Government's Chief Planner Steve Quartermain toured the National Park to discuss current planning issues, affordable housing, development of renewable energy schemes and the impact of national policy on the delivery of the planning function within the National Park.
- MP for Salisbury John Glen, Principle Private Secretary at DCLG, toured the area of the National Park in Wiltshire with Authority members and our Director of Park Services to look at planning issues.
- Hosting visits by the Chief Executive of Natural England Dave Webster and Defra officials including Deputy Director for National Parks Tom Surrey.
- We met with Julian Lewis MP and Desmond Swayne MP to discuss mass cycling events and subsequently wrote to the Minister for Transport, Norman Baker MP, to highlight our concerns about current mass cycling event regulation.
- Working together with New Forest District Council, we held a business breakfast with the New Forest Business Partnership, with opportunity for networking and discussion on how to champion the New Forest together across Hampshire and beyond.

Case Study

2



John Glen MP and
Authority Member
Leo Randall



Steve Quartermain
Government Chief
Planner, Alison Barnes,
National Park Authority
Chief Executive, Steve
Avery, Director of Park
Services

Summary

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New Forest National Park Authority's World War II Exhibition, New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst

Quotes of note

Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East

at the launch of our World War II exhibition:

“What this World War II exhibit has managed to achieve is bringing together local memories and records with parts of the national collection that people will normally never be able to see unless they're a specialist researcher. What's so particularly striking about this project is that people can continue to add their own memories and tributes long after the exhibit has finished.”

Government Chief Planner Steve Quartermain

on a visit to the New Forest which we hosted:

“Coming out on site is an important part of my job – meeting people, listening to their concerns and seeing issues on the ground. I am pleased to be spending time in the New Forest so I can take back my experiences here to Whitehall.”

The Government's Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement

on the future of forestry:

“The economic contribution of the forestry sector is not confined to timber and wood products. England's woods and forests, both in public and private hands, are a significant contributor to rural tourism whose businesses have an annual turnover in the region of £32bn. Businesses in the New Forest alone generated £211m in tourism income in 2011/12.”

National Parks Peer Review team

which assessed our five-year progress:

“The Authority has applied itself to creating a step change in the way that it operates... In particular it has applied considerable time, energy and effort to establishing good working relationships across the complex range of established organisations within the Forest. The distinctly different Authority is now recognised as positively changed by staff, Members, partners and communities alike and this outcome is a credit to the Authority's dedication and resolve to make improvements.”



Ponies grazing at Hatchet Green

Hampshire County Council Chairman Ken Thornber
on the purchase of Rockford Farm with the National Park Authority:

“ Today, more than 8,000 ponies and cattle graze openly on the Forest, and ensure that it does not become overgrown with brambles, gorse and other coarse plant growth. Commoning also ensures that the New Forest remains a treasured asset for recreation and tourism, as well as one of the major lowland pasture woodlands in Europe, and the County Council’s contribution towards safeguarding this valuable ancient practice is good news for its future. ”

Sue Westwood, Clerk to the Verderers and Chair of the Animal Accidents Reduction Group
which we help coordinate:

“ This is not a simple issue, with differing views and ideas about an emotive subject. The group has been fantastic in getting the relevant people round the table to discuss and agree ways forward which have been really beneficial in reducing accident numbers. It is a great credit to all involved. ”

Cheryl Maher, Daisybank B&B in Brockenhurst,
on our sustainable tourism scheme:

“ Our Land has been a really positive way to reach people and grow our business. We used to get one or two enquiries about bookings a week but now it’s three or four a day. The exposure provided by Our Land has been very beneficial. ”

Keith Metcalf, Parish Clerk at Milford on Sea Parish Council, on our wildlife project:

“ We are looking forward to working closely with Angela on the Community Wildlife Plans project. There is a wealth of wildlife on our doorstep and it is a great opportunity for local people to work together to increase green spaces where they live and to encourage youngsters to become the custodians of our local wildlife heritage. ”

New Forest National Park Authority.. through the year



April – Children learning about herbs with IKEA at the Greener Living Show



April – Upcoming athlete Aaron Bennett in the New Forest local heroes Olympic exhibition



July – Olympic torch relay handover 'kiss' at Brockenhurst College



August – Keyhaven farmers Simeon and Lisa Morgan with Julie Stubbs of the New Forest Land Advice Service

April

- Around 1,200 people visited the third annual 'Greener Living Show' to show people how small changes can have a big impact on the environment. Visitors enjoyed over 60 local food and craft stalls, children's activities, renewable technologies and cookery demonstrations from the New Forest Marque at the event supported by IKEA and Sandy Balls Holiday Centre, Godshell.
- A New Forest Local Heroes photo exhibition was launched, celebrating New Forest Olympic hopeful athletes and stars of the future.

May

- People are asked for their views on a Supplementary Planning Document setting out the required standards for new developments in the New Forest National Park on aspects such as car parking, cycling provision, sustainable construction standards and providing public open space.
- A Planning Inspector ruled in favour of the New Forest National Park Authority after it ordered a landfill operator to stop importing 70,000 cubic metres of building waste on to its Redlynch site.

June

- Four additional Local Information Points providing visitor information within existing businesses at Sway, Burley, Beaulieu and Woodgreen were launched, bringing the total to nine across the National Park.
- The New Forest Tour started its 2012 season with a new route in the north west of the Forest.

July

- Our two education officers reported a glowing end of academic year report having visited 60 schools and education providers and worked with 8,500 students aged between four and 24.
- The Queen visited the New Forest Show and showed a great interest in displays and activities centred around our World War II project.

August

- Two members of the New Forest Marque – Simeon Morgan Farming in Lymington and Rosie Lea tearooms in Brockenhurst – came away with awards at the Hampshire Life Food and Drink Awards.
- A project to look at New Forest rivers and streams was launched with the unveiling of a striking sculpture by Trudi Lloyd-Williams entitled the 'Millings Chandelier' at The Mill at Gordleton Hotel and Restaurant.

September

- New Forest Marque member – The Royal Oak at Fritham – was voted national 'Country Pub of the Year', by the Good Pub Guide.
- Olympic medallist Ben Ainslie uses the New Forest Tour bus for his homecoming celebration to Lymington.

2012 2013

October

- The New Forest ancient tree hunt aims to record all the ancient and veteran trees in the New Forest, some of which are over 1,000 years old. The project includes an exhibition in the New Forest Centre, an informative walk for staff from Exxon Mobil at Fawley, school sessions and an interactive online map.
- The National Park Authority's newspaper Park life wins gold at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations awards.

November

- A new tree service hosted by the National Park is launched to cover the whole of the New Forest District.
- The New Forest Tour receives Highly Commended in the 2012 Virgin Holiday Responsible Tourism Awards – the Oscars of 'responsible tourism'.

December

- Free courses were held on woodland management, equine management, hedgelaying and coppicing for commoners, farmers and landowners in the New Forest and Avon Valley.
- The first Christmas Fair for Marque members and other local businesses was visited by 4,500 people at New Park, Brockenhurst.

January

- We attended the launch of the Government Forestry and Woodlands Statement, having previously hosted a visit of the Independent Panel on Forestry and written to Defra to give our views on the future of forestry and the public estate.
- The grade II listed Fox and Hounds pub in Lyndhurst was restored to its former glory following successful enforcement action by the New Forest National Park Authority. A Planning Inspector agreed with the Authority that UPVC windows were inappropriate for the conservation area and the landlord was fined £900 after failing to comply with an order to replace them with a more traditional style and materials.

February

- Wildlife and land management organisations including the RSPB and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust discuss a strategy for the natural environment to pool resources and provide a more coordinated approach to the New Forest landscape and habitats.
- A Sustainable Transport Solutions Fund was launched with businesses and organisations invited to apply for grants of up to £15,000 for green transport initiatives.

March

- John Glen MP for Salisbury toured the area of the National Park in Wiltshire to look at planning issues.
- New Forest East MP Julian Lewis opens a World War II exhibition revealing the Forest's role in the D-Day preparations, prisoner of war camps and how local residents did their bit for the war effort.



September – 4x Olympic sailing gold medallist Ben Ainslie celebrates his homecoming to Lymington on the New Forest Tour bus with National Park Authority Chief Executive Alison Barnes and driver Dennis Taylor.



October – The National Park Authority's residents newspaper Park life wins Gold in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Wessex region awards.



November – Brilliance in Business Awards 2012



December – Christmas Fair at New Park

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New Forest local produce

Our finances in brief..

Financial summary 2012/13

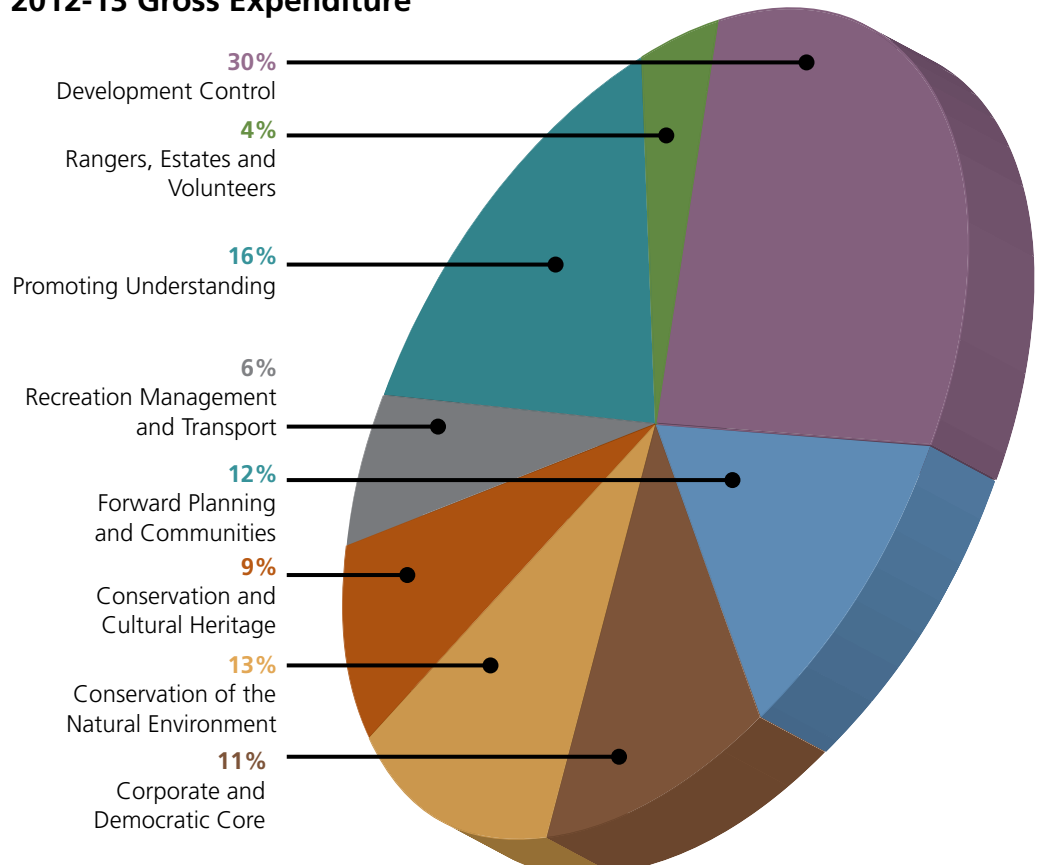
The Authority received around:

- £3.6 million from Defra
- £222,000 in statutory fees for planning and related applications
- £73,000 for shared services with other Local Authorities
- £60,000 interest on its investments
- £39,000 from income generation (such as donations, talks and sales from the New Forest Store)

Significant external funding was secured for the Forest, including:

- £353,000 for New Forest Remembers – untold stories of WWII project
- £203,000 from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- £127,000 for the New Forest Land Advice Service
- £72,000 from the Higher Level Stewardship scheme
- £39,000 for the Water Catchments project
- £37,000 to support New Forest Local Produce
- It also received smaller grants and contributions for Our Land, Traditional Building Skills and Community Wildlife Plans projects.

2012-13 Gross Expenditure



Governance of the New Forest National Park Authority

The New Forest National Park Authority has 22 members:

- 12 appointed by the county, district, and borough councils with land within the National Park. They provide local knowledge and expertise, without representing only their own local authority. Five come from Hampshire County Council, four from New Forest District Council, one from Test Valley Borough Council and two from Wiltshire Council.
- Six appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. They bring key skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the work of the Authority, with a particular interest in the New Forest and a wider national viewpoint.
- Four selected by Parish Councils, appointed to represent the wider National Park view, not just the interest of their own parish. They ensure the truly local concerns of those who live or work in the New Forest are represented.

The members are the people with 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.

Members of the New Forest National Park Authority, whatever their backgrounds, are expected to act in the interests of the National Park as a whole and to take forward the two purposes for which the Park has been designated, reflecting both local and national perspectives.

Members typically spend two to three days a month on formal National Park business including committees, panels and working groups. They will spend time too representing the Park Authority at other events such as workshops, seminars, launches and presentations by the Authority and partner organisations.



Looking towards
Littelholm Hill Inclosure

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Contact us

We would welcome your views and comments on this Annual Report summary or any other aspect of the Authority's performance or services.

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Join us on:



You can download this summary and the New Forest National Park Annual Report from our website:

www.newforestnpa.gov.uk

This document is available in other formats such as large-print, Braille or any alternative language.

Front page photographs

Better Boundaries – replacing conifers with native trees, New Forest Tour, New Forest pony, Archaeology excavation at Bucklers Hard.



Pony at North Gate