

7 Communications Strategy

7.1 Need for a Communications Strategy

Good communication is vital to the success of the *Our Past, Our Future* Landscape Partnership Scheme.

This strategy sits above, supports and co-ordinates the delivery of numerous projects and partners all with various communications streams.

It details how the NFNPA as lead partner intends to maintain good communications and two way engagement with all partners, and beneficiaries of the projects. It also outlines how stakeholders will be kept up to date of the Scheme's progress, which is critical in keeping them actively engaged with delivery.

The OPOF scheme is largely funded with public money from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional match funding and in-kind contributions from key partner organisations. It is important that the public can see that the scheme provides value for money, will result in benefits to the public and is delivered in a transparent manner.

7.2 Strategy Delivery: Resources and Responsibilities

All project partners have their own responsibility to generate and deliver communications in line with their projects. This will be undertaken by relevant project officers and partners' in-house communications team.

Various projects have an identified budget for interpretation, publicity and marketing.

It is important to ensure that all communications generated by the projects are linked and reference their part in the overall OPOF scheme and its aims. As such during delivery phase a Communications Officer (0.4FTE) will be recruited who will provide communications support and advice. A job description is available as supporting documentation.

The Communications Officer will be supported by relevant partner staff and all scheme staff; especially those with specific community engagement elements. This includes the Community Archaeologist, Interpretation and Outreach Officer, Volunteer and Training Co-ordinator and the Restoring Lost Landscapes Officer.

The Communications Officer will liaise with all project officers and partners' communications teams to ensure that messages are co-ordinated and where possible publicity is carried out across all the partner platforms to ensure largest possible reach and impact.

The Interpretation Sub group will meet regularly and will cover publicity and dissemination as a regular agenda point. This group will allow a planned team approach to upcoming project milestones and opportunities.

It is impossible to plan all communications and publicity so any reactive work or inquiries will be dealt with by the Communications officer in first instance and they may bring in other staff as required or relevant.

A central budget has been set aside for the delivery phase for developing and delivering overall scheme publicity including a dedicated website, promotional materials and marketing and any agreed social media.

The partnership is bound by various regulations; such as acknowledgements of the HLF grant and other funding partners. The OPOF partnership board will ensure that all relevant parties are made aware of these and other regulations stipulated by the HLF. A marketing tool kit containing press release templates, area maps, logo blocks and brand guidelines has been created and disseminated to all partners during the development stage. These documents detail the correct use of HLF acknowledgement which is non-negotiable. The OPOF and funders logos are also required, but all other areas such as fonts, images and words are up to partners.

This communications strategy has been adopted by all partners signed up to the Landscape Partnership agreement.

7.3 Communication Objectives

The overarching objectives of *Our Past, Our Future* communications can be subdivided into two main levels of communication: matters of a strategic nature; and matters of a more practical nature.

Strategic-level communications mainly focused on the target audiences, but not exclusively cover the ongoing evolution of the scheme throughout delivery and evaluation. These include:

- To inform and enthuse those living and working in the OPOF area
- To communicate why the OPOF area has been chosen for a HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme
- To present a clear vision of what the partnership aims to achieve
- To ensure that all projects, opportunities and success stories actively acknowledge the OPOF scheme and HLF funding through the OPOF logo and related branding where possible
- To recognise the diversity of the OPOF's audiences and their differing needs, providing quality, accessible information about the area, its heritage and biodiversity, and the threats and opportunities that these bring
- Demonstrate the OPOF scheme provides good value for money, through open communication of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation programme
- Report on and celebrate the successes and achievements of the scheme

Practical-level communications will focus on the opportunities for all audiences to get involved in the scheme through engagement with specific projects; these include:

- Publicising volunteering opportunities to take part in conservation work on the natural and built features within the area.
- Promoting opportunities for participation in events and local heritage projects.

- Announcing improved opportunities for physical and intellectual access to and within the area and for learning about the area’s heritage.
- Advertising and encouraging take-up of training opportunities in local environmental and heritage skills.
- Providing a range of opportunities for obtaining feedback from stakeholders and local communities, especially in relation to the OPOF’s legacy planning work.

7.4 Target Audiences

7.4.1 External Audiences

The scheme’s audiences include all those who live and work in or around the New Forest area and those who use it for recreational activities.

Table 16 includes a breakdown of key messages for each identified audience as well as the primary means of communications for them.

Table 16: Communication Tools for Key New Forest Audiences as identified in ADP

New Forest Audience	Includes	Objectives and key messages for this audience are:	Communication Tools
Residents – Living <u>with</u> the Forest	<p>This group includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farmers, Commoners and other land managers, ▪ Long-standing (Multi-generational) residents ▪ Employees of New Forest organisations ▪ Planners, politicians and other local decision makers 	<p><i>The audience that has greatest influence over the future of New Forest heritage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain, enhance and widen their participation ▪ Encourage them to share their knowledge and passion with others; <i>Residents – Living with the Forest and New Forest Neighbours.</i> 	<p>Face to face meetings Website Digital Downloads Social Media; Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters Surveys E-newsletter Media (National & Local) Talks Exhibitions Articles for parish and county council newsletters</p>
Residents – Living <u>in</u> the Forest	<p>This group includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retired people ▪ young families ▪ People living in Forest, but working in neighbouring cities 	<p><i>The audience that is currently considered to have most impact over that heritage</i></p> <p>This group enjoy the New Forest environment, for many of them it is why they moved there. Working to change this ‘enjoyment’ to ‘valuing’ and building a stronger sense of belonging is a key goal. This needs to break down the belief that the traditional New Forest community is difficult to understand and engage with</p> <p>Active Residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build on their understanding, appreciation and interests to encourage a greater involvement with New Forest life. <p>Passive Residents:</p>	<p>Face to face meetings Website Digital Downloads Social Media; Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters Surveys E-newsletter Media (National & Local) Talks Exhibitions Articles for parish and county council newsletters</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a greater understanding of the New Forest life and landscape Develop a sense of value for the landscape and what makes the New Forest special Encourage engagement with a volunteer activity, society or organisation which focuses on the New Forest. 	
New Forest Neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People from Southampton, People from Christchurch/ Bournemouth People from Ringwood People from the Waterside Peoples from New Milton & other coastal communities 	<p><i>The audience of the future; whose impact could be positive or negative depending on how they are engaged</i></p> <p>Engaging with this audience will contribute to delivering the goal of encouraging, enthusing and inspiring a new generation of people to be more involved in learning about, championing and caring for the New Forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a greater understanding of Forest life and landscape Develop a positive sense of welcome for responsible and respectful activities Develop awareness of what the New Forest has to offer and the relevance it has to everyone's lives. 	<p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Digital Downloads</p> <p>Social Media;</p> <p>Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>E-newsletter</p> <p>Media (National & Local)</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Exhibitions</p> <p>Articles for parish and county council newsletters</p>
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Park Authority has 43,000 unique website visitors a month 8,000 on Facebook and Twitter, some on You Tube channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing captive audience Enjoy regular good news stories and Images How can they be involved remotely? The New Forest area is a unique and highly distinctive place. It is worth a visit and to explore what the area has to offer through our online resources. You can help us by spreading the message widely through other online media. <p>These audiences might contain potential future long stay visitors from further afield:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible messages and behaviours before they arrive 	<p>Website</p> <p>Digital downloads</p> <p>Social media;</p> <p>E-newsletters</p> <p>Media (National & Local)</p>
OPOF Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Government Organisations Protection bodies Local interest groups Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your organisation's support is important to achieving OPOF aims. Together we play an important role in conserving this valuable landscape and sharing its importance and uniqueness with others. 	<p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>Written reports</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Social Media;</p> <p>Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters</p> <p>Promotion of logo/ brand</p> <p>E-newsletter</p> <p>Media (National & Local)</p> <p>Talks</p>

Funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HLF ▪ Match Funders ▪ Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your financial contribution is being well managed to enhance the conservation of local heritage assets and to encourage stronger community participation. ▪ Your organisation's support is important to achieving OPOF aims. ▪ Together we play an important role in conserving this valuable landscape and sharing its importance and uniqueness with others. 	<p>Face to face meetings Written reports Online submissions Website Social Media; Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters Promotion of logo/ brand E-newsletter Media (National & Local) Talks Exhibitions</p>
Stakeholders	<p>This group includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partners ▪ Landowners ▪ Local visitor services ▪ Local businesses ▪ Local Residents ▪ Parish Councils ▪ History, Archaeology, civic societies ▪ Natural history groups ▪ Cultural groups such as local Women's Institute ▪ Specialist Users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your organisation's support is important to achieving OPOF aims. ▪ Together we play an important role in conserving this valuable landscape and sharing its importance and uniqueness with others. ▪ We all need to play our role ▪ Team work makes the dream work 	<p>Face to face meetings Written reports Website Social Media; Leaflets/ Fliers/ Posters E-newsletter Media (National & Local) Talks Exhibitions Articles for parish and county council newsletters</p>
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing volunteers ▪ Local Residents ▪ New Forest Neighbours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Essential to success of OPOF ▪ Part of a bigger scheme ▪ Maintain engagement ▪ Inspire new engagements ▪ Encourage training and skill development ▪ Fun and social ▪ Rewarding 	<p>Face to face meetings Website Social Media; Leaflets/ Fliers/ E-newsletter Media (National & Local) Talks Social events Recognition</p>

7.5 Message Delivery/Strategy

Each project within the OPOF has identified their own publicity and dissemination needs.

There are some key milestones that need to be considered for scheme wide publicity by all the partners using the central budget.

7.5.1 Pre Project Delivery

There is a need for OPOF to continue to have a presence between the round 2 submission in May 2015 and HLF decision in September 2015. The scheme development manager will still be in post in this period so will be able to undertake a minimal amount of communication if required.

The ongoing publicity of the scheme should be piggy backed on any partner events that link to potential OPOF future funding or other opportunities. These include:

- New Forest Show
- Non Native Plants project
- Foxbury
- Archaeology through Lidar scheme and pilot projects.
- New Forest Land Advice Service work and projects

The scheme could also appear as a regular feature or update in partners' email newsletters.

7.5.2 Project Delivery

The first tranche of communications on confirmation of HLF funding and commencement of the delivery phase will be:

1. A general press release on receipt of the Landscape Partnership Scheme will be supported by all partners and relevant social media.
2. This will lead into staff recruitment
3. Renewed push for volunteers

All of which will be supported by all partners and relevant social media.

Projects will then begin to commence and follow their communications plans as set out in their development. These targeted communications will be partnered with general good news stories and yearly review pieces.

7.6 How we communicate the overarching scheme

7.6.1 Channels (use existing channels):

The Our Past, Our Future scheme and its partners utilise a variety of different methods of communication, either as a result of direct contact or online contact. These will be project and audience specific. Communicating the overarching scheme will be undertaken in several ways making use of existing channels used and maintained by the scheme partners.

Table 17: How the scheme and projects will be communicated to different audiences

	Method	Details	Delivery Tools
Direct	Partnership Board Meeting	Regular meetings scheduled. Minutes will be made available to all partners, staff and stakeholders	
	Partner/Team meetings	Working groups that sit below the partnership board will be set up and will meet regularly. Partners will also be encouraged to provide regular feedback to their own internal organisation/team meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apprentice Ranger Working Group ▪ Ecademy Working Group ▪ Heritage Working Group ▪ Interpretation Working Group ▪ Restoring Lost Landscapes Working Group ▪ Training and Volunteering Working Group
	Parish Quadrant Meetings	Regular updates from various staff and partners at the regular quadrant meetings	
	Presentation /Talks	The Delivery Manager and Interpretation and Outreach Officer aim to give regular presentations about the scheme to related partnerships and initiatives and for Parish Councils and community groups throughout the OPOF area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall Scheme Information ▪ Project specific
	Events organised or coordinated by OPOF Partnership	Events will be organised to communicate specific topics. These include conferences, workshops and launch events, to promote and disseminate the OPOF's projects and results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall Scheme Information ▪ Project specific
	Events organised by local stakeholders within OPOF area	The OPOF partnership will join existing events in and around the OPOF area. Opportunities for the OPOF partnership to meet the public (and vice versa) will be sought with delivery focusing on the summer months and circa 10 local events attended each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall Scheme Information ▪ Project specific ▪ Volunteering opportunities ▪ Community Feedback seeking
	Exhibitions	Project specific	New Forest Connects Projects
	Print	Posters and leaflets Partner Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Posters and leaflets ▪ Partner Publications ▪ National Trust Magazine ▪ NPA Park life ▪ Newsletters ▪ Pocket Guide ▪ New Forest Essential Guide ▪ Notice boards
	Visitor Centres/Local Information Points	Ensure Visitor Centres and Local Information Points are stocked with scheme publicity and materials	
	Partners Vehicles – Mobile Units		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobile Units ▪ New Forest Tour Bus

	Press release	These will be made at relevant points in the delivery. Scheme results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scheme milestones ▪ Project specific
Online	Website	OPOF website will be a central resource that can be accessed and edited by any of the partners. The website will be set up by the Delivery Manager with the support of the core staff. All partners and project staff will be expected to contribute material and help maintain the site.	<p>Will feature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scheme Documents ▪ Project information ▪ Reports ▪ News ▪ Events ▪ Contacts ▪ Blogs ▪ Sign posting
	Email	During development phase interested parties and volunteers were encouraged to register their email to keep in touch. Partners will also be able to use their mailing lists to send out scheme updates, promote opportunities or seek help or volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner Email Newsletters
	Social media	Rather than setting up new social media accounts and spending time capturing audiences the scheme will make use of partners' existing social media presence and established networks to maximise the potential reach. Social media linked to the OPOF scheme should carry the hashtag #NFOPOF and try to link the website	<p>Twitter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ @NewForestNPA – 9K+ followers ▪ @ForestryCommEng – 11K+ followers ▪ @HantsIWWildlife – 6k followers ▪ @NT_NewForest – 200+ followers ▪ @SoutheastNT – 19K+ followers <p>Facebook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NFNPA – 10k followers ▪ FC – 14K followers ▪ HIWWT – 3k followers ▪ National Trust – 18k followers <p>This doesn't include various volunteer group social media accounts & individual employee accounts</p>
	Other Digital Outputs / Downloads	Any digital outputs generated for the different project should be shared on the OPOF website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Videos ▪ Maps ▪ Apps ▪ QR codes ▪ Trails ▪ Podcasts
	Other Digital Outputs / Downloads	Digital outputs can also potentially generate material for information screens in visitor centres, mobile units and/or partner offices.	

7.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Upcoming communication planned activities tied to individual projects and the overall scheme will be discussed and monitored at meetings of the Interpretation Working group. These discussions and progress on communications will be reported to and monitored by the OPOF Board, which will meet quarterly throughout the delivery phase.

In the context of the OPOF audience development work, the main differences that we would expect the Scheme's Communication to make are:

- Audiences having more awareness and understanding of the New Forest's heritage and landscape
- Audiences being more actively involved in the New Forest's heritage and landscape
- Partner organisations being more aware of audience development and more actively involved in it.

The measures of this success and the overall effectiveness of the Landscape Partnership scheme's communications will be measured for reporting back to HLF by compiling individual project data and capturing the following basic data (this will be carried out by the Communication Officer);

- Number of people attending scheme events, plus range of organisations represented. Photographs, videos, audio recordings and testimonies/ quotes.
- Range of audience types reached out to, with associated data on gender, age, ethnicity and socio-economic status.
- Number of people signing up to participate in project activities (e.g. conservation, community projects, learning and training opportunities).
- Numbers and types of feedback received at events, community consultations and through Social Media. Response to competitions
- Return rate for surveys conducted, including satisfaction surveys.
- Number of hits and continuous increase in hits on OPOF website.
- Number of followers and continuous increase in hits of blog, Twitter and other Social Media.
- Number of comments left on blog posts and other Social Media, and number of re-tweets of information provided.
- Number of responses following publication of articles in e-newsletters, parish magazines/ newsletters, or as a result of press releases, newspaper articles or interviews for TV or radio.
- Number of people & organisations actively adding photographs and videos, or other information, onto the OPOF's online resources.
- Number of downloads and continuous increase of downloads of digital information provided digitally on OPOF website.
- The uptake of leaflets and other hard copy documents at events.
- Number of public locations in OPOF area where OPOF information is readily available.
- Testimonies from organisations involved in the management of OPOF area natural and historic heritage in relation to partnership working/ cooperation.
- Reports of increased awareness and understanding of the New Forest heritage and landscape

- Range of barriers for potential audiences reduced and/or removed, e.g. information what they can do once they have arrived in the Forest, and people reporting barriers removed.

The above list of data will be reviewed at each of the identified review points below and adapted if more appropriate measures of success can be found.

7.8 Strategy Review

This section of the LCAP is a living document which will be reviewed regularly, in order to allow for changes made during the delivery of the scheme. Also, feedback received from stakeholders and members of the public through engagement activities, events and Social Media will feed into the further development of this document.

Any changes will be discussed by the Interpretation sub group and signed off by the Partnership Board.

The following review points have been suggested:

- Soon after the start of the Year 1 delivery phase tied in with the first HLF claim (March 2016);
- At the end of Year 1 of the delivery phase (c December 2016);
- At the end of Year 2 of the delivery phase (c December 2017);
- At the end of the delivery phase, also feeding into the Completion and Evaluation report at the end of the scheme (c December 2019).