

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

Draft 2016-17 Work Programme

Enjoy

We will champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone can enjoy, understand, value and care for its special qualities.

Enjoy Priority 1: Enabling high quality experiences of the National Park

We will enhance people's experience and enjoyment of the National Park, by:

- working with local communities, land managers and highway authorities to improve sites and routes for people
- developing projects that enable people with particular needs to experience and benefit from the New Forest
- working with partners and local businesses to improve visitor facilities and information within and around the National Park
- encouraging people to volunteer in ways which benefit the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Team	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Work with partners to enhance at least four local sites by improving access, routes or information provision, e.g. through the small grants scheme and community-led projects. EP1, EP2	Mark Holroyd / Jim Mitchell	<p>There have been no applications to our countryside access small grants scheme (shared with Hampshire County Council) recently.</p> <p>Officers are working with communities and parishes to progress a number of small improvements to the rights of way network. We purchased sample cycle waymarker posts for the main cycle hire centres in the Forest, so they can easily show visitors how to use these before they depart.</p>		Promotion of the Small Grants Scheme to Parish Councils via quadrants planned for September.
Work with partners and communities to develop and deliver visitor information opportunities through visitor centres including New Forest Centre and Lepe Country Park redevelopment, eight+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell	Advised on Lepe interpretation planning and New Forest Centre development and forward planning. Rangers visiting sites and LIPS disseminating NP information.		
Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects such as Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme (OPOF LPS) and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 25+ volunteering organisations and attended by 200+ prospective volunteers. SQ2	Jim Mitchell / Richard Austin	The OPOF volunteer database grew to over 250 volunteers. The Get Involved day was held at Foxbury on 11 June. All partners shared ideas at the first volunteer working group meeting. Volunteers undertook botanical surveys and training, digitised over 1400 documents at the Christopher Tower New Forest Reference Library, pulled Himalayan balsam with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, took part in archaeological surveys and much more. Volunteers were sent a Volunteer Newsletter and regular updates throughout the period.		

Action/Outcome	Team	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented including young people (John Muir Award and Youth Action Project) and those with disabilities (PEDALL). EP4, LC9	Jim Mitchell/ Mark Holroyd	Twenty eight PEDALL sessions delivered to 820 participants in this quarter, 500 of which were at the Lepe into Action event at Lepe Country Park.		
Launch the OPOF ranger Apprentice scheme in partnership with other Forest ranger teams and education providers. EW8	Jim Mitchell	A get involved day took place to meet prospective applicants with good attendance and feedback. Over 40 applications received for the two positions which start in October.		
Deliver and support 2+ projects (inc. Walking for health and an OPOF project on developing wild play) and work with partners to deliver a joint plan to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors through contact with the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest. LC8	Jim Mitchell	OPOF Wild Play project started with Officer recruited and initial site identified and site meetings held to develop scope. Walking for health now has over 30 walk leaders (five new trained this quarter) and recorded over 1,200 walking hours in this quarter.		

Enjoy Priority 2: Improving understanding of the National Park

We will further people's understanding of, respect for and desire to care for the special qualities of the National Park, by:

- leading the development and delivery of curriculum-linked educational programmes for schools, colleges and other groups
- delivering engaging events, activities, interpretation and informal learning activities for different audiences
- maximising the use of social media and online resources to reach new audiences
- enabling educators, businesses and people with public-facing roles to be ambassadors for the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Promote the special qualities, our work and key messages through 20 public events led or co-led by the Authority, 50 community events run by other organisations, opportunistic use of mobile unit and an on-the-ground presence throughout the National Park. SQ1, LH10	Jim Mitchell / Rangers	Ranger contacts included over 6000 for the quarter including a focus on engagement around ground nesting birds at key Forest sites and local community events. Extended seasonal ranger contracts enabled an additional 2000 ground nesting bird related contacts with the public during 33 sessions at 17 different locations.		
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities that promote the Forest's special qualities including self-guided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, training, and permanent and touring exhibitions such as OPOF LPS. SQ4, LH10, LD3	Jim Mitchell	Self-guided walking packs have been reprinted due to demand and are on sale through the VIC and concierge. Suitable walking, cycling and running trails have been developed with Burley YHA and Ordnance Survey to replace older trails. OPOF content developed in preparation for the New Forest Show and exhibition.		
Deliver a communications service of the highest standard; support the Heritage Lottery Fund scheme; increase our combined social media audience from 28,000 to 40,000; double the number of email newsletter subscribers.	Hilary Makin	<p>We supported the National Grid pylon removal consultation and NPE agreement with mobile phone companies. We launched the John Muir environmental award; walkers & cyclists welcome scheme; New Forest Tour; Walking Festival; Date with Nature.</p> <p>Visits by the Environment Minister, Tourism Minister and Director of Public Health England were promoted. A new walking and cycling approved routes website section was launched, including videos, 'caring for the Forest' messages and downloadable routecards.</p> <p>We worked with a steering group to organise the Arts Festival of over 40 events in June as part of the HLF Our Past Our Future (OPOF) scheme; seven OPOF project press releases were issued.</p> <p>Combined social media audience at 33,200; email signups increased 26%.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop and lead curriculum-specific sessions for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	The Education team has taught 2,385 pupils from 32 schools during this quarter. These curriculum sessions have covered the full age range and have taken place both in schools and on Crown Land. Litter Assemblies, delivered in partnership with New Forest District Council and Forestry Commission, have been seen by a further 3,358 children from 18 primary schools. This brings the total number of children reached this quarter to 5,743.		
Work with primary and secondary schools to embed the New Forest into their curriculum, including organising annual conferences for students and teachers, the development of a Youth Forum and the continued population of the New Forest Curriculum website. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	Fifteen local primary schools sent delegates to The Forest on your Doorstep Conference which took place in June. Four secondary schools will be sending delegates to the Our Forest, Our Future Conference at which the Youth Forum will be introduced. The team supported the New Forest Association in developing a proposal for individual project work for older students which was introduced to the Southampton Heads of Geography at their summer meeting.		
Develop and deliver informal learning activities for non-curriculum groups, societies etc., including Wild Play Day events in partnership with members of New Forest Educators Forum. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma / Rangers	The Education team supported Discovery Days at the New Forest Centre with activity sessions featuring mammals, insects, dogs and ground nesting birds. Other informal events at which we supported partner organisations included Art in the Park, Minstead's Earth Day, and Discover your National Park Day.		

Enjoy Priority 3: Managing recreation to benefit the National Park

We will work in partnership with others to encourage and manage appropriate recreation, by:

- agreeing and implementing recreation management strategies that benefit people and the New Forest
- raising awareness of issues such as litter, feeding of ponies, disturbance of wildlife, fungi picking and animal accidents
- enabling the New Forest Access Forum to provide useful advice on improving public access
- undertaking and supporting research to clarify positive and negative impacts of recreation locally.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Engage local organisations and recreational user groups in agreeing an overall plan for where within and around the National Park we should encourage people to go to enjoy outdoor recreation – and how this should be achieved. LH10, ST1	Nigel Matthews	<p>Further work with partner organisations to identify where parking or permitted cycle routes might be changed to improve the visitor experience and protect the environment, including a meeting of the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group.</p> <p>Natural England officers continue to develop a proposed route for the England Coast Path; NPA officers hope to ensure the path is well designed and implemented and that collateral impacts are minimised.</p>		
Collate data to inform decisions about the management of recreation and the ways we engage with visitors to the New Forest e.g. use of recreational facilities and sustainable transport, value and volume of the visitor economy, visitor surveys and information.	Mark Holroyd / Nigel Matthews	<p>There are no visitors survey planned for 2016/17; however, efforts are being made to make more use of the data collected in the 2015 survey. We are working with the New Forest Centre to ensure that historic visitor survey data is available to the public as part of the E-cademy project. We have been compiling data for input into the STEAM volume and value model for tourism visits, the results we expect in Q2. A more detailed customer feedback survey has been developed for the New Forest tour, which will help us to further develop the product and target our marketing efforts more efficiently with fewer resources in the future.</p> <p>Initial data from breeding curlew survey work being done by volunteers indicate poor breeding success, mostly due to predation.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Play a leading role in the co-ordination of targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter, fungi, disturbance of ground nesting birds and feeding of ponies. LH10, SQ1, EP5	Nigel Matthews	<p>Campaigns continue in a range of ways as usual. Meetings were held for the Animal Accident Reduction Group and the Dogs Forum (with useful discussion about signage at both) – these enable us to work jointly with partners. Visit to Dorset Dogs gave officers helpful insight into this well-regarded project, some aspects of which may be transferable to the New Forest, or the Solent mitigation work.</p> <p>Ground nesting birds have featured strongly in ranger activities, with multiple drop-in sessions at locations across the Forest, and in the Date with Nature event which this year celebrated its 10th anniversary.</p> <p>Renewed contact with Duke of Edinburgh Awards officers to improve the way the sensitivities of the New Forest are communicated to trainers, assessors and participants.</p> <p>Ongoing liaison with the Safety Advisory Group about cycle events and improve communication.</p>		
Through four full meetings and topic-specific subgroups enable the New Forest Access Forum to provide helpful advice to relevant organisations on improving public access, including the England Coast Path being developed by Natural England.	Mark Holroyd	The New Forest Access Forum met on 6 June at Calshot Activities Centre. The Forum received a presentation from our Policy Manager about the updates to the local plans in the National Park and the New Forest District Council areas. The Forum will be providing advice to both planning authorities with regards to countryside access and the access to green open spaces in the coming months through the consultation process. The Forum has a sub-group which is focussed on providing advice to Natural England on the development of the England Coast Path through the area and the group took part in a site meeting to look at some of the more challenging sections of this stretch.		