

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

2017-18 Work Programme – Q3 (1 October to 31 December 2017)

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	Owner	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	Gillie Molland	The upgraded byway in Hordle was opened to the public in December. This was supported with £4,000 from our Small Grants Scheme for Countryside Access, with additional funding from Hampshire County Council's Rural Communities Fund and local donations. Staff attended the Houses of Parliament in early November for the official launch and promotion of the British Mountaineering Council's Make a Million Campaign, which aims to raise £1 million for a range of vital path repair projects within Britain's entire family of 15 National Parks. Publicity for our local project to improve access around the Lepe Loop will commence in the next few months.		
As the Access Authority for the National Park, provide input to Natural England's plans for the development of the England Coast Path through the National Park. When the route has been agreed, deliver the establishment phase of the new trail and associated open access land.	Nigel Matthews / Gillie Molland	The latest planned start time for the six-week England Coast Path consultation is the later part of February. Officers will be attending a meeting on 29 January to discuss with neighbouring access authorities the most efficient maintenance arrangements for the new trail once established.		
Work with partners and communities to understand, develop and deliver visitor information opportunities about the National Park through visitor centres including New Forest Centre and Lepe Country Park redevelopment, eight+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell	We have been working with the New Forest Centre on how we will work together over the period 2018-2021. We have advertised and recruited two new local information points after vacancies became available in Brockenhurst and Burley. These will be Cycleexperience and Shappen Stores.		

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Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects such as Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme (OPOF) and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 30+ volunteering organisations and attended by 300+ prospective volunteers. SQ2	Richard Austin / Jim Mitchell	<p>This autumn there was a record number of hours spent at our Working Woodlands sites across the New Forest. Volunteers removed scrub such as rhododendron, gorse and bramble from woodlands, and their work from last year is already evident, as new heather is coming through. Archaeology volunteers have been restoring monuments in Lepe and another trip to the National Archives in London has been planned. The Historic Routes and Past Pathways volunteers have been walking their assigned rights of way and recording their findings.</p> <p>The Ecademy project based at the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst has now launched the New Forest Knowledge website and will unveil their collection of maps at an exhibition at the centre.</p> <p>Volunteers received a Volunteer Newsletter in November. A total of over 26,000 volunteer hours have been recorded through the OPOF scheme.</p>		
Deliver and support 2+ projects (inc. Walking for health and an OPOF project on developing wild play) and work with partners to deliver activities 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	<p>Holbury Manor Wildplay site has had the tree safety work completed and the play area was built on 13 and 14 December and is now completed. Staff and volunteers have been training in site inspection and an opening event is planned for February half term 2018. The autumn seasonal wild play download for families ran from mid-October to mid-December and achieved 407 downloads.</p> <p>We are awaiting Q3 figures for the Walking for Health Project. Walk leaders are sometimes asked to tell their story in relation to the walks they run. John, a walk leader in the New Forest, said:</p> <p><i>'The group is friendly and welcoming to new-comers – it is nice to see people chatting as we walk and we make sure no one walks alone. One lady commented recently about how easy she finds it to walk for two miles in company but it seems too far to contemplate alone. The social aspect of the walks is very important, especially for the more socially isolated members of the group.'</i></p>		

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Deliver the OPOF ranger Apprentice scheme in partnership with other Forest ranger teams and education providers. EW8	Gillie Molland	Year two apprentice rangers (Martin Meaker and Peter Dovey) started during October 2017 and after their first placement with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have now moved on to work with the rangers and volunteers at the National Trust. They have undertaken formal training at Kingston Maurwood College as well as achieving certificated training in first aid, brushcutters, manual handling and chainsaw operations.		
Continue the development of the PEDALL project, securing external funding and recruiting volunteers and deliver cycling sessions for participants EP4	Donna Neseyif	We are continuing to deliver sessions as per the lottery targets. We are in the process of recruiting volunteers and are on target to recruit the required number for year one of the project.		
Engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented including young people (John Muir Award and Youth Action Project) and those with disabilities. EP4, LC9	Jim Mitchell /Gillie Molland	Our north area Ranger spent a week in December working with the Prince's Trust gaining work experience and job shadowing their youth workers. He has returned with a host of ideas and skills transferable to how the NPA can engage and develop links with young people. Our work currently includes the Youth Action Project coordinated by us but delivered in conjunction with many New Forest partners. We continue to deliver the John Muir Award across the National Park with new opportunities arising at Greenwood School, Dibden Purlieu and Tile Barn Outdoor Centre aiming to include the Award as part of their group delivery programme.		

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	Gillie Molland	Rangers engaged with 1,768 people in this quarter including leading several walking festival walks. Continued use of the mobile unit to attend 10 events promoting responsible use of the National Park by both local people and visitors. Key events in this period included a busy weekend at the Burley Steam Pressing Weekend (cider festival) speaking to more than 400 people, Exbury Christmas Fair with the NPA elves engaging with at least 350 people in one day. Rangers continue to provide a presence at Beaulieu Road pony sales.		
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities that promote the National Park's special qualities including self-guided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, training, and permanent and touring exhibitions including activity to mark the 800 th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. SQ4, LH10, LD3	Jim Mitchell / Gareth Owen	We installed the Charter of the Forest exhibition in October in the New Forest Centre. This explored both the historic charter and its resonance, as well as how people relate to trees and woods today. Over the three months of the exhibition 19,500 people went through the doors and 70 comments were received in the visitors' book. We have assisted with the production of interpretation at the new Milford Conservation Volunteers bird observatory (hide) on Keyhaven causeway, which opened on 25 November. The conservation volunteers created the hide by converting the old pumping house, part-funded by an NPA Sustainable Communities Grant. It will be used on open days and by groups interested in the wildlife of the National Park coast.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Review the operation of the concierge service within the New Forest Centre and update the agreement with the Ninth Centenary Trust in the context of recent changes to information provision in the Forest.	Nigel Matthews	An informative Members' day at the New Forest Centre in December and subsequent correspondence have prompted a review of the way in which the NPA works with the Ninth Centenary Trust, e.g. whether a service level agreement might be better than a grant. The concierge service (which was regarded by the Centre as 'invaluable' and which sold more New Forest Tour tickets than the Visitor Information Centre did in 2016) will be considered alongside this process.	Changed from Green in Q2	The timescale for agreeing the way forward has slipped, but it should still be possible to at least agree interim arrangements by the March Authority meeting.
<p>New website live and amendments made by end Q3; brand messaging reviewed and rolled out; Heritage Lottery Fund scheme, Coast Path consultation, National Grid Hale Purlieu trials, Local Plan and recreation consultations and Visitor Gift Scheme supported and engagement targets (to be determined by project leaders) attained; Green Halo campaign launched; Walking Festival organised and Charter of the Forest celebrated.</p> <p>Arts Festival organised and audience of 4,000 achieved.</p>	Hilary Makin	<p>The Green Halo Partnership was launched at Ordnance Survey HQ on 22 November with 100 organisations represented. Natural England's COO was the keynote speaker, who said that natural capital will be central to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.</p> <p>A new joint campaign to cut the number of New Forest animals killed or injured on the roads in the dark winter months coincided with casualties reducing by half in the lead up to Christmas.</p> <p>The website will be launched in Q4 as the project start was delayed while we took the chance to review our messaging and refocus our communications.</p> <p>More than 1,500 walkers attended expert-led walks during the two week Walking Festival, run in partnership with local organisations, with 94% of those who left feedback saying they learnt something new about the National Park.</p> <p>We assisted with the launch of the upgraded YHA New Forest at Burley. It received £31,000 of funding from the Authority as part of the £700,000 revamp and was officially opened by YHA Ambassador and British athlete and adventurer Sarah Outen, MBE.</p>		

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		<p>We issued a press release and social media posts about the dangers of fireworks to Forest stock, horses and pets.</p> <p>Over 300 families and friends came together to celebrate their loved ones by helping to plant a community wildlife space at St Nicholas' Churchyard in Brockenhurst. The Family Trees event was held during National Tree Week at the start of December. More than 130 people discovered more about the Forest's history and archaeology at a two-day conference in Lyndhurst, which also saw the launch of the New Forest Knowledge website.</p>		
Develop and teach curriculum-specific sessions about the national park for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	<p>405 pupils from 10 schools and colleges received teaching from the Education team during the quarter, including secondary or university level students studying habitat management or river studies, and "in school" sessions for primary school pupils introducing the special qualities of the national park, or exploring the Forest at Night. This year, once again, the team have worked with schools outside in every month of the year.</p> <p>The New Forest Marque assembly has been enjoyed by 2,372 pupils from 14 schools since October. The assembly promoted the idea that local produce is 'good for you and good for the Forest'.</p>		

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Work with primary and secondary schools to embed the New Forest National Park into their curriculum, including organising conferences for students and teachers, the development of a Youth Forum and the continued population of the New Forest Curriculum web pages. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	All available 2018 work experience places have been allocated to students from 5 local secondary schools. Each student attended an interview; after meeting NPA staff and touring the office, all nine have enthusiastically confirmed their place. The New Forest Educators' Forum met together at Avon Tyrell. 34 representatives from 21 of the Forum organisations contributed to a packed agenda which featured the full range of excellent outdoor education available in the national park including an introduction to the Shared Forest toolkit, an overview of the Children's University, discussion on seeking sources of funding for transport for schools and a presentation from Priestlands School on the benefits to pupils of outdoor learning, in particular the John Muir Award.		
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, Gillie Molland	Rangers attended 9 pre-schools in this period, delivering to 165 children. Rangers have provided assistance and support to partner organisations supporting Woodlander Bashley's outdoor activities session for New Milton Junior School children and delivering sessions for Ringwood Brownies and a training walk for New Forest Walking for Health Walk Leaders.		

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 the public, local organisations and recreational user groups in agreeing an overall evidence-based 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	Two reports have been prepared following the ‘call for views’ consultation to inform an update of the New Forest National Park Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030 that we had been asked to lead on by the RMS Steering Group (Forestry Commission, Natural England, Verderers, Hampshire County Council, NPA and New Forest District Council). One is a Findings Report (summarising what people said); the other is a ‘Next Steps’ Report, summarising how the feedback received is influencing the ongoing work. The next step is that all steering group organisations take the reports to their respective decision-makers and recommit to preparing actions for the update.		A range of challenging and complex issues were raised in the consultation – and for many there are no easy solutions. However, the Steering Group is still committed to the process of updating the RMS and, with careful liaison, it should be possible to draft actions for the RMS – and put these out to further consultation during summer 2018.
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>The animal accident rates usually go up when the clocks change and more people travel home in the dark. This year, we worked with partner organisations to design and install eye-catching temporary signs on high risk routes to highlight the increased risk at this time of year. This led to a multifaceted joint campaign, starting with a high-profile media launch at the Sales Yard on 23 October. Initially, the total of animals killed and injured during following weeks was less than half the number recorded the year before – and although accidents increased around the turn of the year, the campaign was widely accepted as being successful in raising awareness.</p> <p>Rangers delivered over 1,000 animal accident hotline cards and ‘I Go Slow For Ponies’ stickers to hotels, B&Bs and local businesses prior to the clocks going back and to tie in with the Shared Forest #add3minutes campaign.</p>		There is a high degree of public concern about these issues, but there are no ‘magic wands’. We will always look for new and more effective ways to achieve success and work with other organisations to ensure a proportionate and meaningful response.

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		<p>The last of the year's larger cycle events (the Gridiron) was on 8 October. Almost 700 took part but as usual for this event, it caused few issues. A review of the effectiveness of the Cycle Event Organiser's Charter is being prepared for the January Authority meeting.</p> <p>The Joint Litter Working Group (NFDC, NPA and FC staff) met on 18 October, and a broader meeting (including the National Trust, CDA, Verderers and HCC) met on 12 December to plan the 2018 Spring Clean, on the first weekend in March.</p> <p>Officers hosted a one-day workshop for officers from other English and Welsh NPAs, including arranging for a presentation by Stephen Jenkinson (who is leading on a range of national dog walking initiatives). We also attended a meeting of the 'Bird Aware Solent' dogs initiatives working group. In both cases, our work on promoting responsible dog walking and reducing disturbance to birds and other wildlife is highly relevant and useful to other organisations for whom this is a relatively new area of work.</p> <p>The Forestry Commission put up revised signage about fungi picking and we have helped hand out leaflets from the mobile unit.</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.	Gillie Molland	The Forum met on 4 December. They received an update from Alison Barnes on priorities for the NPA, an update on the England Coast Path from Natural England and a presentation on the Local Plan for the National Park. The developer for the proposed Fawley Waterside development gave a presentation on their intentions and the Forum was able to give initial feedback. The Forum is keen to ensure this development is accompanied by significant and permanent countryside access improvements to the south eastern corner of the National Park.		