2 The Landscape Area, its Heritage and its People

2.1 Landscape Character

2.1.1 Introduction

The New Forest National Park has a rich variety of landscapes. Whilst they all have a distinctive character they are also all recognisably part of the New Forest including the wooded slopes of Wiltshire in the north, the central plateau and the open coastline of the Solent in the south.

When National Character Areas were first introduced in the 1990's by the Countryside Agency the New Forest was shown as one large character area. Similarly the New Forest National Character Area profile produced in 2012/13 by Natural England covers not only the National Park but also the lower Hampshire Avon Valley and some of the wider New Forest District Council areas.

In 2000, New Forest District Council took the broad National Character Areas produced by the Countryside Agency in the 1990s and developed a more detailed Landscape Character Assessment. It subdivided the New Forest into 19 areas of similar character and type, describing key features and management guidelines.

The New Forest National Park Authority has built on the New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment and taken each of the landscape character areas that fall all or part within the National Park boundary and provides more detailed descriptions and management guidelines. The Landscape Character Assessment was published in May 2015 and is available as an additional document to support this application, together with a shorter summary document.

2.1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

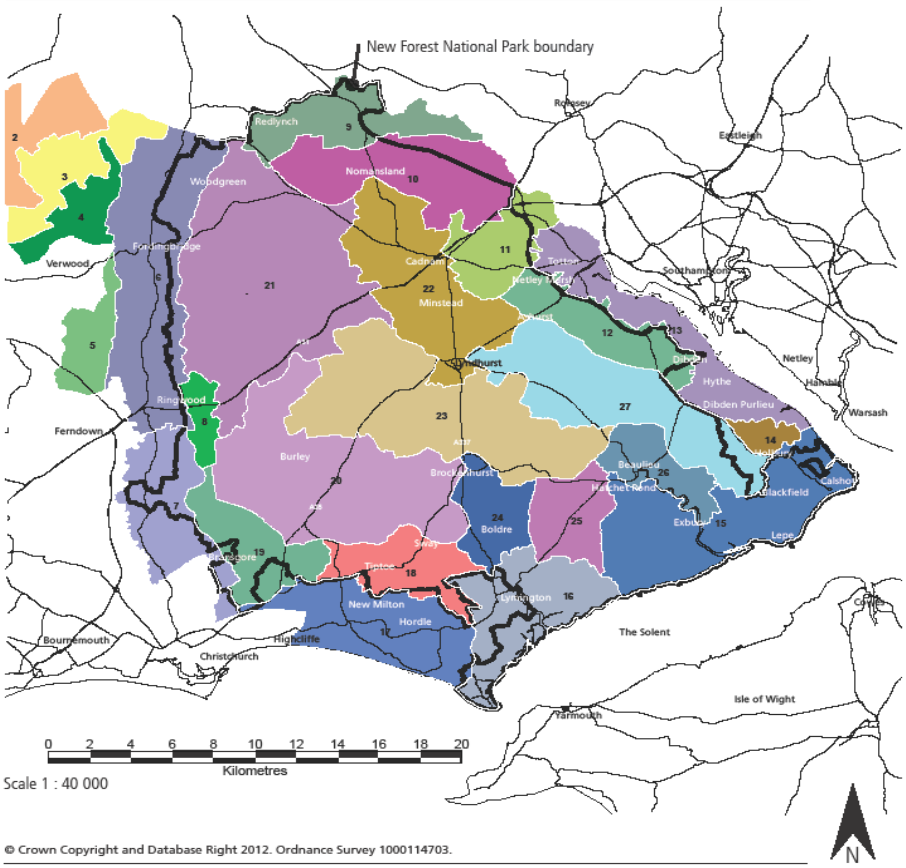
The New Forest National Park's Landscape Character Assessment (2015) subdivides the National Park into 19 areas (**Figure 5**) with similar character and type. The OPOF core area is fragmented, and although all 19 Landscape Character Areas do not cover the OPOF core area, they do cover the wider scheme area and are important to be able to understand the overall character of the New Forest.

These following landscape types are present which are shown on **Figure 6:**

- Coastal Fringe - A large scale, flat, open landscape with wide views and a quiet but exposed character.
- Coastal Plain Estates – small parliamentary enclosures - An intensively farmed but well managed landscape of small irregular fields with straight boundaries.
- Coastal Plain Estates – large informal enclosures – An intensively farmed but well managed large scale estate landscape dominated by fields resulting from informal enclosure.

- Heath Associated Estates – An enclosed wooded estate landscape, often on undulating ground, around the fringe of the Forest.
- Heath Associated Smallholdings and Dwellings - A variable small scale pastoral landscape with a regular small scale field pattern defined by ditches and banks.
- Ancient Forest Farmlands – A farmed forest landscape with a strong sense of enclosure and an ancient irregular enclosure pattern.
- River Terrace Farmlands – A flat, open, intensively farmed landscape with a medium to large scale regular field pattern.
- River Floodplain – A flat, low lying pastoral river landscape, frequently associated with former water meadows.
- Enclosed Farmland and Woodland – A wooded agricultural landscape, often on undulating terrain, forming the boundary with the chalk lands.
- Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands – Ancient unenclosed oak and beech woods forming the heart of the ancient landscape of the New Forest. These areas are outside of the core OPOF area.
- Timber Inclosures / Plantations – Woodland stands within the perambulation behind fences and within Inclosures.
- Heathland – Heathland areas that arise on poor acid soils with a mosaic of wet bogs, bracken, gorse and tracts of heather. These areas are outside of the core OPOF area.
- Historic Parkland – Parkland landscapes which are designed landscapes often associated with a large house and sited to take advantage of views.

Landscape Character Areas



Key

2. Martin and Whitsbury Open Farmland
3. Damerham and Rockbourne Valley
4. Wooded Sandleheath Farmland
5. Ringwood Forest
6. Upper Avon Valley
7. Lower Avon Valley
8. Poulner Woods and Pastures
9. Landford Forest Farmlands
10. West Wellow Heaths and Commons
11. Copythorne Forest Farmlands
12. Hythe and Ashurst Forest Farmlands
13. Waterside Parishes
14. Fawley Refinery Complex
15. North West Solent Estates
16. Lymington and Pennington Coastal Plain
17. Barton And Milford Coastal Plain
18. Sway Pasture and Smallholdings
19. Bransgore Woods And Pastures
20. Southern Heath and Forest
21. Northern Heath and Forest
22. Furzey Woodland and Villages
23. New Forest Central Woodlands
24. Lymington River LCA
25. Beaulieu Heath
26. Beaulieu River LCA
27. Eastern Forest Heaths

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

Figure 5 - Landscape Character Areas

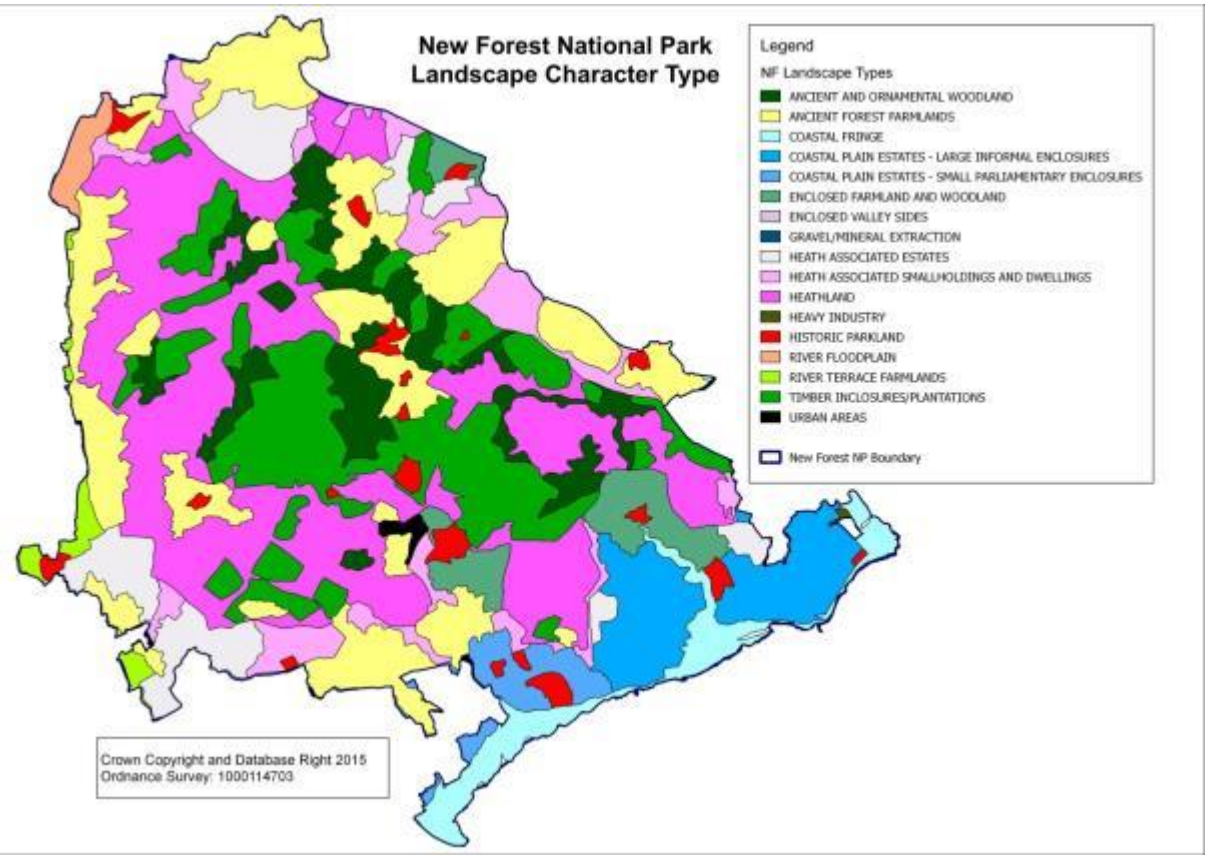


Figure 6 - Landscape Character Types

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies the following:

- landscape features/attributes within that area that are most important in defining its character and sense of place
- condition of the landscape and the most important features within it
- forces for change acting on the landscape
- future vision for that landscape character area and supporting management guidelines to assist in the achievement of the vision.

2.1.3 Summary of the landscape character of the New Forest

Lying within the Hampshire basin, the New Forest forms an elevated plateau of sands, gravels and clays that slopes gently to the coast of the Solent, bounded by the river valleys of the Avon Valley to the west and the Test to the east. A steeply wooded ridge marks the western edge of the plateau and the start of the distinctive Forest core - a mosaic of woodland, ancient wood pasture, stream valleys, and heathland, mire and forest farmlands (**Table**). The northern part of the plateau contains dramatic landforms with extensive elevated open heathland plains cut by steeply eroded U-shaped valleys. The A31 divides the plateau along a natural watershed. To the south of this the landscape is more verdant with open lawns and larger areas of semi-natural woodland and wood pasture, as well as extensive open heathland. This whole area reveals an incredible time depth, preserved through the system of commoning.

The unenclosed semi-natural woodlands, heathlands, mires and grass lawns together form the area known as the Open Forest interspersed with large wooded

Inclosures. Combined, these cover some 50% of the National Park area and are managed largely by public and voluntary bodies - the Forestry Commission (responsible for managing the Crown Lands of the National Park, covering some 47% of the National Park), the National Trust, Hampshire County Council and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The Forest Inclosures were created at various times since the 17th Century and are fenced to protect them from grazing stock. Many of the older broad-leaved woodlands and specimen conifers are important landscape features and wildlife habitats.

Pockets of ancient forest farmlands and small-holdings with strong commoning traditions border the Open Forest. Heathland commons run along the western and northern edges of the Open Forest while assarted fields (medieval fields cut out from the original woodland cover) and woodlands are particularly characteristic of the eastern and southern boundaries. In contrast the large-scale coastal estates along the Solent fringes are dominated by Parliamentary enclosures evident in large rectangular fields bounded by predominantly hawthorn hedgerows.

In total, some 23% of the National Park is privately managed farmland. These enclosed lands of small-holdings and large estates create a rural landscape characterised by scattered farmsteads and hamlets, narrow winding lanes and small fields divided by thick hedgerows. About 62% of the enclosed landscape is under pasture and meadowland.

The wild and flat Solent shoreline extends over 42 kilometres (26 miles) with extensive areas of mudflats, shingle and salt marsh, backed in places by low cliffs. Unusual habitats include oak woodland coming down to the water’s edge along the Beaulieu Estuary and a series of saline lagoons (Salterns) at Keyhaven.

Settlements are part of the distinct landscape of the New Forest and have their own distinct sense of place. Historically the towns and villages of the New Forest developed on the more productive land of the river valleys and coastal plain fringing the Forest core. The older market towns of Lymington, Ringwood and Fordingbridge now lie outside the National Park boundary. The four main villages within the National Park are Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Sway and Ashurst.

Rural settlement is either nucleated as in Beaulieu or Woodgreen, or dispersed with scattered hamlets such as Frogham. Linear villages, such as East Boldre, developed later as land was enclosed piecemeal from the Open Forest. The main villages expanded from the 19th century onwards and have a denser settlement pattern. Some of the larger estates have buildings set within landscaped grounds and parkland.

The relationship between the Forest and neighbouring sea and land is close, with strong historic links of a far wider area of common land and a rich history of salt production and ship building on the coast. In modern times the constant evolvement of urban expansion and industrial development from outside the Forest impacts within. Decisions made beyond the Forest’s boundaries can affect the special qualities of the National Park.

Table 2: A selection of pictures showing New Forest Landscape Character

Figure A - Historic parkland, Brockenhurst Park

Figure B - View across Avon Valley from Hale

Figure C - Grazing land and paddocks, Tiptoe

Figure D - Traditional Forest settlement, Norleywood

2.1.4 Decline in Landscape character

The Landscape Character Assessment outlines the issues which are leading to a decline in the landscape character of the individual Landscape Character Areas of the New Forest. This section summarises the key issues for the whole New Forest.

Changes in habitats and species impact on the landscape character of the area. This can include encroachment of various species into key habitats areas due to lack of management.

The alteration of field patterns has changed over time, either though changes in land use or enlargement of fields through amalgamation to suit modern, intensive farming methods, or suburbanisation to accommodate recreational horse keeping. This has erased the historic small scale field patterns closely associated with the landscape's traditional character. In addition the loss of or fragmentation of, hedgerows has affected the field pattern sense of enclosure and eroded the rural character of the landscape.

Changes in land use have impacted on the traditional functions of the landscape including its important role for grazing. Intensification of agriculture has eroded the

ancient small scale field pattern and changed traditional small-scale farmed landscape and historic land uses.

Encroachment of settlements onto commons has eroded the traditional character of the Forest.

The impact of major infrastructure such as visual and noise intrusion of the main transport routes such as the A31 dual carriageway and the main railway routes and visual intrusion of overhead electricity pylons and major industry e.g. Fawley Power Station has impacted on the rural character of this landscape.

New development, alterations, proliferation of signage and planting are often out of keeping with local vernacular styles and local landscape setting which leads to an erosion of local landscape character.

High levels of visitor traffic and visitor facilities impacts on the tranquillity.

2.2 Natural Heritage

2.2.1 Geology

The New Forest National Park occupies an area of Eocene sands and clays covered in many areas by thick spreads of Pleistocene flint river gravel (**Figure 7**).

The Eocene sediments are relatively soft deposits with every variation between pure sand and pure clay, much of it a mixture of both. This soft geology of clays, sands and gravels has been exploited through human history by various extractive industries from Roman Pottery Kilns to thriving pre-World War II New Forest brick industry.

The clays of these stratigraphical units typically produce boggy ground, which is one of the most important habitats in the New Forest due to the flora and fauna they support. The presence of bogs and wetlands throughout the Forest helped contribute to the area's designation of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The sands of these stratigraphical units tend to form hills with steep slopes; examples can be seen in the Burley and Lyndhurst area. If the sand is not seen directly, its presence may be made visible by badger burrows.

The south eastern part of the New Forest is rather different because it contains the uppermost Eocene strata of the Solent Group. The carbonate content of these beds is relatively high and they are often regarded as ‘marls’. These beds have been dug in places for marl pits; linked to cob building construction and one of the old common rights no longer exercised on the New Forest; ‘***Common of marl****: the right to dig clay to improve agricultural land’*. Drivers Map of the New Forest surveyed during 1786/7 details an area of Marl Pits on Hatchet Moor that today is more recognisable as Hatchet Pond (**Figure 8**).

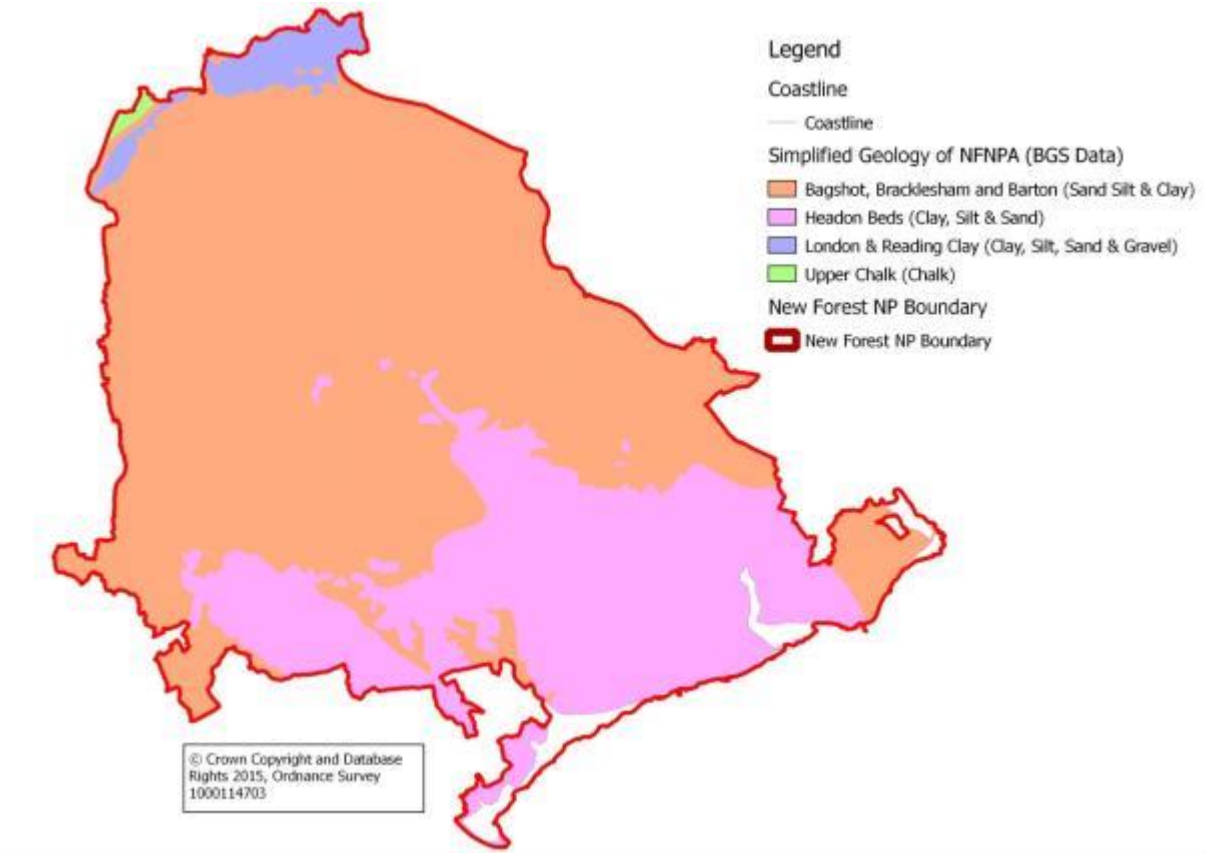


Figure 7: Basic geology of New Forest National Park Authority

Figure 8: Extract from 1814 Drivers Map of New Forest Credit: Cambridge Library

The south eastern area of the New Forest is mainly comprised of the Headon Hill Formation. These more calcareous strata are particularly good for farmland and the valuable estates of the Beaulieu area mostly lie on Headon strata.

There was no actual glaciation in the New Forest, but it occurred further north in Britain. The New Forest area was tundra with seasonal floods of braided rivers, and cold and icy much of the time. Now, in the mild climate of the present interglacial, it is prevented by human activity such as burning and by common grazing, from becoming a completely wooded forest.

2.2.2 Habitats and Species

The New Forest is one of the most important sites for wildlife in the UK, it is rich in biodiversity and includes a complex mosaic of habitats, and is widely recognised as being of exceptional importance for nature conservation on a European and International level. Historic land uses such as farming, commoning, mineral extraction and forestry have shaped the landscape over many centuries and human influences continue to shape the natural environment of the Forest today.

Over 50% of the National Park is designated for its international importance for nature; this is mainly the Open Forest and therefore outside of the core OPOF LPS area. However, because the OPOF boundary is not one discrete area but made up of a number of areas within and adjacent to the Open Forest, it is important to describe all the New Forest habitats in order to get a full understanding of the natural heritage. In addition the habitats that are adjacent to the designated sites have an important role in helping to maintain the overall conservation value of the New Forest as they can act as a buffer and corridors for wildlife.

Key features:

- It is the largest area of 'unsown' vegetation (such as lowland heath, fen and ancient pasture woodland) in lowland England
- About 1/3 of British wildflowers grow in the New Forest
- The Forest is home to the largest breeding population of Dartford warbler in the UK
- The woodlands are the richest in epiphytic lichens of any lowland woodland in Europe
- 73% of British dragonflies species breed here
- Of 18 British species of bat, 13 are found in the New Forest
- It is home to all 6 of the UK's native reptile species: adder, grass snake, smooth snake, sand lizard, common lizard and slow worm
- 46 nationally and internationally rare plant species are found in the New Forest and for many it may be their most important remaining British locality.

The New Forest landscape is dominated by heathland and pasture woodland, it is the largest area of semi-natural vegetation in England and is of international importance. The value of this area for wildlife is derived from a pastoral economy which has been in existence for hundreds of years. The open forest consists of a mosaic of heathland, mires, grassland, ancient pasture woodland, riparian and bog woodland, rivers and streams and permanent and temporary pools. The interest of

this area has derived from the long-standing rights of common, with commoners stock grazing freely over extensive areas. There are also areas of broad leaf inclosures which are important for wildlife.

In order to maintain its traditional character and value for the grazing commoning stock there is an extensive Open Forest management programme which includes: controlled burning, bracken management, mowing and swiping and birch and pine clearance. In order to promote the regeneration of fresh young growth, the Forestry Commission undertakes controlled burning of gorse and heather, and the harvesting of bracken. Burning of gorse and heather encourages new growth which is beneficial to a variety of flora and fauna, and creates food for commoning stock. It also results in a mosaic of different aged habitats which creates effective fire breaks to protect large areas of heathland, woodland and private property from wildfire. Burning starts on the first working day in November and ends on the last working day of March each year. Bracken is a vigorous and dominant plant that can create a tall, dense canopy up to six feet in height. When it collapses each autumn, the understorey plant species can be smothered. It encroaches onto the open heathland areas and it is here that the Forestry Commission controls the growth by swiping it down, chemically treating it or cutting the foliage and turning it into garden mulch which is sold in local nurseries and garden centres. All bracken control takes place during the summer. Much of the vegetation actually benefits from cutting or burning as vigorous new growth helps to create a diverse Open Forest environment.

The New Forest supports an exceptional variety of mosses and lichens, flowering plants and invertebrates, and is one of the largest areas for breeding waders in southern England, including curlew, snipe and redshank. The Forest is also well known for its birds of prey including goshawk, hobby and honey buzzard.

The mosaic of habitats is unique in lowland Europe and includes 13 habitats of European importance and many species of European importance listed in the EU Habitats Directive. This is reflected in its designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive, a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EU Birds Directive.

The value and richness of the New Forest derives from several factors: its location, climate and geology; the long continuous history of pastoralism and sustained management practices such as heathland cutting and burning; the complex variety and association of habitats at a landscape scale; a wide variety of micro habitats; and dynamic change and variation provided by human and natural processes including extensive grazing, succession, fire and flooding

The following sections describe the habitats of the New Forest broadly divided into 8 areas:

- Heathland
- Mires
- Woodland
- Inclosure
- Forest Fringe
- Rivers, streams and ponds
- Avon Valley

- Coastal plain

2.2.2.1 Heathland

Heathland in the New Forest includes heather dominated heaths, grasslands and waterlogged bogs or mires. The New Forest has the most extensive area of heathland habitat remaining in Europe (over 10,000ha). It is of particular importance for birds, invertebrates and reptiles and supports the largest breeding population of Dartford warblers in the UK. The smooth snake is found in good numbers despite declining elsewhere due to loss of heathland in other parts of southern Britain. Wetter areas support unusual plants such as marsh gentian and greater sundew. The heathland habitat is maintained by grazing and controlled burning or cutting and baling the heather (once every 25 years), which removes old growth and allows new young growth for animals and wildlife to graze. It also provides thick cover for nesting and shelter.

The heathlands of the New Forest, often referred to as the Open Forest, cover approximately 18,000 hectares.

2.2.2.2 Mires

The National Park has 75% of the valley mires in north-western Europe (90 out of 120). The permanently waterlogged soils along many of the valley sides and bottoms has led to the formation of the most important mire system in Western Europe supporting plants such as mosses, bog asphodel and white beaked sedge.

Most mires are found in the valleys, often towards the south of the Park. A valley location means that water feeding the mire will have passed through the surrounding rocks and soils and be relatively rich in nutrients. The water movement through the mire creates complicated patterns of nutrients and vegetation. At the outer edges of the mire sphagnum mosses are commonly found alongside different orchid species, cotton grass, sundews and bladderworts. This is the most nutrient poor soil on the mire. Plants such as sundews and bladderworts thrive here as both are adapted to low nutrients by being carnivorous on small insects. Purple moor-grass and bog myrtle are found towards the middle of the mire along with areas colonised by alder and birch trees. This last zone often has many other plant species associated with it. Mires are generally rich in plants with over 150 species being recorded on the better sites

2.2.2.3 Woodland

New Forest woodlands are unique, with an outstanding diversity of habitat and the highest population of veteran trees in Western Europe. They are recognised internationally for the species they contain and forests, woods, and individual trees in the New Forest have historically been used and valued for timber, fuel and shelter. There are many different types of woodland with a range of broadleaf and coniferous species, unenclosed and enclosed and hence subject or not subject to grazing. Woodland here is described under three categories to distinguish between the open and enclosed woodland on the Crown land and the privately owned woodland.

- Ancient and ornamental woodland
  The term refers to the many areas of the New Forest that contain a mixture of native trees and bushes, such as oak, beech and holly. These woodlands vary in size and are largely unenclosed. Many areas are completely natural, having changed little since the time of King William I. Other areas of Ancient

and Ornamental Woodlands have been influenced by past industries such as ship building (**section 2.3.8.1**). Timber had other local uses and many small areas within some of the Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands were separated and enclosed with a ditch, bank and small timber fence. This kept the animals out and so prevented grazing and the associated damage to the vegetation. The trees enclosed within were usually coppiced - cut at ground level which promoted rapid growth of new stems. This method of tree management greatly increased the amount of timber per tree, ensuring a plentiful supply for local use. The principle tree species are beech and oak and holly dominates the shrub layer. There is diversity in tree age from saplings to mature, senile and dead standing and fallen trees, together with a wide range of tree densities from closed high canopy forest to open stands with extensive heathland glades to a more open parkland-like structure.

2.2.2.4 Ancient Trees

Figure 9: Ancient Beech tree New Forest. Credit Mark Heighes

The New Forest is believed to have the highest concentration of ancient trees in Western Europe. Ancient oaks may be 400 to 800 years old, while beech can reach 300 to 400 years. The most ancient of all are yews, some of which are over 1,000 years old. Typically, the oldest trees have a great girth, a hollow trunk and a much reduced crown. Veteran trees will be the next generation of ancients. They are slightly younger in age, often still with a full crown, but clearly showing signs of age such as damaged branches or dieback. Around 1,000 ancient and veteran trees have so far been recorded. The famous Knightwood Oak, for example, with a girth of 7.38 metres, is believed to be about 600 years old. The New Forest is one of the most important areas in Britain and Europe for lichens, beetles, bats and fungi dependent on very old trees, including many rare and threatened species.

The New Forest Ancient Tree Hunt is helping to record the location and sizes of veteran and ancient trees throughout the National Park, adding the information to the National database held by the Woodland Trust. The project is run jointly by the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission, with the help of local volunteers. About 1,500 ancient and veteran trees have been recorded within the National Park, mainly comprising oak, beech and holly. Twenty three trees have girths of between 6.5m and 8.8m and are likely to be 400 years old or more.

- Inclosures
  The Crown Land also includes 'inclosures' managed for forestry; these contain large areas of coniferous plantations often on former heathland or ancient woodland sites. These were established in the early 20th century with the aim of creating a strategic reserve of timber in the event of another war. This purpose remained the same until the early 1980s where the emphasis changed and now the general policy is to convert the woodlands to hardwood species over the next few decades by gradually phasing out the conifers.

Traditionally, conifer crops have provided income from timber sales to help meet the costs of managing the forest, but most of these conifers are non-native and the policy now is to favour only native species. The trees are an integral part of the forest and provide many different habitats for animals, insects and birds. They have to be planted, weeded, thinned and felled in cycles to maintain the integrity and health of the forest. All these operations are carried out in consultation with other users of the forest and in harmony with nature wherever possible.

- Private woodland
  The New Forest is composed of 8,890 hectares (40%) of privately owned woodland, around 40% of which is unmanaged, owing to the prohibitive cost of management, woodland size, lack of suitable access and communication between demand and supply businesses. Human management has led to the diverse woodland habitats that the New Forest is famous for and loss of this management has led to the development of homogenous, dense, dark, humid, poor quality and nutrient rich woods. The main types of woodland found are broadleaf woodland with over stood coppice last managed more than 40 years ago and undermanaged broadleaf/conifer woodland planted in the 1950's.

2.2.2.5 Forest fringe

This enclosed landscape of fields, hedges and woodland extends around most of the Open Forest and includes the eastern border of the Avon Valley. The 'fringe' is functionally linked with the Open Forest as stock graze both the Open Forest and some of the lanes, village greens and commons of the fringe. The area is used as back up grazing land for the forest, particularly to support stock in the winter, (this landscape type also includes coppice enclosures and woodland set within the Open Forest as these have more in common with the biodiversity of the ancient coppice woodland in the Forest fringe.)

The Forest fringe is rich in biodiversity and includes agriculturally unimproved grassland, ancient coppice woodland, ponds, hedges and veteran trees. Some of the unimproved grasslands are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and many are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and it is likely that survey could reveal many more meadows and pastures of great value for nature.

Woodland and trees in the fringe support a rich fauna of birds, bats – including the rare Barbastelle and Bechstein's bats – and invertebrates including the woodland fritillary butterfly.

Ponds here are more nutrient rich than the acidic ponds of the Open Forest, and support amphibians such as the nationally protected great crested newt, and dragonfly and other invertebrate species not found within the Open Forest ponds.

2.2.2.6 Rivers, streams and ponds

The New Forest is an outstanding area for freshwater wildlife and includes a substantial number of nationally and internationally important areas. The New Forest catchment includes 32 water bodies monitored under the Water Framework Directive, including rivers, streams, brooks and lakes. These range from larger rivers such as the Lymington and Beaulieu to shorter streams and brooks such as the

Sowley Stream, Jacobs Gutter, Beckton Bunny, Dark Water and Walkford Brook. The River Avon and its tributaries are considered as a separate catchment and some of the water bodies that drain into it are within the National Park boundary. In addition to the WFD monitored network, the New Forest supports a large network of unmonitored headwater streams, over 1,000 individual ponds and many thousand more trackway pools, which together support an outstanding assemblage of uncommon freshwater plants and invertebrates making it one of the most important freshwater areas in Europe.

The freshwater habitats support significant fish, mammal, macroinvertebrate and wetland plant populations, including species that are important to conservation because they are rarely found outside traditionally managed habitats like the New Forest. Most other freshwaters in lowland England have lost a large proportion of their wildlife value because of pollution, intensification and habitat modification. Key populations of several European protected species, including otter, great crested newt, bullhead, lamprey and migrant sea trout are present. Floodplains are narrow, but support an important assemblage of wet meadow, reedbeds and reed-lined ditches, and provide habitat for bats, invertebrates and birds including water rail, grey wagtail and kingfisher.

The New Forest catchment is unusual in lowland England in having large areas of uncultivated land (the open forest). Due to the unique nature of the New Forest it is one of the best places to see rich and near-natural freshwater habitats in the UK, a fact widely recognised by the high level of protection given to the landscape.

Headwater streams and ponds within the protected area of the New Forest are generally at reference condition; supporting the full suite of species we would expect to see in the absence of pollution or obstructing modifications. Freshwaters of this quality are given High Status under the Water Framework Directive. However, in spite of their potential, some freshwaters currently only achieve Good Status. This means they only achieve the minimum standards required under the Water Framework Directive. The difference between Good (the minimum) and High (the very best status) can mean the loss of almost half the species reliant on these clean water sites. Of the 30 monitored ‘river water bodies’ and two lakes in the catchment only 40% are currently considered to be at ‘Good’ ecological status (on the scale of Bad, Poor, Moderate, Good and High). Most transitional and coastal waters achieve only Moderate status, in spite of the fact that all are covered by national and international designations to protect them. Unfortunately some freshwaters in the New Forest currently fail to meet even these minimum standards.

The many hundreds of smaller water bodies and streams that dot the Forest are not covered by the Water Framework Directive at all, but include some of the least-damaged freshwater systems in the Europe – reflected in the exceptional importance for wildlife of these habitats.

2.2.2.7 Avon valley

On the western edge of the New Forest is the Avon Valley, which again supports internationally important habitats including the chalk river and associated fen vegetation. The River Avon is fed from a chalk aquifer, but downstream of Fordingbridge is influenced by water chemistry and hydrology arising from the acidic Dorset Heaths and New Forest. The River is designated as a Special Area of

Conservation (SAC) and supports 27 species of fish in addition to important populations of Atlantic salmon, sea trout and brown trout. Some 66 species of aquatic plant have been recorded in the river channels and associated dykes.

The river's wide floodplain is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to its internationally important assemblages of breeding and wintering birds including large flocks of gadwall, wigeon, teal, shoveler, golden plover and black-tailed godwits. The Avon Valley is the last river valley in Hampshire that retains a viable population of breeding wading birds. To the north of Ringwood are Blashford Lakes – a nature reserve created by gravel extraction that attracts a large number of wintering wildfowl and is included in the Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar Site. The valley supports the largest and most species rich floodplain grassland in the New Forest and is one of the largest in England.

2.2.2.8 Coastal plain

Bordering Southampton Water and the Solent is the coastal plain, although only parts of this are in the National Park. Here habitats include grazing marsh, saltmarsh, intertidal flats, saline lagoons, vegetated shingle and soft rock cliffs and slopes. Much of this habitat is included within international conservation designations – the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site; the Solent Maritime SAC; and the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC. In places the coastal plain extends inland to include estuarine rivers and enclosed pastures used by wintering birds such as brent geese.

The coastal grazing marshes have a distinctive vegetation including variations between grassland, saltmarsh and swamp. They are important for wintering waterfowl and breeding birds, and support varied and rare invertebrate communities. Within the grazing marshes are saline lagoons with specialised plants and invertebrates including the lagoon shrimp, the starlet sea anemone and foxtail stonewort.

Saltmarshes represent a transition from mudflats to a variety of terrestrial habitats and are variably inundated by tidal waters. They provide nesting places for sea birds and waders, including nationally important colonies of breeding terns. Intertidal flats consisting of muds and mixed sediments and eelgrass beds support a rich invertebrate fauna and provide a rich feeding resource for wintering and migrant waterfowl.

Vegetated shingle is a nationally rare habitat that supports scarce plant species such as the little robin and is well developed on Hurst Spit, the Beaulieu Estuary and Calshot Spit. Soft cliffs and slopes occur west of Hurst Spit and erosion and slumping are providing a range of open and vegetated habitats supporting rare invertebrates and reptiles including common lizard and adder.

Additional habitats are provided by the rivers and streams that cross the various landscapes of the New Forest, including the Lymington, Keyhaven and Beaulieu rivers, which eventually enter the Solent. The New Forest coast has very interesting transitions of habitat from estuary to ancient woodland, swamp and grassland. These occur particularly in the Beaulieu estuary, where estuary edge oak woodlands contain scarce species such as the narrow-leaved lungwort.

2.2.2.9 Species

The New Forest hosts a diverse range of species that are rare, uncommon and declining elsewhere in the UK and Western Europe. As well as rare status, species may be associated with the New Forest due to the area being a particular important stronghold for commoner species. To many naturalists the fame of the New Forest is associated with special species such as the New Forest cicada, wild gladiolus, tadpole shrimp, smooth snake, nail fungus, Hampshire purslane, as well as its special habitats.

Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. There are 943 species of principal importance included on the S41 list and up to 40% of these priority species are found within Hampshire and the New Forest.

The Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan identified 50 notable species which local organisations and experts regarded as meriting special regard. The richness of the New Forest is exemplified in 41 of these being found within the area. Data on the status of these species is updated annually by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre in their monitoring reports. There is no agreed separate priority list of species for the New Forest, although the New Forest – Action for Biodiversity identified the following as possible 'champion' species.

- New Forest cicada *(Cicadetta montana)*
- Hornet robberfly (*Asilus crabroniformis*)
- Hampshire purslane (*Ludwigia palustris)*
- Marsh gentian (*Gentiana pneumonanthe)*
- Marsh clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata)*
- Little robin (*Geranium purpureum)*
- Starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis)*
- Wild gladiolus (*Gladiolus illyricus*)
- Tadpole shrimp (*Triops cancriformis)*
- Bechstein's/Barbastelle bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*) (*Barbastella barbastellus)*
- Waders/waterfowl – e.g. redshank, ringed plover, Brent goose
- Nail fungus *(Poronia punctata)*

2.2.2.9.1 Mammals

There are numerous varieties of mammals in the New Forest. The New Forest is perhaps best known for its deer. Fallow deer, red deer and roe deer are fairly widespread and can often be seen; whilst sika deer are found in reasonable numbers, but generally only in the south of the area. Muntjac deer are also present, but these tiny creatures are secretive and rarely seen. The fallow deer (Dama dama) was introduced here by William I when the *Nova Foresta* was established by him, in 1079. 'Forest' means 'a place set aside for royal hunting' and the New Forest was the king's first hunting ground established in Britain, upon his seizing the throne in 1066. Therefore, deer, and in particular the fallow deer, are intrinsic to the history of the New Forest. The forest wouldn't be recognised as a distinct place was it not for the original herd of fallow deer. Mediaeval royal hunting and natural predators such as wolves, bear and lynx controlled numbers of deer in the past. Today, in the

absence of these controls, it falls to the Forestry Commission keepers to manage them at a sustainable level. Deer cause damage to forest trees and farm crops, and also invade nearby gardens in their search for food. This necessitates a need to regulate their numbers as part of the management of the New Forest.

Badgers are reasonably widely distributed, and so are foxes and rabbits, although the latter occur at lower densities than in prime habitats elsewhere. Grey squirrels are successful colonisers despite sometimes determined attempts by man to keep down their numbers. Mice, voles and shrews also occur only in modest numbers compared to many places elsewhere as heavy grazing by deer and commoners' stock, and the consequent removal of ground level vegetation, does not suit them - and stoats and weasels are largely absent.

The New Forest is a stronghold for bats and up to 13 out of the 18 UK species can be found here (17 of which are known to breed in the UK) and represents a diverse bat fauna. The Hampshire Bat Group (HBG) began surveying the New Forest for bats in 2006, with a focus on the distribution of Bechstein's and Barbastelle bats to try to assess the significance of the New Forest for bats within a European context. The Forest has an abundance of suitable roost sites for bats in trees although heavy grazing by ponies and deer may limit the foraging resources within woodlands. The lack of understorey also makes it a difficult place to capture bats. Because managed areas of Forestry Commission land are often more structurally diverse and their significance as foraging sites and consequently in maintaining these rare populations should not be underestimated. The Bat group have erected a hundred bat boxes in 6 sites with a number of common bats species present and a small maternity colony of brown long-eared bats recorded so far. The capture and radio tracking and transect surveys that they have carried out have demonstrated that the New Forest is of international significance for both Bechstein's and barbastelle bats.

2.2.2.9.2 Reptiles

The New Forest National Park is home to all six of the UK's native reptile species:

- adder
- sand lizard
- slow-worm
- grass snake
- common lizard
- smooth snake

The smooth snake and the sand lizard, which inhabit heathland, are two of Britain's rarest species, they are small in number, although the sand lizard numbers are increasing after being close to extinction, in part due to the successful breed and release programmes that have been run across the country including at the New Forest Reptile Centre.

Heathland destruction elsewhere means that the New Forest has become an important haven for these species

2.2.2.9.3 Birds

The New Forest heaths, valley mires and Ancient Woodlands support important populations of both rare and common bird species which breed, over-winter or pass through on migration**.** This is recognised by its designation as Special Protection Area under the EC Wild Birds Directive (1979) in 1993, for the conservation of the honey buzzard, Montagu's harrier, kingfisher, woodlark and Dartford warbler. The Directive applies to birds, their eggs, nests and habitats.

The New Forest's woodlands support a wide range of woodland birds. The ancient grazed woodlands of the Forest have areas of dead wood habitat and very old trees, so support all three woodpecker species. The woodlands also support a large percentage of Hampshire's summer visiting wood warblers, redstarts, spotted flycatchers, marsh tit, siskin, crossbill, garden warbler, firecrest and hawfinches, along with other common woodland birds such as jackdaws, stock doves, tits and starlings.

The mature heathland supports numerous species including the Dartford warbler, visiting nightjars and resident stonechats and meadow pipits. Areas of regenerating heath are often home to skylarks and around woodland edges the rarer woodlark inhabits areas of heavily grazed grasses and heather. Woodlarks declined heavily throughout the country from the 1950s but have shown a steady increase in the Forest with one of the largest populations in the country.

The valley mire systems of the Forest are inhabited by snipe, curlew, lapwing and a few Redshank.

The New Forest streams, rivers, ponds and flooded gravel pits attract kingfishers, various ducks, great crested and little grebes, reed bunting, reed, sedge and Cetti's warblers, and water rail.

The coastal habitats attract a variety of coastal birds such as Mediterranean gulls, little terns, Brent geese, migrating whimbrels and redshank.

Most winters a few great grey shrikes from Eastern Europe and merlins and hen harriers from Northern England are present. Common buzzard and sparrowhawk nest throughout the Forest favouring the coniferous stands of timber.

A number of surveys and estimates of some of the key ground nesting bird species in the New Forest have been carried out since the 1960s, with national surveys of some species between 1984 and 2006. The methodologies and sample areas used have varied and therefore direct comparison between different surveys is difficult. Trends are not readily apparent for most species, although the figures for redshank appear to show a clear decline and nightjar numbers seem to have remained relatively stable in recent years. New surveys of ground nesting birds are being undertaken through the monitoring for the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and as part of national surveys.

2.2.2.10 Dartford Warbler

Figure 10: Dartford Warbler. Copyright Mike Read

The Dartford warbler is associated with gorse and dry heath areas of the New Forest. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century there was a considerable reduction in its habitat, the population is also affected directly by the incidence of severe winters and almost crashed in the 1960s. It's now only found in the heaths of the New Forest, Dorset, and north Hampshire and Surrey as these are the only places that stay warm enough for the species to survive through the winter and also have suitable heathland habitat. A 1994 survey showed a population of around 540 pairs, the highest on record. The population in the New Forest is approximately 500 pairs, making it the most important population in the country. Management of the open heath is closely linked to the requirements of this nationally rare bird, with mature, dry heath and gorse its optimum habitat.

2.2.2.10.1 Fish

17 species of fish have been found in the rivers of the New Forest. These include the bullhead and brook lamprey. There has been little artificial stocking of fish in the New Forest and therefore the fish communities contain a natural genetic diversity that is unusual in the UK.

2.2.2.10.2 Invertebrates

The New Forest is very rich in invertebrate species with 55% of butterflies and moths, 46% of beetles, 74% of dragonflies and damselflies, and 67% of grasshoppers and crickets that are found in Britain living here.

Up to 10,000 species of invertebrates are found in the Ancient and Ornamental woodlands and are mainly associated with the large quantities of dead wood found in these areas. One of the New Forest's most striking of the species that are dependent on dead wood is the stag beetle.

The old oak woods of the forest are home to some special moth species such as the scarce merveille-du-jour and the dark crimson underwing.

The wide variety of freshwater habitat types in the New Forest support a rich and varied invertebrate community, and species associated with unpolluted high quality

waters. Over a third, 37% of all Britain's larger freshwater insect species have been recorded in New Forest ponds. In a recent survey, 90% of ponds visited supported at least one freshwater invertebrate of conservation importance. Ponds in the enclosed lands of the Forest are more nutrient rich than the acidic ponds of the Open Forest, and support amphibians such as the nationally protected great crested newt, and dragonfly and other invertebrate species not found within the open forest ponds.

2.2.2.10.3 Plants

The mix of habitats in the New Forest hosts a rich variety of plants.

The New Forest is the largest area of mature, semi-natural beech woodland in Britain and represents Atlantic beech forests and old oak woods in the most southerly part of the habitat's UK range. The ancient trees are important for epiphytic lichens and bryophytes. During the spring the woodland areas contain wood anemones, early flowering orchids, wild garlic (ramsons), lesser celandines, bluebells and primroses, and later in the year bird's-nest orchid, helleborines and the rare wild gladiolus which grows among bracken on the edge of the ancient pasture woodlands - the New Forest is the only place in Britain where it is found.

It contains the largest remaining area of lowland heath in Europe, made up of a patchwork of dry and wet heath. Unlike much lowland heath, the New Forest heaths continue to be extensively grazed by cattle and horses, favouring species with low competitive ability. During the spring the heathland is dominated by gorse and bracken but also contains lousewort, petty whin, heath milkwort, tormentil, cotton-grass, sundews and later in the year bell heather, cross-leaved heath, dwarf gorse, dodder and harebells. The common-spotted, heath-spotted and lesser butterfly orchids are also present on the heathlands, while in the valley mires the rare, tiny bog orchid is present.

In the wetland fringes and ponds gypsywort, watermint, water forget-me-not and brooklime are present and in wetland areas, the rare marsh gentian, marsh St John's wort, mints, sundews and bog asphodel are also present in the valley mires and other boggy places. The ponds support very rich wetland plant communities, over 275 species, equivalent to two thirds of the UK total. The area is considered of European importance for Stoneworts.

The New Forest Molinia meadows are species-rich grasslands with an abundance of small sedges such as Carnation Sedge, Common Sedge and yellow-sedge. This vegetation occurs in areas heavily grazed by ponies and cattle in areas known locally as 'lawns'.

New Forest is also known for its fungi, of the 12,000 species found in Britain, around 2,700 are present in the New Forest, making this one of the most productive fungus habitats in Western Europe. Woodland areas are where most are found including chicken-of-the-woods, fly agaric, birch bracket fungus, cep, puffballs, beefsteak fungus, staghorn, sulphur tuft and stinkhorn.

2.2.3 Extent and status of habitats and species

The importance of the New Forest for biodiversity is illustrated by the extent of 'Habitats of Principal Importance' and the large area of land designated for nature conservation (**Table 3**). Habitats of Principal Importance are those listed by

government, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, for particular conservation attention in the UK. In the New Forest National Park there are 29,099ha of Habitats of Principal Importance which represents 51.36% of the total area. These habitats are the main components of statutory designated sites of national and international importance, and where not legally protected most of these habitats are included within the locally identified Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Hampshire or County Wildlife Sites in Wiltshire.

Table 3 - Proportion of Designated Sites

	Statutory Sites		SINCs	
	Area (Ha)	% of Total Area	Area (ha)	% of Total Area
New Forest National Park	32,262	56.95%	3,018	5.33

2.2.4 Designations

2.2.4.1 Site of Special Scientific Interest

The New Forest National Park contains 20 SSSIs but is dominated by the main New Forest SSSI which covers almost 29,000 hectares (**Figure 11**). The New Forest SSSI includes heaths, mires, grassland and woodland as well as other habitats. Nowhere else in lowland Britain contains such a mix and such large areas. It is also home to a huge number of notable species. It is estimated that nearly half of the 2,500 species of butterfly and moth have been recorded in the New Forest. Many of these, and other invertebrates, are considered rare. In addition nine rare and 25 nationally scarce species of vascular plants are recorded.

As well as this ecological wealth, the New Forest SSSI also contains areas which are of geological interest. Sections through the Bracklesham beds contain rich and well preserved fossils of marine animals.

A number of other sites within the National Park have been notified as SSSIs. These include areas of grassland, lowland bogs as well as ancient semi-natural woodland, many sites of which are outside the Open Forest. A number of large SSSIs are also associated with freshwater and marine environments. These are important for breeding, over-wintering and migratory birds, as well as coastal plants.

2.2.4.2 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Within the National Park there are four SACs (**Figure 11**). The New Forest SAC encompasses around 29,262 hectares and includes most of the unenclosed Forest and Inclosures together with Langley Wood, Whiteparish Common, Landford Heath and Loosehangar Copse and Meadows in the north, and Royden Woods in the south. It supports a complex mosaic of wildlife habitats, formerly common in lowland western Europe but now rare and fragmented. The major components are the extensive wet and dry heaths with their rich valley mires and associated wet and dry grasslands, the ancient pasture and enclosed woodlands, the network of clean rivers and streams and frequent permanent and temporary ponds. Outstanding examples of 13 habitats of European interest are represented together with two priority habitat types, namely bog woodland and riverine woodland.

The quality of the habitats for which the SAC is designated is dependent upon the management activities of the various owners and occupiers. Of fundamental importance is the persistence of a pastoral economy based on the existence of Rights of Common. The commoners' stock, mainly cattle and ponies, roam freely over extensive areas of the New Forest, playing a vital role in keeping open habitats free of scrub and controlling the more aggressive species such as bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and purple-moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*) ,and maintaining the richness and variety of heathland and wood pasture habitats. This is complemented by the annual heathland burning and cutting programmes which ensure that at any one time there is an extensive range of structurally diverse habitats available for plants and animals to utilise.

The Solent maritime SAC extends for 11,325 hectares and comprises the Solent coastline and maritime habitats to the mean high water mark, including estuaries of the Beaulieu Rivers and Southampton Water north to Hythe.

The Solent and Isle of Wight lagoons SAC is 36 hectares and includes the saline lagoons of the Pennington Marshes and adjacent areas.

The River Avon SAC comprises the river and river valley from Breamore south to Christchurch. It covers 450 hectares in total.

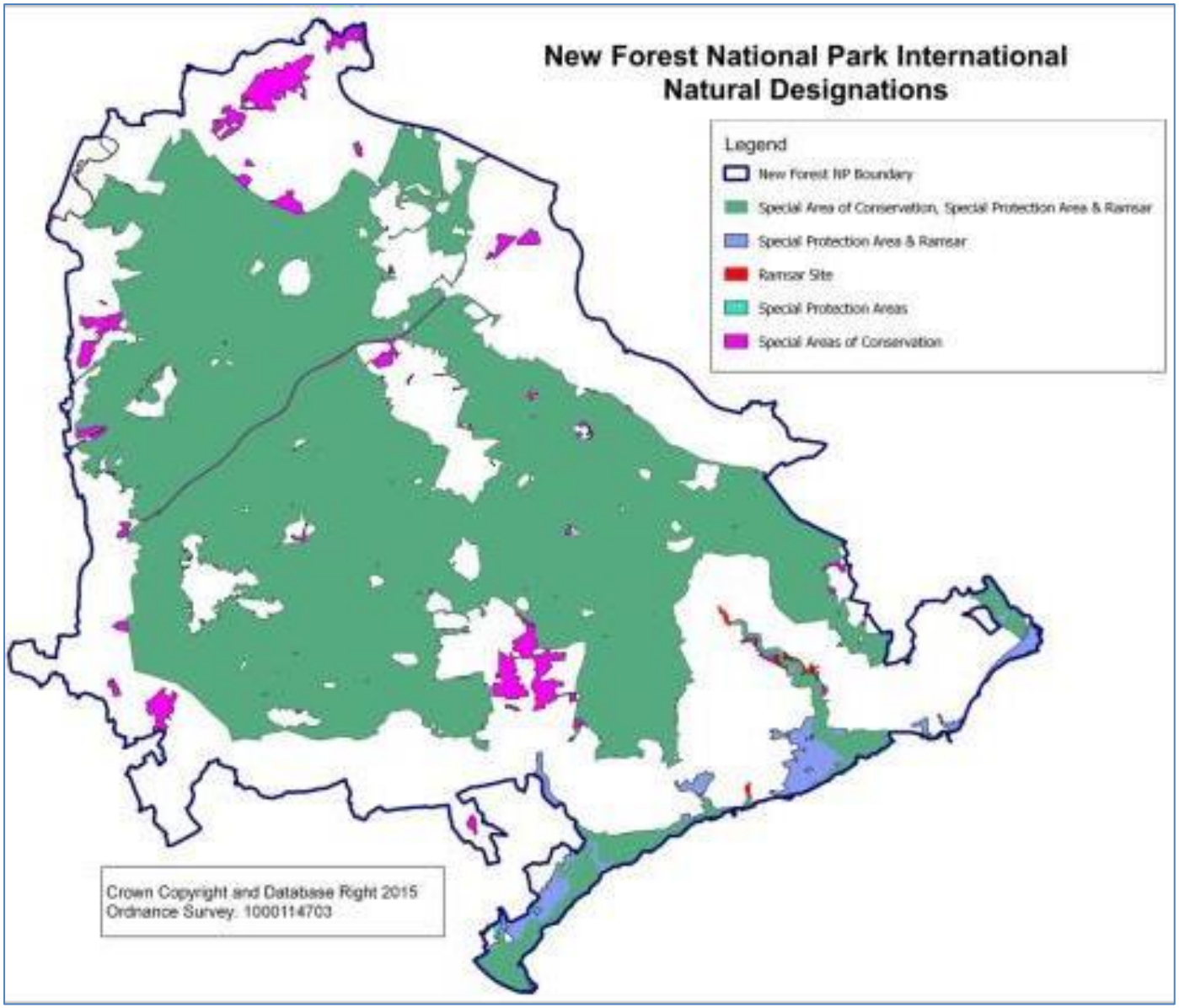


Figure 11: International Nature Designations

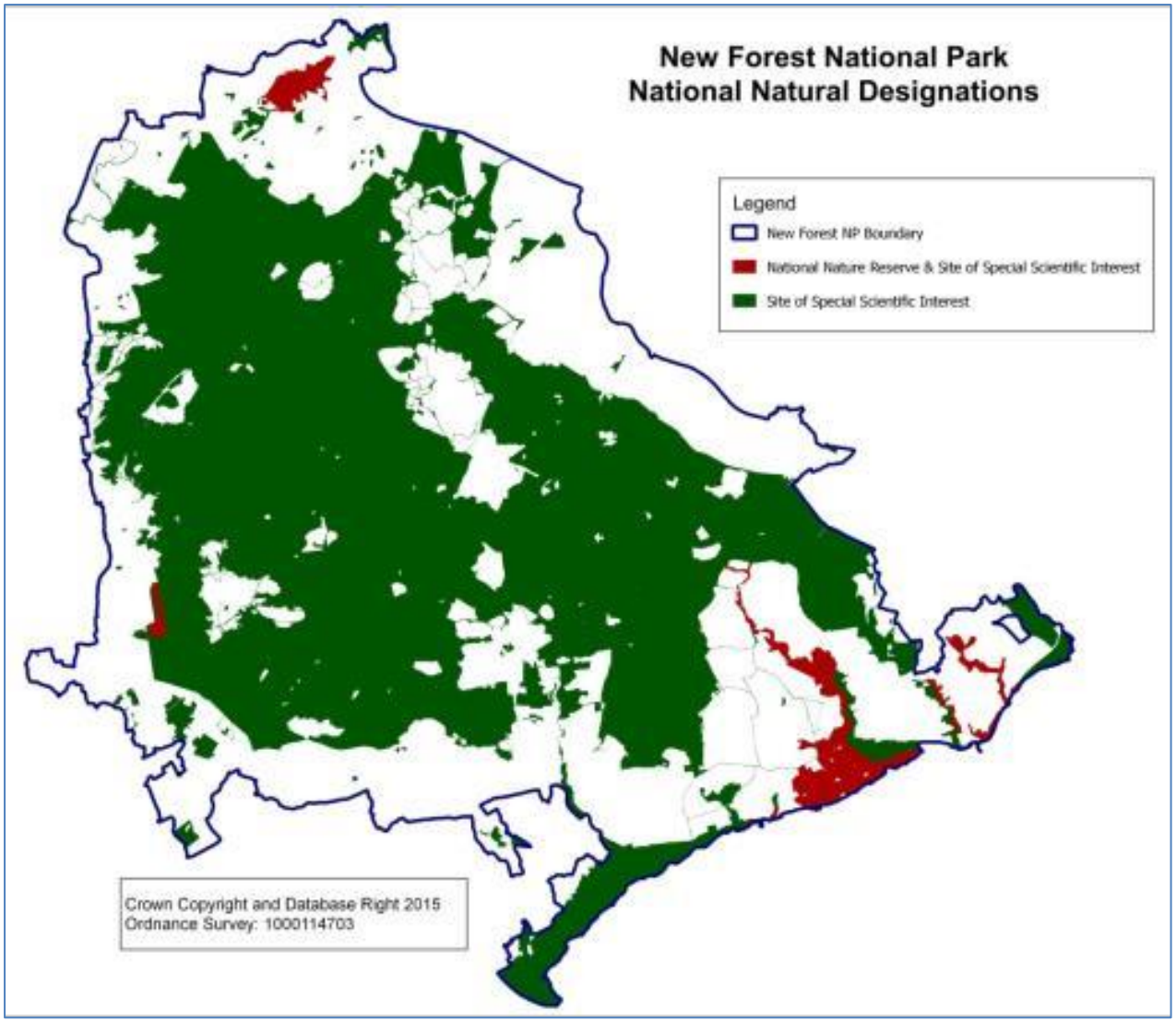


Figure 12: National Nature Designations

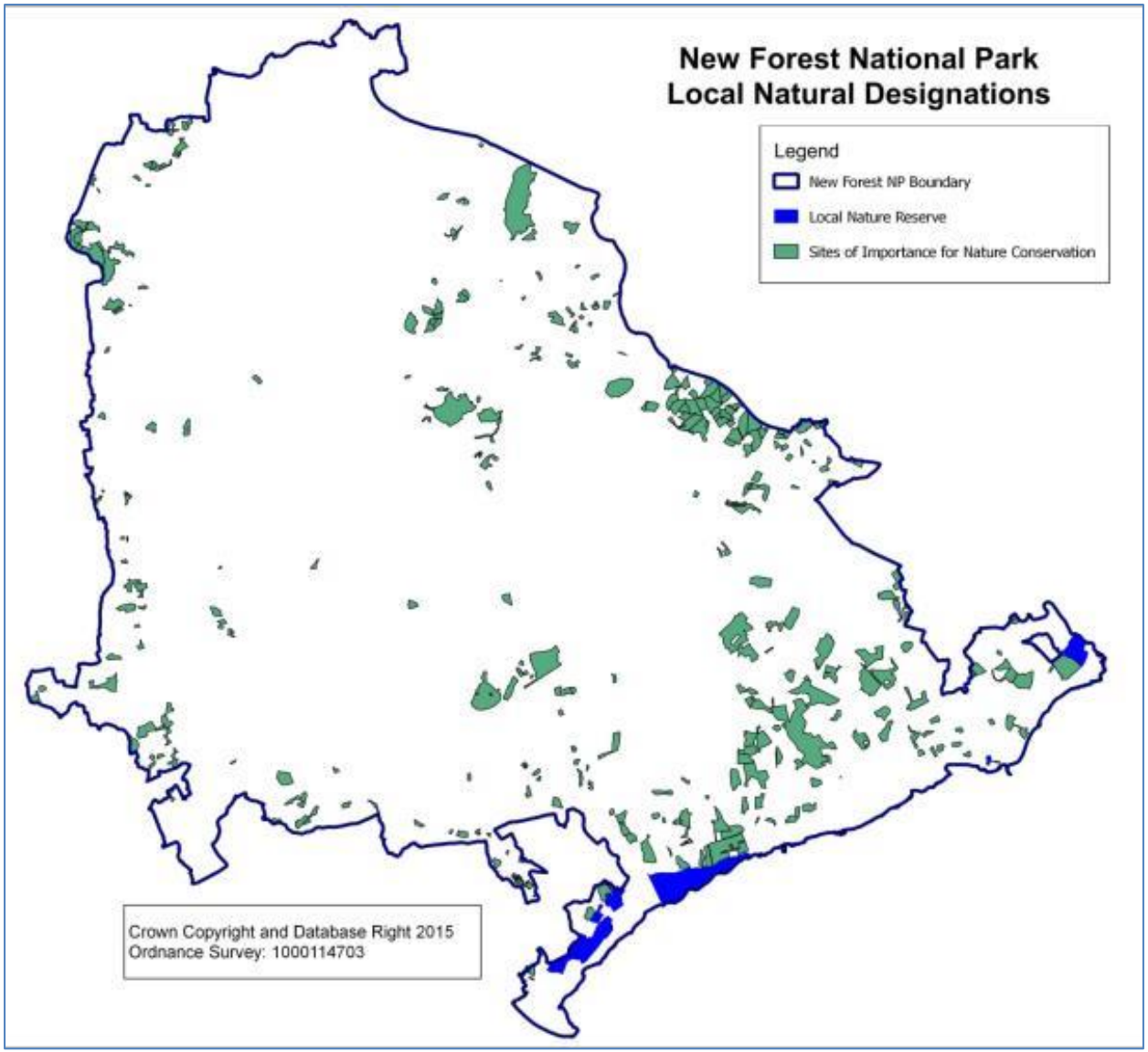


Figure 13: Local Nature Designations

2.2.4.3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

The main New Forest SSSI is also a SPA (**Figure 11**) because of a number of rare and vulnerable birds that are supported by its habitats. These include honey buzzard, nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.

In addition, the Avon Valley SSSI, on the western edge of the Park is a SPA along with the SSSIs along the coastline. These coastal areas contain important breeding colonies of birds such as the sandwich tern and little tern, along with wintering populations of waterfowl such as dark bellied Brent geese.

2.2.4.4 Ramsar sites

The main New Forest SSSI is a Ramsar site **(Figure 11**) largely because of the rare plant and invertebrate species associated with its wetlands. The Solent and Southampton Water is another important Ramsar site within the National Park. The Solent coastline includes a complex of low cliffs, shingle spits, saltmarsh and mudflats of national and international importance for nature conservation.

2.2.4.5 Local Sites

Some of the most important sites are already protected by international or national designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). However, a large number of other sites are also important for wildlife and over 50% of the UK's priority habitat identified (by government) under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan lies outside national nature conservation designations.

To help safeguard these sites in Hampshire, they are being identified and recorded as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and 3,800 sites have been designated covering 9% of the county, 379 of which are in the New Forest (**Figure 13**). In Wiltshire they are being identified and recorded as County Wildlife Sites and 40 areas or parcels of land have been designated which are in the New Forest. Many contain habitats or features that cannot be recreated and it is important to ensure that these sites are not lost and that they continue to be managed for their wildlife interest. This gives SINCs a vital role in helping to meet UK biodiversity targets by protecting a large part of this very important resource. Together with designated sites such as SSSIs, SINCs form a vital component of the biodiversity of Hampshire.

SINCs help to buffer and connect natural areas, providing ecological networks and increasing resilience of biodiversity to pressures of land use and climate change. They contribute to the quality of life and health and wellbeing of the community. They provide attractive countryside and important open space in urban areas. SINCs also provide excellent opportunities for recreation and education.

SINCs in Hampshire are identified by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and in Wiltshire by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre using data from a variety of sources. Sites are identified using detailed selection criteria and include an ongoing county-wide habitat survey programme carried out with landowner permission.

SINCs can vary in size from a small pond or woodland to an open expanse of grassland or heathland. Sites can also be linear such as road verges or streams. A site may qualify due to the presence of an important habitat or for supporting a rare

species. A site may also qualify if it supports a rich assemblage of species. They include privately owned areas and land owned by local authorities, parish councils, charities or organisations such as the Forestry Commission or Ministry of Defence. Nearly 20% of SINCs in Hampshire are owned by public bodies or non-governmental organisations.

HBIC produces a schedule of SINCs for each local authority in Hampshire. Landowners are notified when a SINC has been identified on their land and offered advice on how to retain its importance for wildlife.

All of the SINCs support nationally important habitats. The majority require management to retain their wildlife interest which could range from coppicing of woodland, to clearing of scrub on heathlands to grazing of chalk downland.

The selection of land as a SINC recognises a legacy of good management and relies on continued stewardship by the land owner or manager.

Table 4 - List of Designated Nature Conservation Sites

Designation	Site in National Park
Ramsar	New Forest, Solent and Southampton Water
SPA	New Forest, Solent and Southampton Water
SAC	New Forest, Solent Maritime, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons, River Avon
SSSI	New Forest, Poors Common, Burton Common, Sowley Pond, Langley Wood and Homans Copse, Loosehanger Copse and Meadows,Norley Copse & Meadows, River Avon System Landford Bog, Landford Heath, Whiteparish Common,, Avon Valley (Bickton-Christchurch), Fletchwood Meadows, Roydon Wood, Lymington River, Lymington River Reedbeds, North Solent, Hurst Castle and Lymington River Estuary, Hythe to Calshot Marshes, Dibden Bay
NNR	North Solent, Kings Great Common, Langley Wood
Local Nature Reserve	Boldre Foreshore, Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes, Calshot Marshes

2.2.5 Decline in Natural Heritage

Over 40% of priority habitats and 30% of priority species are declining in most recent UK analysis. The UK Government's recent Biodiversity 2020 strategy signs up 'to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

Our Past, Our Future aims to contribute to this objective by delivering the following outcomes highlighted as mechanisms in Biodiversity 2020 strategy:

- a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation

- putting people at the heart of biodiversity by involving and engaging local communities in volunteer projects and offering training opportunities
- reducing environmental pressures through working with landowners and other land managers to improve their management of habitats,
- improving our knowledge through survey and monitoring

The State of Hampshire's Biodiversity report, written in 2006, states that freshwater and wetland habitats are in poor condition and those grassland areas and many types of woodland are not managed to conserve their biodiversity. In addition it highlights that diffuse pollution via run-off poses serious challenges and that alien plant and animal species are well established in all of Hampshire's terrestrial habitats and some species are highly damaging to native species and communities. The report states that the main problems affecting various species in Hampshire are habitat fragmentation, habitat loss through development, poor water quality and diffuse pollution, intensive land use in farming and forestry and inappropriate land management.

Maximising and valuing the services provided by nature is central to the sustainable management of the New Forest and to the National Park Authorities aims of 'protect', 'enjoy' and 'prosper'. Many social and economic benefits accrue from a high quality environment such as food, water and wood provision, regulation of climate and floods, and an educational and aesthetic benefits we receive from the environment. Therefore the way this resource is managed is crucial to the conservation and economy of the New Forest.

The core of the Open Forest is Crown Land managed by the Forestry Commission in association with the Verderers of the New Forest who oversee the grazing under the rights of common. Because of its international status for biodiversity the overarching objectives for the area are set by the Special Area of Conservation Management Plan. Detailed action is set out in the Forestry Commission's Crown Lands Management Plan 2008-2026, which forms a component part of the SAC Management Plan.

Key objectives are the maintenance and achievement of favourable condition of the SSSI which underpins the international designations. This relies on sustainable grazing and a range of management practices including cutting and burning of vegetation to maintain the Open Forest and restoration of wetlands following early 20th century watercourse modification and drainage.

Management of the forestry inclosures (plantation areas) is set out in the Forestry Commission's Inclosure Forest Design Plans which include provision for restoration of former wood pasture, heathland and valley mire. Issues include the retention of deadwood, the balance of natural extension of woodland on Open Forest habitat and decline of woodland through lack of regeneration.

Considerable progress has been made in achieving favourable conservation status through the European Funded Life II Project (1997 – 2001) and Life III Project (2002 – 2006). The latter focused on watercourse and wetland restoration and produced the New Forest Wetland Management Plan 2006 – 2016 which guides current action to restore streams, mires, lawns and riverine woodland.

Currently maintenance and restoration of habitats continue under the £16m Higher Level Stewardship Scheme for the New Forest; 'The Verderers Grazing Scheme'. This scheme, under agreement between the Verderers, the Commoners, Forestry Commission, NPA and Natural England, operates from 2010 to 2020. The Verderers are responsible for delivery through a formal partnership with the Forestry Commission and New Forest National Park Authority. The prime objective of the scheme is to ensure that grazing by commoners is sustained to preserve the New Forests rich and complex habitat, and the scheme is considered a major step forward for encouraging young commoners. The scheme covers:

- Payments for grazing
- Wetland restoration
- Capital projects
- Survey and research
- Educational access
- Supportive projects e.g. Contribution to the Non-native Species Project

There are several other HLS agreements on Open Forest land apart from the HLS on the Crown Lands, held by the Verderers. For example the National Trust, Hampshire County Council, Wellow Parish Council and Waterslade Farm all own and manage land and have agreements. In addition many farmers, landowners, tenants and some Parish Councils have signed up to a number of HLS agreements and WGS/EWGS agreements on private land around the enclosed landscapes of the National Park.

Commoners play an essential role in maintaining the Forest's landscape and ecology, through the grazing of animals and other associated management.

The Forest fringe is intimately linked with the core of the New Forest as commoners livestock have access to some of the verges of roads and lanes and many enclosed pastures are used as back up grazing for stock. However access for stock is now limited, and small commons, verges and village greens once grazed, are no longer grazed and have lost their biodiversity interest. Many of these areas have become invaded by scrub or have been incorporated into urban mowing regimes. This not only restricts the land available to commoners, but has resulted in the loss of botanically rich grassland. This grassland is also being lost through the use of artificial fertilizer or herbicides and mowing.

Restoration of coppice woodland in the Forest fringe and the conversion of planted woodland back to semi-natural woodland is a conservation priority, both on Crown Land and private land. Biodiversity and the local economy would benefit from promoting and developing initiatives for wood products such as woodfuel.

Survey work in the New Forest on the loss of SINCs and the effect on individual species has been minimal to date but it is estimated that in 2011 only 48% of the 375 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the National Park were being managed in a way that will retain or improve their nature conservation interest. The condition of the remaining SINCs within the New Forest is either 'unfavourable' or unknown (HBIC).

Ponds occur throughout the Forest fringe, often on village greens, commons and road verges, but many are neglected and overgrown with scrub and woodland.
The biodiversity of rivers and streams crossing the Forest fringe have suffered from early 20th century river engineering including dredging, straightening and bank re-enforcement. Water quality can be poor in lower reaches particularly where elevated nutrient levels are exacerbated flow. Associated floodplain grazing marshes have declined in quality through agricultural improvement, abandonment and drainage and would benefit from restoring their management and hydrological regime.

Compared with the investment in the management of the Open Forest, the Forest fringe habitats have been neglected. The network of habitats is of considerable importance and would benefit from targeted action and action that integrates its management with the other landscapes of the New Forest.

Maintaining and improving the biodiversity of the Avon Valley within the SPA and SAC has proved a significant challenge. The extensive un-improved grassland is dependent upon hay cutting and grazing to maintain its floristic richness and to support exceptionally important breeding wader and wintering wildfowl populations. The Valley has suffered from changes in the agricultural economy including intensification of dairy farming and lack of grazing, resulting in loss of habitat and coarser vegetation. Populations of wintering wildfowl and breeding waders have substantially declined.

Issues for the river itself are water abstraction, past channel management causing degraded river habitat, bank management, encroachment by non-native species and increased water temperature due to climate change – which could affect salmon migration and spawning.

Significant areas of the New Forest coast that are within the National Park are being managed for nature conservation: Lymington and Keyhaven Marshes (Hampshire County Council / Hampshire Wildlife Trust), Lymington Reedbeds (HWT) and the Lepe foreshore and Calshot Spit and Marshes (HCC), other stretches of coastline are in private ownership.

Many organisations are involved in the management of the Forest, and they work in partnership to help to achieve the greatest benefit for conservation. Volunteers are also important in helping to achieve this aim.

The projects within the Scheme are all designed to make positive strides towards turning around many of these issues in the New Forest, particulary in areas surrounding the Open Forest. Specifically this will be delivered by tackling habitat fragmentation and intensive land use through creating and enhancing boundary features as habitat networks via Better Boundaries, habitat restoration works at Foxbury, working with landowners and managers on best practice in order to tackle inappropriate land management through New Forest Rural Skills, Working Woodlands and Nature's Stepping Stones, tackling issues around poor water quality and diffuse pollution through Living Waters and eradicating invasive alien plants through the Non-native Invasive Plants Project.

Visitor days to the New Forest already stand at 13.5 million visitor days per annum and this is set to increase by another 1.6 million per annum by 2026. This together

with population growth will create greater pressure on the habitats and species such as recreational pressure leading to erosion of heathland and lawns. Wildlife disturbance is also a key issue when it comes to recreational impacts. Disturbance can in extreme circumstances affect breeding success, winter survival and whether species are forced to migrate and become excluded from the areas they would otherwise occupy. These impacts are difficult to establish objectively because of the complexity of the ecological relationships of wild species and large numbers of factors that can influence population levels, but general principles can be applied and educational campaigns can make big steps in changing behaviours for instance, in ensuring that ground-nesting birds are not disturbed during critical times of the year. The projects within the Scheme will help address these issues, in particular by raising awareness and understanding through a variety of ways through the New Forest Connects project and Foxbury project.

2.3 Heritage and History

The cultural heritage of the New Forest has been formed through the richness, complexity and peculiarities of its natural and social history. Its development can be seen in archaeological sites, the domestic and agricultural buildings, historic houses and designed landscapes, settlement patterns and the character of the Forest landscape itself. Less tangible are the traditional craft skills, commoning, building techniques, dialect, artistic and literary achievements, and the people and events of the past which are remembered in fact and legend.

The National Park contains 214 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 621 listed buildings and 20 designated Conservation Areas. In addition there are at least another 200 ancient monuments that could meet the criteria for scheduling and many more that are gradually being identified through field survey.

Large amounts of the New Forest's heritage has been mapped remotely, surveyed, assessed and recorded through past and current projects funded through the HLS and other grants. This work has focused on the more accessible central Crown Lands or very specific geographical areas such as the coast, or periods such as WWII. The Landscape partnership provides a unique and powerful opportunity to update and expand the archaeological record of the New Forest's often overlooked or ignored periphery made of patchworks or private woodlands and farms along with the towns and communities. This will bring some parity to the public archaeological record of the Forest; providing the most up to date and accurate public database of Archaeology for the whole New Forest for the first time.

2.3.1 Mesolithic (c.8000 – 4000BC) to Neolithic (4,000 – 2,000BC)

During the early Mesolithic the New Forest was linked to the Isle of Wight by a dry wooded valley criss-crossed by rivers. Evidence from this period can still be found on the Solent seabed.

Man's impact on the more recognisable New Forest landscape today probably started in the late Mesolithic period (around 5,000BC). Worked flint has been found in the Avon Valley and on areas of the open Forest, indicating that humans hunted and gathered wild local resources. The hunter-gatherer way of life was gradually replaced by small scale farming and a less nomadic lifestyle in Neolithic times,

although there is currently a general lack of physical remains from this period in the New Forest.

2.3.2 Bronze Age (2000 - 700BC)

By the Bronze Age the New Forest landscape had become a complex mosaic of wooded and heathland areas - perhaps similar to much of the open landscape we see now in the New Forest.

The Bronze Age was a period of major environmental change. A rise in the local population, along with more extensive herding of domestic livestock, led to a massive expansion of arable agricultural practices on the better soils. Significant numbers of Bronze Age barrows visibly survive on the open heathland, where the soils were too thin and badly drained. The New Forest contains a range of enigmatic Bronze Age sites; groups of small mounds that have yet to reveal their purpose and hundreds of burnt mound sites associated with activities that required heated water. Along the coastal margins and within the river valleys, where the soil was more fertile, evidence has emerged of field systems and settlement activity.

From at least the late Bronze Age onwards, the coastal areas were important for the sea-salt industry that flourished until the middle of the 19th century, resulting in the salterns and some of the coastal marsh landscape visible today.

2.3.3 Iron Age (700BC – 43AD)

The New Forest Iron Age was a time for defensive settlements such as the hill forts at Buckland Rings and a possible Iron Age trading site at Ampress Park near Lymington, Castle Hill at Burley Street, Frankenbury, overlooking the Avon Valley and Tatchbury Mount looking towards Southampton Water. Large areas of woodland was cleared, where the soil was more fertile, and extensively cultivated, much of which has now reverted to heathland.

2.3.4 Roman (43 – 410AD)

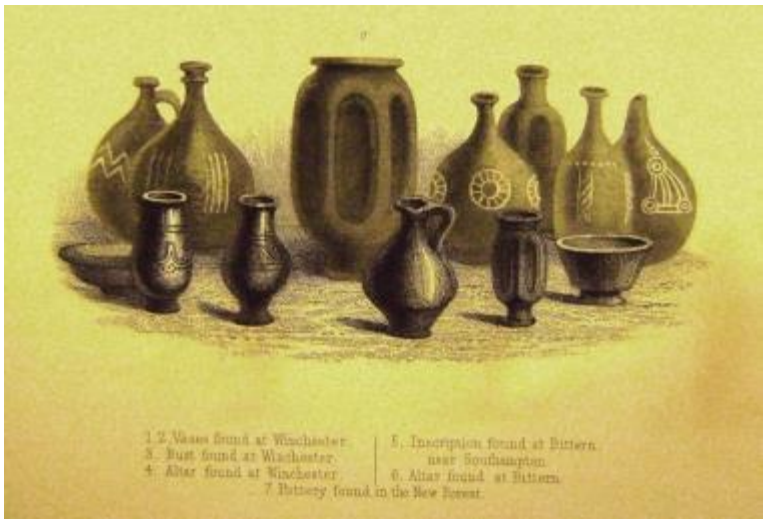


Figure 14: Roman New Forest Ware

The Romans started a thriving pottery industry in the New Forest using the plentiful natural resources of clay, wood fuel and water. Many sites have been found across the Forest area with a distinctive circular earth kiln and extensive pottery fragments

nearby. The pottery was traded widely – all the Roman sites in the south of Britain have evidence of New Forest pottery (**Figure 14**).

These kiln sites were linked by a network of roads, some of which can still be mapped across the New Forest and evidence suggests an emerging coastal pottery industry and an extensive Roman settlement at Lepe.

There are no Roman villa sites within the New Forest National Park, the nearest being at Rockbourne, near Fordingbridge.

2.3.5 Early Medieval (410-1066AD)

It is traditionally thought that Lepe provided the landing point for the Saxons. The existing pattern of parishes and the older Forest villages dates from Anglo-Saxon times. The area became known as Ytene '*of the Jutes*', who were one of the early Anglo-Saxon tribal groups who colonised the area.

Evidence is now emerging of other middle and later Anglo-Saxon settlement activity within the New Forest, often on prehistoric sites and now beneath poorly drained heathland. Many modern place names; Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Lymington are of Saxon origin, and the sites of the Forest's oldest churches date from these times.

2.3.6 Medieval (1066 – 1500AD) and Post-Medieval (1500 – 1800AD) periods

It was during this period that the area became known as the New Forest; in Norman times the word 'forest' did not mean a wooded area, as we understand it today. Instead it meant a separate legal system with its own courts and officers to protect the venison (beasts of the chase) and vert (the green undergrowth they fed on). The 150 square miles of nova foresta was one of 21 areas in England to be placed under forest law by William the Conqueror in 1079 and first recorded in the Doomsday Book in 1086; it is the only forest that the book describes in detail.

Forest law was deeply disliked by the local population. Peasants could no longer hunt for these protected animals for the cooking pot or take wood to build their homes and light their fires. They were not allowed to enclose their land or fence their crops, as such activities restricted hunting. The penalties for contravening Forest law were severe. The Forest Law could not protect the full extent of the royal forest's boundary and, over the ensuing centuries, political allegiance was secured through the grant of numerous tracts of land both around and within the present perambulation of the New Forest to the nobility and religious orders, in exchange for services rendered, giving rise to the large estates which still exist in the locality.

Local people were eventually compensated with the common right to graze their livestock and domestic animals on the forest - activities that they had been carrying out before the creation of *nova foresta*. The rights were restored in the 1217 Charter of the Forest (*carta de foresta*), which repealed the death penalty for stealing venison and abolished mutilation as a lesser punishment. Special Verderers' courts were set up to enforce the laws of the Charter. The common rights were confirmed by statute in 1698 and then the New Forest Act 1877, which confirmed the historic rights of the Commoners and prohibited the enclosure of more than 65 km^2 at any time. It also reconstituted the Court of Verderers as representatives of the Commoners rather than the Crown.

In 1204 King John granted to the house of St. Mary of Citeaux, as the head of the Cistercian order permission to found the monastery of St. Mary of Beaulieu in the New Forest with provision for thirty monks. With the John's and Henry III's patronage, Beaulieu monastery thrived and expanded, though it was far from the richest English Cistercian house. The abbey was surrounded by workshops, farm buildings, guesthouses, a mill, and extensive gardens and fishponds. Strongly fortified gatehouses controlled entry to the monastic enclosure, which was defended by a wall. A water gate allowed access to ships in the river. This extensive estate has a large impact on the south coast and large swathes of the New Forest, echoes of which can still be seen today.

There is extensive evidence of woodland activities, extraction and industry from medieval and post-medieval times includes charcoal, saltpetre and gunpowder production. The patterns of the larger estates were established at this time and are associated with better soil types, many of the inclosures were also established on the better soil types. Earthwork remains of some of the royal hunting lodges built in the depths of the Forest in the 13th – 15th centuries can still be seen today.

The events of the 16th century Tudor period had a lasting impact on the New Forest landscape and heritage. The extensive Beaulieu Cistercian Abbey, was dissolved in 1538; with the land granted to Thomas Wriothesley, 1st Earl of Southampton. The abbey, church and cloistral buildings were nearly completely demolished. Much of its stonework and its lead roof were removed to build the New Forest coastal fortifications of Calshot at the entrance to Southampton Water and Hurst Castle that stand today.

2.3.6.1 Salt Industry

Salt has always been an important commodity, and not just for culinary purposes - it was also used as part of the tanning process, and before the invention of fridges and freezers, as a preservative. Since at least the Iron Age, salt was extracted from sea-water by evaporation at places along the New Forest coast. Salt would then be carried inland across the New Forest to settlements using donkeys or packhorses along well-worn routes.

During the 1700's Lymington and the New Forest coast became the centre of salt production on the south coast following an industrial approach to producing salt, making use of the flat coastline and double tides. A continuous line of salt works occupied the 5 miles of coastline from Lymington to Hurst Spit as well as large areas of the Beaulieu River bank and Southampton Water shore. By the late 18th century, there were 149 salt pans functioning along the Solent. These mainly consisted of large areas of evaporation ponds, wind pumps to move the concentrated saline solution to coal fired boiling houses containing metal pans to complete the process of making the salt crystals.

Figure 15: Lymington Salterns, with salt pans and wind pumps. Credit New Forest Centre

The sea salt manufacture in the New Forest was seasonal, depending on good weather, but on average the season was sixteen weeks. Each salt pan in a boiling house would produce about 3 tons a week and Lymington supplied most of Southern England with salt and also exported large quantities to the Newfoundland fisheries and other areas.

Salt became an easy target for heavy taxation; in 1755, £57,891 worth of tax was collected, showing how large and important the industry was to the area. However by the end of the 18th century the rising taxes, coupled with a few bad seasons and the arrival of better transport making the cheaper mined salt from Cheshire easier to supply saw the rapid decline of the Solent salt pans. The last salt house closed in 1865 and within a few years the boiling houses were removed and the salt-ponds filled up and levelled off for grazing. Two buildings survive from this industry in Lymington and the landscape designed to flood has become famous as a wading bird nature reserve.

2.3.7 Modern Period (1800AD – present)

Within the forested areas of the New Forest, woodland management measures such as inclosures, banks and ditches become commonplace, with the landscape being parceled off and then opened up. During the latter part of the nineteenth century better access to the New Forest, resulting from the development of the railway and extension of the road network meant that new residents started to move into the area. This '"new gentry" began buying up many of the old lodges and "service cottages" put on the estate market as "superior gentlemen's residence in beautiful and romantic surroundings." In addition, the improvement of the road network allowed the opening up of the area to further residential development.

Over the remaining years of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, the New Forest's importance to the Crown as a source of revenue from timber was replaced by its potential as an area of recreational and natural history importance. The recreational potential of the area for residents and visitors alike started to increase property values, prompting landowners, including some of those commoners who owned their holdings, to take advantage of the potential of the growing market.

The 20th century archaeological record in the New Forest is dominated by military and industrial relics. The two World Wars left lasting reminders such as airfields, Mulberry harbour construction sites and various army camps. These periods have been researched in more detail through recent HLF funded New Forest Remembers projects www.newforestheritage.org. The work is ongoing, but results to date (**Figure 16**) expanded the understanding of and made public the huge impact that the war periods had on the New Forest both in terms of environment, industry and culture. A similar research project is now focusing on the World War One period.

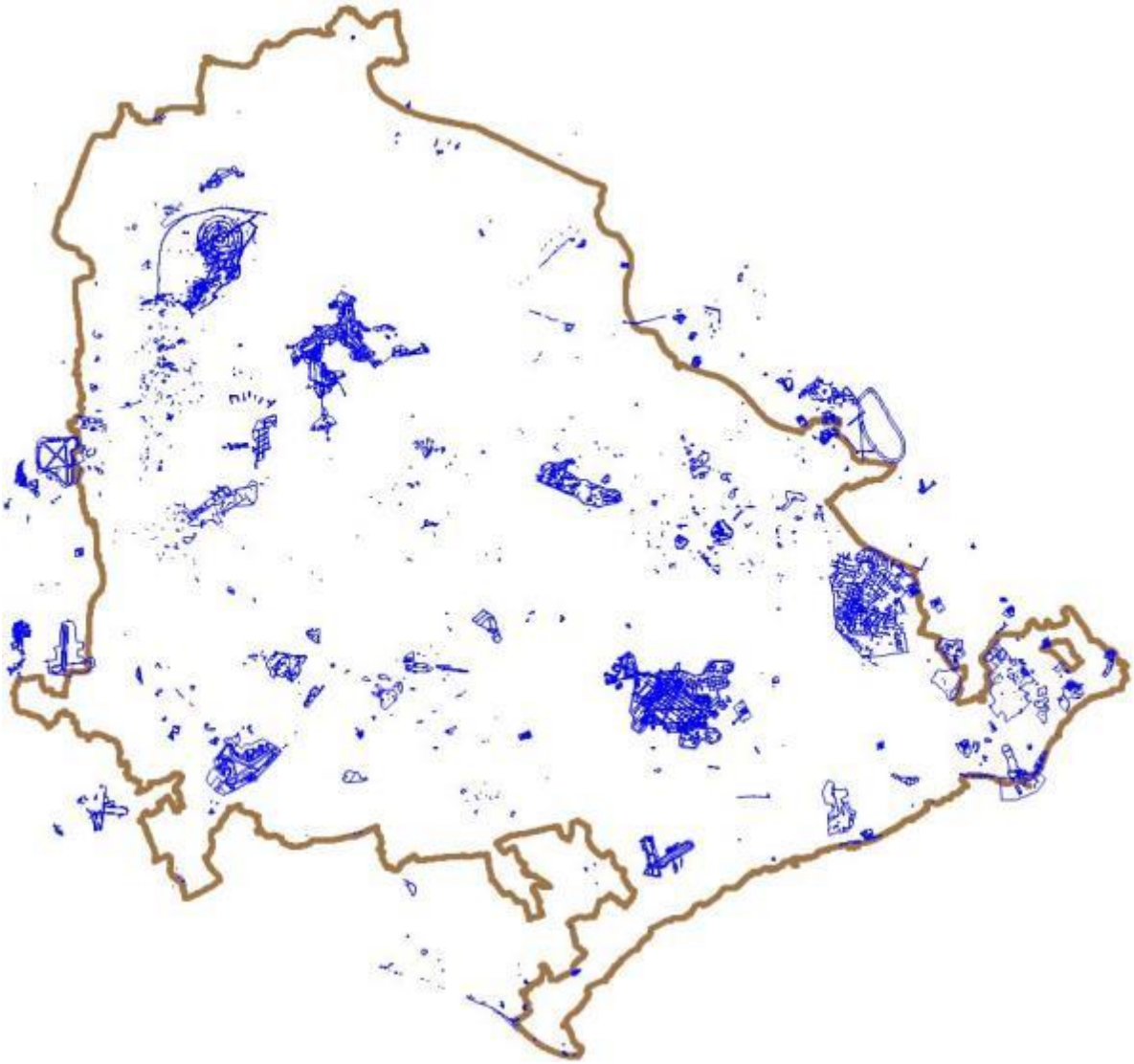


Figure 16: Map showing the wide distribution and density of WWII sites across the New Forest. NFNPA

Post war the threat of war and the impact of previous wars still continued to impact on the New Forest landscape, with the establishment of numerous underground monitoring stations across the New Forest by the Royal Observer Corps one of which is still extant at Lepe Country Park and will be restored through a recent HLF grant. A further big engineering project occurred near Bransgore when Royal Air Force Sopley, became the home of Southern Radar and the Joint Air Traffic Control School. The radar station was housed in a deep underground bunker under a field adjacent to the war time radar station, whilst quarters were built in Bransgore for its married personnel and a large domestic site was constructed between Bransgore and Sopley next to the site of Merryfield farm.

In the years following the war the area became even more accessible as a result of the increasing use of the car, the expansion of Southampton and the urbanisation of Waterside, the decline of working commoners was matched by increasing numbers of ‘amenity’ commoners attracted to the area; those turning out a ‘few ponies for pleasure rather than gain’. This resulted in a growing number of ponies being depastured on the Forest ‘at the expense of the number of cattle. This period has also seen huge changes wrought by the influx of wealthy people seeking a rural

retreat as the Forest is seen as an important area for recreational and natural history.

Despite the extensive and continued social and economic pressures on the unproductive commoning agricultural system from the medieval period to the present day, it has not disappeared completely. The New Forest is now grazed by commoners as part of funded conservation management, which is explored more in **Section 2.8.1**.

2.3.8 Industry

The New Forest has been the home to a number of industries, all of which used the area's natural resources and location to manufacture for local use, as well as for export within the UK, and even across the world. The production of charcoal was closely linked to the practice of coppicing woodland that was widespread in the New Forest until the 15th century but during the 16th and 17th centuries the market for charcoal was lost to coal. Nevertheless, by the 19th century, burning still continued, with picturesque descriptions of the charcoal burners and their huts. During World War II small circular metal kilns are recorded as being designed and made to improve the charcoal making process.

From the Stuart period onwards the demand for timber for ship building increased and parts of the New Forest were inclosed specifically for timber production and with a specific ship building yard at Bucklers Hard. The end of the Napoleonic War and the advent of iron ships in the mid 1850's saw the demise of shipbuilding at Buckler's Hard and the demand on local timber for the industry (see box for further information) .

There is a long history of brick and tile making across the New Forest, in the areas around Fordingbridge due to the London Clay deposits. The distinctive yellow bricks that characterise Exbury and Beaulieu are known as Beaulieu Buffs and were produced in local kilns such as at Baileys Hard. Red bricks were widely produced in other estate brick kilns and a thriving industry was created in Boldre to supply the adjacent town of Lymington in the late 18th century. Brickmaking remained an important export from the area until nearly all of the open gorse fired kilns were closed in line with blackout regulations that came with the outbreak of WWII.

From 1860 until 1920 Fritham was home to the Schultze gunpowder factory, which specialised in smokeless powder for sporting guns. Established in 1865, it was at one time the largest nitro-compound gunpowder factory in the world, with sixty separate buildings and a staff of a hundred. It supplied three-quarters of the world's annual consumption of gunpowder for sporting purposes and often sent 100-ton consignments to the Americas loading road vans and special railway trucks for the docks at Southampton.

There was also an extensive Ironworks at Sowley.

2.3.8.1 Ship Building

In light of demand for ships timbers requiring straight trees an Act of Parliament was passed in 1698 making it illegal to pollard trees in the Forest together with the inclosure of 2000 acres for oak cultivation.

Regular Navy surveys were undertaken in the New Forest with the numbers of trees fit for shipbuilding being recorded. Naval surveyors would identify suitable trees with the 'Ordnance Mark' **Figure 17** (also called a 'broad arrow' or 'Kings Mark'). This mark signified that the trees were property of the Crown and that it was unlawful for anyone to fell or damage them. Some trees can still be found in the Forest today bearing the 'Ordnance Mark'

Figure 17: New Forest Beech tree showing 'Ordnance Mark'

Shipbuilding was a huge consumer of timber; it could take up to 2,000 trees to build a third rate 74 gun warship and up to 6000, (10% of which were oaks) for a first rate 104 gun ship such as Nelson's HMS Victory. Most of the demand for suitable hardwood timber fell on the Royal Forests; New Forest, Alice Holt and the Forest of Dean, although it has been claimed that these only contributed around 10% of the overall requirement with the remainder sourced from private estates and imports.

In 1740 the New Forest became a focus of ship building with the establishment of a construction site at Buckler's Hard on the Beaulieu River by master shipbuilder Henry Adams (1713 – 1805). Buckler's Hard a failed Freeport venture by the 2nd Duke of Montagu became a hive of activity with senior staff in the cottages at Buckler's Hard and other staff employed from the surrounding villages. Over the ensuing years over 50 ships were built for the Royal Navy at Beaulieu by Henry and then his sons, three of which fought at the Battle of Trafalgar; *Agamenom*, *Euryalus* and *Swiftsure*.

Figure 18: Model of the Buckler's Hard Shipbuilding site in its heyday. Credit: Beaulieu Estate

During construction of large ships a lot of surplus timber would have been used for construction of numerous smaller river craft that would have been sold locally.

2.4 Cultural Heritage

2.4.1 Vernacular Architecture

The 621 nationally listed structures within the National Park vary widely, ranging from grand houses such as the 18th century Hale Park, the 14th century monastic barn at St Leonards and the 13th century Palace House at Beaulieu down to commoners' cottages and hovels along with features such as bridges and even 20th century telephone boxes. These unique recognisable features help make up the cultural fabric of the National Park.

- 13 Grade 1 listed Buildings
- 33 Grade II* listed Buildings
- 575 Grade II listed buildings
- There are 1787 local interest buildings within the 20 conservation areas that cover the park which are locally significant and give the New Forest its distinctive character particularly in their relationship to the landscape. There are just as many buildings of similar quality outside the conservation areas.

Older settlements on the enclosed lands and in and around the open Forest are generally linear and dispersed, with clusters of roadside dwellings located along a series of minor roads, and often with no obvious centre. Larger villages such as Burley, Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst have a denser pattern of settlement originating in late medieval times, generally still based on a linear pattern but now with local shops, businesses and Victorian buildings.

The historic buildings of the National Park vary widely in styles. Many dwellings reflect the materials that were available to people at the time. The absence of building stone, chalk and flint stone limited the amount of development, and the earliest buildings were constructed from the plentiful local materials such as timber, earth and gravel. The materials and design of buildings did not change until the onset of tile and brick industries in the late 15th century. This reflects the general poverty of the area, with a dispersed population gaining a living from subsistence small-holdings. The oldest surviving cottages date from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and are timber framed with thatched roofs. Cob survives from the 18th century. The later Victorian cottages, found in many villages, are typically simple semi-detached red brick buildings with slate roofs and were the result of the movement of slate into the New Forest using the new rail network. Agricultural buildings were occasionally built of cob, but generally were timber framed and timber clad, often with cladding to be replaced later with corrugated iron.

In contrast the private wealthy estates were often centred on large manor houses. The estates include a number of substantial farm houses often with notable weather boarded barns, together with timber frames or brick cottages built in a distinctive style according to each estate. With the exception of Beaulieu Palace House, the large Medieval houses have not survived, however some were replaced by later 18th and 19th century buildings, as for example at Exbury and Pylewell.

Associated with the more wealthy estates there are a number of historic parks and gardens which lie within the Forest, some nationally recognised and others notable

locally. There are 7 registered parks and gardens within the Our Past, Our Future area and a further 78 sites on the Hampshire register of gardens of historic interest.

2.4.2 Hovels and Squatters

The social history of the New Forest and its reliance on commoning results in a general perceived poverty of the local population. Although some fine houses still exist, many of the domestic buildings that have survived are humble hovels – small cob cottages with thatched roofs.

Cob was made from earth or clay and gravel puddled together on the ground with water, to which binding materials such as straw or dung were added. The walls were built in stages as each 'lift' had to be allowed to dry before more cob could be added. Foundations were shallow (many hovels had none) and made of rubble. Roof structures were basic timber and pole rafters gathered from the Forest. Windows were small and few.

Cob buildings were a community effort and were not expected to last indefinitely as the materials could be broken down and reused in a new building.

Several Forest villages were first settled by squatters, for example East Boldre, Woodgreen, Blissford and Bull Hill at Pilley. Some of their cabins or shacks still survive: built of makeshift materials such as timber or corrugated iron, they have a unique charm.

2.4.3 Fashionable Development in the 1800s

Country houses designed by major architects such as Sir John Soane and John Nash were built near Lyndhurst in the 1700s, preceding fashionable developments in other Forest villages from the 1850s onwards.

Wealthy gentlemen bought land and built country residences sited within grounds landscaped to look like parkland. Villages such as Burley, Minstead and Boldre were popular because they were further away from the new railway lines and were therefore considered more exclusive.

Well-known architects also gained commissions to design local churches for growing populations: good examples can be seen at Emery Down (designed by Butterfield), Brockenhurst (Romaine-Walker) and Lyndhurst (William White).

2.4.3.1 Churches

Figure 19: St Nicholas Church, Brockenhurst Copyright © Christian Wolf collection

Many of the New Forest churches have fascinating historical, artistic and literary associations. Well-known and very influential national architects gained commissions to design local churches for growing populations, such as Butterfield at Emery Down, Romaine-Walker at Brockenhurst, and the exuberant and colourful parish church in Lyndhurst by William White (1860s).

There are seven medieval churches in the New Forest which often started as chapels attached to the local manor. St Nicholas' Church in Brockenhurst **Figure 19** is considered to be the oldest church as Brockenhurst is the only New Forest village for which a church was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 AD. Many have been replaced with later churches and many new ones were built to serve the increased population and different denominations, particularly in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

The churches at Copythorne, Netley Marsh, Marchwood and Colbury were all built in the 19th century to serve the historic and vast parish of Eling. The medieval church at Eling was far too small to serve the increasing population and the area was subdivided into a series of smaller parishes with their own churches in a range of distinctively different gothic styles. Eling church was saved from total demolition and rebuilding that was initially proposed. Instead the south aisle of Eling church was enlarged and rebuilt as part of a major relatively sympathetic restoration.

The south east of the New Forest is home to several historic churches. This includes St Katharine's at Exbury, St Paul's at East Boldre, All Saints at Fawley and Church of the blessed Virgin and Child at Beaulieu.

2.4.4 Commoning Heritage

The commoning system and way of life has remained a central part of the social fabric of the Forest and played a major part in creating the present cultural landscape as well as the natural landscape. The close knit community has existed for well over a thousand years and continues to define life in the New Forest.

The National Park Authority's current Management Plan describes 'An historic commoning system that maintains so much of what people know and love as "the New Forest" forming the heart of a working landscape based on farming and forestry.'

Visitors and residents of the New Forest see the ponies, the cattle, donkeys and pigs; but the commoning community itself is largely invisible. Those with a closer interest may be aware of the drifts, the pony sales and the point-to-point, but very few really understand how commoning operates and, significantly, how it survives in today's social and economic environment.

It is now generally acknowledged that commoning is essential to the continuation of the New Forest as an area widely acclaimed as an invaluable environmental and recreational resource.

2.4.5 New Forest Gypsies

Nothing is known for certain about the early origins of the Gypsies of the New Forest. However, it is recorded that, by the nineteenth century there were large numbers living in the Forest, or nearby. An article written for the Hampshire Field Club in 1893 noted that they had regular camping grounds across the Forest **Figure 20**:

However, by the turn of the twentieth century, as the New Forest become increasingly accessible and attractive as a place to live, the sale of many properties to outsiders who had no knowledge of the way of life, meant that the Gypsies were increasingly viewed as a nuisance and a threat to settled people's land and property. As a result of the growing tide of concern about the problems that Gypsies were said to be causing, and in response to a police authority request, in 1926 the Forestry Commission set about confining the New Forest Gypsies into seven areas. Permits to live in the compounds were issued to each family, and the licenses which they had to sign strictly controlled what they could do and where they could go on the Forest.

Figure 20: A Gypsy family camped in the New Forest, Hampshire in the 1890s

The Second World War brought even tighter restrictions on the Gypsies' way of life. Wartime developments and manoeuvres were widespread in the Forest and all those who had not been settled into the compounds were gathered up, while all those living in the Forest came under tighter controls on their activities.

Starting in the early 1950's, policies were introduced to move Gypsies out of the compounds and into settled housing. Some moved away from the area, while others were able to buy or rent their own accommodation, and those who had no means to provide housing for themselves were rehoused by the local authority. With pressure increasing on them to leave the compounds and live a settled life, by the late 1960's all of the New Forest's compounds had been closed.

2.4.6 Customs and Traditions

Customs and traditions form an essential part of the distinctiveness of the cultural heritage of the New Forest.

There is folklore and legend**,** from the death of King Rufus to tales of smugglers who planned their operations at pubs like the Royal Oak at Fritham, and stories about poaching and the Beaulieu and Burley witches.

There is a strong artistic and literary tradition associated with the Forest, for example Heyward Sumner the artist and archaeologist who produced a series of carefully observed Forest landscapes. The forest still continues to inspire art, culture and crafts people today.

The place names of the Forest reveal a living picture of its history. Almost every wood, heath, field and pond has its own name which is remembered recorded and used. A 2007 Living Register of Language and Traditions was a first step made

jointly by a number of organisations to develop a record of what UNESCO describes as the 'intangible cultural heritage' of the New Forest. The work encompassed the collation of New Forest words, expressions and place names, the recording of some 20 life histories, and the writing of a report on local traditions.

Local skills and crafts survive such as thatching, sculpture, pottery and painting.

A 'Report on New Forest Traditions'[1] includes information on numerous local traditions, many of which are no longer practised, and on local industries including ship building, salt manufacture, rope and brick making and charcoal burning. It also has information about culture and religion, recreation and tourism and history and myth.

Woodgreen Village Hall Murals

Figure 21: Detail of one of the Woodgreen Village Hall Murals

When Woodgreen village hall was built in 1930-1, two students from the Royal College of Art (Robert Baker and Edward Payne) were commissioned by the Carnegie Trust to decorate the walls entirely with murals, depicting village life as it was then. The mural shows poachers looking down from Castle Hill; the Sunday School in the Methodist Church; folk dancing; fruit picking **Figure 21**; the Horse and Groom; the village flower show; making cider; and the caretaker lighting the stove.

2.4.6.1 Smuggling and Poaching

Despite its importance to the area for up to five centuries, there are only stories and scraps of information about smuggling in the New Forest. It was an industry in which almost every inhabitant had some kind of financial interest, and became profitable after the 1671 Customs Act placed duties on certain imported good, particularly wines and spirits.

[1] Available online: http://www.newforestcentre.org.uk/uploads/publications/65.pdf

Poaching has been as much a part of the Forest's economy as smuggling since at least the times of the Norman Conquest. In the mid-19th century John R Wise (the New Forest: Its History and its Scenery, 1895) noted that 'as recently as thirty or forty years ago, every labourer was either a poacher or a smuggler, very often a combination of the two.' The hard life endured by the small holders living in the Forest, coupled with an abundance of the king's deer made poaching an obvious choice for those who sought additional income. Even the introduction of the Deer Removal Act of 1951 and its resulting decimation of the Forest's deer population failed to bring all poaching to an end.

Smuggling was an important part of the economy of Lymington, and was widely – if discretely - supported by the local community. One woman who lived in a cottage at Buckland, wrote in a letter dated 1823, that she was so used to the nightly disturbance caused by poachers and smugglers that she did not hear anything unusual when her own house was broken into. The trade resulted in the accumulation of considerable wealth and the building of several large houses in the town. The reduction of import duties and better policing of the coasts led to the end of large scale smuggling in the mid nineteenth century, although, with the large numbers of small craft that sail between the New Forest coast and the continent, there is doubtless scope for it to continue on a small scale to the present day.

2.4.6.2 Burley Dragons and witches

Burley is notable in English folklore for being the supposed location of a dragon's lair at Burley Beacon, just outside the village. There are several local versions of the tale. The documentary version of this tradition is contained in the margin of a pedigree roll written prior to 1618, and preserved at Berkeley Castle. It actually names the dragon-slayer as Sir Maurice Berkeley, lord of the manor of Bisterne in the 15th century. The document describes the dragon as "doing much mischief upon men and cattle ... making his den near unto a Beacon." Sir Maurice Berkeley killed the dragon but died himself soon afterwards.

It is possible the dragon had some foundation in fact, and that it was a wild beast (such as a wild boar) living in and around the New Forest. The dragon is mentioned several times in the novel *The Forest* by Edward Rutherfurd.

Figure 22: Sybil Leek in the New Forest

The village of Burley today linked to a tradition of witches and witchcraft, but this dates from much more recent history and relates to the arrival in the village of Sybil Leek **Figure 22**, who came from a family with a tradition of involvement in the occult and became known as a white witch.

In the late 1950's she moved to Burley where she had an antique shop. Her open attitude about being a witch caused problems. Growing media interest led to the press and tourists visiting Burley to see her and follow her to the secret coven meeting places. Although the interest in her activities led to increased tourism in Burley, some people were not happy about the scale of

interference in village life, while others were also uncomfortable having a white witch in their midst. The lease on the property she rented in the village was not renewed and she moved out, finally moving to the USA, where she was widely welcomed, and remained until she died in 1982.

2.4.6.3 Forest Folk

Various individuals and characters have also added to the cultural fabric of the New Forest through their research, passions and artistic talents that have helped promote and reveal the Forest and its charms to a wider audience. Some of these individuals were famous in their fields and are known around the world whilst others are known more local folk heroes. The following very selective list gives a brief illustration of the variety of individuals, passions and the way the New Forest was became their muse. Many of these individuals will be explored in more detail through several of the projects within the Landscape Partnership scheme and work with the local communities.

Brusher Mills (1840 - 1905) became a New Forest folk hero for his unusual occupation as a snake catcher living on the Forest in a hovel. Brusher's grave in St Nicholas' Church, Brockenhurst, where villagers paid for a marble headstone to mark his final resting place.

The grave of *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 – 1930)*, creator of the world's most famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, is under a large tree in Minstead churchyard. Later in life Conan Doyle discovered the New Forest and brought a country home at Bignell Wood, near Minstead, as a birthday present for his second wife Jean, and the couple used it as a rural retreat from their main home at Crowborough in East Sussex.

Alice Pleasance Liddell (1852 – 1934) was the little girl who inspired Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. Under her married name of Alice Hargreaves, she came to live in Lyndhurst. Alice was four years old when the author, whose real name was Charles Dodgson, became a close family friend. His fantastic stories were made up to entertain young Alice and her sisters on a boat outing and formed the basis his books, which went on to become the most popular children's books in England. Alice's connection with the New Forest began in 1880 after she married wealthy Reginald Hargreaves, who had inherited the Cuffnells country estate near Lyndhurst. Alice became a society heiress and was the first president of Emery Down Women's Institute. Her ashes were interred in the family grave at St Michael and All Angels, Lymington.

George Heywood Maunoir Sumner (1853 – 1940), known as Heywood Sumner, was a renowned painter, illustrator and craftsman and an important figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. After bringing his family to Cuckoo Hill, near South Gorley, he spent the rest of his life researching and recording the archaeology, geology and folklore of the New Forest. His Book of Gorley, a journal of his new rural way of life included anecdotes and illustrations of local characters and the history of the New Forest and its nearby commons. His Guide to the New Forest, published in 1923, is considered to be one of the best guides written about the woods of the New Forest.

The *Reverend William Gilpin (1724 – 1804)*, devoted his life to improving the conditions of his parishioners after becoming Vicar of Boldre. By the time he acquired the vicarage in 1777, he had achieved great success in several different

spheres: as a writer, artist, clergyman and schoolmaster. He was also an originator of the idea of 'the picturesque', which he had developed from travelling extensively around the country and sketching the landscapes he saw. While living in the New Forest he published sketches and thoughts in Remarks on Forest Scenery, and Other Woodland Views, as well as publishing sermons and works on moral and religious subjects. He improved conditions in his parish by supporting a project for a new poor house. He held enlightened views on educating and disciplining the young, and personally built and provided an endowment for a parish school that now bears his name. He used the proceeds from his writing and an auction of his original drawings to fund more good works. You can see a monument commemorating his long and productive life in the Church of St John, Boldre and his tomb is in the churchyard there.

Lucy Kemp-Welch (1869 – 1958), spent many hours sketching the ponies that roamed the New Forest when she was a young girl and went on to become the foremost painter of horses of her time, particularly of working horses. Colt-Hunting in the New Forest, her best known work, is in the Tate Gallery, and some of her other paintings are in the Imperial War Museum. She also became famous for her illustrations for Black Beauty by Anna Sewell. She was the first president of the Society of Animal Painters.

Eric Ashby (1918 – 2003), shared his love of the New Forest with the world through his wildlife films. It took four years of work for him to shoot enough sequences for his first 45-minute film, The Unknown Forest, which was shown by the BBC in 1961. A unique portrait of real animal lives, it was warmly received by viewers, who were able to see how badgers, deer and foxes in the New Forest behaved. Two years later he filmed The Major, the life story of a village oak tree and the first wildlife film to be shot in colour. An ardent conservationist, he founded the first local Badger Group in 1969 and was outspoken in his views against hunting. His secluded home in Linwood became a haven for some 30 wild foxes from rescue centres.

2.4.7 State of Built Heritage

The Landscape Partnership area contains 10 listed buildings that are on the English Heritage 'at risk register' and 2 further listed buildings which are being watched and are both considered to be medium risk. Of these 12 buildings, none have management plans in place as yet, and only one is in development.

There is significant concern about unlisted buildings of local interest within conservation areas, as recent surveys (2007 and 2010) have identified changes to historic buildings which affect their special interest. For example, in the Western Escarpment Conservation Area, there were 282 domestic buildings of Local, Vernacular and Cultural Interest initially identified in the 2007 survey, which significantly enhanced the character of the conservation area. However, in a survey only three years later, it was considered that 27 of these buildings had been altered in such a way that they no longer had this level of interest or value – a 10% loss in three years. These were alterations which fall within permitted development rights so could not have been managed though the planning process. This demonstrates a pressing need for the NFNPA and other partners to work with home owners to increase understanding and awareness by the property owners to try and prevent further irreversible character loss.

The Landscape Partnership area contains 11 Scheduled Ancient monuments that are on the English Heritage 'at risk register', which are mainly Bronze Age Barrows, but includes an Iron Age Hillfort. However the 'At Risk' Register only deals with Scheduled Ancient Monuments, not the 200 sites identified worthy of scheduling or the large numbers identified through recent archaeological projects and data gathering. This demonstrates a need to further research these sites in order to prevent further decline and this is one of the key areas that will be addressed in the Scheme.

2.4.8 Management of Heritage

The Forest's heritage resource and its management is subject to national legislation and local planning guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), the regional research strategy, local plan processes, landscape management plans and strategies, Coastal Management Plans, the Forest Design Plan (2007) and Higher Level Stewardship Environmental Stewardship Handbooks (Natural England, 2013). Much of this has been defined by government, the heritage community and institutions such as the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (cIfA). The latter's code of practice is commonly taken as the minimum standard expected for any work undertaken involving the protection, preservation, and conservation of heritage assets. In short, the management of the New Forest's archaeological resource is already subject to various protocols which will shape any subsequent strategy. A central ethical component of contemporary heritage management strategies is the preferred option of preserving heritage assets *in situ*. This strategy has proved broadly effective in terrestrial settings where natural threats are deemed minimal and the cultural threats can be controlled.

The principal vulnerability or damaging processes linked to heritage sites can best be described using a system adapted from the existing English Heritage Monument Protection Programme system five generic categories can be identified:

- Natural processes (Coastal Change, vegetation and animal damage);
- Developments;
- Socio-economic activity;
- Other causes of damage, and;
- Unknown threat.

By using these categories, an assessment of the vulnerability of New Forest historic environment sites and features can be obtained through a systematic survey and assessment approach which can enable benchmarks for future management and monitoring.

Research priorities for the New Forest heritage have been identified by documents such as Hampshire County Council's 'Hampshire Archaeology Research Framework' and the New Forest National Park Authority's 'Cultural Heritage Action Plan' and the Centre for Maritime Archaeology at Southampton University 'Maritime Historic Environment Research Framework' following consideration of the various themes and issues identified throughout this section. Some of research aims and objectives are detailed along with opportunities for heritage in section XX

2.5 Economy

The New Forest National Park has a diverse economy with 2,300 businesses representing a wide range of sectors, with the largest being the professional, scientific and technical sector. The estimated Gross Value Added for the economy in 2012 was £0.6-1.0 billion. The area has a skilled workforce with an estimated 37% of the workforce with level 4NVQs, which is higher than in Hampshire, the South East, and the UK.

The local economy has been resilient in recent years with unemployment consistently lower than the average for Hampshire, the South East, and the UK, with the current unemployment level being just 0.5% (Jan 2015, Job Seekers Allowance). Many residents commute to jobs in Southampton, Bournemouth and the towns adjacent to the National Park. The working age population within the New Forest area, however, is lower than the average for Hampshire.

It is recognised that maintaining a high quality natural environment can contribute substantial economic benefits by supporting tourism and helping to attract high value employees and businesses. Research suggests that National Park designation brings economic benefits for businesses both within a National Park and in a wider region. The New Forest's rural land based economy supports and maintains the landscape, which, in turn, is essential for a vibrant tourism industry. This results in a very interlinked economy, where many parts are dependent on others for their long-term sustainability. Therefore a number of the businesses are intrinsically linked to the landscape and heritage value of the New Forest:

- Land-based businesses in commoning, agriculture, forestry and woodland management make up only 10% of businesses in the New Forest, but these industries remain vital in maintaining the land use management practices that help conserve the landscape character and cultural identity of the National Park. Although the New Forest is generally not considered to be a deprived area, this does hide a specialist agricultural / commoning and forestry sector that suffer from low incomes, marginal sustainability and an ageing workforce.
- The tourism industry makes a major contribution to the local economy and many businesses are based in, or benefit from, the National Park. It is estimated that £201 million was generated by tourism visits to the National Park in 2011, with the tourism sector being a very significant employer within the National Park. Maintaining a high quality natural environment contributes significantly to economic benefits by supporting tourism.
- The New Forest Marque (a New Forest produce quality assurance and marketing scheme) helps the rural economy by supporting local produce businesses and adding to the local 'offer' for the tourism industry.
- The maritime sector provides a number of business opportunities mainly centred around Lymington and the Waterside, which are outside of the National Park, but which still have an influence due to their proximity.

2.5.1 Influence of the Surrounding areas

The National Park is sandwiched between the economic growth areas of Southampton and Bournemouth. Research by Tourism South-East in 2005 indicated that over 15 million people live within a 90-minute drive of the National Park. Other research estimates that housing development in the period 2006-2026 within 50

kilometres of the New Forest will result in an additional 1.05 million visits per annum - an increase of 8%. The New Forest provides a critical "green lung" for the South-East region with its increasing population and development pressures.

The New Forest National Park sits within the New Forest District which has a different economic profile from the National Park. Although the District is not within the Landscape Partnership Scheme boundary the people living within these areas are the immediate neighbours who will travel through and to areas within the park, hence these areas have an influence on the general economy of the area. The Index of Multiple Deprivations (for New Forest District; A Profile of Hampshire, HCC 2011) is a weighted average of other indices, namely income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education, skills and training deprivation; barriers to housing and services, crime and living environment and shows areas of the New Forest District in **Figure 23**.

The District level analysis of the Rural Evidence Research Centre for 2005 categorises the New Forest as a significantly rural, low productivity district. Defra also classify the New Forest as being one of the five districts in the South-East with significant poor economic performance (Local Futures Group: The Knowledge Economy in Rural England, 2004.)

There are also pockets of deprivation with regard to education, skills and training. Two New Forest Super Output Areas fall in the bottom 10% of most deprived nationally within this category and a further 6 are in the bottom 20%. The area has a greater proportion of people without qualifications (27.6% - OCSI, 2007 figures) compared to both County and regional levels.

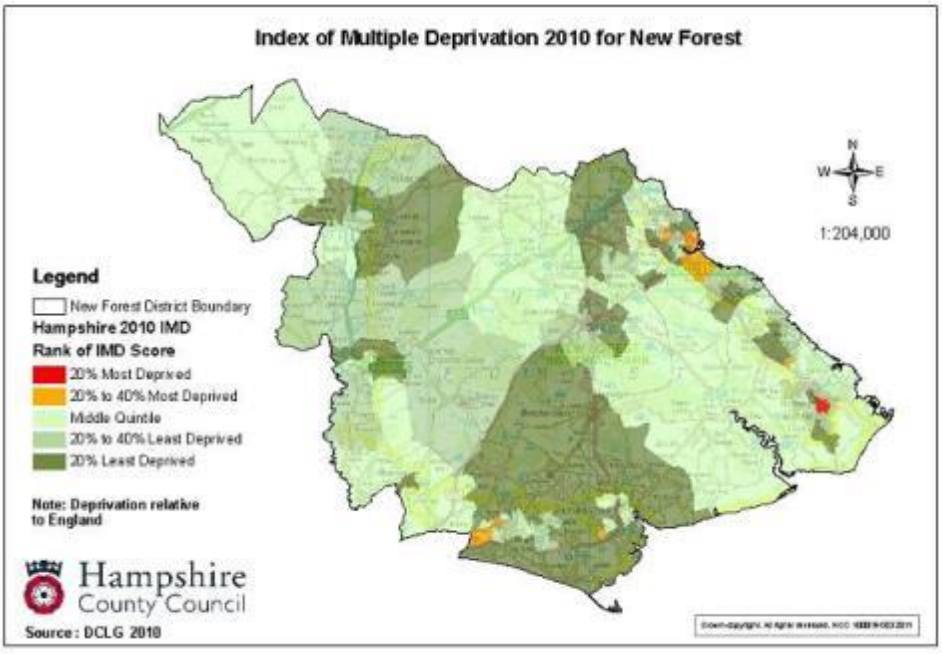


Figure 23 - Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010

2.6 Transport

The New Forest is an area of over 200 square miles comprising largely rural land with a scattering of towns, villages and very small hamlet communities. There are several main transport routes through the area such as the M27/A31, A35 in an east-west direction and A337, A326 in a north south. Other areas are connected by smaller forest roads, mostly within the perambulation and subject to a maximum 40mph speed limit

There are several train stations on the route from Southampton to Bournemouth with all fast London trains stopping at Brockenhurst which gives this area particularly good links. A number of bus companies operate in the Forest with connections between some villages and to the main towns and cities. Ferry connections to the Isle of Wight are from Lymington (just outside the National Park boundary). The two local airports are adjacent to the area in Southampton and Bournemouth.

There is statutory public access to 29,652 ha of land within the National Park, focused largely on the Crown Lands and adjacent commons. This amounts to 52% of the total land area – a higher proportion than any of the other English National Parks except for Northumberland (78%), the Yorkshire Dales (62%) and the Lake District (55%).

The public rights of way network includes 326 km of footpaths and bridleways, of which 74% have been classed as 'easy to use' by the highway authorities (March 2103). In addition there are 171 km of cycle routes on forest tracks and 16 km of signed National Cycle Network cycle routes. Recreational cycling is popular with visitors, serviced by numerous cycle hire facilities within and around the National Park.

A series of visitor and residents surveys have suggested that the vast majority of visitors access the National Park by private car or van as their main mode of transport. In 2013 this amounted to 78%, while 22% used sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling, train, coach and bus (New Forest National Park Visitor Survey, 2013). This shows a slight improvement compared to a similar survey 2011 (New Forest Residents and Visitors Survey, 2011), at which time 18% of visits were by sustainable transport. Sustainable modes of transport are used more by visitors moving around the Park once they are here, rather than as the primary means of access. The 2013 survey indicates that 48% of visitors choose sustainable means of travel within the area, including walking, cycling and coach trips.

In 2012, Hampshire County Council, the New Forest and South Downs National Parks, and five partner authorities were awarded £3.8m from the Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The aim of this funding is to reduce the impact of car traffic in the National Parks by encouraging 370,000 visitors to switch to car-free travel at each Park by 31 March 2015. This includes:

- improving key public transport services into the two National Parks
- make it easy to reach visitor attractions within the two National Parks (see box)
- promote travel by bus, rail and cycle to and around the National Parks.

2.6.1.1 New Forest Tour

The open-top New Forest Tour offers visitors an alternative to travelling round the Forest by car. It's run in partnership by the New Forest National Park Authority and bus operator and funded through the Sustainable Transport Fund. Passengers benefit from good views of the National Park, discounts at attractions and good public transport links with local trains, buses and ferries.

The Tour began in 2004 with one route and 4,000 passenger journeys. It grew to two routes until 2013 when LSTF funding allowed a third new route to be launched and the Tour had grown to 40,653 passenger trips. In 2014, LSTF funding was used to add new stops at Hythe Ferry and attractions like New Forest Wildlife Park and Longdown Activity Farm near Ashurst. Passenger journeys increased again to a record 41,877 that summer.

It's estimated that the New Forest Tour saved an estimated 226,000 private car miles in 2014, and provided a boost to local businesses, contributing an estimated £680,000 to the local economy.

It offers a good opportunity to educate people about the heritage of the area.

2.7 Recreation and Tourism

The last detailed New Forest visitors survey was carried out in 2005 by Tourism South East (New Forest Visitor Survey, 2005, commissioned by the Countryside Agency) and found there were 13.5 million day visits annually and confirmed that people visit the New Forest for the tranquillity of the natural environment and the unique New Forest experience.

The New Forest visitor profile can be approximated from visitor surveys 2009-2011:

- Local resident 39%
- Day visitor from home 17%
- Staying visitor in the New Forest 31%
- Day excursionist from holiday base 13%

Additionally:

- 4% are visitors travelling from overseas.
- Average group size is 2.75 people
- 40% between the ages of 55 years to 75 plus years
- 2% consider themselves to be part of an ethnic minority
- 92% reported that they did not suffer from any impairment which affects their daily activities.

In the New Forest the most popular destinations for informal outdoor recreation are the open landscapes in the heart of the Forest, where the main activities are walking, dog walking, enjoying the scenery, cycling, picnicking and horse riding. On the coast, sites such as Lepe Country Park and Calshot are also popular, especially during the main holiday periods. The major attractions, including the National Motor Museum, Paulton's Park, and the villages of Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu and Burley, appeal to people throughout the year.

There are a number of formal recreation facilities within the National Park, some of which are located on the Open Forest, used mainly by local people. These include sports pitches (predominantly for cricket) in most parishes, nine golf courses, and facilities for specialist interests such as polo and archery. Many specific groups come to the National Park to participate in organised events, such as orienteering, scouting and guide activities, charity events and school field trips. Large indoor leisure facilities are located in the Park at Calshot and nearby in Hythe, Lymington, Ringwood and Totton.

The Solent is one of the major recreational yachting locations in the UK and attracts people from all over southern England. A proportion of these are catered for within the National Park, with a number of public and private moorings on the Beaulieu River, at Keyhaven and Calshot, and purpose built marinas close to the Park at Lymington and Hythe.

More than 50% of the National Park is openly accessible and there are over 300 kilometres (186 miles) of rights of way across the enclosed landscape. The New Forest represents a significant proportion of the total accessible natural green space available for the enjoyment of people in the south east region.

Whilst the provision for access is generally excellent, some areas, especially in the south of the National Park and along parts of the coast, are less well served by footpaths and other rights of way. In addition the major roads, such as the A36, A326 and A31, form barriers to safe access for both nearby communities and visitors within the Park.

A survey undertaken in the development phase as part of the audience development work asked people what they are interested in in the New Forest and how they liked to be involved in the landscape and heritage of the New Forest. **Figure 24** and **Figure 25** show the results from those who consider themselves to be local or visitors to the area. The results indicate that people are most interested in the natural heritage of the New Forest and to a lesser extent the cultural heritage relating to the built environment, local customs and traditional ways of life. Discussion with stakeholders suggests that this could be because the history of the New Forest is

largely hidden, either physically under the trees or intellectually because it is tied up with traditional land management practices and ways of life which have not always been accessible to the general public. Added to this is the fact that there are few historic sites or ancient monuments such as castles or cathedrals to draw people's interest.

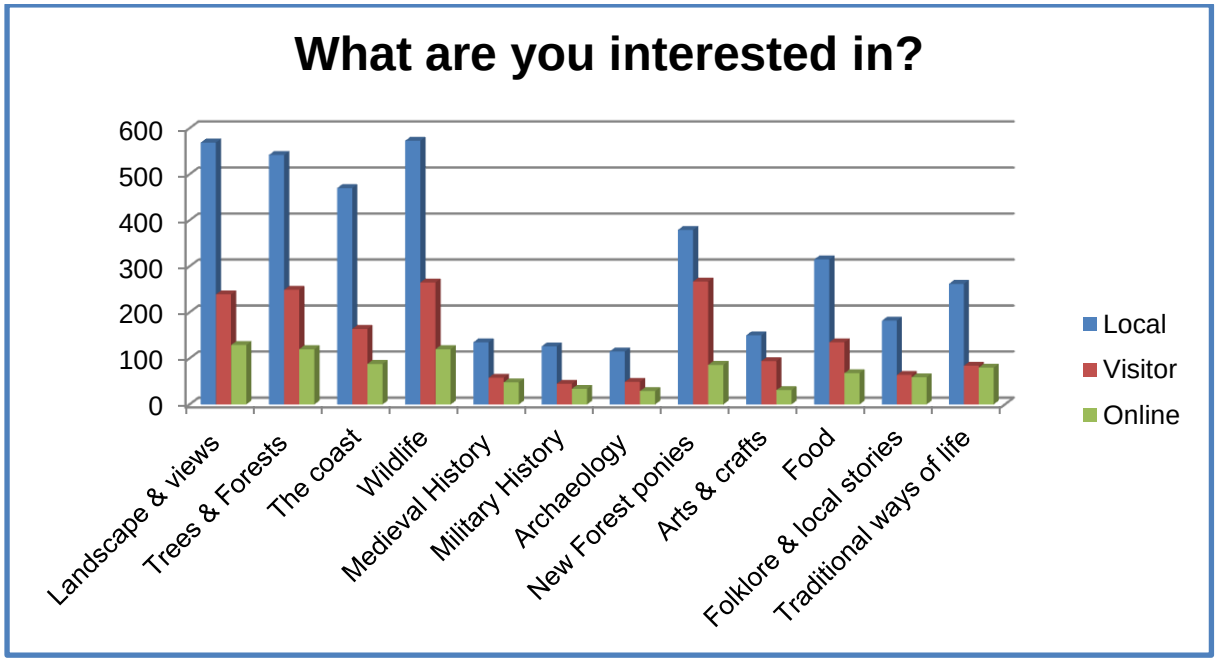


Figure 24 - What people are interested in

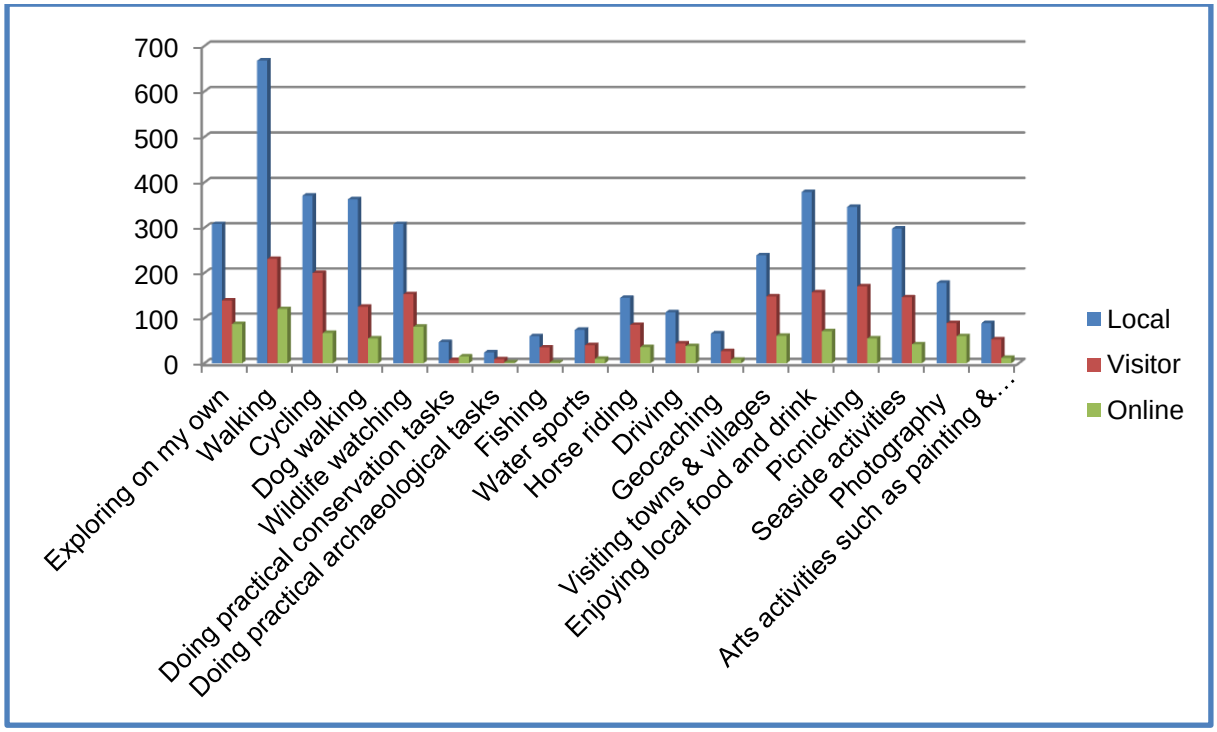


Figure 25 - How people like opt be involved in the New Forest Landscape and Heritage

Figure 25 shows that ‘walking’ is the dominant activity, which is consistent with the analysis of how people use the landscape. For a large number of people, particularly local people, exploring the Forest on foot, either with or without a dog, is the primary way that they interact with the landscape. This, along with the growing popularity of cycling (in its many different forms) gives a strong sense of an ‘active’ landscape, one where people appear prepared to get out of their cars and interact with the natural world.

One of the greatest challenges for the National Park is to enable people to continue to enjoy the Forest in different ways, while ensuring this does not affect the enjoyment or work of others and maintains those very qualities that attract people to the area.

2.7.1.1 Walking in the New Forest

Walking is the single most important recreational activity and forms part of nearly every visit to the National Park. For 30% of visitors it is the main purpose for visiting. The Open Forest which contains 20,000 ha of unenclosed land and commons has long been open to public access on foot and on horseback and as such provides some of the most extensive countryside access to be found in the south of England. There is only a relatively small amount of open country land covered by the Crow Act; 325 km (200 miles) of rights of way cross the enclosed lands. There are two long distance routes – the 98 km (60 mile) Solent Way and the 51 km (32 mile) Avon Valley Path from Christchurch to Salisbury which part cross the New Forest. Many of the rights of way have historic roots. At least two Roman roads run through the New Forest, some sections of which are today rights of way. Some routes were used by smugglers taking their stock from landing sites on the south coast. Others were used by stock owners herding their animals to market. Many pass historical features in the landscape, ranging from prehistoric burial mounds (which serve as useful markers in the countryside) to practical features like extraction pits, farms, settlements and bridges.

Walking in the New Forest can provide something for everyone, and it is readily accessible by road from nearby centres of population and has a long history of attracting day visitors and holidaymakers who come in particular to enjoy the scenery and the special qualities of the Open Forest and the coast. The Forestry Commission has developed a number of popular waymarked routes on Crown Land – at Blackwater, Wilverley, Ober Water, Bolderwood and the Reptile Centre. As well as the more informal family strolls and dog walks people can get involved in expert-led wildlife walks, history hikes, or food trails. The Crown Lands also attract a significant range of organised events ranging from orienteering, cross country and organised walks through to Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

Figure 26: Walking at Boltons Bench Lyndhurst

2.8 Sustainable Land Management

Commoning, farming, forestry and woodland management have been essential to the rural economy and have helped shape the landscape of the New Forest through historic times. In particular, the distinctive pastoral economy of the area, including common grazing, has allowed many of the characteristic New Forest habitats and landscapes to develop and be maintained into the 21st century.

2.8.1 Commoning and Farming

Although common rights were once widespread in Britain and Europe, they have been lost in many areas due to the enclosure of common land and the demise of former royal forests. The New Forest remains one of the few extensive lowland commons where rights are still widely practised and a strong commoning culture continues.

Common rights are attached to land in and around the New Forest rather than to any individual. Someone who makes use of the common rights attached to their property is known as a practising commoner. Local people were granted the common right to graze their livestock and domestic animals in the New Forest over 900 years ago in exchange for the strictures introduced by Forest Law. Although the custom clearly predates its introduction, the Law formalised the situation.

The common rights are as follows:

- **Pasture**

  Pasture is the most important right which permits the commoner to turn out ponies, cattle, donkeys and mules onto the common grazing. Those who wish to exercise their Right of Pasture do so by application to the Verderers' Clerk who will confirm the existence of the right and allocate a brand for the animals. Once they have been branded, the animals may be turned out upon payment of a *marking fee* which helps to finance the cost of employing the Agisters who are responsible for supervising the stock on the Forest.

  - There were 3491 cattle depastured in 2013, over the last 30 years numbers have steadily increased. These animals are now largely in the hands of a small number of older commoners with large herds, but the cattle are vitally important to balance the grazing pressure on the heath. They are not so often kept by new commoners because of the need for increased knowledge and problems of management. There is a huge burden of paperwork involved in keeping cattle which pony owners do not face.
  - There were 165 donkeys turned-out on the Forest in 2013, numbers have increased over the last 30 years.
  - There were 5120 ponies turned-out on the Forest in 2013, which is the largest amount recorded, and numbers have fluctuated between 3000 and 5000 over the last 30 years.

- **Pannage or mast**

  The Right of Common of Mast is the right to turn out pigs in the pannage season. Pannage runs for a minimum of 60 days in the autumn and the pigs

eat the acorns that are poisonous to ponies and cattle. Commoners who turn out pigs in the pannage season may apply to allow a female pig who is in-pig (pregnant) to remain on the Forest after the season ends. Such pigs are known as *privilege sows*. They must return home at night and once they have given birth to their piglets they must go home and stay off the Forest. Pigs are extremely important to the Forest – they can eat acorns with no ill effects. Acorns eaten in excess may kill other grazing animals. Between 200 and 600 pigs are turned out, during 2013 339 pigs were turned out.

- **Sheep**

  The Right of Common of Sheep permits the commoner to turn out sheep onto the Forest. Number have ranged between 30 to 200 and in 2013 185 sheep were turned out.

- **Marl and Turbary**

  The Rights of Common of Marl and Turbary the right of marl permits the commoner to dig for a special type of clay that is used to improve agricultural land. The right of turbary is the right to cut peat for fuel. Neither of these rights are currently permitted.

- **Estovers**

  Estovers is the right to have free fuelwood. There are only about 100 properties throughout the whole Forest to whom the Forestry Commission will allocate a number of *cords* of wood (a *cord* is a stack of wood 8ft long, 4ft high and 4ft deep).

In addition to the six registered rights, some properties benefit from additional rights over the adjacent commons, such as the right to dig gravel or cut bracken for animal bedding. These rights existed over the whole New Forest, not just the added areas, but have reduced over the years with the increasing importance given to conservation over common rights.

There are still strong cultural and economic links between farming and commoning, although this has declined in recent years, including the seasonal movement of stock and the sharing of labour and equipment. Commoning also has close links with forestry, woodland management and the general on-going management of the Open Forest habitats (including cutting, burning and bracken control), all of which can provide employment for a number of commoners and a source of additional income as the income from commoning alone is poor. Promoting understanding of the importance of commoning to the New Forest, and the issues it faces, will be vital in ensuring its long-term survival.

It is estimated that about 4,250 ha of back up land is currently used to support commoning in the Forest. The majority is rented or used through informal arrangements with others, and only about 30% of commoners own all the back up land they use. About a quarter of commoners would like access to more back up land to help with their commoning activity. (Census of New Forest Commoners, 2011)

Mainstream farming is important in underpinning a strong land-based economy and maintaining the agricultural use of large areas of the National Park. It has been the basis of the rural economy on the more fertile land surrounding the open forest, which was enclosed as private farmland at the time of the Enclosures in the 18th century, and many of the fields still show typical medieval boundary patterns. The farming economy remains the major land use in the National Park, and has retained close links with the central open forest. Approximately one quarter of the National Park is farmland, most is used as permanent grassland used for grazing livestock, mainly cattle. About 20% of the farmland is used for growing arable crops, mainly wheat, winter barley, grain maize and oilseed rape. New Forest farmers also produce pigs, poultry, sheep, salad and vegetable crops, soft fruit, flower and nursery stock. Over half of the farms within the New Forest are smaller than 5 hectares (about the size of 10 football pitches). Many of these will be managed by commoners who use the Open Forest for additional grazing. A small percentage of farms (approximately 3%) are over 100 hectares, these are mainly large private estates of which there are several within the National Park. Just under 5% of the total population of the National Park is employed in agriculture.

2.8.2 Forestry and woodland management

Forestry is a significant feature of the New Forest, providing local employment and training and enabling timber to be both sourced and processed locally. It will be important for the industry to adapt to changing markets for forestry products, including wood fuel, and continue to champion sustainable production in the local context.

The Forestry Commission manage 13,566 ha of the total woodland area, including 7,332 ha of forestry Inclosures and 3,692 ha of ancient pasture woodlands (the Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands). The majority of other woodland is privately owned and nearly half of this (3,198 ha) is managed through Forestry Commission grants and licenses which entails work to an agreed management plan. Other woodlands may also be in active management, but in many cases there is no requirement for a license and so such work (for instance small-scale coppicing) is unrecorded.

Native broad-leaved woodland is a vital wildlife habitat and a valued part of the local landscape. The Forestry Commission's Forest Design Plans will, over time, increase the proportion of broad-leaved woodland in the Inclosures compared to conifer plantations, and the woodland grant scheme supports private landowners in reinstating or creating new areas of native woodland.

Sustainably managed hardwoods are also an important resource used by local forestry enterprises. Some businesses are taking advantage of the strong image of the Forest to market high quality products, such as timber-framed buildings. New markets and skills could be developed, linked with relevant training and based on sensitive management of the woodland resource. Examples include specialist high quality goods aimed at the tourism market, local furniture design, rural craft industries and wood fuel products that contribute to the local production of renewable energy.

2.8.2.1 Sustainable Woodland Management

Figure 27: Stacked cut timber

The New Forest has 100 inclosures which results in an area of 8,500 hectares, and today they are not only important for producing timber but also for their conservation and recreation value. The New Forest produces approximately 50,000 tonnes of timber per annum, equivalent to over 2,000 lorry loads each year. The timber comes from areas that are either thinned to promote the growth of the remaining trees or from areas cleared for replanting or restoration to other habitats, such as heathland. Modern harvesting equipment can cut up to 1,000 tonnes a week, and in the New Forest the Forestry Commission supplies a number of local and regional mills with conifer logs to produce a range of products including fencing, pallets, carcassing and chip board. During the winter months the forest produces some 1,000 tonnes of quality hardwoods, mainly oak, that is largely used for green oak buildings and beams. All the timber is certificated, holding the FSC mark, giving the customer assurance that the wood has come from sustainable managed forests. The harvesting operations move around the forest's timber inclosures on approximately a five-year cycle. Careful plans are drawn up at each site in order to minimise the impact on both visitors and the environment whilst seeking to maximise the long-term benefits of the operation. It is inevitable that there will be some disruption but damaged rides and tracks will be repaired as soon after the operation as possible. The forest remains very much a working landscape and all the receipts from timber sales go back into the area helping to cover the costs of tree establishment, conservation and recreation work.

2.8.3 Museums and Libraries

2.8.3.1 New Forest Centre Museum and Library, Lyndhurst

The New Forest Museum has a range of displays and activities about the New Forest National Park, focusing on New Forest life and its people as well as certain historic periods that had an impact on Forest life.

The centre is also home to the Christopher Tower New Forest Reference Library, which probably contains the largest collection of the great classical works on the Forest, published from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, and there is a very large collection of general books on the Forest together with guides and books on

Forest walks. The past is well represented with studies both on the Forest's history and that of the individual towns and villages lying within and around it.

The collection covering natural history is extensive and includes the observational notes made by the late Eric Ashby from the 1950s to the 1990s. Many standard works on all aspects of natural history are also within the Library. Woodland and forestry is very well represented and includes a number of limited reports produced by the Forestry Commission.

Collections include the Library of the medieval forest specialist David Stagg, Gypsies of the New Forest and material relating to military use of the Forest. This includes lists of all the men killed and commemorated on the war memorials of every parish with extensive biographical notes. Also included in this section are books on the New Forest airfields, military hospitals and the manoeuvres of the late nineteenth century.

The ephemeral collections on all subjects include newspaper, magazine and journal cuttings, personal notes, leaflets, advertisements and a host of minutiae of all kinds. The Library also is home to a sizeable collection of photographs and postcards relevant to the geographical area covered in the main collections.

The Library is constantly expanding its collections and is looking to develop public access through the Ecademy project.

2.8.3.2 New Forest Embroidery

The Forest Centre is also the home of the New Forest Embroidery, which was commissioned by the New Forest Association in 1979 to commemorate the 900th anniversary of the creation of the New Forest.

It was designed by Belinda, Lady Montagu, and created by her with a team of more than 50 helpers. It is 25 foot long (7.6 metres) and just over 2 feet deep. It shows the most important historical events in the Forest, set against a background of Forest flora and fauna **Figure 28**.

Figure 28: Section of New Forest Embroidery

2.8.3.3 Maritime Museum, Buckler's Hard

Situated on the Beaulieu River, Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum and Buckler's Hard Story gives an insight into the history of this 18th century shipbuilding village focusing on its vessels including those built for Nelson's Navy.

Visitors can discover the village connections with Sir Francis Chichester, and read about the fascinating story of the S.S. Persia. They have the opportunity to look inside the historic cottages and see how 18th Century residents used to live.
Also on show is replica timber framed 18th shipwrights' workshop which has been built using traditional methods.

2.8.3.4 National Motor Museum, Beaulieu

The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu features over 250 vehicles, which tell the story of motoring from its earliest pioneering origins up to the present day. There are a number of innovative displays, including *For Britain & for the Hell of It*, featuring the museum's iconic Land Speed Record cars.

Palace House, which has been the home of the Montagu family since 1538, was built around the gatehouse of Beaulieu Abbey and has been preserved as it was during the Victorian era. The 13th century Beaulieu Abbey is the setting for a display on the Cistercian monks who once lived and worked there.

2.8.3.5 Other Museums

There are a number of other museums adjacent to the National Park:

- St. Barbe Museum and Gallery in Lymington explores the unique history of Lymington and the New Forest Coast.
- Fordingbridge Museum, Fordingbridge includes a collection of artefacts from the late John Shering, related to local history.
- Eling Heritage Centre in Eling displays the history of Totton and Eling from pre-historic times to the present day.
- Rockbourne Roman Villa in Rockbourne is the remains of the original villa, and includes a site museum life in Roman Britain.

2.8.4 Historic Environment Character Assessment

Alongside the 214 Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Landscape Partnership area there are also over 200 more at present that have been identified suitable for scheduling. There is also a wealth of unscheduled archaeology, for example, there may be over 450 boiling mound sites that are known, none of which are scheduled. There are over 3,500 sites recorded in the Historic Environment Records for Hampshire and Wiltshire for the National Park, many of which are archaeological sites. In addition, there are many other sites that do not feature within it. Many of these relate to private research and unpublished surveys. It is possible that the total number of archaeological sites, buildings of archaeological interest and historic landscape features within the park could be multiplied by a factor of 10 and still be an underestimate of the totality of the potential resource.

The significant number of archaeological sites and monuments that are not scheduled rely on an understanding of their importance and merits being articulated within decision-making processes (such as planning). Therefore it is important to collect and collate information and to share understanding of significance.

2.9 People with a key stake in the landscape

The land within the New Forest National Park is mainly owned by private individuals, public bodies and voluntary organisations such as the National Trust see **Figure 29**. There are many other organisations that also have a say in its management who have differing roles and influences on the area. The NPA has identified 93 different stakeholders, and this section summarizes the role of some of the major players in the Forest that are relevant to the OPOF LPS.

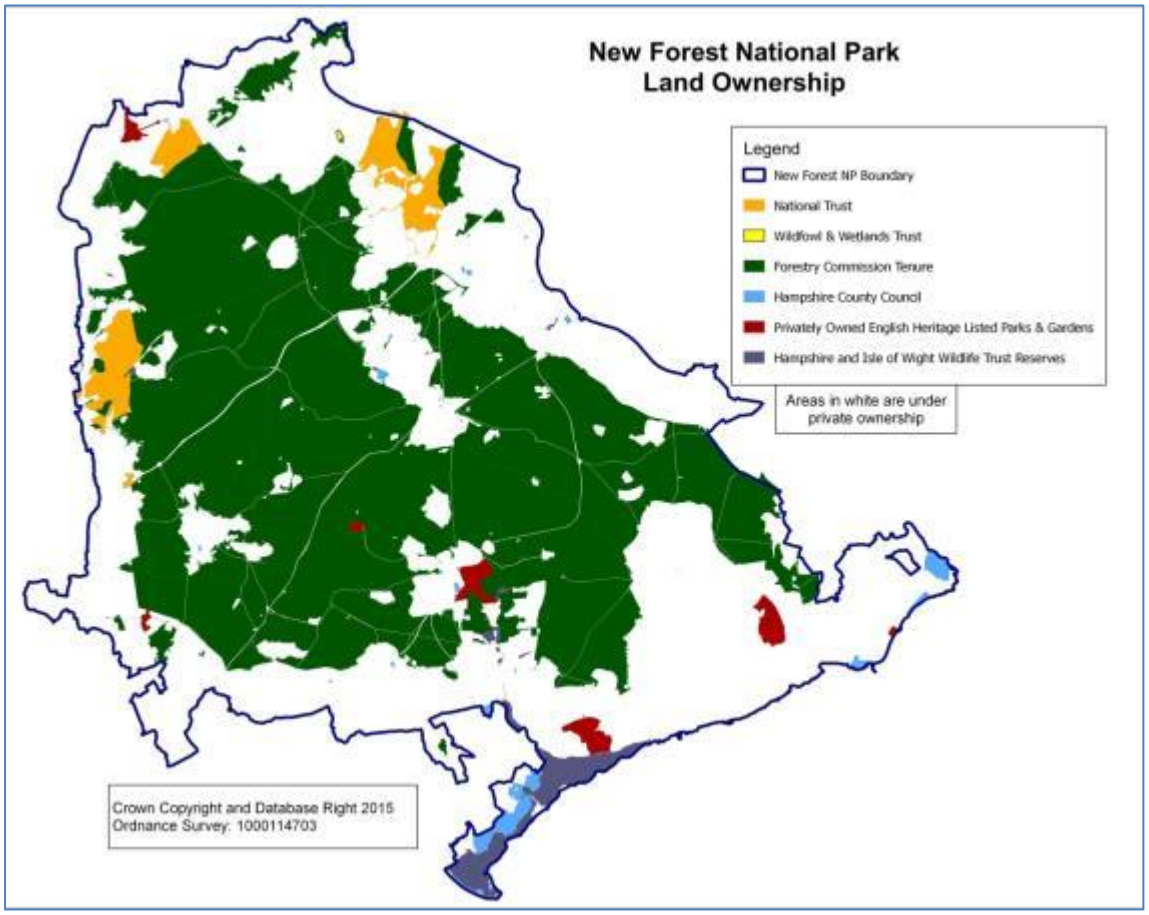


Figure 29 - Land Ownership

2.9.1 Residents

The New Forest has a population of approximately 35,000 according to the latest Census data. It has a particularly ageing population compared to the national average and other English National Park areas. Only 39% of the local population is younger than 45 (compared to the national average of 59%), while 38% are aged 60 and over (compared to 23% for England as whole). The New Forest demographic makes the linking of generations and the handing down of skills and knowledge from the older generation to the younger ones a priority.

The majority of the population within the Landscape Partnership area live in dispersed and small rural communities. There are 37 villages of varying scale within the National Park spread across 37 parish areas. Most have limited services within the communities and the smaller settlements are particularly at risk of losing or

suffering from reduced services. This, combined with the lack of a good public transport network to most of the smaller villages, means that most residents are dependant on their cars.

About one-third of residents live in the four main villages of Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Sway and Ashurst and these have a long tradition as local centres of cultural and economic life.

Many people are attracted to live in the New Forest because of the quality of the environment and this has resulted in high land and property prices.

The make-up of communities within the New Forest has changed rapidly in response to a combination of social and economic trends. There is less of a focus now on the traditional rural way of life and many residents do not have direct connections with the local area, with many travelling outside the area for work.

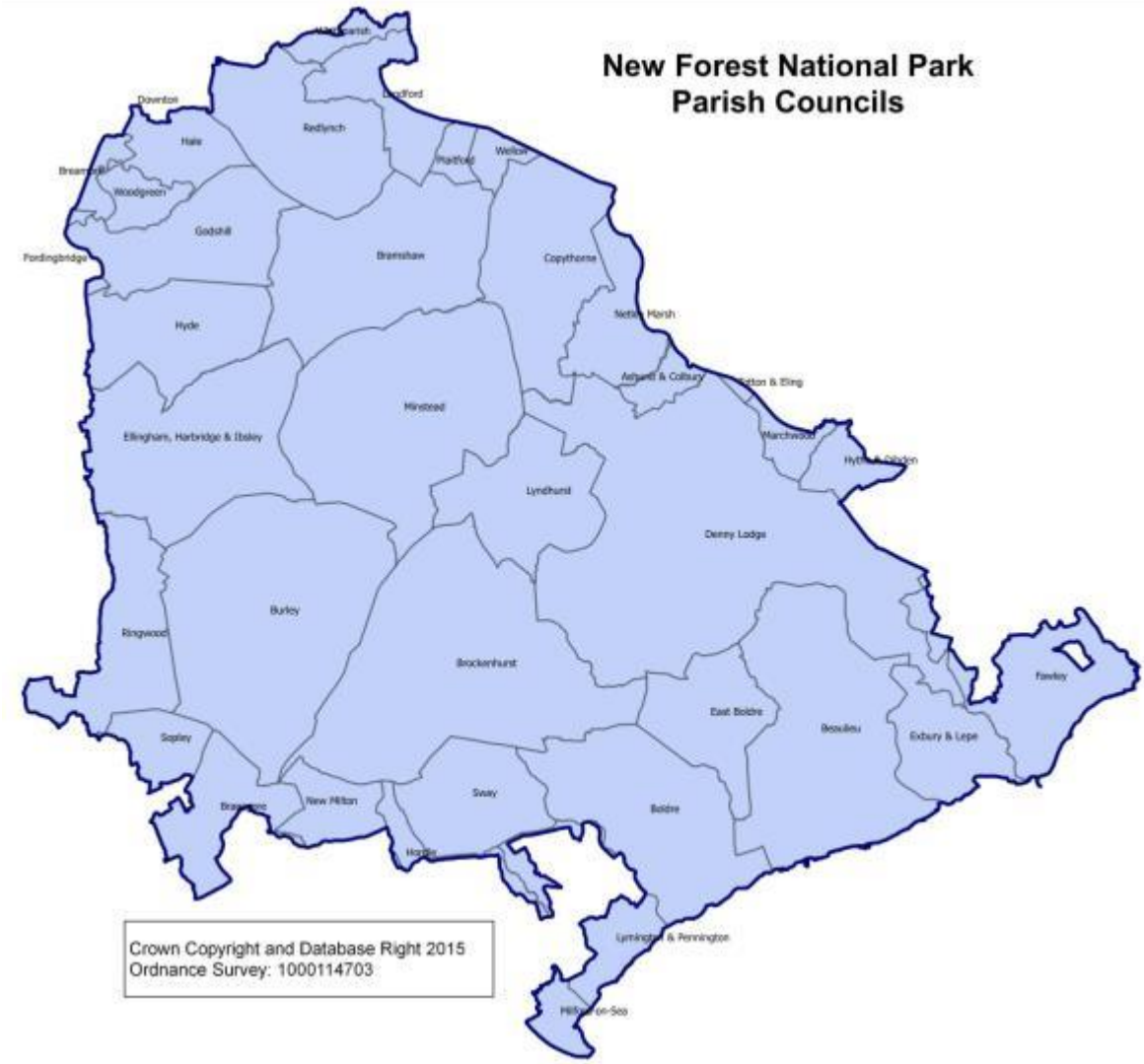


Figure 30 - Location of Parishes

2.9.2 Parish and Town Councils

Parish and town councils provide and manage a wide range of services at a community level, including community facilities and open space. They are instrumental in raising awareness about the character of their areas and developing local projects and initiatives to enhance their area. Most of the parishes and towns within the National Park (**Figure 30)** are represented by the New Forest Association of Local Councils.

Many of these have been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme as a number of projects are based on local communities or on Parish Council land.

2.9.3 Private Landowners/managers (Farmers, Estate Owners)

Private land managers, including the major landed estates, manage about 50% of the land area of the National Park. Many have a long-term interest in the landscapes, habitats and heritage of their areas and have combined farming and estate management with the conservation and promotion of local distinctiveness.

Some private landowners and managers have been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme as some projects will take place on private farmland and farmers will also have the opportunity for improving or learning new skills.

2.9.4 Commoners

Someone who makes use of the common rights attached to their property is known as a practicing commoner. Many commoners are descendants of families who have been commoning for many generations. Commoning today does not provide a living so some commoners are also farmers who use the Forest for some of their stock for a part of the year and many are employed in other industries or local businesses. Many Commoners continue to turn out animals because they have always done so and enjoy the social contact it provides. A number of others have come into commoning simply for the interest it provides. Commoning, although a way of life to many, has seldom provided the total means of subsistence for any commoner. Today, few children of commoners find it easy to continue the system because of the poor return involved, particularly in the pony market and a major difficulty is the lack of affordable back-up land (land needed to graze animals when they are not on the Forest) and housing in or close to the Forest. Many properties with common rights are purchased as retirement or holiday homes or by people who work out of the area and many new owners have no intention of maintaining the old traditions. In recent years it has become evident that commoning is at serious risk of decline

During 2014 there were 662 practising commoners (pers comm Verderers 20145), they play a vital role in maintaining the Open Forest. In recent years the Verderers Countryside Stewardship Scheme and other forms of support have encouraged an increase in practising commoners and the numbers of stock depastured, but there are nevertheless concerns about the longer term viability of commoning such as the high cost of suitable housing and land and the need for part-time employment in other aspects of the local economy.

The government recognises the essential role that commoners play in maintaining the Forest's landscape and ecology and the National Park Authority is committed to supporting commoning. Several initiatives including many within the Our Past, Our Future scheme have been introduced with the aim to assist and support commoners.

Many commoners have been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme, with a number of projects that have a focus on commoning.

New Forest Ponies

The New Forest ponies are indigenous to the New Forest where they have lived since before the last Ice Age. They are one of the recognised mountain and moorland or native pony breeds and are valued for their hardiness, strength, and sure-footedness.

All ponies grazing on the New Forest are owned by New Forest commoners – people who have "rights of common of pasture" over the Forest lands. An annual marking fee is paid for each animal turned out to graze. The population of ponies on the Forest has fluctuated in response to varying demand for young stock. Numbers fell to fewer than six hundred in 1945, but have since risen steadily to the current 5000.

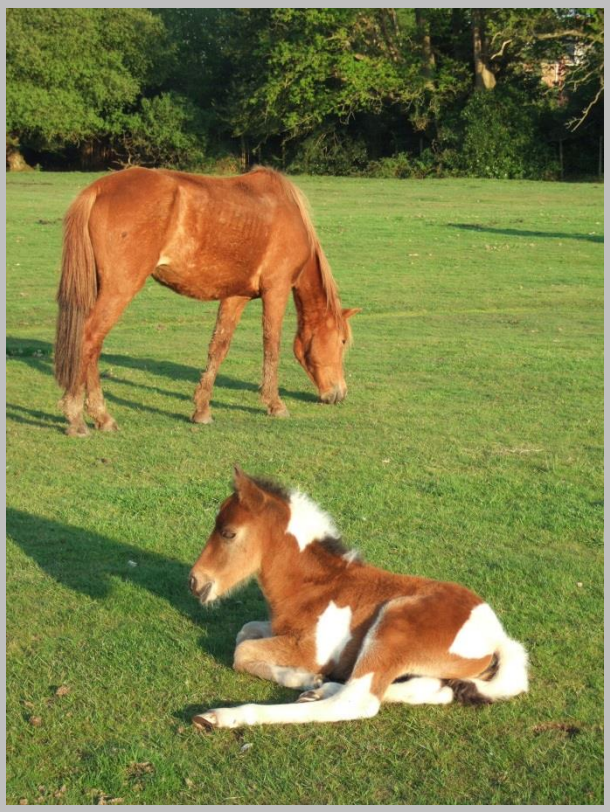


Figure 31 - Mare and Foal

The welfare of all stock grazing on the Forest is monitored by five Agisters, employees of the Verderers of the New Forest. Each Agister takes responsibility for a different area of the Forest. The ponies are gathered annually in a series of drifts, to be checked for health, wormed, and they are tail-marked; each pony's tail is trimmed to the pattern of the Agister whose area the pony runs. Purebred New Forest stallions approved by the Breed Society and by the New Forest Verderers run out on the Forest with the mares for a short period each year. Many of the foals bred on the Forest are sold through the Beaulieu Road pony sales, which are held several times each year.

2.9.5 New Forest Commoners Defence Association

The CDA was founded in 1909 in response to the increasing conflict between the spreading urban populations around the New Forest's fringes and the commoners' animals. The Association's main purpose is to support the right of commoners to turn their stock out on the open Forest and to promote their interests in the day-to-day management of the Forest, as well as in the wider political arena. The CDA continues to protect the commoners' point of view in day-to-day Forest management, as well as the political future of the Forest.

The CDA has been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme, with a number of projects that have a focus on commoning.

2.9.6 Verderers

The Verderers of the New Forest have duties and powers under the New Forest Acts for the protection and administration of commoning, the welfare of commoner's animals and the regulation of development on the Crown Lands. The Verderers Court comprises the Official Verderer (Chairman), five elected Verderers representing the commoners and four appointed Verderers: one each appointed by the Forestry Commission, DEFRA, the National Park Authority and Natural England. The post of Official Verderer is a statutory appointment made by Her Majesty the Queen.

The role of the Verderers of the New Forest is to:

- protect and administer the New Forest's unique agricultural commoning practices;
- conserve its traditional landscape, wildlife and aesthetic character, including its flora and fauna, peacefulness, natural beauty and cultural heritage;
- safeguard a viable future for commoning upon which the foregoing depends

They also manage the Verderers Grazing Scheme which supports the grazing of commoners' stock on the Open Forest see case study.

Verderers' Grazing Scheme

The Verderers' Grazing Scheme (VGS) was introduced on 1st March 2012 and replaced the Verderers' Countryside Stewardship Scheme which ran from 2003 to 2012. The new Scheme was brought about by the decision to upgrade the original scheme to a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme managed by a partnership between the Verderers, the Forestry Commission and the New Forest National Park Authority, and is due to run through until the end of February 2020.

The fund has been used for the following:

- direct payments to commoners for depasturing stock, which is so essential to the ecology of the Forest,
- New Forest pony 'Bloodline Scheme' which is intended to re-introduce selected bloodlines into the Forest;
- the 'Stallion Scheme' which manages the selection and number of stallions

which run on the Forest each year;
- Pony Welfare Programme' which encourages commoners to replace older ponies with young stock, avoiding the inevitable welfare problems encountered by older ponies on the Forest.
- Rebuilding of a number of 'pounds' (pens where depastured animals are handled on the Forest) using hardwood, as a long term legacy project, as well as replacement of drift fencing to facilitate the rounding up of ponies.
- microchipping New Forest ponies when they are sold at Beaulieu Road (subject to eligibility);
- the work of the Land Advice Service team
- reflective pony, and more recently, cattle collars
- funding for a small grants scheme to assist commoners with their commoning businesses.
- upgrade to the Beaulieu Road Sale Yard, providing mains water and electricity to ensure the long term future of this vital facility.

The Verderers have been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme, with a number of projects that have a focus in commoning.

2.9.7 Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission promotes sustainable forestry and woodland management in England, including the provision of management advice, overseeing woodland grant schemes and felling licences and promoting the use of timber and wood-fuel. In the New Forest it is responsible for the management of the Crown Lands (around 26,756 hectares covering about 50% of the National Park) for conservation, recreation and the rural economy on behalf of the Secretary for State, since 1924. It has produced a Crown Lands Management Plan, and is implementing long-term Forest Design Plans for the Inclosure woodlands, and has been involved in many of the large-scale landscape and habitat enhancement projects in the Forest.

The FC are a partner in OPOF and are involved in three specific projects.

2.9.8 National Park Authority

The New Forest was made a National Park in March 2005. As guardians of a national park the New Forest National Park Authority has statutory purposes and socio-economic responsibilities as specified in the Environment Act of 1995:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

Working in partnership with other organisations it is also the Authority's duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.

This is summed up as:

Protect - Enjoy - Prosper

The New Forest National Park Authority has overall responsibility for ensuring that the National Park is safeguarded for people to enjoy now and in the future. It does this by:

- Producing policy - including a National Park Plan which sets out the long-term vision for protecting things that make the National Park special and for making sure that people can continue to understand and enjoy them. The Plan describes what the National Park Authority can do itself and how it hopes others will help.
- Planning - being the local planning authority within the National Park area with responsibility for matters such as planning policy, planning applications and tree preservation orders.
- Funding and grants - using around £4m a year from central Government to deliver National Park purposes.
- Delivering projects in the Forest - working with partners on conservation, recreation and information and leading on major initiatives.
- Championing the Forest - listening to the diverse views in the New Forest, advising policy-makers and representing the National Park locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

2.9.9 New Forest District Council

New Forest District Council is responsible for planning policies for much of the area surrounding the National Park. It provides a range of community services, promotes the local economy and manages tourism within its area, which includes the majority of the National Park. It is also the housing authority, waste collection authority and traffic management agency for the area. It has produced economic and tourism strategies and a New Forest Landscape Character Assessment which identifies and describes the different landscapes within the National Park.

2.9.10 Test Valley Borough Council

Test Valley Borough Council provides a range of community services, promotes the local economy and manages tourism within its area, a small part of which is within the National Park. It is the planning authority for the area of the borough outside the Park boundary.

2.9.11 Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council is responsible for a wide range of public services, including education, social care, transport and waste management. It is the highway authority, including public rights of way, for a large part of the National Park. It is also involved in countryside management of land within the National Park, provides environmental education facilities in the Forest, supports the rural economy and helps conserve the natural and built environment. HCC are a partner in OPOF and are involved in 2 projects.

2.9.12 The Environment Agency

The EA is responsible for protecting and improving the environment for people and wildlife, and reducing the risk of flooding. Its work includes protecting the environment against risks such as pollution and over use of water. It has produced a

number of strategies to address water quality and water resources in the New Forest area. The Environment Agency is involved in one of the projects.

2.9.13 Natural England

Natural England is responsible for protecting and enhancing England's natural environment. In particular, it works to ensure sustainable management of designated nature conservation sites, reverse the decline of biodiversity, conserve and enhance the landscape and promote access to the countryside. It has produced a detailed management plan for the New Forest Special Area of Conservation, promotes green infrastructure and sets up and manages Higher Level Stewardship agreements. It also has a strong involvement in conserving coastal habitats and manages nature reserves within the National Park. NE are a partner in OPOF.

2.9.14 Conservation Organisations

A number of conservation organisations are present in the New Forest. They undertake the following:

- Manage land for conservation or own nature reserves
- research projects relating to biodiversity or specific species or habitats
- land management advice
- campaigning
- raising public awareness about the habitats and wildlife
- run programmes of events for children and adults
- volunteering
- raise money to fund projects in the New Forest

Their purposes vary however they would have a common goal of protecting the traditional character of the New Forest.

The New Forest Land Advice Service, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the National Trust have been involved in the development of the OPOF LPS and will continue to be involved in the delivery of the scheme as they are involved in a number of specific projects.

New Forest Association

The New Forest Association was formed in 1867 and is one of the oldest conservation organisations in the world. It is dedicated to protecting and sustaining the traditional character of the New Forest in southern England including commoning but also takes a wider approach to the problems of the Forest.

The New Forest Association was originally formed because there was a threat to enclose all usable parts of the Crown lands for timber production which would have impacted on those who relied on common rights for their animals to graze the New Forest. They sponsored the 1877 New Forest Act, and have been involved in all subsequent New Forest related legislation and policy making since including discussions over plans for coniferous timber plantations, how to deal with the increase in cars, electricity pylons and road 'improvements'.

The NFA still offer leadership in recognizing any important changes that face the Forest. Since the advent of the National Park the Association has recognised the importance of a good relationship with the Authority and seeks to maintain dialogue to help influence and steer the way to greater protection and recognition of the area that is the New Forest.

It is an independent, campaigning charity based on its membership and volunteers. The NFA is represented on many New Forest committees, including the New Forest Consultative Panel, the Forest Design Plan Forum, and the Open Forest Advisory Committee. They are able to monitor and influence the policies and activities of the organisations managing the New Forest and have published research papers such as 'Loss of Grazing Survey' and 'Commoners Housing Review'. These highlight the increasing problems faced by the next generation of commoners trying to find affordable housing and land from which to continue their vital contribution to the future of the New Forest.

2.9.15 Forums

The main forums within the National Park are the New Forest Consultative Panel, the New Forest Association of Local Councils and the Solent Forum, while groups with a more specific remit include the Open Forest Advisory Committee, New Forest Access Forum, New Forest Dog Owners Group, Forest Design Plan forum, New Forest Equine Forum, New Forest Business Partnership, New Forest Tourism Association, New Forest Access for All and many others.

2.9.16 Businesses

There are a number of business organisations that represent the range of sectors that acts as a forum for local business people to express their views, share their knowledge and experience, network with potential clients and suppliers, and help make changes that will benefit their business and help to build a stronger economy for the New Forest. These include the New Forest Business Partnership, New Forest Tourism Association and the New Forest Marque.

2.9.17 Community groups and volunteers

There are numerous, wide ranging community groups operating in the New Forest including volunteer groups, local history societies, village hall societies, community wildlife groups, friends groups. A number of these will be directly involved in the OPOF projects which aim to involve the local community.

There are 23 organisations that organise volunteer work directly relevant to the conservation, public understanding and enjoyment of the Park. The Forestry Commission has two of the strongest volunteer teams: the Volunteer Rangers and the Two Trees Conservation Volunteers contributed 2,672 volunteer days in 2013. The National Park Authority leads several volunteer projects, including ‘New Forest Remembers’, Heritage Mapping, and Community Wildlife Plans. In total these

contributed about 700 volunteer days in 2012/13. The National Park Authority also runs an annual Volunteer Fair at which different organisations can recruit new volunteers. The event in January 2015 attracted 34 organisations and 300 people. It resulted in about 100 people signing up as local volunteers.

2.9.18 Day and Staying Visitors

Customer profiling analysis (Customer Profile Report 2013) indicates the New Forest's Top 3 visitor customer types as:

- Garden Suburbia: Middle aged families, well established in community, buy on the basis of quality, dependent on cars, comfortable internet users, moderate views, semi-detached suburbia, adult children still at home.
- Dormitory Villagers: Commuter villages, empty nesters and retirees, traditional, local community, good networks of friends, village life, quality and service, value for money.
- Innate Conservatives: Spacious bungalows, retired married couples, self-employed, good social networks, pride in home and gardens, responsible, hardworking, savings and investments

A face to face survey of a random sample of visitors to the New Forest was carried out by the Research Unit at Tourism South East on behalf of New Forest District Council. The survey gathered descriptive, behavioural and attitudinal data from respondents:

- Most visitors were found to be relatively mature in age. Overall, 40% of all visitors were found to be between the ages of 55 years to 75 plus years.
- Overall, just under a third (29%) of all tourist visitors were visiting the New Forest for the first time.
- Day visitors from home were found to be the most frequent visitors, with half visiting on average six or more times a year. 27% of all visitors responded that their main reason for visiting was a “Day out" (30% in 2010 and 40% in 2009).
- The top factor influencing visitors choices about where to visit was the opportunity provided to go for a walk, followed by somewhere they could “Get fresh air/enjoy great views” and somewhere they could “Observe wildlife/fauna/flora”
- The vast majority of visitors (82%) used a car to travel to the New Forest.
- Overall half of all visitors did not use any information such as travel guides of website to plan their trip to the New Forest as they already had knowledge of places to visit.

In addition to the above there are many different smaller groups.

2.9.19 Formal Education Establishments

The New Forest Educators’ Forum is a group dedicated to achieving the highest quality outdoor learning provision within the New Forest. The 23 organisations which comprise the Forum provide an extensive range of high quality outdoor education, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and inclusion. The National Park Authority offers a Travel Grant Scheme to eligible schools within or close to the park boundary, which in 2013-14 enabled 2,000 children and young people to access the education provision offered by the Forum members. The area is also used to help to inspire the young generation through initiatives such as Mosaic (see box)

The New Forest Centre focuses particularly on learning about the cultural history of the Forest. Other formal establishments include the Countryside Education Trust and Minstead Study Centre.

Mosaic

Mosaic aims to engage young people so that they experience National Parks and encourage them to become 'champions' for these special landscapes. It focuses on young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years from some of the most deprived communities both within the New Forest boundaries and close by. It is a National Parks initiative but its youth led, the 'young champions' decide how they want to get involved and how the project will evolve. The youth workers and project staff simply give them the confidence and support to make their ambitions a reality.

Figure 32 - Mosaic Champions

Being outdoors in a special place like the New Forest offers an important escape from the often stressful lives many disadvantaged young people live. These landscapes are inspirational places and can give young people the opportunity to try new experiences and develop vital skills that can help them cope with the worries and challenges of modern life both now and as they reach adulthood.

"*My decision to go to study at college have been heavily influenced by the mosaic project and gaining experience in my local National Park."(*New Forest Mosaic Young Champion)

The young Champions get involved in National Parks in a variety of ways, such as organising visits for other young people, advising the National Park Authority on its marketing products, or testing out facilities in the area to see if they are catering for young people. The National Park provide a range of training opportunities based around their interests and they gain experience and skills which will help them gain employment.

2.9.20 User/ activity groups

There are a number of specialist user and activity groups representing the range of activities that take place in the New Forest e.g. Equine Forum, Dog Forum, New Forest Cycling club etc.

2.10 Plans and Policies

There are a number of plans and policies which help manage the New Forest. The key ones are outlined in **Table 5**, which also highlight how the OPOF will help achieve their aims and objectives.

Table 5 - Plans and Policies and How OPOF can help to address them

Plan or Policy Mechanism	Description	OPOF Project which will help to address the Issue
National Park Management Plan The role is to guide and co-ordinate the work of all those with an interest in the Park, in delivering the National Park purposes and duty. It is a strategic document which sets out the overall Vision and approach for the area, and attempts to tackle some of the major issues that affect the Park now and in the future. It is a plan for the National Park as a place and a community, It sets out an overall approach to managing the National Park, which can then guide more detailed policies and actions, developed through further discussion with relevant organisations and local communities. The plan looks at 10 topics, each of which includes the context, issues, current work, objectives, approach to addressing the issues and a series of priority actions.The current Management Plan was produced in 2010 to cover the period 2010 - 2015 and is currently being updated. The update is designed to be a supplement to the existing Management Plan and focuses primarily on bringing the actions in the plan up-to-date, looking forward over the next five years. It also includes short chapters illustrating some of the projects completed over the last few years and the major changes or issues that have arisen since 2010. A revised version of the Management Plan update, based on the consultation responses, will be produced for formal public consultation in May/June 2015. and a final version of the document will be agreed by the main partner organisations in July	The Update has a number of action that relate to the 10 Strategic objectives for the National Park from the 2010 Management Plan.	NA
	▪ Enhancing landscapes and habitats – protect and enhance the large scale cultural landscapes and semi-natural habitats of the New Forest	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 1h - Historic Routes 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring
	▪ Conserving local distinctiveness – conserve and enhance the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the villages and landscapes of the New Forest	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 1h - Historic Routes 2c - Building Skills 2d – Veteran Trees 3b - Heritage on my Doorstep 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Encouraging sustainable land management – encourage land management that sustains the special qualities of the National Park	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change

	▪ Planning for climate change – plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest and reduce the overall environmental footprint of the National Park	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a - Monitoring – Biodiversity 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Safeguarding tranquillity – maintain and enhance the tranquillity of the National Park	3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Understanding the special qualities – achieve a shared understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the National park by local people, visitors and organisations	1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 1h - Historic Routes 3a - Ecademy 3b - Heritage on my Doorstep 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3c - Common Cause - Photography 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Enjoying the National Park – enhance people's enjoyment and quality of experience of the National Park, while safeguarding the special qualities of the area	1h - Historic Routes 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 3f – Wildplay 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Supporting local communities – strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities, and the pride of local people in their area	1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 1h - Historic Routes 3b - Heritage on my Doorstep 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3e - New Forest Connects 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Fostering economic well-being – develop a	2a – Rural Skills

	diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities	2b- Apprentice Rangers 2c - Building Skills 2d – Veteran Trees 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Improving traffic and transport – reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and provide a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park	3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
Recreation Management Strategy The Recreation Management Strategy (RMS) sets out the strategic direction for the management of outdoor recreation in the New Forest National Park from 2010 – 2030. The Strategy seeks to guide and influence recreation and spatial planning policy and implementation across the whole of the National Park and adjoining areas. It outlines how the outstanding opportunities for recreation and enjoyment that the National Park offers will be protected and enhanced whilst a balanced approach to management will safeguard the conservation of the resource that visitors wish to experience and enjoy. The Strategy identifies a series of actions for the National Park Authority and key partners which are designed to improve and develop the way in which recreation contributes to the sustainability and wellbeing of the New Forest National Park and all those people who live and work here - as well as for those people who come to visit and enjoy its special qualities.	A series of priority actions are outlined which address some of the major challenges facing the National Park. These are grouped around the following key themes:	
	▪ Active engagement with users, land managers and providers of recreation to further the first and second purposes of the National Park	1f - Natures Stepping Stones 1h - Historic Routes 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Appropriate communication structures and events will be set up, as required, to enable active discussion between user groups, land managers and recreation providers to address matters of conflict (actual or perceived) and mutual interest	3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ A programme of survey and research will be implemented to inform future discussions and decisions about the management of recreation. The Strategy will be reviewed after five years in the light of this evidence	3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ The majority of recreational activity will be focussed on gateway locations. The potential for enhancing facilities within the New Forest National Park will be explored at these sites and around a core network of sustainable access routes	1h - Historic Routes 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ The provision of new areas of green infrastructure will absorb the anticipated growth	1f - Natures Stepping Stones 3d - Foxbury

	in levels of recreational demand from new housing and increased populations in adjacent urban areas. This will be achieved by working with neighbouring Authorities to improve the provision of new and enhanced facilities within or close to the growth areas	3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Capacity for further growth in visitor numbers within the National Park will be managed by having a maximum number of car park spaces and limiting the provision of new facilities outside villages	1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe
Landscape Action Plan The Landscape Action Plan was published by the National Park Authority in 2013. It contains guidance for people wanting to help maintain the special character of the New Forest. It describes what makes the New Forest landscape so unique and suggests ways of helping to maintain what we all cherish. It brings together guidance which already exists in planning documents which have been agreed by a wide range of people. It does not 'prohibit' the use of certain features in the landscape – rather it aims to encourage people to consider options which might be more in keeping with the character of the New Forest. The Landscape Action Plan is available as an additional document to support this application.	A number of actions are recommended to address the issues within key themes:	
	▪ Conservation and enhancement of tranquillity and dark night skies	3c - Common Cause - Campaigns
	▪ Settlements in the landscape	1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 2c - Building Skills 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Integrating roads into the landscape	NA
	▪ Integrating access to recreation provision into the landscape	1h - Historic Routes 3e - New Forest Connects 3f - Wildplay Sites 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Integrating renewable and low carbon technologies into the landscape	NA
	▪ Managing forests and woodlands in harmony with the New Forest landscape	1a - Working Woodlands 3d - Foxbury 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring
	▪ Managing the enclosed landscapes	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ Monitoring landscape change	4a – Biodiversity Monitoring

		4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
Nature in the New Forest: action for biodiversity The NPA produced an action plan for biodiversity in 2012 which brings together information and collective aspirations for biodiversity. Its approach focuses on conserving and enhancing biodiversity through landscape scale, ecosystem management and the many services provided by nature. It provides a framework for all partners, stakeholders and the community., building on current initiatives, guiding future activity, sets strategic priorities and actions.		1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring
New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD The first set of dedicated planning policies for the whole of the New Forest National Park area was adopted by the National Park Authority on 9 December 2010. The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) provides the overall vision, strategic aims and objectives and spatial planning policies for the New Forest National Park for the period to 2026. The 42 policies are used to guide decisions on planning applications within the whole of the National Park.	Protect and enhance the natural environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the range of habitats and species.	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Conserve and enhance the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the built environment of the New Forest.	1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 2c - Building Skills 3c - Common Cause - Verderers Hall 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest and reduce the overall environmental footprint of the National Park.	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a - Monitoring – Biodiversity 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change

	Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 1h - Historic Routes 2a – Rural Skills 2b- Apprentice Rangers 2c - Building Skills 3b - Heritage on my Doorstep 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3c - Common Cause - Photography 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 3e - New Forest Connects 3f - Wildplay Sites 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Promote affordable housing to meet local needs and maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.	N/A
	Develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities throughout the Park.	2a – Rural Skills 2c - Building Skills 3g – New Forest Arts Festival 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Encourage land management that sustains the special qualities of the National Park.	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 2a – Rural Skills 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Support development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, and provides opportunities for enjoying the Park's special qualities.	1h - Historic Routes 3c - Common Cause - Verderers 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects

		3f - Wildplay Sites 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and support a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park.	3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
Natura 2000 Natural England have set Conservation Objectives for the New Forest SAC which ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features. The UK government is obliged to take steps to avoid any significant pollution, disturbance or deterioration of the habitats. Through its Agencies (NE) it works closely with owners and occupiers to conserve, enhance and maintain the special habitats. The SAC Management Plan was prepared in 2001 and explains how the various habitats must be managed into the future to address current and forseeable problems and opportunities, and the needs of the special habitats and species, with the ultimate goal of achieving favourable condition for all European features. The Plan includes Implementation plans, produced by individuals for all land managing Partners to cover works for the next 5 years. The New Forest Site Improvement Plan was produced in 2014, these have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS). The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. The SIP sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who	Conservation Objectives: Maintaining or restoring; ▪ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species ▪ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats ▪ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species ▪ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely ▪ The populations of qualifying species, and, ▪ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change

needs to do what, when and how much it will cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links. The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge.		
Forestry Commission The New Forest Inclosures Forest Design Plans have been compiled within the context of the England Forestry Strategy and the South East England Regional Forestry Framework entitled "Seeing the Wood for the Trees". The FC have produced a Management Plan for the New Forest Crown Lands. One component of the Management Plan is a Plan for the New Forest Inclosures. The Inclosures have been divided into 20 separate units with the management objectives of each presented as individual Forest Design Plans (FDP). THE FDP define the long term vision for woodlands, usually looking 50 to 100 years ahead and set out objectives and how management will move towards achieving this vision over the initial 10 to 30 years	▪ To sustain and protect existing habitats of nature conservation interest	1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ To develop woodlands that are more attractive and are sympathetic to their landscape context	1a - Working Woodlands 2d – Veteran Trees 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ To develop woodlands that provide opportunities for public enjoyment, aiming to divert pressure away from more sensitive habitats	1a - Working Woodlands 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ To provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries	1a - Working Woodlands 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ To protect all ancient monuments and any other features of cultural heritage	1a - Working Woodlands 1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	▪ To achieve the Minister's Mandate objectives through consultation with local communities and representatives of organisations involved with nature conservation, public recreation and the timber industry	N/A
Verderers Policies The Verderers statutory, customary and relevant powers and duties include primary legislation set out in: The New Forest Acts of 1877, 1879, 1949, 1964, and 1970;	Objectives: The primary objective of the Verderers is to protect and administer the New Forest's unique agricultural commoning practices, to conserve its traditional	1c - Conserving the Forest Fringe 2a – Rural Skills 3c - Common Cause - Campaigns 3c - Common Cause - Photography 3c - Common Cause - Verderers

The Countryside Act 1968 Section 23. Their general statutory duties set out in: The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 Section 11A (as introduced by Section 62 Environment Act 1995), The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 28G (as amended by Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), Regulation 48 of the Habitats Regulations. Their policies were published on 20th July 2005 and include Objectives, Aims and detailed Policies covering various subject areas	landscape, wildlife and aesthetic character, including its flora and fauna, peacefulness, natural beauty and cultural heritage, and to safeguard a viable future for commoning upon which these depend. Aims The Verderers will endeavor to ensure that the unspoilt natural beauty of the Forest is maintained and, where necessary, restored and/or enhanced. The Verderers will seek the relocation or cessation, or where that is not possible, mitigation of any activities that are damaging to the special qualities They have specific polices of how they would respond to issues in relation to the following: Commoners and Farming; Camping; Car parking; recreation and recreational facilities; utilities and roads; signage; man made features; land exchanges with the Minister; education and Information; relationship with other public bodies such as the National Park; nature conservation. All their policies are aimed at protecting and/or restoring the special qualities of the Forest,	3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
New Forest Catchment Project The New Forest Catchment Project is working with local communities and organisations to identify where they feel there are opportunities to improve the health of our streams, rivers and lakes. This will help meet legislative requirements but more importantly improve the quality of the local environment for all and complements the ongoing work of the Environment Agency. Its focus is on producing co-ordinated plans of action at an individual stream level on individuals streams. Some of the work through the OPOF LPS will further to meet these objectives and provide added value to this work		1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change

The Solent European Marine Sites Management Scheme (SEMS) sets out the conservation objectives for the internationally designated coastal sites and the SEMS Management Group takes an overview of the wide variety of activities on the coast potentially affecting these sites and the action required to meet the conservation objectives. The Solent Forum, comprising all relevant local authorities, statutory agencies and interested parties provides a platform and network for partnership working, information dissemination and discussion of coastal issues. The Forum commissioned a study to investigate recreational disturbance of birds to assess and plan for potential impacts from increasing development and housing in South Hampshire – The Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project . The Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy sets out policies and guidance for the protection and management of areas of land outside the statutory designated sites that provide a feeding and roosting resource for the birds.		N/A
North Solent Shoreline Management Plan This provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal processes, including flooding and erosion. The policy for much of the New Forest coast is to 'hold the line' of defences, for example, where there is risk to development and industry or indeed risk to important habitat behind defences such as the grazing marshes and saline lagoons between Lymington and Keyhaven. Recreation of habitat elsewhere to compensate for habitat lost in front of sea defences is being considered under the Regional Habitat Creation Programme facilitated by the Environment Agency and Natural England in partnership with other partners. Policy for currently undefended frontages will allow evolution of the coast under natural processes and favour habitats such as mudflats and		N/A

saltmarsh. A long-term vision is required to take account of potential loss of grazing marsh, much of which in the medium term will be protected by the sea wall between Lymington and Keyhaven. Loss would require compensating through permitting landward migration of the terrestrial and upper saltmarsh habitat. Any repositioning of saline lagoons would require very advanced establishment of the new resource		
Community Wildlife Plans Project These encourage local communities to record, map and conserve wildlife in their local area. So far the project has worked in New Milton, Milford-on-Sea, Hordle, Godshill, Marchwood, Wellow, Lymington and Pennington, and Landford. Wildlife surveying and habitat mapping workshops have enabled members of the local community to get out and survey their local green spaces, and find out more about the wildlife on their doorstep and to write a plan for their own parish. This has enabled local community groups to: ▪ collate existing biological data, bringing together what we already know about the wildlife of each area ▪ collect new data, with help from a range of community groups from all ages, experience and backgrounds ▪ discuss the opportunities for improving green spaces for wildlife and creating more 'wildlife corridors' which link important habitats and allow wildlife to flourish ▪ compile a Community Wildlife Plan, summarising the wildlife resource and the plans for maintenance and enhancement for wildlife and enabling communities to deliver further practical conservation work		1a - Working Woodlands 1b - Better Boundaries 1d - Invasive non Native Species 1e - Living Waters 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 3a - Ecademy 4a – Biodiversity Monitoring 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
Village Design Statements		1g - Rediscovering Arch Heritage

These describe the character and features of local distinctiveness within individual parishes and may include information on buildings of local historical interest, the landscape setting of the village, land uses and important views. They also suggest guidelines to conserve the character of the area in the event of any new development. Village Design Statements are produced and agreed by the local community and can be adopted by the planning authority as Supplementary Planning Documents. Seven villages have completed or are producing Village Design Statements (Hordle, Wellow, Landford, Ashurst and Colbury, Sway and Boldre).		1h - Historic Routes 2c - Building Skills 3b - Heritage on my Doorstep 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
Countryside Access Plan for the New Forest & South-West Hampshire (HCC, 2008-2013) This seeks to determine an approach to managing rights of way for the next twenty years and explores the specific issues affecting enjoyment of the area and propose actions to address them. They do not necessarily relate to increasing public access to the countryside; many of them are about enhancing and improving the existing network. A further development of these plans was the establishment of the Providing Access To Hampshire's Heritage (PATHH) project by Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF). PATHH sought to identify historic highways that had fallen out of use and were no longer recorded on the definitive map, so that they could eventually be restored and re-opened to the public. The project was extremely successful and identified a number of historic highways that HCAF will submit for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) to	Outside the Crown Lands of the New Forest, there is a shortage of accessible open space for recreation and routine exercise that is within or close to the major settlements	1h - Historic Routes 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 3f - Wildplay Sites 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	There is a high reliance on cars and car parks to access the countryside in the New Forest & SW Hants	1h - Historic Routes 3d - Foxbury 3e - New Forest Connects 3f - Wildplay Sites 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	There are insufficient attractive and suitable car free routes that link centres of population to each other and to the countryside	1h - Historic Routes 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Countryside users are forced to use or cross busy roads to link up off-road access	1h - Historic Routes 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	There are limited opportunities for access to and along the coast of the New Forest & SW Hants	1h - Historic Routes 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Provision and improvement of public access needs to take full account of the special qualities of the New Forest and SW Hants area	1h - Historic Routes 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change
	Landowners and land managers are concerned about some of the effects of public access, which can deter them from providing more access	1a - Working Woodlands 1f - Natures Stepping Stones 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change

Hampshire County Council before a 2026 cut-off date for restoring historic highway.	The extent of countryside access in this part of the county is unrivalled in the whole of Hampshire and could offer a high level of accessibility to all users	1h - Historic Routes 3e - New Forest Connects 4b – Evaluation & behaviour change