

A Landscape Partnership to ensure the New Forest's distinctive landscape survives despite future change and modern-day pressures.



Our Past, Our Future is a £4.4 million Landscape Partnership Scheme for the New Forest supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

It will undertake 21 projects to restore lost habitats, develop Forest skills and inspire a new generation to champion and care for the New Forest. The HLF funded Scheme is now 6 months into the delivery phase.

**The NPA and partner organisations have made some excellent progress with the individual projects and some of these key achievements are summarised in this, the first of our 6 monthly newsletters.**

## **Practical Conservation**

Volunteers have helped plant **5000** trees at the National Trusts' Foxbury reserve and elsewhere they have helped remove scrub to help improve sites for wildlife, and over **300m** of hedge has been laid to improve corridors for wildlife.

## **Research**

Initial surveys of industrial archaeology sites and graveyards have been undertaken and over **500** library items have been digitised at the New Forest Centre. The Inaugural Community Heritage Forum was held to discuss training and partnership opportunities for local groups and volunteers.

## **Training**

Over 90 people have attended traditional building skills courses that have been run for agents and homeowners, and **52** people have attended courses on sustainable land management.

## **Events**

Over **40** events have been arranged as part of the New Forest Arts Festival from 11 - 26 June 2016 and work is underway for an exhibition and activities at the New Forest Show from 26 - 28 July.

**Volunteering** is integral to all the projects and we now hold over **200** contacts for potential volunteers. A 'Get Involved Day' is arranged for 11 June where new volunteers will have a chance to 'have a go' at the different volunteering opportunities that the Scheme has to offer.



If you want to find out more about any of the projects or volunteering for the Scheme, then please contact the team:

Email [Ourpast.ourfuture@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:Ourpast.ourfuture@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

Web [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/landscape-partnership](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/landscape-partnership)

## Restoring lost landscapes

### Working Woodlands led by New Forest Land Advice Service

Over the 3 years the project will work with 30 private landowners to restore and sustainably manage 120 hectares of woodland, thereby improving the environmental, social and economic benefits that they can deliver. Sites for the first year have been identified and work will start to progress the project in August 2016.

### Stepping Stones led by New Forest Land Advice Service

The project aims to improve 30 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. Plans for the first 11 sites have been agreed with landowners and during the first 6 months work has been completed at 7 sites to clear invasive willow, gorse and rhododendron from important species rich grasslands and heathlands. Further work is planned later in the year and remaining sites will be sought for future years.

### Better Boundaries led by New Forest Land Advice Service

The project aims to improve 4km of boundary features by working with 22 landowners within the Western Escarpment. During the first 6 months over 300metres have been created, restored or enhanced, with work including hedgelaying, hedgeplanting, fencing and ground preparation. These improved boundary features will then create habitat corridors that enhance the landscape character of the New Forest farmland.

Better boundaries hedge laying training in process



### Biodiversity Monitoring led by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Habitat and species monitoring will take place at many of the sites which will be restored, enhanced or better managed during the delivery of the Scheme. The Wildlife Trust are working closely with New Forest Land Advice Service and volunteers to undertake surveys. Breeding bird surveys are currently underway and volunteers will survey and monitor butterflies, bees, bats and reptiles during the summer months.

### Living Waters led by the Freshwater Habitats Trust on behalf of the New Forest Catchment Partnership

The project aims to improve aquatic biodiversity in the Beaulieu River catchment by addressing diffuse nutrient and sediment pollution, and managing high quality habitats like the Beaulieu Abbey ponds. Within the first 6 months, a water harvesting system to reduce farmyard run-off carrying nutrient and sediment into the Beaulieu River has been completed at Leygreen Farm.

Water harvesting system at Leygreen Farm



Archaeological heritage volunteers at Copythorne graveyard

### Rediscovering and Conserving Our Archaeological Heritage

led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will focus on industrial heritage sites, burial grounds and unsurveyed woodlands. During the first 6 months a number of graveyards and their monuments have been accurately located and meetings are now being held with local groups to undertake community led recording and condition surveys of the monuments. Plans are being made for a small scale community archaeological excavation at Bucklers Hard as part of the Festival of British Archaeology.

### Conserving the Forest Fringe

led by the Forestry Commission

A trainee Estates Keeper has been employed who will work closely with 8 Forest communities to raise awareness and understanding about the importance of boundaries onto the Crown land and reduce visual encroachments. Work has started with Woodgreen and Nomansland and other Parish's will be sought for future years.



New Forest National Park officers surveying hedgerow near Woodgreen

### Removal of Invasive Non Native Plants led by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The project is targeting problem areas outside the core Forest i.e. Avon Water, Cadnam River, Lymington River and its tributaries and Fleet Water. Agreement has been reached for work with over 80 landowners over the 4 years of the project. Two project officers are in place and have planned volunteer tasks to hand pull Himalayan balsam starting in May 2016 and contractors will spray Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and American skunk cabbage.

### Historic Routes and Past Pathways led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will work with volunteers and local communities to identify rights of way of significant historical importance and promote a greater understanding of their importance. Work on the project will start in November 2016.

Non-native balsam removal at Passford Water



## Discovering Forest heritage and inspiring a new generation

### Connecting People and Places led by the National Trust

The project is working to restore and increase native woodland and heathland cover within the National Trust's Foxbury estate, with the emphasis on community, educational delivery and sustainable recreation. Within the first 6 months volunteers have planted over 5000 trees, access improvements have been completed with the installation of a car park, timber cabin and composting toilet, which have enabled several large events to be held at the site.



### Common Cause: Verderers Hall led by the Forestry Commission

Work will commence on the restoration of the hall in June, while the Court is in recess, until September. Plans are also being worked up for new interpretation and improved access to the hall for the public.

### Common Cause: A Shared Forest led by the Commoners Defence Association

The project aims to change people's attitudes to commoners and their stock, and influence their behaviour. A campaign to emphasise the importance of not feeding/petting ponies is planned for the summer, and one on safe driving for the autumn. A consultant has started research to develop an educational toolkit on commoning for key stage 1 and 2 that will emphasise the importance of commoning to the continued existence of the New Forest landscape and ecology. Discussions are ongoing to determine how to best progress further research and other campaigns.

### Common Cause: Through Our Ancestors Eyes led by the Commoners Defence Association

The project aims to collate a photographic and document archive of commoning, forestry and agriculture in the New Forest which can be used to conserve the cultural history and educate people. Volunteers have been recruited and trained on how to use scanning and oral history recording equipment. Over the summer months visits will be made to people who have offered to share their photographs and memories with the project.



### New Forest Connects led by the New Forest National Park Authority

This project will deliver a diverse programme of events, activities, training and other interpretation. The first year's exhibition will be at the New Forest Show and then tour the Forest, other interactive elements for the Bolderwood Information unit and the Deer Viewing platform are progressing. The project is also delivering a training programme to train and support people in heritage interpretation, and also train a smaller group of 'trainers' who will then deliver heritage interpretation training to others.

Left - Car park at Foxbury Estate  
Above - Commoners ponies being prepared for export from Warren Farm

### New Forest Knowledge led by the New Forest Centre

The project will provide online access to knowledge, data and information about the New Forest for the benefit of researchers, students and the local community. During the first 6 months 20 volunteers have catalogued and scanned over 500 library items. Website options are being considered and a conference is planned for October 2016.

### Heritage on our Doorstep led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will support and train groups to get involved with and discover more about their local heritage and share it with the wider community. In total 8 groups will be included in the project and several have already expressed an interest. Conversations have begun with Minstead and Emery Down and a new group in Netley Marsh. A Community Heritage Forum has been held to engage groups and commence training and projects.

### Wildplay led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will create engaging and exciting areas for kids to be able to engage with the natural world in an informal setting. Permanent wild play sites will be targeted in key sites, including Holbury Woods and Lepe Country Park. A project officer will also arrange pop up events and raise awareness amongst the local communities throughout the Forest.

Wildplay at Anderwood



### Arts Festival led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will organise and promote an annual arts event on the heritage of the New Forest. This first year's Festival is planned for 11 - 26 June 2016 and includes over 40 events varying from film and theatre performances to music concerts and workshops. Many are in unique spaces, including a beach hut, tree house and castle, helping people explore more areas of the New Forest. See [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/artsfestival](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/artsfestival)

Boat haven by Will Hacon  
- one of the artists taking part in the Arts Festival



## Developing Forest skills

**New Forest Rural Skills** led by the New Forest Land Advice Service and the Commoners Defences Association

This project will deliver subsidised courses to farmers, commoners and other landowners. A number of successful courses have been run at Sparsholt College and at locations around the Forest and further courses are planned.

In addition, 8 commoners will mentor 11 people over the first year to ensure their knowledge is passed onto the younger generation.



Cattle breeding course

**Veteran Trees Skills** led by the New Forest National Park Authority

This project will provide tree surgeons and tree officers with the most up to date training in the care and management of ancient trees. Courses will start in 2017.

**Building Skills** led by the New Forest National Park Authority

The project will run courses on traditional building skills.

The aim is to train 90 agents and builders and 450 homeowners over 4 years. During the first 6 months the project has run the first set of homeowners courses in Beaulieu which covered local traditional building materials, techniques and sympathetic repair methods.

The first of five professional courses took place in March on Historic Masonry Structures at Buckler's Hard and other topics are planned across the remainder of the year.



Professional course on understanding historic timber framed structures and historic roof structures

**Apprentice Ranger** led by the New Forest National Park Authority

This joint partnership between all of the New Forest ranger teams will offer two environmental conservation apprenticeships per year. Recruitment for apprentices for autumn start dates has commenced. A 'Get Involved' day will be held in June, this will include a series of stalls and activities and potential apprentices will be invited to attend to find out more about being a ranger.

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