

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK



Shutterstock Car Park

Definition

Sustainable transport is used to describe all forms of transport which minimise emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants.

It is about finding ways to move people, goods and information in ways that reduce the impact on the environment, economy and society.

With the increase in concern for the effects of climate change, sustainable transport plays an important role in helping to reduce the scale of this problem.

Introduction

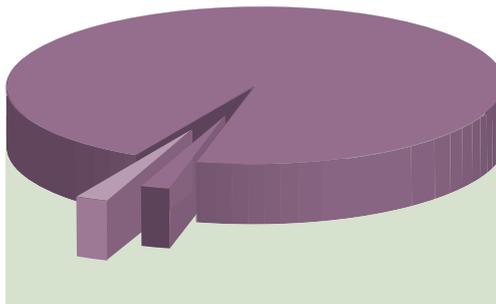
Research has shown that some 96% of visitors arrive in the New Forest National Park by private car. This generates huge pressures for the Park and often results in congestion problems, poor air quality and issues with road safety.

In an effort to reduce the harmful effects of the private car, a number of different initiatives are being progressed which aim to make sustainable transport more appealing to people visiting or travelling through the National Park.

Transport used by visitors to the National Park

Car	96%
Public Transport	2%
Other (e.g. ferry)	2%

Sustainable means of transport include public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling as well as technology such as electric or hybrid cars and biodiesel.



Figures provided by Tourism South East, 2005



Cyclist, Keyhaven



Lymington train, picture New Forest District Council, (NFDC)

Cycling

The New Forest has an extensive 'gravel track' network of traffic free routes. These are managed by the Forestry Commission and form the key element of the cycling opportunities on offer in the New Forest.

Away from the gravel track network, all the roads across the Open Forest have a 40mph speed limit, which helps to slow traffic down and make the cycling experience more pleasant.

Cycle hire is available in most settlements, including Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Burley.

Increasingly, cycle routes are being promoted which link the New Forest with surrounding urban areas, such as Southampton and Bournemouth. In many cases this will enable people to cycle safely from their homes to the National Park.



Dog walkers and cyclists, Beaulieu Heath

Public Transport

Rail

There are 4 railway stations located within the National Park boundary; these are Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu Road and Sway. Travelling by train provides a great opportunity for leaving the car at home.

In an effort to encourage more visitors to arrive by train, 'car free' discounts have been established by a number of accommodation providers which reward customers for leaving their cars at home or in the accommodation provider car parks.

The Lymington to Brockenhurst heritage line now has Community Rail Partnership status. Through the partnership various initiatives are planned to make this important section of railway line more appealing to locals and visitors.

Rail Facts

- There are over **130** stopping trains each day at Brockenhurst Station!
- The New Forest used to be served by more railway lines but many of these were closed in the 1960's. Examples of these include Brockenhurst to Poole and Ringwood to Salisbury – large sections of these are now recreational trails.

Cycling Facts

- The average speed of cyclists using the promoted off road network is **3.7mph**, and their average route length is **11.7 miles**.
- **90%** of day visitors who come to cycle in the New Forest live within **15 miles** of the National Park boundary.

Over 130 trains stop at Brockenhurst Station each day



Brockenhurst Station, picture NFDC



Ferry

There are two ferry services located close to the National Park boundary. Firstly, the Hythe ferry provides an excellent link between Southampton and Hythe (and Waterside) and carries some 400,000 passengers per year.



Whitelink ferry, picture Clive Chatters

Whilst the primary purpose of the ferry is to carry commuters between Hythe and Southampton, the ferry is becoming increasingly important for leisure trips to the New Forest. The New Forest Tour calls at the ferry terminal each morning and afternoon, and cycles can be hired close by so that visitors can continue their journey to the New Forest car free!

A ferry service also connects Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight with Lymington, where visitors can continue their journey to the National Park by rail or bus.

Ferry Facts

- In 2003, a dredger crashed into the Hythe ferry pier causing significant damage. The pier has since been repaired.
- The shortest and fastest vehicle route from the Isle of Wight is between Lymington and Yarmouth.

New Forest Tour Facts

- Despite the poor weather in 2007, passenger figures increased by 10% on 2006 numbers.
- There are plans to have cycle racks fitted inside the bus for those wishing to explore more by bike.

New Forest Tour

The New Forest Tour is a recreational open top bus tour which operates over a 100 day period during the summer.

It follows a circular route which starts in Lyndhurst and passes through the settlements of Brockenhurst, Lymington and Beaulieu before returning to Lyndhurst. The bus also calls at campsites along the route and key visitor attractions including the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and Exbury Gardens.

In addition to the tour experience, customers are offered the opportunity to 'hop on and off' the bus and undertake one of a number of walking and cycling routes along the way, before returning to base on a later bus.



New Forest Tour bus, picture Paul Close



View from the top

Buses

The New Forest has a good network of public bus services which provide links to the National Park from the surrounding areas and within the New Forest itself.

Across the UK, the level of bus passengers has steadily declined over the last 50 years. This has primarily been a result of the cost of motoring getting cheaper. The bus industry is under particular pressure from rising wages, fuel and insurance costs. However buses have an important role to play in connecting communities with local services and for many the bus is the most accessible and reliable form of transport.

The key bus services in the New Forest are provided by Solent Blue Line and Wilts and Dorset.

Bus Facts

- Half of rural households live more than a 13 minute walk away from a bus stop.
- 29% of rural settlements have no bus service at all.



Other Sustainable Transport Projects

Travel Plans

Travel plans are organisation transport strategies which set out to identify the causes and solutions to transport issues relevant to that organisation. Very often, travel plans will seek to reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys associated with an organisation by promoting car sharing, cycling, walking and public transport as alternatives.

Bio-fuel Taxis

The New Forest has recently seen its first environmentally friendly taxi service introduced. The service, called Our Friends in the South, uses 100% bio-diesel extracted from vegetable and recycled used cooking oil (bio-diesel - subject to availability and operating conditions) to power two London style taxis. This offers a 'green' alternative to the usual taxi services on offer in the National Park.

The levels of emissions of these taxis are far below those of rival 'fossil fuel' operators and this helps create a cleaner environment in the towns and villages of the Forest.

Horse Drawn Omnibus

2007 saw the launch of an exciting new sustainable transport project based in Ringwood. The 1906 Southampton Corporation Omnibus service offers various routes across the New Forest pulled behind rare breed Suffolk Punch heavy horses. The service departs up to four times daily and includes an 'out into the Forest tour' that includes a chance to stop off in the Forest for lunch.

This alternative method of transport offers customers the opportunity to park their car at Ringwood and enjoy a unique journey across the New Forest.

Further reading/ useful information

Other New Forest National Park Authority fact files

The New Forest Tour: www.thenewforest.co.uk/tourbus

Driving Sideways: www.driving-sideways.co.uk

Our Friends in the South: www.ourfriendsinthesouth.com

Wilts and Dorset Bus: www.wdbus.co.uk

Solent Blue Line: www.solentblueline.com

Cycling in the New Forest Leaflet (available from Visitor Information Centres)

www.newforestnpa.gov.uk Factsheet available on CD, in large-print, or Braille on request

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