

BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

2018-19 Work Programme Q1 (1 April to 30 June 2018)

Enjoy

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

Enjoy Priority 1: Helping more people to understand and value the things that make the New Forest National Park unique and special

- Deliver learning and engagement activities (e.g. through rangers, education officers, events, exhibitions and interpretation) for different audiences including a focus on children and young people, making the National Park relevant and accessible and giving them a voice in its future
- Lead the development and delivery of bespoke curriculum-linked education for schools and colleges at selected National Park sites and in the classroom
- Maximise the use of social media and online resources to help a growing number of people to understand, value and care for the New Forest
- Enable organisations with face-to-face public and visitor-facing roles, including educators, businesses and accommodation providers, to be ambassadors for the National Park and its special qualities

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Promote understanding of the special qualities, our work and key messages through 14,000 face to face contacts by NPA rangers at public engagement events led or co-led by the Authority, community events run by other organisations, informal learning activities opportunistic use of mobile unit and an on-the-ground presence throughout the National Park. (SQ1)	Claire Sherwood / Nigel Matthews	<p>There were 8,255 face to face contacts by the ranger team. Of these, 5,172 were at events ranging from country fairs and community fun-days to guided walks, preschool visits, youth engagement sessions, dog training activities and 'pop-up' roadshows in Forest car parks aimed at discouraging people from approaching livestock. The remaining 3,083 were people spoken to by the seasonal rangers at around 30 locations across the National Park about protecting ground nesting birds.</p> <p>There were also numerous messages about the special qualities to >2,000 followers via the New Forest Rangers' Twitter account.</p>		
Support and train at least four organisations with face-to-face public and visitor-facing roles to be ambassadors for the National Park, championing understanding of its special qualities (e.g. educators, businesses, accommodation providers, local information points and visitor centres) (SQ4)	Jim Mitchell / Aynsley Clinton	<p>New Forest Tour operator pre-season driver training sessions across three sites in June; 14 drivers attended. Topics included improving customer service skills, reminders about the special qualities of the National Park, how to help ensure residents and visitors enjoy their time responsibly on the Tour and at popular visitor points along the way.</p> <p>A 'Go New Forest Discovery Day' took place on 24 May where 18 people from local businesses and accommodation providers visited the 'Date with Nature' event at the Reptile Centre to find out about local wildlife. They also went on a guided walk led by a Forestry Commission keeper looking at how people can help ground-nesting birds.</p>		
Establish renewed joint working arrangements between the NPA and Ninth Centenary Trust to maximise opportunities for the New Forest Centre to achieve national park purposes (SQ4)	Nigel Matthews	Liaison focussed on identifying the services that the Trust provides exclusively to the NPA, so that their cost/value could be assessed alongside other more general benefits.		Satisfying all parties involved will not be easy. See agenda item for further information.

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Increase social media followers by 8,000 and email newsletter subscribers by 2,500. Investigate customer relationship management software to manage our marketing database.	Hilary Makin	Social media followers increased by 2,400. Email newsletter subscribers increased by 100. We are liaising with other national parks looking at CRM systems.		
Develop and teach curriculum-specific sessions about the national park for 10,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school. (SQ7)	Sue Palma	724 pupils from 13 schools were taught by the education team during this quarter, mainly at Bolderwood and Whitefield Moor, with "Special Qualities of the National Park" as the most requested theme. A further 1,425 pupils from 6 schools booked a 'Plastic Planet' litter assembly, bringing the total to nearly 14,000.		
Work with schools and partner organisations to embed the New Forest National Park into the school curriculum, including administering the Travel Grant Scheme, facilitating the Educators' Forum, organising student work placements and the maintenance of the New Forest Curriculum web pages. (SQ7)	Sue Palma	To date, 49 schools have applied for the Travel Grant Scheme, and 1,860 children have already benefitted from the scheme. Nine work experience students from four different schools have been accepted for placements in July following interviews, and three university and college students will also be joining the staff as volunteers during the summer vacation. The revised New Forest Curriculum website is now ready, and the uploading of resources to the new site has begun.		

Enjoy Priority 2: Enabling high quality and beneficial experiences of the National Park

- Encourage providers of sites for outdoor recreation to highlight in their visitor information and interpretation the New Forest National Park's special qualities and its status as a nationally-important, living landscape
- Work with Natural England, local communities, land owners, land managers and highway authorities, to establish the England Coast Path and improve agreed recreational sites and routes in ways that will reduce impacts on sensitive areas
- Work with health providers, communities and businesses to enable people to benefit from improved mental and physical health through engagement with the special qualities of the National Park
- Work with partners to develop a shared approach to promoting volunteering, building on the success of the Our Past Our Future scheme and the annual volunteer fair, to enable more people to volunteer in ways which benefit the New Forest's special qualities and support their own wellbeing

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Develop interpretive resources with partners on at least three sites / locations that promote the National Park's designation and special qualities e.g. suitable interpretive signage, self-guided trails, digital. (SQ4, LH10)	Jim Mitchell / Gareth Owen	<p>The OPOF historic routes project will establish five new history trails. Of the 691 Rights of Way in the project area 23 draft trails have been suggested and are now being surveyed on the ground. For each trail we will highlight any historical significance of the routes used, the landscape traversed and emphasise that these rights of way are within a National Park.</p> <p>We are working with Avon Tyrrell to establish six new interpretation points. The trail focusses on the National Park, the house, UK Youth and flora and fauna.</p> <p>Canadian War Memorial - working with FC we have restored the memorial and will install a new interpretation panel about the use of the area by the Canadians during WWII and the lead up to D-Day.</p>		
Work with partners to enhance at least four local sites or walking routes by improving access or information provision, e.g. through the small grants scheme and community-led projects. (EP1, EP2)	Adam Vasey / Claire Sherwood	Current work includes the Mend our Mountains campaign for improvements to the Lepe Loop and a request to contribute towards work in Shallows Lane, Boldre to restrict damage by turning vehicles. Work on how we can add value to rights of way signage and infrastructure will progress when the new NPA's Access Ranger is in post.		
As the Access Authority for the National Park, provide a representation to Natural England's report on the development of the England Coast Path through the National Park. When the route has been agreed, deliver the establishment phase of the new trail and associated open access land. (EP3)	Adam Vasey / Nigel Matthews	The NPA's representation highlighted parts of the route where we had concerns, or wanted reassurance that better alternatives do not exist. Issues included use of roads, potential disturbance to wildlife, establishment and maintenance costs, and the way in which 'spreading room' will be pictured on OS maps.		The establishment of the Coast Path will be a significant task for the NPA but it will be fully funded by NE. We anticipate a significant delay in the announcement of the final route.

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Deliver activities to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors through contact with the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest, including 10,000 hours spent walking for health and one new permanent community Wildplay site established. (LC8, LC9)	Jim Mitchell / Claire Pearce	<p>Holbury Wildplay site official opening took place in April and is now being used by the local community; further 'pop up' days planned. Sway Wildplay site also installed and in use; official opening will take place in September.</p> <p>The Healthy walks partnership with NFDC and Community First New Forest resulted in 1,743 hours spent walking for health this quarter. 40 walk leaders spent 508 hours leading 331 people on these walks.</p> <p><i>Case study: Mr J had looked for a group walk that he felt comfortable joining. He was delighted to find one local to him in the New Forest. The walks have given him a reason to go out and enabled him to make new friends and share experiences. He benefits greatly from chatting with other walkers, which improves his general mood. He says it is the highlight of his week and is encouraging him to walk more often.</i></p>		
Deliver the OPOF Apprentice ranger scheme in partnership with other Forest ranger teams and education providers. (EW8)	Craig Daters	The two Apprentices continued their journey by spending 10 weeks with FC Ranger, Keeper and Ecology teams. Duties included patrolling, infrastructure repairs, assisting with harvesting operations, butterfly transects and bat surveys.		
Continue the development of the PEDALL project, securing external funding and recruiting 15 volunteers, and deliver 190 cycling sessions for up to 400 participants. (EP4)	Donna Nesityif	Recruited 6 new volunteers. Delivered 87 Inclusive Cycling sessions to 531 participants and 329 carers.		

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Engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented including young people (Wild Play days, John Muir Award, Youth Action Project) and those with disabilities. (EP4, LC9)	Jim Mitchell / Craig Daters / Claire Pearce	Youth Action Project: we facilitated 5 visits for Princes Trust groups to work alongside YAP partners (approx. 30 x 16-25 year olds) John Muir Award: 52 awards completed by the end of this period (via Brockenhurst College, Priestlands and Greenwood Schools).		
Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects such as Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme (OPOF) and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 40+ volunteering organisations and attended by 400+ prospective volunteers. (SQ2)	Richard Austin / Jim Mitchell	On the 23 June, volunteers were trained in surveying techniques for butterflies and bumblebees. The volunteers have been surveying throughout the spring and summer, with three breeding bird surveys completed across 23 different sites between April and June. Species spotted include a hawfinch in Emery Down, Firecrest near Fordingbridge and a Cuckoo near Minstead. Volunteers have also been out clearing Himalayan balsam from watercourses in the forest and will continue until September. We held a volunteer day to do some tree maintenance at our Family Trees sites in Sway and Ashurst and also completed a day of scrub clearance in Pilley in preparation for the horse logger. The surveying of historic routes has begun with sessions in Netley Marsh and Totton and will continue throughout summer and into autumn.		

Enjoy Priority 3: Facilitating a partnership approach to managing recreation to achieve a net gain for both the working and natural landscape as well as for the recreational experience

- Gain wide agreement and shared commitment to deliver a new suite of prioritised actions that will improve the management of recreation across and beyond the National Park
- Work with partners and facilitate the delivery of co-ordinated communications to influence behaviour and reduce the recreational impact on the 'working Forest' and its special qualities
- Facilitate a review of the sites and routes used for recreation throughout the New Forest and to gain agreement for changes that need to be made, including working with highway authorities and landowners to create a more joined up and safer network of walking and cycling routes between villages and places of interest
- Undertake and support research, and to collate data that clarifies positive and negative impacts of recreation and the success of recreation management initiatives

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Engage the public, local organisations and recreational user groups in agreeing evidence-based actions for an update to the Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030, including commitments from named organisations to deliver key areas of work. (LH10)	Nigel Matthews	Following discussions within the RMS Steering Group, Advisory Group and at the June NPA Authority meeting, a joint consultation was launched on 18 June, for a period of 8 weeks. Further discussion has taken place to help different people and organisations respond (e.g. with NFDC councillors, the Access and Equine Forums, at the New Forest Show and at other events). Most of the draft proposed actions to manage recreation are being well-received but we have yet to see the free-text comments, which are likely to include useful additional information.	Amber	The management of recreation in the New Forest is challenging and complex. However, the Steering Group remains committed to the process of updating the Strategy and in ensuring that the new actions are meaningful and effective.
Work with partners to collate data and evidence to inform where recreation is best encouraged across the New Forest and identify the most effective ways and places to provide information about responsible recreation.	Nigel Matthews / Jim Mitchell	We have commissioned a consultant to review the figure of 13.5m day visits to the National Park that was calculated in 2004. The plan is to look at existing datasets (e.g. traffic, tourism and population data) to detect past and potential future trends – and apply these to the 2004 figure. In addition, the work being led by Test Valley Borough Council on behalf of local planning authorities will involve collecting <i>new</i> data, and therefore provide a complimentary picture of visitation.	Green	
Play a leading role in the co-ordination and delivery of targeted educational campaigns leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter, fungi, disturbance of ground nesting birds and feeding of ponies. (LH10, SQ1, EP5)	Nigel Matthews	We facilitated a meeting of the Animal Accident Reduction Group in April. Overall, the autumn/winter campaign was agreed to have been positive – and the number of accidents fell back to ‘normal’ levels after a very poor autumn/winter last year even though the number of animals depastured has risen. There is ongoing work to improve static, changing and electronic signage, use of road markings and communication materials. We also hosted a meeting convened by Defra staff and attended by people from various parts of the UK where commoners’ animals are vulnerable to road traffic accidents. The New Forest has a more coordinated approach to reducing accidents than elsewhere – although of course there is much more to do.	Amber	There is a high degree of public concern about these issues, and there are no ‘magic wands’. The role-out of the update to the recreation management strategy will bring fresh focus to this work.

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		<p>Participants in UK Cycling Events' spring sportive on 14 and 15 April were required to wear rear numbers and a range of other measures were put in place to help reduce impacts. We heard very few complaints although there were issues around Sway and Pilley where road closures due to emergency gas repairs and a burst water pipe necessitated changes to the planned route.</p> <p>We convened the Joint Litter Working Group in April. Although hampered by snow, the Spring Clean and subsequent community litter picks were successful. We are working with partners to see how it would be possible to more effectively monitor the amounts of litter as well as generate new ideas to reduce it.</p> <p>Through the Dogs Forum we have drafted a Professional Dog Walkers' Charter and plan to invite over 75 dog walking businesses operating in the New Forest to contribute their ideas at an event later this year. The Charter should help demonstrate their commitment to the Forest environment, other people and their dogs, and the welfare of the dogs they walk.</p> <p>As reported above, rangers and seasonal rangers have spent much of the spring promoting responsible walking and dog walking on the heathlands to reduce disturbance to ground nesting birds. We understand that the number of pairs of curlews has again been about 40, with at least some evidence of breeding success. We also helped to inform BBC's Country File coverage of the range of pressures faced by curlews in the Forest</p>		

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<p>Through four full meetings and topic-specific subgroups enable the New Forest Access Forum to provide helpful advice to relevant organisations on improving public access and open air recreation. (EP1, EP2)</p>	<p>Adam Vasey / Nigel Matthews</p>	<p>The Access Forum met at and had a guided tour of Lepe Country Park in June. Among other updates, it considered the research being planned by Test Valley Borough Council on behalf of several local planning authorities. This is driven by the need to understand how people in new housing could affect the designated areas of the New Forest, but will be of wider significance as strategies for managing recreation are developed.</p> <p>We are working with the Forum to recruit new members (to represent landowners, equestrians and people with disabilities) and to ensure there is a good spread of other interests and experience.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>