

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

2017-18 Work Programme – Q4 (1 January to 31 March 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: Enabling high quality experiences of the National Park

We will enhance people's experience and enjoyment of the National Park, by:

- working with local communities, land managers and highway authorities to improve sites and routes for people
- developing projects that enable people with particular needs to experience and benefit from the New Forest
- working with partners and local businesses to improve visitor facilities and information within and around the National Park
- encouraging people to volunteer in ways which benefit the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Work with partners to enhance at least four local sites by improving access, routes or information provision, e.g. through the small grants scheme and community-led projects. EP1, EP2	Gillie Molland	Fundraising and communications still progressing for the Mend our Mountains campaign for improvements to the Lepe Loop. Internal discussions to draft design brief for Added Value rights of way signage and infrastructure improvements.		
As the Access Authority for the National Park, provide input to Natural England's plans for the development of the England Coast Path through the National Park. When the route has been agreed, deliver the establishment phase of the new trail and associated open access land.	Nigel Matthews / Gillie Molland	The England Coast Path objections and representation period started in March and ends on 9 May. Natural England staff and officers attended a members' session to help inform comments that the Authority may wish to make. Officers met with representatives from neighbouring authorities (Hampshire-Kent) for initial discussions about the formation of a Trail Partnership to oversee the maintenance of the route once established.	Changed from Green in Q3	The establishment of the Coast Path will be a significant task for the NPA but it will be fully funded by NE. We will make representations about the route, coastal margin and ongoing management.
Work with partners and communities to understand, develop and deliver visitor information opportunities about the National Park through visitor centres including New Forest Centre and Lepe Country Park redevelopment, eight+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell	Finalised the Memorandum of Understanding between the RSPB and the NPA for the partnership at Franchises Lodge, the first RSPB reserve in the New Forest. The site was acquired by the RSPB in March and the NPA contributed £200k towards its purchase. The MoU details how the partners will work together to achieve landscape, conservation and recreation objectives. Supported Communications visit to Cyclexperience and Burley Youth Hostel to develop approach to sharing National Park messages and content. New Local Information Points in Burley (Shappen Stores) and Brockenhurst (Cyclexperience) established and others renewed for 2018.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects such as Our Past, Our Future Landscape Partnership Scheme (OPOF) and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 30+ volunteering organisations and attended by 300+ prospective volunteers. SQ2	Richard Austin / Jim Mitchell	<p>This winter has been our most successful with our dedicated team of volunteers restoring woodland sites in Bransgore, Minstead, Foxhills, Pennington and Walhampton and improving boundary features in Hyde and South Gorley. They have also cleared invasive scrub on a wildflower meadow, which will encourage a variety of grasses and wildflowers to re-establish.</p> <p>Volunteers have completed the first stage of the Historic Routes and Past Pathways project and our archaeology team have assessed over 250 sites and discovered potential new Bronze Age Barrow sites.</p> <p>The Volunteer Fair ran in January, and attracted 600 people to the Community Centre in Lyndhurst. The Fair was opened by Patrick Keane, a volunteer who has given over 1,000 hours to the Ecademy project.</p> <p>A total of over 31,000 volunteer hours have been recorded through the OPOF scheme.</p>		
Deliver and support 2+ projects (inc. Walking for health and an OPOF project on developing wild play) and work with partners to deliver activities to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors through contact with the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest. LC8	Jim Mitchell	<p>The Holbury Manor Wildplay site has been installed and opening is scheduled for early April. The Wildplay toolkit is also now in its final draft.</p> <p>We have met with NFDC, HCC and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to develop ways to promote each other's work in health and wellbeing and nature / the outdoors.</p> <p>The Walking for Health project had another successful quarter with 45 leaders contributing 672 hours of volunteering enabling 1,189 'walking activities' to take place.</p>		

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Deliver the OPOF ranger Apprentice scheme in partnership with other Forest ranger teams and education providers. EW8	Gillie Molland	Apprentice Rangers, Marty and Pete undertook an 11 week placement with the National Trust before moving on to Forestry Commission. They also achieved their NPTC certificates in Chainsaw Operations and Transportation of Livestock. The apprentice rangers were the focus of the Tesco Bags for Help in-store fundraising campaign which they won and secured £4k which will be used as match funding towards the OPOF scheme. The apprentices took over the NPA Instagram account during National Apprenticeship Week to show young people and potential employers the benefits of the scheme. They attended Brockenhurst College Apprenticeship fair. It was encouraging to speak with so many interested local young people and promote the partnership of the New Forest Apprentice Ranger project.		
Continue the development of the PEDALL project, securing external funding and recruiting volunteers and deliver cycling sessions for participants EP4	Donna Nesityif	January – March 2018 Delivered 45 group cycling sessions with a total of 176 participants and 126 carers Delivered 11 open public cycling sessions with a total of 193 participants and 103 carers. Recruited 10 volunteers Set up Charity “Friends of PEDALL”		
Engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented including young people (John Muir Award and Youth Action Project) and those with disabilities. EP4, LC9	Jim Mitchell /Gillie Molland	Ongoing planning for delivery of National Citizenship Service sessions during summer holidays to engage with up to 500 young people. Support provided for partner sessions delivered to young people and those with disabilities at Pondhead and Hobourne Bashley. Attendance at Totton College volunteer fair to promote volunteering opportunities available across the National Park to students.		

Enjoy Priority 2: Improving understanding of the National Park

We will further people's understanding of, respect for and desire to care for the special qualities of the National Park, by:

- leading the development and delivery of curriculum-linked educational programmes for schools, colleges and other groups
- delivering engaging events, activities, interpretation and informal learning activities for different audiences
- maximising the use of social media and online resources to reach new audiences
- enabling educators, businesses and people with public-facing roles to be ambassadors for the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Promote the special qualities, our work and key messages through 20 public events led or co-led by the Authority, 50 community events run by other organisations, opportunistic use of mobile unit and an on-the-ground presence throughout the National Park. SQ1, LH10	Gillie Molland	<p>Considerable planning has been put in to this year's ground nesting bird (GNB) awareness work. As usual we are working with Forestry Commission, National Trust and Hampshire County Council but have also had some very constructive dialogue with Wild New Forest about using their 2016/17 data to guide engagement on sites with ground-nesting waders.</p> <p>In addition to the usual GNB sessions across the Forest, two locations have been selected, where there is known GNB activity, to provide enhanced levels of engagement. More specific and regular up to date information about the birds will be provided, together with signage to encourage users to choose a route avoiding sensitive areas. Users' behaviour and impacts will be monitored.</p> <p>New Forest Dog Owners Group have part-funded a seasonal ranger who will promote responsible dog walking and appropriate use of the Forest. They will complement the two seasonal rangers (funded by NPA habitat mitigation contributions, Camping in the Forest and Forestry Commission). Together they will greatly increase our presence on the ground, raising awareness of nesting birds and other special features of the New Forest, engaging with campers and generally promoting responsible recreation.</p>		
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities that promote the National Park's special qualities including self-guided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, training, and permanent and touring exhibitions including activity to mark the 800 th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. SQ4, LH10, LD3	Jim Mitchell / Gareth Owen	<p>Supported the development of the 'Ancient and remarkable trees of the New Forest' photographic exhibition which will run from April to July.</p> <p>Supported the development of the OPOF 'Commoners' Voices' Exhibition which will run at the New Forest Centre (and then tour in 2019). The exhibition is curated by Lyndsey Stride. We invited quotes to assist with the design and production of the exhibition and have selected the Way Design. Inception meeting took place in March.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Review the operation of the concierge service within the New Forest Centre and update the agreement with the Ninth Centenary Trust in the context of recent changes to information provision in the Forest.	Nigel Matthews	RAPC recommended that a new agreement with the Ninth Centenary Trust is needed, one that more clearly articulates the benefits to the National Park that result from the NPA's financial contribution. Two quarterly grant payments were agreed as part of the Authority's 2018-19 budget and discussions about the content of the new agreement are ongoing. We have received confirmation that the concierge service will be able to operate within the Centre during the summer.	Amber	Finalising an agreement that satisfies all parties involved will not be easy but officers will report back to members for guidance.
New website live and amendments made by end Q3; brand messaging reviewed and rolled out; Heritage Lottery Fund scheme, Coast Path consultation, National Grid Hale Purlieu trials, Local Plan and recreation consultations and Visitor Gift Scheme supported and engagement targets (to be determined by project leaders) attained; Green Halo campaign launched; Walking Festival organised and Charter of the Forest celebrated. Arts Festival organised and audience of 4,000 achieved.	Hilary Makin	The new website went live on 11 April as the project was slightly delayed to allow us to refine our messaging which informed the new site. Over 800 pages on the old site were reviewed and updated/deleted to help visitors quickly find information they need. New functionality includes an improved planning section; explore by map feature; history timeline and a volunteering opportunities finder is in its final stages. A series of 'history hits' videos about different time periods in the Forest have been produced and used on the website and social media. A BBC 4 documentary on the New Forest is being filmed by Big Wave natural history TV. As well as helping to shape the messaging of the documentary, we have commissioned the company to produce new short films for us highlighting the rare and vulnerable habitats and species on heathland and coast.	Green	

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		<p>A launch with RSPB of the new Franchises Lodge nature reserve included blog posts, a press release, social media posts and media interviews.</p> <p>This quarter we also launched the #pledge10,000 volunteering hours campaign at the Volunteer Fair, which welcomed around 600 people.</p> <p>We also launched the litter Spring Clean event with partners, and supported the Refill New Forest and Ban The Straw plastic reduction campaigns.</p> <p>The visitor gift scheme website structure has been reviewed and content updated.</p> <p>We supported the launch of the consultation on the England Coast Path in the New Forest with media coverage and social media promotion.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop and teach curriculum-specific sessions about the national park for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	<p>During this quarter, the Education team taught 385 pupils from 8 schools, the most requested theme being the special qualities of the National Park. This brings the total number of pupils receiving taught sessions to 2,382.</p> <p>This year's Litter Assembly, Plastic Planet, reached an incredible 13,500 pupils from 61 schools between February and the end of March. This unprecedented response from schools has meant that the team has worked directly with over 15,000 children aged between 4 and 18 during 2017-2018.</p>		
Work with primary and secondary schools to embed the New Forest National Park into their curriculum, including organising conferences for students and teachers, the development of a Youth Forum and the continued population of the New Forest Curriculum web pages. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma	<p>The Travel Grant Scheme continues to be very successful in enabling schools to access the outdoor education provided by the New Forest National Park Educator's Forum. Approximately 3,000 children from 53 schools benefitted from the grant during the 2017-2018 financial year, visiting 18 of the organisations in the Forum.</p> <p>The March meeting of the Forum, hosted by Tile Barn was attended by 30 Forum representatives.</p> <p>All available work experience places for the summer have been allocated, with each student having attended an interview. All are looking forward to their placement in the summer.</p>		

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Develop and deliver informal learning activities for non-curriculum groups, societies etc., including Wild Play Day events, in partnership with members of New Forest Educators Forum. SQ1, SQ7	Sue Palma, Gillie Molland	<p>Informal learning activities were delivered by the Education team at Discovery Days at the New Forest Centre.</p> <p>A planning meeting was held at Milford-on-sea/ Hurst Spit to prepare for the next Wild Play Day in early April.</p>		

Enjoy Priority 3: Managing recreation to benefit the National Park

We will work in partnership with others to encourage and manage appropriate recreation, by:

- agreeing and implementing recreation management strategies that benefit people and the New Forest
- raising awareness of issues such as litter, feeding of ponies, disturbance of wildlife, fungi picking and animal accidents
- enabling the New Forest Access Forum to provide useful advice on improving public access
- undertaking and supporting research to clarify positive and negative impacts of recreation locally.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Engage the public, local organisations and recreational user groups in agreeing an overall evidence-based plan for where within and around the National Park we should encourage people to go to enjoy outdoor recreation – and how this should be achieved. LH10, ST1	Nigel Matthews	<p>The Findings and Next Steps Reports that summarised the results of the 2017 consultation to inform an update of the Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030 were supported by the organisations on the RMS Steering Group (Forestry Commission, Natural England, Verderers, Hampshire County Council, NPA and New Forest District Council).</p> <p>Progress has since been made on drafting actions for the update, and in considering how a second consultation should be organised this coming summer. We intend to feature recreation management strongly in the NPA's stand at this year's New Forest Show.</p>		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.
Play a leading role in the co-ordination of targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter, fungi, disturbance of ground nesting birds and feeding of ponies. LH10, SQ1, EP5	Nigel Matthews	<p>The joint campaign to reduce animal accidents during the winter months generated a lot of publicity and we believe it helped to bring down the number of casualties from the previous winter despite increased numbers of depastured stock.</p> <p>The annual Spring Clean was again a joint effort by multiple local organisations, facilitated by the NPA, although snow meant that litter picks planned for the first weekend in March had to be postponed.</p>		There is a high degree of public concern about these issues, but there are no 'magic wands'. We continue to look for new and more effective ways to achieve success and work with other organisations to ensure a proportionate and meaningful response.

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		<p>Positive contact with UK Cycle Events included three of their staff attending a meeting of the New Forest Association of Local Councils. With NPA officer help, they have produced an informative video for participants about how to ride safely and responsibly in the New Forest.</p> <p>The Dogs Forum met and has agreed the content of a draft Charter for commercial dog walkers that we plan to promote later this year to the 50+ businesses that we know operate in the New Forest.</p> <p>In February 2018 it was confirmed that a joint bid submitted to the Government's 'Joint Working Fund' for funding to support the development of a strategic approach to mitigating the impacts of new development on the New Forest's Natura 2000 had been successful. The NPA was one of six local planning authorities involved in the successful bid and work will progress on this in 2018-2019.</p>		
Through four full meetings and topic-specific subgroups enable the New Forest Access Forum to provide helpful advice to relevant organisations on improving public access, including the England Coast Path being developed by Natural England.	Gillie Molland	<p>The Access Forum met at Hobourne Bashley on Monday 12 March. Agenda items included England Coast Path, New Forest Mitigation Strategy, and Recreation Management Strategy. They discussed Brexit and developing the response to the Defra Future for food, farming and the environment consultation, in particular what provision may be made for supporting public access to the countryside when Britain leaves the European Union.</p> <p>Bruce Rothnie from the Forestry Commission conducted a 40 minute workshop on Managing Recreation – Sharing the care of the Forest which provoked considerable subsequent discussion.</p>		