

BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

2018-19 Work Programme – Q4 (1 January to 31 March 2019)

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
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>The ranger team recorded 1,941 face-to-face contacts in Q4. With few mobile unit events, rangers were instead out and about leading guided walks, giving talks, co-ordinating litter picks for the Great British Spring Clean and leading a wide range of learning sessions for young people. They also assisted with the delivery of Our Past, Our Future projects and supervised conservation tasks for volunteers of all ages.</p> <p>Significant engagement with dog owners at a national level included attendance at Crufts Dog Show in Birmingham and the People and Dogs in the Outdoors Conference.</p> <p>Late in Q4 the team was boosted by four seasonal rangers who began promoting awareness of the New Forest's ground nesting birds during the critical breeding season.</p> <p>Multiple tweets about caring for the Forest were seen by followers of the New Forest Rangers' Twitter account, which increased by around 6% to over 2,500 during the period.</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>Visits undertaken to all Local Information Points. Positive discussions took place regarding delivery of information to all visitors, particularly in relation to the special qualities. Some improvements are in progress, e.g. re-positioning maps, installing/upgrading welcome signs. Invited to all business Discovery Days.</p> <p>Training day delivered to New Forest Arts organisations in February, entitled 'Rough Guide to the New Forest'. Very positive feedback. Day included walk with Forestry England and CDA representatives.</p>		

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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	By mutual agreement the NPA and the Ninth Centenary Trust decided that an MoA was not needed. Officers will purchase specific services from the Trust using normal procurement processes. Joint working on projects and events continues as in the past and we continue to liaise with Centre staff about providing information to their visitors.		
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	<p>Social media followers are up 7,571 over the year. Facebook engagement higher than all other UK national parks most months. Focus on Instagram to reach younger audiences is harder to grow, but has seen an increase of over 2,500 followers to nearly 10,000. Routes website has seen nearly 83,000 route downloads since launch in June 2016.</p> <p>Email newsletters subscribers up 2,303. Open rate is consistently around 38% (local government is usually around 22%).</p> <p>CRM system identified. Project will start as part of OPOF volunteer database with potential to expand to other areas of the organisation. Project brief now being drafted.</p>		Facebook – our largest social media channel - has made it harder for brands to be visible unless you pay to advertise
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	The education team taught 209 school pupils during this quarter, mainly from the primary sector, and attended the STEM Day at Southampton University, at which we were able to teach over 500 children and their parents about the impacts of plastic on the National Park, with particular emphasis on the coast. We also delivered Litter Assemblies to 7,898 primary school children.		

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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	<p>Eighteen Outdoor Education organisations were represented at the March Educators' Forum meeting.</p> <p>Forty four of the 54 eligible schools which we contacted have successfully applied for a YOGA Our Green Action Grant to carry out a small project to improve or enhance the environment.</p> <p>The 2018-2019 Travel Grant enabled 3,160 children from 60 schools to visit 19 of the New Forest education providers.</p> <p>All student placements for 2019 are now allocated.</p>		

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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<p>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)</p>	<p>Jim Mitchell / Gareth Owen</p>	<p>The historic routes project has 45 signed up and active volunteers; additional training for new surveyors is planned for April. Right of Way ground surveying is taking place with 63% completed. Ten suggested trails have been shortlisted and initial historic research started. From these 10 the final five will be selected.</p> <p>Community interpretation progressed with Lymington and Pennington Town Council (Pennington Common), Brockenhurst Parish Council (Telephone kiosks) and East Boldre Parish Council (Telephone kiosks).</p> <p>We have instigated a partnership approach to how 'sense of place' is conveyed through signage and other man-made features in the landscape. A steering group of key partners is being drawn together and a brief for design advice written, to be progressed next quarter. The work will make design recommendations for future signage and infrastructure and will provide costed estimates so that external funding can be sought.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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Work with partners to enhance at least four local sites or walking routes by improving access or information provision, e.g. through the rural communities fund and community-led projects. (EP1, EP2)	Adam Vasey	<p>Brockenhurst footpath 501: works complete. The new surfacing and gate are a fantastic improvement.</p> <p>Lyndhurst Village Walk: Initial ideas to physically improve sections of path have not been approved by Forestry England. Efforts will now be focussed on helping to replace the walk information board.</p> <p>Warren Copse: The wooden signs are being made and will be installed by the end of May.</p> <p>The Lepe Loop: British Mountaineering Council has fundraised £10,000 and other grants are being sought. Ground works hoped to start summer 2019.</p>		
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	<p>Signage has been drafted and agreed with HCC, subject to the Special by Design project which will look at wider signage opportunities.</p> <p>The Highcliffe to Calshot section of the England Coast Path is still being determined (objections and representations being investigated). The Calshot to Gosport section is still being proposed (suggesting a final route).</p>		

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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>The opening event for the Stanford Rise wild play site in Sway that had been scheduled for March had to be rescheduled due to high winds forecast for the day. The third wild play site at Ashurst recreation ground is currently being designed and discussed with the local community. There has been a great response from the community about the project with lots of offers of volunteer support.</p> <p>The healthy walks programme we support recorded 401 walkers undertaking 1697 hours of health walking activity. In addition 8 new volunteer walking guides were trained.</p>		
Deliver the OPOF Apprentice ranger scheme in partnership with other Forest ranger teams and education providers. (EW8)	Craig Daters	Following the successful completion of their placement with HIWWT at Blashford Lakes, undertaking chainsaw and pesticide use training, the Apprentices moved on to the National Trust. Here they were fully involved with a wide range of winter habitat management work, leading volunteer work parties and working with other teams from NT estates in Purbeck and Mottisfont.		

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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 Neseiyif	<p>Q4 delivered 42 sessions for 430 participants and carers</p> <p>Recruited 3 more volunteers giving a total of 13</p> <p>Friends of PEDALL have started fundraising including at UK Cycling Spring Sportive.</p>		
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	<p>NFYAP delivered 15 follow-on sessions over this period, delivered by 8 partner organisations, on 12 sites, engaging with 112 x 16-25 year olds. The main focus of the sessions were undertaking practical habitat management tasks, often working alongside existing volunteer teams.</p> <p>Ongoing support for groups undertaking the John Muir Award, engaging with 30 14-18 year olds, and delivery of an additional 3 one-off sessions for independent groups.</p> <p>Contact made with 'Open Sight Hampshire' for a collaborative project in the summer looking at improving the visitor experience for those with sight loss.</p>		

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<p>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)</p>	<p>Richard Austin / Jim Mitchell</p>	<p>This winter, practical conservation volunteers have been restoring hedgerows in Linwood, Hyde, North Gorley and Blissford by planting up gaps, weeding the hedges and putting up deer fencing. On our woodland sites in Bramshaw, Bransgore and Walhampton a huge reduction in rhododendron removed by volunteers has resulted in an increase in ground flora with bluebells coming up this spring.</p> <p>A volunteer day at Foxhills School saw volunteers, parents and schoolchildren working together to create woodland rides and reverse the encroachment of trees onto the meadow.</p> <p>The NPA supported Burley Local History Society and Burley Parish Council at the 'Dig Burley' event where residents volunteered to dig a 1m square test pit in their garden to examine what they found. We hope to replicate the success of this event in other villages in the forest.</p> <p>Volunteer hours for the scheme has now surpassed the 50,000 mark.</p> <p>A nationwide Year of Green Action has kicked off in the New Forest with a record-breaking turnout for the National Park's volunteer fair. The fair saw 750 budding volunteers head to Lyndhurst Community Centre on Sunday (27 January) to browse hundreds of opportunities from 50 local groups, making this the most successful fair to date.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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	<p>The RMS Steering Group is considering which 'legal framework' is best suited to take forward a spatial strategy for where recreation is encouraged and enabled across the National Park and beyond.</p> <p>In the meantime, officers are facilitating discussions with partner organisations about managing illegal recreation-related activities, verge parking and managing events and organised activities. Multiple other strands of work that relate to the draft emerging actions are also being progressed.</p>		Whilst the work to produce the update is on track, much work remains to ensure there is good understanding of issues and wide acceptance of solutions (both by the public and by local organisations).
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	<p>We have continued to input to the year-long habitat mitigation research that has been commissioned by six local planning authorities. This involves face-to-face interviews across the Forest, counts of parked cars and telephone interviews. A workshop is being planned for June to discuss with key stakeholders which measures are thought to be most effective at mitigating the impacts of recreation on the protected habitats and species. The results should enable the authorities to agree a common approach to mitigating the impact of new housing on the designated habitats.</p> <p>The report on increased visitor numbers to the New Forest attracted predictable interest when it was published in January. Above all it confirms the importance of developing an approach to recreation management that will stand the test of time – and the predicted further increases in recreation.</p>		

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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	<p>Educational campaigns are firmly embedded in the work of the Recreation Management & Learning and Communications teams.</p> <p>Examples of recent work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of four externally funded seasonal rangers to boost our ability to talk with people about ground nesting birds • Renewed SLA with NFDC to provide a People and Wildlife Ranger as part of their wider habitat mitigation work – this role has a particular focus on dog walking • A successful Spring Clean – a partnership approach to cleaning up the Forest and encouraging community litter picks. 94 miles of Open Forest 40mph roadsides were litter picked by contractors. • The development of a more concise and focused ‘caring for the Forest code’ to make it easier to use in situations where space is limited, or brevity is important. • A winter campaign about animal accidents which included eye-catching signage and a touring ‘display’ of near-life-size animal silhouettes. Redesigned emergency hotline cards. • The Professional Dog Walkers’ Charter which sets very high standards of operation for the many commercial businesses that operate across the Forest. This was supported by the NPA and will be launched in the summer of 2019. • Joint working to reduce the feeding and petting of ponies, including better recording incidents and new signs on campsites and at Hatchet Pond. • Liaison with cycle event organisers in advance of sportive events to encourage compliance with the Cycle Event Organisers’ Charter. 		
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)	Adam Vasey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Access Forum agenda format has been streamlined allowing more time for discussion and training. • A new subgroup has formed “New Forest Accessibility” which seeks to improve access for those who struggle to use the National Park. 		