



Annual Review 2020 – 2021

Protecting
together,
shaping
tomorrow





Chair and Chief Executive's statement

We started the financial year heading into a global pandemic, yet the highlights in this Annual Review are testament to our staff, members, partners, volunteers and wider community who have continued to work hard and champion the National Park in what has been a challenging year. It is thanks to this dedication, knowledge of and passion for the New Forest that the special qualities of the area continue to be looked after for the future.

Covid-19 has brought a new perspective on this mission to protect and enhance the National Park in the short term, as we welcomed more visitors, and for the future. The need for connection with green spaces and nature has come to the fore, and amazing and enriching places such as the national parks are being seen in a new light, as 'engine rooms' for green recovery from the pandemic.

As such, a large focus of this year has been on how we work with this renewed recognition of the importance of nature in our lives to ensure the recovery of climate, nature and people.

National Policy is also supporting this focus: the Government's 25 year Environment Plan outlines key objectives such as improving the environment, supporting land management that delivers public benefit, and connecting people with the natural world. We have welcomed the call in the 2019 Landscapes Review to reignite the enthusiasm and vision which brought protected landscapes into being through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949.

One of the key proposals in the Landscapes Review was to make protected landscapes 'landscapes for everyone'. When national parks were founded, they were integral to the nation's approach to health and wellbeing for all; together with another post war movement – the National Health Service – supporting the nation's rehabilitation in the aftermath of World War Two.

70 years on, during Covid-19 we started to recognise these crucial links afresh. In the past few months an unprecedented number of visitors to the New Forest National Park has shown just how much being out in nature brings to people's lives. At the same time, engendering care and understanding among those discovering our landscapes is vital.

As an organisation, we are working on these parallel 'care' missions and 'Care for the Forest, care for each other' has been at the heart of our philosophy and approach – both among our staff and partners, and in our wider campaign messaging. We created a joint action plan with other Forest organisations to manage the increased recreational footfall in the National Park. This was to ensure the New Forest can play a positive and active role in helping people recover from lockdown in the great outdoors yet also caring for this special place.

We are grateful for the people who have stepped forward during this time. While our usual volunteering work could not go ahead, a wave of new Ambassadors helped to share our newly-launched New Forest Code, pick litter and report

irresponsible parking. Retailers withdrew disposable barbecues from sale in one of the hottest seasons on record, avoiding the devastation of wildfire, and more rangers and emergency services staff patrolled visitor hotspots.

Planning applications remained high, and we continued to support good quality design – the importance of which was also highlighted in the Landscapes Review recommendations and emerging Government planning reforms.

In February we launched our first New Forest Awakening Festival – a month-long virtual festival highlighting messages around climate and nature which reached 815,000 people. We are growing and nurturing our existing collaborations to address the twin challenges of the climate and nature emergencies through applying natural or 'nature-based' solutions. One of the keys to nature recovery is to make landscapes bigger, better and more joined up, and through projects such as Our Past, Our Future, and the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme we have continued working with our partners to create and manage the unique heathlands, wetlands, woodlands and wider habitats of the New Forest and to build resilience to climate change.

This year the term 'Team New Forest' has really come to the fore; we are truly acting collectively to be greater than the sum of the parts. By connecting through people, communities and knowledge, winning resources and securing grants which have had tangible benefits for all we are enabling individuals, businesses, groups and communities to

bring about positive change together. Informed by public input through a 'snapshot survey' we have worked on reviewing our Partnership Plan, which aligns with a Green Recovery. We know that nature and its benefits do not stop at borders, and we have played a key role in developing a 'Greenprint' to guide the economic recovery of the wider region. Through our Green Halo partnership we are leading on a 'natural capital' approach and engaging people in its delivery across the central south of England.

There is still much to do, and we will need to continue to work in partnership and to make long-term plans with an increasing diversity of people for the New Forest National Park to remain a beautiful, wildlife-rich, climate resilient living, working landscape.

Despite the pandemic we and our partners are more determined than ever to ensure that protected landscapes aren't only understood as beautiful havens for wildlife and people, but engine rooms for a greener, healthy future.

Alison Barnes, Chief Executive

Gavin Parker, Chair



About the New Forest National Park Authority

Our vision

The vision for the National Park in 20 years' time is of an area which has a unique and immediately recognisable sense of place, where:

- tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the Park
- the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats are all of the highest quality and a great variety of wildlife is able to flourish
- there is a strong sense and understanding of the heritage and living culture of the Forest
- all visitors can gain inspiration, health and wellbeing and enjoy the extensive areas of land with open access

- the far-reaching consequences of climate change are taken into account in all policies and future plans
- people live and work sustainably and contribute to the care of the Forest
- local, regional and national organisations recognise the value of the National Park and there is a shared understanding of its role within the wider area
- everyone contributes in appropriate ways to keeping the National Park a special place for present and future generations.

Our mission – National Park purposes

The New Forest National Park Authority has statutory purposes and socio-economic responsibilities as specified in the Environment Act of 1995:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

Working in partnership with other organisations it is also the Authority's duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park.

We like to sum this up as:

**Protect
Enjoy
Prosper**



Left: The UK's 15 National Parks
Contains Ordnance Survey data.
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Our Authority board members 2020 – 21

National Park Authority members have overall responsibility for making decisions. They set policies and priorities, ensuring efficient and effective use of resources, and that money is well spent. It is their job to represent the interests of the National Park and to balance out any conflicting pressures.

Thanks to all members who have served over the last year.

We said goodbye to Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Chair of the Authority, when his term ended on 31 August 2020.














He was appointed onto the NPA board as Secretary of State member in 2012, elected Deputy Chair in 2013 and Chair in 2014.

Oliver is well-known and respected among organisations across the Forest, and during his eight years








with the Authority showed a detailed understanding of its complex and often conflicting issues. A big thank you to Oliver for his dedication, time, care and support.

Prof. Gavin Parker was elected as Chair at the Authority's online AGM on 15 October, where acting Chair Patrick Heneghan was confirmed as Deputy Chair.

Local authority appointees

 David Harrison, Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee Deputy Chair of Standards Committee	 Edward Heron	 Gordon Bailey, Deputy Chair of Planning Committee	 Richard Clewer	 Ann Sevier	 Mel Kendal (to June 2020)	 Alexis McEvoy (from June 2020)
 Keith Mans	 Leo Randall, Chair of Planning Committee	 Barry Rickman	 Neville Penman	 Sue Bennison	 Caroline Rackham	

Secretary of State appointees

 Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre Chair of the Authority (to September 2020)	 Patrick Heneghan Deputy Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee Deputy Chair of the Authority	 Victoria Mander (From September 2020)	 David Bence	 George Meyrick	 Prof. Gavin Parker Chair of the Authority (from October 2020)	 Stephen Trow
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Parish appointees

 George Bisson Chair of Standards Committee	 Stephen Tarling (from July 2020)	 John Sanger	 Richard Taylor
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Our 22 members do not represent any particular political group. Driven by the National Park purposes and duty, they work with officers to establish and then deliver our work programme, with operational aspects delegated to officers.

- 12 are appointed by the county, district, and borough councils with land within the National Park.
- Six are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- Four are selected from the parish councils within the National Park.

Protect

The New Forest National Park has many special qualities which set it apart from anywhere else in the country. We have a commitment to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty and cultural heritage, and ensuring wildlife is supported into the future by protecting the Forest's precious mosaic of habitats.



Paul Walton
Head of Environment
and Rural Economy

During 2020 the health crisis triggered by Covid provided an opportunity for society to reflect on what is needed for economic recovery and how this can be a green recovery; one that addresses the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.

Land use change that leads to biodiversity loss is a significant contributor to climate change meaning that decisions over future land management in the National Park are of particular importance. This year we have begun to develop our net zero with nature programme that will deliver climate change mitigation projects using nature-based solutions. Our work has been focused on identifying opportunities for financial investment, both private and public, in the natural environment of the National Park; and influencing policy and development opportunities beyond the National Park boundary.

Nature-based solutions not only help mitigate the effects of climate change, they also help restore biodiversity by enhancing habitats that will enable wildlife to thrive. A minimum of £25million over the next 10 years is needed to restore and manage key habitats in the National Park to mitigate climate change. We are working with Palladium, a global positive impact firm, to explore mechanisms to bring in both private and public finance to restore the National Park's habitats to this scale. We are hopeful that the increasing demand from businesses to invest in nature-based solutions can be channelled to fund land managers providing both carbon emission removal and biodiversity enhancement services.

Farming policy, set out in Government's Agricultural Transition Plan in November, aims to reward farmers for producing public goods such as clean air and water, thriving wildlife and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

An Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, due to begin in 2024, will provide public money in return for the delivery of these public goods. With a 'Forest Farming Group' of landowners and managers, work has begun to devise an ELM scheme that will deliver benefits for the environment of the New Forest and support commoning, which is critical to future management of the open habitats of the National Park.

Beyond the Park boundary, the NPA has played a key role in developing a 'greenprint' to guide the economic recovery of the Solent region. Local authorities and partners across south Hampshire have developed key principles to guide the post-Covid recovery of the economy, based on five priorities of:

- Net zero with nature
- A natural health service
- World class blue / green environments
- Creating great places through quality design and build
- A centre of excellence for green skills and jobs.

The greenprint framework was a key element of the successful bid for Freeport status for the Solent in March.

Many people want and hope for a renewed and healthy partnership between nature, business and society following the Covid pandemic; our work in the past year aims to help realise the ambition of a green recovery.

First New Forest Awakening Festival

We led the first New Forest Awakening Festival, which ran 'virtually' throughout February 2021, with a range of organisations, businesses and charities holding 28 online events which were free for everyone to join throughout the month.

The aim was to help share why the New Forest is so special, its role in the climate and nature emergencies, what people are already doing to protect it, and how everyone can help.

Events from NPA staff and partners included a conversation on commoning; a presentation about the RSPB's Franchises Lodge nature reserve; woodland storytelling; a seed show; a talk on the importance of heathlands; a bee workshop; a live tour of a commoner's holding; and Instagram takeovers by rangers looking at the Forest's special qualities.

Many events requiring tickets were at capacity, with 1,074 attending webinars and Facebook Live sessions.

Overall, messages about the climate and nature emergencies were seen by over 815,000 people; while nearly 70,000

people engaged with the online posts or events (attended webinars, viewed videos, commented, liked or shared posts).

We were keen to target new and younger audiences and we reached 72,000 people with posts on Instagram (half of people on Instagram are aged 34 or younger).

New Forest National Park Authority Chair Prof. Gavin Parker said: 'We're thrilled at how many people supported our online festival. Through various digital platforms we were able to continue to share important messages to a wide audience both in and outside the National Park. We'd like to thank everyone who got involved and make it such a success, and we are looking to build on it next year and make it an annual festival.'

Commoner Erika Dovey and her foal



The impact

Messages about climate and nature crises in the New Forest reached 815,000 people



Ponies in floodwater

Banded demoiselle
© Peter LeCointe

Protecting the New Forest's coastal and freshwaters

The New Forest is one of the best and most important freshwater areas and coastal landscapes in the UK. From source to sea, waterbodies are fragile and pristine and bursting with rare wildlife. Together with our partner The Freshwater Habitats Trust, we jointly host the New Forest Catchment Partnership. It works with local partners to conserve and enhance the Forest's special wildlife qualities and the ecosystem services they provide for people.

While the year saw unprecedented pressures on these, it also showed how local communities and organisations valued the Forest's wetlands and were willing to work together to help them. New Forest National Park Authority Ecologist Ian Barker, said: 'Thanks to its fantastic water quality, the New Forest supports approximately 300 species of wetland plants and 400 species of wetland invertebrates, making it one of the most important freshwater areas in the UK. However, human impacts continue to threaten water quality. Despite challenging times this year, the Catchment partners worked together to respond to heightened pressures and delivered an impressive array of activity.' The Freshwater Habitats Trust produced the National Park's first 'Water Code' – helping people to protect the New Forest's wetland landscapes. Messages around clean water for wildlife and space for nature were based on input and support from a range of local partners within the catchment.

Training has been provided to public-facing staff to help people understand the fragile nature of waterbodies

and help them to engage the public. Catchment Partners, including the New Forest Land Advice Service and Environment Agency, built on work carried out in 2019 to look at ways to improve water quality in the Bartley Water and Fletchwood Stream catchments. Advice was provided to 14 landowners and businesses, and over £60,000 of work to secure practical improvements – such as rainwater harvesting and bankside clearance – was successfully delivered to five sites. The Catchment Partnership also continued its role as an advocate and special advisor for the unique value of the New Forest's water environment.

The year saw the inception of new responsibilities from water companies. We as an Authority have aimed to ensure that Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans reflect the views of local experts and communities in protecting and improving water quality.

Find out more at

freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/catchment-projects/newforest-catchment-project/

New Forest Water Code leaflet 2021



Higher level stewardship scheme extended

England's largest agri-environment scheme was extended for a further year, supporting vital conservation projects and commoning in the New Forest.

The Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme protects and enhances the New Forest National Park's internationally-important wildlife and habitats.

Launched in 2010 as a 10-year agreement with Natural England, it is managed by the Verderers in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England and will have brought £22 million into the Forest.

The scheme helps the New Forest face the nature and climate crises. Fragile habitats have been conserved and the commoning scheme has been supported on a large scale, meaning ponies and cattle can continue to roam the landscape and shape the unique habitats through their grazing.

The HLS scheme has achieved an exceptional amount since 2010:

Restoring wetlands – Returned 20 miles of streams which were artificially-straightened in Victorian times to drain the Forest back to their natural water courses. This improves the carbon storage in wetlands, prevents flooding and supports the habitats of rare species such as the southern damselfly and curlew. On-going repairs are taking place.

Supporting commoning – Crucial funding and expert advice have been provided to hundreds of commoners to continue the traditional system of land management. It also includes a stallion scheme managing the selection and number of stallions which run on the forest each year. This helps to reduce the number of foals born each year and improves the quality of those foals.

Protecting archaeology – The whole 220 square miles of the National Park has been surveyed, leading to 3,000 archaeological sites being identified and recorded, with an on-going programme to manage them.

Educating the next generation

– More than 16,500 children have gained a greater understanding of the New Forest through school visits.

Removing invasive plants –

Rhododendron and other non-native species have been removed or reduced across approximately half of the New Forest, helping native plants flourish.

Restoring rare heathland, grassland and woodland – Internationally-protected heath, grassland and woodland areas have been restored.

Lord Manners, Official Verderer of the New Forest, said: 'The scheme works to increase the New Forest's resilience in the face of habitat loss and the impacts of climate change. It has been a rare opportunity to conserve fragile habitats and support commoners and the rollover is welcome news as Britain has now left the EU and is working on a new domestic agricultural programme which is scheduled to come into effect in 2024.'

hlsnewforest.org.uk

Big plans for a little meadow

A meadow in the New Forest has been secured for nature conservation after being gifted to the New Forest National Park Authority.

The half-acre meadow in Godshill borders the open Forest and features oak and ash trees, hazel hedges, scrub and a small brook.

Three siblings, who wished to remain anonymous, bequeathed the meadow to us through the New Forest Land Advice Service (NFLAS) in 2020.

The siblings' grandparents were New Forest commoners and the meadow had been in their family since the early 20th Century as part of a small holding. It was originally an apple orchard with bee hives, was also once used to grow food, and has been grassland for the last 20 years.

The NFLAS, an independent service for the land managing community in and around the New Forest which we host and support, will now look after the meadow. Its plans include hedge laying and coppicing to create thick wild hedgerows and increasing the number of wildflowers.

Julie Melin-Stubbs, NPA Wildlife and Conservation Manager and Manager of NFLAS, said: 'We are proud and excited to become the guardians of this little piece of the New Forest, and are grateful to our donors who are trusting us to become custodians of this land. Our plan is to manage it in a way which will enhance its value for nature, particularly hedgerow birds, wildflowers, butterflies and other insects such as dragonflies, bees, crickets and grasshoppers.'

The land will also be used as a venue to teach countryside skills and land management, as well as to support commoners' livestock.

Julie Melin-Stubbs of NFLAS at Godshill Meadow



Cameron's Cottage before work began

Cameron's Cottage after restoration



New nature centre at Franchises Lodge

We continue to work with the RSPB on an ambitious 25-year plan to help improve Franchises Lodge nature reserve – including its value for a wide range of wildlife, and encouraging more people to connect with nature.

As well as our archaeologists and volunteers clearing thick vegetation from Bronze Age barrows (see p14), we have worked on joint funding bids including the Landscape Enhancement Initiative for clearing invasive rhododendron.

Other areas of work include the Educator's Forum, and a Northern Farm Cluster connecting groups of farmers, foresters and other land managers and helping to increase their skills and knowledge to farm for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The site near Nomansland in the north of the New Forest National Park was saved for the nation by the RSPB in 2018 with the help of a £200,000 contribution from the New Forest National Park Authority and £25,000 from Friends of the New Forest.

The restoration of habitats made possible by buying the site will help nature recovery across the National Park as it provides a bridge between two already internationally-important wildlife areas – Langley Wood National Nature Reserve to the north and the New Forest Special Protection Area to the south. Larger swathes of habitats that are in good condition and well connected are more resilient and adaptable to climate change. They also allow wildlife to move more freely within them. The wood is home to birds including the hawfinch, spotted flycatcher,

firecrest and redstart, as well as a range of invertebrates from beetles to butterflies. Botanically, it boasts an internationally-important lichen community.

A derelict cottage on the site will become a nature centre for young people, welcoming youth groups and charities, schools, colleges and universities later in 2021.

The new nature outreach centre, which is completely off-grid with accommodation for residential stays, is named Cameron's Cottage in memory of 16-year-old naturalist Cameron Bespolka.

The project is a partnership between the RSPB and the Cameron Bespolka Trust, which raised £425,000 towards the cost of renovating and running the centre.

Support for the New Forest commoning community

The New Forest National Park remains one of the few places in England where the ancient tradition of commoning is still widely practised.

Commoners have been grazing their animals on the open Forest since before the Norman Conquest in 1066, helping create and maintain the landscape and rare wildlife which makes the New Forest so special.

However, the rising price of land in the New Forest is making it difficult for commoners to find affordable back-up grazing (land needed in case livestock have to come off the open Forest), and even harder for new and young commoners to establish themselves.

In a new initiative helping address the issue, ExxonMobil Fawley, which owns land on the edge of the New Forest, began renting some of its untenanted grazing land to young commoners at a reduced rate.

The first two commoners to benefit from the scheme, Daniel Drodge and Louise England, are renting land at Hardley Halt, giving them the vital back-up grazing required to bring their animals off the open Forest.

ExxonMobil Fawley has installed new stock fencing and a holding pen (pound) and provided a mobile water tank at the 10-acre site.

The New Forest Land Advice Service, which the NPA hosts and supports, worked with the then Chair of the Young Commoners, Oliver Cook, and local contractors who were also commoners, to prepare the site for livestock. Young commoners were able to express their interest in the land through a bespoke application process.



The impact

10 acres used to support young commoners' livestock

Commoner Daniel Drodge's ponies on grazing land at Hardley Holt

A lasting legacy for the New Forest

The Our Past, Our Future (OPOF) Landscape Partnership Scheme drew to a close in 2021, leaving a legacy of connected communities and thriving wildlife.

Led by the NPA in partnership with 10 other organisations, the £4.4 million scheme was launched in 2015 and focused on the enclosed lands which surround the Open Forest.

It undertook 21 projects to restore lost habitats, develop skills and inspire a new generation to champion and care for the New Forest.

With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, OPOF achieved huge wins for nature:

- More than 210ha of habitat has been restored – equivalent to around 320 football pitches.
- Flora is thriving and attracting more wildlife at newly managed woodlands across the New Forest. Butterflies, bumblebees and birds have been boosted by the restoration of important areas for nature.
- Wild flowers are flourishing along more than 50km of riverbanks where 600 volunteers have helped remove huge swathes of invasive non-native plants.

The impact

Habitat the size of 320 football pitches restored

Top: Commoner Sami Blastock

Bottom: Silver-washed fritillary © Jackie Ley

Volunteer Brian Matthews



Natterer's bat © Simon Colmer

The local community, including residents, businesses and commoners, got involved in OPOF, forging new connections, discovering heritage and learning new skills.

One of the biggest successes of OPOF has been the time and effort its incredible volunteers have contributed. Around 2,000 people have volunteered for the scheme, giving 77,000 hours of their time on a range of opportunities, including archaeological surveys and research, historic routes research, events, practical conservation tasks, water quality monitoring and biological surveys.

Rachael Gallagher, Our Past, Our Future Delivery Manager at the NPA, said: 'The OPOF scheme has been a fantastic opportunity for communities, organisations, stakeholders, landowners and volunteers to work together to help protect the heritage of the New Forest for the future.'

Thanks to the hard work of all those involved, OPOF has also achieved most of its targets and aspirations. It has also been hailed an outstanding example of successful partnership working in the New Forest. An external evaluation found it created a 'step change' through a new, collaborative culture, with the partnership at its core.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/opof



Pony and rainbow in the New Forest



New Forest ancestors © Ernie Mansbridge

History and heritage of commoning in the New Forest

Fascinating accounts of commoning life were brought together in a new collection of memories and photographs. Through Our Ancestors' Eyes features the stories of 20 families and hundreds of photographs depicting commoning, forestry and agriculture in the Forest.

The archive, which includes audio clips and transcriptions, was created by the Commoners Defence Association (CDA) with help from the New Forest Heritage Centre as part of the NPA-led Our Past, Our Future scheme.

All the contents are stored at Christopher Tower Library at the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst and are available on the New Forest Knowledge website:

nfknowledge.org

Charlotte Lines, CDA Chair, said: 'This project gives us a cultural record of commoning, forestry and agriculture within the New Forest; a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy. The CDA is proud to have been a part of this project and we hope we can continue to add to these cultural records for years to come.'



Kate Penny at Blackwater Farm © Caroline Stride

Archaeology: Uncovering and preserving our past

This year the Archaeology and Heritage Team has given advice on:

- 18 planning applications within the National Park.
- Eight enquiries (for example on utilities ground works) within the National Park.
- 56 planning applications within the New Forest District, as part of our service level agreement with New Forest District Council.
- 34 separate requests for archaeological advice on forestry works covering in excess of 40 woodlands and including 23 site visits, as part of our service level agreement with Forestry England's southern district.
- 25 separate stream restoration sites in the New Forest with six site visits, as part of work with the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme.
- Two verge restorations and two sites where ridge and furrow work was planned, also as part of the HLS scheme.



Drone photo of an Iron Age hillfort © HLS Partners

Preserving Home Farm hillfort

The future of an Iron Age hillfort has been preserved thanks to a management programme by the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England.

Home Farm Iron Age hillfort at Denny Lodge had suffered significant disturbance from burrowing animals, bracken growth and tree re-generation, putting it on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

The Heritage at Risk programme helps us understand the overall state of England's historic sites and

identifies those that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.

In 2018 a team of archaeologists carried out a series of geophysical surveys, exploratory excavations and restoration works across the site, with the aim of improving our knowledge of the site as well as the condition of this scheduled monument.

This year, the site was officially removed from the Monuments at Risk register.

Revealed: Three Bronze Age burial mounds

Three Bronze Age burial mounds were revealed this year at Franchises lodge, the RSPB nature reserve near Nomansland which we support.

It took a team of experts and volunteers five days to uncover the mounds, known as round barrows, which were smothered by thick rhododendron and conifer trees.

Round barrows were created in every part of England, mainly between 2200BC and 1100BC. Over 200 of these still survive in the New Forest today, the most common type can be identified as round mounds, often surrounded by a 'ring ditch'.

The barrows at Franchises Lodge are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, giving them the highest level of protection against unauthorised change. However, these barrows are currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register due to their scrub and tree cover.

NPA Community Archaeologist Hilde van der Heul (left) supervising scrub clearance at Franchises Lodge



During the barrow clearance work, RSPB volunteers and staff were joined by our Community Archaeologist Hilde van der Heul.

Hilde said: 'The burial mounds at Franchises Lodge are called bowl barrows, which are the most common form of Bronze Age round barrow. They would have been constructed anywhere from the Late Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age, probably covering single or multiple burials. These ones are grouped into what is called a barrow cemetery, which is not uncommon for the period.

'Despite scrub and tree growth these barrows have survived comparatively well. They contain important archaeological evidence relating to their construction, social organisation, ritual and funerary practices, as well as overall landscape context within the New Forest. It is really important that we keep them in good shape for future generations to enjoy.'

It's hoped the clearance work will result in the barrows being removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.



Bournemouth Archaeology staff and volunteers working on the ring ditch monument at Beaulieu

Community dig explores important Bronze Age monument

Archaeological excavations in the New Forest have investigated the remains of a highly significant Bronze Age monument dating back more than 4,000 years. The project's final report was published this year and includes some fascinating facts about the prehistoric communities who once inhabited the New Forest.

The ring ditch monument, on the Beaulieu Estate, is thought to have played an important role in the local community for many generations, although exactly what it was used for remains a mystery.

During two previous digs at the location, archaeologists and volunteers discovered the monument and five Bronze Age cremation burial urns containing human bone. The team also found some

unexpected evidence of much earlier inhabitants from the Mesolithic period (8000 – 2700 BC) through a charred hazelnut shell and two flint tools.

The Beaulieu investigations were part of an archaeology project led by us at the NPA and supported by the National Lottery Heritage funded Our Past Our Future scheme. The team included experts from the NPA and Bournemouth University working with more than 40 volunteers.

Work on the project began with a week-long dig in 2018 and a two-week excavation followed in 2019.

Jon Milward, Project Officer with Bournemouth University Archaeological Research Consultancy, said: 'Monuments with "entrances" and apparent open interiors such as this one may have been meeting spaces used to carry out rituals and ceremonies that were important to the local community.'

Ancient tree graffiti found by the public

More than 100 examples of tree graffiti are on display online following our citizen science project helping the public to record sightings of ancient marks etched into trees.

The new database helps to map and record the lost and forgotten stories of the New Forest woodlands. It allows everyone from researchers and landowners to schools and community groups to see how people have interacted with trees here over the centuries.

Some of these go back hundreds of years and include initials, names and dates as well as symbols linked to witchcraft, pictures and 'king's marks'.

We created the public database as there was no central record of the known tree graffiti found in the National Park. Much like archaeological remains, tree

graffiti (also known as an arborglyph) is under threat. Over time, the marks are warping or are being damaged by animals or humans. Trees blowing over or dying also threaten the longevity of these historic records.

News of the public findings this year were picked up by The Guardian, BBC Radio 4, the Daily Mail and the Times, as well as many local and international titles.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/tree-graffiti



Tree graffiti in the New Forest © BNPS

Dig Burley

A full report was published on the community archaeology project: Dig Burley.

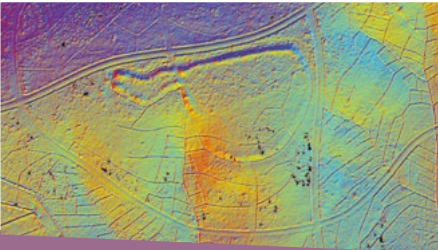
Archaeology and history enthusiasts were last year invited to have their own Time Team experience and take part in a dig to uncover the hidden history of Burley.

48 test pits – each measuring a metre square – were excavated in fields and private gardens across the village. Local residents and volunteers were encouraged to research and learn about the heritage on their doorsteps.

As well as recording a number of finds such as pottery, pipe stems, tiles and Neolithic flint, the project included presentations and training sessions, and a talk from Tim Taylor, creator of Time Team.

There was a huge level of interest, and this successful 'community engagement' approach is one that we'll explore for similar projects in the future.

Read the report at nfknowledge.org



LIDAR image of an Iron Age hill fort in the New Forest

Expanding knowledge

The Archaeology and Heritage Team also works in partnership with the New Forest Heritage Centre to run and manage the New Forest Knowledge website. The site is an online archive and gateway to a wealth of information about the heritage of the New Forest area.

During this period the site had 156,565 visits, with December 2020 being the most popular month with over 29,000 visits; 6,021 views alone on 10 December. Over 400 contributions were added and the site currently has just under 400 members. The site currently holds 138,363 records (including images, documents and recordings).

nfknowledge.org

Protecting the Forest through our planning service

Our planning service is a crucial tool in our work to protect and enhance the Forest for future generations. We aim to set the highest bar for development, working within the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

Our planning policies are key in conserving and enhancing the special qualities that make the New Forest the place it is, including the distinctive New Forest character of our villages and landscapes. They also support the local economy and ensure that any new development is focused on the needs of local people.



Steve Avery,
Executive Director
Strategy and Planning

There is no doubting that this is a time of momentous change for the Forest – in spite of the pandemic – with so many, and such wide-ranging national policy reforms on the horizon. These include a major shake-up of the planning system in England, and the introduction of a new agricultural system as we leave the EU, one that seeks to reward farmers and land managers while delivering additional public goods that improve the environment.

There is also the Government's drive to accelerate our path to net zero as we face up to the climate and nature emergencies and the much-anticipated response to the Landscapes Review 2019.

So, what does this all mean for the New Forest National Park? The Prime Minister's foreword to the Planning White Paper set the tone for the planning reforms, promising 'radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War'. It wants to replace what is seen as an outdated and ineffective planning system with one that is simpler, clearer and quicker to navigate, delivering results in weeks and months rather than years and decades. There is talk about streamlining local plans and 'faster routes to permission', while at the same time saying more needs to be done to plan for beautiful and sustainable places.

A paper to the National Park Authority meeting in October 2020 helped to shape our response to the Planning White Paper, which had also been informed through some lively discussions with local parish councils. Our main concerns centred on the lack of any mention of planning in National Parks and how the new planning system would apply to areas of environmental significance such as the New Forest. We certainly do not want to see any of the existing protections given to National Parks weakened further and would hope the Government takes the opportunity to strengthen existing safeguards aligned to the 25-year plan for the environment and the Landscapes Review.

We also raised concerns about proposals to allow more types of development to go ahead without needing planning permission, and changes to public consultation arrangements which would appear to make it harder for local people to engage with the planning system, both at the strategic plan making stage and in considering applications for new development.

As the planning authority for the New Forest National Park, we would be the first to accept that the current planning system is not a perfect one. There are aspects of the proposed reforms that we would welcome, including a greater emphasis on better designed buildings and simplifying processes, as well as introducing more enforcement powers and sanctions to address unauthorised development.

If there is one thing that undermines public confidence in the planning system, it is the fact that some people are seen to be 'getting away with it' when they build first and ask for permission later. This is also an opportunity to close some well-known planning loopholes – especially those that actually reward non-compliance through the procedure known as the 'Certificate of Lawful Use'.

With some of the highest house prices outside London, we have also asked for more support for affordable housing in the National Park, both in terms of delivering new housing and protecting the existing stock of restricted occupancy dwellings.

We are keen to see how these planning reforms will help to deliver the changing agricultural and environmental agenda now brought forward through the new Agriculture Act and the soon to be enacted Environment Bill. Together with the Government's 10-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, these reforms have the potential to herald huge and positive changes for our farmed landscape, our natural habitats and the wildlife they support. They will also impact our lives in terms of how we 'work, rest and play', with a much greater emphasis on green jobs and skills, renewable energy, sustainable transport and finding 'natural solutions' as we seek to become 'net zero' by 2050.

We are looking to pull all these different strands together in the current review and update of the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan. This will set out the overarching strategy for the management of the New Forest National Park in the years ahead, bringing together and coordinating the aspirations of many different partners who all help contribute towards the two statutory national park purposes for which the New Forest was designated.

Managing New Development

In spite of the pandemic, the pressure for new development in the National Park remains as high as ever and this is reflected in the number of planning applications received by our planning team remaining largely the same as in previous years – at just under 1,000.

One reason for this is the surge in demand for extra space with more people working from home and being able to live further away from their place of work. Nationally we are seeing increasing numbers of people choosing to move to the countryside and all these factors have combined to push up house prices even further and intensify local development pressures.

National Parks are recognised in national planning guidance as areas meriting special protection and together with our own local planning policies, help us to protect the Forest from inappropriate development. We are though concerned about possible further extensions to national ‘permitted development’ rights which allow development to proceed without the need for planning permission.

Following the adoption of our updated Local Plan in 2019, work has progressed to bring

forward a number of our allocated housing sites, notably at the former Fawley Power Station and the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel.

As always, we encourage prospective applicants to take advantage of our pre-application service before formally submitting a planning application. This allows us to flag up any issues in advance and generally results in much better-informed applications which in turn have a much greater chance of succeeding. This work is supported by a range of supplementary planning documents that includes the National Park Design Guide and a series of Village Design Statements (prepared by local parish councils). This pro-active approach to our planning work is borne out in our relatively high approval rate, with 86% of all planning applications approved.



New Forest buildings

The impact

86% of planning applications approved

New Forest thatch

Planning enforcement

As always, we are grateful to the public for letting us know when development has been carried out without planning permission. We also actively monitor some sites to make sure that new development is carried out in accordance with approved plans and the conditions attached to the planning permission.

This year we investigated 240 reported breaches of planning control, many of which we were able to resolve through negotiation. However, there were a few cases where we

had to take more formal action and this resulted in the service of nine Enforcement Notices. These often result in an appeal being lodged with the Planning Inspectorate which can delay the process. We were pleased to see the Government commit through the Planning White Paper to strengthen the planning enforcement process and to make sure there are proper sanctions for those who deliberately flout the planning regulations.

Typical issues which have been investigated in the last 12 months include:

- Use of woodland as private recreational areas and overnight accommodation
- Camping/caravan sites
- Residential mobile home parks
- Inappropriate boundary enclosures
- Change of use of outbuildings to holiday accommodation
- Damage to protected trees.



Fawley aerial view © Three Sixty Group

Fawley plans approved

A high-quality scheme bringing lasting benefits for the landscape, wildlife and local economy was approved by our Planning Committee.

The site of the former Fawley power station had been five years in the planning and is the most significant development proposal ever to have been considered by the National Park Authority.

It includes the redevelopment of the former power station, a key brownfield site, to create a new community including 1,500 homes, 96,500 square metres of new commercial, civic and employment space, with a canal and dock and a boat stack. All will be supported by new infrastructure and community facilities in the form of a two-form entry primary school, public open space, a new Nature Park and habitat enhancements. The development will be served by a new access off the B3053.

As the proposals encompass land within the New Forest District and New Forest National Park, separate outline planning applications were submitted to both authorities. Both have worked closely together over the past five years to draw up policies in their Local Plans which set out their requirements and expectations for the site. These were subject to several rounds of consultation and an examination in public by Government planning inspectors. The respective Local Plan site allocations policies were endorsed by the Government in 2019/20 following a thorough review of the evidence.

Members of New Forest District Council also approved the development within their area.

Fawley Waterside Ltd will start infrastructure development in 2021 with the first homes expected to be available by 2023.

Steve Avery, Director of Strategy and Planning at the New Forest National Park Authority said: ‘After five years of detailed negotiations we have secured a high-quality scheme for this large redundant power station site that will bring lasting benefits for the landscape, wildlife and the local economy. Half the new homes in the National Park will be for local people in housing need. It is the most significant development to have ever been considered by the National Park Authority.

‘The benchmark we set is that any development should be of such an exceptionally high standard that there should be no reason why the whole of the site should not be included in and be worthy of National Park status in the future.’

Councillor Barry Rickman, Leader of New Forest District Council said:

‘This decision marks the start of a truly exciting project that will revitalise the economic future of the New Forest area. I would like to extend my tremendous thanks to all those involved, council officers and members, partners and interested groups in our community, whose contributions have all brought us to this point.

‘As well as providing much-needed affordable housing, this development will provide employment opportunities, as well as supporting the ever-increasing amount of home working.’

Aldred Drummond, CEO of Fawley Waterside, said: ‘We’re pleased with the strong support from District Councillors and the National Park Authority and their recognition of the enormous efforts that have gone into these outline planning applications. Our ambition has always been to build one of the most beautiful small towns in England, one with solid economic purpose that provides much needed job opportunities and acts as a significant economic boost for the Waterside. Paramount is the protection of the New Forest and enhancement of the landscape and biodiversity surrounding this new town.’



Artist impression of the new site © Fawley Waterside Ltd

New planning guidance and regulations for temporary campsites

New measures have been introduced to make sure the increasing number of campsites in the New Forest do not harm the environment.

In recent years the New Forest has seen an increase in the number of temporary or ‘pop-up’ campsites. These have benefitted from national permitted development rights whereby they can operate without planning permission for 28 days a calendar year. This was extended by Government last year and again this year to 56 days to help the outdoor hospitality sector recover from the pandemic.

However, with an ever-increasing demand for touring pitches, there is concern about the future environmental impacts of these temporary campsites within the National Park.

In March 2021, Members agreed to publish guidance and a mitigation framework to help existing smaller campsites meet the requirements of the government’s Habitat Regulations. This is likely to involve sites paying an appropriate habitat contribution each year, and ensuring proper arrangements are in place for the safe disposal of wastewater and effluent. These measures will help address recreational pressures and impacts on water quality from campsite development.

It was also agreed that from June 2022 all larger and new campsites would need to apply for planning permission, supported by new policy/guidance against which future planning applications would be assessed.

Habitat mitigation scheme

Since 2012 we have sought financial contributions from new development within the National Park to fund measures to mitigate the potential impacts of increased recreational pressures on the New Forest’s internationally-protected habitats.

This year, these funds were spent on a package of habitat mitigation measures, including:

- A contribution towards three seasonal rangers employed for the spring / summer 2020 – one of which was retained until March 2021. Rangers talk directly with people who are out in the protected habitats.
 - Printed and online communications including extensive social media highlighting the vulnerability of the New Forest’s habitats and species.
 - Signage work on the Hale-Woodgreen route, one of the selected rights of way that provides an alternative location for recreation away from Special Protection Areas.
- A revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme was adopted in July 2020 to reflect the scale of future development planned within the National Park, and the advice from key partners (including Natural England) on the most appropriate mitigation measures.



Lapwing © Marc Baldwin

Providing public recreational space

As part of the planning process, we also seek financial contributions from new development to create or enhance public recreational spaces in the villages of the New Forest. This year, contributions have been released to support the enhancement of the Highwood Road play area in Brockenhurst, and helping to provide a wild play site in Bransgore.



NFNPA Rangers at work October half term 2020



Trees illegally felled within a conservation area at Bartley

High Court injunction successful

In January we successfully obtained a High Court injunction to prevent further damage to an area of protected woodland in the National Park.

The injunction was sought after 12 oak trees were illegally felled on land south of the A336 at Bartley, which is in a protected conservation area.

The site, between the junctions with Eadens Lane and Tatchbury Lane, has a long-standing tree preservation order (TPO) and is classified as a priority habitat of broadleaved deciduous woodland. Badgers, hedgehogs, at least six types of bat, and more than 25 protected bird species are found in the area.

The unauthorised tree felling took place in early December, leaving large fractures and splits in the remaining tree trunks. Several other oaks had been marked with an ‘X’, suggesting that they were also going to be chopped down. Building materials and equipment were also brought onto the woodland.

The special landscape of the National Park has the highest level of protection, and this High Court injunction illustrates that, where appropriate, we will take decisive measures in respect of any threats to the landscape.

Tree canopy

Tree service highlights

Work to protect trees has seen an increase with tree works applications, investigations into unauthorised tree work, and consultations on planning applications all up on previous years.

In 2020-21 the tree team:

- Registered 707 tree work applications, 100% of which have been dealt with inside eight weeks
 - Investigated over 11 possible breaches of legislation to protected trees
 - Made five new Tree Preservation Orders protecting important amenity trees and woodlands
 - Responded to over 240 consultations on planning applications including major applications such as Fawley Waterside, Lyndhurst Park Hotel and housing site allocations.
- The team has continued to build good working relationships with contractors and consultants in the industry as well as the general public.





Palace House, Beaulieu

Funding for a Local List of buildings

The New Forest’s buildings are an important element of the National Park’s character, and together with ancient woodlands, heathlands and free-roaming livestock, contribute to what makes the area special.

Whereas around 2% of buildings in the area are Grade I, II* or II listed by Historic England in recognition of their national significance, there are many more which are now on the New Forest National Park Authority’s ‘local list’.

The local list includes buildings which haven’t made the national listing, but are considered important enough locally for their character and appearance to be preserved.

Local listing ensures that the architectural or historic interest of these buildings are protected. It doesn’t mean there are any further

controls that already apply to a building or that nothing can be done to the buildings, but does mean we give these buildings special consideration when planning applications are submitted.

This year, we also received funding from Historic England to enhance and expand our local list, which currently includes among other buildings: Beaulieu Village Primary School; Beaulieu Delicatessen in the High Street; the Royal Oak at Fritham; Brockenhurst Primary School, and the Cloud Hotel in Brockenhurst.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/local-list



Brockenhurst primary school

The impact

100 new affordable homes will be delivered

Affordable housing

The New Forest National Park has the highest average house price of all 15 National Parks in the UK. The adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) includes a number of housing site allocations, where the on-site provision of new affordable housing for local people in housing need is a policy requirement. In summer 2020 the National Park Authority resolved to support the element of the former Fawley Power Station redevelopment within the National Park and this will provide 60 affordable dwellings.

Further Local Plan housing site allocations at Ashurst, Lyndhurst and Sway are being progressed and between them these sites will deliver over 100 new affordable homes.

The National Park Authority is also working with local communities and partners to identify small-scale ‘rural exception sites’ in villages elsewhere in the National Park, similar to the schemes completed in Bransgore, Brockenhurst and Pilley in recent years.

Supporting good building design

We place a strong emphasis on the importance of good design in new development. This is reflected in our Local Plan policies, and the seven Village Design Statements we’ve formally adopted to help guide planning decisions.

We’re also continuing to review our Design Guide which is a key part of our planning guidance for the National Park. The Design Guide aims to achieve high standards of design in new development while retaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the natural and built environment of the New Forest.

It supports the pre-application process by providing guidance to help applicants, agents and others

to respond to the features and rural characteristics that make the New Forest special when designing their proposals.

This year we’ve raised awareness of the scope and context for the Design Guide review with town and parish councils through the parish quadrant meetings; and we also held workshops with NPA members in early 2021.

The public consultation on the draft document will be taking place from September 2021.

Lepe beach cafe



Mission Hall listed

In November 2020 we were notified that the 19th century Landford Wood Mission Hall in the north of the National Park had been added to the National Heritage List by Historic England following its designation as a Grade II listed building. The hall was built in 1899 by philanthropist Lady Ashburton for people living around the Melchet Court Estate in Wiltshire.

It was listed for its architectural and historic interest, as well as having a group value with the nearby Grade II listed lodges and gates, and with Landford Wood House.



Landford Wood mission hall © Historic England

Enjoy

Enjoying the National Park responsibly

Our National Park is a special place, and one which has been enjoyed for hundreds of years. We're helping to protect this internationally-important landscape through promoting responsible recreation, and encouraging residents and visitors to respect and protect the New Forest's special qualities.



Nigel Matthews,
Head of Recreation Management
and Learning

Covid-19 has taught us many things, not least that time spent outside in green spaces (and in 'blue spaces' by the sea) does us good. Our physical and mental health is much improved by regular outdoor exercise, conversations with friends and family in beautiful places and time spent connecting with nature. No wonder thousands of people flocked to the coast and the countryside after the first tranche of Covid-19 restrictions were eased in May 2020, especially as the weather was remarkably warm.

Up until then, the New Forest was eerily quiet and some ground-nesting birds, like lapwings and curlews, nested close to car parks and walking routes that would normally have been too busy. That's why some car parks were kept closed through the early part of the summer.

NPA Rangers joined staff from other organisations, especially Forestry England, to patrol the Forest, with a particular focus on engaging with the many people who were visiting the New Forest for the first time. We launched the 'no BBQs campaign' as part of a freshly promoted New Forest code and with much support from parish councils we started the New Forest Ambassadors scheme to enable local people and communities to help pick up litter.

The pandemic confirmed the vital importance of the New Forest National Park: its rich wildlife, its benefits to the health of local people and visitors and the value of its visitor economy. Thankfully, the message of 'plan and book in advance', for people wanting to camp in the Forest, got through – although some campsites didn't open, campers found plenty of alternatives.

Covid-19 also revealed the effectiveness of online engagement: Teams and Zoom meetings, virtual festivals and school assemblies, social media – you'll see from the following articles that we worked in very different ways.

As the winter wave of Covid infections dwindled and we were again allowed to travel for recreation, NPA staff worked with several other organisations on a joint 2021 Action Plan which aimed to 'Care for the Forest; Care for each other'. Actions centred on protecting commoning, supporting local communities, managing demand and capacity of sites, promotion of the New Forest code and cooperation between all key local organisations.



Cross-partnership working

Launch of the New Forest code

New Forest organisations launched a new code to help protect our landscape, livestock and wildlife.

The New Forest code focuses on nine simple ways visitors and residents can help care for this unique place.

It was led by the NPA with partners Forestry England, Verderers of the New Forest, the New Forest Commoners Defence Association, New Forest District Council, Go New Forest and The New Forest Trust.

New Forest Code June 2021



Care for the Forest, care for each other

2020 was exceptional in many ways and saw greater numbers of people spending time in the countryside. While most people respect these landscapes, unfortunately the New Forest – like many other places around the country – experienced anti-social behaviour. Forest organisations, emergency services and communities worked to address issues such as littering, fires and irresponsible parking.

In March 2021 we joined with New Forest organisations, calling on people to ‘care for the Forest, care for each other’ ahead of an anticipated busy summer season in the National Park.

We put a joint action plan in place to ensure the New Forest plays a positive and active role in helping people recover from lockdown in the great outdoors while also caring for this special place.

The plan was developed jointly by the New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry England, New Forest District Council, and tourism body Go New Forest with support from The Verderers, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, Hampshire Constabulary and the New Forest Trust.

Greater numbers of staff across all organisations became available with joint patrols focusing on key issues and visitor hotspots. This highly-visible and coordinated approach, together with more signs, makes the best use of resources to protect the Forest.

Local communities and businesses were encouraged to get involved with the campaign by publicising the New Forest code, becoming New Forest Ambassadors and reporting problems and issues.

Bruce Rothnie, New Forest Deputy Surveyor, Forestry England said: ‘The New Forest is home to some of Europe’s rarest and most fragile landscapes. Keeping this place special requires everyone spending time here to help care for the area; only in this way can we ensure it remains here for all to enjoy.’

Prof. Gavin Parker, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority, said: ‘The New Forest is truly an amazing place and getting outside is a great way to boost our mood and our physical health. However, this cannot be at the expense of this precious place, which is a living, working Forest. We would like to thank all those who helped last year and call

The nine ways to help are:

- Keep your distance from the animals – don’t feed or touch them
- Take home litter and dog waste
- No fires or barbecues
- Keep dogs under control. Don’t let dogs approach or chase any animals
- Park only in car parks
- No wild camping
- Stick to the permitted cycle tracks
- Drive with care – animals on the road!
- Help wildlife by keeping to the main tracks

The code has been shared on websites and social media, with tourism businesses, in the press and thousands of printed versions have been distributed.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/nfcode

on everyone out in the Forest and our communities and businesses to help us care for the Forest and care for each other.’

Book ahead campaign

As lockdown measures eased in July, we worked with tourism body Go New Forest and Forestry England to call on holidaymakers to plan ahead and book in advance so they could enjoy their stay safely and help protect the National Park.

The 10 Camping in the Forest campsites stayed closed all season, and in line with Government guidance, accommodation and attractions were only open to those who had pre-booked – some with timed ticketing to help manage numbers.

We reminded people not to turn up and expect to find accommodation or a camping pitch. We also used the opportunity to share the messaging that wild camping is not allowed in the New Forest, nor overnight stays in car parks.

Ambassador scheme launched to help protect the New Forest

Hundreds of people became New Forest Ambassadors to help support the coordinated effort protecting the area following Covid-19 travel restrictions easing.

Local parish councils, individuals, families and commoners expressed their desire to help respond to anti-social behaviour such as littering, fires and irresponsible parking.

The impact

400 people signed up to help the Forest

We created the Ambassador scheme with a list of practical ways people can help across the whole of the National Park, including their local villages and community areas, alongside the increased patrols and activities already being carried out by rangers and staff from the National Park Authority, Forestry England and the emergency services. More than 400 people signed up over summer 2020.

Litter picking: We initially provided 500 free litter picking kits, each including a picking guide, bags, a hi-vis jacket and a litter picker, available from various outlets across the Forest. We added an extra 250 kits before the lockdown restrictions lifted in March 2021.

Sadly, the annual New Forest Spring Clean which is part of the national Great British Spring Clean was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Many local people continued picking up litter and

reporting issues and some joined or set up litter picking groups.

Reporting a problem: We improved instructions on our website to make it easier for the public to inform the right organisations about problems such as fires, fly tipping or injured animals.

Recording verge and gateway parking. Forms were put online to record irresponsible verge and gateway parking. The hundreds of reports received will help Forest organisations review the Forest’s long-term parking needs.

Welcoming responsible Forest users. Downloadable and printed resources including the ‘New Forest Code’ were made available on the NPA website so that parish councils, local businesses, visitor attractions and accommodation providers can share relevant messages.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/nfambassadors

Retailers back our no fires or barbecues campaign

Fire was our biggest threat to the Forest this year with the Met Office reporting it as the third warmest year in records dating back to 1884.

Due to the extreme fire risk to the New Forest and the high numbers of visitors, we called on retailers across the Forest to remove disposable barbecues from sale and asked for a continued ban on fires and barbecues in the open countryside of the National Park.

The move followed a large number of disposable barbecues being used while the New Forest was at extreme risk of fire. Hundreds of fires were put out over the spring and summer with numerous areas of scorched earth left across the protected habitats. Over 60 barbecues and fires were put out by rangers in just one weekend.

Within weeks of the start of the campaign over 50 retailers removed disposable barbecues from sale with national supermarkets, local and independent stores both inside and outside the New Forest joining the cause. The campaign featured on national and local news, BBC breakfast and local and national papers and was also debated in Parliament. Social media campaigns reached over 2.4 million people.

Forest organisations including the National Park Authority, Forestry England, Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and the National Trust worked tirelessly with the emergency services to educate the public about the dangers of disposable barbecues and fires, and to protect the Forest and coast.

Vast swathes of the New Forest and Dorset have now been declared a complete no barbecue and fire zone. Barbecues, camping stoves or anything with a naked flame are no longer permitted in car parks or any areas of the open Forest.

All barbecue facilities at Forestry England sites have been removed and prominent ‘no barbecue’ signs have been installed at car parks and information points.

We are continuing the campaigning and will be recruiting additional outlets going forward to support a barbecue-free New Forest.



The impact

The open Forest is now a complete no barbecue or fire zone.

Heathland fire © Mac Hall



Ponies at night © Russell Sach

Record reduction in animal accidents

2020 saw the lowest number of animal accidents ever recorded, helped in part by the reduced amount of traffic due to Covid-19.

The Animal Accident Reduction Group worked together in a timely and coordinated way, appealing to the public to help highlight potential issues which may lead to an accident such as icy roads or foggy weather.

The Highway Authority improved road warning signage on all high-risk routes including warnings painted on the road surface.

‘I go slow down for ponies’ car stickers and emergency hotline cards were given out to the public via council parking clocks and local businesses and amenities.

Our social media campaign reached over 850,000 people.

Even without the pandemic, the overall trend in accidents is clearly downwards, with the last five years recording lower numbers of animal deaths than in previous years.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/animalaccidents

Protecting ground-nesting birds

When the Government issued the stay-at-home guidance at the beginning of ground-nesting bird season, few of us imagined the impact this would have on our wildlife.

Ground-nesting birds such as curlew, woodlark and Dartford warbler need a quiet area to stake out their territory, nest and then feed their young. As we began the early stages of lockdown, they were busy finding somewhere safe to lay their eggs and we saw birds in places that were normally full of people and dogs. Coming out of lockdown things got busier and by the middle of May the daily visitors increased to bank holiday levels. This risked the breeding success of the Forest’s rare birds as they had nested closer to some of the car parks and tracks in our absence.

To help protect them every year, seasonal rangers are employed over the spring and summer to raise awareness of how people can help the New

Forest’s ground-nesting birds by keeping themselves and their dogs to the main tracks between March and August. We produced a ground-nesting bird leaflet to educate and engage with those walking in the protected areas.

Working with Forestry England we tried to create quieter areas around very sensitive nesting locations and closed nearby car parks, placing signs at key locations highlighting the presence of the birds and the best ways to minimise disturbance. Social media posts reached just under 230,000 people and the appeal for people to keep to the main tracks was also included in the New Forest code messaging which has heightened the awareness of this campaign.



Woodlark at nest © Mike Read

The impact

850,000 people reached on social media

Keep your distance

For many months during the lockdown, the livestock were alone in the Forest like never before, only being monitored by commoners and agisters. Once lockdown rules were relaxed, unprecedented numbers of people came to the Forest to get outdoors after months of being in their homes. Many were visiting for the first time and therefore unaware of local byelaws and how to be a Forest friendly visitor.

The introduction and wide promotion of the New Forest code in May included the messaging of not feeding or petting the livestock. It was promoted on radio and local news and reached over 830,000 people on social media. Working together as a joint task force with other Forest organisations enabled the consistent message to be spread wider.

Professional Dog Walkers’ Charter launched

Over 50 dog walking businesses have pledged to follow a best practice checklist for responsible businesses.

Created with the dog walking community, the Professional Dog Walkers’ Charter is aimed at professional dog walkers and dog owners who use them. It lists 24 ways that business can help care for the Forest and provides a standard for pet owners to find responsible dog walkers.

All professional dog walkers who walk in the New Forest National Park are being encouraged to follow the high standards set out in the charter, which has three main themes:

- Operating the business in a professional manner
- Staying safe and respecting the environment
- Being considerate to other Forest users.

For the launch, messaging on social media reached over 31,000 local people and gained over 50 sign ups from the professional dog community.

The Professional Dog Walkers’ Charter for businesses builds on the Dog Walking Code to guide individuals which we developed with New Forest Dog Owners Group and is now well established.

The impact

More than 50 businesses signed up to promote dog walking best practice

The New Forest Access Forum has continued its remit to advise the New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council, on improving public access to land in the area for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. We have recently undergone a large-scale recruitment process to gain new and more diverse members. The forum now has nine new members and is looking forward to consulting on future public access projects and initiatives.

newforestaccessforum.org.uk

Minstead Trust out on the PEDALL bikes



PEDALL New Forest Inclusive Cycling

PEDALL ran nearly 800 rides this year despite the severe impact the pandemic had on the charity’s activities.

PEDALL is a health and wellbeing charity that helps everyone no matter what their need, to get out and cycle in the New Forest National Park among nature. All rides are led by qualified and experienced staff and volunteers using an extensive range of specialist bikes on the permitted off-road cycle tracks.

The charity helps people improve their physical and mental health and tackle social isolation by enabling them to enjoy the freedom of cycling and reconnecting with nature.

2020 started well for PEDALL and the expectation was the number of rides and riders supported would be higher than previous years, however Covid-19 has had a severe impact on the project. PEDALL was keen to get back out riding as quickly as possible as riders were disproportionately affected by the restrictions as most were unable to get out and active without help. Safe procedures were put in place to allow restricted rides to resume in September and the team was able to deliver 773 rides supported by 1,335 hours of volunteer time.

PEDALL’s funding applications were put on hold due to funds being directed

towards the immediate Covid response. In December new funding for the PEDALL project was confirmed for an additional three years. The project will now focus on supporting people with additional needs and mental health challenges, older people with dementia, and Covid recovery.

PEDALL is run by the charity Friends of PEDALL (charity number 1177795) and the New Forest National Park Authority, supported by the NHS, the charity SCARF and Colton Care. It is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, Sport England and British Cycling.

pedall.org.uk



Walking in the Forest

The
impact

13,000 people
engaged

Successful ‘virtual’ Walking and Cycling Festival

Over a quarter of a million people were encouraged to step outside as we changed our popular annual autumn walking festival to a self-guided two-week walking and cycling event.

While we couldn’t run guided walks due to Covid-19 restrictions, we encouraged people to get outdoors into nature with the help of a range of resources.

We promoted our website walking and cycling routes and invited people to download the NPA routes app. We shared guided walks from our YouTube channel, and posted ID tips so people could spot the National Park’s amazing wildlife.

We also encouraged people to share their photos while they were exploring the landscape safely, responsibly and at their own pace. Prizes of Columbia sportswear were given to the winning entries.

Our social media campaign reached 268,223 people, with nearly 13,000 people liking, sharing or commenting.

The festival has been running for eight years and normally has around 80 guided walks with experts who help unlock the secrets of the New Forest.

Establishing a Nature Health Network

The benefits of nature for our mental and physical health have never been clearer since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A diverse group of practitioners, policy makers and communities are working together in a Nature Health Network and recognising the benefits of connection to nature – both to ourselves and to nature itself.

The Network was formed in the summer of 2020 by Bournemouth University, Public Health England and the New Forest National Park Authority (on behalf of a group of southern National Park Authorities). Since then the network has grown to over 250 members, and holds a monthly knowledge-share webinar to explore practice and to make connections between those working in the health, environment and education sectors. Members are drawn from the NHS, countryside organisations, communities, academia and much more.

The network provides:

- A platform for practitioners, academics and advocates of nature-based health solutions to showcase approaches to local, regional and national policy makers, decision takers and funders.
- A shared space for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and learning.
- A seed bed for innovation in nature-based learning and health solutions at the community level, testing approaches and evaluating success.

The
impact

250 members of
a Nature Health
Network

Walking app updates

Our popular walking app has been updated to ensure it’s fully accessible to all and people know how to help care for the Forest while they are out and about.

Information about the New Forest code has been added, as well as a function to help compile data so we can see which routes are the most popular.

Developed by the New Forest National Park Authority, the free app features 27 walks ranging from longer hikes to short strolls for all ages and abilities.

It makes following the routes easier than ever, with GPS navigation allowing walkers to see their location at all times. This removes the need to read a map or decipher written directions, meaning a wider range of people can feel confident in taking a walk in the Forest.

Each route on the app features points of interest, where walkers can find out about the history or nature along the route that they might miss if walking without the aid of technology.

Adam Vasey, New Forest National Park Authority Access Ranger, said: ‘A walk in the countryside can be hugely beneficial for your physical and mental health. We want our walks to be available to people of all backgrounds, whether they know how to read a map or not, and the app helps us achieve this.’



Walking app on phone

The
impact

16 new signposts
installed



Information panels at Avon Tyrrell

New signs on the Lepe Loop

People can find their way more easily round a popular circular walk thanks to 16 new signposts we installed.

The five-mile circular walk at Lepe – known as the Lepe Loop – is easily accessed via public transport and takes in countryside and coast. The signposts were funded by the British Mountaineering Council’s Mend our Mountains Campaign to repair heavily eroded paths and trails in all 15 National Parks.



New signs at Lepe Loop

Avon Tyrrell site brought to life

The heritage, wildlife and habitats of the Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Activity Centre site were brought to life thanks to six new information panels we produced with the Avon Tyrrell team.

The centre at Bransgore is a venue dedicated to the continuous development of young people, and the panels were part of the Natures Stepping Stones project through the Our Past, Our Future Heritage Lottery scheme.

Future plans include developing a walking trail around the site, taking in various places of interest.





Children with ponies

Inspiring young people

Our education team evolved into the education and youth team this year to connect new and diverse young audiences to the opportunities the National Park and partners have to offer.

Our school assemblies went online for the first time in spring, and were themed around the climate and nature emergencies. With the help of the NPA communications team and Forestry England rangers, we engaged with 18 schools, and 558 pupils joined us ‘virtually’ for follow-up Q&A sessions online.

Between March and August 2020, Government did not permit any out of school visits. However, from September, we were able to deliver face-to-face

teaching experiences again. We shared the special qualities of the New Forest with 314 pupils, either in their school grounds or in the Forest and coast.

Because of lockdown restrictions, no school travel grants were awarded between April and July. We received 11 applications for trips between September and March, which were especially meaningful for those pupils and teachers who were then able to benefit from the positive experiences the New Forest brings.

The impact

40 families took part in the John Muir environmental award scheme

‘Thank you for all your help regarding the travel grant. The children and staff have all come back so far saying what an experience they have had and it has been a real boost for them during these uncertain times.’

Marchwood Junior School

Families sign up to John Muir Award

Forty families in and around the National Park took part in an environmental award scheme enabling participants from all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy and care for the environment.

The free award scheme supported by the John Muir Trust is broken down into four challenges:

- **Discover** – your wild place
- **Explore** – its wilderness
- **Conserve** – take personal responsibility
- **Share** – your experience with others

This year we encouraged families local to the New Forest to sign up to the award virtually. We offered support and advice along the way through newsletters and videos full of ideas on how to explore spaces local to them and be inspired by the National Park. Feedback from the participants was that it was ‘educational’, ‘inspiring’, ‘informative’ and ‘fun’.



Wild Play, Holmsley

Generation Green project launched to inspire and connect young people to nature

Young people in and around the New Forest will be given the chance to connect with nature and encouraged into green careers thanks to a £65,000 grant.

It is part of a nationwide £2.5 million Generation Green scheme where thousands of young people will be given the opportunity to connect with the environment through new jobs, training, volunteering roles, residentials and outdoor learning experiences.

In the New Forest two Apprentice Rangers and a Wild Spaces Youth Officer have been appointed.

Apprentice Rangers Jordan Jones and Ben Attwell will spend time with six ranger teams across the New Forest including NFNPA, Forestry England, National Trust, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and the RSPB.

Through a placement with each partner organisation, they will gain experience in a variety of ranger work, from public engagement and event delivery to site maintenance and practical habitat management. Apprentices also work towards the Countryside Worker Standard via Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester. These new apprenticeships build on a Lottery-funded scheme which has already seen six New Forest apprentice rangers graduate.

Jordan, 23, said: ‘The New Forest is a complex place and each day I find out more about the special qualities of area. There’s a lot to tell people, and I have

a lot to learn myself, but really want to get involved where I can, and work as part of a Team New Forest.’

Ben, 21, said: ‘I’ve been on patrol with other rangers, picking litter and learning about rare ground-nesting birds. The New Forest’s landscapes are far more important than I first thought. I’m looking forward to helping to protect this amazing place.’

The grant has also funded a Wild Spaces Youth Officer to enable and inspire young people in local communities to connect to nature through public nature and play sites both inside and outside the New Forest National Park. In the role is Claire Pearce who was previously employed by the NPA as a Wild Play Project Officer, during which time she successfully set up four natural community play spaces in the New Forest area. Now she’ll be helping people in the 14-24 age group get out into nature. She said: ‘I’m looking forward to working with teenagers and young adults. After the past few months of Covid restrictions, it’s the perfect opportunity to help people who wouldn’t normally engage with the Forest to enjoy all the benefits the National Park brings.’

The Generation Green project, funded by a £2.5million grant from the government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund, will create hundreds of jobs across the UK, as well as training and volunteering opportunities, residentials and outdoor learning experiences. Taking part are a 15-strong Access Unlimited coalition of outdoor education providers led by the Youth Hostels Association (YHA).

The opportunities created by YHA, The Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the 10 English National Parks through the Generation Green project, will enable more than 100,000 young people in the UK to be connected to nature.



NPA Apprentice Ranger Ben Attwell



NPA Apprentice Ranger Jordan Jones

The impact

A £65,000 grant for green jobs in the Forest



NPA Wild Spaces Youth Officer Claire Pearce

Prosper

Working in partnership with other organisations it's our duty to help foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park, ensuring it thrives as a living, working Forest.

Image: New Forest Hampers, Adie Callaghan and Jason Plevay



New Forest National Park Awards 2020 recognise the best of the New Forest

The eighth New Forest National Park awards, in partnership with the CLA, celebrated the wonderful people who help sustain the New Forest’s environment and rural economy, ensuring it thrives and is fit for the future.

Throughout the challenges of Covid-19, people continued to work hard to protect the Forest and keep it a living, working landscape.

Winners were announced at our virtual Authority Meeting in October.

The winners of the 2020 awards were:

Young Farmer/Commoner:
Peter Fogarty

Best Supporter of Local Produce:
The New Forest Hamper Company

Sustainability Champion:
Kathy Sirl, The Naked Pantry

Young Environmental Champion:
Daisy Scott

New Forest National Park Authority Chief Executive Alison Barnes said: ‘A living, working Forest relies on the hard work and dedication of so many great people and our awards recognise those who are ensuring the Forest continues to thrive and is fit for the future, through their work in areas such as commoning, sustainable practices, and supporting local produce. These fantastic winners are essential in building the strong team needed to keep the New Forest special, particularly in light of the challenges of the pandemic and of the climate and nature emergencies. Never has there been a more important time to recognise them; they give us hope for the future.’

This year’s Highly Commended were:

Young Farmer/Commoner:
Peter Niccolls

Best Supporter of Local Produce:
The Naked Pantry, New Milton

Sustainability Champion:
Cottage Lodge Hotel, Brockenhurst

New Forest Marque subscription box



Championing local produce

The New Forest Marque local produce network, which we support, played a key role supplying customers and independent outlets during lockdown.



The unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic highlighted the importance of supporting local business, and the New Forest Marque members rose to the challenge. Many re-invented their ways of working while keeping everybody safe and putting local produce front and centre of what they do.

While some businesses were forced to close, others saw an increase in demand, and membership numbers remained stable at 158.

The New Forest National Park Authority provides financial and professional support to the Marque to help ensure the many small member businesses who are linked to the landscape can thrive. This year our rangers, while in lockdown, also supported members by helping with door-to-door deliveries.

The hospitality and retail businesses were vital in many areas at supporting their communities and especially providing for those who were vulnerable and shielding in the early part of the year. Most public-facing events and shows were restricted or postponed during 2020, so efforts to support members were focused in other areas including:

- Creating and launching an e-commerce page on the Marque website so people can buy online.
- Launching the Taste of the New Forest Marque subscription box service which showcases a wide range of Marque produce.

- Helping with home deliveries by providing a staff member and van free of charge.
- Financial help to brand individual delivery vehicles including the Marque logo.
- Advertising campaigns to raise awareness of the New Forest Marque and the importance of supporting local.
- Re-designing the New Forest Marque website to create a more user-friendly platform, helping connect customers and local businesses.
- Developing the members’ login area providing links for help with business support and many useful resources for members.

Claire Lee, New Forest Marque Operations Manager said:

‘It was evident very early on that the national supply chain was vulnerable, and our members have gone the extra mile to maintain supplies and to serve their communities across the New Forest. Christmas 2021 saw an upsurge in demand for local produce and throughout the year we continued to share the Keep it Local message. Now we ask that consumers carry on sourcing and buying local whenever they can to help ensure these independent local producers are there when we need them.’

Green Halo Partnership increases understanding of nature’s benefits

The Green Halo Partnership, convened by the National Park Authority, celebrated its fifth year by publishing an assessment of all the benefits the New Forest environment provides for people.

The Partnership’s aim is to demonstrate how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically successful community.

Key to its work is increasing understanding of the natural capital of our area. ‘Natural capital’ describes those parts of the natural environment (species, habitats, communities, landscapes, soils, water, air) that provide essential services to people such as storing carbon to help combat climate change, preventing flooding, healthy soil, pollinating plants and crops and important areas for wildlife.

The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted many of the issues that the Partnership has been promoting – including the importance of access to nature

and the health benefits it can bring to society; and the tangible improvements to air and water quality when travel and economic activity decreased during lockdown.

Through its partners such as Future South, Southern Policy Centre and HPW Architecture, the Green Halo Partnership promoted the possibility of a green recovery – one that can capture some of the environmental gains that resulted from the most challenging of times, that supported the need to prioritise health and wellbeing and improved social and environmental outcomes.

Publishing a Natural Capital Baseline, funded by the Solent Local Economic Partnership, has added to our understanding of the natural assets of the New Forest National Park. As the economy begins to recover from the shock of the past year, the baseline will enable partners to understand what can be done to enhance these assets further, how to reduce the impacts of our activities on our natural resources, and how to ultimately help combat climate change.

www.greenhalo.org.uk



Green Halo seed © iStockphoto

New Forest Tour

The open-top Tour returned: social distancing from above! The usual 12-week season was halved to six weeks due to Covid restrictions but managed to remain a popular, much-anticipated attraction among visitors and residents, seeing a drop in patronage of only 25% compared with 2019.

Running in partnership with MoreBus, the Tour encourages people to leave their cars behind and, via audio commentary, discover the stories behind the history, people, places and animals of the New Forest. The hop-on and hop-off flexibility encourages

visitors to contribute to the local economy (estimated at £275,000 last summer) and provides discounts at nearby attractions and businesses.

thenewforesttour.info



New Forest Tour Green Route

Achieving Excellence

Working together across organisations and communities is vital to make sure we have a strong collective voice to champion the New Forest National Park.

Image: Self-employed farrier and commoner, Ben Mansbridge



Partnership Plan – snapshot survey

Forest organisations continued work on the next Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park – our joint strategy which sets out what all the organisations will do over the next five years to care for this spectacular landscape, its wildlife and its communities.

Our remit is to ensure the New Forest is protected, that people have opportunities to learn about it and enjoy the outdoors, and that our local communities prosper.

We had 2,763 responses to our public ‘snapshot survey’ in January 2021 which we created this year to help inform our Partnership Plan. We asked their views about some of their experiences over the previous few months; as well as how we can all help the Forest recover, and what they would like to see going forwards.

Partnership Plan members meet at the National Trust’s Foxbury plantation pre-Covid



All national parks must have a management or partnership plan for their area. In the New Forest, it’s produced jointly by all the main organisations with interests and responsibilities in the National Park, including:

Environment Agency; Forestry England; Hampshire County Council; Natural England; New Forest District Council; New Forest National Park Authority; Test Valley Borough Council; Verderers of the New Forest, and Wiltshire Council.

Climate and nature micro-grants

Projects helping climate and nature were given a kick start thanks to our micro-grant scheme which was open to schools, youth groups and other organised community groups and charities.

Across the Forest, 10 groups applied and we awarded £1,630 to help encourage green projects such as planting wildflowers, bug hotels, hedgehog homes, nest boxes, bird feeders, pollinator trails, water recycling and compost facilities. The funds are also supporting a local volunteer group to survey and monitor slow worms in churchyards within the National Park (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group - groups.arguk.org/hiwarg).

The grants were launched on the back of the online New Forest Awakening Festival (see page 8) which ran throughout February and raised awareness of the nature and climate emergencies, highlighting how people could make a difference.

Grants of up to £150 were available for activities that achieved any of these aims:

Improving opportunities for wildlife and habitats:

Providing new habitat – such as creating new ponds, planting wildflowers or introducing nesting boxes.

Reducing carbon emissions:

Encouraging more walking and cycling, supporting locally-produced food and goods, promoting ‘reduce, reuse, and

recycle’, disposing of litter responsibly, supporting clean energy.

Connecting new groups to nature:

Supporting ideas led by and/or engaging typically under-represented groups in the New Forest National Park.

In our last micro-grant scheme, over 40 schools and youth groups across the National Park bid for grants to make their areas greener. We were thrilled to be able to help them establish wildlife gardens and composting areas, build bug hotels and raised beds, and buy tools and litter picking equipment.

Another micro-grant scheme following the same criteria will run in the autumn.



Bee on orange flower

Our staff

Our values

Our values help shape our culture and reflect our principles, standards and ways of working, they can be summarised as PACT:

Purpose

We are dedicated to our work

Achievement

We innovate, inspire and deliver success

Care

We strive to be sustainable in all we do

Teamwork

We work together with openness, integrity and respect

Staff discovery days

All staff are invited to join our ‘discovery days’ each year – a half day out of the office to mix with colleagues in an informal setting and find out about our work in other parts of the organisation.

This year our discovery days went virtual, with six different sessions for staff to learn more about:

- Wellbeing and self-care
- 5,000 years of countryside access
- Meadow exploration
- Our planning committee
- National Park rangers during Covid-19
- Affordable housing.

Mental health and wellbeing

We continued to deliver mental health and wellbeing support, which was particularly relevant during lockdown. This year, four more staff undertook training to become Mental Health First Aiders and a refresher course was held by mental health experts. Our wellbeing group meets monthly to discuss and implement wellbeing initiatives including socially-distanced walks.



Pony on frosty road

The New Forest Trust’s Love the Forest campaign works with businesses to raise funds for conservation, education and commoning projects.

Businesses in the New Forest provide opportunities for their customers to help look after this precious landscape by adding a donation on a room stay, meal or product.

Among other schemes and projects supported in the last year a £2,500 grant was awarded to the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst and £5,000 to the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project (NFNNPP), led by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which is working towards removing non-native invasive plants from local riverbanks thereby helping the native wildlife and waterways thrive.

The past year has been a difficult one for the Trust due to the affected tourism industry on which it relies for support but there have been some noticeable exceptions.

The best example being during lockdown in February when the Trust successfully invited people to take part in its Valentines Challenge and get sponsored to walk, jog or run a distance when out on their daily exercise from home.

Over the years the scheme has helped fund numerous projects covering a wide range of subjects from studies into rare bats, birds and snakes to helping educate thousands of youngsters about the New Forest and vital projects to reduce animal accidents on Forest roads.

We are now working even more closely with the New Forest Trust as our aims relating to the long-term wellbeing of the New Forest are so similar. We have been supporting its Love The Forest campaign with administration and business development work, while the public can donate online at newforesttrust.org.uk/donate.

Financial Information

The Authority's core grant from Defra was maintained at £3,252,000 for the 2020/21 financial year.

Our financial position has fortunately not been significantly affected during the pandemic, but is being closely monitored at all times.

We have continued to seek cost efficiencies wherever possible and sought ways to increase effectiveness in the work we do. We continue to generate substantial external partnership funding to further services and delivery. On average every £1 we contribute to joint projects generates a further £18 from partner organisations.

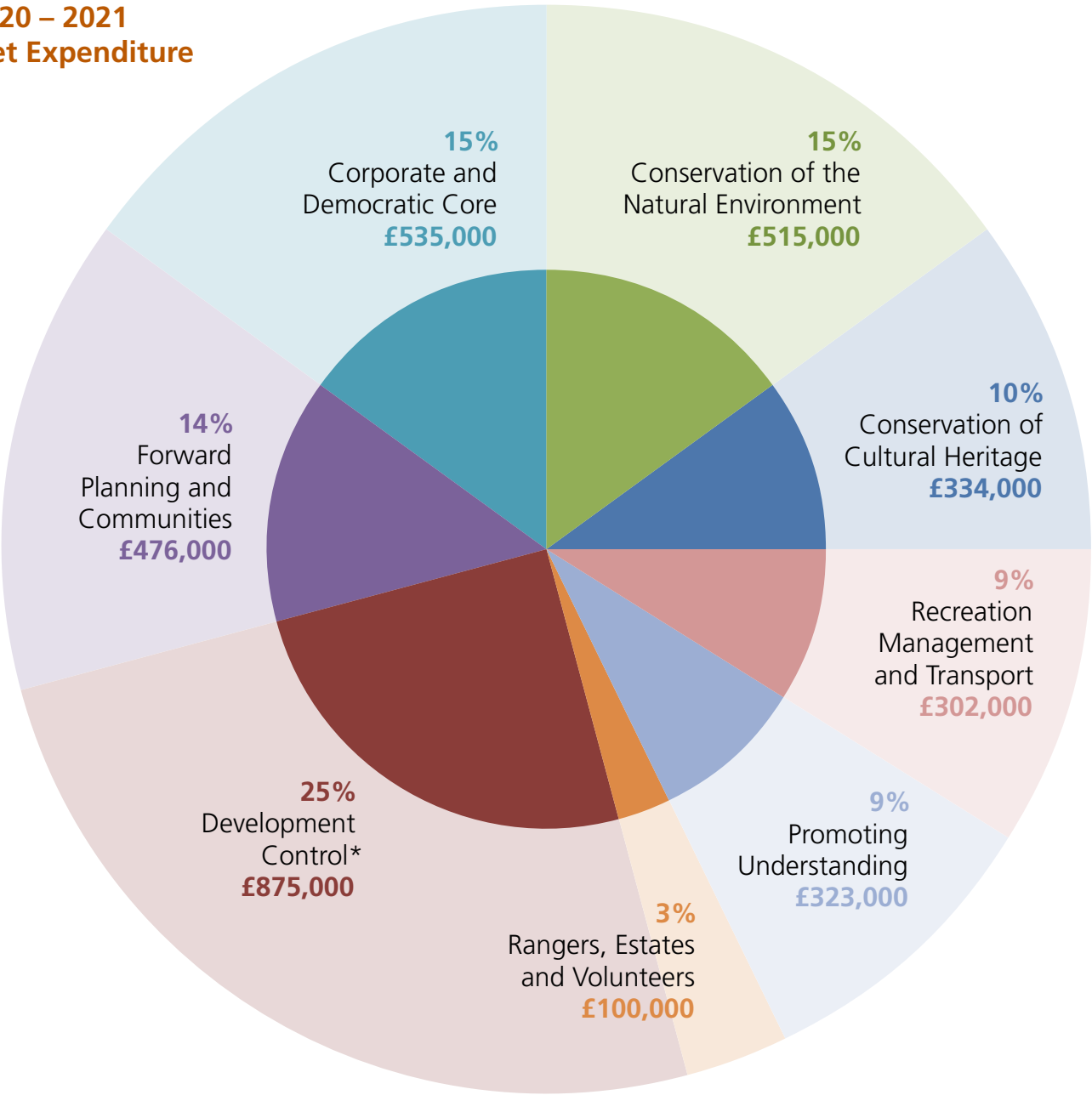
We received around:

- £3.252m from Defra
- £339,000 in statutory fees for planning and related applications
- £164,000 for shared services with other local authorities (rangers, archaeology, comms and administration)
- £7,000 on our investments
- £64,000 in other income generated (such as talks, guided walks, New Forest Tour advertising and charging for expert advice)

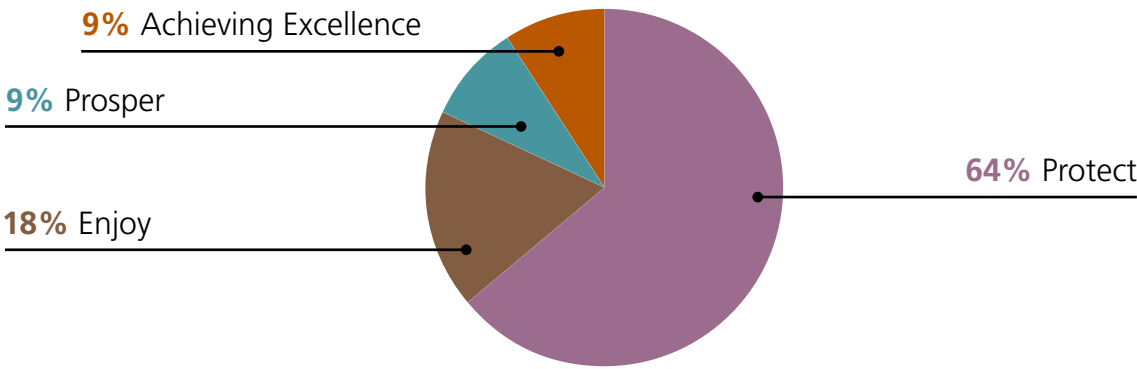
Significant external funding totalling £0.85m was secured for the Forest, including:

- £428,000 Our Past, Our Future: Landscape Partnership Scheme
- £200,000 Health Education England Partnership
- £87,000 Higher Level Stewardship Scheme
- £50,000 PEDALL Inclusive Cycling Charity
- £77,000 New Forest Land Advice Service
- Plus many more smaller projects...

2020 – 2021 Net Expenditure



2020 – 2021 Budget



*Also includes enforcement and the tree service

Contact us

We welcome your views and comments about this Annual Review or any other aspect of our performance or services. For regular updates, please sign up to our email newsletter at [newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

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