

New Forest National Park Authority & RSPB

Communications Protocol

1. BACKGROUND

The New Forest is a 'priority landscape' for the RSPB (alongside the nearby Wiltshire chalk downlands, Somerset Levels, Wild Purbeck and South Downs).

Purchased in April 2018, Franchises Lodge nature reserve is a key partnership project for the New Forest National Park Authority and the NPA's investment to help purchase the site is its most significant to date.

A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed at an Authority meeting in March 2018. The key points in the MoU relating to communications are at 4.2:

4.2.1 to ensure that all information and literature produced and distributed reflects the fact that RSPB Franchises Lodge is in the New Forest National Park.

4.2.2 that the NFNPA will be acknowledged as a key partner to the RSPB on site and that the RSPB and NPA will reference each other in relevant publicity materials (see below).

4.2.3 to seek opportunities to promote jointly aligned messages at the Reserve and in and around the National Park.

and 4.3:

4.3.1 develop a communications protocol to cover issues such as branding, shared key messages and agreed form of words to describe the partnership and where we will use them.

4.3.5 adopt a proactive approach to communicating and working with local communities to maximise social and economic benefits and generate support for the special qualities of the New Forest National Park.

This communications protocol sets out our agreed messages, ways of working and key areas of collaboration.

2. KEY MESSAGES

Joint:

- A secret forest has been saved for the nation by the RSPB with help from the New Forest National Park Authority.
- The spectacular woodland connects two already internationally-important wildlife areas – Langley Wood National Nature Reserve to the north and the New Forest Special Protection Area to the south.
- It's an extremely rare chance to significantly aid nature recovery in the north of the National Park, making the Forest bigger, better for nature and more joined-up
- Opportunities will be given for the public to enjoy the site – 'a secret forest'

RSPB:

- The RSPB is the largest nature conservation charity in the country, dedicated to 'giving nature a home'.
- Creating areas for nature which are bigger, better and more joined up by re-establishing important habitats in the New Forest, such as heathland and a mire as well as improving grassland, wet woodland and the mixed woodland.

NFNPA:

- The NPA contributed £200,000 towards buying the land and offers ongoing support and advice.
- We are collaborating with the RSPB to enhance nature recovery in the National Park, develop this special place into an exemplar site for wildlife and commoning, as well as a tranquil retreat for people of all ages.

3. WAYS OF WORKING

Acknowledging the New Forest National Park setting and the NPA's involvement

Communications should include acknowledgement that Franchises Lodge is in the New Forest National Park.

Where the origin story of the site is explained, communications should reference the NPA's involvement as an RSPB Franchises Lodge partner and on-going collaborator in site development.

Examples of communications where the above would be considered relevant are Nature's Home (RSPB magazine) articles about Franchises Lodge, web pages about the site, visitor publications such as leaflets, local newsletters and also in the 'backstory and ongoing partnership story' at talks and volunteer meetings etc.

Media releases about NPA/RSPB partnership activities and releases explaining the origin story should include the NPA's involvement as a partner and on-going collaborator. Otherwise, this should be referenced in Notes to Editors.

National Park / NPA branding

On site signage at key points (e.g. gateway) should recognise the site is in the New Forest National Park. Consideration of the use of the National Park logo.

Our [corporate branding guidelines](#) set out the colours, fonts, logos and use of photography which help define the National Park brand.

Use of the logo 'In partnership with' – which covers a more in-depth involvement which may include officer time, funding, setting the strategic direction, etc. This is to be used where applicable on interpretation or in-depth publications which either explain the backstory or detail partnership projects.

All communications materials using the National Park logo (printed and digital) **must** be signed-off by the Communications Manager (hilary.makin@newforestnpa.gov.uk).

Fundraising

As a public sector organisation, the National Park Authority cannot raise funds in the same way as charities and cannot be seen to be part of a charity fundraising appeal.

In fundraising materials we would like a mention in text that Franchises is in the National Park and that the project itself is supported by the NPA (and a logo may be appropriate to accompany this explanation) but cannot be part of the appeal.

RSPB to send all Franchises fundraising materials to NPA at early stage of development for consultation.

Lobbying / public affairs

As a Defra arms-length body the NPA hosts visits from officials, Ministers and MPs to champion the role of national parks and would welcome the opportunity to include Franchises Lodge on visit itineraries.

As a public sector body the NPA is unable to join in Government lobbying/campaigning work.

Planning

Any support or funding from the NPA will not influence any planning application, which must go through the planning process.

As a result, we are unable to comment on any proposals which need to go through the planning process before they are considered by the Planning Committee.

National events and engagement campaigns

July

- #NatureOnYourDoorstep campaign: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/> (a positive, uplifting campaign providing tips on how to encourage nature in people's garden and local green spaces).
- Revive our World: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/revive-our-world-five-other-actions/> (an impactful campaign aimed at tackling the climate and nature emergency – campaign involves petitions, stunts and encourages people to take action for nature).

August

- Cameron's Cottage launch – TBC
- Big Wild Summer – TBC
- Big Wild Sleepout - TBC

September

- RSPB AGM - TBC

January

- Big Garden Birdwatch – TBC

Stakeholder communications and 'local intelligence'

The NPA is in regular contact with MPs; county, district and parish councils; is the only New Forest public sector body with its own residents' newspaper; an email newsletter with a distribution of over 21,000; and has the greatest social media reach of any brand to New Forest residents.

The RSPB has a strong local membership and both organisations have growing volunteer groups from the local community.

Both partners pledge to share any issues, challenges or opportunities affecting local communities/businesses which could impact or enhance our work and to share relevant messages/campaigns.

Team New Forest

The NPA is pleased to involve the RSPB in its key stakeholder groups and partnership projects to help shape the future of the New Forest and tackle the nature and climate emergencies. These include:

- Green Halo Partnership
- Partnership Plan
- Wildlife Round Table
- Recreation Management Strategy
- Volunteering
- Educators' Forum
- Strategic landscape/on the ground/conservation/land management group with Forestry England, National Trust, Natural England, Wildlife Trusts and other organisations.

Liaison with RSPB regions & NPA

While recognising there will no doubt be some reactive communications, communications officers pledge to give each other timely warning of comms activity to come and hold meetings three times a year to plan in advance.

Contacts:

- NPA: Communications Manager Hilary Makin
- RSPB: Site manager Richard Snelling

Comms protocol review

The Comms protocol will be reviewed summer 2023.