



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

Protecting
together,
shaping
tomorrow



Annual Review
2021–2022

Stats at a glance



Chair and Chief Executive's statement

Britain's national parks have come under a new spotlight this year. They are developing greater importance in the way we think about the environment and how we manage it for future generations. Their role is stronger in leading nature recovery and the response to climate change; as well as improving the physical and mental wellbeing of the population.

Dubbed 'Britain's breathing spaces', national parks were first established more than 70 years ago to help the country recover from the aftermath of the Second World War. This sought to protect our finest landscapes and promote public access for everyone's health and enjoyment.

Today, following a global pandemic, and faced with climate and biodiversity crises, the opportunity for national parks to provide lasting solutions for people and nature has never been greater. Nationally, attention is on a 'green recovery' – how do we recover the economy and environment and address societal needs as a whole?

The New Forest continues to be an internationally important landscape for wildlife, but this and the way of life that shapes it are increasingly under pressure, and the ability to respond and provide lasting solutions depends on a renewed commitment to working together to secure its future.

With our partners we have continued working on our Partnership Plan which sets out a refreshed vision for the New Forest National Park's future in this context of crisis and recovery.

The Plan's five objectives chime with the Government's intended direction for national parks and that green recovery, with issues and opportunities identified in the Government's recent Landscapes Review and the consultation that followed.

In the following pages we are delighted to show the impacts of some of the work the New Forest National Park Authority is driving with partners and communities, and how it contributes to a place that supports climate, nature, people and place into the future.

Working towards being 'net zero with nature' by 2050 we have helped develop a 'Greenprint' for south Hampshire, as well as creating the New Forest's first natural capital baseline. We're working with farmers and landowners on land management schemes and best practice so the environment continues to play a vital role in capturing carbon through the healthy functioning of the natural systems of our different habitats.

Many of our projects are underpinning nature-based solutions, including making landscapes bigger, better and more joined up. Through our Green Halo Partnership, we are continuing to lead on this natural capital approach and engaging people in its delivery across the central south of England.

Part of our duty as a National Park Authority is to support sustainable and sympathetic building development, and numbers of planning applications remained high this year. Our Building Design Awards were back, rewarding the very best designs across the New Forest, and a new Building Design Guide was launched to reflect policy changes since the last update a decade ago.

Opportunities for us to meet in person with fellow staff members and Forest partners, as we emerged from Covid restrictions, have been especially welcome this year. There is a real sense of renewing all-important relationships and fuelling determination to deliver for the Forest together.

Our action plan to 'Care for the Forest, Care for each other' reaped significant results, with targeted joint ranger patrols at visitor hotspots, increased signage and campaigning around anti-social behaviours – helping to prevent people damaging the very place they had come to enjoy.

We're working with new communities, including convening local green groups to reach and inspire wider audiences. We took our climate assemblies to thousands of school children, and thanks to our second Awakening Festival, messages on climate and nature in the New Forest could be seen by more than a million people.

Our amazing volunteers could start to get out again to help with practical tasks across the Forest, and our Ambassador Scheme attracted hundreds more people who wanted to do their bit by litter picking, reporting problems and sharing the New Forest code.

Lockdown restrictions and the events of Covid have led people to appreciate the difference that nature makes to our lives more than ever before. There is an increased awareness of the link

between our own health and that of the planet. We fully support a 'natural health service' and we have encouraged people out into nature with another successful Walking and Cycling Festival, as well as supporting Walking for Health groups that run regular short and easy walks to help people become more active. Our partner charity, PEDALL, has expanded its offering this year to take more people with varying disabilities and health conditions out for cycle rides using a fleet of specially adapted bikes.

We are buoyed by the passion of everyone who has worked so hard in difficult circumstances to be part of a vital 'Team New Forest'. A huge thanks must go to our staff, members, partners, volunteers and the wider community for their unwavering dedication to the National Park and the hours and expertise they give day in, day out.

There is much more we all have to do to ensure this landscape not only survives but thrives into the future. We will need to work as strongly as ever if we are to ensure our ambitions are clear and inclusive of all. We will also be working hard to attract the significant resources needed to make a difference to this living, working Forest, its people, landscapes and wildlife.

Alison Barnes

Alison Barnes, Chief Executive

Gavin Parker

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 2021–22

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 welcomed three new appointees to the board: Zoë Clewer, Michael Thierry and Diane Andrews.**

Zoë Clewer joined in June 2021 as the representative of Wiltshire Council. She is the Councillor for Redlynch and Landford.

Michael Thierry also joined in June as Hampshire County Council representative for the NPA. Michael is also a member of Ringwood Town Council and New Forest District Council.

Diane Andrews joined in November 2021, replacing Barry Rickman.

She represents the New Forest District Council and covers Bramshaw, Copythorne North and Minstead.

We said goodbye to Leo Randall who retired after being a councillor for 21 years. He served as chair of the New Forest National Park Planning Committee – a position now filled by Gordon Bailey, with Steve Trow as deputy.

Edward Heron also stood down from the National Park Authority to dedicate more time to his roles at Hampshire County and New Forest District Councils.

Local authority appointees

David Harrison	Edward Heron (to June 2021)	Gordon Bailey Chair of Planning Committee	Richard Clewer	Ann Sevier	Alexis McEvoy Deputy Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee	Keith Mans	Leo Randall (to June 2021)
Barry Rickman (to November 2021)	Neville Penman	Sue Bennison	Caroline Rackham	Diane Andrews (from November 2021)	Michael Thierry (from June 2021)	Zoë Clewer (from June 2021)	

Secretary of State appointees

Patrick Heneghan Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee Deputy Chair of the Authority	Victoria Mander Deputy Chair of Standards Committee	David Bence
George Meyrick	Prof. Gavin Parker Chair of the Authority	Stephen Trow Deputy Chair of Planning Committee

Parish appointees

George Bisson Chair of Standards Committee	Stephen Tarling (from July 2020)	John Sanger	Richard Taylor

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

The UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021 reinforced the need to take urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees and to adapt to a changing climate. National Parks can play a key role in addressing the climate crisis, with habitat restoration at the heart of efforts to increase carbon sequestration and enable nature recovery.

Tackling the environmental challenges we face from climate change and biodiversity loss will require considerable financial investment from both the public and private sector. The new Environmental Land Management scheme aims to pay farmers to improve the environment and reduce carbon emissions but to achieve the scale of nature-based projects needed to make a difference it will be necessary to attract private investment. The past year has seen over £1 million of new investment in the National Park from three initiatives aimed at delivering nature recovery and developing nature-based solutions to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. July was an auspicious month with the launch of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and notification of successful bids to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme provides additional investment into the 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) that together cover 25% of England. The aim of the programme is to support farmers, land managers and commoners to deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment while also helping the farm businesses continue to play a key role in the rural economy. In the New Forest, 19 projects were supported in the first year of the programme, with applications approved by a Local Assessment Panel drawn from the land management sector.

The Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund was established to help build back greener from the coronavirus pandemic. A partnership led by the New Forest National Park Authority was successful in a bid to the fund that will restore important habitats, create new wildlife-rich corridors, develop volunteering programmes and create and retain green jobs across the National Park. The programme began in September with funding for projects until March 2023.

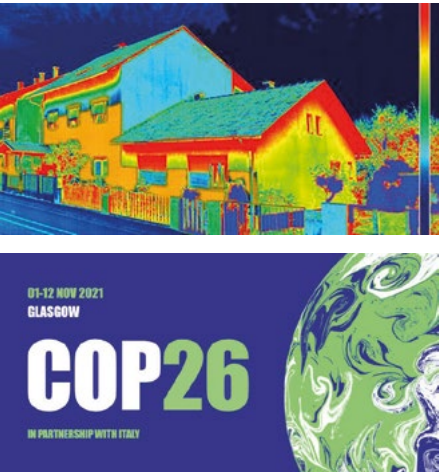
Public finance alone is insufficient to fund the scale of nature restoration needed to address the twin climate and nature crises. Private investment will be needed and the Natural Environment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) has provided £100,000 to fund the development of new ways to finance nature restoration here in the National Park. Farmers and land managers can deliver key environmental services such as carbon sequestration, flood risk reduction, biodiversity gains and nutrient reduction through their land management practices and increasingly investors and private companies are willing to pay for those services. This might be to offset their own carbon emissions, meet their obligations under new environmental legislation such as Biodiversity Net Gain or develop their own enhanced environmental credentials. With the NEIRF funding, the National Park Authority is collaborating with Palladium, a leader in the design and implementation of nature-based solutions, and local landowners to develop business models that can generate revenues from the restoration of the natural environment.

The investment secured in 2021/22 is an important contribution to achieving the aim of becoming 'Net Zero with Nature' and we will continue to work with a wide range of partners to maximise its impact.

*Ponies on a road near Dennywood
by Peter LeCointe*

Inspiring action to tackle climate change

For two weeks the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) engaged the world with all aspects of climate change including the science, solutions, and actions. It brought together 120 world leaders and over 40,000 participants, including party delegates and media representatives.



During the conference in November 2021, we inspired action in our own communities by encouraging people to sign up to our climate and nature challenge pledge. More than 570 people have signed the pledge, agreeing to take at least four of seven simple steps towards sustainable living, such as shopping locally and saving energy.

We were among a prominent group of global protected landscapes who called on world leaders to support our vital work on climate change and nature recovery.

impact

113,000 reached on social media during COP26

The NPA also attended an Accenture sponsored event led by National Parks Partnerships to highlight the role private finance could play in funding nature restoration.

During the conference our communications campaign highlighting our work around environmental solutions and climate change reached more than 113,000 people on social media.

Top: Thermal ‘heat map’ of a home
Bottom: COP26 2021The



Promoting a green recovery

We’ve worked with partners to develop a ‘Greenprint’ for south Hampshire – to drive a green recovery post Covid-19 and develop a more prosperous, fair, resilient and environmentally-aware society. It’s a framework for policy-making, collaboration and co-operation with five themes:

- Delivering net zero carbon with nature
 - Promoting a natural health service
 - Protecting, restoring and improving our world class blue/green environments
 - Creating great places through quality in design and build
- Making our area a centre for excellence in green skills and jobs.

The Greenprint is a joint initiative led by the New Forest National Park Authority, University of Southampton, University of Portsmouth, and Southern Policy Centre, working with Solent LEP, local authorities in the Partnership for South Hampshire and neighbouring

Councils, including Isle of Wight and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council.

The framework takes in the area’s special characteristics and informs councils, businesses and organisations on actions to help deliver a region-wide green recovery.

Lyndhurst High Street

Establishing a Natural Capital baseline

We worked with Solent Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and partners to develop the New Forest’s first Natural Capital baseline.

This important environmental reference point gives a better understanding of the role that the New Forest’s unique biodiversity, ecosystems, and water and marine resources currently play and their future potential as natural solutions for helping us tackle climate change.

Natural capital is used to describe parts of the natural environment (species, habitats, communities, landscapes, soils, water, air) that support the essential ecosystem, such as carbon dioxide (CO2) sequestration and carbon storage, waterflow regulation, soil erosion protection, pollination and important areas for biodiversity.



Walkers on Hurst Spit

Creating a sustainable funding model – Revere

We and the 14 other UK National Parks have formed a partnership with global impact firm Palladium to create a sustainable funding model for nature restoration at scale to tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. ‘Revere’ aims to catalyse private finance and help secure almost £240 million for vital nature restoration projects needed in national parks by 2030.

We have been awarded £100,000 to drive private investment in nature and help tackle the climate crisis in the national park. The project runs to summer 2022.

The pilot project involving the Barker-Mill, Cadland Estates and Forestry England is looking at where arable farmland and low-quality grasslands could be turned into woodlands and wetlands to enhance nature, capture carbon, improve water quality and extend these benefits to the open Forest. The project will then work out how much economic value these environmental benefits provide for people, what they cost to deliver, and how much investment is needed to get started. This model will contribute

to the creation of a green market for environmental services and will stimulate private sector funding for nature improvements in the National Park.

The New Forest NPA is one of 27 organisations across England awarded up to £100,000 as part of this ground-breaking £10 million Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund from Defra, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

The project will uncover the current opportunities and barriers to accessing private finance across the three pilot land holdings, and help unlock private investment to fund nature recovery and climate mitigation across the National Park.

Lapwing © Marc Baldwin

The impact

£100,000 in funding to drive private investment in nature



Funding for New Forest farmers and land managers

Nature, people and places in the New Forest are benefiting from £157,000 in grants given to farmers and landowners. The Farming in Protected Landscapes grants programme was launched in July by Defra and is being managed locally by the New Forest NPA.

Our team from the New Forest Land Advice service has worked with landowners, resulting in great environmental gains across the Forest. So far, 19 projects have been given funding to restore grasslands and wildflower meadows, plant hedgerows and trees, manage livestock, harvest rainwater and improve soil health and soil carbon.

New Forest farmers and land managers can apply for the grants for projects that either support the natural environment, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide public access or support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses. The programme runs from July 2021 until March 2024. In its first few months it has also seen 407 hectares of land improved, nearly 6,000m of hedgerow planted and seven existing farm clusters supported.

Projects include:



Pondhead Conservation Trust manages Pondhead Enclosure in Lyndhurst. Run entirely by volunteers, the Trust restores the hazel coppice and ancient track network to improve biodiversity and enhance people's enjoyment of the woodland, which is the size of 125 football pitches. With funding it is buying a new kiln so it can continue keeping traditional methods alive and making a difference for people and wildlife in the Forest.



A farm in Fordingbridge is reducing its carbon footprint and providing bigger, better, more joined-up habitats for wildlife. Solar panels will be installed to supply power to the farm buildings and a new rainwater harvesting system will collect thousands of litres of rainwater to be used for farming and reduce flood risk. Tree and hedgerow planting will also help to store carbon and, alongside new wildflower areas, will help wildlife flourish.



A smallholding in Lymington received funding to create wildlife corridors linking up habitats and allowing wildlife to move across the landscape more easily. Over 400 metres of hedgerow have been planted, including over 2,500 native hedgerow plants and 24 native trees.

The impact

407 acres of land improved – equivalent to 570 football pitches

A total of **£600,000** is expected to be available for projects in the New Forest National Park during the three-year programme.



Commoners checking their stock in the New Forest

New Forest Land Advice Service: Supporting farmers and commoners

We help farmers and commoners by providing grants, training and advice through our Land Advice Service.

We were busy through the year, giving advice on applying for land management related grants. We ensured 61 Basic Payment Scheme claims and eight Countryside Stewardship claims were submitted – which benefitted 58 commoners.

In addition, our advisers gained nine Countryside Stewardship agreements for commoners, following 2021 applications, and are now busy helping landowners with a further possible seven to be submitted in 2022.

With support received from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund as part of the Green & Blue Horizons scheme, our advisers have been setting up two new landowner clusters in addition to the Southern cluster along the coast. These clusters allow landowners and farmers to achieve wider landscape-scale environmental benefits by working together as a group.

We've instigated the Ditchend Brook landowners group, who are keen to find out about topics such as health of the brook, the obligations and limitations of bankside ownership, training to identify water vole and species requirements, and channel and bankside management and flooding.

A second cluster will be around the Mill Stream in the Emery Down and Minstead area.

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 commoning 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. Ongoing 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 includes a stallion scheme managing the selection and number of stallions which run on the Forest each year to improve New Forest bloodlines. 21,000 reflective collars have also been issued to help prevent animal accidents.

- **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.

hlsnewforest.org.uk



Left: Installing a boardwalk, and right: a new kissing gate and signage to improve access at Landford Bog

Enhancing landscapes

We’re committed to preserving the landscape character of the New Forest, ensuring its special qualities are saved for future generations.

This year we have been working with Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) to move extensive lengths of its electricity network underground to visually improve the open heathland to the south and west of Burley. Timber poles and electricity wires are being removed from the sensitive landscape and the electricity cables buried using mole ploughs which minimise soil disturbance. The project is a result of successful collaboration with SSE, Forestry England and Natural England.

We have also used grants from the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative to give:

- **£200,000** to RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve to improve its landscape by removing extensive areas of rhododendron and improving the various footpaths to enhance public access. The RSPB provided 25% match funding.
- **£25,000** to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to improve Landford Bog nature reserve with new stock proof perimeter fencing, so animals can graze the area again. A new boardwalk is being installed to improve access over a muddy footpath which protects plants and flowers on the ground.

Thanks a million for New Forest Awakening Festival

Messages about the climate and nature crises in the National Park reached an audience of more than a million people thanks to the New Forest Awakening Festival, which took place throughout February.

We led again on the Festival, which ran for the first time last year. It helps 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 highlights how everyone can help.

More than 45 online and in-person events were held throughout the month thanks to a range of New Forest organisations, businesses and charities. These included wildlife walks and talks, a carbon calculator workshop, a mini eco film fair, clothes swap and repair café, and expert tips on how to save energy in the home. There were also

events from New Forest Marque local produce members, including a tour of a commoner’s farm.

Many events requiring tickets were at capacity, with more than 3,300 people attending either online or in person. Businesses and green groups encouraged sustainable practices through initiatives including a plastic toothbrush exchange, refill stations and upcycling opportunities.

Overall, more than 100,000 people engaged with the online posts or events (attended events, viewed videos, commented, liked or shared social posts).

As part of the Festival, the NPA’s Education and Youth team created a Climate Champions film to take important climate and nature messaging to a younger audience, which reached over 2,100 schoolchildren. Youngsters

were also invited to enter a prize draw by submitting a piece of art showing how they had been taking their own actions for the environment.

An online Volunteer Fair was the finale to the 2022 Awakening Festival which attracted 250 sign-ups to find out about 16 New Forest organisations with volunteering opportunities.

The impact

Climate and nature messages could be seen by a million people

Green and blue horizons scheme boosts green jobs and nature recovery

An £800,000 scheme to kickstart action to confront the twin climate and nature emergencies began in September thanks to a grant of £539,000 from the Government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

The ‘Green and blue horizons from city to Forest’ scheme is beginning our path towards net zero with nature and helping new and diverse audiences connect with the New Forest.

Over 18 months, we’re teaming up with Countryside Education Trust, the Freshwater Habitats Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and the New Forest Commoners Defence Association (NFCDA) to deliver the project.

We’re working with farmers, landowners, communities, and volunteers to extend nature networks and create wildlife-rich corridors that link National Park habitats to neighbouring towns and cities.

So far, the partners have:

- Improved nearly 11 hectares of grassland (the equivalent to 15 football pitches) and 1,500m of hedgerows
- Set up and started working with five landowner networks to collectively improve nature

- Organised and delivered 358 volunteer days over the winter period removing gorse from scheduled ancient monuments, filling gaps in existing hedgerows, removing bramble and invasive species
- Improved 15 hectares (the size of 21 football pitches) of woodlands across four sites including removing non-native species
- Created and retained 17 staff posts across five partner organisations
- Supported the NFCDA in promoting commoning, with a 236% increase in online social engagement. We have also helped gain national attention on the NFCDA’s successful trial of salt licks to encourage animals away from roads.
- Developed plans for a climate education programme linked to The Fort Climate Centre being built by the Countryside Education Trust in Beaulieu.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/horizons

The impact

15 hectares of woodlands improved (equivalent to 21 football pitches)



Artist impression of Fort Climate Centre



Minister returns to successful wetland restoration project

We invited Rural Affairs Minister Lord Richard Benyon on a tour of the New Forest in March, to see environment projects and meet organisations caring for the National Park.

He visited a stream at Fletcher’s Thorns near Brockenhurst which he first saw in 2011 when diggers had carefully recreated its natural meandering course. As part of a programme led by Forestry England to restore wetlands across the New Forest, the meanders were put back into the stream to improve the condition of these internationally-important habitats after the Victorians had straightened the channel to drain the land.

Restorations are improving habitats for rare wildlife, protecting streams and mires from further erosion, helping to manage flood risk and increasing resilience to drought. They are funded by the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme, one of England’s largest environmental improvement schemes of which we are a partner.

During the tour Lord Benyon also visited a commoner’s holding near Lyndhurst; met the inclusive cycling charity PEDALL; heard from National Park rangers about the New Forest code; discussed farming grants and subsidies with commoners and farmers in the Verderers Hall in Lyndhurst; and met with partners and landowners along the Waterside who are working to drive private investment into restoring habitats and climate change initiatives.

He said: ‘I was very pleased to return to the New Forest and see first-hand the positive impact the wetlands restoration has had on freshwater wildlife. ‘This wetland is just one example of how we can restore our natural world and let our wildlife recover. We are committed to expanding support for wildlife recovery with ambitious proposals in the Nature Recovery Green Paper and stretching Environment Act targets. I am excited what the future holds for this project and similar initiatives across the country.’

Photo (left to right): NPA Chief Executive Alison Barnes; Rural Affairs Minister Lord Richard Benyon; Official Verderer Lord Willie Manners; NPA Chair Prof Gavin Parker at Blackwater



Archaeology: Uncovering and preserving our past

Our archaeology and heritage team not only cares for the National Park but provides services to Forestry England and New Forest District Council.

With the help of communities and volunteers, we're constantly unveiling new treasures and insights – revealing how the area has been used as a working Forest for centuries.

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

- 49 planning applications in the National Park
- Five new enquiries around replacement power poles and undergrounding
- 11 new enquiries and eight site visits as part of our service level agreement with Forestry England's southern district
- 90 planning applications within the New Forest district outside the National Park, as part of our service level agreement with New Forest District Council
- Ridge, furrow and tree stump removal, stream restoration and verge restoration as part of work with the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme.



Tatchbury track reconstruction by Jennie Anderson. © Wessex Archaeology



Archaeology volunteers clearing scrub off barrows

Volunteers help improve Bronze Age barrows

During the year the archaeology team along with keen volunteers removed vegetation from 20 Bronze Age round barrows.

The Scheduled Monument improvement project, in collaboration with Forestry England, aims to clear vegetation from a number of Scheduled Monuments on the Open Forest.

The pilot project was set up to remove gorse, bracken and other vegetation that could be damaging these historic features.

Round barrows are circular mounds, often surrounded by a 'ring ditch' from which the earth for the mound was dug. Most of them were raised over a burial in the centre, presumably that of an important member of the Bronze Age community.

We often find evidence of later burials in and around barrows – called 'satellite burials' – meaning these monuments were long-lasting and important features for the then local communities. There are more than 400 of these burial mounds remaining in the New Forest.

Hilde van der Heul, NPA Assistant Community Archaeologist, who led the project said: 'The results of the clearance work can look quite severe at first, but as less damaging vegetation returns this will soften over the following months. All work followed guidance set out by Historic England to avoid damage to the Scheduled Monuments.

'We were helped by 86 volunteers joining us on 34 task days, totalling

1,060 volunteer hours. They were delighted at getting out again after several lockdowns and seeing the positive impact of their work.'

Historic routes and past pathways

Following years of research, we launched five new walking routes steeped in history and folklore.

All five walks take in established rights of way and are closely connected to residential areas, making them easy for people to access.

- Carters Lane, Marchwood: Travel back to a time of large country estates and wealthy landowners who supported the community by building schools and churches.
- Lepe to Fawley: Learn about the role the New Forest played in D-Day preparations and view the remains of World War Two military installations.
- Rockford Common: Discover ancient oaks and wonderful wildlife as you walk through open heathland grazed by free-roaming ponies.
- Stuckton Iron Works, Fordingbridge: Journey through a working landscape and learn of heavy industry, riots and smuggling.
- Tatchbury Mount: Walk around an Iron Age hillfort and along some of the New Forest's oldest pathways.

The walks were researched by the NPA's archaeology team with the help of volunteers. Historic maps dating back to 1759 were analysed and the team researched 700 current rights of way, in 37 parishes. Almost 260 walking

surveys were conducted to whittle the contenders down.

The routes' rich heritage has been brought to life by old photos, maps and specially-commissioned reconstruction drawings, dramatisations and folk songs.



Sam Dunning. © Heather Dunning

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. As well as providing access to a wealth of information about the heritage of the New Forest area, it has been set up as a community portal where individuals and groups of all abilities and interests can add their own research, articles and photographs to expand our New Forest cultural heritage story. During this year the site had 157,000 visits and continues to grow in content and functionality. Thousands of records are now accessible – from excavation and survey reports to 3D models, historic maps and oral histories.

nfkknowledge.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

Our role as the local planning authority helps us to protect the National Park and to ensure the New Forest remains a living, working landscape.

We recognise the need for small-scale sustainably located development within the National Park to support the social and economic well-being of our communities. This includes providing local affordable housing and local community facilities.

Our Local Plan sets out where new development can take place in line with the principles of sustainable development and the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the New Forest. Most new development is accommodated within the larger New Forest villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway. Together these villages provide homes for around one third of all National Park residents and have the broadest range of community facilities, local employment opportunities and transport links.

Elsewhere, the relatively small and scattered nature of the remaining settlements means that the level of development will be more limited but it is important that local communities across the National Park continue to thrive.

This year we have seen a number of our 'allocated' housing sites come forward and we have worked hard to secure a high standard of design and layout, as well as making sure that all schemes incorporate measures to mitigate impacts on the New Forest's designated nature conservation sites.

While the vast majority of planning applications in the National Park still entail relatively minor development, our job is to ensure that the cumulative impact of these numerous small-scale changes do not result in a creeping suburbanisation of the National Park, slowly eroding the Forest's distinctive character. That's why our new Design Guide includes a renewed focus on conserving local character, sustainable construction and environmental enhancement.

Good planning is only achieved with the active engagement of local communities and we would like to thank everybody who has taken the time and trouble this year to respond to one of our public consultations, to submit comments on an individual planning application and to report a suspected breach of planning control. It all helps to make a difference and is much appreciated.

Fresh Landscape by Nick Lucas



Managing new development

The pressure for new development in the National Park remains as high as ever and this continues to be reflected in the high number of planning applications received by our planning team – just over 1,000 this year.

The majority of these applications are for smaller scale developments, typically home extensions and new outbuildings. As in previous years, the vast majority of applications are approved (85%). We work closely with applicants and local agents to achieve high quality schemes, with many potential stumbling blocks successfully resolved at pre-application stage. Notable planning applications approved this year include the redevelopment of the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel (providing 79 new dwellings) and 62 new dwellings at Whartons Lane in Ashurst (including 31 new affordable homes) – being two of the five new housing sites allocated in our adopted Local Plan.

Both nationally and locally there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of well-designed

buildings, and our new Design Guide – adopted in January 2022 – is already helping to ensure new development reflects what is special and unique about the New Forest. Increasingly more development is now exempt from the need for planning permission – commonly known as ‘permitted development’ – and this can include changes to the use of a building, house extensions and boundary enclosures. These are national ‘rights’ conferred by Parliament but we do monitor their impact locally and have made the case to Government that permitted development rights should not be extended further in the National Park.

Above: Lyndhurst Park Hotel



Artist impression of the proposed dwellings at Ashurst © Thrive Architects

Planning enforcement

Sometimes development is carried out without planning permission, and we are grateful to the public for letting us know when this happens. This year we investigated 205 new breaches of planning control, most of which we could resolve through negotiation, advice and mitigation. However, there were a few cases where we had to take formal action and this resulted in serving five formal enforcement notices.

Typical issues investigated in the last 12 months include:

- Using woodland as private recreational areas and overnight accommodation
- Converting agricultural buildings to storage and vehicle repair areas
- Pop-up camping/caravan sites
- High fencing and walls
- Hard-standings and track encroachments
- Expanding residential gardens into paddocks or agricultural land
- Changing outbuildings to holiday accommodation
- Using dwellings as short-term holiday accommodation
- Removing/damaging protected trees.

Planning enforcement has mainly reacted to specific complaints raised by members of the public, Parish Council or Authority Members, but we also actively monitor some sites to ensure development complies with planning regulations.

New Neighbourhood Plan for New Milton

In July we formally adopted the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans allow local communities to have a say in development and land use in their area. The draft Plan for New Milton went to a local referendum in May 2021 with 88% in support of the policies prepared by the Town Council. The adopted New Milton Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help make decisions on planning applications for the part of the parish that falls within the National Park (including Bashley and Ossemsley).



New Milton Neighbourhood Plan



Bransgore affordable housing

The NPA has bought a site at Burley to build two new affordable homes. These will be let out to local families in housing need in a scheme similar to that previously completed in Bransgore.

Other sites that will deliver local affordable housing are being progressed at Fawley, Ashurst, Lyndhurst and Sway. As set out in our Local Plan, providing new affordable housing for local people in identified housing need is a key policy objective, as the New Forest housing market makes it difficult for many local people to stay in the area.

The new site at Burley will also include a local heritage centre. Local residents hope to form a charitable trust to help take this project forward.



A temporary campsite in the New Forest

Habitats protected by new ‘pop-up’ campsite guidelines

New planning guidelines have been agreed for new and larger temporary ‘pop-up’ campsites within the National Park to help protect the environment and local communities.

A six-week public consultation held in late 2021 helped inform the NPA’s decision to agree a new ‘Article 4 Direction’. From 30 September 2022, temporary 28-day campsites with 51 pitches or more, and any 28-day campsite established after 1 March 2020 will need planning permission from the National Park Authority.

The move followed concerns from local residents, parish councils and others about the number of temporary campsites operating in the New Forest National Park and their impacts on local communities, the New Forest’s protected landscape and sensitive habitats.

Under national permitted development rights, temporary campsites can legally operate for 28 days a year without planning permission (this figure was extended to 56 days during 2020 and 2021 in response to the pandemic).

We considered comments from a wide range of respondents, including residents, organisations, existing campsite operators and key stakeholders. Over 70 per cent supported the Direction, including all 12 of the town and parish councils within the National Park that responded, the RSPB, and the Verderers of the New Forest. 20 per cent of respondents to the consultation objected and nine per cent did not express a preference.



Tree service highlights

The Tree Team has continued to handle a high volume of work with an emphasis on storm damage.

Climate change is becoming a serious consideration for trees with the ever-increasing number of storm events. Since the end of November 2021 and the end of March 2022, the UK has experienced seven named storms, with Storm Eunice on 18 February having a significant impact on the New Forest.

In 2021–22 the tree team:

- Decided 630 tree work applications for works to protected trees
- Investigated seven suspected breaches of unauthorised works or damage to protected trees
- Made five new Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees and woodlands which were considered under threat
- Offered professional arboricultural advice on over 180 planning applications including several major applications for development.

Following a busy period during lockdown, the Team has enjoyed getting back out and meeting people face to face. It continues building on excellent working relationships within the industry and residents of the New Forest.

The impact

Decided 630 tree work applications

Above: Storm-damaged tree

Habitat mitigation scheme

In our role as the planning authority for the National Park, we secure financial contributions from new development (residential and other forms of overnight accommodation) to mitigate recreational pressures on the New Forest’s internationally-protected sites.

These financial contributions are used by our revised ‘Habitat Mitigation Scheme’ document (2020) and overseen by a steering group including Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

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

- Employing three seasonal rangers over the spring and summer – covering the ground-nesting bird and peak visitor seasons – to engage people and raise awareness.
- Improving the rights of way network in areas away from the internationally-designated sites to encourage people to use these areas.
- Promoting key messages (including the New Forest code) through social media, publications and the website.

We also continue to work with neighbouring planning authorities to ensure the impacts of their planned development on the New Forest is appropriately addressed. This includes providing new green spaces as part of larger developments and employing additional rangers working within the New Forest’s protected sites.

Image: Banded demoiselle by Peter LeCointe



The impact

Three seasonal rangers employed

Successful prosecution for illegal tree felling

We successfully prosecuted a landowner for illegally cutting down several protected trees at Bartley.

In early December 2020 15 oak trees, one field maple tree and a group of hawthorn trees were felled on land south of the A336 at Bartley, which were protected because they were in a conservation area.

We acted immediately and were successful in securing a High Court injunction to prevent further unauthorised felling.

Sufficient evidence was put together against the landowner who pleaded guilty in court on 30 July.

The court issued a £2,000 fine, and the landowner was also ordered to pay the Authority’s costs.

Steve Avery, Executive Director of Strategy and Planning at the New Forest National Park Authority, said:

‘The Authority will prosecute where there is enough evidence to support unauthorised tree removal and wanton destruction of protected trees – which are so important to the landscape character of the National Park.’



Trees illegally felled at Bartley



Our Building Design Award winners

High-quality design and the best new developments across the National Park were celebrated in our Building Design Awards. Residential and other buildings were eligible for an award, as well as conservation projects and ‘green’ buildings.

Cameron’s Cottage at RSPB Franchises Lodge in Landford was awarded **Best Green Project** winner. The once-derelict estate cottage has been sympathetically refurbished and extended for use as a residential retreat for young people.

The design, by Moorhouse Architecture, incorporates an impressive outdoor classroom, locally-sourced timber, solar panels, sustainable heating, and numerous homes for wildlife including bats and birds.

The judging panel, made up of National Park Authority members, commended the re-use of the existing building, which helped to preserve important local cultural heritage. The panel also praised how the development benefitted the education sector and the wider community.

Best Residential Scheme went to Tuckermill House in Boldre for its impressive modern extension which maximises light and views in a 1930s house.

The scheme, by Forest Architecture, allows the Arts and Crafts character

of the original home to be seen, while complementing it with a modern timber-clad extension. The finished design includes additional glazing to add light to the interior and was considered appropriate for its setting, with a flat roof overhang reducing upward light pollution.

The Old Dairy in Sway was awarded **Best Non-Residential Scheme**. The former agricultural buildings at Cook’s Farm were repaired and converted into office space by Hordle-based Tuakana Construction.

The judging panel praised the scheme for keeping the majority of the historic fabric of the existing buildings and for recycling original materials. Hazelwood fencing, sustainable drainage and bat boxes also impressed the panel, who noted the efforts made to enhance the setting of the buildings.

Best Conservation Project went to the Ice House at Beaulieu Palace, a structure dating back to 1870 which had fallen into disrepair. Conservation works by Andrew Waring Associates involved

stabilising the Ice House (which was also used as an apple store in the second world war), reforming the arch between the entrance and the dome, and adding a door and interpretation boards.

The Cameron’s Cottage development was also given a commendation in the Best Conservation Project category, for working with the existing building on the site and retaining its character, while bringing it back to beneficial use through a thoughtful restoration.

Gavin Parker, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority, presented the awards at the Authority meeting in March 2022. The plaques were made by New Forest company BearWood using sustainable timber.

Clockwise from top left:
Tuckermill House. © Richard Chivers Architectural Photography
Cameron’s Cottage after renovation. © Moorhouse Architecture
Cameron’s Cottage is now an education centre. © Moorhouse Architecture
Beaulieu Ice House after restoration
The Old Dairy. © Tuakana Construction

New design guidance for the National Park

A revised Design Guide for building development in the New Forest National Park includes a renewed focus on conserving local character, the climate emergency and sustainability.

The Guide is used by property owners and architects looking to submit planning applications. It is also a reference document for town and parish councils and local communities or neighbours when commenting on applications. It’s one of the factors considered by the National Park Authority when determining planning applications.

Since the first New Forest National Park Design Guide was adopted in 2011 there have been significant changes in both local and national policy and guidance, leading to the Guide being revised.

The new Guide has a greater focus on climate change and sustainability which have risen up the planning agenda in recent years. It also looks at areas of greatest pressure in new developments within the National Park, such as types of boundaries used and protecting dark night skies by reducing light pollution.

It provides guidance on the right materials to use in new development, while a new section on sustainability includes ‘green’ measures which can be implemented, while respecting the environmental protections and local character of the New Forest National Park. These include native planting, the use of energy efficiency measures in new buildings and using locally-sourced materials.

The Guide – which is a supplementary planning document – was developed following a six-week public consultation with organisations such as Historic England and Natural England; town and parish councils; water companies; conservation groups and architects giving feedback as well as local residents.

Gordon Bailey, Chair of the NPA’s Planning Committee, said: ‘The Government has called for planning authorities to have local design guidance in place so planning applicants can see at an early stage what the expectations are for the standard and type of design.

‘Our revised Design Guide also highlights the positive contribution new development can make to the character of the National Park.’

newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/design-guide

New Forest National Park Design Guide



Brockenhurst primary school

Celebrating New Forest heritage through our Local List

We have been looking at ways to celebrate the special character of the National Park’s Heritage and expand our Local List thanks to funding received from Historic England.

National planning policy encourages all planning authorities to publish a ‘local list’. Whereas around two per cent of buildings in the National Park are Grade I, II* or II listed by the government in recognition of their national significance, there are many more which are currently included on the New Forest NPA’s Local List. These include Brockenhurst Primary School; the Royal Oak at Fritham; and the Cloud Hotel in Brockenhurst.

However, coverage was patchy and incomplete so in January we launched a campaign for the public to nominate buildings and other heritage assets, such as archaeological sites, monuments, landscapes, streetscapes (post-box, streetlight, signage etc.) or public works of art that add character to their location. Among the nominations received so far are the Jubilee Oak at Sway, the village hall in Minstead and the WW2 bombing range at Ashley Walk.

Guided by Historic England advice, the criteria for nominations include age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, group value, archaeological interest, historic interest, community/social value and landmark status.

Once submitted, nominations are assessed by a Local Listing Review Panel and the New Forest National Park Authority Planning Committee. If approved, they will be added to the Local List and the relevant county’s Historic Environment Record.

Gordon Bailey, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority’s Planning Committee, said: ‘The list celebrates the wonderful things that give the New Forest its special qualities and unique character.’

newforestnpa.gov.uk/local-list

Enjoy

Enjoying the National Park responsibly

Our National Park has been enjoyed for hundreds of years, and continues to attract many people as a place to relax, re-energise and connect with nature.

We're helping to protect this internationally-important landscape through promoting responsible recreation, and helping people to respect and protect the New Forest's special qualities.



Gillie Molland
Lead Ranger

As lockdown ended, people emerged with a renewed focus on the value of green spaces and connecting with nature. It's well known that spending time in the outdoors improves mental and physical health, and many chose the beautiful landscapes of the New Forest to recover and reset from the pandemic.

In 2020 we saw unprecedented numbers of visitors to the National Park, and in March 2021 we launched a joint action plan to prevent people inadvertently harming the place they had come to enjoy.

Our 'Care for the Forest, care for each other' campaign was a successful way of working with our partners and communities to deliver joint actions to help protect the New Forest's habitats, livestock and local communities.

Joint ranger patrols with Forestry England (FE) focused on promoting the New Forest code and reducing negative impacts from recreation on the Forest. We used patrol vans, bikes and the mobile information unit to reach as wide an audience as possible – with the team speaking to hundreds of people on many days.

These joint patrols, as well as increased communication and signage, the launch of the Ambassador scheme plus targeted interventions at key hotspots, resulted in a 40% drop in fire-related incidents compared with 2020, fewer verge parking incidents and a nine per cent reduction in

litter at coastal sites despite an increase in visitor numbers.

Rangers also helped Agisters with 12 drifts (pony round-ups), providing information to the public and helping to keep Forest users safe during the events. In the autumn we worked closely with FE rangers and keepers to help with deer rut patrols to ensure minimal disturbance to the deer at this crucial time of year.

More opportunities for people to safely get back to nature and discover the National Park have taken place this year. We welcomed the return of some events which had been postponed by Covid-19, including our popular Walking Festival which in 2020 ran 'remotely'. This year we introduced guided cycling activities to the programme, and 900 people attended 91 events (20 of which were sold out).

Further evidence of people's increased interest in getting active in the outdoors is the high number of volunteer hours we facilitated, as well as our partner charity PEDALL offering new confidence-inspiring cycle activities. All the time we are striving to promote the National Park as a living, working Forest, and help safeguard commoners' animals, forestry operations and protected landscapes.

By encouraging people to learn about and enjoy this area responsibly, we will ensure a growing number of people will be invested in protecting it for future generations.

Sharing the New Forest code

Follow the New Forest code

The New Forest is a unique place with rare wildlife and free-roaming livestock. Thank you for helping us care for this special place by following the simple New Forest code:

Keep your distance from the animals – don't feed or touch them

Keep dogs under control. Don't let dogs approach or chase any animals

Stick to the permitted cycle tracks

Take home litter and dog waste

Park only in car parks

Drive with care – animals on the road!

No fires or barbecues

No wild camping

Help wildlife by keeping to the main tracks

The New Forest code

We've worked with local businesses, accommodation providers, traders and communities to help share the New Forest code which we launched in 2020 with Forest partners.

The code focuses on nine simple ways visitors and residents can help care for this unique place and protect our landscape, livestock and wildlife.

We created an online toolkit including downloadable leaflets, posters and videos. The code's messages have been widely shared on websites and social media, in shop windows, on public transport and through tourism businesses – including when accommodation is booked.

Between April and September 2021 alone, messages about the code reached more than a million people through NPA and partners' social media channels.

Joint action plan to care for the Forest, care for each other

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 played 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 makes the best use of resources to protect the Forest. More than 10,000 hours were spent on these dedicated patrols over the summer.

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.

Increased signage included 16 signs discouraging people from feeding and petting the livestock, while 18 mobile signs significantly reduced verge parking.

For the first time, digital signs put in key Forest entry points including the A337 at Cadnam, A35 at Ashurst and A35 near

Hinton. The signs displayed messages encouraging people to follow the New Forest code, keep their distance from the animals, to take litter home, park only in car parks and not to use barbecues or fires.

The signs were in place for three months and were jointly funded by the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest District Council and Forestry England.

2021 New Forest Action Plan Results

Sharing the New Forest Code

400 social media posts

1.1m impressions

55k engagements

1.6m+ newsletters to subscribers

8 joint press releases

Digital signs at key roads into the Forest

Included in tourism information boards in all key villages, towns and Forest campsites

Signs

New signage across all Forestry England car parks – updated throughout the season to deal with persistent issues

Mobile signage targeting key hotspots

16 signs to discourage feeding and petting of livestock helping to reduce feeding

18 mobile signs substantially reduced verge parking

Increased joint patrols

A boost in the number of rangers resulting in over 10k hours of joint patrols

29 joint patrols with the emergency services (police and fire service)

70 patrols focused specifically on supporting the ground nesting bird campaign

Litter

8.6% fall in litter despite visitor numbers at coastal locations up 60%

230k bags given out to encourage people to take litter home, #Crabby campaign

Fly-tips on the Forest downward trend in 2021

Community support

Growth in the activity of community litter picking groups.

New Forest ambassador scheme: 1,000 litter picking kits created, 737 ambassadors recruited

Community verge parking reporting: 600 reports made by the public over the pandemic

Supporting commoning – Drifts – Forestry England managed 80 car park and 18 cycle route closures, and around 200 additional signs put in place to notify the public

BBQ ban

Removal of BBQ points across the Forest

40 extra no BBQ or fire signs

50 retailers removed disposable BBQs from sale including several major supermarkets

Outdoor fires in the New Forest Area fell by 40% (compared with 2020), and were 30% less than in 2019 before the pandemic



Left: Heathland fire © Mac Hall. Right: One of the No BBQs signs around the New Forest

BBQ-Free New Forest

Businesses and organisations continued to support a BBQ-Free New Forest this year, as part of our campaign launched in spring 2020. We called on retailers in and around the New Forest to remove disposable BBQs from sale and for a continued ban on fires and BBQs in the open countryside of the National Park.

The New Forest is now a complete no BBQ and fire zone and more than 50 shops and outlets in and around the New Forest have taken disposable BBQs off sale. BBQs, camping stoves or anything with a naked flame are no longer permitted in car parks or any areas of the Forest managed by Forestry England, the National Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Wellow Parish Council. All BBQ facilities at Forestry England sites have been removed, and prominent 'No BBQs' signs are at Forestry England car parks and information points.

As a result, wildfires in the New Forest decreased by 40% (compared with 2020) and were 30% less than 2019 before the pandemic.

Waitrose first agreed to stop selling disposable BBQs in the New Forest National Park in 2020. Now Waitrose and Aldi have led the way nationally, taking the unprecedented decision to remove disposable BBQs from sale in all UK stores from March 2022 with Co-Op and recently Morrisons removing them from stores within a mile radius of national parks in the bid to stop wildfires. This will also cut down on waste by taking single-use BBQs off sale, with Aldi stating its ban would remove 35 tons of single-use waste packaging.

With local New Forest East MP Dr Julian Lewis originally bringing the matter up in Parliament, High Peaks MP Robert Langan is now sponsoring a Private Members Bill to prohibit the use of disposable BBQs on open moorland and to give local authorities the power to ban the sale of disposable BBQs in their area.

Protecting rare ground-nesting birds

We continue to work closely with partners such as the New Forest Dog Owners Group, Forestry England, Hampshire County Council, the National Trust and Bird Aware Solent educating the public on how and why it is important to protect rare ground-nesting birds. This year we produced a new leaflet called 'Heathland Highlights' showing what the public can expect to see (or hear) on the heathlands of the Forest.

NPA rangers have been working with other rangers and keepers patrolling the most sensitive areas where these birds build their nests and raise young. By speaking directly to Forest users we aim to help them understand the messages and advise how they can reduce the risk of disturbance. This has also included giving feedback to the scientists and organisations monitoring these birds – including positive and negative signs about breeding pairs, evidence of predators, and issues around repeated recreational disturbance.

We have partnered with Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership (SCCAMP) to produce short informative videos to champion responsible behaviours among dog owners to protect the habitats that so many of our bird species rely on.

Above: A sign warning the public about ground-nesting birds. Below: Snipe chick. ©Marcus Ward, Wild New Forest

Targeting litter and fly-tipping

We’ve partnered with organisations to help tackle the anti-social behaviours of litter and fly-tipping in the National Park.

The New Forest Spring Clean, which is part of the national Great British Spring Clean, ran from 25 March to 10 April 2022 and saw local litter heroes across the New Forest helping to protect the environment.

This year’s campaign supported local events attended by over 600 volunteers, collecting roughly 320 bags full of litter between them.

Our Ambassadors give hundreds of hours to help clean up the Forest and their local areas, and there has been a huge growth in the activity of community litter picking groups.

The New Forest Spring Clean is a joint initiative for the Litter Forum with members from Forestry England,



Ringwood community going plastic-free

New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, National Trust and the Verderers of the New Forest.

Tackling another source of litter, we’ve joined forces with the New Forest District Council, Forestry England and Hampshire Constabulary on a joint anti-fly-tipping operation to target vehicles without waste licences. Results have included seized vehicles, orders to produce waste carrier licences and several arrests with further investigations and lines of enquiry.

The impact

600 volunteers picked Forest litter as part of the Great British Spring Clean



New Forest ambassador Mary Earle

Ambassador scheme protecting the New Forest

Following the launch of our Ambassador Scheme in 2021, we now have 866 registered ambassadors, 203 of whom are youth ambassadors. The scheme continues to attract local residents to become involved in protecting the New Forest by picking litter, recording verge parking, reporting issues in the Forest and distributing New Forest codes. We’ve continued supplying litter picking kits from our collection points

in Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu, Woodgreen, Lepe, Milford on Sea and Lymington.

Ambassadors have also been taking part in the New Forest Spawn Survey (Freshwater Habitats Trust) and recording wildlife as part of the UK National Parks LookWild project.

newforestnpa.gov.uk/nfambassadors

The impact

866 people signed up to help the Forest

New Forest Ambassador **Craig Esterhuizen** from New Milton is a chaplain for a local veteran’s group who also works with the Men’s Activity Network in Hampshire. He said: ‘I work with chaps with post-traumatic stress and depression and I thought it would be really nice to arrange a clean-up so that we could get them out during lockdown.

‘We can do a big pick up, make them feel good about doing something purposeful plus we can have a nice chat along the way, in a lovely open environment.’



New Forest ambassador Craig Esterhuizen



Operation Mountie

2021 saw the lowest number of animal accidents ever recorded.

This was despite higher traffic numbers on Forest roads with more commuters returning to the office after working from home due to the pandemic and two major road closures and diversions from the A35 and A31.

Social media highlighting animal accident awareness reached an audience of 918,514 with 62,626 engagements, and 945 link clicks to the website.

As part of the New Forest Animal Accident Group, we have worked on a new multi-agency approach called Operation Mountie to educate motorists about the dangers of speeding on New Forest roads.

Between 1 November 2021 and 31 March 2022, on Roger Penny Way and surrounding roads, 95 vehicles were stopped for speeding, 20 people received tickets for speeding and invalid licences, and 78 motorists received educational advice from the New Forest Animal Accident Group.

The operation is supported by the Safer Roads Unit Mobile Camera Team with over 100 additional fixed penalty notices being issued for speeding offences along animal accident hotspot roads.

Due to the success of Operation Mountie, the approach has now been rolled out to other Police districts in the Forest with the hope of focusing on other high-risk roads to minimize animal accidents over the next year.

The New Forest Animal Accident Group is supported by the New Forest Commoners Defence Association, Forestry England, Verderers of the New Forest, the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Constabulary, New Forest Trust, New Forest Association, British Deer Society and New Forest Roads Awareness.

Encouraging volunteering

Our incredible volunteers are vital to much of the work we do in the National Park. Our volunteering programme restarted in May following Covid-19, and since then we have organised or supported 146 volunteers who gave 3,182 hours to the following projects to help the National Park:

- Clearing rights of way at Godshell, Tatchbury, Woodgreen, Hale, Blackfield, Hamptworth, Landford, Redlynch, Rockford and Stuckton.
- Restoring ‘scheduled ancient monuments’ by bracken bashing and removing gorse from barrows. Volunteers have visited those at Hilltop, Crockford Inclosure, Hawkhill Inclosure, Longslade View, Wilverley Pit, Whitemoor Pond and Roundhill campsite.

- Joining the Blackwater Conservation Group on the Blackwater River to remove invasive Himalayan balsam from the river banks at Hamptworth Golf Club.
- Removing invasive species including rhododendron, laurel, and Scots pine in Bransgore, Walhampton, Frogham and the Meyrick Estate.
- Restoring a wildflower meadow in Emery Down and a hedgerow in Rockford.

‘Now that we are retired, our volunteering days give us the opportunity to stay active, keep fit and meet new people, while enjoying the beautiful New Forest and hopefully helping to restore and maintain the countryside for the next generation of visitors.’
– Martin and Diane Cannon

Promoting responsible dog ownership

Since January 2021 more than 50 businesses have signed up to a professional Dog Walkers’ Charter which lists 24 ways that businesses can help care for the Forest and provides a standard mark for pet owners to find responsible dog walking businesses.

We also teamed up with a new group, the Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership (SCCAMP) which includes the New Forest National Park Authority, the South Downs National Park Authority, Bird Aware Solent, Heathland Hounds, Dorset Dogs and Devon Love Dogs.

Five bitesize films were released, featuring top tips on how to make dog walks fun and interesting – while also helping to protect our beautiful countryside. These are being shared by a leading canine behaviourist as part of a new regional initiative.

Dogstival 2021 was attended by more than 8,000 people. NPA rangers shared messages about responsible behaviour when visiting protected landscapes. Teaming up with Dicky Bags, an award-winning bag to carry dog waste, we encouraged owners to pick up after their dogs and dispose of it appropriately to reduce the impacts of dog waste being left in the Forest.

The impact

3,182 volunteer hours given to the New Forest



Autumn cycling in the New Forest

Successful Walking and Cycling Festival

More than half a million people were encouraged to enjoy being outdoors in nature, as our Walking and Cycling Festival returned with in-person events for three weeks in October.

It was our busiest Festival yet, with a huge demand for walks post Covid-19, many of which were booked up weeks in advance.

We introduced guided cycle rides and involved the inclusive cycling charity PEDALL in the 2021 Festival, which was sponsored by Hoburne Bashley.

We and other partners welcomed 900 people to 91 events. 15 NPA staff members led walks about archaeology, wildlife & conservation, access in the countryside and climate change.

The impact

91 walking and cycling events encouraged people to get outside



Improving accessibility in the New Forest

We've enabled more people to enjoy one of our walking routes by replacing six stiles with accessible kissing gates. The Stuckton Ironworks trail is one of our longer routes, with views across the Avon valley and Dorset, and plenty of historical interest along the way.

New signs on popular routes

People can find their way more easily along three popular New Forest walks thanks to new signage along the Lepe to Fawley, Carter's Lane and Tatchbury Mount routes.

The 20 oak signs are made from sustainable Forest timber, installed by local contractors.

The impact

20 new signs made from sustainable timber



A PEDALL guided ride

PEDALL New Forest Inclusive Cycling

Our partner charity has expanded this year to help more people improve health and wellbeing. With its extensive range of specialist cycles, the team continued to support people with additional needs, and now offers confidence rides on two-wheeled bikes. It's also helping people with dementia, social isolation and recovery from the effects of Covid-19.

PEDALL has opened a second inclusive cycling hub at Ashurst to complement its base in Burley thanks to funding from Sport England (£50,000); British Cycling (£25,000) and continued support from the National Lottery Community Fund (£297,000 for 2021–23).

The hub at Ashurst improves accessibility as it's near a railway station and on a bus route, reducing travel times for riders from Southampton, Portsmouth, and Winchester. A second ride leader was recruited to head the base at Ashurst, almost doubling the sessions offered to 2,788 rider and carer slots per annum and increasing volunteer recruitment and training.

PEDALL volunteers are an enthusiastic and passionate group (many being cyclists), who are keen to enable those who have less of an opportunity to cycle, to do so in the special environment of the New Forest. In total, an active group of 32 volunteers took part in 435 volunteering ride slots (approx. 3,262 hours) helping to manage ride sessions, maintain bikes, and support fund-raising activities.

We continue to support PEDALL, alongside several local companies

including EXXON Mobil which donated £2,500, and INEOS which donated £1,500 to help maintain the fleet of specialist cycles.

Highcliffe Golf Club sponsored PEDALL with annual fundraising efforts being donated to the project. Barton Peverell College kindly gifted PEDALL a minibus to help accessibility to the New Forest.

The PEDALL charity relies on community and business support to match the National Lottery funding and is looking for additional supporters to help deliver this popular community resource. There is a range of ways people can help, including sponsoring a bike, supporting an additional needs apprentice, and volunteering.

pedall.org.uk

The impact

3,262 cycling hours helped people get into nature

Artists in residence

Working with the charity SPUD, we launched a new three-year artists in residence programme, offering six residencies and accompanying exhibitions focused on the New Forest.

The programme aims to develop a creative partnership between the arts and people who work, live, and visit the New Forest, and showcase that to new audiences.

The partnership believes that the arts are integral to people's understanding of landscape. It's working with inspiring and inspired artists to think in diverse ways about landscapes, how people interact with them, and the challenges they face.

The two artists each year will be hosted by SPUD, part funded by the NPA. The residency is open to artists or makers working in any medium, visual arts, crafts, performing arts, writing film, video, or digital media.

Resident artists will be invited to explore the five key areas of our Partnership Plan (see P42) that are crucial in helping to secure the future of the New Forest National Park: Nature Recovery; Net Zero with Nature; Thriving Forest; An inclusive National Park and Team New Forest.

Image from left: Mark Drury, Director at SPUD; Caroline Rackham, NPA Member; Beccy McCray, New Forest National Park Residency artist starting October; Alison Ward, trustee at spudWORKS; Marie Smith, New Forest National Park Residency artist starting May; Jim Mitchell – Interpretation and Outreach Manager at NPA





Children from St Joseph's School, Salisbury, enjoying a residential weekend in the New Forest

Inspiring young people

We're working hard to enable young people to experience nature and encourage them to protect it for future generations.

The Education and Youth team has interacted with 3,359 learners (both online and in person) reintroducing educational visits after the interruptions caused by the pandemic. We responded flexibly to groups' varying degrees of readiness and confidence in returning to outdoor visits and offered support through our Travel Grant Scheme which subsidises transport costs – often the biggest barrier to educational trips.

'The children had a fantastic time at Testwood Lakes which wouldn't have been financially viable without the help of the travel grant scheme.'

St Marks CofE Primary School

Working with partner organisations, we also created a Youth Ambition Document which sets out potential projects and pathways of engagement for young people at all levels. This will let us proactively respond to funding opportunities as and when they become available, as well as maximise opportunities for young people to connect with nature and have their voices heard within decision making processes.

Climate assemblies

The Education and Youth team's annual assembly programme was, for a second year, delivered virtually to schools and community groups, with more than



2,200 young people engaging with messages around climate and nature.

Aimed at five to 11 year olds, the 'Climate Champions' film raised awareness of the roles New Forest habitats play in tackling the climate and nature emergencies and was a collaboration by NPA staff across sectors. After sending it to schools, the Education and Youth team offered follow-up question and answer sessions, with young people showing they are incredibly environmentally aware, keen to see action happening, and take part themselves.



Members of Calshot Youth Club creating a wildlife-friendly garden



Families sign up to John Muir Award

53 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 wildness
- **Conserve** – take personal responsibility
- **Share** – your experience with others.

Following the success of last year we once again 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.

The impact

3,359 young people engaged

'Working in the Education Team as part of the Kickstart Scheme for six months was such a great experience in which I gained confidence and skills to take forward into a new role. I definitely would not have been able to get my new job as an Environmental Educator without the support and experience the New Forest National Park Authority gave me. I am very grateful for the opportunity I was given and for the team of people that I could learn so much from.'

Ella Gardner Kickstart Education Assistant



Calshot Youth Club's wildlife-friendly garden

Building a connection to nature

Young people from local schools and youth groups have seen their confidence and wellbeing improved thanks to a range of outdoor activities in the New Forest National Park funded by Generation Green. The national programme has helped youngsters aged 11 to 25 build their connection with nature. It's supported by organisations including the Youth Hostels Association, Scouting, Girlguiding, the Outward Bound Trust, English National Parks and Field Studies Council.

Since April 2020 the Wild Spaces Youth Officer at the NPA has been helping several groups on a weekly basis. These include:

Calshot Youth Club which has developed its own space for nature thanks to a £2,000 grant from the NPA's Sustainable Communities Fund to create a wildlife-friendly garden. The young people came forward with their own ideas incorporating vegetable beds, fruit trees and 'mini-beast hotels'.

Bournemouth and Poole College which has taken part in a wellbeing walk at Bolderwood, as well as activities with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Lepe Country Park, and bushcraft with the team at Woodlander Hoburne Bashley.

St Josephs' Catholic School in Salisbury. The NPA partnered with Burley YHA to host a residential weekend for

pupils as part of a six-week programme of engagement. The 13 students were selected by the staff to build resilience and develop skills to overcome various challenges.

The Generation Green Programme was financed by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund and delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Youth voice residential weekend

To round up the 16-month Generation Green programme, young people from 13 national parks met together in the Peak District in February, hosted by project partner YHA. The New Forest National Park was represented by former Kickstart Education Assistant Ella Gardner and Apprentice Ranger Ben Attwell.

The young people, aged between 15 and 26, took part in a weekend of nature connection activities, workshops, and group discussions. This included meeting with the YHA Youth Advisory Team, CEO James Blake, and Chair of Trustees Margaret Hart, as well as board members from the Peak District National Park Authority.

The weekend established the foundations of a stronger youth voice connecting all UK National Parks, enabling a more diverse group of people to have their say on environmental and social issues.

Our apprentice ranger

Trainee Ranger Ben Attwell has spent time with six ranger teams across the New Forest including the 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, he has gained 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.

He said: 'I have loved my apprenticeship and I've really grown in confidence as a result of engaging

with staff from Forest organisations and members of the public.

'Through working with other rangers, I've developed skills including leading school groups and communicating with diverse audiences. I've also enjoyed the practical work including fencing, path surfacing and scrub clearance, as well as learning key wildlife and habitat survey techniques.'



Ben Attwell NPA apprentice ranger 2021–22

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: Simon Noble of New Forest Marque member The Noble Bee

Promoting true local produce

The New Forest National Park Authority is proud to support the New Forest Marque which helps promote businesses involved in the production, processing, and distribution of local produce – businesses for whom the New Forest is at the heart of their product.

The Marque is a not-for-profit membership scheme and perfectly placed to champion the drive towards shopping locally and eating seasonally. It has, however, remained a challenging time for Marque members due to the Covid-19 pandemic, even as restrictions ease in the UK. While events, retail and hospitality are open, Marque producers and retailers face rising costs and staff shortages. Businesses have had to operate on restricted hours or opening times to manage pressure on limited staff.

Claire Lee, New Forest Marque Operations Manager, said: 'We are all aware that the cost of land and property is high in this part of the country, so whether it is looking for grazing for livestock, providing accommodation for staff, or storage and production premises for manufacturing business, these costs contribute to the challenges faced by our local producers. Having a thriving rural network of business

connected through the New Forest Marque helps outlets source produce direct from the local producer and has seen collaborations between members who have space and facilities needed by fellow members. The Marque helps our members' businesses grow and rise to these challenges.'

By shopping locally and buying New Forest Marque goods from small-scale producers who are closely linked with the landscape, shoppers can help nature and reduce their carbon footprint. Their support helps ensure the New Forest National Park remains a special place into the future.

The Marque expanded its team over the year to three members of staff, including a resource seconded from the NPA communications department three days a week. The Marque also welcomed three new directors to the board, Charmaine Bennett, Hilary Harper, and Mark Williams.

Work this year has included:

- Expanding the membership – which currently stands at 163 – with a particular focus on reaching primary producers.
- Hosting a tasting evening in which products from over 30 Marque suppliers and producers were showcased to more than 80 guests including chefs and people from the local hospitality and retail industries.
- Sponsorship of the Brilliance in Business Awards, in which Marque members enjoyed a strong showing with 18 members nominated for awards and eight winners in various categories. Marque winners on the night included The Forest Foodie, who was awarded Business of the Year for 2021 and Kathy Sirl of The Naked Pantry, who received the Pandemic Hero of the Year award for her work supporting the community during the pandemic.
- Selling seasonal Taste of the New Forest subscription boxes, a quarterly hamper featuring 10-12 products from different Marque producers. More than 80 boxes were sold and delivered throughout the Forest during the year.
- Resuming quarterly member networking evenings following a 20-month pause due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Launching producer roadshows with two events attended by a dozen Marque producer members selling food, drink, and crafts.
- Increasing recognition of the Marque logo and what it stands for through social media, communications, events, and awards.
- External communications focused on buying local produce and eating seasonally.



Green Halo seed

Green Halo Partnership joins up on nature recovery

More than 130 people from businesses, charities, universities and the public sector joined a virtual conference: Towards 2030, exploring how organisations working in and around the New Forest National Park can tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

The online conference marked the Partnership's fifth anniversary and considered how we can tackle nature recovery and 'net zero' while supporting people's health and prosperity.

Inspirational guests at the conference included keynote speaker Sir Dieter Helm – Professor of Economic Policy

at the University of Oxford, Aldred Drummond – Chief Executive of the Fawley Waterside project and Anne-Marie Mountfield – Chief Executive of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Partnership is convened by the NPA and aims to demonstrate how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically-successful community.

It also highlights the importance of access to nature and its benefits to mental and physical health.

greenhalo.org.uk



The New Forest Tour at Beaulieu © Chris Balcombe

New Forest Tour

The popular open-top bus service returned, with the usual 12-week season extended to 15 weeks to optimise on what was considered a staycation year due to global Covid-19 restrictions.

There was a 17% increase in business on the same operating period for 2019 despite a 20% national fall in bus travel (slightly lower in New Forest given the older demographic), proving the Tour is a much-anticipated attraction among visitors and residents.

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 £906,000 last summer) and provides discounts at nearby attractions and businesses.

The impact

18 New Forest Marque members nominated for awards



Laura Stainton-Burrell of Hockey's Farm with a basket of New Forest Marque produce

Supporting Brilliance in Business

We support local enterprise through the New Forest Business Partnership's Brilliance in Business Awards, and are pleased to sponsor the category for Best Environmental Contribution to the National Park.

This year's winner was The Naked Pantry and Naked Quench – the zero-waste and plastic-free grocery and coffee shop in New Milton.

Cottage Lodge Hotel in Brockenhurst was also a finalist. The small family-run hotel prides itself on its eco-friendly initiatives to improve its carbon footprint, including sourcing food from local suppliers and using plastic-free services.

Another nominated for the award was Welcome Stores in Brockenhurst. The family-owned business offers refill stations, local produce, alternatives to plastic packaging, and free water refills.

NPA member Alexis McEvoy presented the Environmental Contribution award on the evening, alongside Matthew Lawson, Chair of the New Forest Business Partnership.

nfbp.org.uk

Image: Kathy Sirl of the Naked Pantry (centre) with Alexis McEvoy (right) and Matthew Lawson (left)



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: MP John Glen visits Cameron's Cottage education centre as part of a tour of NPA partner projects.



Our Partnership Plan

An ambitious Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park has been developed to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and help people and communities thrive.

The Plan is a joint strategy which sets out what all the Forest organisations will do over the next few years to care for this spectacular landscape, its wildlife and communities.

The plan focuses on five key areas, which were created with the help of an online ‘snapshot survey’ in late 2020, when 2,700 people gave their views, followed by a formal consultation in summer 2021.



The Partnership Plan summary document

The five themes are:

Nature recovery – creating a network of restored and expanded habitats enabling wildlife to thrive.

Net zero with nature – delivering nature-based climate solutions through local partnerships.

An inclusive National Park – pride in the New Forest and connection with nature for all.

Thriving Forest – sustaining a living, working landscape with commoning at its heart.

Team New Forest – communities, organisations and businesses working together and all contributing – being greater than the sum of our parts.

The Plan builds on initiatives already under way ranging from restoring wetlands; to developing a ‘Natural Health Service’ where people are prescribed nature-based therapies; to creating more green skills and jobs; and new opportunities for mass volunteering.

The main partner organisations are in the process of approving the Plan, for launch in summer 2022: 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.

For details of how the plan will be delivered and how you can get involved, visit newforestnpa.gov.uk/partnershipplan

Funding sustainable communities

We’ve continued to support schools, youth groups and other community groups through our micro-grants which fund projects to help climate and nature.

This year, 10 groups applied across the Forest and we awarded £1,600 to help encourage green projects such as planting wildflowers, bug hotels, hedgehog homes, bird boxes and compost facilities.

Grants of up to £150 were available for activities that achieved the following aims:

- **Improving opportunities for wildlife and habitats**
Providing new habitat – such as creating new ponds, planting wildflowers or introducing bat and bird 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.

Through our Sustainable Communities Fund, this year we have also supported each of the following projects with a £2,000 grant:

- A project with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to help remove invasive non-native plants from watercourses.
- Pilly Community Shop to expand into new premises. The new building will enable the shop to become even more of a social resource for the community.
- Solent Rescue Independent Lifeboat (based at Lepe Country Park) to replace fluorescent lights in the boatshed with energy-efficient lighting.
- Artists Luke Pell and Lucy Cash to support under-represented groups in the New Forest to connect with each other and develop inspiration from the National Park via a series of creative walks and activities.
- Hythe Pier Heritage Association with urgent repairs to the railway track, enabling a wider range of audiences to use the ferry to travel into the National Park.



Pony and rainbow in the New Forest

A major boost was given to volunteering in the National Park this year thanks to a grant of nearly £9,000 from the New Forest Trust and public donations.

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.

The Trust entered the Big Give’s Green Match Fund, appealing to members of the public for donations towards volunteering and the chance to have their donation doubled.

Almost 180 donations were made and £8,743 was raised, smashing the target of £5,000.

Volunteers do critical work in the New Forest National Park, including conserving woodlands, creating hedgerows, planting trees and carrying out surveys. The grant helped pay for coordination, training and equipment for our 600 volunteers.

This year, Love the Forest funding has also helped to promote the New Forest code so visitors can care for the Forest; as well as a scheme helping Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to remove invading non-native plants from rivers and streams.

More recently, Lymington-based family business New Forest Ice Cream started giving a percentage of all scoop tub sales of its vegan salted caramel flavour to the Love the Forest scheme.

Director Niki Jenman said: ‘Other than vanilla, salted caramel is the top selling flavour across our scoop range so we hope it should really drive donations for the charity. Being vegan, this plant-based product seemed a good fit with Love the Forest’s nature conservation aims.’

William Ziegler, Chair of the New Forest Trust said: ‘The last two years has been difficult as the tourism industry – our main source of visitor income – has struggled during and after the pandemic. We are working to rebuild our relationships with our fantastic business supporters and are working closely with the tourism body Go New Forest to achieve this.’

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 well-being 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.

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 included six different sessions for staff to learn more about:

- Local freshwater habitats
- Carbon in the New Forest
- Education and Generation Green
- Built heritage and the Local Listing project
- The John Muir Award
- Practical habitat management.

Mental health and well-being

We continued to deliver mental health and well-being support, which was particularly relevant through another period with most staff working from home.

In December, our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider offered staff a free trial of a variety of online well-being and exercise classes which were all well-received.

Our wellbeing group meets monthly to discuss and implement initiatives including socially-distanced walks, while a dedicated area on our intranet continues to provide access to information to help staff maintain and enhance their well-being.

Local MPs saw some of the dedicated work and important issues being tackled by the National Park Authority as they met NPA staff and partners on visits across the Forest.

New Forest West MP Sir Desmond Swayne met young people starting out their careers in the environment and outdoor sector in the National Park including our two apprentice rangers as part of our 'Generation Green' project.

Sir Desmond met the young people and NPA staff at YHA Burley, hosted by the YHA Regional Operations Director with the Chair of Burley Parish Council and he then joined NPA staff litter picking in Burley village.

He said: 'It was a privilege to speak with young apprentices, volunteers and other National Park employees: their enthusiasm and commitment was tremendous. It bodes well for the future of the National Park which is in good hands.'



Sir Desmond Swayne meets NPA and YHA Burley staff

MP for Romsey and Southampton North, Caroline Nokes, spoke to NPA rangers and other staff at Canada Common in the north of the National Park.

The rangers were with the New Forest Explorer – a mobile unit which travels to car parks and events, sharing information on the Forest's rare habitats and landscape and how we can all care for them.

At nearby Half Moon Common, Caroline met NPA staff to learn about nature-based solutions to tackle the climate and nature emergencies in the New Forest. She also heard how we are facilitating grants available to farmers and land managers as part of the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

Caroline then visited the RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve at Nomansland. She said: 'The visit was a fantastic opportunity to talk about the potential for nature conservation in the New Forest. It was also great to meet the NPA rangers. They have such a great enthusiasm for sharing the right messages to visitors and residents about caring for this unique landscape.'



Caroline Nokes MP meets rangers at Canada Common, with NPA Chief Executive Alison Barnes and Chair Gavin Parker

Dr Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East, visited a wild play site and helped to unveil an information panel at Holbury Manor. It's one of three wild play sites in the Forest – spaces to help families discover and connect with their surroundings, and where children can enjoy exercise. The NPA's lead education and youth officer talked about the benefits of wild play, which improves health and wellbeing, and encourages young people to explore nature.

Alongside local councillors, Dr Lewis also officially unveiled an information board at Holbury about Warren Copse which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and an ancient woodland. Funding has helped improve the woodland for recreational access and wildlife.

Dr Lewis then visited Calshot to learn more about the Waterside area, as well as Forest-wide initiatives to help a 'green recovery,' and spoke to NPA archaeologists at Lepe Country Park to understand challenges facing New Forest heritage sites such as coastal erosion and climate change.

Dr Lewis said: 'This was a fascinating tour of just three of the many valuable features of our sensitive, fertile and historic environment, and the projects underway to restore it, preserve it and make it accessible to all who live in or visit the area. The tour was particularly commendable in the light of all the difficulties posed by the pandemic, with which the NPA and its dedicated staff had to contend.'



Dr Julian Lewis unveils an information panel with Forest partners



Salisbury MP John Glen visited a new nature education centre ahead of it being opened as a resource for young people.

Cameron's Cottage is at RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve. The derelict site was saved for the nation by the RSPB in 2018 with the help of a £200,000 contribution from the NPA and £25,000 from Friends of the New Forest.

Now, after a complete renovation, it's welcoming youth groups and charities, schools, colleges and universities. The new nature outreach centre is completely off-grid with accommodation for residential stays. It's called Cameron's Cottage in memory of 16-year-old naturalist Cameron Bepolka.

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

John Glen said: 'I think it's a fantastic scheme, and a great example of a successful management model for collaboration between communities, councils, organisations and volunteers. I'm keen to see the benefits it will invariably bring to young people thanks to its enviable position in the Forest.'

'Not only does it offer the therapeutic value of nature but will introduce a new generation to the stewardship responsibility we all have for this beautiful part of the country.'

RSPB and NPA staff also welcomed the NPA Chair and members to the cottage.

The group then went to nearby Wiltshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve Landford Bog to hear about the NPA's work delivering benefits for the environment in and around the New Forest.



Images: John Glen visiting Cameron's Cottage

Financial Information

The Authority's core grant from Defra was maintained at £3,252,000 for the 2021/22 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 £17 from partner organisations.

We received around:

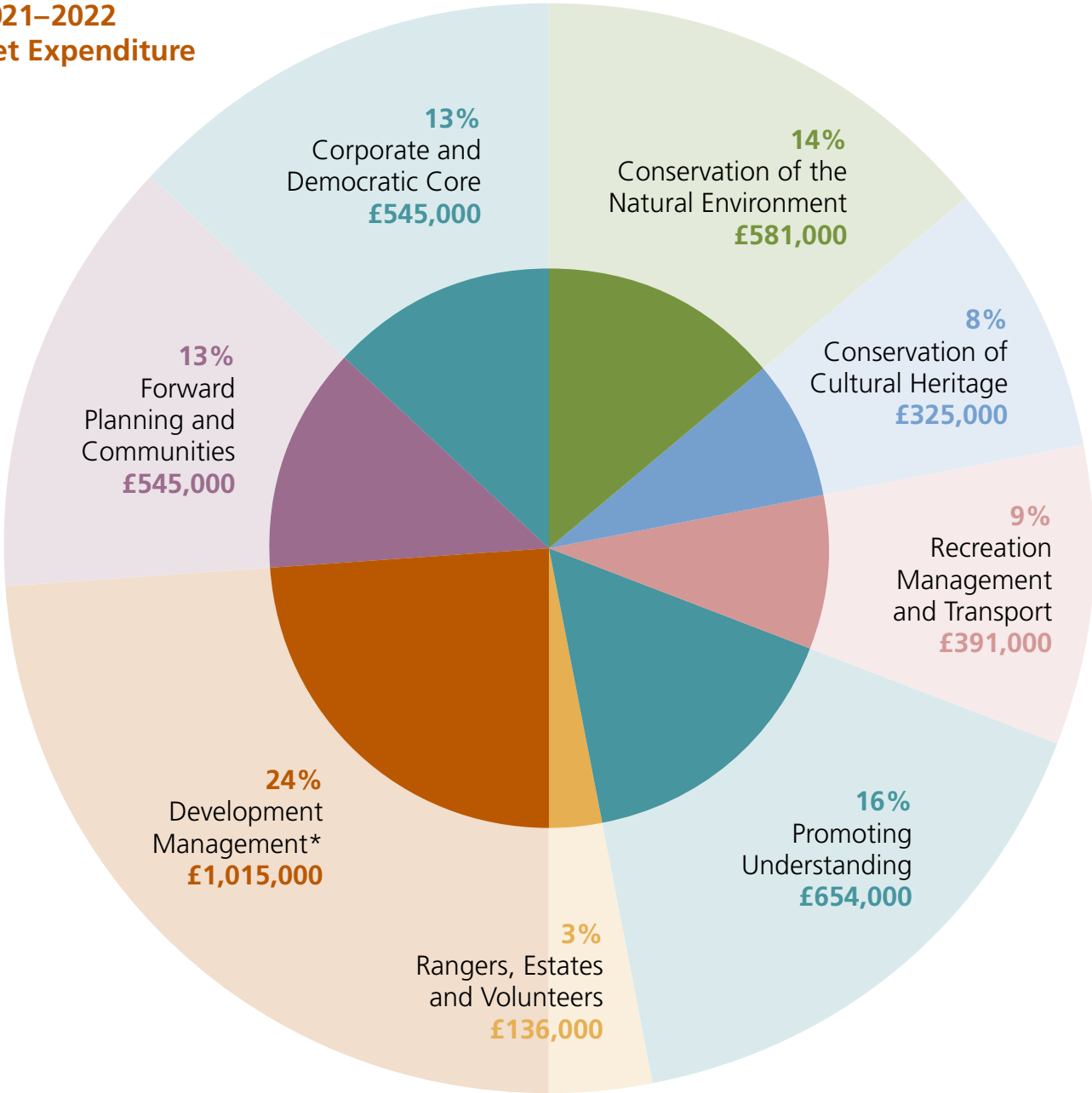
- £3,252m** from Defra
- £377,000** in statutory fees for planning and related applications
- £179,000** for shared services with other local authorities (rangers, archaeology, comms and administration)
- £1,000** on our investments
- £39,000** in other income generated (such as talks, guided walks, New Forest Tour advertising and charging for expert advice)

Significant external funding totalling £0.84m was secured for the Forest, including:

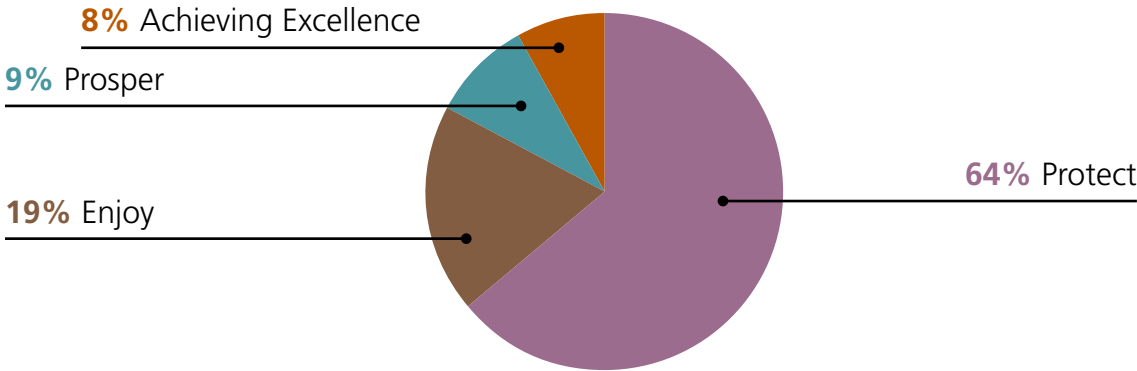
- £203,000** Farming in Protected Landscapes
- £116,000** PEDALL Inclusive Cycling Charity
- £83,000** Green and Blue Horizons: Green Recovery Fund
- £79,000** Higher Level Stewardship Scheme
- £77,000** Franchises Lodge: Landscape Enhancement Initiative
- £55,000** Generation Green
- £51,000** New Forest Land Advice Service
- £50,000** Our Past, Our Future: Landscape Partnership Scheme
- £46,000** Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund

Plus many more smaller projects...

2021–2022 Net Expenditure



2021–2022 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

Write to us at:

New Forest National Park Authority
Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington
Hampshire SO41 9ZG

Call

01590 646600

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Email

enquiries@newforestnpa.gov.uk

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