

Consultative Panel Meeting On behalf of Forestry England

March 2023



It's tree planting season, which is core to our work, at Irons Hill Inclosure, near Brockenhurst, we worked with corporate partners HP and our staff to plant 900 broadleaf trees, after we'd recently removed conifer trees from this area. Native trees planted here include oak, hornbeam and field maple, which will provide a home for wildlife while they grow and mature.

In addition to these trees, we've also planted a further 20,000 trees this year across several areas, which are enclosed to grow trees. Planting young saplings is a vital step in preserving the rich soil quality and especially important in maintaining the unique and well-established habitats for wildlife that can be found here in the New Forest.



STAYING ON TRACK TO HELP NEW FOREST'S RARE BIRDS

The New Forest is a Special Protection Area for Birds and a critical breeding location for endangered ground nesting birds. Key species here include curlew, lapwing, around 15% of the UK's visiting population of nightjar, and a third of the nation's breeding population of Dartford warbler. Under pressure in many parts of the UK, helping them breed successfully in the New Forest has a key role to play in their overall survival.

Everyone spending time in the New Forest whether on foot, wheels or hooves can support the campaign by staying on the main tracks and looking out for our special signage in the most sensitive locations.

Orange signs indicate areas very close to breeding grounds and can be seen in locations including our car parks and on the main tracks. Red "stop" signs highlight nesting sites in the immediate vicinity and ask the public to avoid these areas.



The relocation of the car park at Hatchet Pond, one of the UK's most important ponds for nature, has begun. The works are part of an ongoing action plan by Forestry England, Freshwater Habitats Trust and Natural England to restore the renowned beauty spot which has been under major threat from pollution and over-use.

The next key phase of the restoration plan is now taking place with the relocation of the car park to prevent pollution draining from it into the Pond. The approved planning permission is seeing the car park moved further away from the edge of the Pond whilst still retaining views over it.

Given the ecological importance of the site the works will be carried out by specialist contractors, overseen by Forestry England's ecology team, and take several months to complete.



We take the work our volunteers do seriously, and we're delighted to see so many of our volunteers have now returned, post-pandemic. Much of our conservation and forest maintenance work is seasonal, so the winter months are usually the busiest time of year to get the work done. Everything they do contributes to the conservation of the Forest, and we are extremely grateful for their help to look after the Crown lands of the New Forest.

If you know of anyone that wants to get involved please visit:
<https://www.forestryengland.uk/new-forest/volunteering-the-new-forest>



Forestry England's contractors have recently completed a busy programme of works over the winter: **Matley Ridge and Turf Hill** clear-felling conifer trees to restore these areas back to heathland.

Heathland restoration work has now finished at Matley Ridge, near Lyndhurst. This work involved removing the tree stumps and raking and burning debris following the recent felling, which is a necessary job that will bring long-term benefits to the habitat and start to restore the area back to heathland.



Last year, forest organisations worked together with support from the community on a range of initiatives to Care for the Forest. The 2022 joint Action Plan included targeted patrols and spot checks, education around the New Forest Code, and action around litter and reducing fire risks. This graphic provides more information on the impact of this work.



Camping New Forest has signed the contract to take over the running of Forestry England's ten New Forest campsites - Aldridge Hill, Ashurst, Denny Wood, Hollands Wood, Holmsley, Long Beech, Matley Wood, Ocknell, Roundhill and Setthorns.

Setthorns campsite was the first to open under the new management on 1 Feb, with the other 9 sites opening at the start of the season on 1 April.

We are pleased to have chosen Camping New Forest as operators to run our sites here in the New Forest. They really know and understand the special nature of the New Forest and are part of its community. Working with them and other key local groups we will be able to shape the future of these incredible locations.



Drivers thanked for slowing down on New Forest roads as animal accidents continue to fall.

The number of animals killed or injured on roads through the Forest continued to fall last year as a result of a series of multi-agency spot-checks and driver education events that took place at key accident hot spots.

The total number of New Forest animals killed or injured and destroyed was 41 compared to 44 in 2021. This includes 34 ponies, 3 pigs, 2 cows and 2 donkeys. A further 19 animals were injured compared to 15 last year. Overall, Agisters attended 82 incidents, compared with 103 in 2021. 26 of these incidents happened in daylight, 13 in twilight and 43 in the dark.

Despite the numbers being lower, the multi-agency Animal Accident Reduction Group is still concerned about the overall number of accidents, with 12 of these being Hit and Runs.



We've been working closely with New Forest District Council and our other partners across the New Forest to look at ways to enhance the care of this special place.

The Recreation Management Strategy for the New Forest, supported by the steering group organisations, the advisory group and the public through previous consultations, sets out a series of measures and objectives to ensure that this special place is both protected and provides access for all to enjoy the benefits of spending time here. We see the proposed PSPO as an essential tool in supporting the work of this strategy.

Protecting the New Forest from the growing risk of wildfire and their potentially devastating consequences is a key priority. It has been an issue for many years and despite concerted effort with our campaign to ban on fires/barbecues in recent years, our teams have spent many hours this year preventing irresponsible use of BBQs and fires, and working with the emergency services to respond to incidents. We fully support the introduction of a PSPO in this area as a further safeguard and way to communicate the risks to those spending time here.

We're committed to working with New Forest District Council and other partner organisations in the New Forest to support the roll out of the PSPO, if it's enacted.

Public Spaces Protection Order



It is an offence to:

	Light a fire or place, throw or drop items likely to cause a fire		Feed, provide or deposit food for consumption by any New Forest pony, horse, mule or donkey
	Light a BBQ (including a disposable BBQ)		Pet or touch any New Forest pony, horse, mule or donkey

Fail to terminate any of these activities or surrender any items used in conjunction when required by an Authorised Officer.