

Park Life

News from the New Forest National Park Authority



Autumn/Winter 2022/2023

FREE!



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& Cycling
Festival



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6&7

Paradise
restored



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herd



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An ambitious vision for the National Park

Organisations caring for the New Forest are calling on people to join them in working towards the National Park becoming a 'national beacon for a sustainable future, where nature and people flourish'.

The Re:New Forest approach sets out a vision of a New Forest moving towards net zero, with wildlife habitats restored, thriving local communities, and more people caring for the Forest and benefiting from connecting with nature. It looks at five key themes – climate, nature, people, place and partnership – and was developed thanks to input from hundreds of people over the last two years.

Re:New Forest is the campaign fronting the New Forest



National Park Partnership Plan – a joint strategy to manage the National Park up to 2027 and drive large-scale improvements and investment. The Plan has been jointly produced by Forestry England, Hampshire County Council, Natural England, the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest District Council, the Verderers, Test Valley Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. It's a strategy for the National Park as a place, and not just the organisations who have prepared it.

New Forest National Park Authority Chair Prof Gavin

Parker said creating a thriving Forest supporting communities, commoning and land management for the benefit of the environment is at the heart of the Plan. He said: 'In this joint Partnership Plan we set out an ambitious vision for the New Forest National Park's future. 'There are already some fantastic examples here of nature recovering, of communities living more sustainably, of businesses reducing their impact on the climate and of projects to improve our health and wellbeing.'

'An urgent step change is needed – many agree that now is the time to redouble our efforts to tackle the twin challenges of our age – the decline of nature and biodiversity and the fundamentally connected threat of the climate crisis. 'We would like to thank everyone who gave their views during the preparation stages. We want to continue the conversation and call on everyone to take significant and urgent action with us to "Re:New Forest" over the next five years.'

Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest for Forestry England, said: 'The New Forest is a truly special landscape and an internationally recognised

● Continues on page 2

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Volunteers in the New Forest

Conservation of the National Park

● Continued from page 1
haven for nature. It is also a location facing increasing pressure, and significant changes will be needed to ensure it can survive and thrive well into the future. Achieving this requires all of us from the local community, business, Forest groups and authorities to work together.' Official Verderer Lord Willie Manners said: 'Commoning is vital to the conservation of the New Forest, and the Verderers

welcome the support for commoning in the Partnership Plan.' Councillor Jan Warwick, Executive Member for Climate Change and Sustainability at Hampshire County Council, said: 'The launch of this campaign is very timely coming, as it does, during our Year of Climate Resilience. I am proud of the role that the County Council has played in the development of the New Forest National Park Management Plan which we

were pleased to endorse. 'We wholeheartedly support the guiding principles set out by the Plan that will steer a course for supporting local residents and preserving the New Forest in the face of climate change for the next five years, that will reap benefits for many years after.' To find out more about Re:New Forest and how you can get involved visit www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/partnershipplan.

Re:New Forest Themes



Re:New Climate

Net Zero with Nature - significant cuts in land-based carbon emissions are secured through restoring natural habitats and enabling carbon capture



Re:New Nature

Nature Recovery - habitats are more resilient, restored, expanded, connected and maintained to enable wildlife to thrive, both within and beyond the National Park



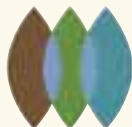
Re:New People

An inclusive National Park - people within reach of the New Forest of all backgrounds, abilities and socio-economic groups value the National Park as an important part of their lives and seek to care for it.



Re:New Place

Thriving Forest - a living, working Forest is sustained through its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and support for commoning. There is a vibrant local produce market, access to affordable homes and a growing green economy featuring sustainable tourism and green businesses.



Re:New Partnership

Team New Forest - communities, businesses and organisations work together as a team to deliver the vision of the Partnership Plan, sharing knowledge, ideas and resources to deliver the best for the Forest.



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Feeding a natural and healthy diet to your pet could not only help prolong your pet's life but also offer them a better quality of life. Obesity is a growing concern for vets who have estimated as high as 51% of dogs and 44% of cats are overweight or obese. Arthritis, diabetes, pancreatitis, and heart disease are commonly associated conditions with overweight animals but research of illness where obesity is a contributing factor is much longer.

Problems such as itchy dry skin, gunky ear discharge, chewing at paws, eating their own poo and tear staining can also be down to an incorrect diet or through something missing from their food and can, in many cases, be treated with diet changes or supplements. This can allow you to save money at the vets and also ensure your pet not only survives but thrives.



We are excited to be working with Sue from Groovy Grooming who has set up her new canine hydrotherapy pool in Medstead called Snazzy Swimmers. We will be offering a weight management clinic suitable for dogs who struggle maintaining or losing weight. We will also be offering Nutrition Consults, ideal for dogs with underlie health issues including allergies, pancreatitis and support diets for dogs with kidney and liver problems.

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COMMITTED COMMONERS

The New Forest Commoners Defence Association (NFCDA) plays a vital part in protecting and shaping the New Forest into the landscape we all know and love.

Relying on volunteers and the good will and passion of commoners, the NFCDA is able to be a key component of the working Forest.

Chair of the Association is Charlotte Lines (45). As a commoner herself she juggles a full time job, family life, her animals and leading the NFCDA operation.

We caught up with Charlotte for a Q&A on how she manages all of the above, her goals for the NFCDA and her views on the New Forest.

Q. What animals do you and your family have?

A. I have ponies running out on the Forest. My family also turns out cattle and then pigs over the pannage season.

Q. How would you describe the New Forest and what does it mean to you?

A. I've been lucky enough to grow up in the Forest. However, it wasn't until I travelled for a couple of years and on coming back that I really appreciated what a special place it is.

It's well evidenced how the natural environment helps with mental health and well-being and I can completely understand why people would want to visit and immerse



themselves in the Forest's natural beauty, and its wildlife.

Q. How do you manage to juggle your work and the New Forest Commoners Defence Association?

A. Every member of the committee is a volunteer. Some have work and family commitments, others not so much, but we all have commoning commitments day or night, 365 days a year. We all give our time willingly so the NFCDA can continue to protect and safeguard our cultural heritage now and into the future as it has done for over 100 years.

Q. What is the biggest issue facing the NFCDA today?

A. The three issues giving us the biggest cause for concern are: One - Visitor pressure, day visitors, visitors on holiday, and residents who do not display the right behaviours, whether that's feeding or petting our animals, out of control

dogs, irresponsible parking, or putting poisonous garden clippings out for our animals. These and many other irresponsible actions are having a detrimental effect on our animals, and our commoning activities.

Two - Our ability to continue with rising costs for fodder, land and housing availability.... It's becoming increasingly harder for younger commoners to establish and make commoning viable. I'm really concerned for the next generation and how vulnerable they are.

Three - The loss of our essential infrastructure especially back up land primarily used for grazing, and making fodder.

Q. What cultural significance does the NFCDA hold in the New Forest?

A. The primary focus of the NFCDA is on safeguarding the interests of commoners, particularly around the welfare

this forcefully and successfully over centuries.

Q. What future goals do you have for the NFCDA?

A. Continue to safeguard the interests of commoners. However, we realise this means we have to work with many partners who have an interest in the New

Forest, whether that's the operators like Forestry England, regulators such as Natural England or volunteer organisations such

as the New Forest Association. We all have to work together to ensure our cultural heritage is not lost!

Q. What is something you feel the public don't understand or realise about the New Forest?

A. Our animals provide a number of vital services to the Forest, whether that's their grazing which keeps the open habitats free of scrub and controls the more aggressive species such as bracken and purple-moor grass, or by leaving footprints (poaching) which allows rare species to thrive. Or even by depositing dung where specialist fungus confined to dung from ponies grazing acidic rough pasture flourishes.

Without our animals we would not be able to enjoy the variety of habitats and species the Forest has to offer.

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Top and here,
Charlotte Lines



Walking and Cycling Festival marks 10th year

The New Forest Walking and Cycling Festival is back this autumn, with experts leading the way on dozens of guided events.

Now celebrating its 10th year, the ever-popular Festival offers a chance for people to connect to nature, experience new things, and learn about the special landscape, habitats and culture of the New Forest. It's taking place across the National Park over three weeks from 15 October to 6 November 2022. This includes the autumn half term holiday so will feature guided walks suitable for people of all ages – including spook-tacular Hallowe'en fun.

A packed programme of events will cover everything from wildlife wanders, fungi spotting, birdwatching and historical trails.

A team of people will be sharing their knowledge from organisations all over the Forest, including National Park Authority staff and rangers,



Clockwise from above, autumn cycling, a guided walk on Hurst Spit and a dog-friendly walk

Forestry England, Wild New Forest, New Forest Association, New Forest Ramblers and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Among the new events for 2022 is a photography tour, led by a National Park Artist in Residence, Marie Smith, in partnership with SpudWORKS. It ties in with her exhibition

We Belong Here and is a chance to learn about Marie's process of working as a photographer against the backdrop of the New Forest, and for her to share her experiences of being a BAME person in nature.

The Festival is also a brilliant opportunity to explore the Forest on two wheels. Guided

cycle rides will be back once again after being introduced last year to encourage responsible cycling in the New Forest.

All rides follow designated cycle trails across the National Park and are led by qualified guides catering for all abilities. If you need help getting into the saddle, inclusive

cycling charity PEDALL will be encouraging people on board its extensive range of specialist cycles, developed for people with additional needs. The charity is also offering rides for anyone to build their confidence on two-wheeled bikes.

New Forest National Park ranger Adam Vasey said: 'The

National Park is a wonderful place to walk and cycle during the autumn with flat, accessible routes that allow everyone to enjoy the Forest's amazing landscapes and colours.

'It's also easy to travel around car-free to help protect this amazing environment.

'Participants say they always learn something new on the guided walks, however well they know the New Forest.

'And being outdoors has so many physical and mental health benefits, too.'

The events on the New Forest Walking and Cycling Festival are bookable now.

Many are free, but all places need to be booked, so don't miss out.

When out in the Forest, please follow the New Forest Code.

● For more information about the Walking Festival, and to book a place on a walk or cycle visit newforestnpa.gov.uk/walkingfestival.

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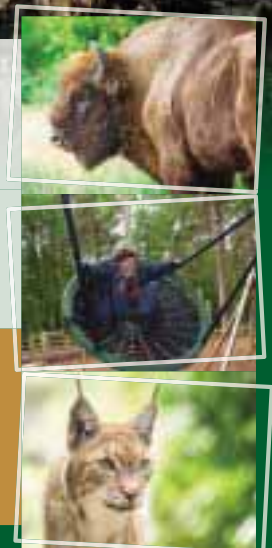
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Top, a young girl with a dragonfly made at the FHT stand at Southampton Uni Science and Engineering Day; middle and above left, Thea Margetts (FHT) with New Forest Ambassadors; above right, New Forest Ambassadors on a kayaking litter pick

Freshwater Habitats Trust - Wilder for Water

The Freshwater Habitats Trust's (FHT) 'Wilder for Water' project works to protect the New Forest's precious wet habitats and waterways through public education and engagement.

Their project officer is Thea Margetts, someone who has a true passion for protecting natural landscapes stemming right back to her childhood. Thea's role is one of the 17 posts created for the scheme and her passion and enthusiasm for her work has shone through.

In just a few months, Thea has run 39 events, reaching nearly 6,000 people. These events have been spread across the Forest and beyond, going into Bournemouth and Southampton talking with and educating everyone from young children to retirees about the importance of safeguarding the New Forest's world-class wet habitats.

The events ranged from science fairs at Southampton University to kayaking down the Beaulieu River litter-picking with the New Forest Ambassadors.

Working collaboratively with the New Forest National Park Authority's volunteering co-ordinator Richard Austin (another role retained through this funding), Thea has set up a fantastic partnership with

the New Forest Ambassadors. Together they have picked litter along rivers and campsites, down streams and in car parks, while also taking the time to stop and talk to the public and holidaymakers about the Water Code and the landscapes they're cleaning up. The New Forest Water Code is a set of guidelines about how to interact with and behave around the Forest's waterways, rivers and ponds.

On top of the successes running events, the Wilder for Water project has seen the New Forest Water Code distributed in 75 locations so far, including camp sites, public spaces and conveniences as well as in windows and leaflet stores in local businesses.

FHT New Forest's followers on social media have grown by over 400% - thanks to consistent and quality posts twice weekly, including blogs, vlogs, articles and pictures all showcasing the unique wet habitats within the New Forest and how to protect them.



Scan here to find out more about the New Forest Water Code

BROADENING HORIZONS

The 'Green and Blue Horizons from city to Forest' scheme was launched last year, bringing together five organisations and representing an £800,000 investment into the New Forest.

The scheme works to confront the twin climate and nature emergencies with projects to:

- Restore habitats
- Begin our path towards net zero with nature
- Help new and diverse audiences connect with the New Forest.

Here are some of the highlights from the five partner organisations at the half-way point of the project.

New Forest National Park Authority - Nature Connection

An overarching goal of the scheme is to connect people with nature and green spaces, especially those living in cities who may have limited or no access to them.

The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) has attended fairs and events showcasing the mental and physical benefits of spending time in nature as well as how to interact and leave a positive impact on these spaces.

NFNPA Rangers and members of the education team have been to university freshers' fairs, the University of Southampton's Science and Engineering Day, New Forest & Hampshire County Show and more in a bid to develop the



A youngster takes a look at the NFNPA stand at Southampton Uni Science and Engineering Day

link between city and Forest.

Alongside these events, the NFNPA has co-ordinated over 70 volunteering days since the beginning of the scheme last autumn.

These range from woodland and wetland restoration by clearing invasive species such as rhododendron, to protecting historic and ancient landmarks.

Commoners Defence Association – Communications role

The Commoners Defence Association (CDA) is a volunteer-run organisation representing New Forest Commoners and their animals all while aiming to protect the Forest's landscapes.

As part of the Green and Blue Horizons scheme it has recruited a part-time communications officer and keen photographer Chris Fairhead to help spread key messages on social media, in newsletters and among partners and members.

The other part of Chris's role is to promote the whole scheme on behalf of lead partner the New Forest National Park Authority. With Chris's photography and using key hashtags, messages and forest-wide campaigns such as #KeepYourDistance and #ProtectOurFoals, the CDA's social media posts have been seen on a total of 1.5 million screens since December 2021. Stallions have been the winner so far on social media for the CDA, with over 110,000 views on the stallions' important role

in improving the quality of foals and maintaining the New Forest pony bloodlines. It is not, however all about the pretty ponies and cattle; each post has an important and targeted message on how to protect, behave and interact with the animals and landscape. By the end of the scheme, the CDA plans to have its own media library and communications workflow that can be the building blocks for spreading their messages far and wide.

Green and Blue Horizons from city to Forest is funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

● For more information see www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/horizons



A Damselfly by a New Forest stream

Picture: Chris Fairhead



Above, glorious Autumn colours in the New Forest; above right, New Forest heather

Countryside Education Trust – Mini Internship

The Countryside Education Trust (CET) is a non-profit organisation and working farm based in the heart of the New Forest in Beaulieu. Its aim is to educate people about rural living, farm life and conservation.

Through the scheme, two Climate and Environment Educators – Owen Glyn Smith and Lizzie Mutter – have been recruited. Together they ran a ‘mini-internship’ in the summer, a one-week course aimed at 16 to 30-year-olds who may not have the best access to the Forest or green spaces.

Composed of talks and activities based around climate change and sustainability, the course was a great success with nothing but positive feedback from everyone involved.

Day one was based around the links

between weather and climate, how to interpret data from the CET’s weather station alongside analysing different soils around the farm.

Day two saw the group tree mapping in Hartford Wood, carrying out a butterfly survey and then using materials found in the Forest, making shepherd’s sticks and charcoal for artists through charcoal burning.

Day three demonstrated the great collaborative work possible through the scheme with Thea from the Freshwater Habitats Trust leading a day about the New Forest’s waterways, showing how to carry out water quality and biodiversity testing whilst also talking about the unique qualities of the Forest’s wetlands.

Day four was based around farming and commoning. The group learned about traditional crops and livestock

breeds and the comeback they’re making, the importance of hedgerows as wildlife corridors and how New Forest commoners help shape and protect the landscape.

Day five was a visit to Eling Tide Mill on the very outskirts of the Forest. Here they learned about how ancient technology can still be applied in modern times. The group then collated all their findings and teachings throughout the week to develop activities for public outreach. The ‘mini-internship’ was a rousing success, with participants blown away by the jam-packed schedule, saying it went ‘above and beyond’ expectations.

Due to the internship’s success, the CET is aiming to run another course this autumn/ winter, this time concentrating on 16 to 19-year-olds.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust – Nature Restoration

Restoring and creating habitats that benefit wildlife, and are more resilient to climate change, is another key goal of the scheme. Thanks to this funding, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) has been able to retain the role of a Farmland Adviser alongside, and as part of, the New Forest Land Advice Service.

By using their experience of what works on the ground, the New Forest Land Advice Service is advising and supporting networks and clusters of commoners, farmers and land managers to work together to develop nature and

climate resilience. This includes facilitating ways to share ideas and knowledge face-to-face and via small groups as well as bringing in other partner organisations and opportunities to learn from experts on a range of subjects such as nature conservation, biodiversity, soil health and quality, and woodland and wetland management.

Five networks and clusters have been identified in the New Forest, representing a multitude of small landowners and managers and the uniqueness of the geography and landscape. The aim is to improve collaboration and enhance key ecological features so that we have a nature network capable of delivering landscape-scale resilience.



Left, a New Forest pony on a winter morning; top, an agister with a stallion ready to be released; above, a Highland Cow in New Forest heather; right, pannage pigs

Pictures: Chris Fairhead



New Forest AWAKENING FESTIVAL

The New Forest Awakening Festival – led by the New Forest National Park Authority with a range of partners – is back in 2023! Everyone is welcome to join the festival which is running throughout March.

Through a series of online and in-person events, talks and workshops, people can discover why the New Forest is so special, its role in the climate and nature emergencies, what people are already doing to protect it, and how everyone can help.

Keep up to date at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/awakening

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PARADISE RESTORED

WINNING THE BATTLE TO REMOVE A GLORIOUS BUT DEADLY NEW FOREST INVADER

A once inaccessible 'secret' parcel of land in the north of the New Forest is at the heart of a project to restore a wealth of birds, wildlife and heathland.

Thanks to £200,000 of support from National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI), secured through the New Forest National Park Authority, a team of RSPB staff, volunteers and contractors is also restoring the habitat by removing a voraciously spreading species of plant and a most unwelcome visitor – the rhododendron. Nearly three centuries after they were first brought to these shores a dense entanglement has ensued of woodlands and ancient burial grounds near Nomansland, requiring a counter-offensive of near



NPA archaeologist Hilde van de Heul helping volunteers clear rhododendron from the Bronze Age barrows

military precision.

The 'rhodi' found favour in the 19th Century gardens of landed nobility. Not only was it believed to brighten the estates of the social influencers of their day but

also provided cover for game. But wherever rhododendron found a stylish home to take root, there was also the risk of unleashing a biodiversity disaster. Beneath its evergreen leaves, there was a shade that

could eradicate all life. The plant even survives summer fires and winter frost as it swallows up woodland and smothers anything in its path. In 2018 the New Forest National Park Authority helped

the RSPB buy the land at the Franchises Lodge nature reserve and continues offering support as the charity restores 1,000 acres of spectacular grassland and woodland, working with commoners and other local people to ensure the site is managed properly and flourishes for years to come.

It's a 'priority landscape' for the RSPB, which is improving habitats to encourage a whole suite of species.

Thanks to works completed through the LEI funding, three species of wood warbler have already taken up residence, and ground-nesting birds such as the woodlark and nightjar are also making a return.

Removing the rhododendron is not just uncovering heathland but also Bronze Age burial sites. Sarah Kelly, Landscape Officer at the New Forest National Park Authority,

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Grazing Red Ruby Devon cattle

said: 'The sheer amount of vegetation and ground conditions made the work much trickier than expected so most of the incredible results have been achieved by hand. In other parts of the site, contractors introduced a new technique of using an excavator with a flail (which has a free-swinging metal or wooden bar). This process protects the soil structure and is one that's hoped can be rolled out with other landowners across the New Forest.'

The land at Franchises Lodge

was in private ownership for many years, which has resulted in the number of rhododendrons as well as conifer plantations left over from post-war attempts to boost timber production. In the past, the area would have provided a more open habitat including mires and wet heath, alongside ancient woodland. Today just a few fields and clearings remain, with some



Richard Snelling

pockets of hardwood too, much of which is designated as protected Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) woodland.

Richard Snelling, RSPB site manager at Franchises Lodge, said: 'Our aim is to allow for greater connectivity through the landscape and is more of a restoration project than a rewilding, returning the grassland to a good condition within the next seven years



Woodlark at nest

Picture: Mike Read

and the heathland in 10 to 20 years. We can't do it ourselves, so we're grateful for grants such as the LEI funding, as well as partner support.' The wood pasture management is being supported by the re-introduction of grazing with Red Ruby Devon cattle – the Westcountry breed often referred to as 'Red Rubies' due to their deep red-brown colour.

Richard said: 'I was looking around for cattle with the right temperament and bumped into local farmer

Volunteer fair

Save the date! The area's largest volunteering event, the New Forest Volunteer Fair, is back on 29 January, 2023 10.30am– 4pm at Brockenhurst Village Hall.

More than 40 local groups will be offering hundreds of roles to suit

all ages and abilities. See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/volunteerfair



Andrew Parry-Norton from Storm's Farm, a commoner near Cadnam who was looking for some backup grazing. The breed is just so well-behaved, good-natured, loves getting stuck into all the rough grazing and doesn't care about the wet.'

Nestled in the heart of RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve is Cameron's Cottage. This retreat, in memory of the teenage bird blogger Cameron Bepolka, now

provides a residential field study centre that sleeps almost 20 in what was once one of the derelict cottages on the site. Educational groups can experience the therapeutic value of nature away from mobile phones. It's a visual testament to the future lifeblood of the Forest, inspiring a new generation to better understand, protect and enhance a part of the National Park that so easily could have become a paradise lost.



The Landscape Enhancement Initiative has helped improve the environment around pylons and this Bronze Age barrow is now clear of invasive rhododendron



CURRENT SUCCESSSES IMPROVING THE LANDSCAPE

This is just some of the fantastic work the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) has helped deliver in the New Forest.

It's helped create a better environment around these pylons. The grant scheme is run by National Grid to reduce the impact of existing electricity transmission

lines in England and Wales. Over the next five years National Grid says it aims to build on this success with funds in the region of £12m available to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks in England and Wales. As well as making a positive contribution to natural beauty, wildlife and

biodiversity the LEI is also helping to save our cultural heritage in the National Park. Three large mounds known to be Bronze Age graves have had rhododendron removed. There are now plans for a path to go around this giant mound, nicknamed 'The Monster' by the team who helped clear it.

LOVE THE FOREST



The New Forest Trust's Love the Forest campaign raises funds for conservation, education and commoning projects. Every donation helps to secure the future of this beautiful place.

Love the Forest funding has more recently helped pay for training and equipment

for our dedicated volunteers; helped to promote the New Forest Code, and supported a scheme to remove invading non-native plants from rivers and streams.

You can help too, by donating at newforesttrust.org.uk/donate

Help shape £1m culture project

An £1 million project has launched across the New Forest, enabling communities to connect through arts, culture, and heritage – and you can help shape it. Culture in Common is one of 39 projects funded by Arts Council England across the country, designed to transform access to arts and culture in places where engagement is below the national average. The £1 million investment for the New Forest covers the first three years of a 10-year vision to develop a thriving community-driven arts scene which has co-creation at its heart, enabling communities to plan, commission and create their own creative activities and events. The investment is guided by a consortium of organisations: Energise Me, Folio, The Handy Trust, New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority – blending arts, community



Culture in common partners and arts council members

engagement, environment, heritage, physical activity and health expertise. All the partners are passionate about collaborating and building relationships with New Forest communities.

Sofia Richardson, Manager of The Handy Trust, said: 'The programme will allow people to come together, develop ideas they'd like to see and have the support to action them to create a long-lasting impact.'

'There are many challenges among our community: elderly struggling with loneliness, young people not having

enough to do, and certain areas of isolation. This is a chance for people to improve these issues and enhance their involvement and enjoyment of the arts, their local community and their local environment. They already have some great ideas.'

The first phase of the project is all about getting to know local people and finding out what matters to them through street surveys, national data and insights, 'social listening' and getting involved with community meet-ups.

While the project is in discovery mode and the



Junk Band perform and right, a young artist gets creative

website is being developed, it's supporting local events and setting up 'taster sessions' – in Marchwood (Summer Junk Band workshop); in Hythe (Youth Club Halloween celebration); in Totton (Lantern Procession) and across the New Forest (clay workshops and walks as part of the New Forest Walking and Cycling Festival).

You can help the Creative in Common team to connect with and gather voices

from the New Forest District Council area community by completing the survey on the website www.cultureincommon.co.uk and sharing it.

Find out about future projects on the Culture in Common website nearer the time and join the mailing list to stay up to date.

● To invite Culture in Common to speak with your community or request the survey in alternative



formats please contact project coordinator Mai Brillet at mai.brillet@energise.me.

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Sustainable farming that's been decades in the making

Profile: Peter Nicolls – Sustainable farmer, commoner and New Forest Marque member

Meet Peter Nicolls, a 38-year-old New Forest Marque producer and commoner with a unique herd of pedigree Dexter cows.

Being a generational New Forest commoner, Peter has a wealth of knowledge and experience that has allowed him to be at the forefront of sustainable beef farming in the New Forest.

Peter's farming business operates under the name of Hatchett Herd and is endorsed by the New Forest Marque.

Based on the outskirts of Beaulieu, the Hatchett herd can often be seen grazing on the open plains at Balmer Lawn, Brockenhurst, and beyond where they play an important part in shaping the landscape we see.

Peter comes from a commoning family that stretches back further than he can remember. The three acres of land that he and his family now call home was acquired long ago by his grandad Jack Humby when he traded six cows for the land.

It is doubtful many people know the land between Brockenhurst and Beaulieu better than the Nicolls family. The wealth of knowledge about how to farm and manage the land in the New Forest has passed down from generation to generation, something that Peter hopes to pass on to his young children Florence and Evie.

In 1998 the first Dexter cows of the Hatchett



Peter Nicolls oversees his herd



Herd were bought, and from there has been managed and expanded to the pedigree herd found today.

Peter said: 'I got my first Dexters as I wanted something a bit different that was my own. My grandad bought me my first two Dexters in 1998. It's now got like a hobby that's out of control. I'll be out on spring mornings and summer evenings checking on my herd, which to me is the best part of it all.'

Dexters are considered excellent conservation grazers, their small size (smallest breed in UK) and hardiness means they can graze all year while not damaging the ground. In fact they do just the opposite: their grazing actually creates an environment for rare and interesting species to grow and flourish.

Cattle 'poach' the Forest ground with their hooves, creating an imprint which establishes a small space without competition for some of the Forest's rarest flora to grow. The absence of grass in the trodden areas allows rare and wonderful species to establish themselves. For example, the sundew.

This fascinating species is a carnivorous plant.

Existing in the Forest's wet heathlands it traps unfortunate insects buzzing and crawling around the landscape. It can be seen growing on the side of imprints left by the Forest's grazing animals such as Peter's Dexters. The lack of competition and sun-facing embankment left by the animals' hooves provide the perfect environment for this unusual plant to exist.

After his cattle have grazed on the New Forest for around a year, Peter will move those cows onto back-up conservation grazing areas – Roydon Woods and North Solent Nature Reserve. Here the Dexters will graze the fields to the perfect conditions and length for ground-nesting birds such as the curlew to nest safely.

By leaving the cows to graze on the Forest, the Dexters grow naturally, slowly building up fine layers of fat that create the much-desired, succulent marbling effect in the meat.

The delicious taste of Dexters' beef has only recently been realised.

Previously thought of years ago as a 'poor man's cow' they were somewhat disregarded,

now they can be found across the world.

Known for its quality, ease of cooking and smaller joint and cut sizes, the meat is popular among chefs.

The marbled texture allows the meat to in effect self-baste while cooking.

Hatchett Herd beef carries the New Forest Marque and can be found in Beaulieu Farm Shop and Pilley Community Shop and is sold to a Hale-based butcher that supplies the local area.

Information on Peter's produce can also be found in the New Forest Marque produce guide, which contains a wide array of tasty and quality New Forest made produce and goods. By supporting the New Forest Marque, you support local producers such as Peter Nicolls.

Peter said: 'When you buy local you know the producer, you know the quality and the person behind your food, where the animal has grazed and the butcher's where it ends up.'

'The New Forest Marque produce guide always boosts sales. This support shortens the supply chain and helps set me up for the future. It means there is a constant stream of income.'

The Marque is growing

Three new businesses have joined the New Forest Marque, which now has more than 160 members:

- Evelina's Home Pantry, Sway. Evelina uses traditional methods to make wholesome preserves including a fabulous selection of jams, pickles, chutneys and spreads. All are handmade in the New Forest, using produce from local farmers.
- Green Hill Park Shop, Landford. The on-site shop at Green Hill Farm Holiday Village serves a range of local food and produce, including many

products from New Forest Marque members

- Manns Cookies, Lymington. The Mann family offers boxes of fresh cookies, home-made in the New Forest and posted the same day. The cookies are hand rolled, topped with an ever-changing array of treats and made with locally-sourced ingredients.

Follow the Marque on social media.
You can find the New Forest Marque on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter - follow @newforestmarque for all the latest New Forest food and drink news.



How to buy local

Head to the New Forest Marque shop for a variety of ways to buy local and support New Forest producers. You'll find luxury hampers packed with goodies, fresh boxes delivered direct to your door, and an exclusive dine-at-home service designed to offer you a taste of the New Forest Marque. newforestmarque.co.uk/shop

Plea for drivers to pass wide and slow

Forest organisations are renewing their call for drivers to remember to pass animals wide and slow this winter.

Historically, winter is the worst time for animal deaths in the Forest as the clocks go back, and more journeys are taken in the dark – with November usually being the deadliest month.

The free-roaming animals are known as the 'architects of the Forest' – their grazing helps make the Forest internationally important for wildlife.

Although the overall trend of accidents has been gradually reducing over the years, any death or injury to an animal is a great loss to its owner and the New Forest.

Low sunlight, dazzling on-coming headlights and bad weather can make visibility poor. Therefore, the New Forest Animal Accident Reduction Group is encouraging commuters, businesses, and visitors alike to adjust their driving to suit the road and weather conditions,



remembering to pass animals wide and slow.

There were 43 accidents attended between January and September 2022. This is down on last year's total of 57. Of the 43 callouts, 30 animals were killed, injured or injured and later destroyed – 24 of

which were ponies.

Many of the drivers involved in animal accidents are local residents and people who make regular trips.

Clerk to the Verderers, Sue Westwood said: 'The figures show a welcome, albeit small reduction in accidents,

animals killed and injured, and the number of hit and run accidents, but the worst time of year is approaching.

'Our usual messages apply, slow down, particularly when passing animals on the verge and when visibility is poor, when it is dark, foggy, raining

or if you are blinded by the sun or oncoming vehicles' headlights. Expect animals to walk out in front of your vehicle. They do not have any road sense.'

She added: 'Remember the speed limit is exactly that, a limit. It is not the speed at which you should always be travelling. Drive according to the conditions, not because you are late for an appointment, want your dinner etc.

'A collision with an animal will significantly slow your journey, assuming you can continue at all. Colliding with a large animal can do a lot of damage to your vehicle and may result in significant injury to the vehicle occupants.'

The New Forest's Animal Accident Reduction Group has spearheaded a range of measures including police mobile speed cameras on the most dangerous routes and reflective warning signs on key roads during the winter months when accidents peak.

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

Who to contact in the event of an accident:

Legally, you should report any accident involving a pony, cow, donkey, pig, sheep or deer to the police as soon as possible, within 24 hours. 999 in an emergency or 101 for non-emergencies.

Sick, injured or distressed animals, excluding deer, should be reported to the Verderers' office by calling 023 8028 2052 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm only).

Alternatively, animals, including deer, can be reported to Forestry England's 24-hour line: 0300 067 4600.

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