



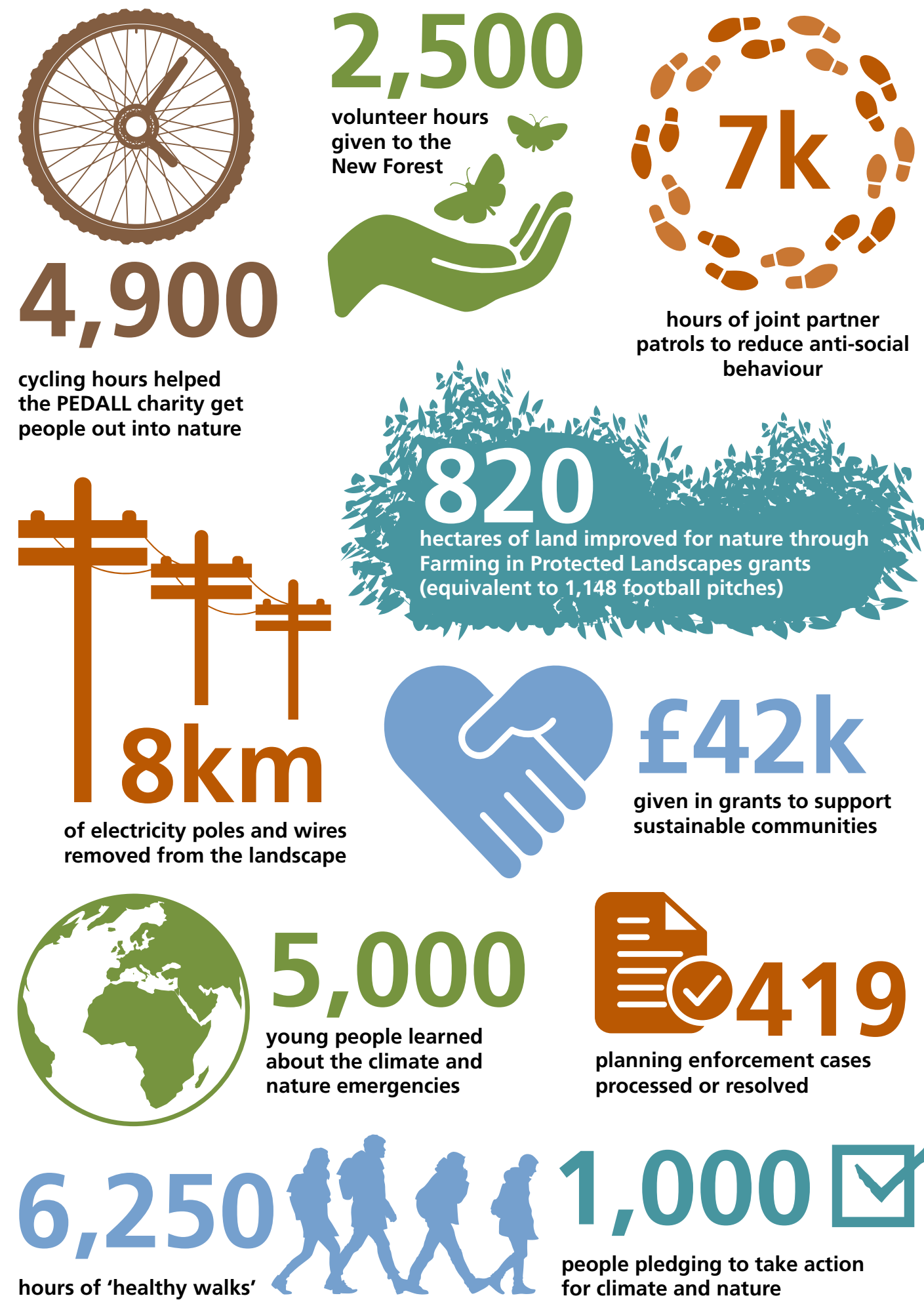
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Protecting  
together,  
shaping  
tomorrow



# Annual Review 2022–2023

Stats at a glance





## Chair and CEO statement 2022–23

Our shared 'Team New Forest' is growing ever stronger, and the commitment and passion for working together for the Forest was highlighted this year at the launch of our new Partnership Plan, Re:New Forest.

Re:New Forest is an ambitious five-year plan and shared mission for the National Park to drive large-scale improvements for climate, nature people and our landscape until 2027. Its launch at the New Forest Show was a major milestone for the nine statutory partners and the many more partners and communities that have steered and shaped its development together.

In the past year, where we saw international focus on climate and nature at COP27 and COP15 respectively, we've been 'thinking globally and acting locally' by leading and convening some major programmes that will enable the Forest, its communities, landowners and commoners to respond practically to the climate and nature emergencies, while ensuring a thriving Forest community and enabling people's connection with what's special about our National Park.

The 'Green and Blue Horizons scheme' is one such programme which concluded this year. The 18-month multi-partner scheme saw land equivalent to 147 football pitches improved for nature and climate resilience across 27 sites.

One of the highlights of the scheme is the project to support climate education at the new Fort Climate Centre at the Countryside Education Trust (CET) in Beaulieu. It was an honour to be a part of the official opening by HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh (then Countess of Wessex) in the spring.

Further habitat improvements have been delivered through the second year of our Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. Grants for farmers and landowners have supported 22 projects and seen hundreds of hectares of habitats improved for nature and wildlife.

We were pleased to learn that the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme was being rolled over for another five years. This brings a further £10 million into the Forest for habitat restoration and to support commoning.

However, it's a time of transition and uncertainty for the Forest as we move towards the full domestic agricultural policy in 2024. We are supporting the Forest Farming Group to commission work to determine which scheme design might be best to meet the Forest's need into the future and to recommend when and how to move into a new scheme.

We also worked with three landowners and the private finance experts Palladium to develop and trial new

models to attract private investment to fund large-scale biodiversity restoration projects. Our Green Halo Partnership conference explored these themes further, with attendees from across the central south of England.

Further collaborative working came in the summer with joint ranger patrols in visitor hotspots, as well as campaigns around ground nesting birds, animal accidents, reducing speeding on Forest roads, and other New Forest code messages. More than 60 stores in and around the National Park are now supporting our BBQ-Free New Forest campaign and have stopped selling disposable BBQs to help prevent the devastating effects of wildfires.

Part of our duty as a National Park Authority is to support sustainable and sympathetic building development and the number of planning applications remained high this year.

Four out of the five major housing site schemes set out in our Local Plan have now been considered by the Planning Committee. There are resolutions in place to grant permission on these allocated sites and they will deliver around 120 new affordable homes in the National Park, making a significant contribution towards meeting the local need for affordable housing across the New Forest.

Community involvement in working with the National Park Authority to care for the National Park is growing further, with over 970 ambassadors (over 250 of whom are young people) registered to pick litter, report problems and share the New Forest code.

A highlight of the winter was our record-breaking Volunteer Fair which welcomed 920 potential volunteers, the largest in the event's 13-year history. Around 100 visitors were aged below 30 – representing a marked increase in the involvement of young people. We also saw more people with disabilities and those from different communities attending the Fair.

It's recognised that the environment sector is lacking in diversity and needs new people to come into green careers. To help address this we have a number of initiatives in place at all levels – including internships and apprentice ranger positions – to stimulate interest in the environment.

Our Awakening Festival ran throughout March inviting people to learn and engage with nature and climate action through over 80 events both in person and online. We were pleased that many of our wonderful local 'green groups' supported the Festival, and the event encouraged small actions at community level across the Forest.

Our autumn Walking and Cycling Festival was also well attended,

highlighting the importance of getting people out into nature for health and well-being. Indeed, our Health Education Fellowship trainee, Dr James Alden, assessed the value of the healthcare costs which had been avoided thanks to local greenspace use and the New Forest in particular. The figure was £27million, which equates to 999 nurses.

We started the year with a difficult picture resource-wise, despite success with external grants. Flat funding settlements from central government have persisted since 2018. Pooling resources and working tenaciously to secure new investment for our joint ambitions across the New Forest will be crucial if we are to succeed in delivering our Re:New Forest plan.

Our own resources were, however, given a welcome boost at the beginning of March, with the award of a one-off £440,000 of additional funding from Defra. The funding letter from our Minister Trudy Harrison had some very positive words about the work we do, describing us as 'the custodians of these special places' and that the funding would help 'protect vital assets and... ensure our National Parks remain open and accessible to the nation...' – a message which is very much in line with our new Partnership Plan themes of climate, nature, people, place and partnership.

The achievements on the following pages are down to many people both within and outside the National Park Authority. Thanks goes to staff, members, partners, volunteers and the wider community for their efforts, passion and expertise. We round off another year with a real sense of commitment to 'Team New Forest' which gives real hope for our shared Re:New Forest mission.

Continued investment in this partnership by us all – together making the case for the significant resources to make a difference – will be crucial for the year ahead, and beyond.



**Alison Barnes, Chief Executive**



**Gavin Parker, Chair**





# About the New Forest National Park Authority

## Our vision

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

- tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the Park
- the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats are all of the highest quality and a great variety of wildlife is able to flourish
- there is a strong sense and understanding of the heritage and living culture of the Forest
- all visitors can gain inspiration, health and wellbeing and enjoy the extensive areas of land with open access
- the far-reaching consequences of climate change are taken into account in all policies and future plans
- people live and work sustainably and contribute to the care of the Forest
- local, regional and national organisations recognise the value of the National Park and there is a shared understanding of its role within the wider area
- everyone contributes in appropriate ways to keeping the National Park a special place for present and future generations.

## Our mission – National Park purposes

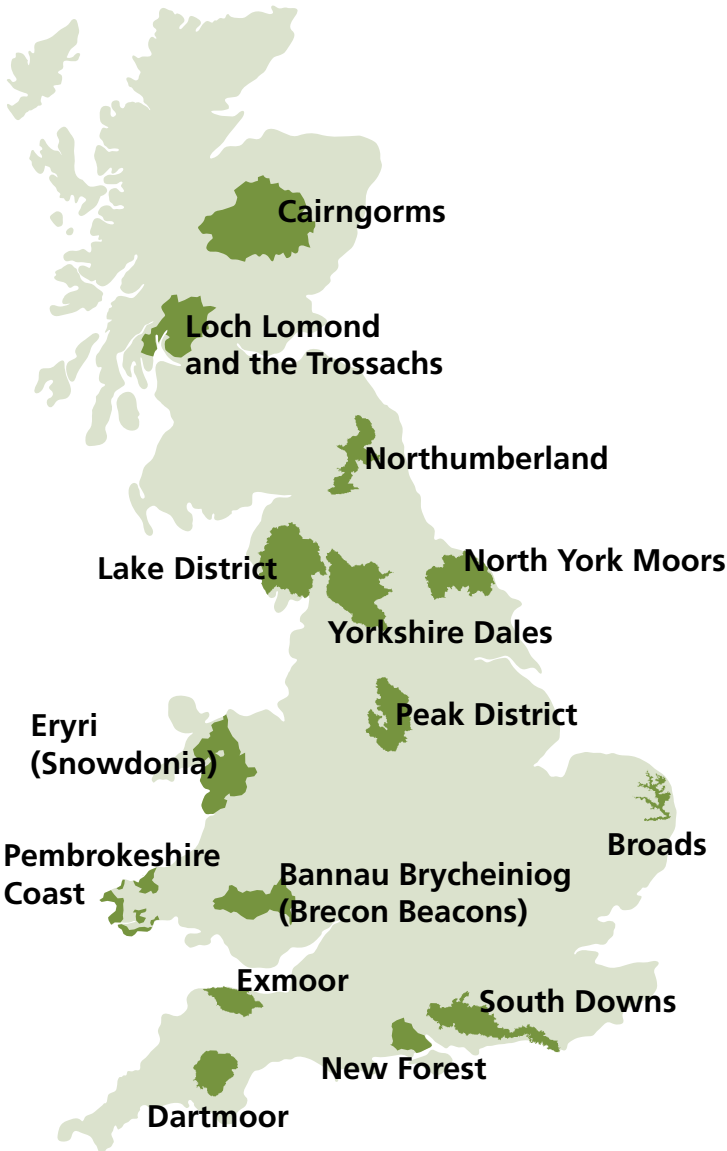
The New Forest National Park Authority has statutory purposes and socio-economic responsibilities as specified in the Environment Act of 1995:

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

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

We like to sum this up as:

Protect  
Enjoy  
Prosper



Left: The UK’s 15 National Parks  
Contains Ordnance Survey data.  
Ordnance Survey 1000114703  
© Crown copyright and database right 2023  
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# Our Authority board members 2022–23

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 learnt of the sad passing of our former Chair Julian Johnson in January. Julian’s steadfast leadership of the Authority between 2010–2014 came at an important time in the life of a new National Park. Julian was a member of the Authority for 12 years until he stood down as a Wiltshire Councillor in 2017. It was a great pleasure and privilege to work with him and many of us have fond memories of his time as member and our Chair, roles which he conducted with care, integrity and wisdom.

## Local authority appointees



David Harrison



Gordon Bailey  
Chair of Planning Committee



Richard Clewer



Ann Sevier



Alexis McEvoy  
(to March 2023)  
Deputy Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee (to Oct 2022)



Keith Mans



Neville Penman



Sue Bennison



Caroline Rackham



Diane Andrews  
Deputy Chair of Standards Committee (from Oct 2022)



Michael Thierry



Zoë Clewer

## Secretary of State appointees



Patrick Heneghan  
Deputy Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee  
Deputy Chair of the Authority



Victoria Mander  
Deputy Chair of Standards Committee (to Oct 2022)



David Bence  
Deputy Chair of Resources, Audit and Performance Committee (from Oct 2022)



George Bisson  
Chair of Standards Committee



Stephen Tarling



John Sanger



Richard Taylor



George Meyrick



Prof. Gavin Parker  
Chair of the Authority



Stephen Trow  
Deputy Chair of Planning Committee

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 town and parish councils within the National Park.



# What makes our National Park special?

The New Forest National Park’s landscape is unique; it’s a living and working Forest which stretches back centuries, with a strong sense of continuity, tradition and history. It has many ‘special qualities’– what makes it unique and recognisable and distinguishes it from all other places in the country.

The New Forest National Park is one of the most important areas for nature conservation in Europe and its ease of access makes it one of the most visited national parks in the country. We are committed to conserving its many special qualities by driving forward nature recovery, the Park’s resilience in the face of climate change and its value for public health and wellbeing.

- **Outstanding natural beauty.** The sights, sounds and smells of ancient woodland with veteran trees, heathland, bog, autumn colour and an unspoilt coastline with views of the Solent and the Isle of Wight.
- **Extraordinary diversity of plants and animals** of international importance.



- **The iconic New Forest pony.** Together with donkeys, pigs and cattle roaming free.
- **Tranquillity** amid larger towns and cities in the busy south of England.



- **Unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage** from royal hunting ground to ship-building, salt-making and 500 years of military coastal defence.
- **An historic commoning system** that maintains so much of what people know and love as ‘the New Forest’ forming the heart of a working landscape based on farming and forestry.
- **Strong and distinctive local communities** with real pride in and sense of identity with their local area.

- **Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery** in one of the last extensive, gentle landscapes in the south including unmatched open access on foot and horseback.
- **A healthy environment.** Fresh air, clean water, local produce and a sense of ‘wildness’.

Images: Rockford by Nick Lucas | Fly agaric in the Forest | Dartford warbler by Mike Read | Donkeys by Nick Lucas | New Forest foal | Bucklers Hard | Quiet recreation | Basket of fruit and veg

# New Partnership Plan launched

## Landmark shift to ‘Re:New Forest’ and transform the National Park


We launched the ambitious New Forest National Park Partnership Plan – a joint strategy setting out what all Forest organisations will do over the next five years to care for this spectacular landscape, its wildlife and communities.

Re:New Forest is the campaign fronting the Partnership Plan, which has 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 climate, nature, people, place and partnership – and was developed thanks to input from hundreds of people over two years.

The official launch was at the National Park Authority’s stand at the New Forest Show with New Forest East MP Dr Julian Lewis and the NPA’s Chief Executive Alison Barnes.

[newforestnpa.gov.uk/partnershipplan](https://newforestnpa.gov.uk/partnershipplan)



‘Creating a thriving Forest supporting communities, commoning and land management for the benefit of the environment is at the heart of the Plan.


‘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’re calling on everyone to take significant and urgent action with us to “Re:New Forest” over the next five years.’

**Prof Gavin Parker, New Forest National Park Authority Chair**

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 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.



‘The New Forest is a truly special landscape and an internationally recognised 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.’

**Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest for Forestry England**



‘Commoning is vital to the conservation of the New Forest and the Verderers welcome the support for commoning in the Partnership Plan.’

**Lord Willie Manners, Official Verderer**



‘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.’

**Councillor Jan Warwick, Executive Member for Climate Change and Sustainability at Hampshire County Council**

Below: Launch of the Partnership Plan at the 2022 New Forest Show. CEO Alison Barnes and MP Julian Lewis cutting the cake.







Woodland Sunrise by Nick Lucas

# Inspiring action to tackle climate change

We’re working to ensure the National Park is resilient to climate change, and helping partners and communities to take action.

The climate crisis is the most significant long-term threat to the extraordinary New Forest landscape. Warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers, rising sea levels and an increasing frequency of extreme weather events all threaten our habitats, wildlife, local livelihoods and human health.

We declared a climate and nature emergency in January 2020, with a commitment to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030.

As set out in our Partnership Plan, we’re also providing leadership to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon

sequestration, working towards the National Park being ‘net zero with nature’ by 2050.

(Net zero is achieved when the amount of Greenhouse Gases [GHGs] emitted by human activities on a global scale are equal to that being removed by the natural environment).

**To help achieve this, our programme of work this year has included establishing key data for everyone to use; helping partners, landowners and communities with advice and funding and enabling them to collaborate on projects.**

## Reaching Net Zero – a report for the New Forest National Park

We commissioned an assessment of the Green House Gas emissions associated with the National Park. The report sets some challenging targets for the National Park to contribute to the UK’s Net Zero target.

We’re sharing the report with stakeholders to galvanise local action.

### Report highlights:

- Looks at which **sectors are the most carbon intensive** in the National Park, and which areas could contribute most to achieving net zero.
- Reveals that **food and drink are the largest source of emissions** associated with residents’ lifestyles and visitor trips in the National Park.
- Demonstrates how **changes made to the way land is managed** could result in the National Park removing more emissions from the atmosphere annually than it produces. This would make the National Park carbon positive and a net contributor to achieving the UK’s net zero targets.



NPA Net Zero With Nature Programme Manager Olivia McGregor



Joy of Growing event as part of the Awakening Festival

- Demonstrates we can all take action by **listing the areas that can play a key role in building resilience** – construction, home energy, food production and diets, travel and transport, business energy use, tourism and the visitor experience, the material economy (including repair, maintenance, renting and reselling of consumer goods).

The report complements the **Natural Capital Baseline** we developed last year with Solent Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and partners – giving an important environmental reference point to the role nature based solutions in tackling climate change and increasing the resilience of the National Park.

## Pioneering new approaches to climate resilience

We worked with global impact consultancy Palladium through the Revere partnership to investigate the potential for private funding for climate resilience and nature restoration in the National Park.

The partnership was awarded £100,000 from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) to run a pilot project to design and test a commercial model for: restoring nature; improving biodiversity; managing nutrients and climate mitigation.

The pilot project has now been completed, involving three New Forest landowners: Barker-Mill Estate, Cadland Estate, and Forestry England.

Detailed studies by the team at Revere looked at a range of issues including polluted waterways, soil quality, habitat loss and climate change. The raft of results and local analysis will enable the National Park and land managers to work together to establish how their protected landscapes can be at the forefront of tackling the climate and nature emergencies in the UK.

Olivia McGregor, the NPA’s Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager said: ‘It’s the first time we’ve had the chance to explore in detail what private finance has to offer in terms of funding nature restoration, and it’s helped us to understand what part it can play in our move towards net zero as a National Park.’



### The impact

Messages about climate and nature reached 1.3 million people

## Activating communities

Working with our communities is crucial in tackling climate and nature recovery.

### Supporting Green Groups

We **regularly convene a growing number of local ‘Green Groups’** – sharing information and expertise, working together on events such as the New Forest and Hampshire County Show, climate cafes, eco fairs, repair cafes, workshops and film screenings.

We also join up on projects, give talks, help to promote local community green activities and find funding for their initiatives (such as through the Sustainable Communities Fund– see P30).

### Successful Awakening Festival

Our third **Awakening Festival** ran throughout March, with 82 events/ initiatives focusing on the climate and nature emergencies. These included walks, talks, workshops, art and poetry, gardening events, litter picks, cycle initiatives, citizen science projects, repair cafes, film viewings, fairs and open days.

- Messages about climate and nature reached more than 1.3 million people
- 3,000 children aged four to 11 attended or signed up for climate assemblies
- Many events sold out or were the busiest ever
- 200,000 attended events, viewed videos, commented, liked or shared social posts – double that of last year’s festival.

Above: Working with community green groups to inspire action

## Encouraging local action through the Climate and Nature pledge

More than 1,000 people have now signed up to our New Forest Climate and Nature Challenge pledge – committing to at least four of these seven actions:

- Cutting waste, and reducing, reusing and recycling
- Reducing impacts of travel
- Following the New Forest Code
- Eating seasonally, and with more plants
- Saving energy
- Helping wildlife
- Shopping locally

Prof. Gavin Parker, Chair of the NPA, said:

**‘Taking a few steps, no matter how small, can all add up to help make a positive impact on the environment.’**



# Enabling nature recovery and enhancing landscapes

We’re working together, and at scale, to maintain, reconnect and enhance nature, developing a nature recovery programme for the National Park.



‘Expanding, restoring and connecting natural habitats will enable wildlife to thrive within and beyond the National Park boundary.’

Paul Walton, Head of Environment and Rural Economy, New Forest National Park Authority

We’ve worked with partners who share an ambition for nature in the New Forest to identify the key challenges for nature recovery in the National Park and the outcomes critical to a strategy for the longer-term future for wildlife in the New Forest.

These include:

- **making space for people and nature** by expanding quality habitats and providing quality green spaces near where people live
- harnessing shifts in agricultural policy to ensure the **future of farming** will benefit wildlife
- working with natural processes to extend opportunities for coastal wildlife through **coastal realignment**
- using **river valleys** to connect the core habitats of the Forest with the coast and adjoining countryside.

Viewing the Forest as a core of protected habitats surrounded by four distinct areas – the Northern Forest, Eastern Waterside, Southern Coast and Western Avon – will be the basis for encouraging more large-scale nature projects and securing the resources to make them happen.

Major work for nature recovery was delivered this year through the Green and Blue Horizons Scheme (see P14/15), and Farming in Protected Landscapes (see P27).



Aerial view of Fletchers Water HLS project © Big Wave Productions

## Further five-year funding for key environmental scheme

The Verderers of the New Forest Higher-level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, which supports vital conservation projects in the New Forest, was extended for a further five years.

One of England’s largest agri-environment schemes, it helps to protect the majority of the New Forest National Park’s internationally-important wildlife and landscapes. Its range of projects includes restoring habitats, delivering education, protecting archaeology, and supporting commoning.

The scheme had an original life span of 10 years which expired in 2020. Since then, it has been rolled over annually, so the five-year extension is welcome news. It has so far brought nearly £23 million into the Forest, with a further £2 million granted each year of the five-year rollover.

Natural England provides technical advice and support to the scheme that is managed by the Verderers of the New Forest in partnership with Forestry

England and the New Forest National Park Authority, with support from the Commoners Defence Association.

‘The HLS scheme has delivered significant environmental benefits to the New Forest and supports the unique grazing system of commoning that sustains it. This is especially important as we respond to the climate and nature emergencies.’

‘The scheme works to increase the New Forest’s resilience to these impacts and an additional £10 million will help further enhance the New Forest’s landscape, biodiversity and historical features at this crucial time.’

Prof. Gavin Parker, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority



Beautiful Demoiselle at rest by James West

### The impact

£10 million further investment into conservation projects



## Our tree service – preserving protected trees

The Tree Team has processed more than 600 applications to work on protected trees.

Two new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been made to protect groups of important amenity trees which may have otherwise been removed or damaged. We have also successfully negotiated the amendment or withdrawal of numerous tree work applications where trees could have been removed or damaged. Review continues of some older TPOs in partnership with New Forest District Council where we have cross-boundary TPOs.

Approximately 200 responses have been provided to the Planning Team giving arboricultural advice, and several of these continue for major development sites.

Communication and education with the general public plays a huge role for the team with hundreds of face to face meetings, emails and telephone calls around our statutory function or providing general advice.

Left: Ponies grazing under a tree at Emery Down

## Enhancing landscapes

### National Grid funded projects

We’re helping to enhance the landscape close to the high voltage pylons that cross the New Forest National Park, through Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) projects funded by National Grid.

Improvements at Landford Bog are nearing completion thanks to a £25,000 grant. Three years of work have been carried out by contractors, local volunteers and staff at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, which owns and manages the site. Replacing the boundary fence and gates to allow

for seasonal grazing, as well as monitoring water levels and installing a boardwalk, have all helped to improve the condition and access at Landford Bog.

£200,000 in LEI funded projects at RSPB Frithches Lodge nature reserve are continuing well, with rhododendron removal and footpath improvements opening up the woodland for biodiversity gain and improved access.

### Burley underground scheme

The collaborative project between Scottish and Southern Electricity Network, Forestry England, Natural

England and the New Forest National Park Authority has resulted in eight kilometres of overhead electricity infrastructure being undergrounded. This has removed the telegraph poles and electricity wires to return the landscape around Burley to its natural beauty.

### The impact

8km of electricity poles and wires removed from the landscape



Before

Burley before and after undergrounding

After



# Green and blue horizons – from city to Forest

- The impact:**
- Land equivalent to 147 football pitches improved for nature and climate resilience across 27 sites.
  - 4,575 hours given by volunteers
  - 200 events reaching around 9,500 people
  - 19 jobs created or retained.

An £800,000 investment in the New Forest brought thousands of people together to extend nature networks and create wildlife-rich corridors that link National Park habitats to neighbouring towns and cities.

**The Green and blue horizons from city to Forest** scheme, led by the NPA, came to an end this year bringing funding to a range of organisations. The 18-month multi-partner scheme kickstarted action to confront the twin climate and nature emergencies with programmes to restore habitats, begin our path towards net zero with nature and help new and diverse audiences connect with the New Forest.

Areas of grassland, woodland, hedgerows, streams, and ponds have been improved and numerous opportunities opened up for people to understand, value and help to care for the landscape.

Across the project, 19 jobs were created or retained at the New Forest National Park Authority and among our partner organisations of the Countryside Education Trust, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and New Forest Commoners Defence Association.

Top: Fort Climate centre  
Middle: Waterblitz volunteer. © FHT  
Bottom: New Forest waterways species

Dexters cows on back up grazing land



- Highlights include:**
- 105ha of land (equivalent to 147 football pitches) improved for nature and climate resilience across 27 sites
- Species return to woodland near Lymington**

At Furzey Ground woodland near Lymington, Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) worked to remove invasive non-native species and carry out gentle thinning to create light pockets where wetland features exist. Invasive plants such as Himalayan balsam and rhododendron had overtaken the woodland, stifling the native plants and sucking the nutrients from the soil.

Specialist wetland plants now flourish including lesser skullcap, water mint, marsh bedstraw, yellow loosestrife, flag iris, bugle, figwort, and ragged robin.

Common darter and golden ringed dragonflies have also returned to the improved areas.

**Expert advice and training given to landowners, farmers and commoners**

Partners have worked with networks and clusters of farming, commoning, and landowner groups to help improve landscape-scale resilience.

Advice has included developing the health of freshwaters, ways to improve water quality, opportunities for training include bankside and grazing management and species identification.

As a result, one landowner received a grant and two others are potential candidates for grants to carry out work beneficial to the Forest.

The networks and clusters will continue to meet and be guided with expert advice after the Horizons project finishes, demonstrating that such funding can provide a platform for ongoing success across the Forest.

## Innovative solutions to protect water quality

The scheme has helped find innovative ways for small rural businesses to protect water quality and reduce reliance on mains water supplies. Freshwater Habitats Trust worked on one site to install a new rainwater harvesting system that takes rainwater from roof surfaces and stores it in tanks holding around 120,000 litres – the equivalent of 100 hot tubs full of water.

These tanks have saved the rural business nearly £3,000 per year in mains supply and provided water during drought periods. They also benefit freshwater biodiversity by reducing the amount of water impacting the surrounding areas that leads to nutrient and sediment run-off.



Above: Water tanks installed by FHT. © FHT

**Volunteers take part in New Forest Waterblitz**

‘The New Forest’s wetland landscape is both ancient and fragile, with areas boasting pristine streams, ponds and mires all bursting with rare species. It’s one of the best and most important freshwater and coastal landscapes in the UK.’

**Thea Margetts, FHT project officer**

FHT worked with volunteers to carry out a ‘Waterblitz’, testing the quality of waters in the New Forest.

177 volunteers collected 800 samples from ponds, lakes, ditches, streams, and rivers from all over the New Forest. So far, results have showed that 85% of waterbody samples are clean, 8% have some pollution and 8% are high pollution.

The Forest’s ponds are the cleanest of the water bodies with 93% classed as clean.

## New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) volunteers continued their hard work

More than 100 volunteer events were, coordinated and delivered by the NPA.

235 people spent nearly 4,600 hours clearing paths, planting hedgerows, removing invasive plant species, picking litter, carrying out surveys of the Rights of Way network and protecting archaeology features. The team has also been working alongside Horizons partners to improve the New Forest’s freshwaters as well as plant new hedgerows that act as wildlife corridors for nature to be able to move across the landscape.



Sophie opens the Fort Climate centre

## 200 engagement events reaching over 9,500 people

**Fort Climate Centre – A new educational hub in the New Forest**

The Countryside Education Trust (CET) in Beaulieu opened its new climate centre.

Officially opened in March by HRH The Countess of Wessex (now the Duchess of Edinburgh), the centre is an educational and community-based hub for people of all ages to learn about the New Forest.

The building was donated to the Countryside Education Trust by the Fort Foundation, inspired by Mr E. S. Fort OBE. The centre reflects Mr Fort’s long-held desire to bring education about climate change to the public to encourage action on the climate emergency.

The Horizons scheme paid for educational material and interpretation boards at the centre, as well as staff and interns to run workshops and courses.

**Communications role brings national attention to Commoning**

The New Forest Commoners Defence Association (CDA) created a new dedicated role to raise awareness and communicate key messages about

commoning. As a result, the CDA has gained national press attention as well as a growing social media presence over the last 18 months.

Stories on road safety, the importance of cattle, and the work commoners do to protect their animals has garnered national attention in the press.

The CDA’s social media presence under the name of ‘Real New Forest’ has also grown. Posts on its social media pages have reached an audience of 2.1 million and its total following grew by 17%. This has helped build a strong platform for future communications from the CDA and it now has a dedicated media library, website tracking, and a strategy moving forward with social media.

The Horizons project was funded by the Government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund, developed by Defra and its Arm’s-Length Bodies. It was delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.



# Protecting the built environment



Unit 1 Forest Corner Farm © LST Projects Ltd

## Managing new development

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.

We deal with some 1,000 applications a year, the vast majority of which are approved – around 90%. Most of these applications are for smaller-scale developments, typically home extensions and new outbuildings. We did though see some major housing schemes come forward in Sway and Ashurst, delivering much-needed new affordable housing. In all cases we work closely with applicants and local agents to achieve high-quality schemes, with many potential issues successfully resolved at pre-application stage.

Our Local Plan sets out where new development can take place, ensuring it’s sustainable, and conserves and enhances the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the New Forest. Our policies also support a prosperous local economy and ensure that any new development is focused on the needs of local people (see P26).



‘Our planning function is absolutely key to conserving and enhancing the special qualities that make the New Forest the place it is, helping us to safeguard it for future generations whilst serving the needs of our local communities.’

Steve Avery, NPA Executive Director  
Strategy and Planning

The impact

419 planning enforcement cases processed or resolved

## Planning Enforcement

Our enforcement team ensures that the integrity of the planning system is maintained and that the National Park is protected from inappropriate development.

Over the last year we’ve investigated 208 new enforcement cases and resolved 211 cases using a variety of tools available. Most cases are resolved through negotiation and the receipt of retrospective applications. In those cases where unauthorised development is harmful, either to the environment and/or local communities, and appropriate remedial action cannot be agreed, then the Authority has taken formal enforcement action. Typical issues investigated in the last 12 months include use of land as a campsite; domestic outbuildings on agricultural land; unsightly residential alterations and excessive hard surfacing on farmland.

We are grateful for the help of members of the public and local councils who alert us to potential breaches of planning control which we then investigate. We also selectively monitor new development to check compliance with planning conditions and legal agreements, as well as minerals and waste sites.

## Celebrating New Forest Heritage through our Local List

We’ve expanded our ‘local list’ with dozens of new listings, helping to further protect and celebrate special buildings and other heritage features in the National Park.

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 our Local List.

Last year, thanks to funding received from Historic England, 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.

We received hundreds of nominations, which were assessed by a Local Listing Review Panel and the New Forest National Park Authority Planning Committee. This year, 100 heritage assets were approved and added to the Local List and the relevant county’s Historic Environment Record.

These include: WW2 remains at Lepe, the Portuguese Fireplace near Lyndhurst, the signal box at Brockenhurst station and the Watch House at Lepe Beach.



Top: Portuguese fireplace | Bottom: Wood End House © Sheerin Bettle Architecture



Top: Setley Prisoner of War camp in 1946 Bottom: D Day remains at Lepe

The impact

100 heritage assets given extra protection

## Archaeology: Uncovering and protecting 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.

This year, the team has given advice on:

- 31

planning applications within the National Park
- 44

requests from Forestry England ahead of forestry works
- 54

planning applications from outside the National Park, as part of our service level agreement with New Forest District Council.
- 13

requests ahead of Higher Level Stewardship scheme works

## Expanding knowledge

The archaeology and heritage team 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 nearly 103,000 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.

[nfknowledge.org](http://nfknowledge.org)



Little Hill © David Hayhurst

## Our Building Design Award Winners

We recognised outstanding design in our 2023 Building Design Awards, which celebrate high-quality design and the best new developments across the National Park.

**Best Green Building** was awarded to Little Hill in Hyde. The residential scheme, designed by owner and architect David Hayhurst, replaced a run-down post-war bungalow with a highly energy-efficient home.

**Highly commended** was residential building Pannage Green in Lyndhurst. David Lovegrove Architecture took a holistic design approach to the new-build property to include a rainwater harvester, heat vent recovery system, triple-glazed windows, wildlife boxes and a pond.

**Best Conservation Scheme** went to Wood End House near Lymington. Using a historic photo of the home as a guide, Ringwood-based Sheerin Bettle Architecture reintroduced a number of features to the Grade II listed building, including sash windows, original chimney designs, and heritage cast iron works.

**Best non-residential Building** was awarded to Unit One, Forest Corner Farm near Ringwood. Local architects Sheerin Bettle designed the new reception, consulting area and surgery for an existing veterinary hospital; replacing a large dominating corrugated tin-clad grain store and mill building with a scheme based on the style of a Hampshire threshing barn with central opposing gables and large barn door openings.

**Highly commended** went to an outbuilding within the grounds of the Grade II Listed Minstead Lodge. Winchester-based TKLS Architects designed a new toilet block and wet room in place of an existing small lean-to toilet and pottery kiln.



Building Design Award winners with NPA Chair Gavin Parker (back row, centre)



# Managing recreational impacts

More than half the New Forest National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation – the highest proportion of any national park in the UK.

We’re helping to reduce the effects of recreational impacts through a number of measures:

## New Forest code

We encourage everyone visiting the National Park to help care for the Forest by following the New Forest code.

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

Copies of the New Forest code have been distributed far and wide, both at events and to local businesses, community outlets and accommodation providers. An online toolkit is also available to download.

According to a recent visits survey (see P21), 92% of respondents were aware of the New Forest code, mostly through signage, social media and e-newsletters.

### 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

\*Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty of £100 or being taken to court and a fine of up to £1,000.

newforestnps.gov.uk      thenewforest.co.uk

Donkeys licking salt on a winter road



## Reducing animal accidents

Sadly each year a number of commoners’ animals are killed or injured on New Forest roads and every animal is a loss to its owner and the Forest.

Thankfully animal accidents continued to fall this year amid a joint campaign plea for drivers to ‘pass wide and slow’.

The total number of New Forest animals killed or injured and destroyed in 2022 was 41 compared with 44 in 2021. This included: 34 ponies, three pigs, two cows and two donkeys. A further 19 animals were injured compared to 15 last year. Overall, Agisters attended 82 incidents, compared with 103 in 2021.

As part of the Animal Accident Reduction Group, we continued to be involved with the ongoing success of Operation Mountie, led by New Forest Roads Awareness group and Hampshire

Constabulary. This joint initiative is supported by the Safer Roads Mobile Camera Unit and involved patrols along animal accident hotspot roads with fixed penalty notices and education given to speeding motorists.

89 vehicles were stopped for speeding and 17 speeding tickets were issued (the top speed recorded was 70mph in a 40mph limit). Other drivers were found to have no insurance, licence or MOT. One was arrested for drug driving.

Social media was also an important tool in raising awareness of the #PassWideAndSlow message. This year, social media posts saw 222,000 impressions with over 18,500 engagements.

The New Forest Animal Accident Reduction 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.

## 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 to educate people about endangered ground nesting birds and that the New Forest is critical to their survival.

Local community groups and businesses also pledged their support and displayed posters to encourage others to stick to the main tracks

during ground nesting bird season and keep dogs under close control, using a lead where necessary.

NPA rangers have been working with Forestry England 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.



Curlew and chick © Forestry England, Roger Wilmshurst

## Protecting habitats through pop-up campsite guidelines

New planning guidelines are now in place for new and larger temporary ‘pop-up’ campsites within the National Park, to help protect the environment and local communities.

Temporary 28-day campsites with 51 pitches or more, and any 28-day campsite established after 1 March 2020 now need planning permission.

The New Forest National Park has the highest concentration of camping pitches per square kilometre of any UK National Park’, and the move follows 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.



A temporary camp site in the New Forest

We have made a National Park-wide Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for larger and all new temporary campsites. This was accompanied by new guidance against which future planning applications would be assessed. The Article 4 Direction does not necessarily mean campsites will not be permitted but ensures that factors such as impacts on neighbouring properties, recreational disturbance, and the provision of supporting facilities are properly considered through a planning application. The introduction of planning controls was supported by most people who responded to a consultation on the draft Direction.

## Public Space Protection Orders

A public consultation was launched by New Forest District Council about two proposed Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for the New Forest to reduce wild fires and to protect animals and people.

The public was invited to comment on two proposed PSPOs, looking to ban the lighting of fires and use of BBQs principally on the Crown Lands managed by Forestry England and to ban feeding or petting commoners’ ponies or donkeys.

The PSPOs would allow Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued with penalties of up to £100, or a fine of up to £1,000 with a Magistrates’ Court prosecution.

## The impact

63 retailers have withdrawn disposable BBQs from sale

## BBQ-Free New Forest

Businesses and organisations continued to support a BBQ-Free New Forest; while a nation wide campaign to ban disposable BBQs has been taken to Parliament.

63 retailers in and around the New Forest have taken disposable BBQs off sale since the BBQ-Free New Forest campaign began in 2020. BBQs, camping stoves or anything with a naked flame are not permitted in car parks or open countryside of the New Forest.

Waitrose and Aldi removed BBQs from sale in all UK stores from March 2022, with Co-Op and

Morrisons removing them from stores within a mile radius of all national parks. The action was taken due to the extremely hot and dry conditions during the summer and prevent wild fires and harm to people and wildlife, but also to significantly reduce waste, including single-use packaging.

In August, Marks & Spencer announced it was also banning the sale of disposable barbecues across all its UK stores to help protect open spaces and reduce the risk of fires. It had already stopped selling disposable barbecues near national parks and in London.



Fire risk sign



# Enjoying the National Park

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

NPA ranger talking to children



## The impact

Nearly 13,000 interactions with the public

### Our ranger team

NPA rangers had nearly 13,000 face-to-face interactions through a range of activities including on-the-ground patrols, guided walks, preschool sessions and community events.

The team partnered with New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau to support community hubs and Fairshare food larders. Rangers provided Forest-themed activities to local residents and promoted the New Forest Code.

We secured a grant of £600 from Natural England to help under-represented communities become more connected to nature in the New Forest. The funding covered minibus hire, lunch, hats and gloves for a ranger-led introduction to

the New Forest for members of the Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group.

A joint action plan with Forestry England and other partners over the summer saw 7,000 hours of ranger patrols, 32 patrols with emergency services, and 70 dedicated ground nesting bird patrols and monitoring sessions.

### Volunteer Fair

Our record-breaking Volunteer Fair attracted 920 prospective volunteers – the largest number in the event's 13-year history. They had the chance to discover volunteering opportunities from 45 different organisations at the fair at Brockenhurst Village Hall which was opened by Sir Julian Lewis MP, Alison Barnes NPA CEO, and guide dog puppy in training Aretha with handlers from Guide Dogs UK. Our marketing specifically targeted under-represented groups and there was a marked increase in young people, people with disabilities and those from different New Forest communities attending. The NPA alone recruited 55 new volunteers as a result of the fair.



Volunteer Fair opening



Forest Walk

### Encouraging volunteering

The vital work we do in the National Park is supported by our incredible volunteers. Over the last year, 165 volunteers have taken part in 63 events, giving a total of 2,464 hours to the Forest.

Tasks to improve species diversity and habitat resilience have taken place across sites including Copythorne (RSPB), Harrow Wood and Cranemore Common.

Hedge planting work has continued with New Forest Land Advice Service on private farms as well as litter picking with Freshwater Habitats Trust. Other work has included clearing paths, removing invasive plant species, carrying out surveys of the Rights of Way network, and protecting archaeological features.

Forest partners encouraging responsible dog walking



Left: People on bikes in Forest | Right: New Forest ambassadors on a litter pick with Freshwater Habitats Trust



### Ambassador scheme protecting the New Forest

We now have 969 registered ambassadors: local residents who have signed up to protect the Forest by picking litter, reporting problems and distributing the New Forest code. This year, a big focus of ambassador work was on freshwater and coastal habitats and dozens of people helped our partner organisation the Freshwater Habitats Trust with litter picks to support its Wilder for Water project. 253 of our ambassadors are youth ambassadors – under the age of 18.

### New Local Information Point at Sway

Sway Local Information Point has changed venue and is now located at the Post Office which stocks a range of locally produced goods as well as offering visitor information and New Forest literature. A hanging sign and map were installed.

### Survey results: Enjoying the New Forest

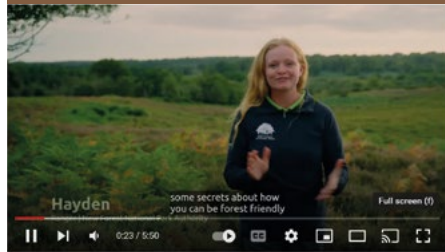
732 responses were received to a survey (in partnership with Go New Forest and Forestry England) aimed at understanding behaviour and impacts on the New Forest National Park – from people who live both inside and outside the National Park boundary.

#### Results include:

- 40% were aged under 55
- 15% said they had a disability or long-term illness
- Most visits were from SO40, SO41 and SO45 post codes
- 40% of visits included at least one dog
- Most visited for walking or relaxing – or for exercising their dog/s
- 15% arrived via sustainable transport, such as foot, bike, train, bus or ferry.

### Visitor welcome film

We produced a new film to welcome visitors and help them care for the New Forest. The film, led by the New Forest National Park Authority with Forestry England and Go New Forest, the official Destination Management Organisation for the New Forest, encourages visitors and locals to help look after the landscape, buy local and get around car-free. It is available on tourism websites, receptions, the New Forest Heritage Centre and online at [youtube.com/newforestnps](https://www.youtube.com/newforestnps)



Above: Welcome film

### Promoting responsible dog ownership

The number of businesses signing up to a professional Dog Walkers' Charter has increased over the past year, with the total now at 77. The Charter lists 24 ways that businesses can help care for the Forest and provides a standard mark for pet owners to find a responsible dog walking business.

Our rangers have been part of a multi-agency team chatting to dog walkers from our mobile unit in car parks across the Forest about responsible dog ownership. Messages have included picking up after pets and keeping them under close control. The partnership includes the NPA, Forestry England, New Forest Dog Owners Group and local police.

Dog poo bags we give out are now made from corn starch, promoting a fully-compostable, zero-waste alternative to regular dog poo bags. We've teamed up with providers Adios Plastic to offer anyone ordering online from their website 15% off with the discount code 'NEWFEST'.



## The impact

77 dog walking businesses have pledged to operate responsibly in the New Forest

Information for dog owners



# Connecting people to nature to support well-being

There’s 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. We’ve helped hundreds of people access and enjoy the beautiful landscapes of the New Forest to boost their mental and physical health and well-being.



### The impact

£27 million savings in healthcare costs a year

## Walking and Cycling Festival

Hundreds of people took part in expert-guided walks and cycle rides across the National Park in the 10th anniversary of the New Forest Walking and Cycling Festival.

More than 700 people joined 96 events across the three weeks, from fungi-finding to hidden heritage, wildlife wanders and arts walks.

The Festival was also a great opportunity for those who wanted to explore the Forest on two wheels. A number of qualified guides led rides across the National Park’s designated cycle trails.

‘For 10 years the Festival has encouraged people of all backgrounds to get outside and enjoy the New Forest and learn something new about its wildlife, landscapes, heritage and culture. It’s fantastic to see people enjoying the New Forest’s special qualities and learning something new.’

Adam Vasey, New Forest National Park Access Ranger

Above: Walking Festival with dogs

## PEDALL inclusive cycling

PEDALL (a partnership between the NPA and the charity Friends of PEDALL) continues to help people with additional needs to access the New Forest National Park using a fleet of specialist and two-wheeled bicycles.

PEDALL now operates from two bases: Burley and Ashurst. The new base at Ashurst has enabled PEDALL to launch new initiatives in 2023, including bicycle maintenance skills training for young people with additional needs. Students from Brockenhurst College joined a pilot training programme and feedback so far has been very positive.

A new ‘bike repair drop-in’ at the Ashurst Community Hub supports the wider community offering free maintenance advice every Wednesday.

PEDALL continues to enjoy support from the National Lottery Community Fund (£297,000, in

2021-2023) and has recently received additional funding from DEFRA (£51,000) which enabled a new fleet of bikes to be bought, including four sociable-tandem bikes, which are extremely popular and versatile.

Additional grants from South Western Railway Community Fund (£44,000) and the Peter Harrison Foundation (£20,000) will help PEDALL build on its initiatives at Ashurst.

The charity took part in The New Forest Show in July, where more than 900 riders enjoyed its short cycle course.

This year, more than 4,000 riders and carers joined rides with PEDALL during 420 sessions. The additional-needs community was supported with regular group rides from 28 organisations including schools, colleges, and residential care homes. Passionate and dedicated volunteers continued to support rides and help maintain the bike fleet. The volunteer base grew again with 61 registered volunteers, while four volunteers became qualified ride leaders. There were 693 volunteering slots, equivalent to approximately 4,158 hours.

### The impact

4,900 inclusive cycling hours



Riding with PEDALL

## Family Tree planting event

More than 140 people of all ages came to a family-friendly tree planting event at New Park, Brockenhurst – run by the New Forest Agricultural Show Society, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Hampshire Forest Partnership.

Around 70 native English oak trees were planted at New Park, which is home to the New Forest and Hampshire County Show.

Denis Dooley, Chief Executive of the New Forest Agricultural Show Society, said: ‘Taking inspiration from the Queen’s Green Canopy tree planting initiative, we were keen to involve the community and expand our existing planting project, creating a living legacy for future generations of visitors to New Park to enjoy.’

The event was made possible thanks to funding from Hampshire County Council’s Hampshire Forest Partnership, which aims to plant one million trees in Hampshire by 2050.

## Improving access and rights of way

- A £122,000 Landscape Enhancement Initiative grant from the National Grid, focusing on improving existing footpaths and signage in the Tatchbury, Marchwood, and Cadland areas of the National Park, began in January. Improvements from the grant will encourage access into the National Park from the residential parts of Waterside.

Similar improvements are also being made at Hale and Woodgreen in the north west of the Forest, thanks to the grant.

- We replaced eight stiles with new easy-access gates on three of our promoted walking routes thanks to landowners who worked closely with us to support accessibility along our public rights of way network.
- The New Forest Walks app has been updated and now contains 40 guided walks. The app provides information and digital signage, encouraging people to walk off the designated lands, on paths closer to their homes.
- Our volunteer groups continue to clear overgrown paths, helping people to access the countryside right on their doorstep.

England Coast Path



## Extending England’s Coast Path

The Calshot to Hythe stretch of the England Coast Path officially opened in August, taking in the outstanding New Forest coast.

It forms part of the 2,700-mile-long England Coast Path, which will become the longest walking route in the world.

We played a part in this landmark route by installing signposts, gates, waymarkers, interpretation posts and panels. We ensured all the signs in the National Park were made with sustainably harvested New Forest oak and were installed by local contractors.

We look forward to working with landowners and local contractors and crafters to create the Highcliffe to Calshot section in the future.

## Developing a Green Health Hub

We’ve been developing a Green Health Hub – an online directory for activities in the New Forest and surrounding area for wellbeing in the great outdoors.

The Hub will signpost people to opportunities in areas including walking, cycling, arts, gardening and volunteering.

The Green Health Hub is a Green Halo project managed by the New Forest National Park Authority, on behalf of the organisations and groups represented on the website, collectively known as the Green Health Network.

## Health Education Fellowship

We welcomed Health Education Fellowship trainee, Dr James Alden, at the NPA to support his work on a report evaluating the health and wellbeing benefits of the National Park.

Using local and national data, he assessed the value of the healthcare costs which had been avoided thanks to local greenspace and the New Forest in

particular. The annual figure is estimated at £27 million (equivalent to 999 nurses) from people regularly visiting the Forest for physical exercise, or just being in contact with nature.

A simple methodology to assess future avoided healthcare costs of greenspace and engagement activities is being scoped which could be used across the region. We’re following up with public health teams and other partners such as Business South who are interested in this approach. We are represented (along with the South Downs National Park Authority) on the Hampshire Mental Health Strategy Steering Group.

James’s report will help our natural capital work and identify future investment opportunities in greenspace and nature, and potential health benefits.

## Promoting ‘Healthy Walks’

The New Forest Healthy Walks programme, which we support alongside New Forest District Council and Community First, continues to encourage people of all ages to join regular, short walks in their own communities. Healthy Walks are fun, free, supportive and led by trained volunteers. 6,252 walking hours were recorded in 2023/23 as part of the project. The walks help boost health and well-being in local, natural spaces, and participants also benefit from the social aspect of the walks.

## Addressing Farmers’ mental wellbeing

Around 80 members of the New Forest farming and commoning community attended a Farming Community Network (FCN) Yarn in a Barn event at Lyndhurst Community Centre, supported by the NPA.

The social and information evening was organised in response to an FCN and Hampshire Trading Standards survey which demonstrated that poor mental wellbeing and the stress of rural crime were key issues affecting people in the Forest.

The meeting included a seminar session with speakers from FCN, Hampshire Police, The Future Farming Resilience Fund and the County and District councils. The challenges affecting farmers and commoners were highlighted and 10 local organisations providing support and advice had information stands.





# Inclusivity through the arts

We’re enabling new, inspiring and accessible creative opportunities to help more people connect to the New Forest.

## Artists in Residence

Our Artists in Residence programme, in partnership with charity SPUD, develops a creative partnership between the arts and people who work, live and visit the New Forest.

Two resident artists a year, part-funded by the NPA, are invited to explore the five key areas of our Partnership Plan – climate, nature, people, place and partnership – that are crucial to helping the future of the New Forest.

Our first National Park Artist in Residence Marie Smith finished her residency with the impactful exhibition ‘We Belong Here’ at spudWORKS in Sway.

The aim of the residency was to reflect upon the richness of the landscape and facilitate a conversation with the community who are perceived to be invisible in the New Forest. Marie collaborated with seven people of colour based in Hampshire and the

New Forest, to create a series of portraits and cyanotypes.

During the portrait sessions Marie and the participants would walk and talk about their thoughts and feelings about the landscape of the New Forest. Each participant made a cyanotype to go with their portrait. Some participants brought objects that meant something to them, while others foraged for materials in the New Forest.

Artist Beccy McCray completed her month in residence and developed plans for the exhibition and events in May 2023. Both artists have applied for additional Arts Council England funding to support their programmes of engagement.

We have applied to Arts Council England for funding for a three-year programme of residencies to start from October 2023.

Marie Smith



Beccy McCray



Images above from left to right: Walk in New Forest, February 2022 © Marie Smith / Pottery making with Tash Fry Kla / Pottery making on a workshop with Culture in Common

## Culture in Common

We’re a consortium member of Culture in Common, part of Arts Council England’s Creative People and Places programme. This enables more people to take the lead in choosing, creating, and taking part in arts and culture experiences in the places where they live. The consortium is led by Energise Me, and includes Folio, The Handy Trust, New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority. Together the consortium blends arts, community engagement, heritage, physical activity, and health expertise.

This year’s programme included three artist-led walks for the New Forest Walking and Cycling Festival with ceramic artist Tash Fry Kla and was supported by our ecologist Ian Barker and access officer Adam Vasey.

The walks were inspired by the clay pits that can be found in specific areas of the National Park. Following the walk, over 50 participants took part in a hand-building clay workshop where they made a cup, decorative mushrooms, or breakfast set. The workshop was commissioned in response to feedback obtained through street surveys and public consultation that highlighted the popularity of pottery and the opportunity to combine this with learning more about the nature and landscape of the National Park.

Find out more about Culture in Common at [cultureincommon.co.uk](https://cultureincommon.co.uk)

# Connecting young people to nature

We’re creating green pathways and nature connection opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds – encouraging them to enjoy the natural world and protect it for future generations.

- Our Education and Youth team met 2,000 young people through youth group visits, school trips and in-school events. Another 3,000 discovered our messages through online school assemblies.
- 43 local schools claimed our travel grant for school visits across the New Forest, enabling 2,788 days of pupils learning.

‘The activities were fully interactive and immersive, which really helped engage the children in the learning and bringing the classroom outside. They could see, hear, touch and smell the delights of the New Forest.’ Fawley Infant School.

‘All children were engaged and many came up with answers who are reluctant to do so usually.’ Freegrounds Junior School.

‘I really liked the way the children were encouraged to be leaders. It really helped to develop their independence.’ Hyde Primary School.

‘We wanted children to experience a real forest, especially as many have not been.’ Eling Infant School.

‘All the students and staff involved really enjoyed themselves and found the trip to be very educational but also fun. They learnt about identifying different types of plants and habitats.’ Bournemouth and Poole College.

## Climate and Nature campaign video

The ‘New Forest Welly Wander’ video was launched to schools and captured approximately 3,000 children’s imagination. Aimed at five-to11-year-olds, the film was launched through the Awakening Festival and a collaborative online tool (Padlet) sharing resources for the classroom with contributions from partners including Forestry England, promoting key New Forest code messages to local schools.

Available to view on YouTube, it’s now sent to all primary schools who have booked a school visit with us as a pre-visit recommendation on how to visit responsibly.

 [New Forest Welly Wander: youtube.com/newforestnpa](https://youtube.com/newforestnpa)



Above: Fawley infant school visits the Forest | Below: Two children in New Forest



Claire Pearce from New Forest National Park Authority

## Reaching new audiences

‘Through my newly-created Youth Development Officer role, we’re giving more young people from diverse backgrounds opportunities to experience the benefits and special qualities of the National Park.’

### Claire Pearce, NPA Education and Youth team

In the autumn we worked with the AlabareUK parent and baby project. Young mums in supported housing from Salisbury joined us with their toddlers for a day exploring Lepe beach and another day out on the open Forest. The pilot scheme has highlighted the benefits of creating nature connection opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including mental well-being and emotional and cognitive development.

‘The impact you’ve had on the parents and their children is second to none, they’ve made memories and been inspired, they are engaged and want to do more. They are begging to go out again soon!’ AlabareUK

### The impact

5,000 young people engaged





## Building better communities

Artist impression of the proposed dwellings at Ashurst © Thrive Architects

We recognise the need for sustainably located development within the national park to support the social and economic well-being of our communities.

### New development and affordable housing

Our Local Plan for the National Park allocates a limited number of sites to deliver new homes for local people in housing need.

The allocations adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station, land at Whartons Lane in Ashurst, and land at Church Lane in Sway all have Planning Committee resolutions to grant planning permission. These sites are due to deliver more than 110 affordable houses for local people, as well as providing new greenspace for the local communities.

Work has started on redeveloping the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel site. The redevelopment will provide 79 new dwellings (including eight affordable homes for local people in housing need with a connection to Lyndhurst), alongside retaining a part of the former hotel building.

This follows the positive site allocation policy in our adopted Local Plan, and the application was supported by Lyndhurst Parish Council. The redevelopment will enhance an important gateway to the village and provide new housing on previously developed land close to the services and amenities in the centre of Lyndhurst.

### The impact

More than 120 affordable homes agreed



### Fawley Waterside

We’ve been working closely with NFDC to progress the development proposal on the site of the former Fawley power station.

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

Most of the built development is taking place on land outside the National Park while all the associated green infrastructure and habitat mitigation will be provided within the National Park.

Following the resolution to grant by Members at Planning Committee, we are close to finalising the legal agreement to secure the necessary mitigation, compensation and nature enhancements. Once the legal agreement has been completed the planning consent can be issued.

Above: Artist impression of the proposed Fawley Waterside development © Chris Draper

## Working with local communities on planning policy and design guidance

We’ve worked alongside communities in the National Park as they produce local design guidance and planning policies to guide new development. Both Ringwood Town Council and Wellow Parish Council are working on neighbourhood plans that will cover their respective areas. Our role is to support town and parish councils who have chosen to prepare neighbourhood plans, through sharing evidence and specialist planning advice.

The draft Ringwood and Wellow Neighbourhood Plans have gone

through public consultation and will be subject to independent examination and ultimately a local referendum before they are adopted. Once adopted, they are part of the ‘development plan’ for these areas of the National Park and an important consideration when determining planning applications.

We also worked alongside Hyde Parish Council as they updated their Village Design Statement for the parish. The parish council led on the update to their design guidance, supported by Authority planning and building

conservation officers. Following public consultation, the updated Hyde Village Design Statement has been adopted and is used in the consideration of planning applications in the parish.

Below: Stone boundary wall at Gorley



## Supporting farmers and commoners

We help farmers and commoners by providing grants, training and advice.

### New Forest Land Advice Service

We run the New Forest Land Advice Service in partnership with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

With advice on applying for land management grants, we ensured 53 basic payment scheme claims and six Countryside Stewardship claims were submitted – which benefitted 55 commoners and four farmers.

Our advisers also facilitated four countryside stewardship agreements and a further three Countryside Stewardship agreement extensions for commoners to help complete water quality improvements on farms during 2023.

With support received from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) as part of the Green and Blue Horizons scheme (see P14/15), our advisers have set up new landowner clusters and held landowner events. Cluster groups allow landowners and farmers to achieve wider landscape-scale environmental benefits by working together as a group.

2km of hedgerows were also planted through NFLAS liaison with six landowners / tenants in the Southern Cluster area, supported by GRCF funding and volunteer effort.

### The impact

We help farmers and commoners by providing grants, training and advice



Commoners’ animals such as ponies shape the New Forest landscape with their grazing

### The impact

Land the area of 1,148 football pitches improved



### Farming in Protected Landscapes

The second year of our Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme has supported 22 projects, seen six projects completed and 820 hectares of habitats (equivalent to 1,148 football pitches) improved for nature.

The programme, developed by Defra and delivered locally through the New Forest National Park Authority, supports farmers and land managers in carrying out projects that support the natural environment, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide public access opportunities or support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses.

The programme will run until March 2025.

#### Projects include:

- Thousands of hedging plants have been planted on a farm in South Gorley, as well as new orchards. Capturing rainwater from the barn with new water harvesting equipment will allow these to be watered in future drought years and reduce runoff in winter. Wildlife boxes encouraging owls, kestrels, bats and pine martens have also been introduced.
- £40,000 of funding has helped a farm in Keyhaven implement ‘strip-till’ planting. This conservation farming technique requires special machinery that prepares just the seeding line ready for planting crops in rows. Research shows this approach helps improve soil condition and enables better crop yields while delivering up to a 40% reduction in diesel used, reduced application of fertilisers and agrochemicals and improved soil carbon.

### Commoning

– an ancient practice shaping today’s landscape

Commoning and the right to turn out animals to roam the landscape is vital for the survival of the New Forest as we know it today. The ponies and cattle shape the landscape – it’s their grazing which creates the habitats and enables plants, fungi, insects, birds and animals to thrive here, some of which are found almost nowhere else in the UK. The animals’ owners are ordinary people with an extraordinary commitment to the New Forest – around 700 commoners who have ancient rights attached to their land or property.





# Growing green careers

We’re inspiring the next generation of young professionals, offering opportunities to develop and grow green skills and opening doors to green careers.

**The impact:**

- Two apprentices
- Two paid internships
- Nine work experience students hosted
- 610 young people engaged at careers fairs
- One Early Green Careers Group



Left: Apprentice Rangers James and Alistair with Agister Robert Maton  
Right: Apprentice Rangers James and Alistair litter picking

## Our apprentice rangers

Trainee rangers Alistair Poxon and James Masser have spent time with six ranger teams across the New Forest including the NPA, Forestry England, Countryside Education Trust, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and the RSPB. Through a placement with each partner organisation, they have gained experience in a variety of ranger work, from public engagement and events to site maintenance and practical habitat management.

Apprentices also work towards the Countryside Worker Standard qualification via Sparsholt College near Winchester.

Alistair said: ‘My time as an Apprentice Ranger has been fantastic. The rotation of placements throughout the Forest has given us a huge range of experience, from coppicing in ancient woodland to 6am deer rutting patrols. This variation

in roles means that there’s something new to learn almost every day, which keeps the apprenticeship engaging and interesting. I’ve had such a brilliant time so far that I’m now confident that I’d like to continue in a conservation career.’

James said: ‘One of the biggest strengths of the apprenticeship has been the placements across our partner New Forest organisations. It’s such a rare opportunity to work with so many different people, each with their own stories, viewpoints and industry experience. And I’ve picked up some amazing new friends along the way, which is definitely my favourite part. I can absolutely recommend the scheme (and regularly do) to anyone interested in starting out with their own green career; it’s been a fantastic start to my journey.’



## New to nature internship

We secured funding for two National Park interns to join us in April and July 2023. These 12-month full-time paid posts give young people experience across the breadth of our organisation as well as help our organisation learn and improve how we support young professionals.

The ‘New to Nature’ scheme is hosted by Groundwork UK and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to mark the Queen’s platinum jubilee. We’re proud to become part of a growing body of professional practice committed to improving equality, diversity and inclusion across the environmental sector.



Images: New to Nature internships



Left: New to Nature internships | Right: Ranger clearing a path at Hale

## Early Green Careers Group

In January 2023 we launched an Early Green Careers Network, giving people at the start of their career the benefit of a support network of others with similar shared experiences.

The group has 30 members from 15 organisations and supports individuals working or volunteering in the New Forest in the first few years of their green career – and perhaps their first career role.

It provides opportunities for personal and professional development, networking and peer support. Meetings are hosted by network members, who have created terms of reference for the group and an online green careers resource. Future plans are for training, development and supporting green careers.

The NPA also has its own Early Careers Group, where people in the organisation can meet and socialise, as well as benefit from talks and advice from more senior colleagues.



## Expanding work experience

We’ve expanded our work experience to enable more students to try out a green career – including nine students from year 10 and year 12 across six weeks. Students had opportunities to take part in a variety of activities and worked alongside different teams across the organisation.

‘I would like to say thanks for being so kind and helpful. You were a really friendly team who I was comfortable talking to and asking questions. Thanks for creating such a great environment; it really improved my confidence.’ Fred, year 10.

‘I appreciate how helpful everyone has been and how educational it has been for me especially learning about the net zero plans and the sustainability that the National Park Authority strives for.’ Matt, year 12.

Above: Apprentice Ranger Alistair at the New Forest Show

‘Raising the profile of green careers through attending careers fairs and providing opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships, helps inspire young people to connect with nature and have more awareness of the job opportunities available. We hope that by providing these experiences, students are supported in helping them to get their first green job more easily.’

Helen Robinson, Lead Education and Youth Officer, NPA.



Helen Robinson



# Supporting a prosperous and sustainable economy

## Funding sustainable communities

We've provided more grants to schools, youth groups, and other community groups who want to help climate and nature and protect the New Forest's precious landscape.

**This year we've given £42,000 to help 15 projects with grants ranging from £50 to £10,000:**

- **£520** Greener Brockenhurst – series of repair cafés.
- **£600** Minstead Trust – interpretation boards for ancient meadow restoration at Furzey Gardens.
- **£8,380** New Forest Transition – resources to help communities reduce their carbon emissions.
- **£913** Eco Sway – energy fair and information day.
- **£3,650** Karina Abramova – virtual climate sculptures and artist-led guided walk.
- **£9,698** RSPB Franchises Lodge – accessible wildlife garden at Cameron's Cottage residential centre.
- **£10,000** East Boldre Community Stores – solar system with battery storage.
- **£1,760** Greener Brockenhurst – promotion of nature friendly wildlife gardening.
- **£1,692** Forest Arts – outdoor arts and wellbeing workshops.

**Smaller grants of under £500 went to:**

- **Breamore Primary School** – hedgehog houses, bat boxes, bee house.
- **Hale Primary School** – window feeders and bug hotels.
- **Orchard Infant School** – wildflower seeds, wildlife camera, timber to build wildlife habitat.
- **Friends of Brockenhurst Station** – bug hotels to complement existing wildflower garden.
- **Amberwood Learning** – wildlife camera and phone microscopes.
- **Energise Me** – clay workshops and artist-led guided walk.

Since 2006 we have awarded £2.5m in grants to over 300 projects that help improve the sustainability of the National Park.



Wild flowers



## Supporting Brilliance in Business

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

The award recognises businesses that understand their responsibility to drive environmental improvements within their industry, creating a greener, more sustainable product or service.

This year's winner was Cottage Lodge Hotel in Brockenhurst. 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.

Also nominated was New Forest Escapes – promoting conscious tourism through its collection of holiday homes in the New Forest.

Boon & Green Health and Beauty in Ashurst was another worthy finalist. The salon uses eco-friendly and organic beauty products, upcycled furniture, sustainable laundry methods and an eco-loo.

Above: Cottage Lodge bedroom

## The impact

45,000 sustainable passenger journeys



The open top New Forest Tour has three routes around the National Park

# Recognising local champions

We ran our ninth New Forest National Park Awards with the CLA, celebrating the wonderful people who support the New Forest's environment and rural economy.

This year a record 130 nominations were received for the best businesses, organisations and individual champions in the New Forest who help keep it a living, working landscape.

The winners were recognised at a special ceremony at the New Forest and Hampshire County Show.

Alison Barnes, CEO of the New Forest NPA, said: 'It's encouraging to see not only new faces and businesses nominated, but the number of younger people put forward for these awards, and how they are inspiring their own generation to protect the natural environment.'

Image: New Forest Awards 2022 at New Forest Show



## The winners of the 2022 awards were:

- **Young Farmer/Commoner:** Katie Ferrett from Romsey
- **Best Supporter of Local Produce:** Setley Ridge Farm Shop, Brockenhurst
- **Rural Diversification:** Tatchbury Manor Farm, Winsor
- **Sustainability Champion:** Countryside Education Trust, Beaulieu
- **Young Environmental Champion:** Arun Curson from Bransgore

## This year's Highly Commended were:

- **Young Farmer/Commoner:** Samantha Gates
- **Best Supporter of Local Produce:** New Forest Hamper Company
- **Sustainability Champion:** The Naked Pantry

# Promoting true local produce



New Forest Marque member Ian Brown, owner of Brook Hill Vineyard

The New Forest Marque is a network of producers, farmers and suppliers with the New Forest at the heart of their offering.

The New Forest National Park Authority supports the Marque in championing businesses involved in producing, processing and distributing local produce, therefore supporting the National Park landscape.

Marque members are varied – providing food and drink, hospitality and retail, arts and crafts, plus tree and education services – but they have a shared goal in supporting each other, the local community and the wider New Forest.

Food and drink bearing the distinctive blue logo is authentic produce that has been grown, reared, brewed, produced or processed in the New Forest and the Marque, a not-for-profit organisation, focuses on communicating the importance of buying locally and eating seasonally.

New Forest Marque Chair Dan Parsons said: 'Over this past year, despite significant headwinds most notably concerning resourcing, the Marque has continued to support its 150 members and remains financially robust.

## Highlights this year include:

- The Marque ran or supported five key trading events from roadshows to country shows, plus offered five networking opportunities to members and associates including farm tours and gin tasting.
- The Marque's producer roadshows continue to go from strength to strength with a spring event in March 2023 proving the most popular yet with 15 stands and more than 1,000 visitors.
- Three seasonal-themed produce tasting boxes were offered for sale, plus honey boxes were introduced for the first time, totalling 107 direct-to-home sales.
- The Marque sponsored the Food and Drink Award at the Brilliance in Business Awards, which featured nine Marque members nominated across various categories, of which four were announced winners at the awards ceremony.
- The Marque featured in a film launched by New Forest organisations to welcome visitors and encourage them to help care for the National Park and buy local produce.





# Building Team New Forest

Above: One of the NPA staff discovery days 2022



## Green Halo Partnership: Exploring green finance

The Green Halo 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.

For the first time since the pandemic, our annual Green Halo Conference was held in person.

The event, held at Ordnance Survey in December, had a focus on ‘investing in our future’. It attracted more than 70 delegates representing 40 organisations.

Speakers from a range of sectors highlighted the opportunities for

maintaining and enhancing our natural capital through investments offered by emerging green finance facilities, the value of investing in the natural environment for business, and the health and well-being of our communities.

The keynote speech was given by the late Lord Bob Kerslake, former Head of the Civil Service and Chair of FuturePlaces, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council’s urban regeneration company.

Above: Green Halo conference 2022



## Promoting a green recovery

We’ve progressed the shared ‘Greenprint’ framework, working with the Partnership for South Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth Universities and the Southern Policy Centre to deliver a shared approach to green recovery and green skills and jobs.

The Greenprint was included in the successful Solent Freeport bid and we continue to advise and encourage the Freeport partners to ensure the Freeport becomes an exemplar of the green economy working in harmony with communities and our landscape.

As well as the fundamental protection of the National Park, we’re championing green skills and jobs and three projects for significant investment through the opportunity of the Freeport:

- A new, extensive and nature rich Country Park.
- Reconnecting the New Forest to the sea by establishing ecologically functional corridors in the Waterside area.
- A connected active travel/ sustainable transport network (implementing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan).

Above: New Forest Show stand 2022 focused on climate and nature



## Sharing climate messages at the New Forest Show

More than 2,000 people visited our stand at the New Forest Show. We focused on the climate and nature emergencies with displays and activities about the impacts of climate change on the National Park, what the main causes are and what we can all do to reach net zero by 2050.

Community green groups from around the New Forest joined our stand to demonstrate what they are doing in their communities and how people can take action with steps such as composting, growing veg, and wildlife-friendly gardening.



Minister Trudy Harrison (third from left) meets Forest partners at a wetland restoration project

## National Parks minister visits conservation projects in the New Forest

Trudy Harrison, Minister for Natural Environment and Land Use, met with New Forest National Park Authority staff and partners on a visit to the National Park in March, praising their joint work around nature recovery.

Ms Harrison, whose role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State includes responsibility for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), visited sites across the New Forest to learn about conservation projects, and how Forest organisations are tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

The Minister met representatives from Forestry England, the Verderers, Friends of the New Forest, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the New Forest National Park Authority on the visit hosted by Campaign for National Parks.

She visited Roydon Woods to see an exemplar of large-scale nature recovery, as well as Fletcher’s Thorns for the Forestry England wetland restoration project which is part of the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. She also learned more about the role of the New Forest commoners and how conservation grazing by commoners’ animals can help with species recovery.

**‘I had the privilege of visiting the New Forest National Park to meet with the Authority and local community groups and see some of the vital work they’re doing towards our nature recovery and access to green space targets. I’d like to thank all involved for organising the visit and commend them for their excellent work.’**

**Trudy Harrison MP**



## Love the Forest

A £2,000 grant for a visitor welcome film was just one of the boosts given to the National Park thanks to Love the Forest (see P21).

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.

Other projects benefiting from the scheme include research into New Forest pine marten populations, and hedge planting at Rockford as part of the Queen’s jubilee celebrations.

Above: Ponies and rainbow at Bolton’s Bench, Lyndhurst

Hotel staff at the New Forest Collection who had helped collect £92,000 in donations from their guests also joined a volunteering programme they had helped to support. Five team members took part in an NPA conservation volunteering day to restore heathland at an RSPB site at Copythorne. They cleared birch and pine trees with hand tools so that key heathland species such as heather and gorse can return and support native species such as curlew, sand lizard and grass snake.

Tourism body Go New Forest adopted Love the Forest as its charity of the year which will further boost publicity and support.

## 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 discover more about the National Park, learn about what other Authority staff do, and enjoy time together / enhance our working relationships. This year our discovery days included six different sessions for staff to learn more about:

- Habitat management
- New Forest freshwater habitats
- Navigation skills
- Electric bikes
- Video filming and editing
- Local New Forest Marque producers

### Mental health and well-being

We continued to deliver mental health and well-being support, through a dedicated area on our intranet, providing access to various resources and tips for well-being.

Our well-being group meets regularly to discuss and implement initiatives and activities to help enhance the well-being of our staff.



NPA staff on a Discovery Day 2022



# Financial Information

The Authority's core grant from Defra was maintained at £3,252,000 for the 2022/23 financial year.

We have also received a one-off financial stability grant in the year to support ongoing and future costs in the authority.

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. This year every £1 we contribute to joint projects generates a further £30 from partner organisations.

## We received around:

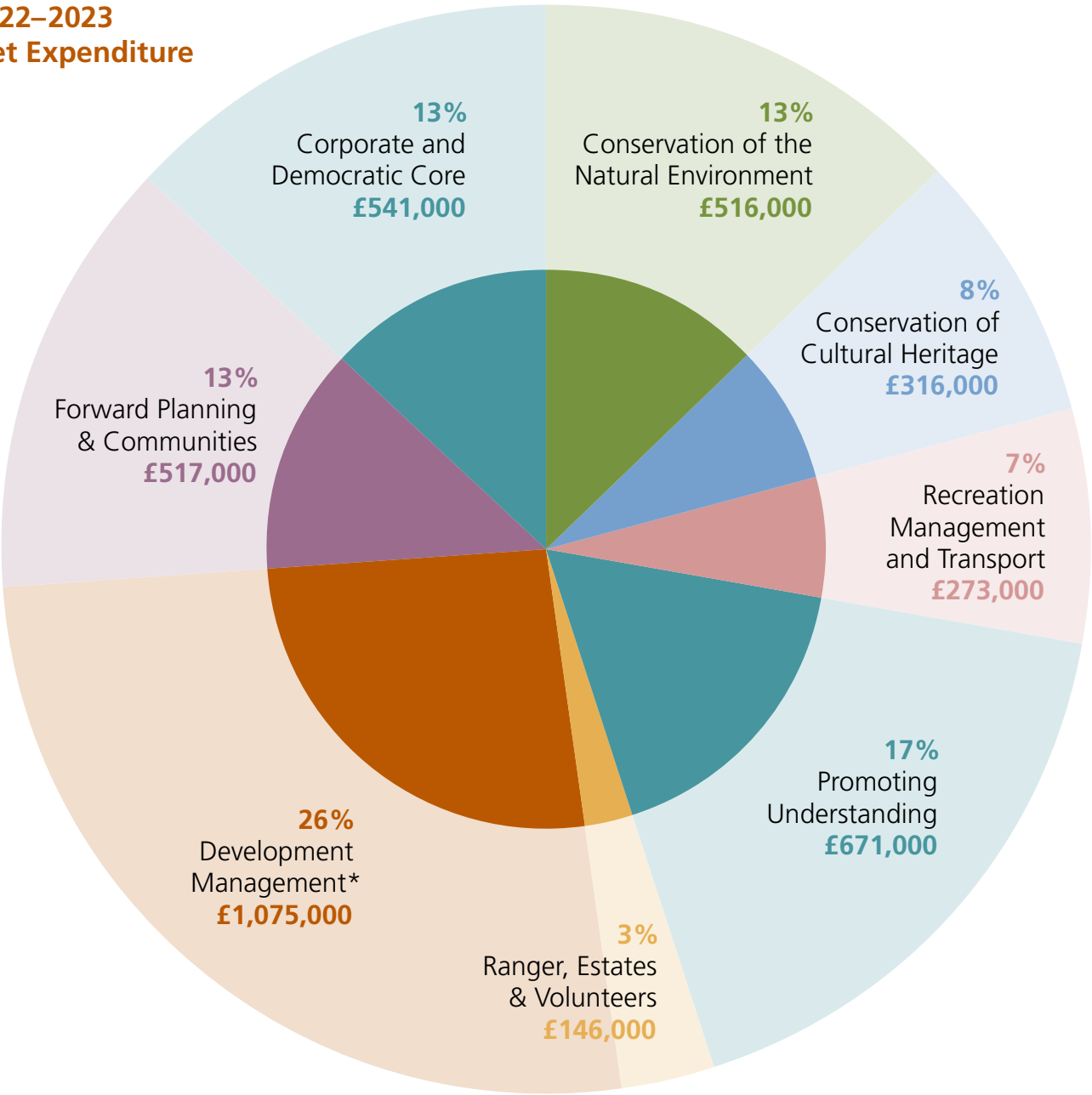
- £3,252m** from DEFRA
- £440,000** one-off financial stability grant
- £327,000** in statutory fees for planning and related applications
- £206,000** for shared services with other local organisations (rangers, archaeology, comms and administration)
- £41,000** interest on our investments
- £71,000** in other income generated (such as talks, guided walks, New Forest Tour advertising and charging for expert advice)

## Significant external funding totalling £0.89m was secured for the Forest, including:

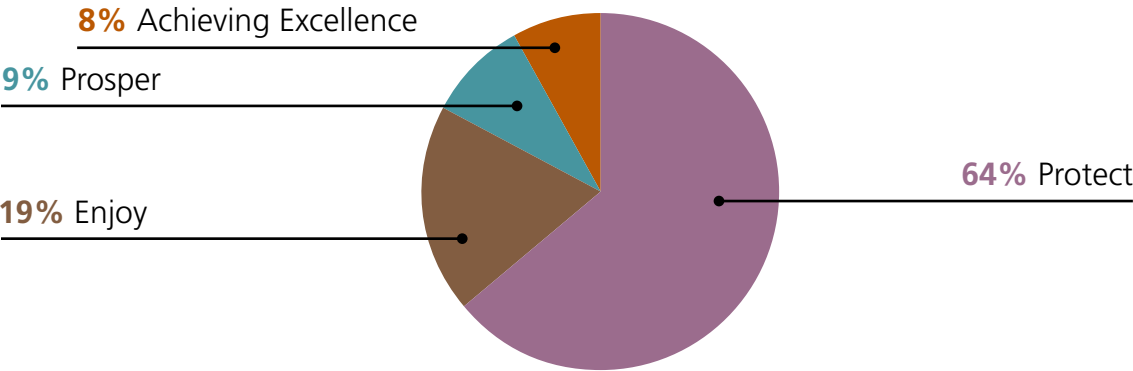
- £242,000** Farming in Protected Landscapes
- £168,000** Green and Blue Horizons, Green Recovery Fund
- £155,000** PEDALL Inclusive Cycling Charity
- £120,000** Franchises Lodge: Landscape Enhancement Initiative
- £88,000** Higher Level Stewardship Scheme
- £75,000** New Forest Land Advice Service
- £40,000** Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund

Plus many more smaller projects...

## 2022–2023 Net Expenditure



## 2022–2023 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](http://newforestnpa.gov.uk)

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