



Chief Executive's report

March 2024



Business Plan themes

Incorporating the five themes of the National Park Partnership Plan 2022-27, plus improvement goals and targets for our Authority under Re:New Organisation – Achieving Excellence.



Re:New Climate



Re:New Nature



Re:New People



Re:New Place



Re:New Partnership

Re:New Organisation – Achieving Excellence

Protect – First Purpose

To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area



Building Design Awards

The judging panel – made up of four members of our Planning Committee – met in January to review the nominations

Awards presented in three categories:

- best residential
- best non-residential
- best green building.

The awards highlight the positive contribution high quality design makes to the built heritage of the New Forest National Park.



Species Survival Fund

£1.3m scheme to restore New Forest habitats and increase wildlife.

- £1.04m grant from Species Survival Fund plus match funding
- Five partners (Freshwater Habitats Trust; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Commoners Defence Association: Wildlife Trust, Wild New Forest) plus support from the RSPB and New Forest Biodiversity Forum.

Programme of:

- land the size of 350 football pitches improved for nature across 25 sites
- improving and linking habitats to help species such as pine martin, great crested newt, pollinating insects and reptiles such as adder and smooth snake.
- 14 jobs created/retained; five interns; 50 volunteers.

**SPECIES
SURVIVAL
FUND**



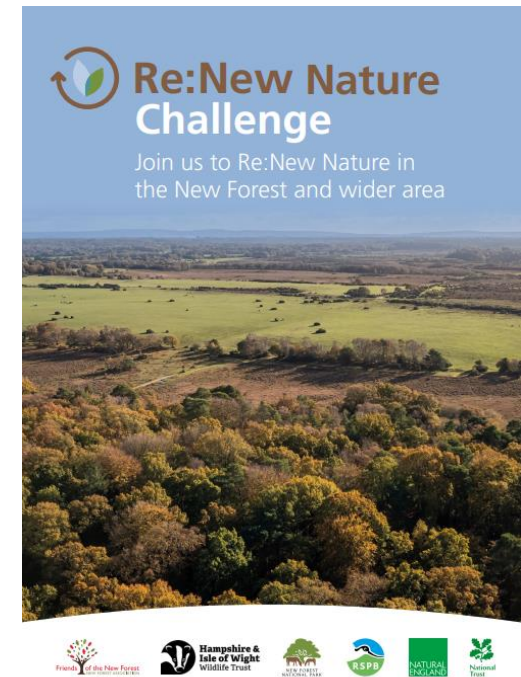
Funded by
UK Government

Heritage
Fund



Re:New Nature Partnership;

- First meeting of Re:New Nature Partnership 12 March
- New Forest Biodiversity Forum conference organised by the Forum and Wild New Forest In February
- 100 people attended over two days; focused on improving wildlife surveying, monitoring, recording and conservation.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Hampshire and Wiltshire progressing.



Protected landscapes targets

Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework published

Three outcomes set out in the Environment Improvement Plan 2023:

- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

Re:New Forest Partnership Plan is well-aligned.



Partnership Plan Leaders Panel met on 7 March to look at how we respond to this and the Duty on all public bodies to further National Park purposes (became law end 2023).

Planning

- Nearly 100 applications in two months and a similar number determined
- 94% of which were approved.
- Planning application process was the subject of an Internal Audit Report which was extremely positive and received the highest possible assurance opinion
- Biodiversity Net Gain makes sure habitats for wildlife are left in a better state than they were before development and developers must deliver a BNG of at least 10%. The requirement for BNG will apply to many smaller developments from 2 April.
- Digital Improvement Fund success -



Enjoy – Second Purpose

To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.



YouCAN (youth for climate and nature)

- £1.4m three-year scheme
- Seven partners
- First board meeting held
- 25 young people signed up to NPA Junior Ranger programme
- YouCAN partners attended the University of Southampton's Science and Engineering Day as part of the Awakening Festival (right).



Awakening Festival

- Highlighting the climate and nature emergency in the New Forest
- 70 events, including Great British Spring Clean litter picking event
- 50 organisations involved
- Many sold out.



Volunteer Fair

- Over 600 people attended
- Opened by Sir Julian Lewis MP, Alison and last year's New Forest Awards Young Environmental Champion winner, Jamie Ward
- 40 organisations reported more volunteers signed up (eg New Forest Transition = 21; Minstead Study Centre = 15)
- Workshops for young people proved popular.



PedAll inclusive cycling

- Awarded £384,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund to help make cycling in the New Forest available to people of all ages and abilities.
- Pedall, with sites at Burley and Ashurst, has one of the most diverse fleets of adapted bicycles in the country.
- The funding means it will be able to recruit a new Ride Leader; run 250 weekly group ride courses each year and cycle with over 4,000 riders per year.



Prosper – Our Duty

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



Green Careers

- Species Survival Fund project - 14 jobs created or retained, five interns recruited, across the partners
- Former intern Josh Dawes recruited as planning officer.



Green Health Hub

- Website of green social prescribing opportunities in and around the National Park.
- Directory of activities developed with partners.
- Includes case studies and stories about the benefits to physical and mental health of connecting with nature.
- www.greenhealthhub.org.uk



The Green Health Hub



[Activities](#) [Groups](#) [Stories](#) [About Us](#)

Join in, feel good



The Green Health Hub

Welcome to the Green Health Hub, your directory for activities in the New Forest and surrounding area for wellbeing in the great outdoors.

This Hub will signpost you to opportunities for you, or people you know, or are working with, sharing a range of different options to consider and then hopefully try out!

Simply click on the **activities** or **groups** pages to get started. If you are interested in hearing more about why nature is great for our wellbeing, or to hear about people who have done this before - **check out Stories**

We will be growing the site with new opportunities - so if you know of an opportunity or have a story to tell then head to the **About Us** page to get in touch.

Affordable Housing

- Lyndhurst Park Hotel site progressing well
- Work due to start soon on Church Lane, Sway development (includes 23 affordable houses).
- Planning permission issued for Whartons Lane, Ashurst, development (includes 31 affordable homes).
- Working to resolve access agreements for an affordable housing site in Burley.



East Boldre shop and PO

A new shop and Post Office has opened at Chapel Stores, East Boldre.

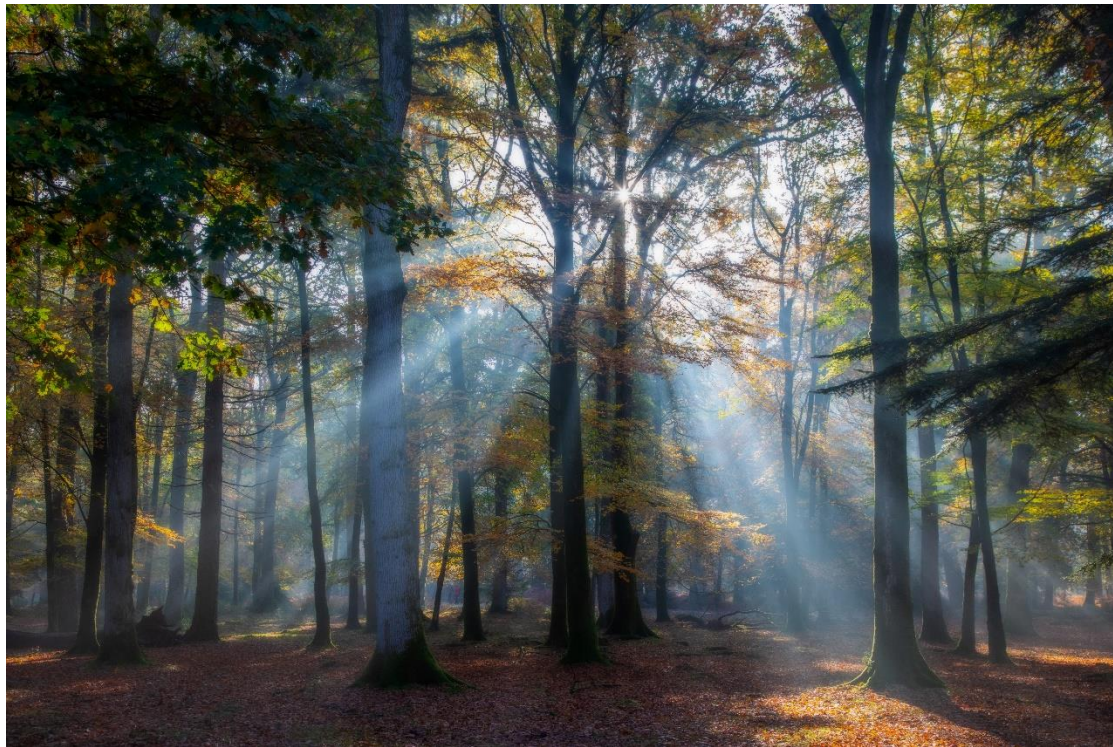
NPA support for maintaining the community facility included:

- Via planning and archaeological input
- A £10k Sustainable Communities Fund grant towards sustainable energy infrastructure.
- A Local Information Point (LIP).

It is now established as a community-owned and non-profit business selling local produce and boasting a social space in the former historic chapel. This more central hub replaces the former LIP for the area which was located with New Forest Activities.



Excellence



Funding success - £15m over since 2010

- Currently managing 12 grants totalling around £3.4m investment in the New Forest.
- Maintaining '£18 received for every £1 spent' of our own Programme Fund on partnership projects.
- Now applying for up to £300k each via the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative for two access projects: on the former Breamore Railway line, near Fordingbridge; at Fawley and Dibden Inclosures, Dibden Bottom and the wider Beaulieu Heath landscape. Preparing application for continued landscape enhancement and rhododendron removal at the RSPB's Franchises Lodge Reserve.



Partnership Plan Leaders Panel

New National Park Leaders' Panel met on 7 March.

Chaired by the Verderers of the New Forest and hosted at King's House, Lyndhurst.

Opportunity to discuss some of the challenges facing commoning in the New Forest and the need for an agri-environment payments scheme that works for the Forest.

Panel Annual Tour – 17 June – Test Valley and Wiltshire to host



Youth Board

- Youth Board will provide a voice for young people across the New Forest.
- Key area of work within the Youth for Climate and Nature (YouCAN) scheme.
- Task and finish group with Members had initial meeting.
- Timetable:
 - Recruitment of young people by July
 - Training and induction in September



International Women's Day

- Online 'Women's Leadership in Protected Landscapes' event on Friday 8 March
- 120 people attended



International Women's Day

Women's Leadership in Protected Landscapes

