

# Park Life

News from the New Forest National Park Authority



Spring/Summer 2024

FREE!



Healing in nature



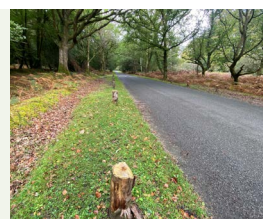
3

Focus on commoning



4

Save our verges



8 & 9

Grand designs



10 & 11



Helping rare ground nesting birds; a ranger walk for a refugee group; Holly Blue butterfly by Naomi Addleton; farmer Crispin Sampson received grants for Brooklands Farm; sunset and commoners' animals, by Nick Lucas

## National parks vital for nature and climate

It's 75 years since the 1949 Act of Parliament that established the family of national parks in England and Wales.

National parks are areas of spectacular landscape which are given the highest level of protection, and the New Forest National Park was designated in 2005.

The New Forest is an internationally important landscape for wildlife with a key role in leading nature recovery and our nation's response to climate change. Shaped by grazing animals and the practice of commoning, the New Forest's unique history is one of people living and working together as a community, sustaining the landscape and its nature continuously over millennia. The designation of the New Forest as a National Park recognised the landscape as one of the most precious in the UK and internationally, but that there is much more

### National Parks 75

we all must do to ensure this landscape not only survives but thrives into the future. Our New Forest environment is under threat more than ever before from climate change, loss of nature, uncertainty about future financial support for commoning, housing development around the National Park boundary and pressure on resources. At this time it's vital that organisations, businesses and communities work together more than ever before to ensure both nature and people can thrive. New Forest National Park Authority Chair David Bence said: 'When national parks were founded, they were integral to the nation's approach to health and wellbeing for all; together with

another post-war movement – the National Health Service – supporting the nation's rehabilitation in the aftermath of World War Two. '75 years on National Parks are also vital for nature recovery and climate resilience and we're leading some joint programmes that will enable the Forest, its communities, landowners and commoners to respond practically while ensuring a thriving Forest community and enabling people to connect with what's special about our National Park.' Through the shared Re:New Forest Plan we are working with partners to support action for climate, nature, people and place. These include:

• £600,000 in grants for

farmers and landowners (see page 15)

• A £1.3 million partnership scheme to restore New Forest habitats and wildlife.

• Ensuring new agricultural schemes are suited to the New Forest, especially supporting commoners to continue to manage vital New Forest habitats.

• Apprenticeships, paid internships, work experience and volunteering opportunities to help young people into green careers.

• A £1.4 million Youth for Climate and Nature (YouCAN) aimed at 11 to 25-year-olds to encourage more community-led action to tackle the nature and climate emergencies.

• A network of Green Groups across our communities who are sharing experience and knowledge and joining up on projects and events to help us all live more sustainably.

• Continued on page 2

**ADVENTURE STARTS HERE**

**NEW FOREST ACTIVITIES**

Adventures for families, couples and groups!

Make the most of your time together in the great outdoors. **Unrivalled adventures in the New Forest National Park!**

**FIND US IN BEAULIEU**

01590 612377

**NEWFORESTACTIVITIES.CO.UK**

CREATE MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME!

SCAN FOR ADVENTURE

## What it is that makes our National Park special?

The New Forest is a world capital for wildlife and considered an ark for nature. Over half the National Park is designated for its international importance for nature – a higher proportion than any other UK national park.

This combination of natural environments – heathland, ancient woodland, bogs and mires, coast, farmland and grassland – is hard to find anywhere else in western Europe.

The National Park is home to an incredible variety of plants and animals. Many of these species are as rare and magnificent as animals you might go to see on safari – just in miniature. They're often hard to see so most of us won't encounter them or appreciate what's beneath our feet. They include:

- over 15,000 species of insect (two-thirds of the UK total)



**A banded demoiselle**  
Picture: Peter LeCointe

- 44 species of mammal (including 13 of the 18 UK bat species)
- at least 12 species of reptile and amphibian
- a third of British wildflower species
- over 70% of British dragonfly species breed here
- 46 nationally and internationally rare plant species
- the UK hotspot for rare breeding birds such as curlew, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

# New Forest's vital role

### Continued from front

• A partnership campaign 'Behind the Scenes' highlighting the special qualities of the New Forest so more people understand and protect this living, working landscape.

David added: 'Organisations, volunteers, community groups and individuals are already working together as Team New Forest to help protect this vitally important area for wildlife. However, there is more to be done. National parks are developing greater importance in the way we think about the environment and how we manage it for future generations.'

'We need to harness our combined skills and abilities to lead the way on climate, nature and health challenges so that we are fit for the next 75 years and beyond.'

### National Park Facts

- There are 15 UK national parks, 10 in England, three in Wales and two in Scotland



- The first national park to be designated was the Peak District in 1951
- The New Forest National Park was designated in 2005.

Above, litter picking in the New Forest; top, an NPA ranger at the New Forest Show; right, a New Forest National Park boundary sign near Saltgrass Lane in Keyhaven



## LARGEST BIKE HIRE & SHOP IN THE NEW FOREST

**cyclexperience**

**SALES ⚙ RENT ⚙ FIX ⚙ EVENT**



**01590 624808**



**BOOK  
ONLINE**

**www.cyclex.co.uk**

**LARGE CAR PARK – GPS ROUTE APP – 2ND HAND BIKES – ICE CREAM**

**⚡ E-BIKES FOR SALE & RENT ⚡**  
**BIKES FOR ALL AGES & ABILITIES**  
**100 MILES OF OFF-ROAD TRAILS**

**4.8★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 370+ reviews**

**Downside Car Park, Brockenhurst Train Station, SO42 7TW**

**SOLENT HOUSE  
DENTAL CENTRE**

**Invisalign®**  
**Your key to  
a confident**

*Smile*

*Comfortable, removable,  
nearly invisible*



**invisalign®**  
PROVIDER

**01590 672986 | WWW.SOLENT-DENTAL.CO.UK**  
**Cannon Street | Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9BR**  
Practice Owners: Dr Anish Badami & Dr Susan Bush



Time in nature benefits our well-being, improves our mood and provides opportunities to be active

# Enjoy the benefits of natural remedy

**Healthcare professionals are increasingly helping to connect people to the benefits of nature in the New Forest through 'green social prescribing'. Find out about the improvements in physical and mental health they are seeing thanks to this 'Natural Health Service'.**

Being in nature is good for us. This is something we often feel intuitively when we go outside on a sunny day or take a trip to the countryside or coast. It's also something which research and evidence backs up: time spent in nature benefits our well-being, improves our mood and provides us with opportunities to move and get active.

A recent study showed that the value of the New Forest National Park – in terms of avoided healthcare costs – was a massive £27million per year, equivalent to 999 nurses.

However, it can also be hard for people to find time and opportunity to make the most of being outside and to know what might be available or where to go.

That's where social prescribing comes in. This rapidly

developing idea in healthcare provision approaches health and well-being in holistic way, considering all the factors in a person's life and not just trying to address a physical or mental health problem on its own.

Joanna Sheppard is a social prescriber for New Forest Primary Care Network. She said: 'Social prescribers work with people to look at what's important to them and what they would like to change to improve their health and well-being - both physical and mental. It often involves connecting people to environment and communities.'

The New Forest Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Team works with all ages from 12 upwards in a variety of areas, with Joanna mainly supporting young people aged 16 to 25.

'We help them into various activities,' she said. 'If there was something happening with a local group and we had a young person that wanted to go along, for example, we could go with them to the first one to help them settle in.'

Joanna has seen a marked increase in patients' mental

ill health since Covid-19, particularly in young people, and most of her work is focused around their mental well-being.

'The 23-year-old we brought into the Forest had been really, really, struggling with his mental health and not really going out. We did a loop through the heathlands and down to a pond, and back through trees near a deer viewing platform.

'He really liked the mindfulness and the relaxation we did. We sat and we listened, and we created a sound map.

'Overall it was such a positive experience for him, and part of a bigger journey.

'He had been in a job that wasn't challenging him and his goal was to work in IT support. After the forest visit, he did some IT drop-in sessions, and then some volunteering sessions, leading to him eventually getting a job in IT.

'I think the whole package: getting himself to a place, meeting different people, learning new things and feeling part of something gave him confidence and led him to a really positive point.'

## Green health hub launched

The New Forest National Park provides many opportunities to experience nature. Now the Green Health Hub website has been launched as a one-stop shop for activities in the New Forest to get people outside and benefiting from nature.

On the site you'll find activities including walking, cycling, arts, volunteering and gardening, as well as people's stories about

their relationship with the outdoors and how it has helped them and you can add your own.

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

● [www.greenhealthhub.org.uk](http://www.greenhealthhub.org.uk)

## EVERTON NURSERIES - GARDEN CENTRE -

### Camellias

COFFEE SHOP & RESTAURANT

*An ideal place to stop by for a coffee or a meal*

DELICIOUS RANGE OF LIGHT BITES AND  
HOMEMADE CAKES AVAILABLE ALL DAY.

Home cooked lunches available daily  
between 12 noon and 2.30pm

Come and try one of our fully  
loaded afternoon teas  
(booking essential)

If you fancy a treat, why not have  
Cream Tea with freshly baked  
scones, clotted cream,  
jam and a pot of tea.



*The New Forest's leading garden centre, offering you the quality and choice from our own 25 acre nursery.*

Open every Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm Sunday 10am-4pm  
[www.evertonnurseries.co.uk](http://www.evertonnurseries.co.uk) 01590 642155  
Everton, on A337, Nr. Lymington, SO41 0BF



# Behind the scenes of a vital tradition

One of the most iconic things about the New Forest is its free-roaming animals. The ponies, cattle, pigs, donkeys and, in certain areas, sheep, graze and forage on unfenced open areas. These animals are owned by local families using their commoning rights. The members of these families are called 'commoners' – ordinary people with an extraordinary commitment to this special place.

They have commoning rights from land they own, rent or share that allows them to graze their animals on the open Forest. Commoners tend to their livestock all year round, so you might see them with trailers rounding up their ponies or checking on their cows. It's all part of the New Forest's long history as a working Forest.

Andrew Parry-Norton, chair of the Commoner's Defence Association, said: 'The commoning community is a vibrant and diverse community of people who come from all walks of life. Together the commoners and their animals have shaped the New Forest for generations and it's thanks to them that the landscape looks how it does today. 'This traditional practice of commoning is vital in supporting our rare habitats, which are a world capital for wildlife. That's why it's so important to understand the animals' behaviour and to consider our behaviour around them.

'The grazing livestock can be very unpredictable. They often step out into the roads with no warning, for example, which can be a hazard even to cars which have slowed right down. Cows are particularly protective over their calves and can move quickly, so please keep yourselves and dogs well away – for everyone's safety.' People can also help commoners by not touching or feeding the animals, keeping gates closed, and not parking across barriers. Andrew added: 'Anyone can become a commoner if they have Forest rights on their property.'



Andrew Parry-Norton, chair of the New Forest Commoners Defence Association; Commoners checking their stock on the open Forest



A saddleback pig with rings in its snout - the rings stop the pigs 'rooting' and turning the turf over; agister Robert Maton releasing a stallion in the New Forest; a calf hidden in bracken while its mother is grazing elsewhere; tailmarking at Holmsley drift

## Who are the verderers?

The verderers of the New Forest oversee commoning and work to safeguard its vital future, as well as being involved with conservation and development control. Dating back to before the 12th century, the Verderers' Court is the last remnant of the old form of Forest government, which was at one time found in many parts of the country. The word verderer comes from the Norman word 'vert' meaning green and referring to woodland. There are 10 New Forest verderers: five are elected

by the commoners and the other five are appointed, one each by the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra), Forestry England, the New Forest National Park Authority and Natural England. The Official Verderer (currently Edward Heron) is appointed by the King and acts as chair of the Court. The Verderers' Court at Kings House, Lyndhurst, is still part of the community. It's open to everyone to hear various 'presentments' to the court every third Wednesday of the month (excluding August).

## Who are the agisters?

Employed by the verderers, agisters are responsible for the Forest animals allowed out to graze. They have an excellent working knowledge of the New Forest, and are out most of the time, often on horseback, checking on the conditions of both land and livestock. All five agisters have their own area and are on call 24 hours a day to respond to any problem with the grazing stock. In late summer and early autumn, the agisters organise the annual 'drifts', where ponies are rounded up, and

given a welfare check which includes worming and fitting reflective collars. The ponies' tails are cut to show they have been paid for. Each agister has a distinctive way of cutting the tail, which indicates the area or 'beat' of the Forest he is responsible for. Foals are branded with the mark of their owner, so that an agister can recognise who the animal belongs to if he sees it out on the Forest.

## Cattle on the Forest

Many commoners are farmers, who turn beef cattle onto the Forest. The cattle's grazing and poaching (where their hooves tread near ponds and streams) subsequently create fantastic habitats for wildlife. The absence of grass in the trodden areas allows rare and wonderful species to establish themselves.

## Hidden calves!

Cows often leave their calves unattended in the New Forest - hiding them while they go off to graze. If you come across a calf which you think has been abandoned, please

don't disturb it as the mother knows where her calf is and will come back for it.

Cows are usually very protective of their calves and can become aggressive, so it's important to keep your distance and any dogs under control (don't let them approach or chase any animals).

## Why do pigs have rings in their snouts?

In the autumn, some commoners let their pigs loose on the Forest to Hoover up fallen acorns which are poisonous to ponies and cattle – a practice known as pannage which dates back to William the Conqueror, who founded the New Forest in 1079. The exact weeks when pigs are let out are decided by the verderers and Forestry England according to how the season is looking and how many acorns are still about. The pigs have rings in their snouts to prevent 'rooting' and turning the turf over which could cause damage to fragile New Forest habitats.

## The five Forest Rights of Common

### • Pasture

The right to graze livestock, including ponies, cattle and donkeys and also some sheep (under a separate common right).

### • Pannage or mast

The right to turn out pigs during the 'pannage' season in the autumn to feed.

### • Estovers or fuelwood

The right to cut wood for fuel. To protect

the ancient and ornamental woodland, commoners who exercise this right are now provided with firewood by Forestry England. Two rights are no longer exercised:

### • Turbary

The right to cut turf for fuel.

### • Marl

The right to dig clay to spread on and improve fields.



**CRESTWOOD**  
OF LYMINGTON

01590 670370 [enquiries@crestwoodcontract.com](mailto:enquiries@crestwoodcontract.com)

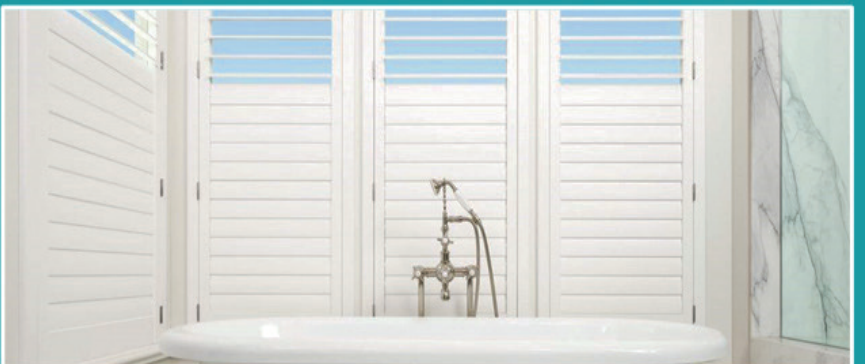


### EXTEND YOUR OUTDOOR LIVING

Our stunning collection of Awnings will help you create an oasis of calm that suits you and your family's needs, making your garden feel like an extension of your home. Our incredible range of Awnings mean you can experience alfresco dining in shade, shelter and comfort.

### BLINDS & SHUTTERS

Luxaflex® The Art of Window Styling  
Whatever your décor style or budget you'll find a beautiful made-to-measure Luxaflex® window treatment that's perfect for your home. Our experts can guide you through the options available to suit your needs.



awnings  
blinds  
shutters

# Meet the National Park's Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager

John Stride is the New Forest National Park Authority's new Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager.

With transformational change needed to address our climate and nature emergencies, John will develop and lead our 'Net Zero with Nature' programme with partners across the New Forest National Park.

**What is the Net Zero with Nature Programme and why does the National Park have one?**

The climate emergency is a big and global challenge. It often feels too big and complex to tackle at a local level. We all know the impact that this is having on the natural world, but nature is also part of the solution. I am working with partners to make nature improvements. This will provide the best chance to make rare habitats resilient to climate change and absorb more greenhouse gases. All

while retaining the unique landscape character and cultural heritage of the New Forest National Park.

**How unique is the New Forest?**

There is nowhere on earth like the New Forest. The scale of biodiversity here is staggering! One of my favourite things to do is go out and look at the colonies of marsh clubmoss. The New Forest population is one of the most important in the world because it is so rare elsewhere. These are part of a group of plants that have hardly changed over the past 400 million years.

When you stand anywhere in the New Forest National Park, you can feel the past beneath your feet. This helps us think about the future and care for what we have, so future generations can enjoy it too.

**How will you carry out your work?**

I will work with partners

including community groups, landowners and agencies, in fact, anyone who wants to get involved. Together, we will identify opportunities and take action to help the New Forest be more resilient to climate change.

**Can you give some examples of how this work will help the Forest?**

Our work involves thinking about a whole range of species and habitats and what we can do to support as many as possible. The ongoing programme of restoring incredibly rare and valuable open habitats is enhancing the resilience of these special sites by making them bigger and better connected.

The New Forest is a world capital for wildlife and by joining up more habitats, such as grazed pastures, we are creating more of the type of space that species need to thrive. Not only are these areas

intrinsic to the character of the Forest with their ancient oak and beech trees, they are also incredibly valuable for the rare insects, fungi, and lichens they support.

Alongside this, we know that the landscape can do more to absorb greenhouse gas emissions.

Restoring the wetlands and the peatlands of the valley mires in the New Forest is a huge opportunity. More ponds have been created, hedgerows have been restored, and even more nature-friendly farming practices have been implemented to support soil health. We can do so much to help the New Forest through the coming decades. This will give it the best chance to be net zero with nature.

**When will we notice this work for the New Forest National Park Authority?**

This work is a key part of the Re:New Forest Partnership



John Stride - NPA's Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager

Plan 2023-2027 so you will see and hear about this work from now and over the coming years.

**What areas can we all make an impact?**

There is so much we can do in our own daily lives to have an impact. In terms of nature,

leave an area of your garden a little wilder than usual. Also, dig a small pond or plant a native tree on your property. You can even volunteer to do nature recording or conservation work. There are many opportunities, please do get involved!

## Extra protection for the New Forest

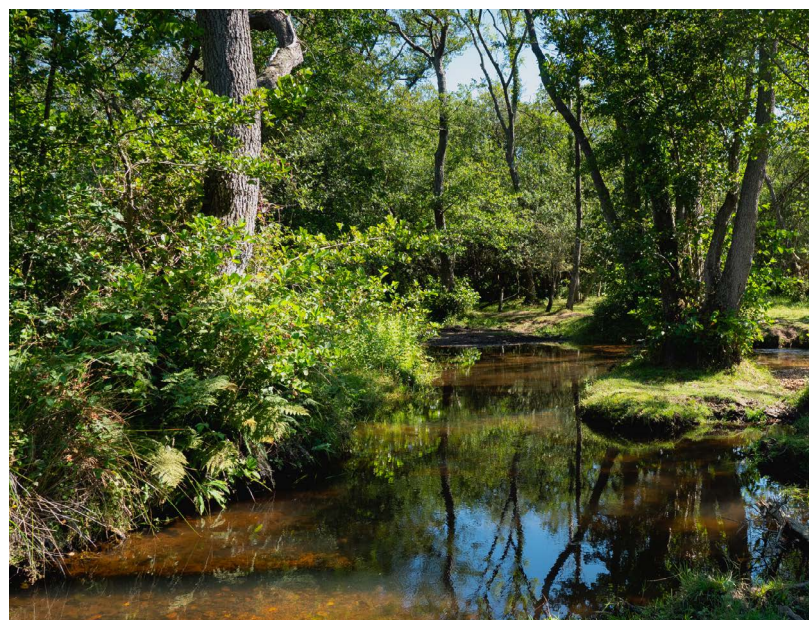
Government departments, public bodies and utility companies now have to give greater consideration to impacts on the New Forest when making decisions that affect the National Park.

All National Parks in England have two legal purposes:

- 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.

Legally all relevant bodies had to 'have regard' to the purposes when making decisions.

Now the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 has introduced a stronger legal duty with relevant bodies



**Strengthened legal duties will help protect the natural beauty and wildlife of the National Park**

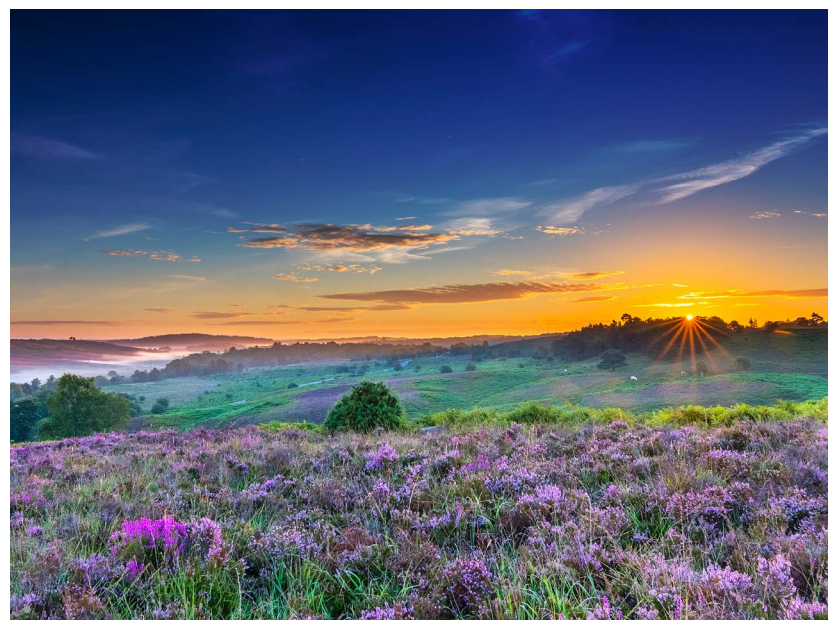
having to 'seek to actively further' the National Park purposes in their work. The Act also requires water companies to upgrade their

larger wastewater treatment works by 2030 to help address the impacts of increased nutrients on water quality in areas including the River

Avon and Solent coast. This requirement is relevant to several of the larger treatment works in the Forest. New Forest National Park

Authority Deputy Chair Victoria Mander said: 'This strengthened legal duty is welcomed and will help ensure the reasons behind

why the New Forest has been designated as one of only 10 national parks in the country are given appropriate weight in decision-making.'



Sunrise picture: Nick Lucas

# Nature shines through creative projects

Last year saw Culture in Common step up its delivery of events to New Forest residents.

The programme, funded by Arts Council England, aims to provide more opportunities for residents to access professional performances and creative activities much closer to home, and what better setting to inspire creativity than that of the National Park?

Community Summer Picnics Together gave children in Hyde, Breamore, Woodgreen and Sandleheath the chance to collaborate with local artists to understand more about their natural environment.

Culture in Common commissioned Helen Menges (ceramics), Danyah Miller (storyteller), and Mandy Smith (nature art) to provide green artsy activities and stories of the New Forest which was enchanting for the children. Storytelling has been a consistent theme in underused parks with the launch of



**Top, Helen Wallbridge took this picture in Beaulieu on a Photo Walkshop; Lyngo Theatre's performance; a Totten Lantern Parade butterfly. Right, storyteller Danyah Miller enthalls youngsters; Left, artist Alexandra Froggatt's impression of the New Forest-inspired garden**



two Story Quest booklets in Blackfield and New Milton, plus our spooky heritage brought to life in Hythe last autumn. The story of the New Forest's very own Witchy White and Mary Dore was told through an impressive scare maze co-created with the local youth group.

Participants on Photo

Walkshops also got the chance to learn how to capture the New Forest's natural landscapes and wildlife.

The walks, which ran from Beaulieu and Calshot, were guided by professional photographer, Paul Gonella, and accompanied by the National Park Authority's Adam Vasey. They provided

the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and study and appreciate the stunning varied landscape of the National Park.

One Photo Walkshop participant said: 'I felt so depressed when I woke up today and through the drive to the workshop but then I arrived at Calshot Beach, got

out my camera and saw the location and the people and it really lifted my spirit.'

Lyngo Theatre's performance for under-fives in Fordingbridge celebrated the beauty of the changing seasons and even Totton's Lantern Parade was themed to Winged Creatures of the Forest.

Appreciation of our special environment was woven into many aspects of the 2023 Culture in Common programme. 'Everything is amazing! I loved the animal lanterns – thank you', said a parade participant.

This year brings even more chances for Culture in Common participants to get closer to nature. In partnership with the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council, the programme has commissioned a Forest of Calm project.

A home-educated group of young people are working with the 'Beardy Gardener' Leigh Johnstone to create a New Forest-inspired garden. You'll be able to see their efforts at the BBC Gardeners' World Spring Fair at Beaulieu 3-5 May before it's then moved to its permanent home at Bramshaw Village Hall.

● Go to [www.cultureincommon.co.uk](http://www.cultureincommon.co.uk) to find out more and book.



## DISCOVER THE WONDER OF EXBURY

200 acres of spectacular spring colour and peaceful woodland set against the backdrop of the Beaulieu River.

Welcome back to the great outdoors.



[exbury.co.uk](http://exbury.co.uk)

Exbury Gardens

New Forest, Hampshire, SO45 1AZ

[info@exbury.co.uk](mailto:info@exbury.co.uk) | 023 8089 1203



- House Refurbishment • Carpentry • Extensions
- Kitchens and Bathrooms • Conversions
- Painting and Decorating • Fully Insured



07703 235135

[info@ifit-homes.co.uk](mailto:info@ifit-homes.co.uk) | [www.ifit-homes.co.uk](http://www.ifit-homes.co.uk)



Sightseers enjoying the open-top bus tour, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year

## All aboard! New Forest Tour turns 20

The New Forest Tour is celebrating 20 years of car-free travel this summer.

For two decades the open-top bus tour has been offering residents and visitors the best views of the New Forest from its top decks, while helping to support the local economy, and encouraging more sustainable visits to and around the Forest.

The first Tour set off along the green route in 2004. Now the experience offers three circular, scenic routes - red, green and blue. This year's season runs from 29 June – 15 September.

Passengers can sit back and enjoy a spectacular, panoramic perspective while listening to audio commentary telling the story of the history and heritage of the New Forest landscape, its people and culture. There are also some fascinating facts about its flora and fauna, and how we can protect this special landscape.

Last summer, more than 40,000 people explored the New Forest National Park on the New Forest Tour buses instead of by car – saving an estimated 220,000 private car miles.

The Tour also provides a boost to local businesses. Last year it contributed an estimated £660,000 to the New Forest economy while stopping at local villages and attractions, such as Beaulieu National Motor Museum and the New Forest Wildlife Park.

Multi-day tickets are great value, allowing you to enjoy each route in full on separate days, at a more leisurely pace. Residents in the New Forest district can purchase one-day, seven-day and seasonal tickets via the Morebus app.

If travelling from Southampton, the ferry is free – just buy a combination ticket for the ferry and Tour bus. Connecting bus services are also free if a Tour ticket is purchased from the bus driver.

The Tour is operated by Morebus in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority and is sponsored by local businesses.

Find out more at [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/nftour](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/nftour).

Keep an eye on ours and the New Forest Tour social media channels to see how you can get involved in celebrating the Tour's 20th birthday.



# Why we all need to help

They often look like muddy or grassy areas that simply link the Forest to the road, but New Forest verges are among the most important in Europe! They're so important that they're a separate designated feature of the New Forest's Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and even have a dedicated officer leading a programme of works to look after them and restore damage to them.

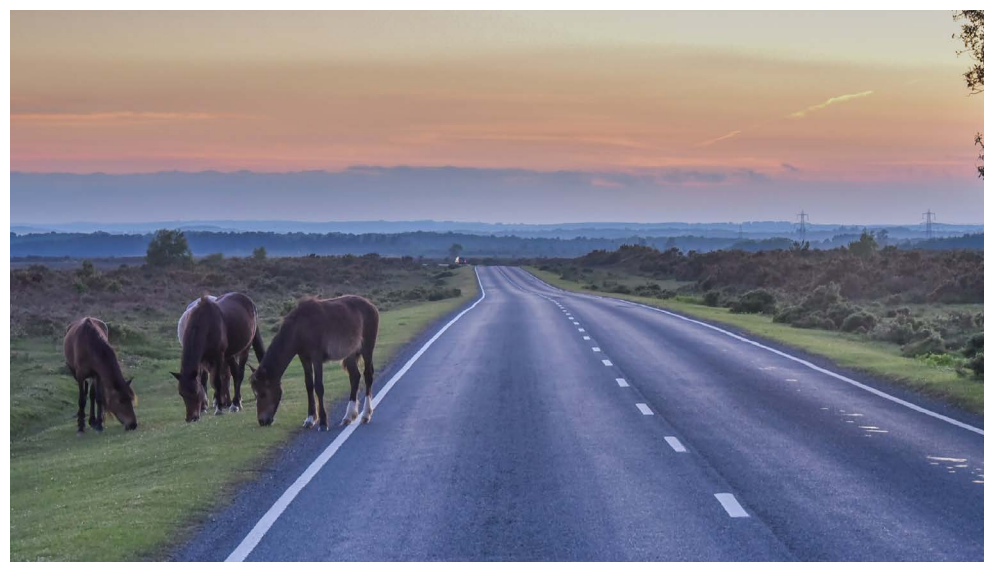
But what makes them so special, and why do they need looking after?

- They are incredibly important habitats supporting many different animals – such as slow worms and newts.
- Rare plant species such as chamomile, harebell, small fleabane, field gentian, pennyroyal, coral necklace and autumn lady's tresses orchids thrive on verges.
- They provide food for the free-roaming livestock. Verges contain high-quality, high-sugar grazing. That's why you see so many ponies near New Forest roads.
- They're an important part of the New Forest landscape, softening the visual impact of roads and buildings.

New Forest verges are under threat. Over the years, many have become informal parking spots or stopping areas. This can really damage the Forest as the vegetation gets worn away, tree roots get exposed and the ground becomes impacted. Over time, this starts to reduce the overall size of the Forest, gradually eroding and reducing it. Since 2010, many miles of verges have been nursed back to their original green roots after years of erosion caused by vehicles parking or driving on them.

It's all thanks to the Verderers of the New Forest Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, which has a rolling programme of work to restore these important habitats. Led by Forestry England, the works have restored around 26 miles of eroded verges, with others earmarked for future restoration.

Measures involve installing

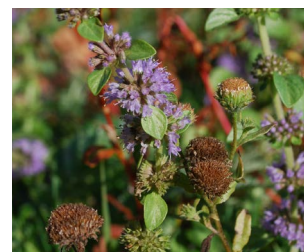


Ponies grazing by the verge in the New Forest

Picture: Claire Sheppard, Bramble and Beach Photography



Verge Restoration Officer Holly Fitzgerald; right, a slow worm at Linwood



Pennyroyal  
Picture: Clive Chatters



Parrot waxcap on a verge

short chestnut posts called 'dragon's teeth' or introducing ditches and banks. With these in place, the damaged verge can be left to recuperate untouched, and vegetation gradually returns.

Holly Fitzgerald works full-time for the HLS scheme as a Verges Restoration Officer at Forestry England. She said: 'Before we restore any verge, we consult widely with parish councils, the public, residents,

commoners and verderers.

By working with local communities, we can come up with plans to provide ample parking but also avoid damage to the landscape.'

Forest organisations are working together to encourage people to park in the 130 official car parks owned and managed by Forestry England. On busy days, temporary signs helpfully point people to the next car

park if the one they've arrived at is full.

Holly's work means she also assesses why people park on verges and how education and information can change this habit. Some people will park on a verge because it's somewhere they have always parked, and simply see the space as a gravel area.

'They don't realise that they have caused the erosion, and that other people will park there if they see cars in the area. When you explain why this can cause damage most people get why they need to stick to the car parks,' she said. 'I also work with residents to encourage them to park within their property, rather than on a verge outside their home.'

All restoration work is carefully planned, to ensure the SSSI is protected. Operational site assessments are carried out, with biodiversity and heritage taken into account. Ditches can't be created under ancient trees, for example, as this would disturb their roots.

**Holly said: 'I never thought I'd see one of these in the New Forest, especially fruiting happily in the middle of a New Forest verge! 'It's the very rare Bilious bolete / Rubroboletus legaliae, closely related to the Satans bolete/Rubroboletus satanas (these have chalkier caps). 'All red pored boletes are either infrequent, rare, endangered or extinct in the UK. Finding this, along with a colony a little further away, really made my week!'**



Rare Bilious bolete fungi on a New Forest verge

# to look after our vital verges



Verges at Holidays Hill before, above, and after restoration, below



An example of bad parking on verges and, right, autumn lady's tresses orchids on a verge



A silver-studded blue butterfly

Contractors fulfil the 'check, clean, dry' policy with footwear and tyres, to avoid cross-contamination of soil even if they have been working locally. This ensures that they don't inadvertently bring in any soil containing

pests or seeds from non-native species. 'We also make sure that key protected species, such as great crested newts, and other wildlife aren't disturbed,' she added. All the hard work from

the scheme is resulting in a visible difference to this nationally-important area for conservation. 'As well as the grass returning, ponies are staying on the verges rather than wandering into the road to avoid churned

up, muddy areas,' said Holly. 'And the wildlife is thriving in the restored sections. I recently saw hundreds of wax cap fungi in a site restored some years ago, which was a really encouraging sight. 'However, there is more work

to be done and people coming to the Forest can really make a difference. 'Please think about where you park and choose one of the 130 official car parks which are maintained to be able to cope with vehicles and protect

the surrounding habitat. 'Together we can help protect these extremely important parts of the New Forest and reinstate many more miles which have been lost.' ● [Hlsnewforest.org.uk](http://Hlsnewforest.org.uk)

## Meet the New Forest National Park Authority Rangers

Rangers are crucial to national parks across the world. Here, they are the eyes and ears of the Forest; they engage with members of the public, attend events, and undertake valuable conservation work, among many other responsibilities. The New Forest National Park Authority has rangers for different areas of the Forest, a people and wildlife ranger, seasonal rangers to help in summer and winter, as well as apprentice rangers who work with a variety of partners during their 18-month apprenticeship. Hayden (pictured front, right) is the NPA North Area ranger and we asked her:

**What does a typical day look like for a New Forest ranger?**

Every day is different, which is



New Forest National Park Authority rangers

Picture: Marcus Langelier

always exciting. Our role changes seasonally and can include anything from litter picking to attending an event with our mobile information

unit, ground nesting bird patrols, leading groups of volunteers in practical habitat management tasks and all in the wind, sun, rain and

sleet! We do a lot of outreach and community work too – basically lots of talking to people about how they can enjoy the Forest and also do their bit to protect it.

**What can't you live without as a ranger?**

Snacks!! We are often out for long periods of time, talking to lots of people – and in all weathers! So a pocket full of snacks is essential in keeping our energy levels up.

**You often get to meet rangers from other national parks, what common traits do they share?**

Empathy. We speak to a lot of people about all sorts of different aspects of conservation and it's important to be empathetic. And passionate. We love what we do and are very passionate about why

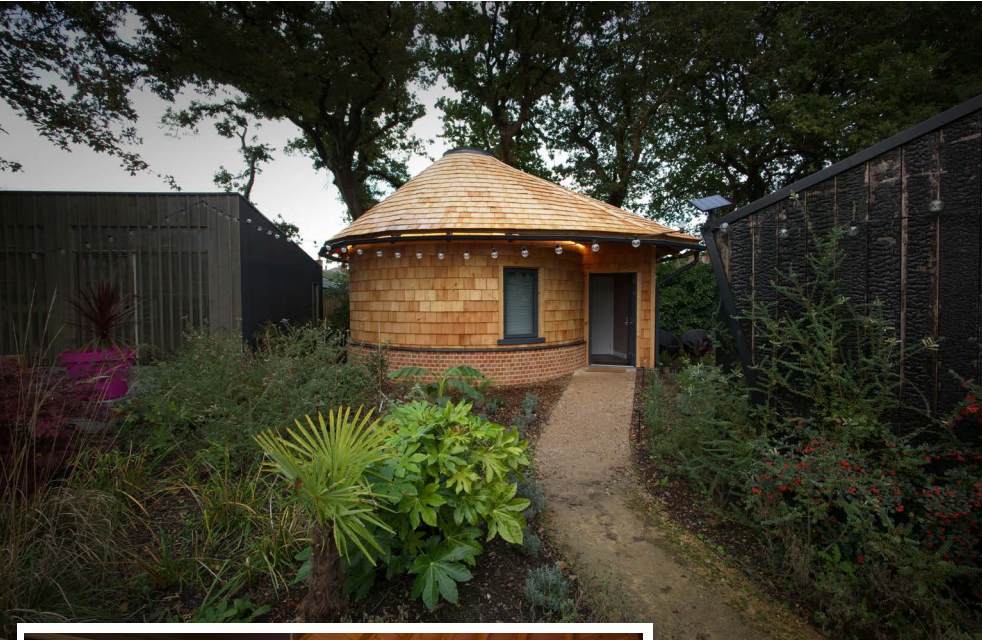
we do it. We often work on our own and being able to share the highs and lows of what you do with passionate, friendly people across other National Parks is so important.

**What advice would you give to someone who is thinking of becoming a ranger?**

Keep going, keep your passion and, if you can, do some volunteering. It shows future employers you're dedicated and also means you get to try lots of different aspects of rangering with different organisations. Whether it's a morning a month, or a litter pick on your way to school, there are lots of ways to get involved in whichever way that suits you.

● Find out more about the NPA ranger team at [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/rangers](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/rangers)

# Sustainability stars at design awards



Here's the amazing architecture recognised in the New Forest National Park Authority's Building Design Awards 2024.

The New Forest's buildings and their setting in the landscape are an important part of what makes the National Park special. The annual awards celebrate high-quality design and the best new developments across the National Park, with nominations invited in several categories.

A judging panel, made up of members of the New Forest National Park Authority's Planning Committee, was particularly impressed by this year's entries, praising not just the outstanding design but the sustainability of all the builds.

**Best Residential Scheme 2024** was awarded to **Chestnut Plantation** at Tatchbury Mount, which replaced a 1950s bungalow with a sustainable and

modern, open-plan new home. The property, designed by Lymington-based John Pardey Architects, gave careful consideration to the site as a whole, and was called 'a beautiful scheme' by the judges.

David Illsley, NPA Policy and Conservation Manager said: 'At 100sqm in floorspace, Chestnut Plantation is also a great example of what can be achieved with a small dwelling.'

**Highly Commended** in the Best Residential Scheme category was **The Clay Retreat** at Norleywood near Lymington. Architects PAD Studio in Lymington created an inspired design for a replacement home using traditional materials which complement each other and enhance the New Forest's South East Conservation Area. In particular, the judges praised the clever shading on the large windows to reduce light pollution which helps to

protect wildlife.

**The Clay Retreat** also won the **Best Green Building** category. The single storey home has a pre-fabricated timber frame construction filled with blown paper insulation. David said: 'The building has particularly high energy efficiency standards which go above and beyond current building regulations.'

**Highly Commended** in the Best Green Building category was **Chestnut Plantation**. The judges were impressed by its solar panels, air source heat pump and woodland management plan for the surrounding land to improve biodiversity.

**Best Non-Residential Building** was awarded to **The Living Room at spudWORKS** in Sway which the judges described as having 'remarkable detailing' and being 'innovative on every level'. Now a space for dementia care community use, it's built on the base of



Above, left and below, The Living Room at spudWORKS, Sway, designed by Delve Architects, won Best Non-Residential Building  
Pictures: Paul Close Photography



**WILL STONE**  
GAS PLUMBING & HEATING

All aspects of Gas, Plumbing & Heating

**BOILERS • BATHROOMS • SERVICING • REPAIRS**  
**GAS • LPG • OIL**

Why Choose Us?



Worcester Bosch Accredited Installers  
NFBP Customer Service Winners  
WHICH? Trusted Traders

Gas Safe Registered  
Fully Insured  
Family Run



Happy to help, please call us on **01425 540950**  
or email **dawn@willstoneplumbing.co.uk**

**WILLSTONEPLUMBING.CO.UK**

Unit 13 • Kings Farm Rural Workshops • Kings Farm Lane • Everton Road • Hordle • SO41 0HD





Above, left and right, Chestnut Plantation by John Pardey Architects won Best Residential Scheme and was highly commended in Best Green Building  
Pictures: Brotherton-Lock Photography

Above and top left, The Clay Retreat by architects PAD Studio, won Best Green Building and was highly commended in Best Residential Scheme  
Pictures: Jim Stephenson

a Victorian water tower, with a new Douglas fir timber frame and locally-made cedar shingles. The design, by Delve Architects in London, has energy-efficient insulation, low energy lighting and makes the

best use of natural daylight. It also celebrates and preserves a heritage feature. David said: 'The building is sympathetic to its surroundings and creates an inviting, informal art therapy

space for people with dementia and mental health issues. The community purpose is outstanding.' Gordon Bailey, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority's Planning

Committee, and a member of the awards panel said: 'The standard of entries this year has surpassed all other years. 'There has been an increasing focus on areas such as climate change and sustainability on

our planning policies and local design guidance. All our winning schemes demonstrate the sustainability measures that can be incorporated into new development, while respecting the environmental

protections and local character of the National Park.' The awards were presented in March. The plaques were once again created by New Forest company BearWood using sustainable local oak.



## Discover Balmer Lawn Hotel & Spa in Brockenhurst

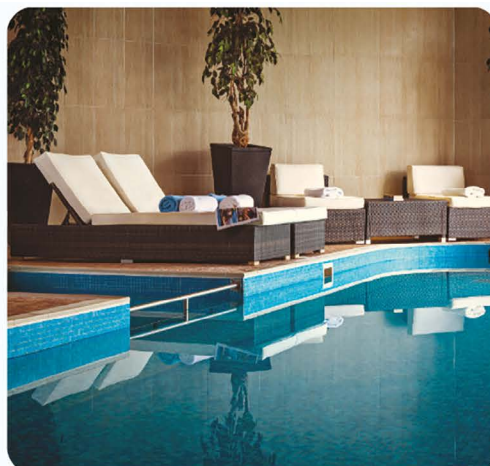
Whether you're here for a business meeting, a memorable celebration, a rejuvenating spa experience, an overnight stay, or simply craving an exquisite dining experience, we've got you covered.

Enjoy a morning coffee & cake or make a day of it and stay for Lunch.

On Sundays, feast on hearty lunches designed to satisfy even the largest of appetites. Delight in quintessential afternoon teas, a timeless tradition, before winding down in our elegant cocktail bar before dinner, where you can sip on expertly crafted cocktails in a stylish setting.

Expansive gardens & terraces, Fun garden games and ZIP wire  
Dogs welcome in The Lodge, lounges, and gardens

All residents and non-residents are invited to join us, so book your New Forest experience today.



Scan the QR code to visit our website - [www.balmerlawnhotel.com](http://www.balmerlawnhotel.com) | Contact reception on 01590 623 116 | [info@blh.co.uk](mailto:info@blh.co.uk) | Balmer Lawn Hotel, Lyndhurst Rd, Brockenhurst, SO42 7ZB



## Marking 20 years of the New Forest Marque

This year marks 20 years since the New Forest Marque was first launched.

Over the last two decades, the scheme, which started out as 'Forest Friendly Farming', has supported hundreds of local businesses, independent producers, and talented craftspeople to do what they do best – provide for their communities.

The distinctive New Forest Marque logo has become synonymous with some of the best local produce in the area. With a wide variety to choose from, you'll find the logo displayed on everything from local honey and free-range eggs, to handcrafted leather goods and fine wool clothing.



The Noble Bee at a Marque Producers Roadshow; right, beef cattle graze the Forest



In recent years, sustainability has become more important than ever.

Did you know that one of the biggest environmental issues in the New Forest is our food

and drink consumption? By shopping locally and enjoying food made on our doorstep,

we can really reduce our impact and support more sustainable practices.

## The sign of true local produce

With strict criteria to adhere to, the New Forest Marque is only awarded to produce which has been grown, reared, caught, brewed, produced, or processed within the New Forest, as well as arts and crafts inspired by the local area. Currently supporting more than 160 members, the latest additions include:

**Dear Moon:** Design and manufacturing studio in Tiptoe creating a range of handcrafted leather goods.

**Forest Firewood:** Family run company taking a sustainable approach to firewood supply. Based in Bramshaw.

**Herd Alpaca Apparel:** Luxury clothing atelier in Brockenhurst specialising in alpaca fibre.

**Derek Honour Arts:** Talented New Milton landscape artist inspired by the beauty of the New Forest.

**The Menopause Boutique:** Wellbeing brand in Lymington



providing a simplistic, natural pathway for the menopause.

**Alex Wright:** Landscape photographer specialising in sunrise and sunset imagery from the local area. Based in Fordingbridge.

**Wildewood Bakery:** Independent bakery in Fordingbridge using locally sourced ingredients.

**Helen Green Ceramics:** Ceramicist in Bransgore specialising in mythical characters inspired by New Forest folklore.

**Abundant Thinking:** Glass artist from Burley capturing the tones and light of our local landscapes and seascapes.

**3D Chart Art:** The home of nautical

wall art, creating bespoke pieces using original Imray Nautical Charts. Based in Sway.

**Hyde Country Stores:** One-stop-shop for all your rural needs in Fordingbridge, offering a selection of locally-made produce.

**Clare Sheridan-Wallis:** Beautiful silver jewellery inspired by the natural surroundings of the New Forest. Based in New Milton.

**Carol Brunton:** Pencil and watercolour artist in Lymington taking inspiration from the biodiversity of New Forest wildlife.

**Jazz Bee Honey:** Quality honey products from Totton, in the heart of the New Forest.

**Freestyle Digital:** Digital marketing agency in Totton helping businesses to stand out from the crowd.

**Circle Insurance:** Modern and innovative financial services company in Lymington providing insurance to local businesses.



## Supporting local artists

An additional branch of the New Forest Marque has officially launched for local artists and craftspeople.

The New Forest Marque Inspired is now open to people who live in the New Forest, predominantly trade within the New Forest, and create authentic and original art or crafts inspired by the beauty of the New Forest.

Generously supported by Arts Council England funding, Inspired allows local artists and creators to benefit from New Forest Marque membership without the need to source materials locally.

## Diary dates

- 12-21 April – Beekeeping Exhibition at the New Forest Heritage Centre.
- 19-21 July – Netley Marsh Steam & Craft Show.
- 30 July-1 August – New Forest Show.
- 10 August – Ellingham Show.
- 13-26 August – Hampshire Open Studios Exhibition.
- 17-18 August – New Forest Food Festival.

# New Forest marks D-Day 80th anniversary

This year marks 80 years since the D-Day landings and their connection to the New Forest.

On 6 June 1944, thousands of troops left Britain for the beaches of Normandy, France, from various locations including Lepe Beach in the New Forest. This is known as D-Day, the start of the great campaign to liberate Europe and to bring the Second World War to an end.

Many places in the New Forest are now well known for their tranquillity and their disconnection from the hustle and bustle of everyday life elsewhere. But for months ahead of D-Day, the New Forest had been home to thousands of allied troops, their equipment, vehicles and supplies.

The woodlands, heaths, villages and beaches were used for training and dress rehearsals for an event none of the troops knew anything about. Residents recalled the roads busy with trucks, tanks and jeeps, with temporary



**Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers during training on Matley Heath, Lyndhurst and Churchill tanks near Brockenhurst; RAF Beaulieu bomb storage and preparation area**



Pictures: Cody Images/Imperial War Museum



**Anti-tank gunners in Ringwood High Street**

Picture: Imperial War Museum

camps hidden among the trees. In the north of the Forest an area had been fenced off and used as a bombing range.

However, on 6 June 1944 the once busy New Forest

returned to its quieter past as the allied forces left the Forest for Southampton, Portsmouth and Lepe, and from there on to the Normandy beaches.

Exploring the Forest today you can still find vivid

**The New Forest Remembers WWII (2012-2018) project aimed to record all the history, archaeology and living memories of the New Forest during the Second World War, and to make the findings freely available via an online digital archive.**

**You can find the New Forest Remembers archive full of documents, photos, film, and oral history interviews on the New Forest Knowledge website [nfknowledge.org](http://nfknowledge.org)**

reminders of our wartime heritage, from brick and concrete pill boxes and abandoned camps marked only by concrete building platforms, to the scars left in the ground from the old

runways, now removed.

Gareth Owen, an archaeologist at the New Forest National Park Authority, said: 'Many of the troops that had once slept in secret camps under the branches of our

New Forest trees never made it home again. So, on 6 June 2024 take a moment to visit one of these sites hidden away in the New Forest, stop, enjoy the tranquillity, and remember.'

There are many events taking place across the Forest to mark the occasion, including a touring exhibition run by Culture in Common, in partnership with the NPA.

Culture in Common is also calling on others to share their memories of the New Forest at the time.

Debbie Aslin from the community arts programme said: 'The New Forest's D-Day story is partly told by the landscape left behind, from airfields and bomb test ranges, to D-Day embarkation points, but we know people hold the greatest stories of all. That's why we're looking for anecdotes of those living, working or passing through the New Forest at the time.'

If you have a story contact: [cultureincommon@energise.org](mailto:cultureincommon@energise.org)



**A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE  
TO HELP YOU WITH A VARIETY  
OF PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND  
LIFE PROBLEMS.**

**The clinic has a wealth of professional expertise  
for you to call on.**

**Audiology, Chiropody, Sports Massage, Clinical  
Hypnotherapy, Dermatology, Functional Medicine,  
Life and Cancer Coaching, Neural Integration Therapy,  
Nutritional Therapy, Psychosexual Therapy,  
Reflexology and Bowens Technique**



**Celebrating over 30 years of care in the community. \***

Visit the Clinic for the path to a restoration of your health  
Our specialist team of osteopaths Gavin Gobell, Hannah Stevenson,  
Alizon Murton together with Victoria Richardson (Chiropractor) are here  
to help you. A safe and knowledgeable pair of hands for people of all  
ages: the answer to relief of your discomfort and chronic pain.

**21 New Street, Lymington  
TELEPHONE 673377**

**New Forest wildlife park**

OPEN DAILY\*  
SEE WEBSITE FOR TIMES  
\*EXCEPT 25/26 DECEMBER

**BE AMAZED BY WILDLIFE**

Visit our beautiful wildlife park within the ancient woodlands of the New Forest.

Meet our friendly keepers and see the animals up close at the **keeper talks** and **feeding sessions**, plus children love our two **adventure playgrounds**!

With conservation and education at its heart, our much loved family-run wildlife park is home to over **260 animals** from **30 species** around the world.

**New Forest Wildlife Park**  
Deerleap Lane, Near Ashurst  
Southampton SO40 4UH

T: 02380 292 408



Follow us!



SCAN ME

**WWW.NEWFORESTWILDLIFEPARK.CO.UK**  
to plan your family day out

# Spectacular swifts need our support



Swifts spend their life on the wing  
Picture: Robert Booth

## By Catharine Gale, Trustee of Hampshire Swifts

Swifts are supreme flyers, perfectly adapted to a life in the air. They sleep, feed and mate on the wing and only land to breed.

When a swift chick fledges, it will spend the next three to four years in constant flight as swifts do not land on the ground or perch on buildings, trees or cables. They have tiny feet, with sharp claws that are perfect for clinging to vertical surfaces, but unsuitable for perching.

Sadly, swifts are in catastrophic decline. Since 1994 their population has dropped by 62% in the UK and by 70% in the South East, including Hampshire. Loss of nest sites is the major contributor, while declines in insects may also play a part.

Swifts eat flying insects, which are most numerous between May and August. That determines how long swifts can spend in the UK as they need huge numbers of these

insects to feed their chicks.

Unlike swallows and house martins who eat a wider variety of insects and can therefore have two or three broods of chicks during the summer, swifts have a single brood.

Two thousand years ago, swifts nested in holes in trees or in cliffs. Now that is rare and swifts are dependent on buildings for nest sites. They look for small gaps high up where they can access a flat space to nest, such as under tiles or eaves, so the nest is invisible from outside.

Modern building techniques mean that houses built in the last 30 or so years rarely have any gaps, so most swifts nest in older buildings. Thousands of nest sites are lost each year when buildings are demolished, or renovated, or when plastic soffits and fascias are installed. Swifts are faithful to their nest site, so once a pair find a site, they will return to it every year. If they return and find it has been destroyed or is inaccessible, they may not breed that year unless a new nest site is available nearby. House sparrows and starlings

are also experiencing steep declines, and they too rely on buildings for nest sites.

Preserving existing nest sites and providing new ones is crucial to prevent swifts becoming extinct in the UK. Thousands of new nest sites are needed to halt the decline. Hampshire Swifts is a charity set up in 2016 with the aim of stopping the decline of this special bird and increasing their numbers.

We give advice on everything related to swifts.

We supply and install swift boxes - £40 for a single, £75 for a double. We provide advice on creating permanent homes for swifts using swift bricks, and work to persuade local councils and developers to install these in new buildings.

Swifts are amazing and beautiful birds. The sight and sound of them racing, screaming, over our rooftops is exhilarating and an essential part of summer. Let's make sure that continues.

## How you can help

- Preserve existing swift nest sites
- Put up swift nest boxes and encourage your neighbours to do it too
- Record where swifts are nesting on the Hampshire Swifts survey website ([www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/swift-survey](http://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/swift-survey)).

Visit [www.hampshireswifts.co.uk](http://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk). For advice or if you're interested in having swift boxes on your house, email [info@hampshireswifts.co.uk](mailto:info@hampshireswifts.co.uk).

**ASHURST NEW FOREST**  
**LONGDOWN Activity Farm**  
**FARMYARD FUN FOR EVERYONE**  
**OPEN DAILY**  
A farm-tastic day for the whole family to enjoy, with a full schedule of animal activities which run throughout the day.  
Farm produce shop and gift shop. Tel. 023 8029 2837  
For updates visit [longdownfarm.co.uk](http://longdownfarm.co.uk)  
**IT'S A REAL HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE!**  
**DON'T MISS OUR BUMPY TRACTOR RIDE**  
No Extra Charge  
**BOOK ONLINE TODAY**  
Tel: 023 8029 2837  
[longdownfarm.co.uk](http://longdownfarm.co.uk)

**LONGDOWN FARM SHOP**  
**Your one-stop shop for delicious locally-sourced food.**  
Local meat, game, sausages, honey & jam, award-winning cheeses, seasonal fruit and vegetables, mouth-watering cakes, dairy, our own free-range eggs, and so much more.  
**THE LONGDOWN CHICKEN SHACK**  
Visit The Chicken Shack for a specialist range of poultry feed, equipment and bedding. Includes small animal feed, bedding, and straw and hay bales.  
Open Daily 10am - 5pm  
Longdown Farm Shop, Deerleap Lane, Ashurst  
T: 023 8029 2837 ext 5  
E: [enquiries@longdownfarm.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@longdownfarm.co.uk)  
[www.longdownfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.longdownfarmshop.co.uk)

**J. Platt Contractor**  
• Fencing  
• Hedge cutting  
• Hard landscaping  
• Agricultural contracting  
07500868917  
[joe.platt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:joe.platt@hotmail.co.uk)

**THE NEW SURGERY BROCKENHURST**  
**Steven Orton & Associates Registered Osteopaths**  
Osteopathic treatments for all ages. We treat everyday aches and pain including arthritis, sciatica, sports injuries and circulatory problems or just to keep you supple and mobile.  
Nutritional Therapy and Podiatry are also available.  
Telephone: 01590 623311  
[www.thenewsurgery.com](http://www.thenewsurgery.com)  
The New Surgery, Brookley Road Car Park, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7RA

**Esme's Tea Rooms**  
We offer Breakfast, morning coffee, lunch, afternoon cream tea, cakes, cream teas.  
Open 8.30am last orders at 4.30pm  
Email: [esmestearooms@yahoo.com](mailto:esmestearooms@yahoo.com)  
**Esme's Tea Rooms**  
16 Brockley Road, Brockenhurst SO42 7SD

**WESTBEAMS TREE CARE LTD**  
**PROFESSIONAL TREE AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT SINCE 2007**  
TREE SURGERY, TREE PLANNING APPLICATIONS, SITE/VEGETATION CLEARANCE, FIREWOOD, HEDGE CUTTING, STUMP REMOVAL, FENCING, MILLED TIMBER  
01590 690644  
[WWW.WESTBEAMS.CO.UK](http://WWW.WESTBEAMS.CO.UK)  
FULLY QUALIFIED & INSURED

# Nature super-highway's key milestone

Volunteers in the New Forest have achieved a major milestone in connecting the New Forest and South Downs National Parks with a giant 14-mile hedge.

The Hampshire Hedge project is creating a nature super-highway through central Hampshire. Working with community groups, landowners, and the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA), the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is improving existing hedgerows by replacing poorly-managed or lost sections.

The hedge will link woodlands, meadows, local nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), starting at Copythorne,

on the edge of the New Forest, with Compton, near Winchester.

The 'Hampshire Hedgeometer' shows volunteers were nearing the first year's target of planting three miles (5km) of new hedgerows. Around 25,000 whips (baby trees) went into the ground during the winter.

Volunteers even planted a section through a New Forest attraction which is home to a very famous pig. The new hedgerow at Paulton's Park will connect two existing woodland areas with new planting along an old hedgeline that previously featured some stunning, mature trees.

CPRE's Hedgerow Project



The launch of the Hampshire Hedge project in November 2023

Officer Ellie Banks, a former New Forest NPA apprentice ranger, said: 'The dense new growth at the base of the improved hedgerow will form a barrier to provide food and shelter for birds and animals.

'The section is a great example of how the Hampshire Hedge can connect existing habitats across a landscape, aiding nature recovery and the ability of local wildlife to migrate.'

The project hopes not only

to enhance the quality of the landscape but also to raise awareness of the importance of hedgerows for wildlife, climate and sustainable farming.

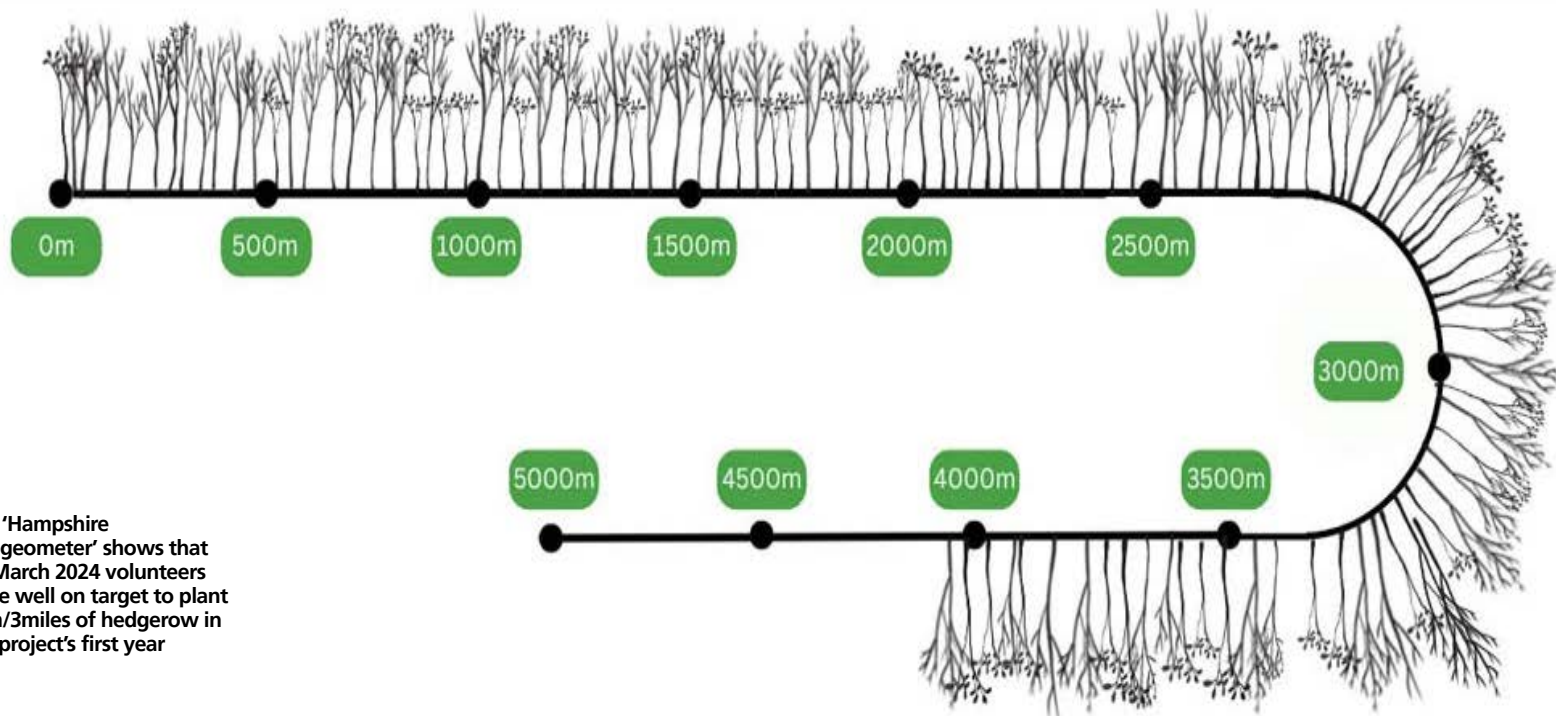
The campaign aims to increase

the UK hedgerows network by 40% by 2050. Hedgerows are an integral part of the English cultural and countryside landscape. However, the CPRE estimates that more than half of England's rural hedgerows have been lost since 1945.

A recent study by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology revealed the nation's hedgerows would stretch almost 10 times around the earth if lined up end-to-end. Unfortunately, Hampshire is one of the counties with the fewest hedges.

CPRE is calling on anyone interested in trying their hand at hedge-laying to join in with their volunteer session every Thursday as it moves across the centre of Hampshire.

● See CPRE'S website for information on the special weekend planting events: [www.cprehampshire.org.uk](http://www.cprehampshire.org.uk)



The 'Hampshire Hedgeometer' shows that by March 2024 volunteers were well on target to plant 5km/3miles of hedgerow in the project's first year

## Your last chance to apply for the grant scheme improving habitats for nature

Farmers, commoners and land managers in the New Forest are being urged to complete funding applications as soon as possible as the successful Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme scheme enters its fourth and final year. Developed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), FiPL supports projects that boost nature recovery and create sustainable farm businesses.

The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) delivers the scheme locally.

A total of £322,000 is expected to be available for

projects in the New Forest National Park with around £73,000 already allocated to a range of new proposals. These include natural flood and wetland management, a market gardening project, and the planting of trees and hedgerows.

Local charity, Ringwood Actions for Climate Emergency (RACE), has started work on planting hedging at a two-acre community woodland space to help improve habitats around the town.

A pioneering deer management scheme in the north of the New Forest will be used as a case study to



FiPL has funded hedging work at a woodland space in Ringwood  
Picture: RACE

help us better understand how to ensure deer populations remain healthy and in balance with their environment. When FiPL was launched

in June 2021 the ambition was to recognise the unique features of protected landscapes by supporting a range of projects that would

reflect at least one of four themes: nature, climate, people and place. So far, in its first three years, the scheme has delivered almost £575,000 in grants for 27 projects, with even more applications for the year three budget still being processed. The NPA's Head of Environment and Rural Economy, Paul Walton, said: 'The FiPL programme will run until March 2025. It has already helped farmers, commoners, and land managers deliver significant

benefits to our living, working landscape with its huge range of habitats and species.

'The success of the FiPL programme nationally saw it extended for a further 12 months, so the programme now has another year to deliver projects to protect our National Park landscapes and boost biodiversity.'

Officers from the NFNPA and the New Forest Land Advice Service will be available to help with applications. They are also offering site visits to discuss potential projects. Find out how to apply on the New Forest National Park Authority website [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/fiopl](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/fiopl) or email [fiopl@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:fiopl@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

# 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:



Scan me to find out more



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.



[newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://newforestnpa.gov.uk)

[thenewforest.co.uk](http://thenewforest.co.uk)  
NPA 01226

kitchen  
bathroom  
bedroom  
office  
living



CRESTWOOD  
OF LYMINGTON

01590 670370 [enquiries@crestwoodcontract.com](mailto:enquiries@crestwoodcontract.com)



Transforming homes from top to bottom