

Park Life

News from the New Forest National Park Authority



Autumn/Winter 2024/2025

FREE!



Dave Dibden and Derek Tippetts, who both care for Pondhead Community Woodland in Lyndhurst Picture: Steve Poole www.steve-poole.com

Working to protect our precious Forest

Behind the scenes of the New Forest there's a dedicated and eclectic mix of people, each helping to care for the Forest's landscape, wildlife and habitats. From commoners, ecologists and archaeologists to farmers, community volunteers and Forest keepers, they work tirelessly year-round to keep it the special place it is.

The New Forest National Park's 'Behind the Scenes' campaign taps into this knowledge and passion, aiming to show a side of the New Forest that often goes unseen. It looks in depth at the amazing rare species and habitats behind the views and the people working behind the scenes to care for them.

The campaign is being led by the New Forest Partnership

Plan group, comprising: Environment Agency, Forestry England, Hampshire County Council, Natural England, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Test Valley Borough Council, Verderers of the New Forest, Wiltshire Council.

Follow @newforestnpa on social media or visit www.newforestnpa.gov.uk

Derek Tippetts, Pondhead Community Woodland, founding member and trustee

The New Forest is not just special – it's unique across the UK and internationally. Its mosaic of different habitats is home to some species of flora and fauna found in few other places. As a volunteer I enjoy managing a community

woodland project in the very heart of the Forest which not only keeps me physically fit but also aids my general and mental well-being.

Pondhead Conservation Trust is a community woodland project and we have provided volunteering opportunities for the local population to appreciate the beneficial effect of working in a woodland environment, irrespective of individual capabilities. We are restoring and managing 78 hectares of Forest woodland under licence from Forestry England.

Our objective is to improve its habitat for flora and wildlife and to enhance public appreciation of the inherent value of woodlands to our environment and personal well-being.

Dave Dibden, Pondhead Community Woodland, founding member and trustee

I go out in the woods and it brings back the way ancient ancestors worked and they were doing it for thousands of years – generation after generation doing the same thing before you. You do get that special feeling sometimes as if you are being watched.

Every season is different – you are doing all the coppicing in the winter and you're freezing cold and wet through and I think 'why am I doing this?' But I can picture myself in the same place in the summer looking at all the flowers coming out – the foxgloves appearing where the light has been let in.

• continued on pages 6 and 7

New Forest Walking Festival



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New Forest arts



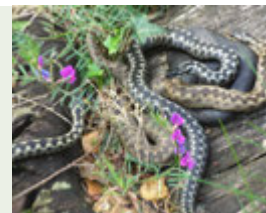
8 & 10

The pigs are out!



9

Species Survival project



11

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YouCAN connecting young people



Youth Board members and YouCAN partners enjoy a residential weekend at the Fort Climate Centre, Beaulieu



Above, two Theatre for Life sessions - one on coastal erosion with Countryside Education Trust at Hurst Spit; in the other, Jazob Mahmud, 14 and Imani Okoh, 23, learn about water quality recovery with Friends of Itchen River estuary in Southampton

The Youth for Climate and Nature (YouCAN) scheme is celebrating a successful first year of connecting young people to nature. The £1.4 million scheme launched in October 2023 to empower young people aged between 11 and 25 to understand and lead climate action within their communities. The three-year scheme also supports green skills and jobs, and an outdoor learning programme for young people from all backgrounds to explore urban, rural, coastal and freshwater areas. YouCAN projects span 300 square miles across the New Forest, Southampton, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, and are led by the New Forest National Park Authority in partnership with the Countryside Education Trust in Beaulieu, Freshwater Habitats Trust, The Parks Foundation in Bournemouth,

Christchurch and Poole, Southampton National Park City project, Theatre for Life, and care and support charity Alabaré. Here are some of the successes from the first year of YouCAN:

Southampton National Park City (SNPC)

The project aims to create a city where people, culture and nature thrive together.

- Delivered three sustainable and educational trips to the New Forest National Park with 38 families and young people, comprising Southampton community members and groups who may otherwise face various access barriers
- Launched 'Guardians of the Greenways', a scheme recognising the Southampton community members stewarding their local green spaces and encouraging young people to take action in their own local spaces and become future guardians

themselves

- SNPC hosted a group walk to share stories and efforts, which was very well attended and has been commemorated through poetry and film
- Commissioned an ecological report on opportunities for habitat enhancement around the Itchen Estuary
- Supported three young volunteers and interns
- Launched 'Young Placemakers', a new mentoring and upskilling programme for 18 to 25-year-olds passionate about creating change in their communities.

Theatre for Life

Theatre for Life is a community led theatre company, creating life-changing projects which make a difference to our communities, using youth voices to raise awareness on issues that are important to its actors and future generations.

- Delivered 12 interactive and site-specific sessions with

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to nature in £1.4m scheme

climate scientists, marine biologists, rangers, creative practitioners and partners including Freshwater Habitats Trust, Countryside Education Trust, SPUD and PEDALL

- During the next phase of the creative development, it will be amplifying the voices of young people in a devised theatre performance 'Generation Anthropocene', connecting with audiences across Hampshire and Dorset in a theatre tour.

Freshwater Habitats Trust

The trust's aim is to protect freshwater life for everyone to enjoy.

- Ran sessions in partnership with Alabaré, Theatre for Life, and the Early Green Careers Network in the New Forest to raise awareness of the unique qualities of freshwaters
- Used real-world examples in these sessions of freshwaters in the New Forest including rural sector industries such as commoning, farming, campsites, equestrian, and horticulture
- Has learnt more about how to engage younger audiences through YouCAN, helping them to develop a greater concern for the environment and enable more people to feel confident in speaking up for freshwaters.

Countryside Education Trust

The trust's mission is to connect people with the countryside.

- Created two new staff roles focusing on conservation and sustainable farming. New recruits Alistair and Kristian are building and enhancing their skills and knowledge across the variety of work involved

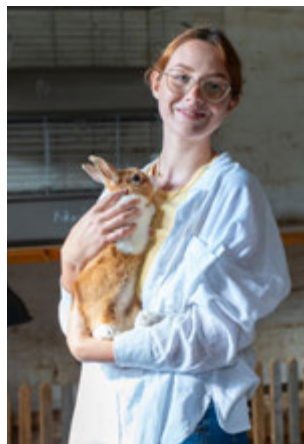
at the CET's base in Beaulieu, which includes a working farm and education centre

- Developed a card game to support the delivery of sessions about animals and farming, and looked into ways to make felt using wool from the sheep on site
- Delivered a training programme for 16 to 19-year-olds providing them with experience in the climate and environment sector. Participants learnt about sustainable farming, practical conservation ecology, and environmental education and had opportunities to develop new skills in running volunteering sessions and delivering activities for local early years groups.

The Parks Foundation

The foundation aims to create inspirational parks that improve people's health and wellbeing, reconnect people with nature and bring diverse communities together throughout the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area.

- Launched a full Young Adult Ranger Work Experience programme, and delivered 19 sessions throughout the summer in parks across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. The sessions are designed to help young people aged 16 to 25 years develop environmental skills in a variety of areas – from managing meadows to surveying butterflies. 19 young people have attended the summer activities with five of them already completing a course of six sessions, and some rangers have gone on to attend more
- Hosted five students from Bournemouth University on



Youth Board member Hayley Quarrington cuddles a rabbit on the residential weekend, which also taught young people about farm animals

short-term work placements, and delivered bespoke sessions for students at a local school

- More young adult rangers will be welcomed this autumn and winter, while in 2025, further bespoke ranger sessions will be arranged with local schools and colleges.

Alabaré

Alabaré supports young people, homeless adults, veterans, the vulnerable and marginalised people.

- Conducted a joint activity with Freshwater Habitats Trust clearing invasive rhododendron from a pond site. The session aimed to give the young people better climate awareness as well as improving their physical and mental wellbeing
- In late October Alabaré will host a residency at RSPB site Cameron's Cottage for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, with support from NPA ranger Hayden.

New Forest National Park Authority (NPA)

The New Forest National Park Authority is leading the YouCAN scheme, bringing together the partners as well as running its own projects.

- Led 13 junior ranger



sessions for 11 to 18-year-olds interested in conservation, sustainability and the natural world. Sessions focused on aspects of Forest life, such as commoning and the importance of the New Forest code. Some have been delivered with partners

- Recruited for and launched the New Forest Youth Board, a group of 18 to 30-year-olds who voluntarily work alongside organisations and groups within the New Forest and surrounding areas

to ensure youth voice is represented wherever possible.

The Board met for the first time during a residency weekend in September 2024 at the Countryside Education Trust (CET). The weekend included team building and a values-based exercise led by the NPA in the Fort Climate Centre, a site tour and animal feeding session by CET on its working farm, a Climate Fresk interactive session led by Decarbon Easer, as well as networking opportunities with

other YouCAN partners

- Created youth volunteering opportunities specifically for 18 to 30-year-olds who may otherwise struggle to access traditional opportunities. Sessions were themed around wildlife conservation, countryside access, engagement, citizen science and the arts, with activities including clearing paths, removing invasive species, conducting surveys, creating art projects, among others
- Part-funded the feature garden 'A Forest of Calm' with New Forest District Council and Culture in Common. The garden was created for the BBC Gardener's World Spring Fair at Beaulieu, in May 2024 and designed by Leigh Johnstone, aka The Bearded Gardener, in partnership with Broadleaf Home Ed Co-op, Solent MIND (Hythe), and Hythe Men's Shed.

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YouCAN was made possible thanks to National Lottery Players, through which £1.2 million was secured from a Climate Action Fund grant from The National Lottery Community Fund – the largest community funder in the UK – and an extra £264,000 in match funding from partners.
www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/YouCAN





Recognising grand designs

Nominations are now open for the New Forest National Park Building Design Awards 2025, to be awarded in the spring. Nominations are invited for schemes completed over the last three years that enhance or protect the built environment of the National Park. Residential and non-residential schemes, conservation projects and green buildings are all eligible. Nominations can come from property owners, architects, local residents, councils and visitors. Nominate at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/buildingawards

Discover the Forest's secrets on one of many Festival walks

Step out into the New Forest during the 12th annual Walking Festival for a 'behind the scenes' look at the National Park's wildlife, landscapes, and communities. The 2024 autumn event will run for two weeks from 19 October to 3 November and includes the half term holiday. Various guided walks from Forest partners will showcase the area's heritage, culture and natural showstoppers. The New Forest National Park Authority's access and volunteering officer, Adam Vasey, said: 'The Walking Festival is a fantastic way to get out into the Forest and see what it has to offer. There are lots of people working hard behind the scenes to keep the Forest special and the Festival is a great way to meet them and discover more about the National Park.



The Walking Festival offers the chance of a behind the scenes look at the National Park

'You can explore an area you've never visited, spot rare fungi on a wildlife walk, or take a walk out with a local ranger to learn about their role in caring for the New Forest.' Hundreds of organised walks

have led thousands through the Forest's marvels since the first Walking Festival in 2013. Last year, the popular Festival offered around 40 events that were joined by 500 people. Walkers in 2024 will be

offered an in-depth behind the scenes look at the Forest's legacy, its internationally-important natural environment and the people who live and work in it. People of all abilities and interests are welcome,

with various routes focused on wildlife, heritage, culture, and arts. Strong and confident wheelchair users will find many tracks within their abilities, while inclusive cycling charity PEDALL will be on hand to help those interested get into the saddle. The charity has a range of e-bikes and specialist cycles and will also offer guided confidence rides.

See the full timetable at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/walkingfestival. Walkers can also download routes online (www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/walks) or use the free app to discover 40 routes straight to their phones with GPS navigation. The app works without phone signal.



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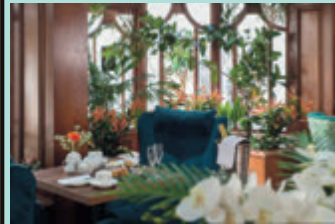


Fri 7th Feb 2025
4 days - Half Board

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DAY EXCURSIONS

October 2024

Mon 14th	Sherborne Pack Monday Fair	£22.50
Tue 15th	Sidmouth - SPECIAL PRICE	£20.00
Wed 16th	Clark's Village	£23.75
Wed 16th	Glastonbury - 2 hour visit	£23.75
Mon 21st	Brighton	£25.00
Tue 22nd	Exeter	£27.50
Tue 22nd	WestQuay Shopping - Southampton	£17.50
Wed 23rd	Cheltenham - VALUE FARE	£25.00
Fri 25th	Bletchley Park, STATION X	£46.00
Tue 29th	Portsmouth - Gunwharf Quays	£21.50
Wed 30th	City of Bath	£25.00

November 2024

Mon 11th	Historic Guildford - VALUE PRICE	£20.00
Mon 11th	Devon & Dorset Carvery + Sidmouth	£36.00
Tue 12th	London - National Portrait Gallery	£27.50
Tue 12th	Gunwharf Quays & M&S Hedge End	£20.00
Wed 13th	Dorchester Market & Weymouth	£18.00
Wed 13th	RAF Museum - London VALUE FARE	£22.50
Thu 14th	Tina - The Tina Turner Musical at the Aldwych Theatre, London	£82.50
Fri 15th	Battersea Power Station - London	£27.00
Mon 18th	WestQuay Christmas Shopping	£17.50
Tue 19th	Clark's Village Christmas Shopping	£23.00
Fri 22nd	Otter Nurseries at Christmas	£23.00
Sun 24th	London - Covent Garden	£27.50
Mon 25th	Brilliant Bristol at Christmas!	£22.50
Tue 26th	Exeter Christmas Market	£26.00
Tue 26th	Chichester at Christmas	£23.00
Tue 26th	Gunwharf Quays at Christmas	£20.00
Tue 26th	Oxford at Christmas	£24.00
Wed 27th	Warner - Festive Lunch	£55.00
Fri 29th	Windsor Castle at Christmas	£52.50
Fri 29th	Kingston upon Thames at Christmas	£25.00
Fri 29th	Winchester Christmas Market	£22.00
Sat 30th	Ideal Home Show at Christmas	£39.00

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Entrance fees/fares are usually included in price

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January 2025

Mon 6th	Warner Super Value - 3* Hythrop Park Hotel	£349
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Fri 24th	North Devon Super Value	£199
	4 days Half Board	
Sun 26th	Warner - 4* Norton Grange Holiday Village	£199
	5 days Half Board	
Mon 27th	Torquay Fun Break at the Babbacombe Hotel	£245
	5 days Half Board	
Fri 31st	4* Belgrave Sands Cosy Break	£255
	4 days Half Board	

February 2025

Sun 2nd	Sidmouth - 4* Victoria Hotel	£499
	5 days Half Board	
Mon 3rd	Torbay 3* Cosy Break	£265
	5 days Half Board	
Mon 3rd	Warner - 3* Bembridge Coast Hotel	£299
	5 days Half Board	
Fri 7th	Quality 3* Torquay Winter Value	£219
	4 days Half Board	
Sat 8th	Birmingham International Tattoo	£169
	2 days Bed & Breakfast	
Sun 9th	Birmingham International Tattoo	£169
	2 days Bed & Breakfast	
Mon 10th	Historic York & Harrogate	£339
	5 days Half Board	
Mon 10th	Warner - 3* Sinah Warren Hotel	£349
	5 days Half Board	
Thu 13th	Cornwall Winter Warner Break	£349
	5 days Half Board	
Fri 14th	Torquay Value Weekend Break with Happy Hour!	£179
	4 days Half Board	
Mon 17th	Warner - 3* Bembridge Coast Hotel	£299
	5 days Half Board	
Mon 24th	4* Belgrave Sands Cosy Break & Dartmoor	£349
	5 days Half Board	

March 2025

Mon 3rd	Newquay & The Cornish Coast	£329
	5 days Half Board	
Fri 7th	Benidorm - Spain's Costa Blanca	£949
	17 days Full Board in resort	

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Dinner Bed & Breakfast

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The Forest guardians working to

■ continued from front page

Jack Stride, beekeeper, of Strides Honey

The New Forest is special due to its diversity of the plants, which is great for the bees and other pollinators and creates a complex and interesting honey. As it is an ancient woodland that is formed on what was once a riverbed, its unique makeup with clay and chalk means we have a distinctive range of plants including heather. As the heather in the New Forest sits on gravel, the honey produced here is special.

I help by providing a healthy stock of bees - they are pollinating the flora and fauna of the Forest to maintain and encourage diversity of plants. I also raise awareness through experience days, workshops and at the market and advise people on how they can make their garden pollinator-friendly.

Nik Gruber, senior tree officer, New Forest National Park Authority

The New Forest is recognised as one of the most important sites in north-west Europe for ancient and veteran trees. These, along with a host of other fauna and flora, provide a rare and important habitat. Older mature trees, particularly of oak and beech, are a particular characteristic of the New Forest. They are a feature not only of the ancient woodlands of the Open Forest, but of the villages and other settlements that have developed over time as an integral part of the Forest landscape.

The New Forest never ceases to inspire and is never the same, with changes in colour and texture throughout the year. It has a unique character and energy, and connecting with the landscape and the wildlife is good for the soul.

Erika Dovey, Commoner and New Forest National Park Authority ranger

The New Forest is a truly magical place full of wild energy, that I'm lucky enough to call my home – I am totally in love with the rawness of this landscape.

It is scrumptiously beautiful



Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli; young Commoner Will Parry-Norton; Erika Dovey, Commoner and New Forest National Park Authority Ranger

All pictures: Steve Poole www.steve-poole.com



Forestry Ranger Charlotte Belcher and Clive Chatters, conservationist and Verderer



Beaulieu River harbour master Wendy Stowe; photographer Steve Poole; young farmer Julia Smales

as the different seasons bring glorious vibrant colours, mind-blowing scents and sights, whether it's the heather in full bloom, autumnal colours, roaring of the stags, foals dancing on the plains, the waves of silver-studded blues or the scratchy song of the Dartford warbler, it's like nowhere else on Earth. With the Forest being busier it's hard to go about our commoning duties. I would ask people to please take responsibility for their

actions when visiting, look out for the signs, pick up after your dog or picnic. Take only memories and leave no trace. **Clive Chatters, conservationist and Verderer** The Forest is extraordinary because it has survived – despite everything. We are the last bastion of the once commonplace. The people whose everyday lives create the Forest are at risk of being excluded by high house prices, high land prices and

low rewards for what they do. Then there is the sheer pressure of numbers of people who want to enjoy the Forest but are unwilling to adjust their demands to respect its sensitivities. We are in danger of strangling the economy which is the lifeblood of the Forest whilst simultaneously loving the place to death. **Charlotte Belcher, Forestry England ranger** The New Forest is such a special place because of the rich mix of habitats that we

have here, from the ancient woodlands to the beautiful heathland that's home to many rare species of wildlife. It's got so much history and heritage behind it too. And culturally, it has such a significance to many people who live and work in the area. The role of the rangers is really at the forefront of trying to achieve that harmony between people and nature, helping people to connect with the outdoors and enjoy it in a responsible way. If

people don't experience and appreciate the wildlife that's here, then they're never going to want to protect it. If everybody really wants to help protect this special place, then the most simple thing they could do is to follow the New Forest code.

Lee Knight, New Forest keeper

The New Forest is such a unique part of wild Britain. You've got various different habitat types within the Forest; the rivers on the boundaries; the coastal area and the salt marshes. It is one of the most biodiverse places on the face of this planet. It's been referred to by some very famous naturalists as the UK's rainforest. The New Forest is no exception in the fact that so many of our wild spaces in the United Kingdom now are under threat. Nature declines have been getting worse in the last century. The vast majority of the work that the New Forest keeper delivers in modern times

protect a precious environment



New Forest keeper Lee Knight



Nik Gruber, senior tree officer, National New Forest Park Authority



Left, New Forest National Park Authority Community Archeologist Hilde van der Huel; beekeeper Jack Stride; Forestry England ecologist Leanne Sargeant



is conservation-based or wildlife-based. We also play quite an important role in the community. We're seen as the local custodian for our patches that we look after.

Leanne Sargeant, Forestry England ecologist

We've got some of the biggest areas of wetlands in all of western Europe. They are vital for this really wide range of species that live in them and we need to make sure that they stay wet. We've been working on wetland restoration for more than 30 years now in the New Forest to really restore those habitats and make sure that they're robust and can function in a natural way. Often people think they can't see any of that rare wildlife because it's hidden away or is small or it's not easy to identify. But actually there's loads of wildlife here. We've got more than 20,000 species. If there was just one thing that people could do to help wildlife in the New Forest, it would be stay on the tracks

and keep your dogs with you so you don't disturb it.

Jonathan Gerrelli, Head Agister

We think of the New Forest as a wonderful wild natural place – which it is to a degree – but it is really man-made.

What we have is a result of man's activities over hundreds and hundreds of years. Commoners turning stock out to graze on the Forest is what has created this unique habitat here – the heathland, the pasture woodland and the browse lines. The animals are free to roam over the entire area and you can't replicate that with machinery. There are so many species which thrive here thanks to the grazing pressure and without that they wouldn't exist.

I was born here and lived all my life in the Forest and my father and grandfather were commoners – it's in my blood. It is always fantastic to go out in the Forest and see all the stock and think 'actually this has not changed probably in hundreds of years'. I'm still a

part of that – it's that link to the history and the continuity of it.

Wendy Stowe, Beaulieu River harbour master

What makes the Beaulieu River special is its natural beauty, making it a haven to escape from day-to-day life. The Beaulieu River and surrounding area form part of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), providing habitats for more than 200 species of birdlife. So while ensuring our berth and mooring holders enjoy sailing on the Beaulieu River, we are responsible for keeping it special by working with other agencies to continue to protect its habitats. Encouraging visitors' environmentally-friendly behaviour and raising the awareness of good practice is an essential part of our role and we would urge all river users to 'do their bit' to act responsibly. Together, we can continue to work to protect the Beaulieu River so it

remains a special place for the future.

Will Parry-Norton, young Commoner, aged 14

The Forest is unique – the way the commoners common it, you have a unique amount of wildlife and unique biodiversity across the Forest. With my dad, it's my job to protect the Forest and continue the legacy. You won't find another place like the Forest in England and maybe in the world. That's why it's important to protect it. People can help by giving animals a wide berth and keep safe – not just for your benefit but to keep the animals safe too. People can also help by eating local, quality produce – it doesn't have to be expensive but knowing where it comes from, knowing that it is from a good farming background, it really supports people which supports the Forest and makes it better for everyone.

Hilde Van Der Heul, New Forest National Park Authority community archaeologist

As an archaeologist, the New

Forest is special to me because of its high level of historical landscape preservation despite its location in such a busy part of the country. I suspect this is due to a combination of its acidic soils and its relatively protected status, once as a royal hunting ground and now as a National Park. I particularly love the Roman pottery kiln sites we have in some of our woodlands – they are a reminder that some of the quietest parts of the Forest today were in fact small but bustling hives of industry a couple thousand years ago. Current challenges for the New Forest include changing weather patterns leading to a growing risk of wildfires and floods. Our coastal heritage sites are particularly under threat from increasing levels of erosion.

Julia Smales, young farmer

I work on an arable farm focused on arable and cereal production. Coming from a farming family, I just love nourishing a plant and watching it grow from drilling

to harvesting and watching the results. The New Forest and surrounding area is a really special and unique landscape to work in. I think it is really important that farms move towards more sustainable practices which are more beneficial for insects and nesting birds. Litter annoys me more than anything – you see people throwing litter from windows, feeding ponies and dumping grass and carrots for them on the Forest – it makes me so angry. I wish people were more aware of the harm it can cause.

Steve Poole, photographer

Lymington-based Steve has recently published a book: *Uncommoners – Portraits of Life in the New Forest*. From intimate pictures of New Forest commoners engaged in ancient agricultural practices to spectacular shots of athletes, workers and artists among the diverse landscapes, *Uncommoners* is a homage to a place that leaves a mark on all those call it home or visit. www.steve-poole.com

We all have Culture in Common

Culture in Common (CiC), the New Forest's Creative People and Places programme, has been working to combine nature and the environment with artistic projects, looking to inspire and engage local communities.

Working with young people from across the New Forest, CiC has commissioned artists to work alongside them, bringing to life their vision of the Forest and natural environment that surrounds them, as well as their feelings on nature and climate.

CiC partnered up with the New Forest National Park Authority and District Council to deliver a project with home-educated students from Broadleaf Home Ed Co-op based at Bramshaw, commissioning The Beardy Gardener (Leigh Johnstone) to co-create a garden inspired by the New Forest.

The garden 'A Forest of Calm' which replicated the iconic heathland landscape that



Motionhouse perform at the New Forest Show; the Forest of Calm creators; Assembled Moments rehearse Future First

Motionhouse picture: Becky Bryant New Forest Show

humans and animals share together, won gold when presented at BBC Gardener's World at Beaulieu. The garden was transported to Bramshaw Village Hall where the students meet every week so that the garden can continue to be nurtured and enjoyed by them and local residents.

A Song-Cycle project has also been running throughout the year. Commissioned by CiC, New Forest Song is

delivered by the Countryside Education Trust, the Rodolfus Foundation, and Hampshire Music Service.

The team is working with primary and secondary school children across the New Forest to produce seven co-created songs reflecting how children feel about nature and the Forest. More primary and secondary schools are being invited to work with the composer and lyricist in

the autumn and winter and the full song cycle will be published in 2025. Award-winning dance company Motionhouse captivated audiences at the New Forest Show, performing its show Wild, a contemporary dance-circus show with gravity-defying acrobatics. The piece was a social commentary on the negative impact of human behaviour on nature and themselves. In autumn

2024, a group of young people will be performing Future First, an immersive, futuristic eco-play as part of Play on Words Literary Festival in New Milton.

Assembled Moments, the team behind the youth theatre, will be running the group beyond the autumn, exploring new ideas and themes with young people from the New Forest.

Between April and July,

Culture in Common reached 11,055 people, involved 496 participants and employed 47 artists. Part of this has been establishing several arts clubs for wellbeing and fun across the New Forest, recognising that loneliness and mental health challenges affect so many people, and that art in its many different forms is a great healer.

More information from
cultureincommon.co.uk



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Pannage protects the Forest and boosts the local economy

As autumn settles over the New Forest, a centuries-old tradition comes to life: pannage season. Pannage is the practice that allows local commoners to release their pigs onto the Forest to forage for acorns, beechmast, nuts and seeds.

Officially known as Common of the Mast, pigs are allowed to explore the Forest typically from mid-September until mid-November, often returning 'home' at night to rest. While it may seem like a quaint throwback to olden times, and an obviously delightful addition to the menagerie of free-roaming New Forest livestock, pannage is far more than that – it's a vital part of what makes the New Forest so special.

One of the most important aspects of pannage is how it helps to protect the New Forest's ecosystem.

The pigs play a crucial role in reducing the number of acorns on the forest floor. In large quantities acorns can be harmful to the ponies and cattle, but pigs can safely consume them, and by doing so, help prevent potential poisoning of the animals that maintain the delicate



Pannage is the practice that allows local commoners to release their pigs onto the Forest to forage

ecological balance.

Pannage season isn't just good for the Forest; it's a gain for the local economy. The pigs, fattened up on acorns, produce special New Forest pannage pork – widely praised for its unique nutty flavour and rich colour. This pork is a valuable product, in high demand not only by locals, but also by top chefs in restaurants across the country.

Last year pannage ham won official registration under the government's UK Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) scheme, as proof of its authentic origins. There is now a call for this to be

recognised across the whole range of pannage pork products.

Commoner and New Forest Marque member Wendy Maughan, from Cadnam, puts her pedigree British Lops out for pannage every year. They start off on the local common, then when the season officially starts they venture into the Forest. Wendy keeps a close eye on her pigs, weighing them regularly to make sure they are getting enough food, and ensuring they are in top condition.

Wendy explained: 'The motivation comes from being able to produce quality meat

for the community that has come from the Forest landscape. You can trace the origins from the land, to farm, to butcher, to plate, and that's what is important; it's local and sustainable, and you know the animals have been well cared for.'

Wendy enjoys the commoner way of life, but says it doesn't come without its challenges, with safety for livestock being a primary concern: 'The worry is the roads and irresponsible drivers. Losing a pig or any animal to an accident, or worse, a hit and run, is devastating.'

The National Park Authority

advocates for responsible road safety around animals, and works with the police and others to enforce and educate where they can, and it is an ongoing effort, especially as the nights draw in.

Supporting commoners is at the heart of what the New Forest Marque scheme sets out to do – championing local produce while preserving the New Forest's heritage and landscape.

Wendy is a proud member of the New Forest Marque because 'it gives meaning to what we do'.

Pannage season 2024 runs to 22 November. Pannage pork can be purchased from several New Forest Marque suppliers including Shappen Stores, Hockeys Farm Shop and Sway Butchers, plus many more outlets listed in the New Forest Marque's Local Produce Guide, pictured below. Look out for the distinctive blue logo.

● See newforestmarque.co.uk/directory/



Support for local artists

Last winter a new category of the Marque was launched - New Forest Marque Inspired - for local artists and craftspeople inspired by the beauty of the Forest. Inspired had success with its first exhibition in August as part of Hampshire Open Studios. Our latest members include:

- Jasmin Glossop - Amigurumi and crochet artist inspired by the beauty of the New Forest
- Vikki Bramshaw - author, researcher and folklore enthusiast
- Heather Joliffe - Heather creates atmospheric landscape paintings of the Solent and New Forest
- Penny Lamprell - Penny works primarily within the New Forest with pastels and oils
- Hilary Bowen - inspired by natural forms, Hilary works mostly with silver and silver clay
- Ruby Gibbons - pencil artist inspired by the animals of the Forest
- Angels Farm Pottery - reduction-fired stoneware created in Lyndhurst

Diary dates

Sat 26 – Sun 27 October:
New Forest Marque Winter Roadshow at Everton Nurseries

Sun 17 November: Eats n Treats at Brockenhurst College

Welcome to the new Marque Members

The New Forest Marque is only awarded to produce that has been grown, reared, caught, brewed, produced or processed within the New Forest. Currently supporting more than 180 members, we are pleased to welcome our latest additions:

- LouLu's Cakes - Bespoke celebration and wedding cakes using as much locally-sourced produce as possible, in East Boldre.
- Sylvan Apiaries - Bee farmers based in Hordle providing honeybee and pollination services. Also honey suppliers.

- Live Edge Wood - Custom, handmade live edge wood furniture-makers in Pilley. All wood is sourced from the New Forest.
- Othens Farm - New Forest eggs, pork and chicken. Based in Lymington.

- Stay New Forest - Full service property management and holiday home rentals.
- Little Timbers - Self-catering holiday lets and supplier of a range of New Forest Marque products. Based near Ringwood.



Artists and first writer ‘in residence’

Arts and educational charity SpudWorks in Sway will be filled with experimental auditory delights from Australian sound artists Em Burrows and Jeremy Segal this autumn.

Em and Jeremy were selected earlier in the year to be the next New Forest Artists in Residence, starting in October 2024.

They will be exploring a relatively untouched concept for the Forest – Community Radio.

Their work will involve capturing sounds from the local community, including songs, stories, poetry and interviews, with a focus on creating a welcoming space where locals can come together to share their voices. Their project will culminate in an installation in May 2025, accompanied by an online radio broadcast that everyone can tune into.

Fresh from his residency in the spring, this October the



Jasper Rouwen returns with his exhibition Friends are Forever

National Park Authority and SpudWorks are delighted to welcome back Jasper Rouwen, former New Forest Artist in Residence, with his exhibition Friends are Forever.

He will be presenting a series of paintings based on the thought-provoking, out of the ordinary moments he encountered during his time in the Forest.

In his own words, his art ‘explores the blurred boundaries and intersections between the domestic and wild, public and private, and mysterious and mundane’.

● Catch his exhibition at SpudWorks until 30 October 2024. SpudWorks is in Station Road, Sway, Hampshire SO41 6BA. www.spud.org.uk

The New Forest National Park Authority is pleased to welcome Yarrow Townsend, author and poet, as the first Writer in Residence.

Having grown up in the New Forest, Yarrow is excited to return to the landscape that shaped her childhood.

This new role, created by Beaulieu-based charity The Countryside Education Trust in partnership with non-profit ArtfulScribe, allows Yarrow to explore her passion for nature and creative writing with the local community.

She hopes to inspire people to connect with the beauty of the Forest through a range of workshops, walks, and writing sessions. Yarrow’s mission is to bring insight to those who may not often have the chance to access the Forest or tap into their creative side, helping them view the natural landscape from a fresh perspective.

A writer of children’s fiction, Yarrow draws inspiration from



Yarrow Townsend, the New Forest’s first Writer in Residence

Keep an eye on the Countryside Education Trust’s website for events: www.cet.org.uk

The residency is funded by the National Park Authority’s Sustainable Communities Fund, which aims to strengthen the wellbeing and sustainability of communities within the Forest by connecting them with nature.

● Stay connected with Yarrow’s journey through her blog on Substack yarrowtownsend.substack.com

the adventurous wonder of being outdoors, combined with a duty to highlight environmental themes such as light pollution’s impact on seabirds and the effects of river pollution.



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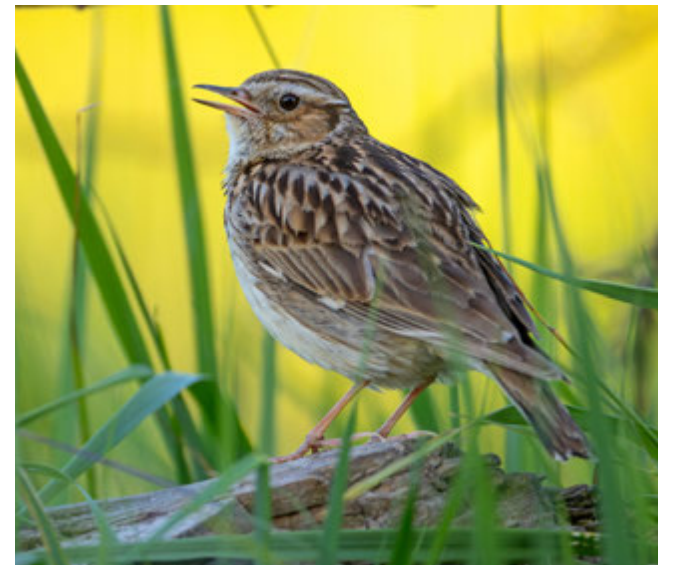


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The Species Survival project looks to the future of the New Forest and its plants and wildlife, such as the adders and, far right, the woodlark; centre, John Stride, Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager

Species Survival project update

Work is well underway to help halt species decline and restore habitats as part of a wider nature programme aimed at helping the New Forest thrive in the future.

The Species Survival project is being led by the New Forest National Park Authority, with partner organisations Freshwater Habitats Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, the Commoners Defence Association, RSPB and Wild New Forest.

Together, they are working to enhance 250 hectares of land for nature – the equivalent of 350 football pitches – across multiple sites throughout the National Park.

Sites have been identified and experts are using their knowledge and experience to help improve the connection

of the New Forest's central core (of the Crown Lands) with the wider landscape, so nature has more space, habitats are better connected and wildlife can thrive.

The work is not just focused on the present but also the future of the New Forest and the ongoing effort to strengthen its resilience to broader issues such as climate pressure and seasonal changes.

The project will see woodland, boggy mires, heathland, meadow, wetlands and streams improved, while new ponds, wetlands and meadows will be created as part of the concerted effort to help ensure the New Forest is a place that will be thriving for future generations.

Survey work conducted across 11 project sites in summer 2024 has already identified

more than 650 species of animal, plant, and fungus, including 50 priority species that are nationally rare or scarce such as woodlark, raft spider and Hampshire purslane.

However, many of these priority species are hanging on at relatively small and isolated sites where the habitat's condition is decreasing due to lack of suitable management. The surveys are therefore informing urgent action to restore, increase, and connect these habitats, enabling these priority species to survive and new species to colonise.

This £1.3million scheme, backed by Defra, will contribute towards the target of protecting 30 per cent of land for nature by 2030 (known as '30by30').

The concentration of expertise and coming together of skills

and experience, building on relationships with communities developed over time is delivering real change and improvements for nature in the New Forest, strengthening the resolve and commitment to keeping the New Forest a truly unique and special place.

John Stride, the New Forest National Park Authority's Net Zero with Nature Programme Manager, said: '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 across the National Park landscape.'

'The New Forest is a world capital for wildlife and by

joining up more habitats, such as heathlands, wetlands and meadows, 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, they are also incredibly valuable for the rare insects, birds, mammals and fungi that 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 are being created, hedgerows are being restored, and even more nature-friendly farming practices are being implemented.

'We can do so much to help the New Forest through the coming decades. This will give

it the best chance to thrive through the changing climate of the coming decades.'

New Forest National Park Authority Chair David Bence added: '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 habitats is hard to find anywhere else in western Europe. Yet, like elsewhere, nature is under serious threat here and the New Forest is the last stronghold for some species.

'National parks cover 10 per cent of England and are vital in helping Defra meet its 30by30 conservation target. This programme represents a major step forward in the urgent conservation work we and our partners need to do for the New Forest.'

New Forest National Park Local Plan due for a review



Cameron's Cottage renovations, RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve
Picture: Moorhouse Architecture

Our planning policies are in place to protect the National Park's special qualities, to guide new development that meets the needs of our local communities and to enhance the New Forest's built environment.

The New Forest National Park Local Plan sets out a suite of policies used to guide planning decisions within the National Park. It includes the scale and location of new development and measures to conserve the local

distinctiveness of the area.

The National Park Authority is now starting work on a partial review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan – which was adopted in August 2019 following several years of evidence gathering, public consultation and independent examination. The plan is key to decision-making on planning applications submitted within the National Park and needs to be kept up-to-date,

taking any new reforms to the planning system into consideration.

The first formal step will take place in early 2025 and will include a public consultation. Following further rounds of public consultation and supporting evidence base work, the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in late 2026.

Find out more at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/localplan.



Save the date!

The area's largest volunteering event, the New Forest National Park Volunteer Fair, is back on Sunday 26 January 2025 at Brockenhurst Village Hall. More than 40 local groups will be offering hundreds of roles for all ages and abilities. Entry is free. Visit www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/volunteerfair

Drivers urged: Report animal accidents



Commoner Dan Rangecroft says he has to cope with an accident involving one of his Forest animals ‘nearly every year’

A commoner has admitted 'it doesn't get any easier' when it comes to coping with losing livestock in the New Forest due to traffic incidents. Dan Rangecroft, 25, has been commoning all of his life and says 'nearly every year' he has had to cope with at least one accident involving one of his animals out in the Forest. There are ongoing campaigns to help reduce the number of incidents involving New Forest animals and drivers, although figures are still relatively high. In the first eight months of 2024, there were 34 accidents

reported; 11 of which resulted in the death of an animal, while seven were injured. Dan said: 'I've commoned my whole life and nearly every year there would be something to do with livestock, where there would be an accident on the Forest. 'Ninety per cent of the time it's either people driving carelessly or speeding. The impact [of losing an animal] doesn't lessen - now I'm older I am more used to it but life would be a lot better if they didn't happen. These things do happen, it's

just the frequency of them. 'It used to be a shock but now when an agister calls you generally know what's coming.' Dan, who estimates he has lost around 20 animals over the years because of accidents, says his mother and his baby daughter have been impacted by livestock being killed. 'My daughter had a donkey hit at Beaulieu,' he said. 'The donkey was born not too long after she was. I gave it to her to start her off commoning. 'It was hit on one of the roads

in the Forest that you do get a few accidents on because it is a busy commuting road. 'You do get times when nobody reports an incident and the animal is suffering. I recall a few years ago my mum had a pony hit on Roger Penny Way and it was three days before anyone found it. 'A dog walker stumbled across the pony and as soon as we found her she had to be destroyed. 'She was in incredible pain with incredible injuries; it was astonishing she had survived on her own for so long really.'

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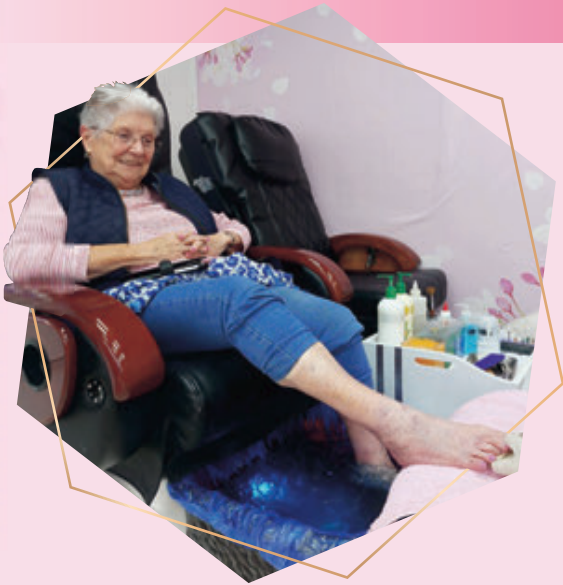
It's the law to report all accidents involving a pony, cow, donkey, dog, pig or sheep to the Police on 999 as soon as possible, and within 24 hours. Call the Verderers' office on 023 8028 2052 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) to report a sick, injured or distressed pony, cow, donkey, pig or sheep (not deer). Call Forestry England on 0300 067 4600 (24hrs) to report a sick, injured or distressed pony, cow, donkey, pig, sheep or deer.

People are encouraged to carry a hotline card with essential phone numbers to call if an animal is killed or injured. Help raise awareness by displaying a new animal safety car window sticker made from eco-friendly materials. Available in many Forest outlets.

As part of the Animal Accidents Reduction Group, the NPA continues to be involved with Operation Mountie, led by New Forest Roads Awareness and Hampshire Constabulary with Forestry England.

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.

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