

Park Life

News from the New Forest National Park Authority

20 years
2005
2025



Spring/Summer 2025

FREE!

20 years of the New Forest National Park

The New Forest National Park was designated on 1 March 2005 – the first English national park to be created in the 21st century and the first in 50 years.

In the New Forest, national park status has:

- Brought the highest level of protection for this special place.
- Secured millions of pounds for nature restoration.
- Helped more people connect to nature for their health and wellbeing.
- Supported local communities and the unique way of life of the Forest.

National parks were established to help the country recover from a world war, protecting our finest landscapes for people and nature.

The New Forest National Park's landscape is unique, a living remnant of medieval England with, at its heart, a commoning system that has shaped the landscape that is home to an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals. It has a historic, cultural and archaeological heritage and provides wonderful opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the outdoors and discovery.

Everyone whose activities impact on the landscape has a responsibility to further the National Park purposes of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

Over the last 20 years the National Park Authority has worked with partners to ensure this shared



A community tree planting event on the National Park's 20th anniversary weekend

'Thank you for your support'

David Bence, Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority said: 'We would like to thank all our partners, communities and volunteers who have come together with us to help care for this special place.

'However, there is much more to do to help the New Forest's unique biodiversity adapt to and be more resilient to

climate change, development and visitor pressures, and threats to commoning and traditional Forest way of life. There are challenges ahead, including lack of funding and resources, but as an Authority we're in a good position to bring people together and lead the charge with and on behalf of our communities.'

responsibility for the National Park is acted upon, bringing people together as a 'Team New Forest' to achieve more than the sum of our parts and tackle complex challenges which are not one organisation's remit. This work is expressed through a Partnership Plan for the whole landscape.

As well as running its own projects, the National Park Authority helps to bring in funding (£8m in lottery partnerships alone since 2013), resources and expertise for communities and other organisations to get things

done for the Forest. Other highlights of working together for climate, nature, people and place include:

- Restoring thousands of hectares of land for nature through partner schemes.
- Supporting commoners with grants, housing and land advice.
- Helping the RSPB to buy a secret forest for the nation in the north of the National Park called Franchises Lodge, the size of 1,300 football pitches.
- Supporting farmers, landowners and commoners to introduce more environmental measures,

with grants of £850,000 over the past three years funded through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

- Developing The New Forest code – our version of the Countryside Code – with partners so residents and visitors can help care for the Forest which, with action on the ground, has helped reduce issues such as wild fires and animal accidents.
- Ensuring planning applications result in the best possible scheme for both the Forest and the applicant.
- Awarding more than £2.5m in grants to over 340 sustainable projects since 2006 through our Sustainable Communities Fund.
- Supporting the next generation of people working for the environment, through pathways into green careers from junior rangers to work experience, interns, apprenticeships and an early green careers group.
- Turn to pages 8 and 9 to see the National Park timeline.

£1m boost
for farmers



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Good news
for our
woodlarks



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New Forest Young Commoners - shaping the Forest's future

By Daisy Slocombe, Chair of the New Forest Young Commoners

A Young Commoner is anyone under the age of 40 who has the right to turn out livestock onto the New Forest. Rights are gained through owning or renting land/property which have commoners' rights. The Young Commoners' committee was formed in 2007 to serve as a voice for the younger generation - advocating for the future of our shared Forest. Encouraging and supporting Young Commoners in their commitment to the New Forest must be a top priority for anyone who cares about the survival of this unique landscape. We are the future of the Forest. Without commoners and their livestock, the New Forest as we know it simply would not exist. However, the challenges we face are significant. Housing and land to rent are becoming

increasingly scarce, yet they are an essential foundation for commoning. Without access to affordable housing and grazing land, it will become harder for the next generation to continue this centuries-old tradition. Our committee is dedicated to ensuring a bright future for Young Commoners. With 15 active and passionate members, we work to protect commoning traditions while adapting to modern challenges. Many of our members also serve on key committees such as the Commoners' Defence Association, the New Forest Livestock Society, the New Forest Pony and Cattle Society, and the Forest Farming Group, ensuring that Young Commoners have a voice in shaping the policies that affect us. We actively raise concerns at the Verderers' Court, held on the third Wednesday of every month in Lyndhurst (open



Daisy Slocombe is chair of the New Forest Young Commoners

to the public), addressing pressing challenges facing the Forest. Last year, we organised an educational talk aimed at improving the quality of ponies we breed; a crucial step in maintaining the hardiness and versatility of the New Forest pony. Events like these expand the knowledge

of Young Commoners and ensure that wisdom from experienced commoners is passed down. What many people may not realise is that most commoners juggle their traditional responsibilities alongside full-time jobs. Our commitment to commoning fits around our

day-to-day working lives, often requiring early mornings, late nights, and weekends. Among our committee members, you'll find NHS workers, a tree surgeon, university students and Forestry England employees. One of the highlights of our year is the New Forest Show, a

key fundraising event for our committee. Funds raised at the show contribute to our Injured Stallion Fund, a vital initiative set up by the committee to support New Forest stallion owners. This fund helps cover costs if a stallion is injured while fulfilling its role on the Forest. The Show also provides an opportunity to engage with the public – educating locals and tourists about the heritage of the New Forest, the importance of commoning, and the New Forest code. If you're attending the show this year, taking place from 29-31 July, we'd love for you to say hello! If you have any questions or would like to know more about our heritage, and passion for the New Forest then email us – nfyoungcommoners@gmail.com. You can also find us on Instagram and Facebook.



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Commoner Bill Howells, who lives in Norleywood, has been turning out animals on the Forest for five decades. He has both ponies and cows; above right, New Forest ponies in summer

'A way of life' for more than 50 years

The tradition of turning out animals on the New Forest goes back generations and it is a critical part of making the area the unique and special place thousands enjoy.

Ponies, cattle, sheep and other livestock are turned out by commoners to graze and forage on the unfenced common land.

Commoning plays a significant role in maintaining the Forest's internationally-important ecology and landscape.

The actions of the animals create a wide range of national and international conservation designations, which make it one of the most prized and cherished landscapes in the UK. But the practice is not without its challenges as commoners are facing increasing pressures on their way of life from all directions.

Commoner Bill Howells, who lives in Norleywood in the south of the Forest close to Lymington, has been turning out animals on the Forest for more than five decades. 'At school I made friends with people who were farming in the Forest, and they

were commoners as well as farmers,' he said. 'I really got into the Forest ways of turning out animals and eventually I was encouraged to keep some of my own.

'I was always interested in the cows and the ponies so I've got some of each. I've not got big numbers but enough for my land.'

The majority of the 700 or so commoners have a full-time job alongside commoning responsibilities. So while it could be perceived as a nice hobby to have on the side, it is far more than that, as Bill attests. 'Commoning is a way of life, in the end,' he said.

The close-knit community of commoners ensures help is always at hand.

Whether it's the changeable weather patterns, the cost of maintaining equipment or a disease outbreak affecting livestock, commoners can always rely on each other. 'We are a community – we are spread out across the Forest but commoning is the thread which keeps us all together and interested,' Bill explained. 'You meet a lot of people around the Forest at events

like drifts (when ponies are rounded up to be checked over) or pony sales, and local dances like we had years ago.

'Even though they might live far away [elsewhere in the Forest], they are our commoning neighbours.'

One of the biggest challenges facing commoners is educating the public about New Forest livestock and treating it in a respectful way.

'When new people come to the Forest they're not sure how to treat the animals,' said Bill. 'They don't realise the dangers, perhaps, to the animals.

'Sometimes people want to go up and pet them, and some animals may turn and retaliate. If people get in the way, they could get injured.

'It puts you in a difficult position because you don't want your animals to injure anybody but you want your animals to be out there to do the conservation job they're doing.'

● You can read a full version of this article on the New Forest Commoners Defence Association website www.realnewforest.org

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£1 million boost for farmers driving nature recovery in the New Forest

A four-year scheme to help farmers, commoners and landowners support sustainable farming has delivered an £850,000 boost to nature, culture and rural livelihoods in the New Forest, with a further £225,000 for new projects available. The Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant programme is delivered locally by the National Park Authority to projects that reflect at least one of four themes of nature, climate, people and place. The funding to improve the natural environment has also enhanced cultural heritage and public access while helping farms be more resilient and fit for the future. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has funded 63 projects in the New Forest since it launched in 2021, and supported nearly 34,000 hectares of land (equivalent to more than 40,000 football pitches) to enhance improvements for nature.

Mires, bogs, ponds, rivers and streams are some of the Forest's most precious assets and a key reason why the area was designated a National Park. Funding for fencing, hedgerow planting and some ditch clearance around a small secret area of waterlogged soil near Bramshaw has helped ecologists begin to identify many rare species including the red listed vulnerable plants lesser spearwort, marsh pennywort and ragged robin. Research as part of the Species Survival Fund has also identified dragonflies, damselflies and hoverflies. With clean streams, more wet bogs than anywhere else in north-west Europe and many ponds, the New Forest is a particularly important place for these invertebrates. Conservationists have also discovered the nationally rare raft spider at the site as well as the robustly built bow jumping spider.



Another key success has been a scheme for farmers to reduce their reliance on mains water supplies and lessen the amount of water impacting the surrounding areas that lead to nutrient and sediment run-off. Thanks to FiPL and the New Forest Water Resilience Scheme, the installation of 50 water storage tanks, each holding 10,000 litres, has brought significant cost savings for New Forest farmers.

At Storm's Farm in Cadnam,

commoner and farmer Sarah Parry-Norton said: 'With the water bills going up, having the rainwater system in the form of a tank filling up our cows' water is brilliant. We've had a water tank for ages for the horses that reduced our water bill by a huge amount, so we're thrilled to have the same for the cows.'

Holly Farm, near Copythorne, which also supports small-scale beef production, has been able to use FiPL funding for a new water

tank to reduce the farm's environmental footprint. Farm manager Eddie Hickman has significantly reduced reliance on mains water which is currently sourced from the dwindling resources of local chalk streams. Eddie has also discovered how storing rainwater has led to a reduction of nitrate runoff from guttering into fields. This decrease in harmful chemical runoff will contribute to a cleaner local water supply and support healthier soils in the

surrounding fields.

Another major upgrade at Holly Farm was the acquisition of a muck spreader, funded through the FiPL grant. The trailer ensures even distribution of manure across the farmland, promoting efficient nutrient recycling and improving soil health. Eddie has been able to reduce his reliance on synthetic fertilisers, which saves him money while also cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The NPA's Head of

Environment and Rural Economy, Paul Walton said: 'The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has been hugely popular with farmers, commoners and landowners who want to support nature recovery and mitigate the impacts of climate change – such as reducing flood risk or storing more carbon.'

'The funding is also boosting opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand our protected landscape.'



Above left, a water storage tank at Storm's Farm in Cadnam – one of 50 provided to New Forest farmers by the New Forest Water Resilience Scheme and the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL); left, a FiPL grant also provided a muck spreader for Holly Farm, near Copythorne; above, Andrew and Will Parry-Norton of Storm's Farm

Storm's Farm picture: Steve Poole



Funding from FiPL has provided some ditch clearance around a small area of waterlogged soil near Bramshaw, which has helped identify many rare species including the marsh pennywort, above left, and the ragged robin, above right; also seen at the site is the bow jumping spider, centre

Spider picture: Matthew Finn

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Crafted by the Forest: A celebration of local makers

When you think of the New Forest Marque, images of golden honey, fresh meat and homemade chutneys may come to mind, but the Marque is not limited to food and drink producers, it supports local businesses across a wide range of categories.

One group the Marque proudly champions is a small niche of New Forest crafters that gather, produce or grow their materials within our special landscape. These crafters include wood and textile workers, potters, and jewellery makers, who live and create their wares locally, obtaining at least 25% of their materials from the land to meet the criteria for the New Forest Marque stamp.

This spring the Marque is fortunate to be partnering with the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst, to showcase a curated group of crafters in a special exhibition. Alex Potter, who designs and makes guitars from scratch in his studio in Sway, is one of the Marque members taking part.

He said: 'If I can use an ash tree cut in Brockenhurst, processed in East Boldre and then further re-sawn in my workshop in Sway, that timber has potentially travelled less than 20 miles from tree to guitar. Using local, recycled and considerably



Marque member Alex Potter, who designs and makes guitars in his studio in Sway, is taking part in a special exhibition of local crafters
Picture: Steve Poole

sourced timbers does present challenges, but it also produces instruments with unique characters.

'Buying local puts money into the local economy, but it also reduces airmiles, increases supply chain transparency and

helps manage environmental impact. This is one of the reasons why I am a member of the New Forest Marque.'

Metalwork and jewellery designer Rosie Wesley is another talented Forest dweller exhibiting. Rosie

gathers natural objects she finds in the Forest such as tree bark, acorns and leaves, and transforms them using direct casting techniques.

Other crafters showcasing include Brick Kiln Pottery, Alpaca Apparel, BearWood, Hollyhock Flock, New Forest Mohair, Cyril's Soap Shed, Kristy Gray Designs and Pondhead Conservation Trust. The exhibition will run from 11 April until 5 May at the New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst.

Passionate about keeping the

traditions and provenance of the New Forest alive, the partnership between the New Forest Heritage Centre and the New Forest Marque is a solid one. Last August the Centre hosted space for the Marque Inspired collective of artists as part of Hampshire Open Studios. Local artists with their paintings, ceramics, glasswork, photography and more, came together to showcase their original works, all inspired by the nature and beauty of the National Park. This year the exhibition returns in August for five weeks.

The Centre also stocks New Forest Marque and Inspired products in its shop and serves local food and drink in its café. At weekends during summer months Marque members are permitted to sell their goods under a gazebo outside the Centre to passers-by.

New Forest Marque Chair Dan Parsons said: 'The New Forest Marque was founded over 20 years ago, however many producers have a long generational history of living and working in the New Forest. Snapshots in time and interesting artefacts relating to local traditions associated with livestock rearing, textiles production, crafts, food and farming can all be found amongst the archives at the Heritage Centre.

'It's a hugely valuable community hub filled with folklore, stories and rich history, and there's always something interesting to see, hear or experience.'

The New Forest Heritage Centre receives no public funding and relies on visitor contributions. It is open every day from 10am – 5pm.

Welcome to the newest Marque members

- **The Fabulous Catch Company** – award-winning fishcakes and fish products.

- **Avi Esther** – nature-inspired healer and therapist.

- **Kristy Gray Designs** – sustainable homeware crafted from local timber.

- **Alderholt Mill** – producing flour made from locally grown wheat.

- **New Forest Cider** – traditional New Forest cider makers.

- **Evelyn Bartlett** – painter with distinctive gouache style.

- **Hannah Richards** – young painter specialising in wildlife and pet portraits.

- **False Faces** – handmade leather and wooden masks inspired by New Forest folklore.

- **The New Forest Candle Company** – ethical candles and bath products.

- **Christine Hale** – watercolour artist inspired by New Forest scenes and wildlife.

- **The Textile Alchemist** – bespoke and sustainable textile art and homeware.

- **Graham Limburn** – leather and wood craftsman.

- **Photography New Forest** – portraiture photography in Beaulieu.

Diary dates

- 11 April – 5 May, Craft Producers Exhibition at the New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst.
- 29 – 31 July, New Forest Show, New Park, Brockenhurst.

- 16 – 17 August, New Forest Food Festival at Hinton Admiral Estate.
- 16 August – 14 September, Hampshire Open Studios Exhibition at the New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst.

Record numbers of rare woodlark

Conservationists have recorded the highest ever numbers of woodlark, a protected species of ground nesting bird, in the New Forest.

A survey by Forestry England and Hampshire Ornithological Society volunteers revealed that numbers of these birds, only typically found in southern and eastern parts of the UK, have increased by over 50% in the last five years.

Around 100 volunteers surveyed 300 square kilometres of the New Forest. They counted a total of 260 breeding pairs, up from the 167 recorded in 2019. This makes the New Forest one of the UK's most important locations for this species, with around 10% of the population estimated to be found here.

The New Forest is an important breeding location for these and several other species of rare ground nesting birds including lapwing, Dartford warbler, curlew and



A survey has revealed woodlark numbers have doubled in the last five years
Picture: Steve Laycock

nightjar.
From the start of the breeding season in late February until the end of August, everyone spending time in the Forest can help these vulnerable birds by staying on the main tracks and keeping dogs with them.
The New Forest is a Special Protection Area for birds and the survey was funded by the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, which includes Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority as partners.

New Forest Code working in partnership

2024 Highlights

Community support

Attended **45** community events and shows

New Forest National Park Volunteers gave over **800** hours to support the Forest

Forestry England volunteers gave over **7,600** hours to supporting patrols and conservation projects across the Forest

Forestry England's team helped the commoning community manage the annual drifts for New Forest livestock with **75** car park and cycle route closures

Supported **20+** community litter picking events

Animal and road safety

13 joint "Operation Mountie" actions to improve animal safety on Forest roads

130 cars stopped on Forest roads

40 tickets issued for speeding and other offences

5 responsible dog walking pop up events in New Forest car parks

92 dog walking businesses signed up to the professional charter

Sharing the New Forest Code

3.8m+ impressions (up from 1m in 2023)

600 social media posts (up from 350)

6 joint press releases

595,000 people reached via newsletters and publications (up from 500,000 last year)

20 tourism information boards featuring the New Forest Code placed in key villages, towns and campsites

Patrols

Over **4,300** hours of ranger patrols

35 joint patrols with the emergency services

160+ wildlife patrols and monitoring sessions for ground nesting birds & during the deer rut

Taking Action

Spoke directly to over **1,100 people** providing education on Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) banning fires/BBQs and petting/feeding ponies

Intervened in over **200** incidents of banned behaviour

A series of joint fly-tipping spot checks on vehicles carrying waste across the Forest resulted in **140** vehicles stopped and action taken against **45** drivers

Forestry England

New Forest National Park Authority

New Forest District Council

go

HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Thank you to volunteers, partners, businesses and the local community for everything you do to care for the New Forest. By promoting the New Forest code collectively, we can all help ensure the long-term future and special qualities of the National Park. Above are just a few highlights of what was achieved in 2024 by working together. The New Forest code can be found on the back page of Park Life.

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Key moments and milestones over 20

2005

February 2005 – The Establishment Order for a new National Park is laid before Parliament.

1 March 2005 – The New Forest National Park comes into being – the first UK national park to be created in the 21st century and the first for 50 years. The Order is signed by Minister for National Parks Alun Michael MP.

2006

1 April 2006 – The New Forest National Park Authority takes on its full functions.

The **Sustainable Communities Fund** is established to fund ‘green’ projects that benefit the economy, community and environment of the Forest. It has awarded more than £2.5m in grants to over 340 projects since 2006.

2007

The NPA provides technical and financial support for the newly-formed **Animal Accident Reduction Group** to reduce deaths and injuries to commoners’ animals on the roads. The Authority is leading on awareness-raising initiatives, including a New Forest Animal Emergency Hotlines card and leading a review of road signs which highlight the dangers of animal accidents.

2008

Five new **Conservation Areas** are designated in the National Park (Forest Central North, Forest Central South, Forest South East, Forest North East and the Western Escarpment) in recognition of their distinctive character and the contribution they make to the built heritage of the New Forest.

2009

The New Forest **Land Advice Service** is established in conjunction with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to support land managers and commoners for the benefit of the environment with advice, funding and training.

2010

The Verderers of the New **Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme** is launched as a partnership with the NPA and Forestry England, bringing in £2m a year to restore habitats, support commoning and increase education about the Forest. The scheme is still running in 2025.

The first National Park **Management Plan** is published to guide the work of the National Park Authority and partner organisations with priority actions to achieve over the next five years. It’s developed following extensive consultation receiving 10,000 responses from the public.

2011

A project to scan the whole national park with a laser machine from an aeroplane begins. This **LiDAR survey** – Light Detection And Ranging – builds a detailed digital model of the landscape and its features, enabling 3,500 heritage features to be recorded.

Gilpin Close, Pilley, the first ‘rural exception’ **affordable housing** scheme granted planning permission by the NPA, is completed. In the 20 years of the National Park, 72 affordable homes have been provided for local people.

The Heritage Lottery Fund announces a £550,000 grant for the NPAs ‘New Forest remembers – untold stories of **World War II**’ project, to record archaeology and memories of the war years in the Forest.

2012

Her Majesty **the Queen visits** the New Forest Show in her Jubilee year and is welcomed to the National Park Authority stand to view exhibitions and activities about the New Forest Remembers WWII project.

The National Park **Design Guide** is launched to help planning applicants understand what makes the Forest a special place and to help maintain and enhancing the landscape and built environment.

2013

The NPA announces a **£4.4million landscape partnership scheme** for the New Forest supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Over the next five years the Our Past Our Future scheme brings together 10 partners and undertakes 21 projects to restore lost habitats, develop skills and inspire a new generation to champion and care for the New Forest.

2014

Navitus Bay Development proposes building an **offshore wind park** of up to 194 wind turbines off the Hampshire and Dorset coast. The wind park would include an underground cable connection to the National Grid



2005: Alun Michael MP signing the New Forest National Park Order



2007: The NPA provides technical and financial support for the newly-formed Animal Accident Reduction Group



2011: Gilpin Close, Pilley, an affordable housing scheme is completed. Over the past 20 years, 72 affordable homes have been provided for local people; 2012: Her Majesty the Queen visits the New Forest Show in her Jubilee year



2020: Excavating at the site of the Bronze Age monument at Beaulieu; 2022: The Calshot to Gosport stretch of the England Coast Path opens



running through the National Park to an onshore substation at Mannington, north of Ferndown. As one of the planning authorities involved, the NPA submits a detailed Local Impact Report with input from our experts in landscape, ecology and archaeology, setting out our concerns about the significant visual impact the turbines were likely to have on the coast and the likely landscape impacts of the onshore cable route.

The development was ultimately refused by the Government, in part due to detrimental impacts on nationally protected landscapes (including the New Forest National Park).

2015

We award over £64,000 to improve around 12 miles of **footpaths**, several of which are gateways to the National Park and have become badly eroded. This includes almost two

miles of byways rebuilt at Hamptworth – one of the routes being a key link between Salisbury and the New Forest.

2016

Our **£2m family cycling scheme** from the Department for Transport funds: a 2km off-road path joining Marchwood to Eling and Totton; plus a 3.5km shared route along from Lyndhurst to Ashurst and a 1km route within Totton, are made more

years of the New Forest National Park



2008: Five new Conservation Areas are designated in the National Park. Hale is in the Western Escarpment conservation area; 2010: Woodgreen Community shop opens, supported by the NPA's Sustainable Communities Fund



2018: The New Forest National Park provides £200,000 toward the purchase of woodland at Franchises Lodge, near Nomansland



Picture: Terry Bagley



2023: The launch of the New Forest Youth Board at the Fort Climate Centre



2025: Families help mark the 20th anniversary of the National Park designation with a tree planting event at Brokenhurst

robust and resurfaced.

2017

A hundred business and community leaders come together to launch a new partnership and pledge to ensure our most precious landscapes work in harmony with the economy. The **Green Halo Partnership** brings together organisations from across central southern England to protect and enhance our 'natural capital' – the benefits we derive from nature such

as clean air and water, protection from flooding, food and healthy outdoor activities.

2018

We approach the RSPB to save a huge area of the New Forest for the nation, providing £200,000 towards the purchase of the 1,000-acre woodland at **Franchises Lodge** near Nomansland. It's an extremely rare chance to turn a huge piece of the north of the National Park into a

special place for nature, making the Forest bigger, better for nature and more joined-up.

2019

The New Forest National Park **Local Plan** 2016 – 2036 is adopted following four years of public consultation and independent examination by the Government. The local plan sets out the updated planning policies for development within the National Park.

2020

Archaeological excavations in the New Forest have investigated the remains of a highly significant **Bronze Age monument** dating back more than 4,000 years. The project's final report was published this year and includes some fascinating facts about the prehistoric communities who once inhabited the New Forest.

The NPA launches the **New Forest code** with partners – our version of the Countryside Code – to help protect rare birds, commoners' animals and habitats. The code is used by communities and businesses, on signs, in publications and online to raise awareness of how we all must help care for the Forest.

The pandemic and subsequent lifting of lockdown sees a huge demand for open space and extreme pressure on the wildlife and habitats. Communities work with us to help care for the Forest, and an emergency **New Forest Ambassadors** scheme is launched with hundreds signing up to report incidents and pick up litter. Over 60 retailers join our campaign to **ban disposable BBQs** to reduce the wildfire risks and national chains including Asda and Waitrose pledge nationwide support.

2021

Central Government funding of £60,000 helps us expand our '**local list**' of non-designated heritage assets that can't be on the national English Heritage Listed buildings register but still contribute to the character of the New Forest. Nearly 2,400 heritage assets are now on the local list.

The **Farming in Protected Landscapes grant** programme is launched. To date it has awarded £850,000 in grants to New Forest farmers and commoners to help them make environmental improvements.

We launch the **New Forest Awakening Festival** which has seen thousands of people enjoy walks, talks and activities provided by a range of organisations throughout March. Messages about the climate and nature crises have reached over four million people.

Our 18-month **£800,000 Green and Blue Horizons scheme** brings together thousands of people to extend nature networks and create wildlife-rich corridors that link National Park habitats to neighbouring towns and cities. Bringing funding to a range of organisations, it sees land equivalent to 147 football pitches

improved for nature and climate resilience across 27 sites; 4,575 hours given by volunteers; 200 events reaching around 9,500 people and 19 jobs created or retained.

2022

The Calshot to Gosport stretch of the **England Coast Path** opens, going through the National Park, as part of a 2,700 mile route around Britain and is later renamed the King Charles III England Coast Path.

2023

We secure a £1.4m lottery-backed scheme to work with partners on **YouCAN** – Youth for Climate And Nature – to connect more young people to the natural world. Youth-led and co-created activities include junior ranger programmes, volunteer opportunities, habitat improvements, walking and cycling in nature, theatre performances about climate change and internships providing experience in green skills and jobs.

2024

The New Forest is the only national park to receive funding from the **Species Survival Fund**. The £1.3m scheme with five other partners is restoring New Forest habitats and increase wildlife across 25 sites – the equivalent of 350 football pitches.

An online **Green Health Hub** of social prescribing activities in the New Forest is launched with the health and outdoor sectors to support people's health and wellbeing through experiences in the outdoors.

UK national parks are the first worldwide to join the **Race to Zero** initiative, committing to drive action to halve carbon emissions within their landscapes by 2030 and become significant net carbon sinks by 2050.

2025

The New Forest National Park Authority thanks partners, communities and thousands of volunteers for creating a '**Team New Forest**' with us to care for this special place. There are lots of challenges ahead – from development and funding cuts to the climate and nature crises.

The 20th anniversary of the National Park designation is marked by a family tree planting event to create a **new 'mini forest'** at New Park, Brockenhurst.

Social Saturdays offer a helping hand to all those keen to be on two wheels

PEDALL Inclusive Cycling has launched new 'Social Saturdays' at Ashurst, offering relaxed, social, confidence-building rides for people wanting support to get back on to two wheels. The sessions are free if you have your own bike, or you can hire a mountain bike or e-bike for a small charge. Registered charity PEDALL offers a fantastic opportunity



to explore the area in a fun and accessible way, allowing people of all abilities to enjoy the stunning landscapes of the New Forest. Operating from hubs at Burley and Ashurst, PEDALL has a large fleet of specialist bikes,

to support people of all ages with physical or intellectual disabilities, social or mental wellbeing needs, a visible or unseen condition, or living with a health diagnosis. PEDALL Social Saturdays on the first Saturday of each month have free bike maintenance drop-in sessions. Manager Shelley Filby said: 'Riding with PEDALL is a wonderful way to connect with nature and the community and see the New Forest from a fresh perspective. 'We'll give you as much support as you need for you to experience the beauty of the National Park in a way that's comfortable for you.'

• www.pedall.org.uk



PEDALL's Gareth and a rider enjoying the session



PEDALL offers confidence-building rides for people that need support to get back on two wheels



Social Saturdays also offer free bike maintenance; the sessions are for all abilities and ages



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Fellows discover the benefits of Forest's Natural Health Service

A recent study showed that the New Forest National Park provides £27m each year in avoided healthcare costs – equivalent to the salary of 999 nurses.

Nature prescriptions, or 'green social prescribing', has been shown to help our health and wellbeing. The study was completed by our first New Forest National Park NHS Wellbeing Fellow Dr James Alden.

Now our latest NHS Wellbeing fellows have passed a six-month milestone in their Fellowship, aiming to enhance awareness of green social prescribing in the area and support the work of the Green Health Hub – a website signposting health professionals and the public to nature activities in the New Forest National Park.

Doctors Laura Pridmore and Jennifer Wyllie have joined with the New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council's public health team to encourage people to embrace active and nature-based activities outdoors and build on the fact that access to green and blue spaces come with huge benefits for wellbeing.

This idea forms the foundation of green social prescribing as a preventative strategy as well as an alternative to medication or clinical solutions, which in turn can reduce demand on the NHS and mental health services.

Laura and Jennifer have reflected on their time on the fellowship, recognising the valuable lessons and experiences they've gained. They highlighted standout



New Forest National Park NHS Wellbeing Fellows and doctors Laura Pridmore and Jennifer Wyllie, working at Pondhead

moments like attending the Pass the PEDALL Inclusive Cycling fundraiser, presenting to Hampshire County Council about barriers faced by people when accessing nature, and meeting numerous Forest groups such as CODA Music and Arts Trust, Pondhead Conservation Trust, Lymington

Parkrun Woodside, and Pennington Allotments.

Jennifer said: 'I feel passionately that even outside of this fellowship, it would be important for all trainee health professionals and all medical specialties to get some exposure to treating public health in non-clinical settings,

because I think it makes you a more rounded clinician.

'One thing I've really taken away is about communication and [the importance of] relationships. Green social prescribing is all about the connection between people and knowing what's available locally – and how to match people to those activities.' Laura said that the opportunities offered by green social prescribing and the fellowship have allowed her to meet, understand, and interact with people and organisations.

Laura and Jennifer are working on ongoing projects as part of their fellowship, including forming a group based at the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst, as well as transforming an NHS site at Tatchbury Mount through

conservation work to encourage workers and visitors to use the outdoor space more.

This is as well as raising awareness of the Green Health Hub itself and spreading the word about green social prescribing and its benefits through potential future talks and conversations.

Jennifer said: 'We both, I think, wanted something that's tangible and that continues on.'

You can read more about the New Forest's National Park NHS Wellbeing Fellows along with people's experiences on the Green Health Hub's 'Stories' section. The Green Health Hub serves as a shop window to signpost people to groups and activities. See www.greenhealthhub.org.uk for more details.

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Culture in Common arts programme gets closer to nature

In 2021 the New Forest National Park Authority partnered with five other local organisations to form Culture in Common, an inclusive culture, arts and heritage initiative for the New Forest Area. Funded by Arts Council England as part of its Creative People and Places Programme, Culture in Common has been successful in delivering creative activities across the New Forest, and continues to do so, with an exciting line up of events planned for spring/summer 2025.

As a member of the consortium, we help guide the programme, making sure it stays on track to achieve its goals and objectives.

A host of creative clubs are offering opportunities for different groups of people to get involved. These include Creative Walkshops running monthly from Forest Arts Centre in New Milton, mixing expressive movement and journaling with an appreciation of nature, as well as The No Run Club, a social group for people in



Activate Performing Arts' River of Hope work; a willow workshop; youngsters have been asked to model in Lego what they want for 2045

their 20s that combines walking with getting out into nature.

Traditional Forest crafts are also proving popular, with a variety of different Romani heritage crafts offered at the Thorney Hill Traditional Craft Club, and hedge-laying courses on offer to Young Commoners keen to rejuvenate and restore the New Forest environment.

Culture in Common Programme Director Jacqui Ibbotson said: '2025 will see Culture in Common step up its delivery of creative events highlighting the local environment

for New Forest residents. The programme works with local people to understand what matters to them, supporting them to design creative and cultural activities inspired by their local place. Culture in Common has been working to combine nature and the environment with artistic projects, to inspire and engage local communities.

'There has been a particular focus on young people, bringing to life their vision of the Forest and natural environment that surrounds them, as well as their feelings on nature



and climate.'

The River of Hope project will be working with performing arts organisation Activate in Ringwood School and The Burgate School in the summer term, visiting rivers in the National Park and encouraging young people to express their thoughts about environmental issues through visual art, spoken word and film.

In the Better New Forest project, Rachel Parsons is working with young people at Priestlands School and with home-educated young

people in Nomansland using Serious Lego. Rachel is asking young people to model what they want for 2045 asking: What does your street look like? What's your village or town transport system like? How do we heat and power our homes? What happens to waste?

Culture in Common is supporting the development of a new Song-Cycle inspired by the young people's emotional connection to the National Park with the Countryside Education Trust and Hampshire Music Service.

By October, the New Forest Song project will have reached seven primary schools, two secondary schools and Broadleaf Home Education groups, with a celebration concert performance on 26 October. Details of how you can get involved are on the Culture in Common website.

We'd also like to hear if you've ideas for a new event.

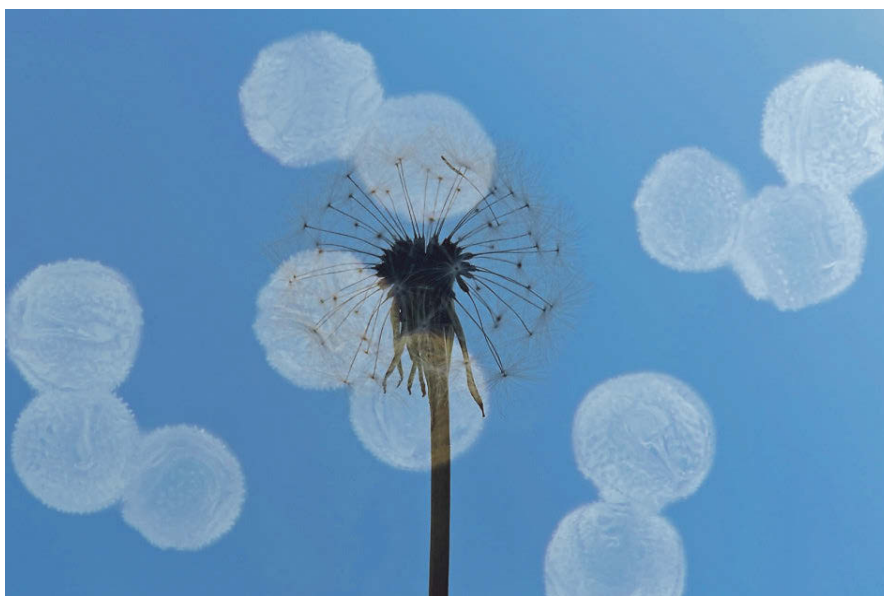
● www.cultureincommon.co.uk

Nature, Sounds and Time: Artists in Residence unveil unique projects

A fresh creative presence will soon arrive in the New Forest as visual artist Isabella Martin steps into the role of National Park Artist in Residence this May.

Isabella will spend a month at SPUD, an arts education charity based in Sway, where she'll immerse herself in the landscape and communities of the New Forest to explore the concept of 'Time'.

The New Forest National Park Authority, in partnership with SPUD and generously funded by Arts Council England, first started the residency programme in 2021. Since then seven different artists have taken part, each bringing their unique outlook. Using their creativity they have explored how people interact with the Forest and the challenges it faces, developing creative relationships with the people that live, work and visit the New Forest. The purpose of the programme is to encourage people to think differently about the landscape especially in relation



Left: Forest Time, and right: Hourglass in the shape of a body part, both by National Park Artist in Residence Isabella Martin.

to its future, and to reach new audiences that may not have been involved with the arts previously.

This isn't Isabella's first artistic study of time. Her recent exhibition, Body Clocks, delved into the science of circadian rhythms, linking the body's internal clock with its surrounding environment. During her residency, Isabella will carry these themes with

her, uncovering the Forest to explore new angles for her work.

Isabella's goal during her time in the New Forest is to create a series of alternative clocks that playfully challenge conventional notions of time. She describes the project as a way to 'connect our time to that of our environment, entangling our body's rhythms with the landscape's natural

flow'. The project, titled Forest Clocks, will be unveiled in a final exhibition at SPUD in autumn 2025.

Meanwhile, following on from their residency in October 2024, sound artists Em Burrows and Jeremy Segal – also part of the New Forest Artists in Residence programme – will return to SPUD with their eagerly anticipated immersive sound

installation, New Forest Collage Radio. This unique exhibit will feature retro interactive radios, snippets of local folklore, poetry, song, and a symphony of New Forest sound bites.

New Forest Collage Radio will be at SPUDWorks from 1 – 31 May 2025. SPUDWorks is in Station Road, Sway, Hampshire SO41 6BA. www.spud.org.uk



Sound artist Em Burrows

Catch the Tour for unbeatable Forest views this summer

Leave the car behind and soak up grandstand views of the New Forest National Park from the top deck of the open-top New Forest Tour bus this summer (5 July -14 September inclusive).

Sit back and enjoy a spectacular, panoramic perspective while listening to an audio commentary telling the story of the history and heritage of the landscape, its people and culture, and some fascinating facts about its flora and fauna. Your ticket gives access to discounts at Beaulieu National Motor Museum, Exbury Gardens and the New Forest Wildlife Park, as well as local businesses participating in the New Forest Card scheme.

There are three circular one-direction routes – Blue, Green, Red – which cover different parts of beautiful countryside



The open-top New Forest Tour offers grandstand views of the New Forest National Park

Picture: Chris Balcombe

and coast. Interchange points are: Blue/Green at Brockenhurst and Lymington, Blue/Red at Burley, Green/Red at Lyndhurst. One ticket allows you to travel everywhere. Remember to bring something to protect you from the sun and an extra layer as it can be

breezy as well as exhilarating on the top deck! Bikes travel at no extra charge, which offers the freedom to hop on and off at bus stops to explore the traffic-free gravel tracks and quiet lanes. Well-behaved dogs are also welcome on board.

Last summer, almost 35,000 journeys were made by people exploring the New Forest National Park on the New Forest Tour instead of by car, saving an estimated 200,000 private car miles and helping to protect the spectacular environment.

The Tour also provides a boost to local businesses. Last year it contributed an estimated £567,000 to the New Forest economy while stopping at local villages and visitor attractions.

Residents in the New Forest District Council area (and Wiltshire part of the New Forest) can buy discounted tickets via the Morebus app. If travelling from Southampton, the Hythe 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 and via the New Forest Tour's social media channels.

It's county show time

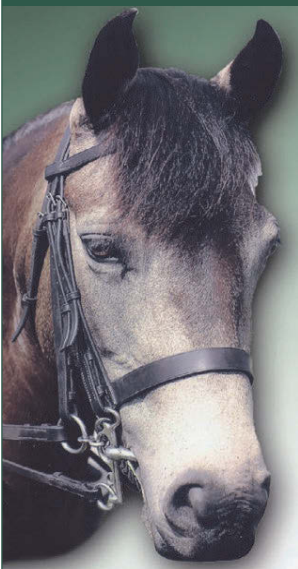
One of the main highlights of the New Forest calendar – The New Forest and Hampshire County Show – is back between 29 and 31 July.

Come and visit the New Forest National Park Authority stand which you'll find in the popular 'Heart of the Forest' area. Discover what makes the New Forest such a special place, and what we can all do to protect it for future generations.

There'll be fun, interactive activities for all the family in the 20th anniversary year of the New Forest being designated as a National Park. Elsewhere at the show you'll find PEDALL inclusive cycling, our partner charity committed to encouraging all ages and abilities out on two wheels. You can also browse stands from local food, drink and craft champions who are members of the New Forest Marque, the sign of true local produce.

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Planning for the future of the New Forest

The New Forest National Park Local Plan – an essential document that guides decisions on new development within the National Park – is currently being reviewed. The Local Plan is aimed at meeting local needs yet conserving what makes the New Forest such a special place.

It includes a set of planning policies based on evidence, national guidelines, and input from those who live and work in the area.

Earlier this year the National Park Authority invited feedback on the planning policy areas proposed as being 'in scope' for review. These include supporting appropriate renewable energy proposals that don't conflict with the statutory National Park purposes; conserving and enhancing the relative tranquillity of significant parts of the New Forest National Park; and considering the



An aerial view of Lyndhurst. The Local Plan guides decisions on new development within the park

scope for new residential development to meet local needs. Following this public consultation, a draft revised Local Plan is being prepared.

Later this year, communities, residents, landowners, parish councils, businesses, developers and interest groups in the New Forest National Park will all be invited to

comment on the new draft. Significant parts of the current Local Plan are consistent with national planning policy and the legal framework for national parks, so will

remain unchanged.

The New Forest National Park is home to 34,000 residents and has a rich built heritage, with over 600 nationally listed buildings. More than 50% of the National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation – the highest proportion of any planning authority in the country. The review of the Local Plan will ensure the right level of protection continues for these special landscapes.

Steve Trow, Chair of the Planning Committee at the New Forest National Park Authority, said: 'The current National Park Local Plan was adopted in 2019 following extensive consultation and independent examination, and we are now updating it to ensure it stays relevant and effective.'

'Over the past five years, national planning policy has undergone significant

changes, particularly in areas such as the climate and nature emergencies and meeting local housing needs. This partial review is an opportunity to positively address these areas and establish the best possible planning policy framework for the National Park.'

The National Park Authority receives and determines over 500 full planning applications every year. These decisions are based on local planning policies that consider the protected landscape, built and cultural heritage, special qualities, local economy, and the needs of the people living within the National Park.

To find out about the next chance to have your say on the Local Plan, keep an eye out in the local press, sign up to the National Park email newsletter at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk or follow @newforestnpa on social media.

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Above left, intern Charlie, right in picture, learning with YouCAN partner the Countryside Education Trust in Beaulieu; above right, Steve Barnard, Trust senior education officer, demonstrates how to chop the ends of coppiced hazel to a point so they are ready for garden centres or hedge-laying

How YouCAN scheme helped Charlie find his passion for working outside

Meet Charlie, an intern at the Countryside Education Trust who, thanks to our Youth for Climate and Nature (YouCAN) scheme, has found his passion for working in the outdoors. On finishing sixth form and having decided that university was not for him, Charlie pursued his love for the outdoors through volunteering, and found his way onto The Parks Foundation's Young Adult Ranger Work Experience programme in Bournemouth, funded by the YouCAN scheme.

Having gained practical experience there and learning from Young Adult Ranger Programme Lead Will Bowskill, Charlie was then recommended for the internship at the Countryside Education Trust (CET), another YouCAN project, in Beaulieu.

Championing coppicing

We joined Charlie at CET on a chilly January morning where he was practising coppicing, a traditional woodland management technique that has been used in this particular woodland in the Beaulieu estate for several hundred years – originally to support the boat-building industry at Buckler's Hard. Now, much of CET's coppiced woodland, such as the hazel that Charlie and others worked on, is sold

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 a further £264,000 in match-funding from partners.

The projects within the scheme 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.

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



to local garden centres or used for hedge-laying.

Charlie not only takes part in the hands-on practical side of coppicing, but also quality control and brokering deals with the garden centres and individual buyers.

Charlie said: 'I love working outdoors - it's my favourite place to be. I just feel alive.' Through the YouCAN scheme, CET has supported 11 interns across a range of specialisms including wading bird conservation, orchard management and creation of educational materials.

In December, CET hosted seven interns at the same time, working on different projects but networking with each other. Two of these

interns have since found paid work in the environmental sector and say that it was the practical experience they gained through the YouCAN internship that helped them stand out in the application process.

Dorset-based charity The Parks Foundation's work experience programme for young adults gives people aged 16-25 in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area a chance to try out an environmental career, and build nature connections, confidence and crucial experience for their CV.

New skills

Skills the programme helps to develop include species conservation, habitat creation,

wildlife surveys, landscaping and park maintenance, among others.

YouCAN funding has enabled The Parks Foundation to put more time and resource towards specifically focusing on 16-25-year-olds like Charlie, a demographic which, according to Will Bowskill, it has previously struggled to engage with.

He said: 'Charlie was our first Ranger to sign up. He came along to our sessions and impressed me with his work ethic. He was keen to get involved with anything he could, and we worked on his practical skills and knowledge to help him find work.'

Hands-on experience

'Charlie particularly improved his woodworking skills and technique in using hand tools,' said Will.

'It's important for young people to have opportunities to explore a potential career pathway and gather a varied



Countryside Education Trust intern Charlie coppicing

skillset to help them discover their passions and potential and possibly start them on their future track.'

The Youth for Climate and Nature scheme aims to empower young people to develop green skills and lead climate action in their communities.

Charlie said: 'Projects like this are important for young people to build green skills. Working in these woods, getting things ready for the garden centre, knowing this is successional, this is all going to grow back, extending the lives

of these trees. That hands-on experience makes me understand it a lot more.

'There's not been a barrier of "you need a degree or a qualification, so you can't come in". I've been able to get to where I want because YouCAN's provided that funding and those projects. 'They've taken a barrier down, so it's enabled me to get into volunteering, to get a passion for it and also, now that I'm here, there's paid experience in conservation on my CV which is a massive help for the future.'

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