

20 years

2005
2025



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

Chief Executive's report

October 2025



Business Plan themes

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



Re:New Climate



Re:New Nature



Re:New People



Re:New Place



Re:New Partnership

Re:New Organisation – Achieving Excellence

Protect – First Purpose

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



FE Car parking scheme

Forestry England announced proposals to introduce parking charges across its 129 sites in spring 2026.

Understanding the need to raise income, we have asked for:

- All income raised in the Forest to be reinvested in the Forest
- Robust measures to counteract displacement parking
- A local concession scheme
- Minimal infrastructure that would impact the character of the Forest.

A nationwide FE parking membership is available, currently at £94/year or £2 a week. There will be exemptions for those working in the Forest.



Duty to further National Park purposes

- Introduced in 2023.
- Legal requirement for responsible organisations to further NP purposes rather than just 'have regard to'.
- Strengthened duty was reportedly under threat – concern could be repealed or weakened.
- Not amongst Planning Bill amendments tabled on 14 October.



Species Survival Fund (SSF) new species discovered

- £1.3m scheme to restore New Forest habitats and increase wildlife.
- Improving 250 hectares for nature over more than 20 sites – the equivalent of 350 football pitches.
- Six partners: NPA, Freshwater Habitats Trust; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Commoners Defence Association; Wildlife Trust, Wild New Forest.
- Three new species of ladybird – great media coverage and positive feedback from good news story.



Dibden 'Solent Gateway 2' proposals

Announcement of informal 'Solent Gateway 2' proposals by Associated British Ports for:

- An automotive terminal
- New access road
- Country park
- Nature area.

Illustrative plans show the footprint would go into the National Park.



Local Plan

- Preparing for six-week consultation beginning 5 November
- Evidence base finalised
- Roadshows around National Park communities
- New online consultation platform
- Examination by Government inspector due in 2027.



Buckler's Hard excavation

Archaeology team worked with University of Southampton and the Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust to uncover the shipbuilding slipway at Buckler's Hard.

24 NPA volunteers assisted three-week excavation.



Supporting and championing commoning

- NFLAS livestock workshops
- FiPL grants for Commoners
- Meeting with Minister at New Forest Show
- Briefed all local MPs
- Meeting with Foundation for Common Land.



**VERDERERS
OF THE
NEW FOREST**



Enjoy – Second Purpose

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



YouCAN youth for climate and nature scheme

- First New Forest Thrive festival in Ringwood attended by over 500 people
- Youth Board – over 600 volunteer hours in a year.
- Great presence at New Forest Show.



Rangers

Engaged with 6,000 members of public.

Patrols including Operation Mountie animal accidents reduction campaign.

Community events including Brockenhurst College Freshers Week re safe driving and PSPOs.

Organising walks for the Walking Festival.



Campaign to reduce animal accidents

- New Forest Drive Safe campaign launched to encourage businesses to share messaging with staff.
- Operation Mountie.
- Communications around clocks changing and increased accident risks due to darker nights/morning.



Park Life

- Water campaign
- Commoners feature
- Local Plan review
- New Forest Drive Safe campaign
- Nature infographic
- Coastal birds
- New Forest Marque
- Youth board
- Artist in residence.

Park Life

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NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

News from the New Forest National Park Authority

Autumn/Winter 2025

FREE!



Ponds at a New Forest Pond

The New Forest is one of the best places for freshwater habitats in the UK – a habitat that's declining globally. In the heart of the National Park there's an abundance of pristine ponds, streams and wetlands, largely free of significant pollution. Yet the picture changes as you move downstream, where a combination of sewage and water spills, leaking septic tanks, land use practices, chemicals and road drainage all have a negative impact on water quality. A programme of restoring rivers and wetlands is included

In the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan, and the National Park Authority convenes a New Forest Water Catchment Partnership with Freshwater Habitats Trust to drive this forward. A partnership of landowners, government agencies, organisations and communities are:

- creating new ponds
- restoring natural water courses
- reducing non-native invasive plants in our rivers
- helping farmers reduce polluting run-off

However, more needs to urgently be done to improve our water quality and to prioritise investment in our most treasured landscapes. Dr Naomi Ewald of Freshwater Habitats Trust said: 'The New Forest's diverse array of freshwater plants and animals are supported by a vibrant mosaic of habitats from ponds and bogs to rivers and streams, and mudflats and saltmarshes. Protecting these high-quality habitats won't just safeguard the Forest's biodiversity, it could also be the key to reversing the decline of freshwater wildlife across England and Wales. Building out from the Forest's biodiversity hotspots, we can create a network of healthy, unpolluted and interconnected freshwater habitats to allow species to spread across the landscape.' Paul Walton, the New Forest National Park Authority's Head of Environment and Rural Economy, said it's essential that national parks are taken into consideration in changes to water regulation which are currently being considered. He said: 'We and our partners

continue to demand faster, more concerted action and need determined focus on adequate resourcing from our water companies and regulators to achieve best water quality for the internationally important New Forest National Park. 'If our national parks are to retain their iconic status, reach their potential as havens for wildlife and support our nation's health and wellbeing then action is needed to ensure the highest water quality standards can be achieved.'

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How we can all help improve our water quality

- 1) Keep any septic tanks in good order.
- 2) Use eco friendly cleaning products.
- 3) Only put flushable waste down the toilet.
- 4) Follow the New Forest Water Code
 - Leave no trace – pick up dog mess and use local toilets.
 - Use suitable facilities – to
- 5) Get rid of waste water
 - Check, clean and dry – make sure any kit doesn't spread pests and diseases
 - Right activity, right place – for paddle sports and swimming
 - Stick to the path – wild camping isn't allowed
 - On the right track – keep dogs under control and stick to permitted paths.

Water facts

The New Forest:

- supports 30% of England's threatened freshwater species
- contains 75% of all the lowland bogs and valley mires found in north-west Europe
- supports 65% of the UK's wetland plants (around 300 species)
- is home to over 30% of the UK's freshwater invertebrates (around 400 species)

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National Park Awards with the CLA

New Commoning Champion award.
Winners of the 2025 awards – supported
by Moore Barlow and
the New Forest Agricultural Show Society:

Young Farmer: Lewis Potter from
Calmore

Best Supporter of Local Produce: Sway
Butchers

Sustainability Champion: Ringwood
Repair Café

Young Environmental Champion: Rhys
Leighton from West Wellow

Farming and Nature Champion: Ben
Dolbear from Beaulieu

Commoning Champion: Andrew Parry-
Norton from Cadnam.



Nightjar Project

- Project to highlight the migration of the nightjar from West Africa to the New Forest.
- Artist Kwame Bakoji-Hume created a large nightjar sculpture.
- Activity to make nightjar models.
- Project has been present at several events over the summer including the Thrive Festival, New Forest Show and Southampton Mela.
- Helps open up conversations about belonging and connection.



PEDALL

- New Forest Show
- Pass the PEDALL – 2nd year and attendance doubled to over 400.
- At least £7,000 raised so far.



Breamore Railway footpath

Working with volunteers and Hampshire County Council to improve two-miles of former railway line with vegetation clearance, surfacing and tree works.



Prosper – Our Duty

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



Green skills and jobs

- Greenprint Partnership – green skills and jobs study completed by NPA and University of Southampton.
- New Forest District Council – working with NFDC economic development scheme to develop opportunities in conservation, land management, forestry sectors.
- Business South Blog - vision for 'World Class Environment and World Class Economy' and connecting with devo/LGR vis'



Sustainable transport

- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan approved by Hampshire County Council.
- Transport Summit planned for November.



Sustainable Communities Fund

Hale village hall – grant of £2,000 for LED lighting and movement sensors



Photo: Hale Village Hall

Health Fellows

Health Fellows Laura and Jennifer ended their year-long fellowship.

Presented at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Resident Doctor Wellbeing and Awards Day on 29 September at Shirrell Health and led a nature connection walk for attendees.



Excellence



New Forest Show

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- 20th anniversary reception setting out challenges ahead
- Minister Baroness Sharon Taylor visit
- Stand featured the YouCAN scheme with Youth Board asking for views about the Forest
- Archaeology - Roman pots
- Ground nesting birds
- 2,500 attended.



MP tours

MP tours to see Partnership Plan projects and discuss challenges.

L to r: Sir Julian Lewis at Buckler's Hard; Sir Desmond Swayne at Breamore Railway Line; Caroline Nokes with Freshwater Habitats Trust and NPA.



Hosted National Parks England Board



Thank you to NPA members

Saying goodbye and thank you to (left to right) Chair of Resources and Deputy Chair Patrick Heneghan, our Chair David Bence and former Chair Prof Gavin Parker.



Welcome to New NPA members

Adarsh Parekh



Ella Mason



James Wylor-Owen



Women in protected landscapes

Women in Protected Landscapes - the place edit



Welsh Wildlife Trusts visit



New Forest Walking Festival

- 18 October to 2 November
- 45 walks with experts
- Family-friendly half-term walks; long, more challenging rambles; and plenty of accessible routes
- Some already sold out.

