

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

First Quarter, 2015-16 Work Programme

Enjoy

We will champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone can enjoy, understand, value and care for its special qualities.

Enjoy Priority 1: Enabling high quality experiences of the National Park

We will enhance people's experience and enjoyment of the National Park, by:

- working with local communities, land managers and highway authorities to improve sites and routes for people
- developing projects that enable people with particular needs to experience and benefit from the New Forest
- working with partners and local businesses to improve visitor facilities and information within and around the National Park
- encouraging people to volunteer in ways which benefit the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Team	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Work with partners to enhance at least five local sites by improving access, routes or information provision through access grants and sustainable transport funding.	Mark Holroyd	Discussions held with Hampshire County Council about continuing to fund a proportion of their Stiles to Gates Scheme (SGS). One application in the New Forest area through Small Grants Scheme from Fordingbridge Town Council to reprint popular 'Exploring Fordingbridge' guided walk leaflet.		
Work with partners and communities to develop and deliver visitor information opportunities through visitor centres, eight+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell	Melt Ice Cream Parlour launched as new Local Information Point in Brockenhurst. New mobile information unit up and running with three distinct interpretation display 'modes' – general information, family cycling and ground nesting birds. Smaller mobile unit still operational and being used in tandem with larger unit by campsite seasonals over the summer.		
Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 25+ volunteering organisations and attended by 200+ prospective volunteers.	Jim Mitchell	Volunteering continues with the New Forest Remembers WWII project, Higher Level Stewardship scheme heritage mapping, Community Wildlife Plans project, Date with Nature and Inclusive Cycling. The Our Past, Our Future scheme contains substantial volunteering activity and preparation for the expected start in the autumn has continued.		
Engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented through projects including Mosaic Youth and Healthy Walks.	Gillie Molland	Current focus is to ensure the maximum number of young people engage and benefit from the project in its final year. Two large events are being planned to reach out to local young people. Support to New Forest Healthy Walks continues. Fordingbridge Healthy Walks, set up by NPA Ranger, now has sustainable number of volunteer walk leaders and continues to attract over 15 participants each walk.		

Action/Outcome	Team	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop two+ pilot projects to explore how the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest can benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors, sharing results to inform further work.	Jim Mitchell	'Healthy Forest, Healthy People: a joint agenda?' workshop attended by over 30 people from the health, environment and land management sectors. Discussions about potential for natural and cultural heritage and greenspace to address local health and wellbeing needs. Speakers included Dr William Bird of Intelligent Health. Common goals and objectives were created and will help inform local health and wellbeing work.		
Deliver inclusive cycling sessions to 500 people with a range of disabilities and establish a not-for-profit inclusive cycling organisation.	Mark Holroyd	In this quarter: New Forest Inclusive Cycling rebranded; now known by the moniker 'PEDALL', delivered sessions to 450 participants and identified three candidates to act as Trustees for the new not-for-profit organisation.		

Enjoy Priority 2: Improving understanding of the National Park

We will further people's understanding of, respect for and desire to care for the special qualities of the National Park, by:

- leading the development and delivery of curriculum-linked educational programmes for schools, colleges and other groups
- delivering engaging events, activities, interpretation and informal learning activities for different audiences
- maximising the use of social media and online resources to reach new audiences
- enabling educators, businesses and people with public-facing roles to be ambassadors for the New Forest.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Promote the special qualities, our work and key messages through 20 public events led or co-led by the Authority, 50 community events run by other organisations, opportunistic use of mobile unit and an on-the-ground presence throughout the National Park.	Gillie Molland	<p>Rangers spoke with 4,815 contacts in this quarter, attending 27 events with the mobile information unit.</p> <p>Eight ground nesting bird awareness and responsible dog walking sessions were delivered, speaking to 309 people.</p> <p>'Look but don't touch' leaflets and posters distributed to businesses and attractions to reduce the number of incidents and accidents from petting and feeding of the ponies.</p> <p>Over 400 people attended Lepe into Action event trying a range of activities accessible to all including children and young people with disabilities.</p> <p>Over 500 people attended the Lepe heritage and archaeology weekend of exhibitions, talks and guided walks.</p>		
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities which promote the Forest's special qualities including selfguided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, training, and permanent and touring exhibitions.	Jim Mitchell	<p>Pack of 11 self-guided walks launched, focussing on rights of way and access from villages and public transport. These are proving popular and are selling well from information points and other locations.</p> <p>Date with Nature at the Reptile Centre has seen over 10,000 people attending in this quarter.</p>		
Deliver a communications service of the highest standard, reviewing our messaging and accessibility, increasing our combined social media audience from 19,000 to 25,000, doubling the number of email newsletter subscribers, creating an information leaflet with online resource for new residents and marking the 10th anniversary of the National Park designation.	Hilary Makin	<p>Combined social media audience has risen to 24,092. E-mail newsletter subscribers has risen by 38%.</p> <p>The 10th anniversary was marked by three Simon King wildlife films and an anniversary theme for staff Discovery Days.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop and lead curriculum-specific sessions for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school.	Sue Palma	Curriculum sessions were delivered to 1613 students from 29 education establishments, and a further 892 children from 6 schools attended Litter Assemblies during this quarter.		
Work with primary and secondary schools to embed the New Forest into their curriculum, including annual conferences and the New Forest Curriculum website.	Sue Palma	The education team worked with teachers from 6 new schools to plan topics featuring the Forest. Teachers from 8 local schools shared best practice in learning outside the classroom at the annual Primary School Teachers Conference at Brockenhurst, with all of the delegates expressing a high level of satisfaction, and reporting that they would take ideas back to school.		
Develop and deliver informal learning activities for noncurriculum groups, societies etc, including Wild Play Day events in partnership with members of New Forest Educators Forum.	Sue Palma / Gillie Molland	Very successful Wild Play Day on the Beach at Hurst Spit with over 800 people discovering fun ways to explore, play and get creative in the outdoors with minimal materials and resources. This was a joint event run in partnership with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Rangers visited eight preschools talking to 253 children.		

Enjoy Priority 3: Managing recreation to benefit the National Park

We will work in partnership with others to encourage and manage appropriate recreation, by:

- agreeing and implementing recreation management strategies that benefit people and the New Forest
- raising awareness of issues such as litter, feeding of ponies, disturbance of wildlife, fungi picking and animal accidents
- enabling the New Forest Access Forum to provide useful advice on improving public access
- undertaking and supporting research to clarify positive and negative impacts of recreation locally.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop an evidence base relating to recreation and visitors to provide meaningful data to inform decision-making and communications e.g. value and volume of the visitor economy, visitor surveys and recreation management information.	Mark Holroyd	A 2015 visitors survey was procured for delivery in Q2. The methodology for the survey has been improved using advice from a PhD student we are working with at Bournemouth University School of Tourism.		
Engage recreational user groups and local organisations in agreeing an overall plan for where within and around the National Park we should encourage people to go to enjoy outdoor recreation – and how this should be achieved.	Nigel Matthews	The Recreation Management Strategy (RMS) Steering Group is developing a Memorandum of Understanding to summarise the desirable outcomes, guiding principles and criteria that underpin the way in which statutory organisations will work together to improve the management of recreation across the New Forest. The RMS Advisory Group was largely positive about the MoU and both Groups are keen to progress to the next stage in which specific proposals are developed.		

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<p>Play a leading role in the coordination of targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter, fungi, disturbance of ground nesting birds and feeding of ponies.</p>	<p>Nigel Matthews</p>	<p>Current projects that incorporate educational messages include the Date with Nature event at the Reptile Centre (ground nesting birds), the New Forest Tour (animal accidents), our stand at the New Forest Show (ground nesting birds), a new video being developed for the New Forest Centre museum (various) and bike navigation devices to be provided via bike hire businesses (stay on permitted routes).</p> <p>Our ground nesting birds work will be greatly helped now that the new People and Wildlife Ranger has arrived (funded through the SLA with New Forest District Council).</p> <p>The Lymington Times featured a map of all the animal accidents that were recorded in 2014 – highlighting the routes where drivers need to take special care. There is now a plan to refresh the warning signage on the B roads across the north of the Forest, including several ‘changing signs’ of the kind trialed on the B3054 in recent years.</p> <p>Most recent cycle events have been compliant with the Cycle Event Organisers’ Charter, the Wiggle Spring Sportive being the exception. Although most cyclists cycled considerately and most motorists coped well with the inevitable inconvenience, some very poor cycling and some very dangerous driving was observed.</p> <p>The Dogs Forum has developed a questionnaire in which we are asking dog walkers what they expect of commercial dog walkers regarding things like price, control over dogs while being walked and whether they pick up after the dogs. We hope to use the answers to encourage commercial dog walkers to follow the Dog Walking Code.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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<p>Enable the New Forest Access Forum to provide helpful advice to relevant organisations on improving public access.</p>	<p>Mark Holroyd</p>	<p>The Forum met on 1 June. Two new members have been appointed to the Forum.</p> <p>The Forum received an update on revisions to HCC's Countryside Access Plan and the implications of the Deregulation Act for countryside access. The panel were consulted on the final draft of the National Park Management Plan and HCC's Cycling Strategy.</p> <p>A subgroup of forum members has been advising the Authority on a new campaign with the working title 'Give each other breathing space' to encourage mutual respect by all on roads and tracks. The campaign will launch in the autumn with support from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.</p>		