

BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2015

Fourth Quarter, 2014-15 Operational Plan

Enjoy

We will work to champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities.

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

We will add to people's experience and enjoyment of the National Park through better access, information and interpretation, by:

- Identifying a network of core routes within and around the National Park, working with land managers, highway authorities and user groups
- continuing to facilitate the work of the New Forest Access Forum in advising on all aspects of access, providing advice and resources for specific local projects that improve public access
- developing projects that enable people with particular needs to experience the New Forest at first-hand
- working with partners and local businesses to improve visitor facilities within and around the National Park
- encouraging people to volunteer their time and skills in ways which benefit the New Forest.

As measures of success, we will:

- Assess a potential network of core routes, involving all local interests
- enable the delivery of at least five access improvement projects annually
- establish at least four major volunteer initiatives and an annual event to promote volunteering in the Forest.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Work with partners to improve at least five existing routes and rights of way through access grants and sustainable transport funding.	Mark Holroyd / Gillie Molland	<p>The Small Grants Scheme panel met on 27 January. There were 7 applications with one in the NFAF area. Hyde Parish Council were successful in their submission to reinstate footpath 740 which has been badly eroded by the river. The Authority provided an additional grant to this project to ensure its successful completion.</p> <p>The NPA contributed to two path improvements in Wiltshire, both of which couldn't have been completed without our contribution. Elements of the Gills Hole path were completed with local volunteers assisted by an NPA ranger.</p> <p>Year total: 6 improvements</p>		
Work with partners and communities to develop and deliver visitor information opportunities through visitor centres, 8+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell	<p>Replacement Local Information Point recruited in Brockenhurst.</p> <p>Support given to other informal information points.</p> <p>Interactive 'plan your day' exhibit commissioned and developed for installation in the New Forest Centre VIC.</p>		
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	<p>Volunteering fair and guide 2015 delivered with 300 people attending and 35 organisations represented.</p> <p>HLS, New Forest Remembers, Date with Nature and Community Wildlife Plans volunteering continuing.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Engage with groups usually thought to be underrepresented through projects including Mosaic Youth, Healthy Walks and Inclusive Cycling.	Gillie Molland	<p>A regular Healthy Walk developed by ranger Craig Daters started at Fordingbridge on 5 February with 24 attendees. 60 people have accessed the bi monthly walks since with an average of 20 people each walk. 3 new volunteer walk leaders have been trained with 2 more pending allowing for an increase in the frequency and greater variety of walk options.</p> <p>Sarah Young, Gillie Molland and 8 New Forest Young Champions joined over 50 others from 5 partner National Parks for the Annual Residential weekend in the Yorkshire Dales. The Champions gained a lot from it with “talking to new people”, “having new experiences” and “learning more about another National Park” being common feedback.</p>		
Develop and share ways that the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest can benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors, engaging health providers and practitioners in promoting these benefits.	Jim Mitchell / Gillie Molland	<p>Health and Wellbeing and the New Forest National Park workshop organised for April 2015</p> <p>Dementia Friends sessions run for National Park staff</p>		

Enjoy Priority 2: Improving understanding of the special qualities of the National Park

We will help to further people's understanding of the special qualities of the Park, by:

- Expanding the Authority's public events programme and face-to-face communication through the ranger service
- continuing to develop public awareness campaigns with partner organisations on issues such as litter, feeding of ponies, disturbance of ground nesting birds and animal accidents
- supporting the New Forest Centre and other key visitor locations in reaching a wider audience and providing innovative interpretation and information.

As measures of success, we will:

- Arrange or support a series of awareness-raising events each year, in partnership with other organisations, reaching at least 8,000 local people and visitors
- work with partners to achieve a year-on-year reduction in the number of fatalities to commoners stock as a result of traffic accidents
- increase the number of visits made to the New Forest Centre's museum by 50% (30,000 people each year).

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Deliver 30 advertised public events led or co-led by the Authority, including the New Forest Show reaching local people and visitors with topics engaging them with the special qualities, the work of the Authority and key messages.	Gillie Molland / Jim Mitchell	Launch event of Lepe Cold War History project at end of March. Over 30 advertised events were led or co led during the year including 2 Wild Play Days, Discover Your National Park Day, Lepe into Action and Marine Wonders.		
Secure face to face contact with 11,000 people at 50 events and shows run by other organisations and through opportunistic use of mobile unit.	Gillie Molland	1,542 Ranger contacts Jan-Mar (year total over 14,701). 6 events attended with the mobile information unit including Fordingbridge and Everton markets, Forestry Commission Discovery Day and half term activities in Lymington, Burley and Blackwater.		
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities who promote the Forest's special qualities including self-guided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, and permanent and touring exhibitions.	Jim Mitchell	11 self-guided trails delivered and packs printed and for sale at local information points, visitor information centres and other locations. 2015 New Forest Tour commentary updated and recorded Work on HLS Lidar exhibition has started.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
<p>Lead coordinated, targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter and feeding of ponies.</p>	<p>Nigel Matthews</p>	<p>The annual meeting (with the Verderers/Agisters, FC and the CDA) to plan the year's programme of activities aimed at reducing the feeding of Forest animals generated a long list of actions including greater use of posters within villages, targeted sessions at Hatchett Pond and increased effort at campsites.</p> <p>Road signs saying 'EXPECT it to STEP OUT' on the B3054 have been installed. Similar changing signs are among the options being considered for the north of the Forest, where animal accidents remain high, and where there has been a cluster of human injuries as a result.</p> <p>School litter assemblies have been very popular (see Education update under Priority 4). We are working with FC and NFDC to expand the anti-litter messages across the Forest.</p> <p>A range of initiatives are in place to reduce disturbance of ground nesting birds. The NPA will host a People and Wildlife Ranger on behalf of NFDC as part of their recreation mitigation strategy; this person's work will include developing ways in which new and existing residents can be encouraged to walk close to their home rather than driving into the centre of the Forest and walking in the more sensitive habitats.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
<p>Deliver a communications service of the highest standard with 12 national articles / year; 9,000 Twitter followers; 2,500 Facebook likes; new online innovations; publications reviewed; 10 film clips produced to promote events and projects.</p>	<p>Hilary Makin</p>	<p>Over 40 national articles during the year. 9,956 Facebook likes (a 240% increase this year) with our community sharing animal accident, litter prevention and other 'caring for the forest' messages on our page and with their own followers; 9,609 Twitter followers (22% increase); 632 instagram followers. 42 film clips uploaded this year generating 191,570 YouTube views (618% increase) including three wildlife films created with TV filmmaker Simon King to mark the National Park's 10th anniversary.</p> <p>New-look Pocket Guide visitor publication proving popular. Park life residents' newspaper design reviewed to make it clearer and more accessible.</p>		

Enjoy Priority 3: Agreeing positive recreation management

We will work closely with land managers, local residents and user groups to agree positive recreation management, by:

- Bringing together all interested stakeholders to agree the direction for recreation management
- undertaking and supporting further research to clarify the trends and impacts of recreation locally
- helping local communities to design and implement practical recreation projects.

As measures of success, we will:

- Commission joint visitor survey work with the Forestry Commission, New Forest District Council and other partners to inform recreation management
- facilitate at least four meetings of the Recreation Management Strategy Working Group to agree and take forward priority work for positive recreation management
- support at least four new community-based recreation initiatives.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
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, recreation management information.	Mark Holroyd	<p>The draft tourism Volume and Value model for 2014 has shown a 2.9% growth in visitor numbers compared to the previous year. This is a numerical model used by all the National Parks and we are in the process of common sense checking these figures against anecdotal evidence locally.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of developing a new visitor's survey for 2015.</p>		
Facilitate forums to enable stakeholders and user groups to promote responsible recreation in coordinated ways, e.g. Recreation Management Strategy groups, Access Forum, Equine Forum, Dogs Forum and Cycling Liaison Group.	Nigel Matthews	<p>With meetings in January and April the RMS Steering Group hopes to be able to share with the Advisory Group very soon its preliminary ideas about how to progress recreation management across the New Forest.</p> <p>At their January meeting the Dogs Forum agreed a range of joint initiatives including public events, targeted sessions at Wellow Common and a staged approach to commercial dog walkers.</p> <p>In March the NF Access Forum discussed HCC's Countryside Action Plan, the National Park Management Plan and how different user groups can be encouraged to 'give each other breathing space'.</p> <p>Now that the Cycle Event Organisers' Charter is finalised, the work of the Cycling Liaison Group is complete. The focus is now on working through the Safety Advisory Group to gain compliance with the Charter by event organisers. <i>The Wiggle event on 11 & 12 April was not compliant and work to collate feedback and review this is ongoing.</i></p> <p>The Equine Forum met on 9 February 2015 and considered a range of matters including Atypical Myopathy, the impacts of firework displays on equines and the Management Plan update.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Support for four local communities with projects which enhance access to and information about local sites.	Gillie Molland	<p>Funding allocated to Hyde Parish Council, Redlynch Parish Council and Wiltshire County Council for footpath improvements to 3 local routes all of which acting as gateway routes out of and into the National Park.</p> <p>Work with South Wilts footpath group to assist in path clearance.</p> <p>Use of rangers and mobile information unit at Barton Common to raise awareness of conservation work and responsible use of the site.</p>		

Enjoy Priority 4: Leading on education about the New Forest

We will provide and support educational activities that, in particular, involve and engage young people, by:

- Developing educational programmes that link the special qualities of the New Forest with school, college and university curricula
- leading outdoor educational visits for schools, colleges and groups at key locations within the National Park
- co-ordinating educational activities in the National Park through the New Forest Educators Forum
- expanding the range of informal learning activities, for all ages, including developing mechanisms for skills and knowledge transfer for the benefit of the Forest.

As measures of success, we will:

- Ensure 50% of local schools feature the National Park in their curriculum
- reach at least 4,000 school pupils annually through direct contact with National Park Authority staff
- co-ordinate at least one major National Park-wide education/skills exchange project every year involving the New Forest Educators Forum and other partners.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Develop new national curriculum-specific sessions for schools and work with HCC and local headteachers to develop a New Forest Curriculum website.	Sue Palma	8 new school sessions for primary and secondary pupils developed and delivered this quarter, alongside existing sessions requested by schools. New Forest Curriculum website continues to develop, but slowly due to teaching commitments.		
Lead high quality curriculum sessions for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school.	Sue Palma / Claire Sherwood / Helen Robinson	Eight ranger visits to pre-schools, engaging with 150 children and 40 supervising staff. Curriculum sessions led by Education Officers reached 3596 pupils from 27 education establishments. 2845 of these young people received a Litter Assembly. This brings the total number of pupils taught by Education officers in 2014-15 to 9324; this number is unusually high, and has been influenced by our decision to release the 2015 Litter Assembly in January 2015 in order to spread our school bookings more evenly throughout the year.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Lead 12 visits for non-curriculum groups such as cubs/brownies, coach trips, and societies.	Gillie Molland	<p>Two training walks led for New Forest Trust businesses to increase understanding of National Park's special qualities.</p> <p>Ranger led walk for 59 members of the ExxonMobil Families Group at Roydon Woods with introductions from HIOWWT.</p> <p>Ranger led visits for Hordle Rainbows, Hordle Beavers and 58 members of Dibden Purlieu youth group.</p> <p>Talks to Beaulieu Young Farmers, Beaulieu Parish Council and Lymington Innerwheel.</p> <p>Delivery of Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger training session.</p> <p>Year total: 27 sessions recorded</p>		
Develop and deliver informal learning such as Wild Play activities, including a Wild Play Day event in partnership with members of New Forest Educators Forum.	Helen Robinson / Gillie Molland	<p>Wild Play Days planned for 2015 include Wild Play on the Beach in early April. Planning meetings and risk assessments for this event carried out in partnership with Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Keyhaven and Lymington Rangers and Lepe Country Park.</p>		