



Chief Executive's report

January 2026



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



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 30 sites – the equivalent of over 350 football pitches.
- Six partners: NPA, Freshwater Habitats Trust; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Commoners Defence Association: Wildlife Trust, Wild New Forest.
- Final month of work. 32 sites instead of the 25 planned; 34,000 engagements; fascinating finds, such as the nationally rare Candelabra Coral fungus.



Credit Russell Wynn



Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

- Scheme extended for a further three years to March 2029.
- Waiting to hear how much has been allocated to the New Forest.
- In the five years to this March, over £1m in grants will have been issued by us to farmers and commoners to improve their land for climate and nature.



Local Plan

- Roadshows around National Park communities and online session attended by over 1,000
- New online consultation platform
- More than 600 responses received.
- Next phase of consultation in the summer.
- Submission for independent examination by a Government inspector in December 2026.



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.

NPA feedback given from a landscape, nature, heritage and wider planning perspective.



Enjoy – Second Purpose

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



Volunteering

Highlights:

- Planting 250 trees at Bramshaw where invasive rhododendron had been removed.
- Ambassadors supporting events during a near sell-out National Park Walking Festival.
- 19 youth volunteers improving land for nature.
- Vodafone employees helping to restore heathland at Copythorne Common.
- Volunteer Fair welcomed over 750 visitors.

A huge thank you for contributions by our volunteers this autumn/winter.



YouCAN youth for climate and nature scheme

- Youth Board presented annual report to the Authority meeting and responded to our Local Plan consultation.
- Representatives attended the Transport Summit, the Young Commoners open committee meeting and training opportunities.
- Youth Board member (and now intern) Eva Wilcox was a panel member on the National Lottery's 'Community Action Fund Festival' speaking on the topic of 'young people leading change'.
- Junior rangers programme has over 25 young people signed up.



Walking Festival

- 18 October to 2 November.
- Over 350 people attended walks with experts.
- Many sold-out.
- Family-friendly half-term walks; long, more challenging rambles; and plenty of accessible routes.



New Forest Drive Safe Campaign

- Significant rise in animal accidents this winter: 108 reported accidents and 47 animals killed (compared to 97 accidents and 37 deaths the year before).
- This is despite the launch of a New Forest Drive Safe campaign with partners to encourage businesses to raise awareness of animal accidents, with over 50 businesses signing up.



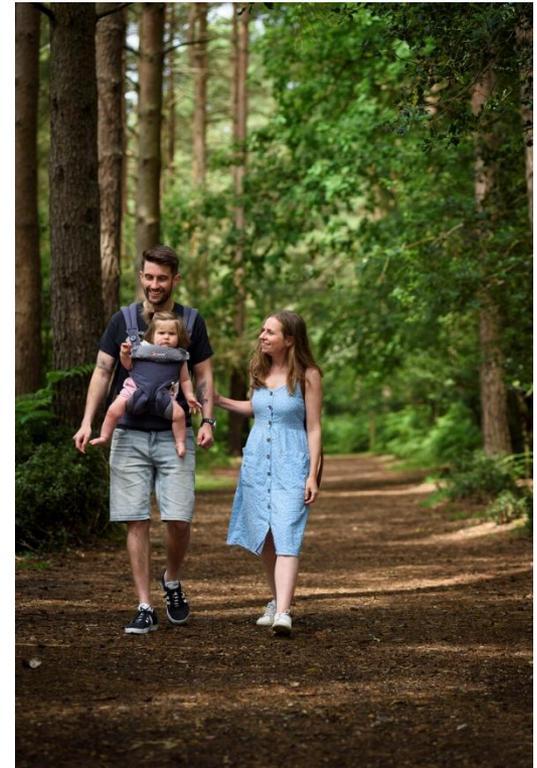
Education team

- NPA education and youth team named finalists in Education/Learning Team of the Year category at the School Travel Awards.
- Our travel grant enables local rural and urban schools to access learning venues across the New Forest.
- Enabled almost 3,500 pupil-days of experience across 12 different providers last year.
- Transport costs are often a barrier to getting young people into nature.



Health Fellow

- Hosting a placement from NHS England to work on developing the Green Health Hub: www.greenhealthhub.org.uk.
- Website connects people to nature-based wellbeing activities across the New Forest.
- Phil Godfrey, Public Health Development Manager for NHS England, working with us one day/week until at least March to lead a comprehensive review of the Hub.
- Soon advertising for a new NHS / National Park Wellbeing Fellowship placement starting in August.



Pass the PEDALL

- Pass the PEDALL – 2nd year fundraiser and attendance doubled to over 400.
- Reached fundraising target of £10,000 through business sponsorship and donations.
- Increased its community network to providing rides to over 50 different organisations, support local people with additional needs.



Access

- Improvements to routes at Blackfield, Tatchbury Mount and Cadland including path repairs, improved signage and replacing stiles with gates to make them more accessible.
- Two four-wheel drive 'tramper' mobility scooters bought with Defra Access for All funding to enable more people to enjoy the National Park.



Forestry England car park charges



Forestry England introducing parking charges across its 129 sites this April.

Understanding the need to raise income, we 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

FE car park discussions: quadrants meetings with parishes; correspondence/enquiries/survey comments; social media comments; New Forest Association.

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.



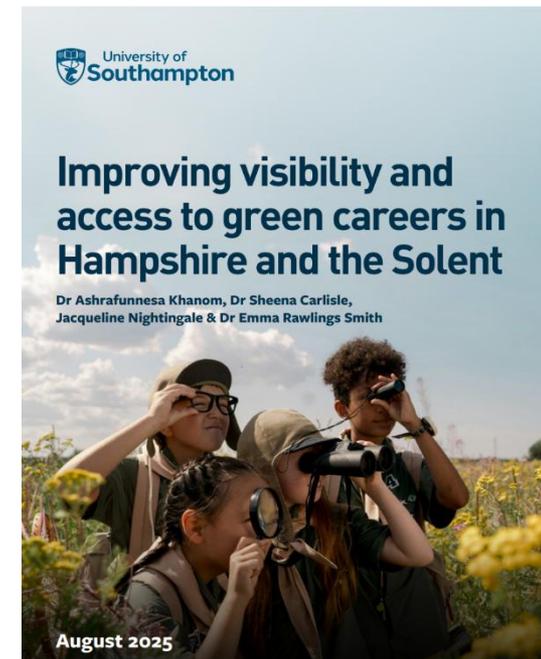
Transport Summit

- Transport Summit held in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and Go New Forest.
- Over 100 people attended.
- Discussions helping to create a shared a vision for how people move around the National Park while respecting its special qualities.
- Positive feedback from participants.



Green skills and jobs

- Greenprint Partnership – green skills and jobs study completed by NPA and University of Southampton.
- Through Greenprint with University of Southampton we jointly published a green skills and jobs report.
- Gives recommendations on improving visibility and access to green careers in Hampshire and the Solent.
- Education team attended two careers fairs to promote environmental roles.
- Green careers network (for those new to the sector) held two training days.
- Marked Green Careers Week by highlighting different jobs available and how people have got into careers caring for the National Park.



Grants

- Small grants scheme launched in October for micro and small businesses.
- £20k funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- In partnership with NFDC.
- Offering small grants of up to £1,000 to help micro and small businesses to grow, adapt their ways of working or enter new markets.
- Nine businesses have had applications approved, including brewers, a firewood producer, jewellery maker and upholsterer.
- Fund closes on 31 March 2026.



Excellence



Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

- Discussions on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- Participated in a NFDC-hosted visit of the MHCLG team leading this area of work in Whitehall.
- Partnership Plan Leaders Panel autumn meeting focussed on how we can ensure the shared goals for climate, nature and people for our National Park can be supported by the proposed changes in administration.
- Joined by colleagues from North Yorkshire NPA to share their recent experiences of devolution.
- Submitted our consultation response to Government on options for LGR.

Hampshire
and the Solent

Hampshire and the Solent devolution

November 2025 **update**



Campaign for National Parks youth event

- NPA at the Houses of Parliament to sign a joint 'Our radical future' declaration, committing to putting young people at the heart of decisions about the future of National Parks.
- Organised by independent charity Campaign for National Parks.
- Keynote speech by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Defra Mary Creagh.



Cyber security

- First national park to adopt the new Government-sponsored national vulnerability alerting system for better proactive threat detection.
- Vulnerability management platform lets security researchers report website vulnerabilities directly to us.
- The reporting process is managed collaboratively by our team, members of the National Cyber Security Centre, and other central government partners.



Landscape Connections

- Expression of interest to develop a large-scale 'Landscape Connections' National Lottery Heritage Fund scheme approved.
- Maximum of £10m available.
- Working up a development phase application with partners for submission later this year.
- Development phase can last up to two years.
- Delivery phase can then last up to eight years.



SSF filming and photography

