



New Forest Association (Registered Charity No. 260328)

Annual General Meeting

To be held at 7.30 pm, Thursday 21 May 2026 at Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, SO42 7RY

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2025 AGM – to approve the minutes (A)
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. To adopt the Annual Report (B)
5. Treasurer's report – to receive and adopt the Annual Accounts (C)
6. Appoint Alan Hamilton to be the Independent Accounts Examiner
7. Election of Trustees – Sue Kirscher has been nominated
8. Election of Officers – the following persons have been nominated – Hon Treasurer: Christopher Winter; Hon Secretary: Susan Randall
9. Election of Vice President – Peter Frost has been nominated

**A Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association
Held on 10 May 2025 at Brockenhurst Village Hall**

1. **Present:** 37 members in person and by proxy.
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Kate Ashbrook, Susan Bishop, Marcus Burton, Gerry Edwards, Clare Gouldstone, Fiona Gover, Keith Howe, Sarah Richards, Peter Venning, John Ward.
3. **Minutes of the 2024 AGM**, held at Brockenhurst Village Hall on 20 April 2024, were approved.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes** – none.
5. **The Trustees' 2024 Annual Report** was received and adopted.
6. **The Treasurer's 2024 Annual Report and Annual Accounts** were received. The Annual Accounts were adopted.
7. The Board of Trustees were authorised to appoint an Independent Accounts Examiner.
8. **Election of Trustees** – Clive Chatters, Peter Ryde and Brian Tarnoff were elected.
9. **Election of Officers** - Gale Pettifer was elected as Vice Chair.

Voting

If you are not attending the AGM in person, you can vote online by following this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdAI-MSBPY9yh-9AhOQuW0vQudcNxbWNmsl0UsZhzG22CuzFw/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

If you are not attending the AGM in person and wish to vote by post, please use the form attached at Annex 2 and return it to Secretary, New Forest Association, 4 Forest Glade Close, BROCKENHURST SO42 7QY by 18 May.

B Annual Report 2025

President: Lord William Manners; **Vice Presidents:** Oliver Crossthwaite Eyre, Peter Frost

Chair: Sarah Nield; **Vice Chair:** Gale Pettifer

Hon Secretary: Tracy Gribble; **Hon Treasurer:** Chris Winter

Trustees: Clive Chatters; Peter Ryde; Brian Tarnoff; William Ziegler

Council Members: Bernie Austin; Jonathan Cox; Tara Dempsey; Tony Hockley; Keith Howe; Jo Ivey; David Humbert; Richard Reeves; Neil Sanderson; Ann Sevier; Julie Stubbs; Jenni Tubbs; John Ward, Sue Westwood

At the end of 2025 the Association had 19 Joint Life Members and 145 Single Life Members. There were 93 Joint Ordinary Members and 322 Single Ordinary Members.

Trustees and Council Report

The object of the Association is to promote the preservation of the New Forest for the benefit of the public, to protect and preserve the character, cultural heritage, landscape and amenities of the New Forest and to protect and preserve the areas of scientific and ecological importance and the flora, fungi and fauna of the New Forest.

During 2025 the Association has furthered these purposes for the public benefit by five meetings of its Board of Trustees and six formal meetings of the Advisory Council. In addition, there were regular meetings of the Habitat & Landscape Committee (HAL), the Planning & Transport Committee (PTC) and Recreation Committee as detailed in their respective reports. The Membership & Marketing Committee has been particularly active working on our new identity and logo as well as our website. Their members are also starting to plan for celebrations in 2027 to mark the millennium of William the Conqueror's birth and the 150th anniversary of the passing of the New Forest Act 1877 – the Commoners' Charter– which preserved the Forest we know today from inclosure.

At the end of 2025 there were eight trustees, including the Association's officers who met on five occasions. We will very sadly say goodbye to Tracy Gribble at the 2026 AGM. Tracy has very ably filled the role of the Association's secretary. She has kept us on the straight and narrow, organising meetings and keeping the records of our deliberations both at Trustees Meetings and our Advisory Council as well as providing her sage counsel. A special thank you must go to her wonderful work at the shows we have attended – both the New Forest Show and the Beaulieu Conservation Day. Her drive and energy have not only ensured an attractive stand but also committed volunteers to be the face of the Association. Tracy is hoping to continue her links in the role of a speaker, where she joins the experienced team of Roger Burfitt and our Vice Chair Gale Pettifer to give illustrated talks to local community groups on the New Forest and the work of the Association. Tracy will be replaced by Sue Randall – a commoner, volunteer ranger and committed naturalist. We also welcome to our Board of Trustees Sue Kirsch who brings a wealth of professional experience to the Board as well as a deep commitment to the Forest.

At the end of 2025 there were fourteen non-trustee members of Council who met on six occasions during 2025. Andrew Parry Norton of the Commoners Defence Association is also on our circulation list and attends as a guest when possible. We value this co-operation between our Associations as on many issues we share similar concerns. Unfortunately, Tara Dempsey, Clare Gouldstone and Julie Stubbs are standing down due to other commitments. Tara is a tireless and valuable researcher and campaigner, who is central to some of our leading work. Thus, it is with great relief that she will continue to contribute as a member of our Habitat and Landscape and Recreation Committees. Julie also may find the time to contribute to our Habitat and Landscape Committee, and we hope that Clare will be able to rejoin Council when time allows. We are continually on the search for those with a deep knowledge of the Forest to join our Advisory Council and so, if you would like to contribute, please do get in touch.

Our work of course is not confined to Trustee, Council or Committee meetings and many of us willingly devote much of our time to Association work. Our monthly Newsletters have kept members informed of some of the most important issues, in particular our January 2026 Newsletter looked back at our work in 2025 and gave an insight into what 2026 might hold. It can be found here <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/9OG30GIR5eSPkQNH?ref=Link>.

There never seems to be a shortage of 'issues' appearing in the Forest and we are not alone in feeling that at the moment we face a barrage of challenges. Some of these have formed the subject matter of presentments to the open court meetings of the Verderers' Court and at the New Forest National Park Authority Board meetings. We also hold regular meetings with the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England and maintain our important network with other Forest organisations and individuals.

At a national level we are actively supportive of the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) and we attended the CNP Annual General Meeting and participated in the National Parks Societies Conference both held this year in London. We also supported CNP in almost all of their letter campaigns where issues were of mutual interest. Again, we try and keep members updated with CNP's work through our monthly Newsletters and I am delighted that their Chair, Rose O'Neill, will be speaking at our AGM. After formal business is conducted, she will speak on the CNP's Rivers at Risk Report and be joined by those with knowledge of the state of our Forest streams.

I cannot finish this report without mentioning our members programme of talks and walks. We strive to provide our members with an engaging and informative programme, and we are very grateful to the speakers and walk leaders who have given their time to this end. Having attended almost all of them, I value the opportunity to speak to our members. Please do let us know what events you would like to attend as we seek to tailor and expand our offering.

The forthcoming year is already presenting yet more challenges to the Forest and to nature nationally. The Association, in pursuit of its charitable purposes, will do its level best to make sure the Forest has an effective voice for the benefit of the public.

Chair of New Forest Association – Sarah Nield

Planning & Transport Committee Report

We have a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable committee that meet every two months to discuss a wide range of issues that have a direct bearing on the New Forest. Regrettably in June 2025 Sarah Richards had to step down from her position as Chair. Her professional expertise and good humour will be missed. I offered to return as a short term Chairman with Graham Baker as Secretary.

Planning applications submitted to the New Forest National Park Authority are of course closely monitored but the scope has widened in recent years to include neighbouring authorities where increasing development threatens the Forest.

To this end, NFA hosted a panel meeting at Brockenhurst Village Hall in April 2025 with senior planning officers from NFNPA, New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council. The meeting was well attended and members were forewarned of the likely implications to our local area from the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework with reforms to speed up the planning system and increase the supply of housing.

More detail was to come later in the year with the revised NFDC Local Plan which sets out a proposed allocation of over 10,000 new homes sited around the National Park at Fordingbridge and Ringwood and to the south at New Milton, Hordle, Everton and Lymington. Further housing is also proposed at Marchwood, Hythe and Fawley bordering the A326 on the waterside.

It's a huge challenge that will impact the forest and among our many concerns is the potential loss of land with common rights or used for back up grazing. We are also critical of the formula used for calculating the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) which we feel leaves a shortfall and is insufficient to reduce pressure on the Forest. Our approach will be to assess the applications on a site by site basis.

We put forward a suggestion to create a Recreational Mitigation Partnership of the local planning authorities within the zone of influence of the New Forest Special Protection Area working together to maximise their mitigation using pooled assets.

The committee had also to consider the NFNPA Local Plan Review. Our focus here was more towards encouraging a change in policy to enable the provision of more 'affordable' homes by inviting

land owners to put forward land that could be considered as 'rural exception sites.' Experience of the current policy shows that the supply of social rent housing does not meet the required need.

The time spent in trawling through and responding to the questionnaires and Local Plans was immense and my sincere thanks go particularly to Graham and earlier Sarah for their valuable input and in meeting the deadlines.

The experience has also led to closer contact with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (Hampshire) which has been very helpful.

In September Associated British Ports put forward proposals for Solent Gateway 2 at Dibden Bay comprising an Automotive Terminal, Country Park and Environmental Area with a new link road to the A326. New cycle and walking routes linking Marchwood and Hythe are also proposed.

As this was a non-statutory consultation and not legally binding the presentation was mainly illustrative and short on detail. However, this will be followed by a Statutory consultation this year when we can expect more information and a clearer understanding of the overall impact.

Ultimately as this is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 the application will be subject to an examination process prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Transport for a decision. This is not expected before 2028.

Aside from the larger scale issues there is also a steady stream of applications most of which are relatively straightforward domestic extensions. However, there are some proposals which merit our attention and for the most part we're supportive of the NFNPA policies. Among these were proposals to redevelop the Fenwick Hospital in Lyndhurst with housing, a solar farm at Netley Marsh and conversion of historic Salt Barns near Lymington to residential all of which we objected to. These applications were subsequently refused by the NFNPA. In contrast we supported an application to convert a barn to an agricultural dwelling at Sopley which was approved by the Authority.

The vexed question of Forestry England's car parking charges also came up for discussion albeit with mixed views however its now in place as is a Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 Order to impose waiting restrictions on many of the forest roads. Interesting times lie ahead.

Chair of Planning & Transport Committee Report

Bernie Austin

Committee members: Graham Baker; Alison Bolton; Philip Butt; Jo Ivey; Ann Sevier; Mike Thomas; Sue Westwood

Habitat & Landscape Committee Report

I'm again chairing this committee (previously 2013-2022). Clive Chatters expanded the role so that its resumption is quite daunting. In thanking Clive for his insight, efforts, and good humour, I must simultaneously thank the whole of the committee for the invaluable contributions they so generously volunteer. This coming year represents a confluence of significant issues which impinge on the Forest's habitats. There are, two Local Plans, Associated British Ports' (APBs') Proposals for Dibden Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Hampshire County Council's (HCC's) for widening the A326 and a wider crisis of funding for maintenance and stewardship.

Looking at Clive's notes for our last AGM, I can see that several issues remain unresolved and our casework includes:

- pursuing answers from Forestry England (FE) over their management
 - Felling works during nesting bird season
 - Tree species selection and restocking
 - Campsites (including the re-opening of Denny Wood, marked for closure in the Special Areas Conservation Management Plan)
- Water Quality including recreation disturbance and pollution from dog bourn pesticides
- Wider assessment of Environment Schemes in the Forest (including Nutrient Neutrality, Coastal Realignment, Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Farming in Protected Landscapes, Landscape Scale Restoration etc.)
- Lack of Alternative Natural Greenspace in local plans and developments

Consultations / Site Visits / Representation in 2025 included:

Consultations

Forest Stewardship Council / Soil Association Audit of Forest Management by Forestry England in the New Forest

DEFRA Heather and Grass Burning Consultation (regarding the burning of vegetation over peat)

Site Visits

Coomy Lawn, Knightwood Inclosure

Representation

The Committee fielded representatives to the Open Forest Advisory Committee, New Forest Catchment Development Group, New Forest Freshwater Restoration Forum, the New Forest Dog Forum, and the Consultative Panel

FE Car Parks

Our committee's view on the wider issue of FE's decision to charge for its Forest Car Parks (in line with their National Scheme) is limited to the impact of both increased verge parking pressures from displacement, and measures meant to combat this displacement with either ditching, itself destructive to the verge, or dragon's teeth, both of mixed efficacy. Our brief as this unfolds is to find useful and focussed ways to track FE's monitoring and mitigation programme, but without doing their work for them. One element of this is the impact of the change in direct recreation pressure, if more visitors walk from various roadside locations instead of the car parks.

Car parks are the blunt nearly sole tool to control the recreation patterns on the Forest. The Recreation Management Strategy Spatial Plan was promised for last year but is yet to be defined or delivered by the National Park Authority. FE moving ahead without this piece in place undermines their delivery of the Partnership Plan and their habitat obligations.

The Waterside

Looking back on my own now ancient AGM reports, I see rumblings about the A326 (from 2022) and ABP Dibden Bay (from 2017), which again are coming forward in 2026. Now, with the imposition of the Freeport, and ABP using Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project plus the hiving off under Local Government Reorganisation of the already over-urbanised Waterside to an expanded Southampton Council, making a case for the Forest is ever steeper.

The major wildlife charities including the RSPB and Wildlife Trust are best placed to challenge ABP. We will do what we can as part of their outer consortium to support them, and our own Planning & Transport Committee's responses to the application. The destruction of SSSI designated habitat on the doorstep of a National Park must be resisted.

In HCC's 2022 non-statutory consultation on the A326 widening proposals there was a key absence of consideration of the green screen between the Waterside and the Forest, wildlife corridors connecting to the Forest, the ability of local residents to have car free access to the Forest and no assessment of habitat impact or mitigation. Hopefully the revised application will address these omissions.

Both threats to the Waterside are predicated on presumption of need, and ignore the capacity of both the Waterside and the Forest to absorb their impact.

Chair of Habitat & Landscape Committee

Brian Tarnoff

Committee members: Jonathan Cox; Tara Dempsey; Naomi Ewald; Peter Frost; Sam Haynes; Ade Parker; Richard Reeves; Neil Sanderson; Julie Stubbs; Jenni Tubbs; Russell Wynn

Recreation Committee Report

The Recreation Committee has met five times during the year and has been occupied with such varied matters as recreational mitigation, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to verge watch. We have finalised our report on Recreational Mitigation which is now on our website and has been sent to all affected local planning authorities, statutory bodies and local MPs. We supported the

PSPOs against lighting fires and barbecues and the feeding and petting of stock and thankfully these have now been extended for another three years by New Forest District Council. Verge watch was repeated this year with a static watch which involved teams observing activities at popular car parks around the Forest on August Bank Holiday Monday.

However, much of the year has been dominated by the implications of the introduction of car parking charges by Forestry England. We have met and corresponded with Forestry England as well as engaged with other key organisations including the National Park Authority, the Verderers, Hampshire County Council. In this engagement we have worked with NFDOG to good effect – most notably at our joint members meeting. This co-operative working has led to David Bennett of NFDOG joining the Recreation Committee. We feel we have done all we can for the Forest in trying to ensure these new charges work for the benefit of the Forest rather than against it. We now wait to see how the role-out transpires with a particular eye on displacement parking.

As a result, other recreational issues, including cycle routes and campsites, have taken a little bit of a back seat but they remain well on our radar, and we expect to be busy in 2026 keeping an eye on these issues. Also in our sights is any progress on the Recreational Management Strategy and the review of the National Park Partnership Plan due in 2027.

As visitor numbers continue to grow so does the work of the Recreation Committee.

Chair of Recreation Committee

Sarah Nield

Committee members: Graham Baker, David Bennett, Jean Crawford-Dixon, Jo Ivey, Brian Tarnoff

Media & Marketing Committee Report

This year has seen this committee lead on several major projects with the assistance of Whistlejacket, a leading brand and design agency. We have articulated our core mission and purpose before moving on to refresh our brand and to look at revitalising our website. This major work has been undertaken in consultation with our Council and key stakeholders and so we hope that members will be pleased with the result which will be unveiled shortly.

There is still much to do to raise our profile and more importantly the work we do in pursuit of our core mission to protect and speak up for the Forest. We have ambitious plans – it just requires the time and resource to make them happen. Nevertheless we are pleased to report that our membership has grown, and we are keen to ensure that this trend grows by looking to younger members and a wider community.

We have made a concerted effort to keep our members informed of exactly what we are doing through a now regular and revamped Newsletter. The difficult decision was made in the light of high printing and postage costs to reduce our paper magazine to once a year. We hope that the monthly digital Newsletter has helped fill the gap.

Our members events are back on track after the COVID interlude. We try and ensure that there is a talk or walk every month and we are very grateful to the contributors. If you have any ideas for future events, we would very much like to hear from you.

Media & Marketing Committee

Sarah Nield on behalf of Peter Ryde (Chair)

Committee members: Juliet Lynn, Sarah Nield, Gale Pettifer

The Trustee Board and Council thank all members of the committees for their time, interest, support and valuable local knowledge. We also wish to thank Sarah Richards, former Chair of the Planning & Transport Committee, and Clare Gouldstone and Chris Counsell, former Trustees, for their work for the Association.

We would welcome new members for any of the Committees. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Hon. Secretary.

C Treasurer's Report 2025

Income – Total income of £21,144 is a decrease from last year's £27,906. The variations include an increase in membership subscriptions and donations along with an increase in dividends from our holding of M&G charity bonds, offset with the one-off legacy payment of £10,067 received in 2024.

Payments – Total payments of £21,589 are higher than last year's £16,800. This is due to spending on the redevelopment of the NFA website in 2025 (£10,957) offset by grants given in 2024 for Water Quality (£6,000) and Legal Fees for Forest Oaks (£2,112).

The Association does not have any employees and no fees are paid to Trustees or Council members. The only fee we pay is for bookkeeping and administrative services.

Deficit – Due to the spend on the website we have generated a small deficit of £445.

Assets/liabilities – Our cash holdings of £120,730 are now held in Lloyds Bank across interest bearing investments to maximise the return. Our investment in M&G charity bonds showed an increase of £8,933 as a result of increases in the stock and bond markets.

Thank you for your support.

Hon. Treasurer – Christopher Winter

Bookkeeping & membership administration: Juliet Lynn

The 2025 Financial Accounts are attached at Annex 1

If you have received these papers by post it is because we do not have an email address for you. If you do have an email address and tell us, in future we will save printing and postage costs that can then go towards campaigning to protect the New Forest. Send an email to us at membership@newforestassociation.org