

Working to Protect the New Forest



New Forest Association

Registered Charity No: 260328

Notice of Annual General Meeting

10.30 am, Saturday, 10th May

Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, SO42 7RY

Members and guests welcome.

Parking for cars and bicycles available on site. It is a short walk (approximately 5 minutes) from Brockenhurst Station and from the no 6 Bluestar bus stop in Sway Road, opposite Brockenhurst Primary School.

Tea and coffee is available from 10.00 am.

There is a short AGM at 10.30 am. If you are unable to attend to vote in person, members who have an email registered with the Association may vote online. (See accompanying email where appropriate.) Members without a registered email address may vote by post using the voting form issued by post.

The AGM will be followed by a presentation on recreational mitigation.

Recreational Mitigation: What is it all about?

by Paul Attwell, Team Manager of the Dorset Heaths Partnership and Sarah Nield, Chair of the New Forest Association

Local authorities close to protected areas, including the New Forest, are required to mitigate the potential recreational impact of new development. They do so by collecting contributions from developers both to manage recreation on the Forest AND to divert recreation away from the Forest by providing alternative recreational spaces. There are millions of pounds at stake! The New Forest Association has been conducting research into how local authorities, in and around the Forest, are (or sometimes are not) using these funds to mitigate recreation. This talk will give an overview of our findings as well as learn from the experience of others. We are fortunate to have Paul Attwell coming to share the positive experience of the Dorset Heaths Partnership which works collaboratively to protect and enhance the nearby Dorset Heaths supported by recreational mitigation funds.

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New Forest Association (Registered Charity No: 260328)

Annual General Meeting

To be held at 10.30 am, Saturday, 10th May at Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, SO42 7RY

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2024 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. Authorise the Board of Trustees to appoint the independent accounts examiner
7. Election of Vice Chair – Gale Pettifer has been nominated
8. Election of Trustees – Clive Chatters, Peter Ryde and Brian Tarnoff have been nominated

A. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the New Forest Association (Friends of the New Forest) Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at 10.30am on Saturday 20 April 2024 at Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, Brockenhurst SO42 7RY

Present: 37 members present in person and by proxy

1. Apologies for Absence: Judith Hope, Robert Damper, Antony Hawley, Susan Bishop, Gerry Edwards, Bernie Austin, Roly Errington, George Hollobone, Jonathan Cox
2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM held at Minstead Village Hall on 24 April 2023 were approved. (Proposed by Brian Tarnoff, seconded by William Ziegler)
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes - none
4. The Trustees 2023 Annual Report was received and adopted. (Proposed by Sheila Ward, seconded by Clara King)
5. The Treasurer's 2023 Annual Report and Annual Accounts were received and adopted. (Proposed by Chris Counsell, seconded by Keith Howe)
6. Independent Accounts Examiner – Alan Hamilton was appointed (Proposed by Chris Winter, seconded by Clare Gouldstone)
7. Election of Trustees – John Ward and William Ziegler (proposed by Clive Chatters, seconded by Jenny Tubbs) were elected as trustees on a show of hands.
8. Election of Officers – Sarah Nield was elected as Chair (proposed by William Ziegler, seconded by Peter Frost). Sarah Richards was elected as

Vice Chair (proposed by Clive Chatters, seconded by Peter Frost). Tracy Gribble was elected as Honorary Secretary (proposed by Sarah Richards, seconded by Brian Tarnoff).

9. Election of President – Lord Manners was elected. (Proposed by John Ward, seconded by Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre)
10. Any other business – none.

B Annual Report 2025 President: Lord William Manners

Vice-Presidents: Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre; Peter Frost

Chair: Sarah Nield

Vice-Chair: Sarah Richards

Hon Secretary: Tracy Gribble

Hon Treasurer: Christopher Winter

Trustees: Clive Chatters, Christopher Counsell, Clare Gouldstone, Brian Tarnoff, John Ward, William Ziegler

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

Trustees' and Committees' Reports

The object of the New Forest Association (NFA) 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 2024 the Association has furthered these purposes for the public benefit by six 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) and the Planning & Transport Committee (PTC). The trustees have also revived the Membership & Marketing Committee (MMC) and the Recreation Committee (RC). At the end of 2024 there were ten trustees, although we will very sadly say goodbye to Chris Counsell, Clare Gouldstone and John Ward as Trustees at the 2025 AGM. Chris has given invaluable advice during his time as a trustee and has spear-headed our stand at various events as we are seeking to grow our profile. This year we attended the New Forest Show and the Conservation Awareness Day held at Bucklers Hard and have plans to attend these events again next year along with additional events. Chris' energy and commitment will be sadly missed. Clare will continue on our Advisory Council and as a member of Habitats & Landscape Committee where her scientific insight and guidance on nature connectiveness is important. John has given years of outstanding service to NFA as a past Chair. We are very grateful that he has agreed to remain on our Advisory Council so that we can continue to draw upon his extensive knowledge and experience.

Clare will however be stepping back from organising our programme of events. Clare has been very successful in breathing new life into this programme and ensuring their smooth management. As a result, this programme goes from strength to strength, and we are very grateful to the speakers and walk leaders who have given their time to inform and entertain our members. Our aim is to provide a summer programme of walks and visits and an autumn and winter programme of talks. Plans are well advanced to fill this calendar. We have continued to reach many local community groups by giving illustrated talks thanks to the tireless work of three volunteers – Sheila Ward, Roger Burfitt and Gale Pettifer. They

have continued to expand our offering of topics as well as making a welcome contribution to our reputation and resources.

At the end of 2024 there were thirteen non-trustee members of Council. We are pleased to welcome to their ranks Sue Westwood, who has recently retired as Clerk to the Verderers. Her experience of the Verderers Court will be invaluable. However, it is with great sadness that we report the death of Roly Errington who passed away in 2024 after a short illness. Roly was a Council member for many years. He made major contributions to promoting the Association and was a key leader of the show team. He was also a tireless networker and campaigner and never hesitated to lobby the authorities particularly on planning matters.

We attended open court meetings of the Verderers' Court throughout the year and made Presentments on various issues. In addition, we held meetings with the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and Forestry England (FE) and maintain our important network with other forest organisations and individuals.

A change of Chair can provide an opportunity to re-evaluate and in 2024 the Trustees, with the help of a business strategist and contributions from Council, undertook a business review and have started to implement some of its suggestions. We have reverted to the use of the Association's registered name and have revived our Marketing & Membership Committee to give strategic direction to our marketing and media communications. This work is ongoing and is progressing positively.

These initiatives have not distracted the Association from campaigning. Our Chair's Updates have kept members informed of some of the most important issues. There never seems to be a shortage of 'issues' appearing in the Forest, many of which would be more harmful rather than beneficial. Much key work remains carried out by our two long standing committees – PTC and HAL, whose reports follow. The newly revived Recreation Committee works both with these committees, with a cross- over of members, and on standalone issues both of which are outlined in this committee's report.

The threat to the Forest and Solent from Exxon's carbon capture plans brought an opportunity to work with other organisations including the Solent Protection Society which have continued with our consideration of the implications for the Forest of the Freeport and other Waterside developments as well as long term environmental plans for the Western Solent. We continue also to work closely with the Commoners' Defence Association with for example research into back-up grazing and with the financial sustainability of commoning an important issue.

With a change of Government in the summer, shifts in policy towards land use, the environment and devolution are beginning to emerge in the pursuit of the Government's target to build more homes. We have and will respond as necessary. The Campaign for National Parks (CNP) also provides a national voice for all national parks. We attended the CNP Annual General Meeting and participated in the National Parks Societies Conference held this year in Brighton and hosted by the Friends of the South Downs. 2024 celebrated the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and to mark the occasion the Government has announced their intention to introduce new legislation which will update the key statutory purposes of National Parks and reform the boards which govern National Park Authorities. It is hoped that these changes will create a stronger emphasis on supporting nature recovery which is much need given the sombre

reading of CNPs Health Check Report on the state of nature in National Parks. This report found that only 6% of land in National Parks is effectively managed for nature and only about a quarter of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within National Parks are in favourable condition; a proportion that is significantly less than SSSIs in other parts of the country. The CNP have also recently won a major case on the new duty of public authorities to “conserve and enhance” National Park purposes which will hopefully be a wake-up call for public authorities that fall short of this duty.

The Association currently has 702 members from 600 individual and joint memberships. These numbers are slightly down on last year when it was 727 and 621 respectively. Although we continue to attract new members, many existing members did not renew after the increase in the membership fees.

The forthcoming year is shaping up to bring 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.

Sarah Nield - Chair, New Forest Association

Report of the Habitats & Landscape Committee

As in previous years, HAL has concentrated on issues where we believe we can make a difference. We have to be selective as there are so many challenges facing the Forest, there is a risk our efforts will become diluted.

Most of our work is long-term and strategic but we are open to address topics of immediate concern. Members will be aware of the national movement to establish beavers throughout Britain. In the vast majority of cases, beavers bring multiple benefits to wetland ecosystems and to natural flood prevention. However, the Forest already has the habitats associated with beavers, and many more besides. We have therefore worked with beaver enthusiasts and experts to identify what makes the Forest different, together with the need to identify and manage risks to the Forest’s special qualities. Our findings are posted on our website. Over the years we have contributed to investigations into water quality in Forest rivers and wetlands. These contributions have been financial and as volunteer time. It is encouraging to see that these concerns are now in the mainstream with continuing research, monitoring and lobbying by a range of partners.

The absence of an effective strategy for the management of recreation continues to give concern. Over the last year this became manifest in extensive, ad hoc proposals to extend the official cycle route network across the Forest. Unfortunately, the proposals were not informed by assessments of impacts on wildlife, commoning, aesthetics or the welfare of other users. Such poorly conceived proposals generate a great deal of work which would be unnecessary if those responsible followed decision-making processes set out in law and policy. There is a problem with cycling on the Forest with our surveys demonstrating widespread abuse and the lack of effective management. It is very difficult to contemplate yet more routes until those responsible demonstrate they will not just exacerbate existing problems. The cycling debate has highlighted the muddled thinking where there are strategic documents produced by statutory bodies promoting the diversion of recreation off the Forest and into attractive alternative destinations, whilst at the same time promoting ever-intensifying recreational uses on the Forest.

To conclude on a seasonal note, each spring there are problems with Forestry England continuing to fell and extract timber during the bird breeding season. We cannot see how FE reconcile this with legal protection for birds and their nests. This is an issue which we will raise again with the commercial foresters and depending on their response will explore whether a more robust response is required.

We can only do this work through the support of our members, for which we are thankful. On a personal note, my thanks go to committee members who have maintained momentum on many issues, particularly during the times when my personal circumstances have kept me from the fray.

Clive Chatters - Chair, Habitats and Landscapes Committee

Planning & Transport Committee

The Planning and Transport Committee (PTC) is one of the committees of the NFA. The committee focuses on planning and transport issues that will impact on the New Forest. We cast our net wider than just the national park as development proposals and transport schemes outside the national park boundaries can have potential impacts on the New Forest.

The committee meets 6 times a year. It currently has 7 members, all with an interest in planning and transport issues. The routine work of the PTC is to review the weekly lists of planning applications submitted to the National Park Authority (NPA) and to consider whether there are matters we want to comment on, support or object to. For example, over the last year we have supported an application for social housing in Bartley (approved) and objected to a proposed solar farm at Ashurst (refused). In both cases a member of the committee spoke at the NPA planning meeting. The committee also raised fundamental concerns about the possible CO2 pipeline across the Forest (proposal withdrawn).

The planning policies of the councils that adjoin the national park are also of interest and as these are updated and reviewed the PTC will consider the implications for the New Forest and make comments where appropriate. We made comments on Test Valley Council's proposals for mitigating the impact of new housing on the New Forest to ensure that all new development in their area makes adequate contribution to the impact made by new households who will use the Forest for recreation.

As many of you will be aware, national planning policy is also going through a period of considerable change. Recent changes have the potential for significant housing growth in all the areas adjoining the New Forest. We considered the draft national policy and submitted comments to government. Unfortunately our comments were not incorporated in the final document but this is an issue we keep focused on through our review of local plans. In doing this we work closely with the Campaign for National Parks – the body that represents a wide range of charities who have an interest in all the English national parks and of which we are members.

Over the last year the PTC has been joined at our meetings by planning officers from the NPA and heard first hand about their work and the challenges they face. This gives us the opportunity to both challenge and support the work they do. These working relationships have been very helpful for the wider engagement with the NPA and for the work the NFA is doing on recreation mitigation and cycle routes.

We are anticipating that in 2025 some of the old chestnuts will reappear for discussion – the widening of the A326, Dibden Bay as part of the Solent Freeport, the development of the Cadland estate land on the Fawley power station site, local plan reviews at NPA, New Forest District Council, Test Valley and the councils to the west – Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. We will be sharpening our understanding of the calculation of housing numbers and preparing to develop our case for resisting high levels of housing growth in the surrounding area that could have a significant negative impact on the quality of the New Forest.

Sarah Richards - Chair, Planning & Transport Committee

Marketing & Membership Committee

The Marketing and Membership Committee (MMC) was revived in November 2024.

Broadly, the remit of the MMC falls into two main areas; firstly, to develop the public profile and increase awareness of the work of the NFA, and thereby increase the effectiveness of the Charity in achieving its aims. Further, to ensure the members of the NFA are kept up to date and engaged with the work of the NFA. MMC is also tasked with contributing to an increase in membership so that the NFA can become a more powerful voice for the New Forest.

Since November there have been two meetings of the MMC – the first dealt primarily with the pressing matter of the Charity name. After examining the marketing implications the recommendation to the Trustees was to revert to the original NFA name. Another recommendation was to move Forest Matters from a print publication to an online, emailed magazine, with the money saved going towards increased communications with members on a more regular basis. A print version to be published once per year, to coincide with the AGM, including important articles published by email and summarising the key achievements and activities of the NFA, as well as a look to the future year's priorities.

An important issue for the second meeting which took place in January 2025 was to revisit the key question – 'what is the charity for?' – 'what is it set up to do?'. While for many this is obvious, it is not so easy to articulate in a clear, concise and impactful way, such that a potential new member can be readily engaged. Such clarity is essential for the creation of a marketing and communications strategy. A key element of marketing is to make sure communications are easy to understand, and the messages 'cut through' the cacophony of noise from social media and other sources, all competing for attention. MMC recommended the appointment of an external strategic marketing and communications consultancy called Whistlejacket to report on the best, most succinct description, and this work has been commissioned.

The meeting also considered how to implement the name change, and the need to rapidly produce new material with NFA name and logo for upcoming events such as the New Forest Volunteer Fair. Membership of the MMC needs to be supplemented with skills in strategic marketing, and marketing communications so that the strategy can be readily put into effect. Applications from qualified people with enough time to commit are very welcome. There is a lot to do!

Chris Counsell - Chair, Membership & Marketing Committee

Recreation Committee

The Recreation Committee may be recently revived but work in this area has been ongoing, so it is rather a question of providing a forum in which to share views and provide support to those involved with various aspects of recreation.

During the year we repeated our monitoring of byelaw compliance with another Byelaw Watch. It is easy to become somewhat immune to the constant infringements seen across the Forest, but we feel it is important to keep up this monitoring. If we can build up a database of statistics, we can begin to present these findings to the relevant bodies and press for action. So please do continue to participate in any future Watches – this is something you can do for the Forest.

Our attention this year has also looked to policy and in particular recreational mitigation. Briefly, development within the Forest and in areas close to the Forest need to make payments to mitigate their likely recreational impact to the Forest. Payments look to control recreation within the national park and also to provide other recreational areas outside the park. These payments are collected and administered by the local authorities, but our research shows that there is a very mixed picture indeed. Some authorities have failed in their statutory responsibilities in not collecting payments at all whilst the effectiveness of others' implementation falls short. The National Park Authority have been working to try and improve the co-operation but there is still a way to go in drawing recreational pressure away from the Forest.

The HAL report has referred to our work on the proposed cycle network extensions and we will continue to press for a proper process to be followed which pays due regard to the special qualities of the Forest and ensures effective management of the network.

It may appear to have been a relatively quiet year for the campsites as Camping in the New Forest improve the management of the sites. However, we have been active on the Camping Liaison Group and will continue to press both Forestry England and Camping in the New Forest to prepare and implement a route map for the closure or relocation of sites which has been promised for over twenty years. The danger is that other sites are now on the red list. If problems are ignored, they do not go away but grow. Where some headway has been made is on trying to protect commoners from liability for injury to campers resulting from free roaming stock.

Sarah Nield – Chair, Recreation Committee

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity 260328)
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS YEAR END DECEMBER 31st 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
INCOME		
<i>Charity Activities</i>		
Members' Subscriptions	8229.00	7847.00
Donations	1233.85	3253.33
Legacies	10066.78	0.00
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim (for previous year/s)	1621.34	1709.91
Trading Activities (book sales & Event tickets)	1005.78	199.50
	22156.75	13009.74
<i>Other Receipts</i>		
Bank Interest	1881.27	302.16
Charibond Dividends	3868.10	3157.64
	5749.37	3459.80
TOTAL RECEIPTS	27906.12	16469.54
PAYMENTS		
<i>Charity Activities</i>		
Council Expenses (travel, meetings, conferences)	1538.60	1062.73
Insurance	580.45	512.17
Office Supplies and Postage	723.27	1605.31
Newsletters & Reports (Printing)	69.00	1484.55
Subscriptions (Campaign for National Parks)	536.00	1118.00
Bank / Paypal Charges / GoCardless Fees	68.79	61.23
Admin & Bookkeeping Expenses	3600.00	3600.00
Advertising, Public Relations, Website	975.94	1161.65
Safeguard Training	0.00	69.00
Professional Fees (Water Quality Report)	6000.00	0.00
Legal Fees (Forest Oaks)	2112.00	6868.25
Events & Shows	546.40	0.00
Gifts given at AGM	49.95	0.00
	16800.40	17542.89
Net Receipts	11105.72	-1073.35
Cash Funds Opening Balance	110069.38	111142.73
	121175.10	110069.38

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity 260328)
STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES YEAR END DECEMBER 31st 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash Funds		
Lloyds Current Account	18350.83	88971.08
PayPal	918.81	1074.11
Virgin Bank	20296.01	0.00
Lloyds Instant Access	5.75	0.00
Lloyds 32 Day Notice	81603.70	20024.19
	121175.10	110069.38
Investment Assets		
M&G Charibond: Opening Value	88287.40	85500.79
Increase/Decrease in value	-3110.27	2786.61
(as at end June '24)	85177.13	88287.40
Assets for the Charity's Use		
New Forest Embroidery	100.00	100.00
Stock for Retail Sales		
Stock for Retail Sales: Opening Value	330.88	641.64
Less: value of goods sold or given away	-14.08	-310.76
	316.80	330.88
Other Monetary Assets		
Gift Aid Receivable*	1667.13	1616.63
	1667.13	1616.63

* Gift Aid on subscriptions & donations reclaimed but not yet received.

Notes on the Accounts

1. The Receipts and Payments Account has been prepared as a summary of receipts and payments made during the year by the New Forest Association.
2. These Accounts have been prepared in a format which complies with guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Approved on behalf of the Trustees

..... (Name) (Date)

..... (Name) (Date)

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the New Forest Association

I report on the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31st December 2024, which are set out on the previous pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;

to follow the procedures laid down in the general Direction given by the Charity

Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act, and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present 'a true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Acts; and

to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Alan Hamilton F.C.A.

Address 7 AVENUE ROAD, NEW MILTON, BH25 5JP

Date 25/2/2025