

Update for 9th March 2020

Storms Ciara and Dennis

The recent storms have caused significant issues around the area but have also highlighted how effective our tree safety management policy and process is, with fewer than expected incidents of fallen trees especially away from roads and high recreational areas, given the high winds and saturated ground. The teams have been dealing with fallen trees, clearing accesses and unblocking culverts and ditches to reduce flooded areas, full time for the past couple of weeks.



Car Park Maintenance

Last year we changed the way we undertake the maintenance of our car park surfacing. We took this responsibility back in-house and purchased new equipment and took on an additional member of staff to deliver this. This winter has been the first one for the new way of working to be tested. **Have you noticed any change?** We can now respond much more effectively to surfacing repairs with the approach being little and often. The benefits of this have been that we do not need to plan this type of work in advance to tie in with contractors. We don't need to close car parks in advance of works whilst we wait for the optimum window of dry weather and contractor availability. Response time is immediate and we don't need to have a car park surface continuing to deteriorate or

have to close car parks due to their condition whilst we await works. It may only be anecdotal evidence, but I haven't received a single complaint about potholes from a MOP so far this winter.

Ground Nesting Birds Campaign

Over the coming weeks the ground nesting bird season will begin, a time when several rare species of birds including the Nightjar, Curlew, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler, start their breeding cycle. Unlike most birds they choose the rather risky tactic of building their nests on the ground rather than in the trees making them extremely vulnerable. If disturbed, they may flee their nests and expose their eggs and chicks to predators.

The New Forest is a favourite spot to nest for these birds, one of the reasons that much of the Forest is a Special Protection Area for birds. This is why each year we close a small number of car parks in areas that provide important habitats for these birds. The car parks affected are Crockford, Crockford Clump, Hincheslea Moor, Clay Hill in Burley and Yew Tree Heath. Closing these car parks helps us to create quiet zones around these very sensitive sites offering the birds greater protection, which we hope will make it more likely that they will be able to breed successfully.

The campaign was highly successful last year and we want to replicate this and continue to highlight the importance of GNB. The campaign will again be supported by dedicated GNB seasonal rangers to engage and educate with users and on-site informational and instructional signage. We have chosen 3 sites (Burbush, Yew Tree Heath, Moonhills) this year to focus efforts with signage. Orange Informational signage will detail the importance of GNB and their habitat generally around a protective zone from car parks. Red Instructional signage will be present further towards a protective breeding zone.



Harvesting Operations

Planned harvesting works are ongoing in Wilverley and Norleywood, two areas with high recreational demand. Due to the wet weather, extraction roads and rides have suffered creating wet and muddy access. We have been responding to this by ensuring up-to-date information of working areas and alternative route information is on-site and have even created new, alternative routes at Norleywood by clearing desire lines further to make new pathways to allow recreational access and timber operations to coincide side by side.