

National Park Access Updates March 2024

New Forest Access Forum

2024 is a recruitment year for the forum. After the March meeting we'll start recruitment for any vacant posts and have new members in place for the June meeting. All posts will be for a three-year term until 2027. In other news the 2023 report has been compiled and is available on the Access Forum website.

Volunteer Access Work

Access surveyors have been given their path survey maps and are preparing for the first half of the Ease-of-Use path survey. This survey is conducted in March/April, then later in September/October, assessing a randomly selected 20% of paths which gives an estimate of the percentage of paths which are open and easy to use. Our current score is 76%.

National Grid Landscape Enhancement Project

Sixteen oak signposts have been installed along the new Franchises Lodge walking route and a further 15 signposts are in production and are due to be installed over the next month along the Landford and Hamptworth walking route.

DEFRA Access For All Fund

We are starting the third year of this scheme and will be using the funds to support pedal, re-surface the Knightwood Oak trail and design a series of leaflets for some tramper-friendly routes in the New Forest.

England Coast Path

Discussions continue with Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and other access authorities about establishing a Trail Partnership. The working title is the Solent to Sussex Trail Partnership and will cover an area from Dorset to Brighton. By forming a trail partnership we are eligible for a larger maintenance grant from Natural England.

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