

Access Forum, March 2025

Update on behalf of Forestry England,
South District.



The highest ever numbers of woodlark have been recorded here in the New Forest.

A survey by Forestry England with Hampshire Ornithological Society volunteers, found that the population of these special ground nesting birds has increased by over 50% in the last 5 years.

This makes the New Forest one of the UK's most important locations for this species with around 10% of the population found here.

The survey was done to help assess the impact of our work to try and boost the number of protected birds breeding here. Over the last 15 years, we have returned large areas of forest back to heathland to create more of the habitat they need to thrive.

Each year we close some of our car parks near nesting sites during the breeding season, including: Clayhill, Crockford, Crockford Clump, Hincheslea, Hincheslea Moor, Ocknell Pond, Ogdens, Shatterford, Yew Tree Heath and part of Beaulieu Heath car park.



The wintertime can be the deadliest months for animal accidents on Forest roads, and our rangers have been reminding motorists to expect the unexpected when driving in changeable conditions.

The vast majority of the hundreds of drivers caught speeding this year were on their daily commute and only 5% were visiting the area.

Two-thirds of all drivers stopped as part of Operation Mountie lived within the boundaries of New Forest District Council.



We continue to work with local partners NFDC, the police, VOSPA and the NPA, carrying out random spot check on vehicles carrying waste.

Recently we extended these checks to include private estates (Beaulieu and Longdown) that are also suffering with similar issues.

Our joint campaign highlights how we're proactivity tackling offenders in the New Forest.



We have seen significant increases in the cost of maintaining our car parks - with rises in the cost of materials and changes in weather patterns causing greater damage.

With less than 10% of our core funding now coming from taxes, this puts further pressure on our ability to maintain such a large network of car parks in the New Forest (130 car parks).

This has resulted in additional car park closures this winter, as we work through the list of required repairs.



Due to increased stormy weather and high winds, we're seeing a lot more trees being damaged.

Forestry England's staff have been carrying out tree safety check surveys.

Every year they inspect the condition of hundreds of miles of Forest roads and our car parks - looking for signs of decay, rot and damage and checking the trees' stability.





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Growing the future