

A unique and beautiful place

This leaflet contains advice on how to help preserve the New Forest, especially areas next to the Open Forest that are grazed by New Forest ponies and cattle.

The New Forest has long been recognised as a unique and beautiful place with centuries of grazing animals, owned by Commoners, making the unique open heathland landscape what it is today.

The New Forest was designated a National Park in 2005 to recognise the special quality of the landscape including the villages and historic buildings of the area. As the owner of a property that adjoins the Open Forest you can play your part in preserving and protecting the New Forest National Park.



Advice and guidance for owners of properties adjoining the Open Forest



This advisory leaflet is produced and funded by the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

www.hlsnewforest.org.uk

and supported by the Verderers of the New Forest, Forestry Commission, New Forest National Park Authority and Natural England.



This project has been funded through Environmental Stewardship

Helpful tips



Protect your garden

The condition of your boundary (fencing, hedges, gates and cattle grids) is your responsibility and needs to be stock proof so that animals cannot access your garden. If a Forest animal gets into your property you may be held liable by its owner if it suffers any injury or illness as a result. If the animal damages your garden you cannot claim against the owner.

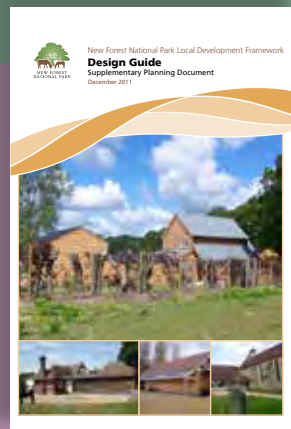
If you have a cattle grid it is important that it is kept clear of silt and leaves to avoid animals learning how to 'walk' the grid. If replacing an existing cattle grid make sure it is constructed correctly¹ and that the side fencing is effective and in good condition. Grids in bad condition are particularly dangerous to livestock.

Keeping the New Forest character

Consider how your boundaries look too. A well constructed fence², preferably post and rail or post and wire including stock netting, or a picket fence with a native species hedgerow behind and a traditional timber five bar gate, will fit into the landscape much better than a tall close board fence with matching gates. Bear in mind that the fence must exclude Forest stock – ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs and in some areas sheep. The National Park Design Guide includes guidance on boundaries. See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk or pick up a free copy at the New Forest National Park office.

Helpful specifications – available from the Verderers' office:

- ¹Cattle Grids: Cattle Grids for Private Roads
- ²Fencing: Woodland Trust Spec No. 3.13
Fencing Post & Rail
Woodland Trust Spec No. 3.14
Fencing Mild Steel stock proof



New Forest National Park Design Guide



Boundaries

The grazing animals need all the Forest for grazing, and lots of small encroachments add up to larger areas being lost from the Open Forest.

As a general rule portions of land including, but not exclusively, verges, gateways and ditches, lying outside the hedge, fence or wall of a property in an area to which commoners' stock has access, will be subject to rights of common. Such land must not be fenced or otherwise enclosed, or the grazing diminished in any way. To do so will constitute an illegal encroachment.

Ensure that you don't encroach on the Open Forest by moving fence lines or placing obstacles to demarcate areas, creating driveways or by allowing hedges to spread through fences and over ditches.

If in doubt build your fence on the garden side of an existing hedge or contact the Forestry Commission for advice (contact details on the back of this leaflet).

Ditches should be kept clear to allow for free draining of water. It is important to cut back hedges next to roads, footpaths and bridleways.



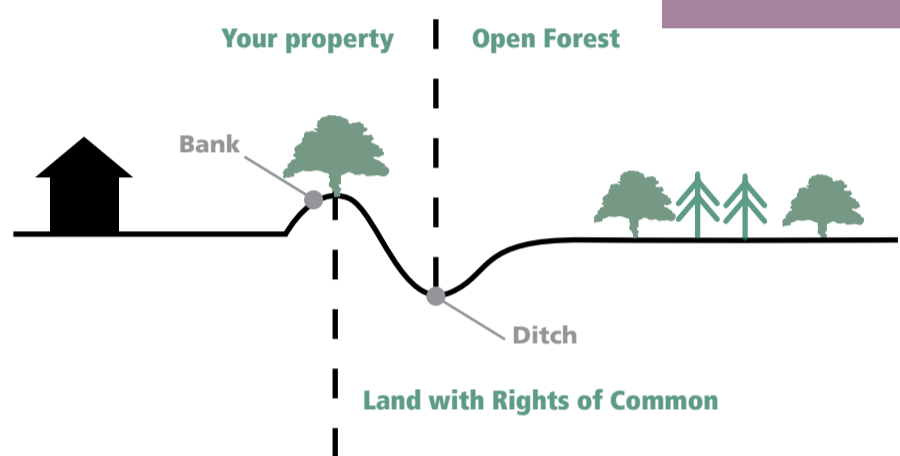
Help keep the ponies healthy

Do not dispose of windfall fruit, unwanted hay, straw, and grass cuttings on the Open Forest where it can be eaten by grazing animals. This can be very dangerous to the animals and adds unwanted nutrients to the Open Forest which change the flora and soil make up. Grass cuttings in particular can kill ponies. Compost grass cuttings and prunings within your own garden, take to a licensed tip or consider joining the New Forest District Council or Wiltshire Council Garden Waste Scheme.

On 'bin' day make sure that domestic waste is not accessible to animals. Waste disposal bins with lids are often used to deter animals.

Septic tank

Untreated sewage leaking into a ditch or watercourse is a hazard to the delicate balance of flora and fauna on the Open Forest. If you have a septic tank or cesspit, make sure that it is regularly emptied and maintained to avoid any overflow. Water from swimming pools must not be discharged onto the Open Forest. Manure piles should be located away from watercourses.



Parking with care

Most of the Open Forest is designated a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), because of its national importance as a wildlife habitat. The verge outside your house is most likely to be a SSSI and should always be treated with care, so avoid parking or storing materials on it especially in wet weather when the soil can easily be churned up. This particularly applies if you are having building work done. To build a new drive over a SSSI verge, planning consent from the New Forest National Park Authority and approval from Natural England normally has to be gained, as well as consent from the Forestry Commission if it is on Crown Land.



A good example where the fence is on the property side of the ditch and bank, has native plants growing behind and has not encroached on the Forest.

Hedges help wildlife

When planting at the boundary to your property consider using wildlife and stock friendly native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn and holly. Avoid laurel, rhododendron and exotics (which can 'escape' into the Forest) or very fast growing conifers such as Leylandii, as well as other plants that can be poisonous to animals such as laburnum and yew. The New Forest National Park has a helpful leaflet on planting a hedgerow called the Native Species Hedgerow Guide. The New Forest Land Advice Service can also provide specific advice.

Lighting

Keeping the night skies as dark as possible and cutting down on light pollution helps preserve the tranquillity of the Forest and also saves energy. Outside lights need to be considered carefully; a badly positioned floodlight can shine out across the Forest for miles or constitute a highway hazard. Too many outside lights can illuminate a house or drive far beyond what is needed for safety or security and excessive lighting will disturb bats and nocturnal animals.

Useful contacts

For advice on boundaries to your property contact the Forestry Commission or the Verderers office

Forestry Commission

The Queen's House, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7NH
Tel: 023 8028 3141
Email: enquiries.southern@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest

The Verderers of the New Forest

Also for advice on Forest stock, ponies, cattle, etc.
The Queen's House, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7NH
Tel: 023 8028 2052 Fax: 023 8028 3101
Email: enquiries@verderers.org.uk
Website: www.verderers.org.uk

For advice on the disposal of domestic waste and bin collection, disposal of grass cuttings, prunings etc and garden waste schemes

New Forest District Council

Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7PA
Tel: 023 8028 5000
Email: contact@nfdc.gov.uk
Website: www.newforest.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

The Council House, Bourne Hill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3UZ
Tel: 0300 456 0102
Email: customerservicessouth@wiltshire.gov.uk
Website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

For advice on the design of domestic boundaries, fencing, external lighting or planning enquiries

New Forest National Park Authority

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG
Tel: 01590 646600
Email: dev.control@newforestnpa.gov.uk
Website: www.newforestnpa.gov.uk

For advice on septic tanks

Environment Agency

National Customer Contact Centre, PO Box 544 Rotherham, Yorkshire S60 1BY
Tel: 03708 506506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

For advice on the management of a hedgerow

New Forest Land Advice Service

Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ZG
Tel: 01590 646696
Email: enquiries@nflandadvice.org.uk
Website: www.nflandadvice.org.uk

