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## **BACKGROUND**

The *Progress* Project, under the auspices of the Forestry Commission, seeks to reconcile the need to conserve the New Forest with the recreational demand. The project is involved with a number of initiatives to establish baseline information designed to inform the future management of the new National Park.

Surveys are under way to establish the number of people using the area for recreation and to note the various types of activities undertaken. One of these is horse riding. The impact of this activity has already been the subject of some reports, but the most recent information dates back to 1994. There is a need to update this information and assess the attitudes of horse riders and other forest users.

England Marketing was commissioned by the *Progress* project in September 2004 to undertake this study.

## **RESEARCH AIM**

To obtain baseline information on the recreational use of the New Forest National Park by horse riders.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To estimate the number of horses that make use of the New Forest National Park area, broken down by three sub regions.
2. To assess the type and extent of usage of the National Park by horse riders.
3. To assess the extent of erosion caused by ridden horses within the Park.
4. To identify how better provision for horse riders within the Park could help reduce erosion.
5. To assess the problems of horse riding in order of priority, as perceived by both horse riders and other forest users.
6. To identify any further research in the context of horse riding that may help the management of the recreational use of the New Forest National Park.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The area for study was specified as that of the New Forest National Park comprising around 57,000 hectares. This is a very large area and it was not possible, given the financial constraints, to undertake an actual physical count of horses within the National Park boundaries.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a combination of research methodologies was employed. These have included a survey amongst horse owners/riders, a survey amongst householders in the area, a focus group with those in the New Forest actively involved with horse riding and a series of telephone interviews with livery yards, riding clubs, vets and farriers.

As a first step, the author identified the existence of the New Forest Equestrian Association (NFEA) which has around 650 members. Lengthy discussions were held between England Marketing and the NFEA where it was agreed that NFEA would assist England Marketing in the undertaking of a focus group amongst horse owners and from this, help with sending out a postal questionnaire to its members.

The focus group took place in January 2005 and included a representative from the British Horse Society who is also involved with the New Forest Riding Club (NFRC) and who agreed to help with the postal survey. The focus group was extremely helpful in presenting the horse riders' perspectives, some of the perceived problems and the benefit of many years riding experience in the Forest.

A total of 810 questionnaires were sent out to NFEA and NFRC members and a total of 267 were returned. This is a 33% response rate and 267 responses provide a suitably robust sample.

In addition to the NFEA/NFRC questionnaire (horse rider's questionnaire), a general questionnaire was sent to a sample of households across the National Park area. The households were selected on a random basis from a representative list of postcodes. The household survey yielded 1276 responses from 6,000 questionnaires sent out, a 21% response rate, of which 7.5% of respondents owned horses and 9.7% named horse riding as one of their leisure activities.

It was thought that the vets and farriers who worked with horses in the New Forest area would, between them, have a list of horses in the area. In pursuit of this information, a series of calls were made to most of the vets and farriers across the area. There were three main veterinary establishments in the area who were able to provide detailed figures of the horses they have on their books. The other vets claimed they did not treat horses. There were ten farriers, some of whom provided details of the number of horses they deal with in various locations. This information broadly supported that provided by the vets.

The questionnaires used for the two surveys are attached as appendix 1.

## **REPORT ON FINDINGS**

The main findings from the research carried out are presented in the following pages, broken down by objective.

## **OBJECTIVE 1**

*To estimate the number of horses that make use of the New Forest National Park*

### **Number of horses**

Various approaches were used in this study to try and estimate the number of horses which use the New Forest.

1. In the first instance the study team considered the use of horse passports. As horse passports have been introduced, it was initially felt that this would be a good source of information but there has only been 20% - 50% take up so far (source NFEA and one of the veterinary surgeries). There are many organisations responsible for issuing passports rather than one central body and many are experiencing a backlog of paperwork. As having a horse passport is now a legal requirement (since February 2005) once the backlog of paperwork is cleared, this may provide a useful source of absolute horse numbers in the area later this year, however for the purpose of this study this information would be unreliable.
2. Using data captured from the household survey where 96 of the 1,276 respondents claimed they owned horses i.e. 7.5%, this figure was then extrapolated to reflect possible horse ownership in the New Forest District Council area (this area extends beyond the National Park boundary but people living there are within easy reach of the Forest). The population of the area is 71,985 households (source: 2001 census) which indicates that 5,400 (7.5%) households could own a horse. Although the New Forest is a popular area for riders, the author feels this figure may be a little high as the national figure for horse ownership in Great Britain is only 1.6% (source: British Horse Society). Using 1.6% of the households in the area would give an estimated 1,151 horses.
3. Turning to the NFEA/NFRC Horse Riders survey, we were able to gain some more realistic evidence. The respondents to the NFEA/NFRC horse riders' survey numbered 267 and between them the respondents accounted for 542 horses from a 33% response rate. If this figure is extrapolated to the 810 owners to whom the survey was posted, we could assume that between them they own/ride 1,642 horses.
4. Desk research and interviews were undertaken amongst riding schools. A total of 17 Riding Schools are registered in the area and these account for 192 horses.
5. Desk research and interviews were undertaken amongst other riding clubs and pony clubs, apart from the NFRC. It is estimated that each riding club has about 100 members and up to 200 horses. There are four main riding clubs in the area. It is recognised that some clubs and organisations may overlap in membership but given that the clubs appeal to members of different age groups we would estimate that the overlap is 10% or less. Thus riding club members could account for an estimated 800 additional horses.
6. 40 livery yards were contacted separately but as only 6 responded to the questionnaire and they were not suitably forthcoming with information about their numbers of horses, this line of investigation did not yield any meaningful

data. Livery yards, unlike riding schools are not obliged to register with the District Council so data are not readily available from any other sources. It is expected that the number of horses in livery would be included in the figures derived from the household survey anyway, given that over a third keep their horses in livery.

7. The hunt reputedly has 40 regular members which is likely to account for a further 80 horses.

Thus using membership and riding school counts, it was possible to account for perhaps 2,714 horses (1,642 + 192 + 800 + 80)

This evidence was further corroborated by the following:-

1. Interviews with some farriers were undertaken. There are more than 40 farriers registered in Hampshire with the Farriers Registration Council but many of these are located some distance from the New Forest. Using [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com) (revealing 19 farriers in the New Forest area, some of whom were contacted and said they were too far away) and [www.NFED.co.uk](http://www.NFED.co.uk) (New Forest Equestrian Directory – revealing 9 farriers, 2 of whom said they were too far away) it is estimated that there are 10 farriers who are *actively* working just in the New Forest area. During the telephone research, some of the farriers were prepared to say how many horses they regularly attend. On average, this seemed to be 200-300, a realistic figure based on the author's own experience. Thus it would not be unrealistic from these estimates to suggest that there are 2000-3000 horses regularly shod in the New Forest.
2. Telephone interviews with vets (also identified by internet research, as for farriers) similarly point to there being between 2,500 – 3,000 horses. The largest equine veterinary surgeons have 16 vets at the practice and estimate that they have around 2,000 horses on their books that regularly require their services. The two smaller main practices estimate they have 350 horses and 500 horses respectively, which they attend on a regular basis located in the New Forest area. Other practices listed in the area, a further 6, claimed that they did not deal with equine cases.

### Changes in numbers since 1994

In 1994 the report estimated 3,600 riding horses in the New Forest. Although the 1994 survey had a wider remit to count the number of horses, this research, eleven years on, suggests the number may have declined to 3,000 horses, based on the sources used above.

In both surveys carried out by England Marketing, respondents were asked whether the number of horses had increased or decreased over the last 10 years. The table below shows the results. A few respondents declined to comment so percentages do not add up to 100.

Perceived change	Horse Riders' Survey	Household Survey
Increased	15.4%	36.0%
Stayed the same	61.0%	48.0%
Decreased	20.6%	15.0%

The majority of respondents in both surveys had lived in the area for more than 10 years. The perception amongst the majority of local people is that the number of horses has either stayed the same or increased, but the horse riders feel that the number has more likely stayed the same or decreased.

One of the major veterinary practices also commented that they felt horse riding had increased – young girls are working on Saturdays to pay for their horses and more people who live in cities and major towns are buying horses for weekend riding.

Thus, the general perception of local people is that the number of horses has not declined. This perception could be due to increased awareness of horse riding activity through the presence of the NFEA.

However, the number of riding schools has decreased according to the local council and NFEA felt strongly that the number of horses had declined citing the following reasons.

- There is less take up of horse riding amongst children because parents are working longer hours and have less time to take them riding.
- Parents are concerned about risks associated with horse riding.
- The cost of keeping a horse (£2 – 3k per annum) is becoming more prohibitive.

The scope of this study was to *estimate* the number of horses in the New Forest. More accurate figures could only be gathered by a field survey, which would be an expensive undertaking and would be unlikely to yield data differing wildly from the estimate. Based on the various sources, it is concluded that there are at least 3,000 horses in the New Forest but this figure could be higher, although unlikely to exceed 5,000. Once the horse passport issue is resolved, this may be a better and more reliable source to which the Forestry Commission could turn.

### Location of horses

The spread of horses in each of the 3 main areas, north of Lyndhurst, to the west and to the south has been estimated by responses from both the horse riders' survey and the household survey by taking a mean figure. The table below shows the estimated split of horse numbers by area.

Location	Horse Riders' Survey	Household Survey	Mean	Likely number of horses
South	53%	55%	54%	1620
West	24%	26%	25%	750
North	23%	19%	21%	630

The south area of the New Forest is significantly more popular than the west and north. This is further confirmed by the popularity of particular areas for riding shown on the Map (figure 1, objective 2, page 12) but it should be borne in mind that the south is also a larger geographical area with a greater population density.

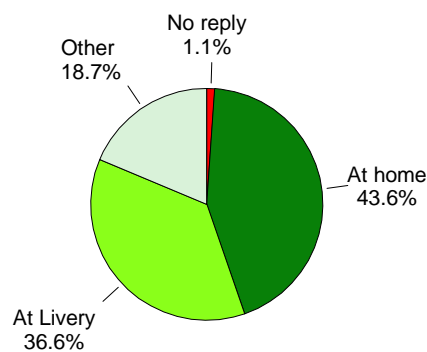
## OBJECTIVE 2

*To assess the type and extent of usage of the New Forest by horse riders.*

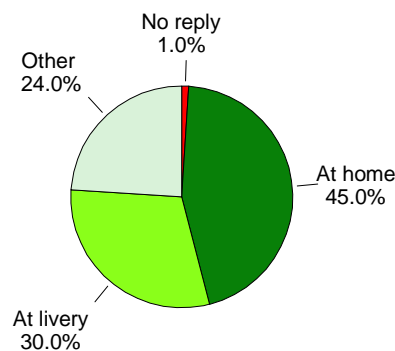
A series of questions in the both the horse riders' survey and the household survey sought to gather data on the extent to which riders use the forest and where they tend to ride.

Based on the horse riders' survey, 44% of the riders keep their horses at home, 37% are kept in formal livery and the remainder are kept in nearby rented fields or stables. We believe the majority of these to be in fields/stables rented out to horse owners by farmers near the Forest. Similarly, horse owners covered by the household survey showed 45% at home, 30% in livery and 24% in miscellaneous fields and stables. The charts below show the figures graphically.

### Where are the horses/ponies kept for the majority of the year - Horse Riders' Survey



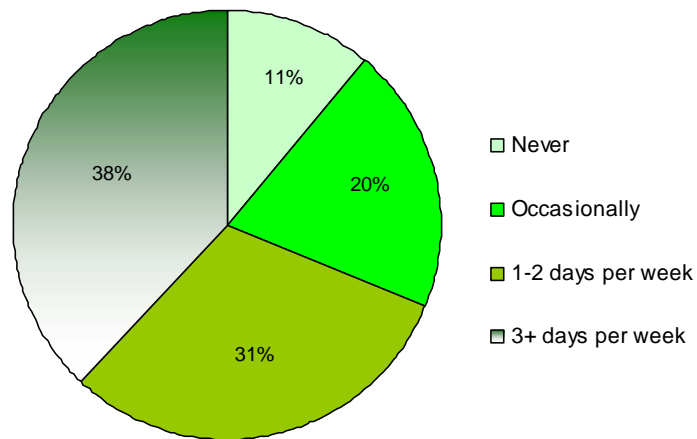
### Where are the horses/ponies kept for the majority of the year - Household Survey



Respondents were asked how frequently they ride in the forest. The results were as follows:

Frequency of Riding in the New Forest	% Respondents
Never	11%
Occasionally	20%
1 – 2 days per week	31%
3+ days per week	38%

Frequency of riding in the New Forest



Where riders owned more than one horse, the first horse is ridden more frequently than the other horses as shown by the more detailed tables below.

### Horse Riders' survey

Absolute Analysis % Responses	Base						
		Horse / Pony 1	Horse / Pony 2	Horse / Pony 3	Horse / Pony 4	Horse / Pony 5	Horse / Pony 6
Base	<b>519</b>	<b>261</b> 50.3%	<b>149</b> 28.7%	<b>60</b> 11.6%	<b>28</b> 5.4%	<b>13</b> 2.5%	<b>8</b> 1.5%
Never	<b>52</b>	20 38.5%	10 19.2%	11 21.2%	4 7.7%	3 5.8%	4 7.7%
Occasionally	<b>107</b>	42 39.3%	33 30.8%	16 15.0%	11 10.3%	5 4.7%	- -
1-2 days per week	<b>158</b>	81 51.3%	51 32.3%	17 10.8%	6 3.8%	2 1.3%	1 0.6%
3 or more days per week	<b>202</b>	118 58.4%	55 27.2%	16 7.9%	7 3.5%	3 1.5%	3 1.5%

### Household Survey

Absolute Analysis % Responses	Base						
		Horse / pony 1	Horse / pony 2	Horse / pony 3	Horse / pony 4	Horse / pony 5	Horse / pony 6
Base	<b>176</b>	<b>94</b> 53.4%	<b>46</b> 26.1%	<b>15</b> 8.5%	<b>12</b> 6.8%	<b>5</b> 2.8%	<b>4</b> 2.3%
Never	<b>27</b>	11 40.7%	5 18.5%	2 7.4%	3 11.1%	3 11.1%	3 11.1%
Occasionally	<b>31</b>	15 48.4%	8 25.8%	5 16.1%	2 6.5%	1 3.2%	- -
1-2 days per week	<b>56</b>	33 58.9%	17 30.4%	3 5.4%	3 5.4%	- -	- -
3 or more days per week	<b>62</b>	35 56.5%	16 25.8%	5 8.1%	4 6.5%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%

Respondents were asked whether they had direct access to the New Forest from where they keep their horses. 63% of horse owners claimed they can ride straight into the forest and 35% claimed they did not have direct access (a few respondents did not answer).

Respondents were asked whether they have to ride in the open forest to get to surfaced tracks. In the horse riders' survey 58% said they did and in the household survey 62% said they did.

When asked where they mainly ride, the results were as shown in the table. A few respondents chose not to complete this part of the survey.

Where they ride	Horse Riders' Survey	Household Survey
On surfaced tracks	29%	23%
In open areas (off surfaced tracks)	38%	39%
In enclosed areas	24%	21%
Other	8%	13%

Thus the open areas and surfaced tracks appear to be the most popular types of area in which to ride.

Respondents were asked how often they vary the general area in which they ride, and then how often they vary the route on which they ride. The tables show the findings.

Frequency of varying area in which they ride	Horse Riders' Survey	Household Survey
Every time	39%	33%
Every week	20%	18%
1 – 2 times per month	21%	20%
< 1 per month	11%	9%
Never	9%	13%

Those who never vary the area in which they ride were asked if they vary the general route.

General Route	Horse Riders' Survey	Household Survey
Every time	60.0%	79.0%
Every week	20.0%	12.5%
1 – 2 times per month	9.0%	
< 1 per month	3.0%	0.4%
Never	3.0%	0.4%

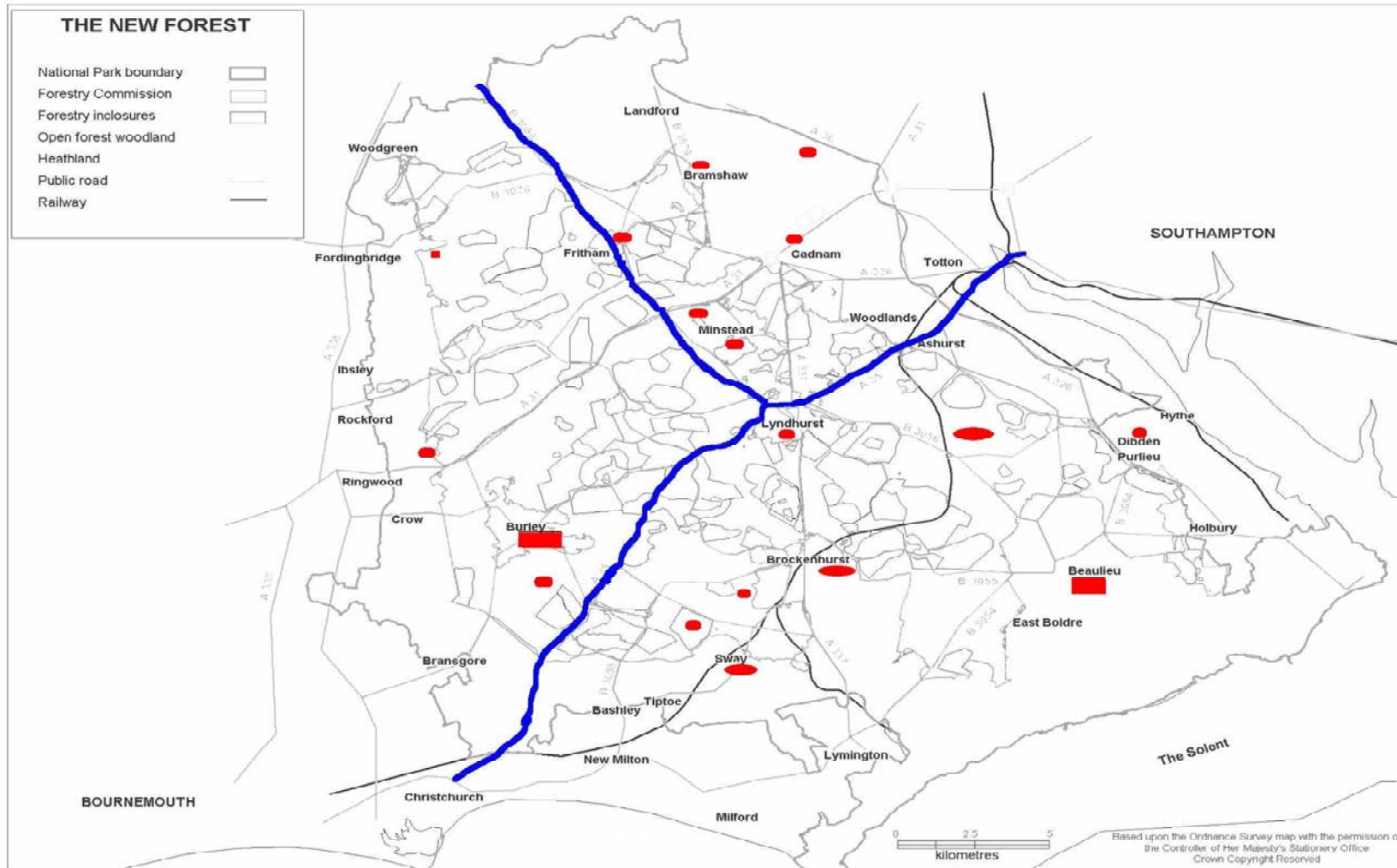
Thus most horse riders, whilst not always varying the general area within which they ride, tend to mostly vary the route they take with that area.

The areas which are the most popular to ride in are as follows:-

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Beaulieu area	38
Burley area	36
Brockenhurst area	26
Sway area	22
Ipley area	20
Fritham	18
Dibden Purlieu	17
Holmsley	17
Longslade	17
Minstead	17
Bramshaw	16
Lyndhurst area	16
Cadnam area	16
Canada	15
Linford	14
Setthorns	13
Stoney Cross	12
Godshill	10

The most popular of these are shown on the attached map (figure 1)

Figure 1



Key - Frequency of Times Mentioned By Horse Riders

- 30-40 times
- 20-29 times
- 11-19 times
- 10 times

Anecdotal evidence gained from the survey as well as the focus group and the individual interviews, confirmed that the areas most frequently cited in the survey are generally the most popular areas in which to ride.

The Forest is regarded by many as a very pleasurable environment in which to ride and those who keep horses enjoy riding as a traditional activity.

However, some respondents said a reason for always riding out in the Forest is due to New Forest District Council's stringent planning rules on the erection of ménages.

Of the people who never ride in the Forest, a few ride on the roads around the Forest and only three respondents mentioned that they ride in ménages more often than in the Forest.

### **OBJECTIVE 3**

*To assess the extent of erosion caused by ridden horses within the National Park*

In the original brief the Forestry Commission wished to assess the extent of erosion which might be attributed to horses ridden within the park.

It was agreed that for the purposes of this study, timescales were too short to undertake a full scientific study. Indeed, England Marketing quoted Boardman “monitoring of soil erosion as a field based measurement needs to take place over a significant area and for a period of longer than two years” (Transactions, IBG, June 2003).

However, during the course of this study, anecdotal evidence was gathered, particularly through the focus group amongst NFEA members which suggested that the Forestry Commission vehicles caused erosion with 4x4 vehicles. The focus group showed some photographic evidence of where vehicles had been driven and horses had been forced to make additional tracks to the side of the wheelings but this evidence did not quantify the problem.

The perception of a number of the local people who do not ride is that horse riding contributes to erosion but some horse riders claim horse riding does not cause erosion. If the horse numbers have truly declined, as has been suggested, the problem should also be less than 10 years ago.

## **OBJECTIVE 4**

*To identify how better provision for horse riders within the park could help reduce erosion.*

The focus group outlined some of the improvements which could be made to the forest from the point of view of horse riders. The horse riders' survey questioned respondents on what would improve horse riding in the New Forest for them. There were an enormous number of comments made by the horse riders, many of whom listed a number of comments, and confirmed the suggestions of the focus group. The comments are all summarised by theme and the main points shown below. A fuller version of the comments has been submitted in a separate document.

The 267 total number of respondents from the horse riders' survey suggested improvements which could be made which would help reduce erosion and also suggested a number of other improvements, which would not impact upon erosion but would improve conditions for horse riders.

### **Improvements to reduce erosion**

There were 94 comments suggesting the following:

1. Clearance of logs and debris from streams by the Forestry Commission to avoid them flooding and creating boggy areas, which would prevent horses stepping round these areas and creating new tracks.
2. Maintenance of bridges so that horses do not have to step around broken bridges and provide non-slip surfaces on the bridges and again, prevent horses from creating new tracks.
3. Better maintenance of tracks with less sharp, large gravel which is not suitable for horses' hooves which would encourage horses to stay on the surfaced tracks.
4. Reinstatement of rides and tracks after Forestry Commission vehicles have passed through or undertaken logging work. Horse riders will not then be forced onto alternative routes.

### **General improvements**

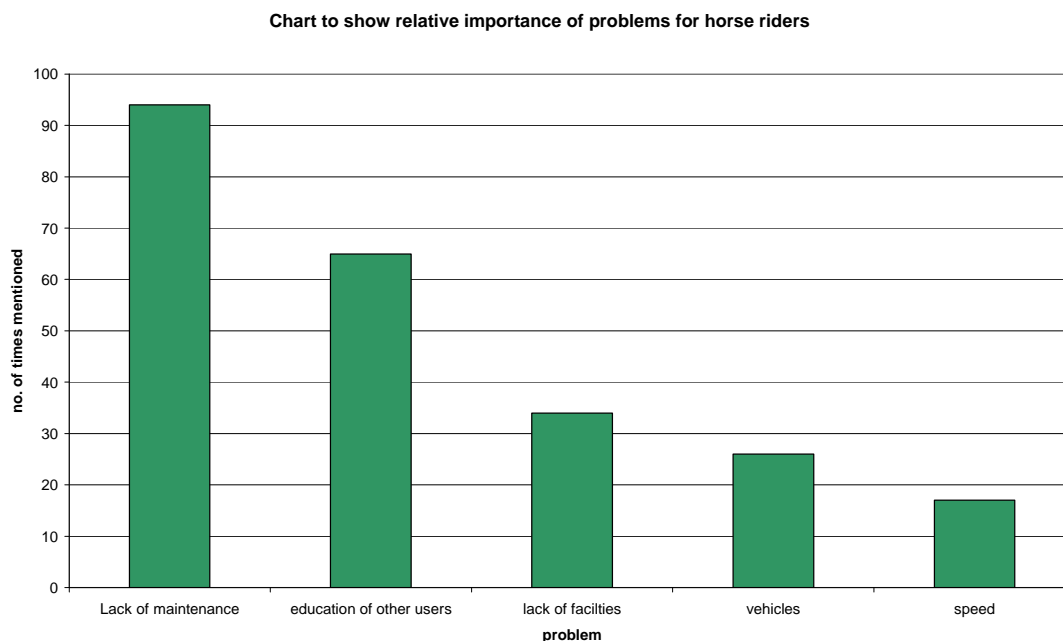
1. Better maintenance of gates and gate hardware so their locks and catches are less stiff and not rusty and easier to reach from horseback.
2. More gorse cutting to clear the way for riders and stop grazing animals from straying onto the paths so much.
3. A few larger car parks to accommodate horseboxes and more frequent repair of potholes in car parks.
4. Some areas require safer crossings to access the Forest, such as the A35 at Wootton. There were a total of 34 comments on improving routes through the forest and safer crossings.

5. Education of other users about consideration for riders. In particular, cyclists should not approach horses quietly and at speed, dog owners should keep their dogs under control and visitors should be encouraged to take their litter home. There were 22 comments suggesting that users should have respect for each other and 26 comments referring specifically to cyclists.
6. Motorists should be reminded to travel more slowly on the roads through the Forest. There were 17 comments on speed of drivers through the Forest.

## OBJECTIVE 5

*To assess the problems of horse riding in order of priority as perceived by both horse riders and other Forest users.*

A number of problems emerged from the open questions in the horse survey as well as the focus group with NFEA members. They were prioritised by the number of times they were mentioned and are shown in the bar chart below:-



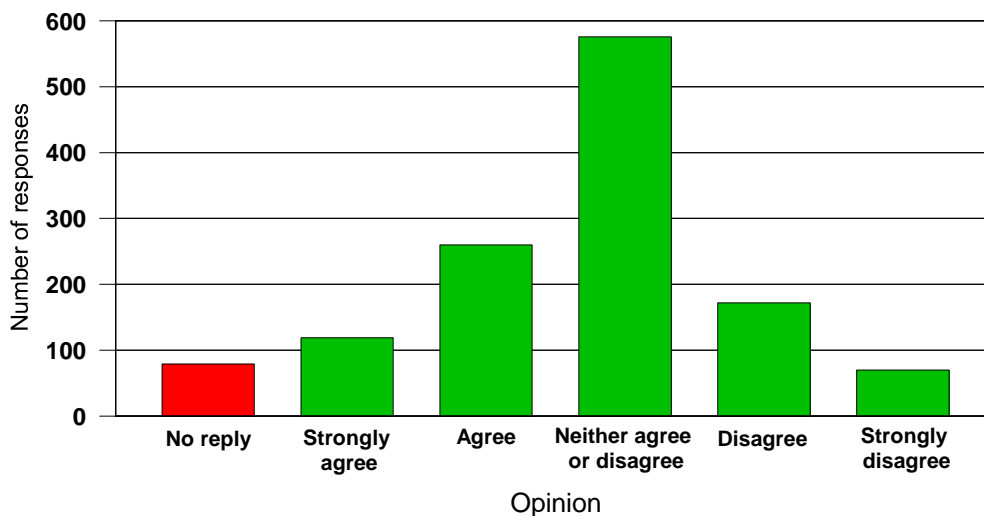
- 1) From the horse riders point of view the most significant problem is maintenance or lack of it carried out by the Forestry Commission. The key problems are with gates, pot holes, bridges and tracks.
- 2) Secondly, is the lack of consideration by other users, particularly cyclists, who come up behind horses and spook them, as well as kites and dogs out of control.
- 3) Horse riders feel more facilities, signage, alternative routes and specific areas and better car parks made available for them would ease some of the difficulties they experience.
- 4) Tracks left by the Forestry Commission vehicles create problems for horse riders leaving the ground deeply rutted, muddy and sometimes impassable.
- 5) Speed of cars on roads through the Forest is also considered to be something of an issue.

### Perceived Problems

The Forestry Commission wanted to explore whether the disturbance of ground nesting birds was a problem.

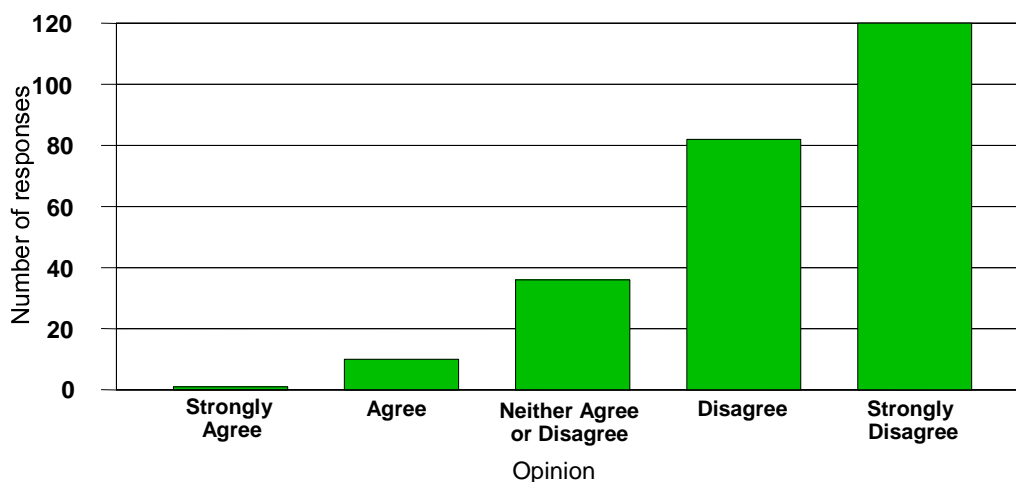
As far as horse riders disturbing ground nesting birds are concerned, the chart below shows the majority of respondents in the household survey were ambivalent with only 19% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they disturb ground nesting birds.

**Horse riders disturb the ground nesting birds  
- Household Survey**



The chart below shows the response of the horse riders to this question which show the vast majority strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that horses disturb ground nesting birds.

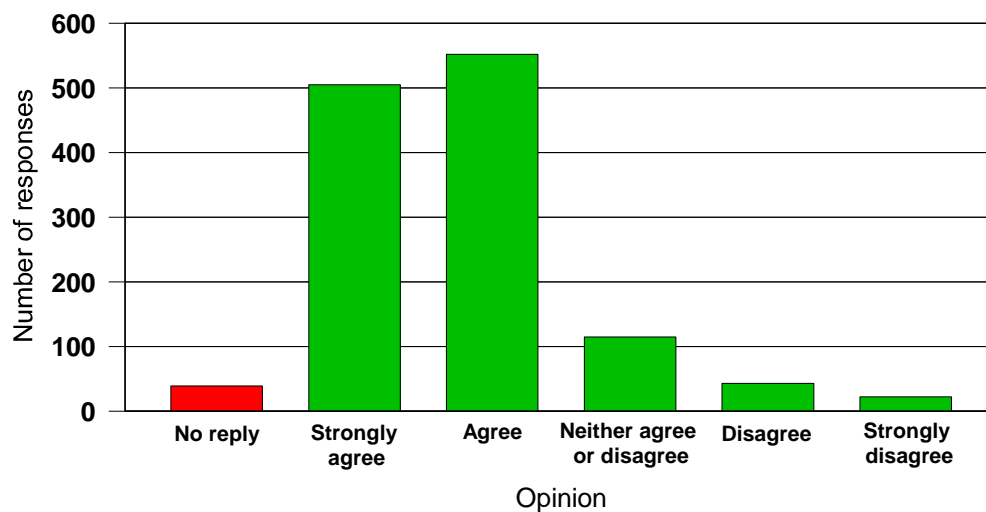
**Horse riders disturb the ground nesting birds  
- Horse Riders' Survey**



It appears that the perception of respondents is that horses do not disturb ground nesting birds, and this was supported by further comments from the focus group.

As far as other users of the Forest are concerned, they do not seem to be concerned about horse riding with 83% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that horse riders should continue to enjoy open access in the Forest.

### Horse riders should continue to enjoy open access in the forest - Household Survey



Naturally 99% of the horse riders felt they should continue to enjoy the open access in the Forest.

## **OBJECTIVE 6**

*To determine whether there should be any further research undertaken*

This project has highlighted the main issues which affect horse riders in the New Forest and some improvements which could be made have been identified.

Continued communication and the ability to work together should negate the need for further extensive research specifically amongst riders. However, it would appear that some further work amongst other users might be worthwhile to canvas their opinions. It would be worthwhile considering more research and dialogue with commercial stables who are heavier users of particular locations in the forest by virtue of the fact that a number of horses are ridden out together.

As cyclists are apparently becoming more numerous it would be appropriate for the Forestry Commission to undertake a similar study amongst this user group to establish whether an increase in areas set aside for cycling activity would lead to more harmonious relationships between horse riders and bike riders. (Some more ideas on this are to be found in the similar dog study)

**APPENDIX 1**

**Recreational Horse Keeping in the New Forest**

Please **DO NOT** include any ponies depastured in the New Forest in your answers to this questionnaire

- Q1 How many horses/ponies do the members of your household own and use for recreational purposes?**  
 1 .....  2 .....  3 .....  4 .....  5 .....  6 .....
- Q2 Please indicate where the horses/ponies are kept for the majority of the year**  
 At home .....  At Livery.....  Other (please specify) .....   
 Other
- Q3 On average how often is each of the horses/ponies ridden in the New Forest?**
- |                         | Horse / pony 1           | Horse / pony 2           | Horse / pony 3           | Horse / pony 4           | Horse / pony 5           | Horse / pony 6           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Occasionally            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1-2 days per week       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 or more days per week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Q4 Do you have direct access to the New Forest from where the horses/ponies are kept?**  
 Yes (Specify where) .....  No .....   
 Where?
- Q5 In which parts of the New Forest do you normally ride?**
- Q6 How often do you vary the general area in which you ride?**  
 Every time.....  Go to Q8  
 Every week.....  Go to Q8  
 Once or twice a month.....  Go to Q8  
 Less than once a month.....  Go to Q8  
 Never.....  Go to Q7
- Q7 How often do you vary the general route on which you ride?**  
 Every time.....  Once or twice a month.....  Never.....   
 Every week.....  Less than once a month.....
- Q8 Do you have to ride in the open forest in order to get to any surfaced tracks?**  
 Yes .....  No.....

**Q9 Would you say that you mostly ride** (Tick as many options as apply)

On the surfaced tracks .....       On the open areas of the New Forest (off the surfaced tracks).....       On the enclosed areas of the New Forest .....

Other (Specify) .....

Other

**Q10 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about horse riding in the New Forest?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Horse riders should continue to enjoy open access in the forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse riders disturb the ground nesting birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q11 In your opinion has the number of horses being ridden in the New Forest increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 10 years**(or during the time you have lived in the area if that is less than 10 years, in which case please state how long you have lived in the area)?

Increased.....       Stayed the same.....       Decreased .....

Number of years lived in the area

**Q12 Is there anything that would improve horse riding in the New Forest for you?** (If you run out of space, please continue on a separate piece of paper)

It would be helpful to us if you could provide the first four digits of your postcode in order that we can collate the results by area.

Please be assured that the information you have provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Name:**

**Telephone:**

**Postcode:**

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire, your views are important to us.

A FREEPOST envelope has been enclosed for your reply, which we would appreciate by Monday 28th February 2005

## New Forest Household Survey



Dear householder

We are undertaking some research amongst households in the New Forest area on behalf of the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission are continually looking for ways in which they can make your leisure visits to the New Forest Countryside more enjoyable whilst at the same time maintaining the conservation value of the site. We would appreciate 10 minutes of your time to answer a few simple questions which will help the Forestry Commission understand more about their visitors

The questionnaire is divided into 4 sections. In the first section we would like to know how you use the New Forest Countryside

### SECTION 1 - TO BE COMPLETED BY EVERYONE

**Q1** What leisure activities do you enjoy in the New Forest countryside? (Tick all those options that apply)

- |  |                          |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Walking (Alone or with family/friends) ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Picnicking or just relaxing.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dog walking .....                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cycling / mountain bike riding..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Horse riding .....                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Please specify below).....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jogging / running .....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                     |                          |

**Q2** Do you have direct access, by foot, from your house to the areas of the New Forest that you normally use?

- Yes .....  No.....

**Q3** Which areas of the New Forest do you normally use and/or car parks do you use?

**Q4** What do you enjoy most about your visits to the New Forest?

**Q5** Do you think of the New Forest as an important Wildlife site?

- Yes .....  No.....

**Q6 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding dog walking in the New Forest?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Dog walking is beneficial to the health and pleasure of both the dog and its owner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog walkers should have the same general freedom to enjoy the Forest as other Forest users provided the dogs are under control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dogs should be kept on a lead or close to their owners in areas where birds are nesting on the ground (1st March to 31st July)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog fouling is a significant problem at some car parks and popular areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A leaflet should be available to visitors giving details of dog friendly pubs, B&B's, hotels etc, local vets and warnings of local dangers such as adders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog walkers usefully observe and report problems during their walks e.g. injured animals, fires etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The New Forest is a better place to exercise dogs than residential areas and playing fields	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q7 How often do you observe dogs in the New Forest that are out of control? (You may tick more than one option)**

Never.....  Not very often .....  Often.....   
 Rarely.....  Fairly often.....  Mainly during the tourist season.....

**Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about horse riding in the New Forest?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Horse riders should continue to enjoy open access in the forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse riders disturb the ground nesting birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q9 Is there anything that can be done to improve your visits to the New Forest?**

**SECTION 2 - TO BE COMPLETED BY DOG OWNERS**

As a dog owner we would appreciate your help in establishing the extent of dog walking in the New Forest and your views on the facilities available for dog walkers

**Q10 Are you aware that dog walkers have been walking freely in the New Forest for very many years?**

Yes .....  No .....

- Q11 How many dogs do you own?**  
 One .....  Two.....  Three .....  Four.....  More than four
- Q12 How many dogs do you normally walk at one time?**  
 One .....  Two.....  Three .....  Four.....  More than four
- Q13 How often do you walk your dog(s) in the New Forest countryside?**  
 Twice a day .....  3 or 4 times a week .....  Occasionally .....   
 Once a day .....  Once a week.....  Never (Go to next section)....
- Q14 On average how long does each of your walks last?**
- Q15 If your dog fouls whilst in the New Forest car parks or popular areas, which of the following statements best describes what you would prefer to do?**  
 Clean up and take it away for disposal elsewhere .....  Move it off a path or popular area into the undergrowth.....   
 Use dog bins if made available.....  Never clean up or move it.....
- Q16 Is there anything that would improve dog walking in the New Forest for you?**

**SECTION 3 - TO BE COMPLETED BY HORSE OWNERS**

As a horse owner we would appreciate your help in establishing the extent of horse riding in the New Forest and your views on the facilities available for horse riders

- Q17 How many horses/ponies do the members of your household own and use for recreational purposes?**  
 1 .....  2 .....  3 .....  4 .....  5 .....  6 .....
- Q18 Please indicate where the horses/ponies are kept for the majority of the year**  
 At home .....  At livery.....  Other (please specify where below).....
- Q19 On average how often is each of the horses/ponies ridden in the New Forest?**
- |                         | Horse / pony 1           | Horse / pony 2           | Horse / pony 3           | Horse / pony 4           | Horse / pony 5           | Horse / pony 6           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Never                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Occasionally            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1-2 days per week       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 or more days per week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q20** How often do you vary the general area in which you ride?  
Every time.....  Once or twice a month.....  Never.....   
Every week.....  Less than once a month.....

**Q21** How often do you vary the general route on which you ride?  
Every time.....  Once or twice a month.....  Never.....   
Every week.....  Less than once a month.....

**Q22** Do you have to ride in the open forest in order to get to any surfaced tracks? Yes.....  No.....

**Q23** Would you say that you mostly ride (Tick as many options as apply)  
On the surfaced tracks .....  On the enclosed areas of the New Forest .....   
On the open areas of the New Forest (off the surfaced tracks).....  Other (specify where below).....

**Q24** In your opinion has the number of horses being ridden in the New Forest increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 10 years (or during the time you have lived in the area if that is less than 10 years, in which case please state how long you have lived in the area)?  
Increased.....  Stayed the same.....  Decreased.....   
Number of years lived in the area

**Q25** Is there anything that would improve horse riding in the New Forest for you?

**SECTION 4 - TO BE COMPLETED BY EVERYONE**

It would be helpful if you could provide the first four digits of your postcode in order that we can collate the results by area

Postcode

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire, your views are important to us.  
A FREEPOST envelope has been enclosed for your reply, which we would appreciate by **Thursday 24th March**

**APPENDIX 2****In which parts of the New Forest do you normally ride? – Horse Survey**

Parts of the New Forest	Number of responses
3 bridges	1
Acres down	5
Alderhill	4
Amberwood	2
Anderwood	4
Applemore	1
Appleslade	3
Ashley walk	1
Ashurst	7
Balmerlaen	1
Barcley	1
Bartley	8
Bashley	4
Beaulieu	38
Bentleys	1
Blackfield	10
Blackhill road	1
Blackwater	1
Blissford	1
Bolderwood	1
Boundway	2
Bramshaw	16
Broadley	8
Brock	1
Brockenhurst	26
Brockshill	2
Brook	2
Broom	1
Broomy	2
Broorly	1
Brownhills Enclosure	8
Burley	36
Bull hill	1
Burlens bench	1
Busketts Enclosure	3
Cadnam	16
Canada	15
Canadian cross	1
Castle hill	1
Clayhill	1
Colvelly	1
Copythorne	1
Crockford	1
Crow	3

Parts of the New Forest	Number of responses
Culienley	1
Culverley	7
Deerleap	4
Denny	10
Dery wood	1
Dibden purlieu	17
Dur hill	2
East bolde	1
Emery Down	1
Exbury	3
Faircross	1
Fawley	7
Foxhills	1
Frame heath	1
Frare heath	1
Fritham	18
Frogham	4
Furzely	6
Goatspen	1
Godshill	10
Golf course	1
Gorley	6
Hale purlieu	6
Hampton ridge	3
Hasley	5
Hatchet pond	1
Have moon	1
Hawkhill	2
Highland water	1
Hightown	1
Highwood	3
Hilltop	6
Hinchelsea	5
Holbury	2
Holen hill	1
Holidays hill	1
Holly hatch	3
Holmesley	17
Horseshoe	1
Hyde	5
Ibsley	4
Ipley	20
Irons hill	1
James hill	1

Parts of the New Forest	Number of responses
James Moor Plain	1
Kings copse	4
Kings garn	1
Kings hat	3
Ladycross	1
Latchmoor	1
Linford	14
Linwood	9
Longdower	1
Longdown	9
Longslade	17
Longstable	1
Longwater	1
Lonsdown	1
Lucy hill	1
Lyndhurst	16
Lynwood	1
Marchwood enclosure	5
Mark ash	1
Marksway	1
Markway	2
Marleway	1
Matley	6
Milkhams	1
Milking pound bottom	1
Millersford	1
Minstead	17
Mockbeggar	1
Moon hills	1
Moyles court	6
Netley Marsh	2
New park	1
Newbridge	7
Nomansland	6
Norgby wood	1
Norley wood	6
North gate	1
North western	1
Oakley enclosure	2
Ober	1
Ocknells	1
Ogdens	4
Parkhill enclosure	1
Penn common	8

Parts of the New Forest	Number of responses
Perenley	1
Picket hill	2
Picket post	5
Pigs Bush	8
Pilley	3
Pipe line strip	1
Pipers wait	2
Pitts wood	3
Plaitford	2
Prilly	1
Raydon wood	1
Red shoot	1
Rhinefield	5
Ringwood	2
Rising sun	1
Rockford	7
Round hill	3
Seehorns	1
Set thorns	13
Setley	6
Shatterford	2
Shirley holms	4
Shobley	3
Slay	1
Sluffers	1
Smugglers	1
Sowley	1
Stagbury hill	3
Stockley	1
Stoney cross	12
Sturtmoor Common	1
Sway	22
Tantary wood	1
Telegraph	1
The noads	2
Thorney hill	3
Three beach bottom	1
Tile barn lane	1
Tiptoe	3
Totton	1
Turf hill	5
Verely hill	4
Waterside	1
Weirs	1

Parts of the New Forest	Number of responses
Wellow	6
Whitefield	1
Whitemoor	4
Wilverley	36
Winerley plain	1
Woodlands	5
Wootton	23
Yewtree Road Heath	1