

CLOtC accredited forests for self-led learning visits

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom ([CLOtC](#)) is the national voice for learning outside the classroom. The Forestry Commission is proud to be working with the CLOtC to create and improve opportunities for self-led learning on the public forest estate.

We are working towards [CLOtC Site Provider Awards](#) for Forestry Commission sites across England. This award recognises organisations which actively welcome schools onto their site/s for self-led visits and ensure that the sites and any other services provided meet the needs of schools.

CLOtC accredited site: Bolderwood, New Forest, Hampshire

The New Forest is a place of ancient history, beautiful scenery, fascinating wildlife and opportunities to undertake all kinds of field work and curriculum related studies. There are so many places to go, with different learning possibilities that it can be hard to choose the best place. If you're looking for a day visit for your class which meets your learning objectives but doesn't cost the earth, why not visit Bolderwood? The only costs would be the coach and a small charge for a group permission to visit the site.

Bolderwood is one of several visitor sites in the New Forest, and attracts many visitors on a busy summer's day. On weekdays during term time the site is much quieter and ideal for school groups to visit. Bolderwood is famous for its deer viewing platform, where there is also information about the deer which live in the New Forest.

Bolderwood in the New Forest is part of the public forest estate, which is made up of more than 1500 woods and forests in England that are cared for by the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission practises sustainable multi-purpose forestry which means that they follow long term forest design plans to ensure that there'll always be forests to produce timber, to provide habitats for wildlife and to enable people to enjoy the benefits of a forest visit.

Example school visits – Bolderwood offers the opportunity for a wide range of studies for all ages from Early Years to Year 13 and beyond

- **EYFS** – Understanding the world – exploring different habitats to look for minibeads and other wildlife, discussing where they live and why
- **Primary school** – Geographical skills – using a simple map of the site, mark on it the location of...e.g. the deer viewing platform, the Jubilee Grove, the car park, a specific tree, a place where you found a beetle....; next, identify the different tree species and mark their positions on the map; how many of each species are there?
- **Secondary school** – Geography and science data collection to develop skills and learn about different environments e.g. comparative ecosystem study visiting heathland, deciduous woodland and conifer plantation all within 5 minutes walk of the car park.
- **A-level and advanced vocational studies** – Fieldwork for geography, tourism studies and countryside management courses – human impact on the environment; conflicts in land use (balancing needs of forest for timber, people and wildlife); impact of the deer, and debate about whether and how their population should be managed; ecosystem comparisons similar to those for secondary schools, but in greater depth; comparisons with other sites in the New Forest and elsewhere.

Site [webpage](#)

- has information about trails, site facilities, opening times, parking charges, directions and events

On-site facilities

- Ample parking for cars and coaches, toilets and picnic tables
- Deer viewing platform with information about the deer species found in the New Forest
- There is an information cabin which is accessible but currently open only at weekends and during busy times. It might be possible to open it during term time on request but this depends on the availability of staff and volunteers.

Surrounding woodland

- Bolderwood is situated right in the heart of the New Forest – within five minutes walk is a variety of habitats including mixed woodland, open spaces, heathland and the Bolderwood Ornamental Drive, which passes through some impressive mature Douglas fir and areas of beautiful and biodiverse ancient woodland.
- There are 3 waymarked walking trails from the car park, including a short stroll to the deer viewing platform, where the resident fallow deer herd can often be seen. The Jubilee Trail also passes the deer viewing platform, and the Radnor Trail and the 7.5 mile Bolderwood cycle trail start from the car park.

Self-led learning opportunities

- Woodland activities – trees, minibeasts, habitats (see FC [downloads](#) and [lesson plans](#))
- Active / sporting – cycling, walking, map reading
- Find out about other sites in the New Forest that are managed by the Forestry Commission at www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest
- The [New Forest National Park Website](#) has lots of information about the national park

Learning opportunities from partner organisations

Wild Heritage offers a range of learning activities for schools in the New Forest. For details please visit their [website](#) or telephone 01590 612766 or 07799 517739

Local Forestry Commission contacts

- The local FC office is in the Queen's House, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7NH; reception is staffed 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-4.30pm on Fridays – [email](#) or telephone 0300 067 4600
- The local FC learning team is based at Alice Holt Forest – [email](#) or telephone 0300 067 4448

Planning your visit

- **Contact the FC learning team** ([email](#) or phone 0300 067 4448) or the [New Forest permissions officer](#) – we'd like to know you are coming and you will need to complete a form before you come.
- **Pre-visit** – we strongly recommend that you make a pre-visit to the site before bringing your group – you'll need to know where to park, where the toilets are and where and how you will carry out your activities; you'll also need to be able to write your risk assessment.
- **Health and safety** – we carry out regular safety checks of the area around Bolderwood and of the waymarked trails; we do not however, check every path and every part of the forest; if you are bringing a group to the forest, it is your responsibility to carry out a pre-visit and write your own risk assessment; we cannot provide you with a site risk assessment because the forest is a variable environment, which changes as a result of weather conditions, time of year, forest operations etc; we do offer a [sample risk assessment](#), which may be of use, when you are writing your own, and a [guide to group leader responsibilities](#); If a member of your group has an accident while visiting Bolderwood, please contact the local FC office.

Accessibility

- Toilets and car park are accessible and gates have latches which wheelchair users can use.
- Parts of the trails are not ideal for wheelchair users because of steep gradients. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Forestry Commission.

After your visit

- **Feedback** – we'd like to know how you get on with your self-led visit to Bolderwood and have provided a short [online survey](#)
- **Further opportunities** – if you would like to find out more about learning opportunities on the public forest estate, please [email](#) and ask to be put onto our mailing list