

Invitation to Quote

Designer to work on a temporary exhibition for the New Forest Centre, Lyndhurst

(NFNPA – 0040)

“Commoning Voices has evolved from a very simple starting point. That we want to tell our own story in our own words. Now we need someone to help us put those words into an attractive exhibition.” Lyndsey Stride, New Forest commoner

The Commoning voices project is seeking an experienced designer to work with the team on a temporary exhibition about commoning for the New Forest Centre.

1. Background

1.1 What is a New Forest Commoner?

New Forest Commoners are people who own or rent property of land with common rights attached. An Atlas of Rights is held in the Verderers Office and details all properties with these rights attached.

There are five New Forest common rights:

pasture the right to turn out ponies, donkeys and cattle.

pasture (sheep) the right to turn sheep out.

mast the right to turn out pigs in the autumn pannage season

marl the right to dig clay (discontinued)

turbary the right to cut peat (discontinued)

estovers the right to fuel wood.

Whilst anyone can buy a property in the New Forest and become a commoner there is an established commoning community with several core families, who have been commoning in the

New Forest for many generations. Commoning is rarely a full time occupation and New Forest commoners have other jobs in all walks of life; farmers, solicitors, teachers, forestry workers, cooks, cleaners, nurses the list goes on. Yet one thing binds them together – their passion for and knowledge of the New Forest. Without commoning the New Forest would quite simply not be the special place it is today, the dogged determination of commoners to keep going has ensured that commoning has survived and with it the Silver Studded Blue Butterflies and the Small Fleabane and the camomile lawns – all of which rely on the grazing of commoners’ animals.

Commoning is not unique to the New Forest, it is the farming system which has shaped many of the iconic landscapes of Great Britain and the world. Here are a few interesting statistics to illustrate this:

- Just 3% of England is common land and yet it offers disproportionate benefits to society,
- 82% of commons are found in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs),
- 39% of all open access land is common land and
- 21% of all Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are found on common land.
- The majority of the New Forest is SSSI.

1.2 What is the ‘Our Past Our Future’ Landscape Partnership Scheme

In 2015 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £2.9m for the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and partners to run a Landscape Partnership Scheme known as ‘**Our Past, Our Future**’ (OPOF). A number of delivery and funding partners make up the Landscape Partnership Board including New Forest National Park Authority, Beaulieu Estate, Commoners Defence Association (CDA), National Trust, Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Natural England, New Forest Centre, Freshwater Habitats Trust and the New Forest Land Advice Service, who take collective responsibility for successful delivery of the 21 projects. The Scheme is running until 2020 with an overall budget of £4.5 million which includes match funding contributions from partner and other organisations.

The OPOF’s vision is to ensure the New Forest’s distinctive landscape survives through future change and modern-day pressures. A range of projects to **restore habitats, discover Forest heritage and develop Forest skills**, alongside volunteering and measures to connect people to the landscape, will aim to provide a step-change towards this goal.

- Commoning is central to the heritage of the New Forest and the OPOF aims, as such a number of the projects within the Scheme focus on commoning, these include the following:
- A Common Cause - A Shared Forest project is considering the role of publicity campaigns and interpretation material in changing people’s behaviour and understanding commoning and so result in a positive outcome for the Forest e.g. more careful driving on forest roads, no feeding of livestock or leaving rubbish on the open Forest where they can access it, keeping dogs under control and better understanding of commoning. See www.newforestcommoners.com
- A Common Cause - Through Our Ancestors Eyes project is collating a photographic archive of commoning, forestry and agriculture in the New Forest which can be used to conserve the cultural history and educate people about the history of commoning

- A Common Cause - Verderers Hall project will restore the Hall including restoration of the tiled floor, bay window repairs and redecoration. It is also improving public access, providing new interpretation, and maximising the educational opportunities. This will enable the Verderers Court within the Hall to act as focal point for telling the story of commoning and increase awareness and understanding.
- New Forest Rural Skills is delivering subsidised courses to farmers, commoners and other landowners to give them the necessary knowledge and skills to continue the traditional systems and provide the skills required for today's modern-day agricultural requirements. In addition, experienced commoners will mentor young or new commoners to ensure their knowledge is passed onto the younger generation.
- New Forest Connects is a diverse programme of events, engagement, educational activities and other interpretation aimed at inspiring primarily 'local' people about the heritage of the New Forest. It include heritage interpretation training for staff, volunteers and businesses engaging with the public in the National Park. Subprojects are: Commoning Voices, Connecting people and place, New Forest exhibitions and learning resources, New Forest events and guided experiences, Restoring lost landscapes interpretation, Walking with a purpose, Common threads, and Senses of place.

1.3 What is Commoning Voices?

1.3.1 Aim

Commoning Voices (as a sub project with in the New Forest Connects project) is about empowering commoners to tell their own stories in their own words, sharing their passion, knowledge and dedication to commoning in the New Forest and revealing the human stories of this extraordinary place.

1.3.2 Project Team

The project is being led by a team of people and their roles are as follows:

- **Jim Mitchell (Interpretation and Outreach Manager, New Forest National Park Authority)** - The Commoning Voices project falls under the New Forest Connects project which is being led by the NFNPA. The NFNPA provides overall support for the project and Jim helps to steer the project and ensure it links with the wider New Forest Connects and other OPOF projects.
- **Lyndsey Stride- (New Forest Commoner)** - Lyndsey Stride, is leading on the Commoning Voices project and is the exhibition curator. Lyndsey describes herself as "I wear lots of hats! I am a commoner. I am married to Robert, whose family have been commoning in the New Forest for many generations. We keep ponies, cows and pigs. We are often asked to be involved in films and documentaries about the Forest and as a result I have developed an understanding of what people want to know about commoning and what surprises them. I have been a teacher for many years and am also a Forest School leader. I love the Forest and am passionate about sharing the incredibly important story of commoning with a wider audience. We have six year old twins – they already have their own riding ponies and help every day on the farm. We have started to use social media to tell our personal commoning story on Twitter (commoningfamily@cuffnells) and have had a really positive response with

nearly 450 followers in 6 months. Over the past year I have worked with Susan Cross at TellTale who is my mentor in the Commoning Voices project. Susan is both an inspiration and a guide and her wise words have helped to shape the commoning voices project from its inception.

- **Susan Cross (TellTale consultants)** – TellTale have been involved in the Our Past Our Future Scheme during its development and produced the Interpretation plan that formed part of the bid to HLF. They have also been involved in delivering interpretation training and are now involved as a mentor to the Commoning Voices project. TellTale is a leading heritage communication and interpretation consultancy with many years' experience of working with rural communities (see www.telltale.co.uk).

1.3.3 The project so far

In May-July 2016 many of the OPOF interpretation project officers took part in a series of training workshops with a company called TellTale, Consultants, who were contracted by the NFNPA to deliver mentoring and support activities for the Commoning Voices project. A chance conversation about how an interpretation project on Lindisfarne had empowered the local community triggered the start of the Commoning Voices project.

The project began with two workshops, one for young commoners and one for a more diverse group of commoners. These workshops were fantastic - we simply couldn't stop people talking about commoning, the Forest and their lives. The first workshop informed the direction of the second and from these we have gathered a number of quotes and identified a number of conversations to record in a longer 'listening project' style recording (see Appendix 2). With the support of BBC Radio Solent we will edit these recordings so that the human stories of commoning can be better understood by the general public.

We have realised that many people simply don't know commoners exist. They often think that the ponies and cattle are wild. If they do know commoners exist their views and perceptions of commoners are often based on hand me down information, negative press reports and misconceptions.

Our project has also started to engage commoners with social media. Providing an opportunity for the general public to 'know, like and trust' commoners and begin to see their everyday lives and realise the contribution they make to and dedication commoners have for the Forest.

As a very small team we have focussed our attention on cascading information and have led workshops for a number of different organisations who regularly talk about the Forest and commoning. These have included New Forest Tourism Association, local Tour Guides, National Park Authority Staff, OPOF project leaders as well as a couple of walks in the [Walking Festival](#). All of these have taken a social style with commoners chatting with guests and sharing their love of the Forest. We will be continuing this with a larger Open Farm Sunday event in 2018.

2. The brief

2.1 Exhibition Overview

To develop an imaginative and sensitive approach to present our commoning voices within the temporary exhibition space at the [New Forest Centre](#) (Saturday 3 November 2018 – Sunday 6 January 2019).

Elements of the displays must also be available subsequently as a travelling exhibition. We plan to tour the exhibition initially around the towns on the periphery of the New Forest including at local Museums, village halls and arts venues. In 2019 we aim to take the complete exhibition to at least two other venues and smaller stand-alone elements to local community venues such as libraries and community halls.

The aim of the exhibition is to help the commoning community to connect with the wider New Forest community and those living beyond the boundary of the National Park. Everybody loves the New Forest but few understand the contribution commoners and their animals make to the Forest. Through this exhibition people will begin to ‘know, like and trust’ commoners and to feel that their personal love of the Forest is in some way linked to commoning.

Many commoners have lived in the New Forest for generations and are deeply rooted in their local place, just as their animals are. Yet it would be hard to spot a commoner walking down the street – contrary to urban myth, commoners are ordinary people leading extraordinary lives; iconic people who have shaped our most iconic landscapes.

2.2 Objectives

1. To share the passion and knowledge of commoners with the wider Forest community and visitors. #RealNewForest
2. To present the diversity of the modern commoning community
3. To explore the relationships commoners and others have with the Forest #Icare2
4. The exhibition needs to be immersive and interactive for visitors, appealing to all senses and presenting commoners as people others can relate to and drawing on personal experiences of the New Forest.
5. To empower people so that they view themselves as commoning champions and recognise their own passion for the Forest. We want people to feel a part of the Shared Forest
 - a. #Icare2
 - b. #KeepCommonersCommoning.

2.3 Deliverables

- Trial image ideas at the New Forest Show and Open Farm Sunday event
- Exhibition concept and design, to include:
 - Use of imagery and graphics
 - Use of audio
 - at least one interactive element
 - List of additional resources required

Produce the exhibition and associated elements

2.4 Timetable

Requirements	Deliverable	Timetable
Phase 1: Exhibition design		February to May 2018
Inception meeting	Meet with Lyndsey and visit a smallholding and the open Forest to explore the #RealNewForest	February 2018
Develop content for exhibition using curatorial panel which will include both commoners and non-commoners. Suggest imaginative ways in which we can present our commoning voices including at least one interactive element	Exhibition concept and design to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of imagery and graphics • Use of audio • at least one interactive element • List of additional resources required 	April 2018
Face to face meetings with Lyndsey Stride and others to select images quotes and artefacts to trial at Open Farm Sunday and New Forest Show. Which images of commoning do people connect with most?	Face to face meeting	May 2018
Initial design		Spring 2018
Phase 2: Artwork, detailed design, manufacture and installation		August to January 2019
Work with Lyndsey Stride and curatorial panel to select final images, quotes and artefacts.	Face to face meeting	August 2018
Provide a script writing brief for Lyndsey Stride	Script writing brief	September 2018
Detailed design completed	Exhibition design to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of imagery and graphics • Use of audio • at least one interactive element 	October 2018
Manufacture exhibition and associated elements		October 2018

Installation of exhibition at New Forest Centre	Completed exhibition and associated elements	Week commencing 29 th October 2018
Exhibition at New Forest Centre Launch- aimed at commoners There will be a number of additional events within the exhibition targeted at different groups such as Parish Councils, Rotary Clubs and Schools which enable commoners to tell their personal stories and interact with others who care about the Forest. This has been the most successful element of the Commoning Voices project so far.		Saturday 3 November 2018 – Sunday 6 January 2019).
Lyndsey Stride to travel whole exhibition and elements of exhibition		2019

2.5 Target Audience

The resources of a Landscape Partnership like Our Past, Our Future does not allow it to address all the audiences at once or even in the lifetime of the partnership initiative, so prioritisation is required.

The Audience Development Plan for the scheme prioritised the following key audiences:

Residents – living *with* the Forest

- Key stakeholders in terms of the management of the heritage assets but also in respect to the visitor experience.
- The group most impacted by the activities and behaviours of some of the other audiences.

Residents – living *in* the Forest

- These people already have a relationship with the Forest but they do not necessarily feel that they have a stake in it. They would like to know more and be more involved.
- A sub-set of this audience is the ‘New Forest Community Groups,’ usually a special interest group organised around a particular activity or aspect of Forest life. Often containing members from both ‘Residents’ category audiences.

New Forest Neighbours

- Living in the /neighbouring towns & cities (Southampton, New Milton, Christchurch, Bournemouth etc.) This audience often cherishes the idea of the New Forest being on their doorstep but are unsure how to interact with it. It can also be unaware of the Forest.

- This audience contains elements of other audience groups as they currently experience the Forest as ‘visitors’, ‘members of special interest groups’ and ‘young people on organised activities’
- The population of these neighbouring communities also contain representatives of some of the missing audiences such as young people and ethnic groups.

It is envisaged the exhibition will engage with all of these audiences. The New Forest Neighbours audience will also be engaged via the traveling elements of the exhibition in 2019. A more detailed exhibition plan will be drawn up to attract the above audiences to the exhibition. The ‘Living with the Forest’ audience include the commoning community themselves, and their involvement in the exhibition is a key goal.

2.6 Essential elements of the exhibition

2.6.1 Four elements exploring relationships

From the workshops and behind the scenes events detailed in 1.2, four key conversation areas have emerged. The exhibition should focus on these four relationship

Commoners and commoners

The commoning community is a strong and vibrant community of people made up of a mixture of old and new, young and old, team players and individuals. Together they exercise their rights to ‘depasture’ their animals on the Forest. The exhibition will explore these relationships and reveal the human side of commoning, from the annual rivalry in the Point-to-Point, to haymaking in the summer and evening dances.

Commoners and their animals

The relationships commoners have with their animals goes back over generations. There is nothing more incredible than listening to a commoner talk about an individual pony - some could tell you the entire family tree of the pony and a story to go with each family member. Others will talk at length about their best or worst colt hunting horse.

Commoners and the Forest

Commoners have an intimate relationship with and deep knowledge of the Forest: its trees, heaths, plants and wildlife. The commoning year is strongly influenced by the seasons on the Forest, the arrival of the cuckoo heralds the end of the hard winter months and the wet bogs provide summer feed for hungry ponies. Commoners are rooted in the Forest, like the ponies they are haunted in a particular place.

Commoners and you ...

Everyone experiences the New Forest in a different way. Both local people and visitors should feel empowered to champion commoning and feel proud to be a part of the unique and special place that is the Forest. #Icare2 is the social media tag we would like to promote, encouraging others to tell their personal Forest stories. From annual holiday makers who always camp at the same open Forest site to daily dog walkers who notice the same ponies every day and forest workers who have lived and worked in the Forest all of their lives. Understanding how everything in the New Forest is linked will hopefully empower people to see themselves as commoning ambassadors.

2.6.2 Interactive element ideas

Interactive elements are important in order that the exhibition experience engages people on a personal level, rather than being a passive experience. The team have several ideas for interactive elements ...to It is important that the exhibition makes use of social media to take people beyond the exhibition and keep the conversation going after their visit as well as drawing them back to the exhibition. The Shared Forest project has demonstrated the benefits of Social Media in its recent #add3minutes driving campaign.

2.6.3 Travelling elements of the exhibition

The individual elements should be movable and able to stand alone. We plan to tour the exhibition initially around the towns on the periphery of the New Forest and then perhaps further afield.

Designs need to take into account the need to transport to other venues and for elements to work in isolation of other elements at separate venues. This will be discussed in detail with the successful designer.

3. Resources

The following resources will be made available to the successful designer:

Professional photography

Sally Fear is a local professional photographer who has published two books about New Forest Commoners and a recent book about the New Forest Keepers. She is a New Forest commoner and has attended the Social Media training as part of the commoning voices project. Sally is keen to be on board. Sally is working with the NFNPA and CDA to photograph commoners on their holdings and this will provide images for the interpretation work this year, these together with her back catalogue of images will provide a suitable bank of modern commoning pictures.

Audio

Through the project to date recording have been made of commoners talking about their lives, the Forest and their animals. The project is working with BBC Radio Solent to edit these into short clips which reveal the personal stories of commoning in a rich and vibrant way.

Through our Ancestors Eyes

Over 600 images have been collected and scanned to a high resolution from commoners' family albums. There are also accompanying oral recordings of who is in the picture and what they are doing

Script

With the help of your script writing brief and the support of Susan Cross at TellTale we will provide the text for the exhibition.

Artefacts

We have a number of commoning linked artefacts which we could display including cups and trophies, hot brands and rope halters.

Illustration

Sandra Binney has agreed to be involved in the exhibition and is the winner of the NPA [Open Art](#) competition in 2017 – she has wonderful large scale paintings of commoners' animals.

www.sandrabinney.com sandrabinney@sandrabinneyart

4 Inspiration from other exhibitions

The following, including two contrasting exhibitions, offer ideas and inspiration for our story telling....

BBC Radio 4 - The Listening Project

Whenever you mention the Listening Project people respond in an incredible way. They have either cried or laughed, but in all cases you feel that you have been let in to a private world – a conversation between two people about something which really matters. This has been the basis of much of our Commoning Voices work.

The Lost Words by Rob Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

This book is wonderful. Simply beautiful. But these creatures and plants are not lost to us, as commoners they are woven in to our everyday lives in the Forest. My children will never forget riding their pony across the heath and seeing a black adder draped across the bracken – they were no more than 3 or 4 years old at the time. We too want to share what is special about the flora and fauna of the Forest and our contribution as commoners to the habitats which sustain so many of these special things.

Azerbaijan Venice Biennale Exhibition

<http://m.azerbaijanvenicebiennale.com/#/en/vita/a/3>

This immersive exhibition was visited by our CDA chairman Tony Hockley and he said that it was an extraordinary way to present diversity. He was particularly struck by the element where the silent images of people talking and their jumbled up words were projected. It draws on all the senses and offers a complex yet simple interpretation of ordinary people.

Voices From the Land

<http://www.somewhere-nowhere.com/projects/voices-from-the-land>

A more traditional approach but a very powerful one, much loved by the farming communities it portrays. This time with fewer, carefully scripted words and beautiful images of ordinary farming folk.

5. Tender

The NFNPA holds a budget of **£20,000 ex VAT** for this project, which includes both the design and production elements (i.e. all deliverables). We are keen for potential bidders to demonstrate exactly what output they can provide for this figure and in this light, bids will be solely assessed by the quality of submissions and the stated deliverables.

- Please outline your approach to delivering this brief and in particular, where you feel you can add value. There is no set page limit for submissions, but the NFNPA encourages responses to be concise.
- Please can you provide three examples of work you have completed and explain the relevance of these to our project.
- Please provide contact details so we can contact a referee for each project.
- Although our budget is fixed, please provide an itemised breakdown of costs against the timetable illustrated in Section 2 of this ITQ, this should include all expenses.
- CVs of staff who will deliver the work.

All submissions are required to comply with the New Forest National Park Authority 'Standard Conditions of Contract for Services' which will be used to draw up the contract with the winning contractor.

A shortlist of suppliers may be invited for interview in advance of a final decision being made.

All queries relating to this brief should be submitted through our [In-tend portal](#).

Please note that to ensure fair and open competition, all substantive responses to any questions raised by interested suppliers will be made available to all other suppliers where appropriate. Any such clarifications will be posted on our In-tend portal and you will receive email notification to make you aware of this (you must be registered on the site in order to receive these).

Please note that the Authority will not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals or any associated work effort.

All submissions should be made through our [In-tend portal](#) and must be submitted by **12 noon Wednesday 31 January 2018**.

The New Forest National Park Authority reserves the right to withdraw this contract opportunity without notice and will not be liable for any costs incurred by suppliers during any stage of the process. Suppliers should also note that, in the event a tender is considered to be fundamentally unacceptable on a key issue, regardless of its other merits, that tender may be rejected.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 Plan of the New Forest Centre

Appendix 2 Commoning Voices PowerPoint: images and quotes to illustrate the four aspects of the exhibition