



QUEEN
ELIZABETH
Country Park

August 2009— October 2009

Volunteer Ranger Service Newsletter

Queen Elizabeth Country Show 2009

Well, what can be said about this years show apart from WET WET WET, particularly on the Saturday! Even with the atrocious weather, people still braved the elements to witness such events as: Sheep Show, Dog Trials, Falconry Displays, Heavy Horses, along with various arts and crafts stands, including our very own 'Make and Take' and 'Ugandan' stalls.

The 'Make and Take' proved as popular as ever, with children and adults alike. Who can blame them with a selection of toys including Hedgehog, Rabbit, Cat, Biplane, Helicopter, Heron, Racing Car and Cruise Liner. The volunteers who helped out on this stall had a steep learning curve, and, by the end of Sunday, some of us had very sore fingers and thumbs!!! However, all this effort was worth it, as the money raised from the toys alone was over £400.

Steve Peach et al were kept busy on the Ugandan stand with lots of people asking questions and wanting to know how they could get involved, and by Sunday I believe Steve had a very sore throat (No comment!). We also had lots of interest in the work of the Volunteer Ranger Service and even managed to recruit a people as well.

Chris Duke was collecting sponsorship for the charity truck-pull (details inside); even in the foul weather on Saturday (I believe he took over £200 in sponsorship, so well done Chris!

Indeed, a very BIG THANK YOU to everybody who helped out. No matter how small or large the contribution, without you, these stands could not happen, so well done everybody.



Wildlife Quiz Night in aid of the Twining Project

Please do not forget that the Wildlife Quiz night is being held on Saturday 3rd October 2009 (7pm start)

The tickets cost £10 (discounts for children) and include some samples of Ugandan Style Food

You can come along as an individual or as a team and the question will be designed to test your sense of humour as much as your wildlife knowledge

Tickets available from Steve Peach or Debbie Saines

www.hants.gov.uk/qecp



Hampshire
County Council



My Favourite Wildlife

By Volunteer Ranger Steve Mott

Small Mammals

"What's that blooming cat brought in now?"

The above phrase is used by the majority of people with regards to their first contact with small mammals. When the phrase 'small mammals' is used in this context, it is specifically referring to mice, voles and shrews. Indeed, because of their nocturnal habits, unless you are deliberately looking for them, the majority of small mammals are relatively hard to find. This is quite surprising when you consider that, with the exception of a couple of species, the population sizes of the majority of small mammals are very healthy indeed.

There are currently eleven native species of 'small mammals' in the United Kingdom: Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*), Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*), Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens*), Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*), Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*), Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*), Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*), Yellow-Necked Mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*), Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and House Mouse (*Mus musculus*). There are also two sub-species of vole which are endemic to the Scottish Isles of Orkney and Skomer, hence their common names of Orkney Vole (*Microtus arvalis orcadensis*) and Skomer Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus skomerensis*).



Common Shrew



Pygmy Shrew



Water Shrew



Hazel Dormouse



Bank Vole



Field Vole



Water Vole



Harvest Mouse



Wood Mouse



Yellow-Necked Mouse

If you asked the general public which is the most instantly recognisable small mammal, the answer, it could be argued, would be either the Hazel Dormouse or Water Vole. The Hazel Dormouse, like the Water Vole, is a very charming and charismatic mammal, with no seemingly 'negative' aspects in its behaviour/ecology. Unfortunately, like a large number of the general public and volunteers, I have yet had the pleasure to see one, but I hope to do so in the very near future. That said, last year, when I was residing in Winchester, I was fortunate enough to see, on several occasions, some Water Voles. Indeed, I was able to observe one for over 10 minutes, being as it was very early in the morning. Although it was aware of my presence, it did not appear to consider me a threat, and just carried on with its general business. In fact, the only reason it did eventually dive into the water was because a Mountain Biker went past and spooked it!

The above example is a perfect illustration of just why my favourite type of wildlife is small mammals: They may be difficult to see, but are worth the effort (Even for just 10 minutes!). Also, I think that Field and Bank voles are equally as charming as Water Voles. Indeed, when I was conducting live-trapping for my dissertation on small mammals, the majority of voles captured seemed totally unconcerned about the whole affair (spending the night in a Longworth Trap, being weighed, being handled etc). In fact, on more than one occasion, when I released some of the voles back into their natural habitat, they would sometimes run straight back into the trap! Unfortunately, I can not say the same about the Wood Mice or Yellow-necked Mice....

Monitoring

The monitoring of small mammal populations is of vital importance in understanding their ecology and their place in the ecosystems of the United Kingdom. Small mammals are very valuable components in the ecosystems of the United Kingdom. They are a major food item for many other animals such as the Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) Stoat (*Mustela ermine*), alongside some of the rarer carnivores such as Pine Martin (*Martes martes*) and Wildcat (*Felis silvestris*). As such, it is important to know the abundance, health and distribution of said small mammals in order to ascertain, not only their status, but also as an indicator for other animal populations, such as the ones above. For example, studies have found that when the small mammal populations are low, the Tawny Owl population also declines.

I am currently, with Steve Peach, in the process of instigating a monitoring program for the Queen Elizabeth Country Park. This program is mainly to ascertain what small mammals are present on site, how many and where. At the present time, this project is in its initial stages and if you are interested in helping, please contact either myself or Steve Peach.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Steve Peach for his time and for allowing me access to the Park's facilities.

All Photographs are courtesy of www.google.com/images

Volunteer Awards By Martin Bonner (Chairman)

In March I was given the task of completing the nominations for the East Hampshire Volunteering Awards, which are sponsored by East Hampshire District Council. This is an annual event supported by EHDC, HCC, Community First East Hampshire and Volunteer Centre East Hampshire, to thank volunteers for the time and effort that they put into the group they belong to. All the people nominated have to have completed a minimum of 100 hours volunteering. QECPVRS put forward 10 or so nominations every year but only the Sponsor and a couple of nominees are asked to attend the ceremony at Penns Place, as room is limited. This year Mike Berry and Julian Cansdale were asked to attend the ceremony on May 1st along with myself, please see the group photo that was taken after the main ceremony. This years nominations from QECPVRS were: -

David Blomfield, Graham Cann, Pat Cann, Judy Mason, Julian Cansdale, Martin Kerr, Mike Berry, Terry Bryant, Matthew McManus, Michelle Morris and Ashley Hiom.

I would like to take this opportunity to say well done to all of these members and thank you for your contribution to the group.

Next year I hope that we will be able to have the opportunity to put another 10 or so members forward for this award.



Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project Sponsored Truck-Pull

On Sunday 19th July 2009, a group of, brave, determined, or just plain daft, Rangers and Volunteers met outside the Visitor Centre. The reason for this congregation was a Sponsored Truck-Pull, of a Ford Ranger (2.5ton), over 3.26 miles, to raise funds for Uganda Twinning Project. This was expertly organised by Chris Duke. Indeed, last weekend at the Country Show, even in the dreadful weather on Saturday, Chris was out there collecting monies and trying to get sponsors (which he did!).

Come the big day and the weather was looking ominous, with overcast skies and even a small drop of rain. Despite this over 20 people turned up to either help pull the truck or collect money. People then organised themselves into whether they were going to pull or push the truck. In the event, most people seemed to take turns doing one or the other. A very hotly contested position was the person who needed to sit in the truck and steer/brake when required....The route was from the Visitor Centre, up to Juniper Car Park and then through the park, ending back at the Visitor Centre.

At precisely 10.32, the Truck-Pull started, and for the first few hundred yards, seemed quite easy. This was probably due to the fact that this part was quite flat (apart from the speed humps!). However, once we had reached the first bend, it started to get tough. After a while, it was decided that the best course of action was to pull/push the truck for a short distance, rest for a bit and then repeat. This worked very well, and before we knew it, there was Juniper Car Park – A Sight to behold! Once we had reached Juniper, there was a well deserved break, with the poor lad in the Kiosk suddenly descended upon by a group of very thirsty volunteers! After this break, the truck-pull, although not easy, was not quite so physically demanding. That said, however, until we reached the ‘downhill point’, it was, in places, still quite tough-going.

Whilst one group was pulling/pushing the truck, other helpers were collecting money from passer-bys and most cars which went past also donated. The sight of the Visitor Centre was a welcome sight, and as the truck eased into a bay, there was a round of applause from everybody to everybody who took part.

It is pleasing to report that about £400 has been raised, so thank you to everybody who took part. Also a special thank you to Chris Duke for organising the event; however, next time Chris, how about a something a little less strenuous like a pub crawl involving beers of the world....



Volunteer Newsletter

Country Park News

Sheep on Butser Hill

Volunteer Rangers are asked to be vigilant whilst patrolling on Butser Hill.

Many of our ewes will be pregnant and by the time you get this newsletter their could be lambs on the hill.

We need to make sure that the sheep and lambs are not hassled by dogs and people.

Please report any incidents to the Duty Ranger or Manager.

Dog Patrols

The Rangers are continuing to take part in special Dog Patrols of the Forest and Butser Hill.

These Patrols are in response to complaints from other Park Visitors, including Dog Owners about the minority of people who refuse to clear up after their dogs, do not dispose of their dog dirt bags appropriately or who do not keep their dogs under proper control.

During these patrols the Rangers aim to identify those people who are choosing to ignore the Country Park's Code of Conduct and encourage them to adopt a more acceptable standard of behaviour.

Any visitors who have queries about these Patrols or the code of conduct should be directed to the Park Manager.

Volunteer Ranger Handbook

The new improved Volunteer Ranger Service Handbook is now available.

If you have not yet received your copy please contact Steve Peach and we will send it to you ASAP

Email Addresses

Please keep us informed if you change your email address, sending out this newsletter by email saves the VRS TIME AND MONEY

Help if you can

Volunteers are needed to help out with the Butserfest and Culture in the Park on Saturday 12th September and Sunday 13th September. Please let Graham or Steve know as soon as possible if you can help

Notices from your Committee

THE IMPORTANCE OF SIGNING IN.

I would like to remind all members that it is important that you sign in and out when you are attending the Park, even if you are only popping in and picking up a radio then going for a walk around the park.

This is so that you are covered by insurance if anything should happen to you during your visit, also it is important that we can record and track the hours we spend on the various tasks that we carry out.

When we carry out projects where QECPVRS is supplying labour to carry out tasks associated with the project, as our part of the match funding, the hours spent on the task will be a vital record for audit purposes if any grant provider wishes to check that we have fulfilled our commitment of hours.

INFORMATION AND MESSAGE BOARDS

Please can you keep yourselves up to date with any events or general messages, such as meetings or training dates by looking at the message boards.

The main board is in the Rangers Office, there is also a board in the Volunteer Store and you can also find messages are left in the signing in book.

The Newsletter will also provide the same information but will not be up to date with any changes that happen after publication.

Social Meeting Ideas

We could do with your ideas and suggestions for social meetings. So far we have had a skittle evening, a Christmas meal in the Park's Café, Barn Dance and Bar-B-Q. But if you have any other thoughts do let Mark Saines know.

Wildlife Quiz Night in aid of the Twining Project

Please do not forget that the Wildlife Quiz night is being held on Saturday 3rd October 2009 (7pm start)

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Tickets available from Steve Peach or Debbie Saines

Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project Welcome to our Ugandan Colleagues

After some initial problems involving visas, the Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project is pleased to welcome four Rangers from the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda to the UK.

Janet Okwel, Moses Turinawe, Robert Adaruku and Stephanie Biira Nyabibuya are all Ranger Guides. They will be here until the 30th of September and will be working with all the Team at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

We have a series of site visits and excursions planned including trips to other nature reserves and parks, historic tours of places like Winchester and good old fashioned tourism type activities.

All Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to come along and meet them and find out more about their work, their life and how their thoughts on this trip to the UK.

If you are thinking about perhaps taking part in one of the return visits to Uganda, then this is also your opportunity to find out more about the place you might be going to.

To wet your appetite, here is some background information on our Ugandan Colleagues.



Janet Okwel

I am thirty five years old and have been working in Queen Elizabeth National Park for about 11 years. I love my job, it is exciting and I get to interact with people from so many countries around the world.

I have been impressed with the way members of the local community volunteer to work as Rangers in the Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

I am happy with the Twinning Project as it brings together individuals, communities and schools of the two Queen Elizabeth Parks.

Robert Adaruku

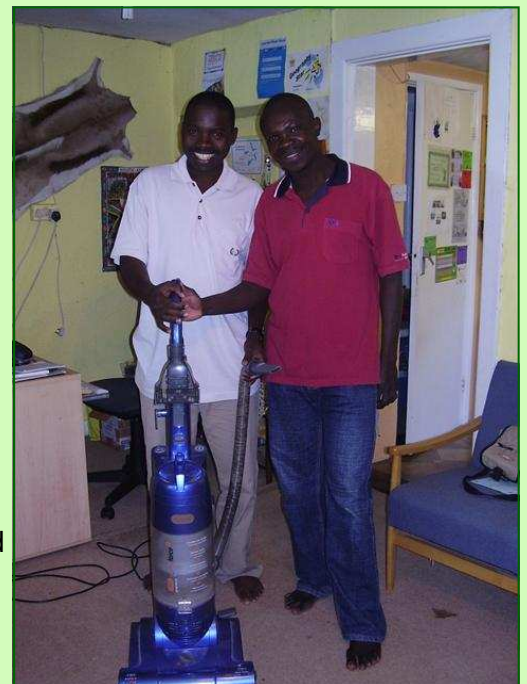
On the 12th August 2009 we started our journey to the UK from Uganda. when we arrived at Heathrow airport we were met by Steve Peach who works as a Conservation Ranger at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

Steve introduced us to the staff members, took us around the Park and gave us a background history of the Park.

We have been involved in monitoring reptiles and butterflies and learnt why they do so.

We have also been to other Parks and Nature Reserves including Mead Water Country Park, the New Forest National Park and Butser Ancient Farm.

I have gained a lot of experience during my stay.



Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project Our Ugandan Colleagues

Ranger Guide - Moses Turinawe

I have been a Ranger with UWA for 8 years and I am one of the beneficiaries of the Twinning Project.

With 4 other Rangers I arrived on the 13th August and at the time of writing this report I have been in the UK for 3 weeks. What a great experience! The people are really friendly and ready to help.

The weather has been the main challenge, but we are getting used to this.

The Queen Elizabeth Country Park (564ha) is small compared to the Queen Elizabeth National Park (2000 sq km) but the management have utilised their small area into the most wonderful tourism centre in the UK.

The rate at which Tourist are visiting the QECP is amazing. Recreation Conservation is the main concern of QECP.

I have learnt a number of things which I can take back to my Queen Elizabeth Park.

I believe that if we can encourage more of our communities to visit our Parks, they will begin to understand what it is that Rangers are trying to do and this will benefit conservation.

I want to end by urging everybody to support the Twinning Project in all ways possible, because as the communities and park Staff get to interact with each other they will learn a lot. This will help us to achieve the conservation goal

'Conserving for Generations'



Ranger Guide - Stephanie Biira Nyabibuya

I am 28 years old and have been working as a Ranger Guide in the Queen Elizabeth National Park for 7 years.

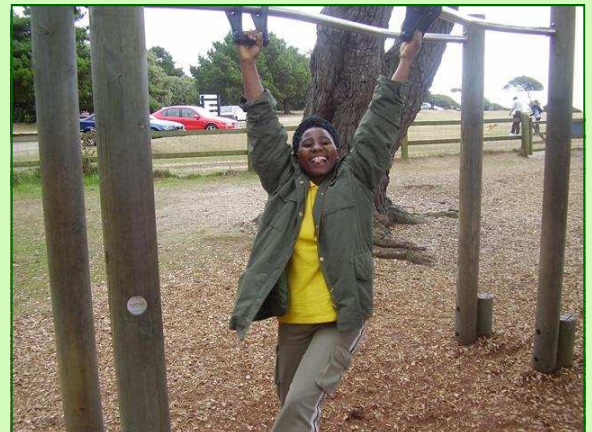
I began my flight on 13/08/09 and landed at Heathrow airport at 9.00am and I was warmly welcomed by the Conservation Ranger Steve Peach, who is also the Coordinator of the Twinning Project. I am enjoying my time in the UK and I have been interested to see that so many people are interested in conservation.

I have been acquiring knowledge about cycle routes, children's activities and Butterfly walks.

When I return to Uganda I would be keen to see if I could help to introduce interpretation on the archaeology and butterflies. I am grateful to the Project because it has created a relationship and friendship between the staff of the two Parks, since we are living in peace and harmony with each other and giving us good care, like babies.

I have experienced different types of food stuff and how they are organised and eaten, which I did not expect in my lifetime, but because of the Twinning project I have tested all sorts of food.

I have been on a train for the first time and enjoyed my visit to Lepe Beach Country Park, and seeing the coast.



If you shop using the internet then you can support the Twinning Project by registering with easyfundraising.org.uk.

Once registered and once you have nominated **The Queen Elizabeth Parks Twinning Project** as your chosen good cause, all you do is log on to [easyfundraising](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) website each time you want to shop.

You use their links to your preferred shopping sites instead of typing in the address yourself. The project then gets rewarded each time you buy something.

You can also benefit the Project by using their search engine easysearch.org.uk

Volunteer Newsletter

Volunteer Ranger Service Diary, Task and Training List

Key Events

Wednesday 2nd September Safari Drive 7pm – 10pm

Join two Park Rangers on an evening wildlife patrol through Queen Elizabeth Forest and surrounding area. Please meet at the Visitor Centre 15 minutes before the starting time. Cost £10 per person with the maximum of 4 people in each drive. All finishing times are approximate.

Friday 5th September Bat and Moth Evening 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Find out more about the creatures that haunt the Country Park at night. There is no charge and you can just turn up on the night.

Saturday 12th September Butserfest 09 11am—9.30pm

Young persons festival, good safe fun for 14 — 20 year olds.

Sunday 13th September Culture in the Park 11—6pm

A Multi-cultural event for the whole family

Wednesday 16th September Safari Drive 7pm – 10pm

Join two Park Rangers on an evening wildlife patrol through Queen Elizabeth Forest and surrounding area. Please meet at the Visitor Centre 15 minutes before the starting time. Cost £10 per person with the maximum of 4 people in each drive. All finishing times are approximate.

Saturday 26th September Nature's Harvest 1pm – 3pm

Come along and learn about what is good and bad to dine out on, and what the local wildlife are eating on this guided walk and food tasting session. 31 per person and booking is essential. Please meet the Visitor Centre.

Wednesday 14th October Wednesday Walk 10.30am – 12.30am

Come along on a gentle stroll around the Park in the company of one of the Rangers. Please meet at the Visitor Centre.

Monday 26th—Friday 30th October

Knights and Dragons Seasonal half-term activities

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th October

Conservation task Weekend 10am – 3pm

Your chance to join the Rangers on a variety of conservation projects based within the Country Park. Meet at the Visitor Centre, wear old clothes, good strong boots and bring a packed lunch. Suitable for adults only. This is a free activity, but you need to book in advance.

Wednesday 28th October Wednesday Walk

10.30am – 12.30am
Come along on a gentle stroll around the Park in the company of one of the Rangers. Please meet at the Visitor Centre.

Sunday 1st November Fungus Foray 2pm—4pm

Friday 6th November Uncorked—7.30pm Musical entertainment

Wednesday 11th November Wednesday Walk 10.30am – 12.30am

Come along on a gentle stroll around the Park in the company of one of the Rangers. Please meet at the Visitor Centre.

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd November

Conservation task Weekend 10am – 3pm

Your chance to join the Rangers on a variety of conservation projects based within the Country Park. Meet at the Visitor Centre, wear old clothes, good strong boots and bring a packed lunch. Suitable for adults only. This is a free activity, but you need to book in advance.

Wednesday 25th November Wednesday Walk 10.30am – 12.30am

Come along on a gentle stroll around the Park in the company of one of the Rangers

Wednesday 9th December Wednesday Walk 10.30am – 12.30am

Weekends in December
Christmas in the Park our usual Christmas activities.

Social Events

Just in case you didn't realise there is a

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Tickets available from Steve Peach or Debbie Saines

Christmas Meal and Get Together Wednesday 9th December 2009 7pm for a 7.30 start.

Please let Debbie or Mark Saines know if you are intending to come along, as the numbers will be limited.

As in past years Volunteers Awards will be handed out so suggestions and nominations most welcome. (These are meant to be tongue in cheek)

There will also be a chance to view the latest pictures of Volunteers in Uganda

Volunteer Ranger Meetings

Quarterly Volunteer Ranger Meeting
Wednesday 7th October 2009
7.30pm in the Forest Annexe

Key Information

www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp

Main Country Park Contacts

Steve Peach

Conservation Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator
Tel 023 92 595040
steve.peach@hants.gov.uk

Queen Elizabeth Country Park

Gravel Hill
Horndean
Hants
PO8 0QE

Martin Bonner

Chairman

Mark Saines

Secretary

Debbie Saines

Treasurer

Can all be contacted via email
qecpvr@aol.com

General Park Enquiries

qecp.enquiries@hants.gov.uk
Telephone: 02392 595040
Fax: 02392 592409

Coach House Café

02392 6345

South Downs Joint Committee

(Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
023 92 591362

Rights of Way Enquiries

0845 6035636

Hang Gliding / Paragliding

Skysurfing Club

www.skysurfingclub.co.uk

Model Gliders

Meon Valley Soaring Association
www.mvsa.freeserve.co.uk

Running

Portsmouth Joggers Club

www.pjc.org.uk

Visitor Centre, Shop and Café opening hours

10am - 5.30pm

daily from 1st March to 31st October (2008)

10am - 4.30pm

daily from 1st November to 21st December (2008)

Other Key Park Information

Guided walks

All guided walks start from the Visitor Centre unless stated otherwise. Some walks have restricted numbers and for these walks booking is essential.

Volunteer Rangers should advise potential participants

To wear strong boots or shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.

In very warm weather, plenty of liquid should be taken

The Park is very hilly and therefore some walks can be quite challenging

Guided Walks are very popular most of the walks requiring pre-booking having a waiting list.

So if people cannot attend a walk they should let us know as soon as possible, as there will be other people keen to take their place.

For Children

For younger children a Tots Play Area can be found just beyond the Visitor Centre Pond and an Adventure Play Trail is situated adjacent to Juniper Car Park

Getting to the Park

Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to try and be as environmentally sustainable as possible.

Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to lift share, use public transport or cycle to the Park.

Whenever possible patrols around the Park should be carried out on foot

Any vehicle based tasks should be carefully planned to ensure that as Rangers we have minimal impact upon the environment we seek to protect

Public Transport

National Traveline - for journeys by bus and train - 0870 608 2608 or www.traveline.org.uk

Bus details

From Portsmouth and Petersfield contact Stagecoach Coastline on 0845 121 0170 or www.stagecoachbus.com

Train details

www.nationalrail.co.uk

Codes of Conduct

With over 300,000 Visits made to the Park each year it is important that Volunteer Rangers are aware of the Codes of Conduct.

These are designed to ensure that every Visitor has a safe and enjoyable time and to protect the special interests of the site.

Volunteer Rangers should encourage all Visitors to adhere to these simple guidelines

(Copies of the Codes of Conduct can be found on the Park Pages)

Dog Walkers

Should keep their dogs under strict control at all times

Should clean up after their dogs, especially in the picnic areas and car parks
Should not leave dogs unattended in vehicles on hot days

Should be aware that allowing their dogs to be out of control in a field containing livestock is an offence

Litter

All litter should be taken home and as much as possible should be recycled
Litter can injure people and puts wildlife at risk.

Litter can also increase the fire risk

Mountain Bikes

Bikes should only be on the designated routes

Should be aware and take care of other Park users

Should wear safety helmets

Should not ride on the pavements surrounding the Visitor Centre and Café

Horses

Should only ride on the designated routes

Should be aware and take care of other Park users

Should de-box in Gravel Hill car park

Should not ride on the main Forest Road

Barbeques

No gas, disposal or home BBQs can be used in the Country Park

Visitors should use the Hearths provided by the Country Park. These need to be booked in advance

All litter should be taken home