

## Case Study: Empowering Young Lives –

A Holistic Approach to Youth Support



## **Background**

A gap in provision for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme in New Milton—particularly for teenagers—was identified. Meetings with Jamie Burton at New Forest District Council (NFDC) and Louise Beardmore highlighted the need for dedicated teenage provision in the area.

Ruth Owen, HAF Programme Delivery Officer, contacted Louise to discuss existing services and explore opportunities for improvement. Jamie Anderson from Arnewood School also reached out to Louise, raising concerns that the nearest available provision was at Highcliffe School, which is not easily accessible to young people or families in New Milton without private transport.

New Milton, a coastal town in Hampshire, bordering Dorset, faced increasing concerns around youth disengagement, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), food insecurity, and a lack of accessible recreational opportunities for underprivileged young people. With limited local services and the nearest support centres located in areas that are inaccessible, many families struggled to access essential provision for their children—particularly during school holidays.

We saw an opportunity to combine needs with activities to access a large variety of young people. Starting with a youth work perspective allowed us to build up trust with young people who otherwise might struggle to engage.

## **The Challenge**

Local schools and community workers reported that teenagers were particularly affected by lack of services and provision, often left without structured activities, positive adult guidance, or even regular meals when out of school. This led to rising concerns about mental health, ASB, and long-term social exclusion. As funding has been pulled across the board, services are unable to operate. Youth funding has been cut by over 73% in recent years, there is currently no mental health provision for under 18s (other than CAMHS, which is overwhelmed) and the closest sexual health clinic is in Bitterne (32 miles from New Milton).

## **The Initiative**

In response, a partnership initiative was launched to plug these gaps and increase services, involving New Milton Town Council, Arnewood School, South Coast Sports Academy (SCSA), Stacey Miller

Louise Beardmore  
May 2025  
Youth Voice New Milton





Consultancy and community volunteers. The programme aimed to deliver comprehensive support through:

**Mental Wellbeing, Guidance & Mentoring:** Youth workers and trained consultants provide sessions that help young people to increase their awareness of mental health, emotions, and feelings, and develop their own strategies to be able to support and advocate for themselves.

**Food Provision:** A holiday lunch programme ensures no child goes hungry, providing two nutritious meals per day alongside food parcels for families in some cases. There is also a focus on learning about nutrition, and the young people make their own lunches and plan meals for future sessions. Making and tasting their own meals creates more incentive to try new things and encourages relationship building and trying new foods.

**Sport & Recreation:** Daily sports activities—including football, rugby, basketball, archery, roller skating and much more—delivered in partnership with South Coast Sports Academy, who focus on supporting every young person above company status or profits. The partnership was created due to Gav Vincent’s unwavering commitment to supporting the young people who need it most. We have built our focus on trying to get females involved in sports, particularly male dominated sports and it has been a great success. We have specific days for different sports and create

**Arts and Crafts:** Each day we provide a dedicated arts specialist to encourage those who are not sporty to spend part of the day getting involved in a sociable artistic activity. Some examples of what we have done include painting murals on the walls of the hub, making Christmas wreaths, painting and building bee hives, creating graffiti art, making bracelets, crochet, painting, drawing arts etc.

We also provide young people with books to take home and encourage them to discuss the books at subsequent sessions.

**Music and podcasts:** we have worked with a local media company to create a media set up so our young people can plan and record pod casts and music. We have used this to encourage young people to explore careers and think about what there is in the local area and what qualifications might be needed for a specific career path.

**Drugs and Alcohol awareness:** We have trained workers with an understanding of drug and alcohol addiction. There is a high level of addiction in the area, so we feel it is vital to include a safe learning space for the older young people to explore and learn about drugs and how they can impact people, in a safe environment. We have a ‘drugs box’ to use with older groups to help raise awareness.







**ASB:** some of the young people who attend our provision have been excluded from school or are at risk of exclusion. We ensure our youth workers are available to work with these young people and provide interventions when required. We aim to ensure we have staff who can set a good example to these young people. Our youth workers are also trained in weapons prevention. Stacey Miller is a specialist in working with young people with a higher level of need and can recognise need engage with many of the more challenging young people.

We provide career development advice, and support for young people aged 16-18 who need work experience. They are provided with a DBS check, given an interview-based discussion to help build their experience and give them feedback to develop their skills. We can then provide a reference for future career opportunities. We take on four 'young leaders' per session, and they are paid for each day they work.

## Impact

Over the course of the last year, the programme supported many of our most vulnerable young people aged 11–16. Key outcomes included:

**Increased Participation:** 85% of young people attended booked sessions, with many citing the friendly environment and variety of activities as key motivators.

**Improved Well-being:** Surveys showed a 60% improvement in reported self-confidence and mood, particularly among those who also started to utilise our youth services.

**Healthier Habits:** Families reported better eating habits at home thanks to nutritional guidance and meal support. Young people were more motivated to get involved with the cooking and baking tasks at home, knowing their friends would be making the same things.

**Stronger Community Ties:** Local volunteers, parents, and businesses played an active role in delivery, strengthening community cohesion and pride.

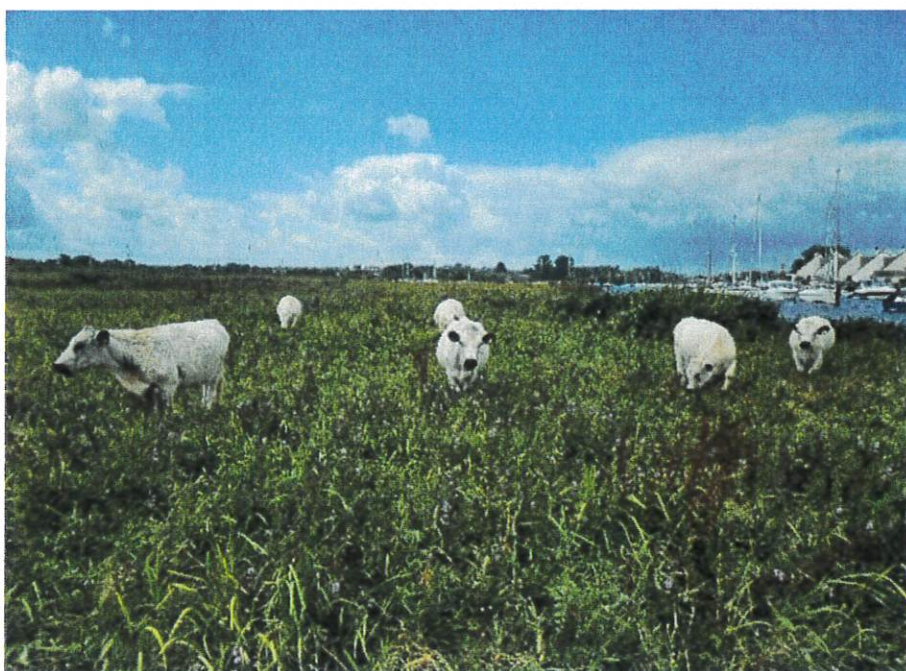
**Minority engagement:** we have supported many young people who otherwise might not access services such as these. We cater for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (almost 25%), young carers, young people in need of social development. We have also encouraged many females to get involved in male dominated sports.



Extract from CHOG Annual report 2024 by Robin Harley BCP Council Countryside Officer (East)

"Like 2023, the pony roundups in 2024 were very problematic, particularly on Priory Marsh, largely due to the wet conditions, with local Environment Agency data showing around 2mm/year increase in water levels, which seems to be accelerating. As a result, the grazier decided to cease all future pony grazing on Priory Marsh, which meant we had to find an alternative management solution going forward.

As BCP Council already owned cattle, it made sense to purchase some additional animals, although we had to ensure we had room for them from October to May. We also needed to put handling infrastructure (pens) in place at the entrance, source the animals and then dog test them to ensure they were suitable for a public site. We selected British White Cattle, as they are docile, adapted to wet site grazing, available locally and a native breed at risk. We have started with six animals but hope to grow the herd over time. All the above, of course, significantly delayed the start date for grazing.

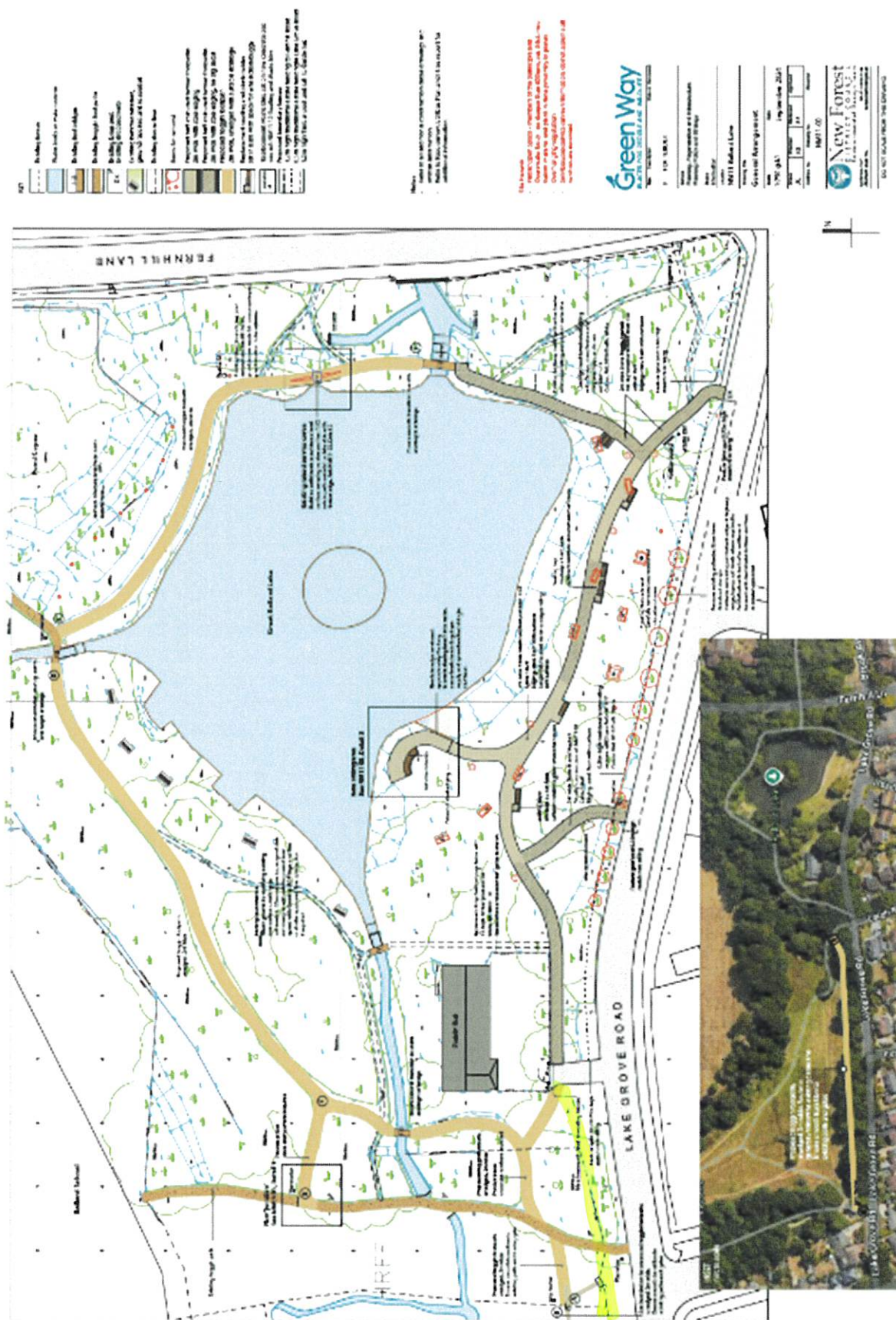


*British White Cattle on Priory Marsh (Robin Harley)*

Switching from pony to cattle grazing creates important differences, owing to what and how the animals eat, as well as their divergent behaviours. Ponies establish short lawns, grazing close to the ground, whereas cattle pull at vegetation with their tongues. This has some significant implications for the habitat; and, in combination with a shorter season, reduction in animal numbers and general wetter conditions, Priory Marsh has become more dominated by sedge, reed and rush. We can only influence grazing period and numbers, so plan to increase both in 2025 and measure the impacts.

Presence of cattle after many years of absence does create more diverse conditions overall, particularly in contrast to Stanpit Marsh, where pony grazing continues."





**Graham Flexman**

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**From:** Paul Relton  
**Sent:** 08 May 2025 15:48  
**To:** Graham Flexman; Mark Jeffries  
**Cc:** Jill Colclough  
**Subject:** NFDC recreational mitigation programme 2024/25 - NM11 Ballard Lake, Access and Open Space Enhancement Works - MoU and LEMP  
**Attachments:** NM11 MoU for maintaining recreational mitigation sites\_FINAL.pdf; Appendix A NM11 03 A1 250 General Arrangement for LEMP.pdf; Appendix B NM11-13 Planting Plan- Rear of Seating Area.pdf

Dear Graham - we are pleased to confirm that the recreational mitigation works at Ballard Lake are nearing completion...and should be substantially complete by the end of May. Therefore, please find attached a copy to the MOU and Management plan for your review and acceptance...

As previously advised, the proposed soft landscape planting works have been deferred until September/October when conditions will be more suitable for planting. The proposed cultivation of new planting beds will be undertaken at the same time.

Unfortunately, the Contractor has encountered a delay in the supply of the bespoke curved bench (new seating area overlooking the pond)...Notwithstanding this delay, we propose that the site is opened to the public once the footpath works and all other hard landscaping works are complete by the end of May. The bench will be installed by the Contractor at a later date (possibly by the end of June).

The recreational mitigation works undertaken by NFDC at Ballard Lake are on land that is owned and/or leased by NMTC and therefore, the required maintenance of this scheme should be undertaken by NMTC. This approach has been adopted by NFDC with other local town/parish councils for similar recreational mitigation schemes (including NM6 - Ashington Park and NM5 - Carrick Woods)... The MoU sets out the basic level of maintenance required and the shared principles that should be adopted by both NFDC and NMTC to ensure the scheme is *".... maintained to provide a neat and tidy appearance that is safe for public use and promotes biodiversity net gain..."*.

I trust that the above is acceptable and request confirmation that NMTC are happy to sign-off on the MOU. Alternatively, if you have any questions/queries on the MoU and/or Management Plan, please don't hesitate to contact NFDC and we will endeavour to answer these.

Finally, we are keen to promote the recreational mitigation programme and newly completed Green Way projects, such as Ballard Lake, therefore Jill will be in contact with you regarding a "formal" opening event once the main works are complete, to possibly take place in early June (on completion of the footpath works), or towards the end of June/early July following installation of the curved bench.

regards

Paul

Paul Relton

Programme Manager (Recreational Mitigation Project)

New Forest District Council

Tel:

*Note: my standard working days Monday to Thursday (inclusive)*





KEY

---	Existing fences
---	Water body or water course
FB	Existing footbridges
---	Existing hoggin footpaths
DK	Existing lamp post
---	Existing dropped kerb
---	Existing benches retained, ground repaired and re-seeded
---	Existing desire lines
---	Proposed built coloured tarmac footpaths
---	2m wide with steel edging
---	Proposed hoggin footpath
---	2m wide, unedged with suitable drainage
---	Replacement seating and picnic tables set in bays with space for wheelchair buggy
---	Replanted saplings
---	Waste bin
---	Noddy board
---	Native mixed hedge
---	Boundary fences
---	1.2m high traditional estate fencing to Fernhill Road
---	0.5m high traditional estate fencing to Lake Grove Road
---	1.2m high timber post and rail to Guide hut

**Green Way**  
PLACES FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE  
Site E. Renewed

Service	Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure
Planning Policy and Strategy	
Stages	
Location	NM11 Ballard Lake
Drawing Title	General Arrangement
Scale	1:250 @A1
Date	May 2025
Drawn	JC
Checked	HE
Reviewed	JP
Approved	
Contract No.	NM11-03
Drawing No.	

**New Forest**  
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