

FILM: NEW FOREST – YEAR ONE PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to highlight the progress of the Film: New Forest Project in its first year and look forward to the future development of the initiative based upon knowledge and experience gained within the initial 12 months.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2016 an agreement was made for New Forest District Council to form a four year partnership with Creative England to promote filming opportunities in the District. The agreement was signed at platinum level in year one dropping back down to gold in subsequent years allowing commitment to a promotional film during the course of the project.
- 2.2 The overriding objective of the initiative was to bring economic benefit through spend of productions when located here. A single feature film can spend £40,000 in a single day on local goods and services
- 2.3 Research shows that those working within 'Programming, Broadcast and Motion Picture' activities within the New Forest generate a low-end estimate of £6m (GVA) to the local economy. Known spend of film and television productions since the start of the project is estimated by Creative England to have generated £250,000 in local spend for New Forest businesses. This is considered a low estimate as it is based on the known productions and beyond this, unknown, unaccounted for spend will make this figure considerably higher.

3. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR 1

- 3.1 A wide range of activities have taken place within the first year of the agreement. These areas of work have primarily been aimed at raising the profile of the New Forest amongst industry professionals, creating a local network and ensuring that the permissions processes for those wishing to work in the New Forest are positive whilst respectful.
- 3.2 In July, a locations event was held at Appletree Court. The event was aimed at business and/or landowners who saw potential in making their premises available for filming of television or film productions. Those attending heard first-hand experience of the benefits and implications that allowing crew onto their premises can bring.
- 3.3 In October, a Crew Night attracted around 100 individuals to Balmer Lawn Hotel. This brought together local producers, location scouts and freelance professionals to network and make valuable contacts. The event also acted as the public launch of the Film New Forest project; receiving a positive response amongst those gathered.

- 3.4 Film: New Forest exhibited at the second Film Expo South event at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton. This regional event provided a platform to promote Film: New Forest to a wider audience for the first time with the focus being on the wide variety of filming locations which the New Forest can offer (“A million possibilities, in one unique location”). At the exhibition the official branding and supporting material were launched. Several valuable contacts were made and significant interest was taken in the New Forest project by those who visited the stand throughout the day.
- 3.5 Early in the project, it was identified that whilst there were a number of organisations and individuals with an interest in this sector but there was little joined up collaboration or communication between them. For this reason the Film: New Forest Steering Group was established. The group is seeking to ensure that those with an interest in this area (including Forestry Commission, National Park Authority and Film Makers) are communicating and working together; seeking to ensure that whilst the industry brings local benefit, it does so in respect of the local area and its residents.
- 3.6 To aid promotion of the New Forest and its diverse filming opportunities, a database of over 50 filming locations has been established. The majority of these have been professionally photographed by Creative England who maintain the database and utilise it accordingly when processing enquiries.
- 3.7 Over the winter months, a Skills Audit was carried out within the district. The objective of this was to understand the (freelance) skills available to productions wishing to work here, many of whom rely on freelance crew as opposed to bringing them on site.

4.0 PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS FOR YEAR 2 AND BEYOND

- 4.1 A further Crew Night will be held in the autumn to build the local network further. The interest at the inaugural Crew Night was significant but with the local network now significantly further established it will likely be a very popular event.
- 4.2 Under the agreement with Creative England, a short film promoting the benefits is to be produced. Plans for the production of this film are currently in the early stages and will progressed with the input from the aforementioned Film New Forest Steering Group.
- 4.3 Through work carried out in the first year of the project a number of locations where productions have taken place previously have been identified. Ideas around creating a Film New Forest Tour are being explored which could take in sites where major films and television shows have been shot. An exploratory tour has been diarised for June.
- 4.4 A high proportion of the enquiries received to Film New Forest are from students of local universities seeking permission to film their projects in the district. Whilst Film: New Forest is keen to encourage the development of these individuals, their requests often lack sufficient detail resulting in inefficient processes. Film: New Forest will work with local universities to ensure that such requests contain the appropriate information so that filming requests can be handled efficiently.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no existing crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The funding for year 2 (at the reduced gold level) will be funded corporately. Any additional spend, for example marketing materials, attendance at events will be met by Economic Development or Communications budgets accordingly.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 In its first year the Film: New Forest project has made significant progress. Of particular note are the connections made between stakeholders at the local level. These relationships have proved valuable and will be increasingly so moving forward.

9.2 The Film: New Forest branding is now established and becoming recognised amongst those within the industry. This will be further developed online and in print to promote the area to those wishing to work here.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That support for the Film: New Forest project should be maintained in order that the progress made to date can be built upon and further sector related benefit can be brought to local businesses.

For Further Information Please Contact

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Appendix 1 – Film:NewForest visuals



Fig 1. Logo and 'hello' branding created for the project



Fig 2. Attendance at Film Expo South exhibition



Fig 3. Locations meeting held in the first quarter of the partnership



Fig 4. Photo library of locations created



Fig 5. Website information for enquiries



Fig 6. Social media #FilmNewForest being used to increase awareness