

The Eco-Traveller Notes for Teachers – New Forest



This is a decision making exercise based on the management of the New Forest National Park in Hampshire. In this exercise, children make the key planning decisions to promote the aims of the Park.

Since the New Forest is now under the protection of the National Park Authority, there are strict rules to protect the animals and habitats in the area. These include rules to control the building of telecommunications equipment such as aerials or satellite dishes, prevent any work which does not match existing buildings or change the appearance of a building e.g. cladding or dormer windows. At the same time, it is important to encourage development and employment, often related to tourism while retaining the 'character' of the rural area.

There are five decisions to make in this exercise, you can create an optional score sheet with some paper so that pupils may work in groups, rather than individually, and then compare their results. Hopefully, there will be lots of creative discussion before each decision.

Case 1. Mrs. Armstrong's cottage.

A fairly simple case, because this would go against everything the Authority hopes to achieve. No points if the children allow it, but 2 points if they turn it down. Houses should match existing buildings and if you allow one exception then you soon get all sorts of bizarre designs.

Case 2. Mr. Henry's chip shop.

This is a little harder because local people will want takeaway fish & chips and it does create employment, but the owner seems to have a very casual attitude.

Children can allow this development but only if they insist on strict conditions:

- All litter and mess must be cleared up – 1 point
- Shop must close by about 9.30 pm – 1 point (so they won't disturb residents)
- No points if the children just say 'yes' or 'no'.

Case 3. Feeding the ponies.

Sadly, New Forest ponies are becoming far more aggressive towards tourist visitors, often looking for food and even invading picnic areas. Some people have been frightened by the ponies trying to snatch at their lunch. This kiosk would be a terrible idea because the ponies risk their health and often chew at leftover crisp packets etc.

- Let the kiosk go ahead – no points.
- Ban the kiosk – 3 points.

Case 4. The Exchange Bookshop.

Exchange bookshops survive by selling good quality hardback books and often build up a loyal customer base, with the same people visiting several times each year to buy or return their books. This development should create employment and please the visitors.

- No points if children decide to block it.
- 2 points if they let it go ahead.

- Bonus +1 or +2 if children talk about 'recycling' books or bringing people back to the National Park more often (more tourism) to return their books.

Case 5. Hanging baskets.

Children may decide to ban this idea because of the welding in the workshop, but it should be acceptable within reasonable limits and will create employment. Local floral displays will improve the village and there will be more work at farmer Lindsey's farm supplying the fresh flowers.

- 1 point if children block it.
- 2 or 3 points if they let the workshop go ahead.

These scores are for guidance only.

Teachers are welcome to add cases of their own and may find some helpful information at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk

Encourage your pupils to do some research either from books or the internet. As a bonus, your pupils can go into their local First Choice store and request more information to complete the activity sheets. Your First Choice store will have some fact sheets and any brochures available on the various destinations for your pupils to cut out pictures if need be. If your pupils go into the stores with their families they can expect to walk away with an Eco-Traveller certificate just for asking for more information.