



Escaping to Ashdown Forest

For those of us lucky enough to live nearby, Ashdown Forest has offered freedom, inspiration, and sanctuary over the last six months of lockdown.

Everyone will agree that the Forest is more beautiful than ever, with recovering habitats providing shelter for record numbers of birds, butterflies, and everything else that makes the Forest so special.

We need nature now more than ever before. Ashdown Forest is common land and free for everyone to enjoy peace and space, which is why we kept the car parks open during the recent lockdown. As a result, we have seen unprecedented visitor numbers. We are proud of the Forest and the role it has in enriching lives, but visitor numbers of this magnitude present new challenges.

In the background, our team have been working harder than ever with a skeleton crew to protect the Forest and keep it safe for our visitors. We have attended multiple forest fires and deer vehicle collisions, removed fly-tips, cared for our livestock, found lost dogs, installed benches, mended fences, replaced gates, installed information panels, and litter picked the car parks continuously.

We provided lockdown activities and online maps, improved our wildlife interpretation, and developed educational resources. We launched wildlife projects, such as the iNaturalist app, to engage with the local community, and our conservation team has worked tirelessly to restore our rare habitats. It is thanks to your support and donations that all this is possible.

In these difficult times, your support is now more important than ever. Over recent months, it has become apparent just how much we all need to escape to the Forest from the confines of home.

You may not be aware that Ashdown Forest is now predominantly self-financed after recent reductions in Local Government funding. As with so many other not-for-profit organisations, our funding opportunities have been further diminished during the pandemic, especially with the Forest Centre being closed to the public.

We are publishing a 2021 Ashdown Forest calendar, which shows the beauty of the Forest through the seasons and why it means so much to so many people. All proceeds will go towards The Conservators of Ashdown Forest who have been caring for the Forest since 1885.

If you can help, the A3 calendar is available to buy through our website:

<https://www.ashdownforest.org/store/>

A big thanks to Dave Brooker for his photography and help with the design.

Thank you for supporting Ashdown Forest.