

# PARTNER REPRESENTATIVE PROFILE: RHYS MORGAN

*NEW FOREST LAND ADVICE OFFICER, WILDLIFE TRUST*

Growing up in rural North Wales I have always had a keen interest in the countryside, this has certainly played a large part in my chosen career path. The majority of my career has involved an outdoor element of surveying the countryside. I would say I am a ‘conservation generalist’ with a keen interest to support the greater countryside.



My career started working for Powys County Council as a Rights of Way Officer shortly followed by a position with the Countryside Council for Wales. The position was varied but of most interest to me was working with the farmers through “Tir Gofal” an environmental stewardship scheme.

I started working with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) in 2006 after moving south to live with my wife. The Project was called Forest Friendly Farming, a successful scheme supporting commoners and landowners with conservation advice. We ran a small grant scheme making various farm improvements, such as laying hedges. This project has continued to be successful for 19 years now, evolving into today’s New Forest Land Advice Service (NFLAS), run in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA).

My role is both interesting and varied. I’m employed by the HIWWT but based in the New Forest NPA office at Lymington with the NFLAS team. Our work varies depending on the time of year. We are a reactive service so you’re never too sure what the next question will be! We provide a local one stop shop for those wanting support in the New Forest area regarding wildlife, habitat management, government regulations, small grants and back up grazing when it can be found.

NFLAS was created back in 2010 after the success of the previous project: Forest Friendly Farming. There had been a keen interest among several organisations to work together providing bespoke advice collectively for commoners and landowners in the New Forest. NFLAS enables several organisations to work together and bring greater expertise to the table. This has proven to work well and continues to do so. We started as three organisations: HIWWT, New Forest NPA and Natural England with the Verderers also providing support to the service. This has changed over time but also expanded to bring in additional projects into the fold. NFLAS works closely with a variety of organisations such as Freshwater Habitats Trust and enjoy many positive relationships.

Recently NFLAS have been working with landowners to submit Catchment Sensitive Farming grant applications. We have a variety of applications across the New Forest and the aim of these grants are to financially support land owners with much needed capital work improvements. The grant allows for the funding of a variety of installations such as rainwater harvesting systems to reduce run off and water costs. One of the key items we look for are the location of manure piles as these are a key focus point for run off into the local environment.

Of course, this isn't our only work in the summer months as we are still a one stop shop in the New Forest providing advice on multiple issues.

As an advisor in the New Forest and Avon Valley since 2006 I can certainly say this is a unique place to work. We are all familiar with the fact the New Forest is an important place for wildlife and conservation but equally as important are the commoners and farmers I have got to know over these years. Continuing to support them is one of the driving forces behind my keen interest to support the New Forest. To find out more about the work of the New Forest Land Advice team click [here](#).

By Rhys Morgan, New Forest Land Advice Officer, Wildlife Trust