



NEW FOREST TOGETHER

Campaign Update – July 2026

We are pleased to report that support for our non-political campaign continues to grow both locally and at Westminster. It is clear that the New Forest is not the only area where Local Government Re-organisation is being met with strong opposition.

16

County Councils, including Hampshire, have signed a joint letter to the (current) Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt. Hon Steve Reed OBE MP outlining their concerns about decisions taken regarding LGR in their counties and calling for urgent engagement. The letter was sent from and also signed by the Chair and two vice chairs of the CCN (the County Councils Network). We are awaiting news of a response.

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Local authorities, including Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council, have now started the formal Judicial Review process. HCC believe this is the only way to access the advice from Civil Servants given to the Minister before he made the decision about how the county would be divided. The government have failed to provide this crucial information on a voluntary basis. It would appear from recent articles in The Times and the Daily Mail that the advice given by Civil Servants about the plans for Essex was actively ignored. We strongly suspect this may have happened in Hampshire as well.

27,000+

People have signed the New Forest Together petition either online or in hard copy. It shows the strength of feeling in the New Forest about the planned carve up of our district. We are making plans to deliver the petition, together with a giant postcard from all of us in the New Forest, once the dust has settled on the Labour leadership. We hope by then to have 30,000 signatures and will be working hard to achieve that! Fundraising is going on to help pay for at least one coachload from the New Forest to Westminster. Our second Quiz Night will be held in Lyndhurst on 17th July.

Dozens

of MPs packed into Westminster Hall on June 10th to express their constituents' outrage about Local Government Reform. The debate is recorded in Hansard and can be read [here](#)

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2026-06-10/debates/02F6BCAE-6D7F-48AB-AA63-6922DBAB5D5E/LocalGovernmentReform> or watch at [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv/) - [Westminster Hall LGR Debate](#)

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1 Successful New Forest Together ‘roadshow’ has already taken place in Lyndhurst. The second, in Fordingbridge had to be postponed because of the recent heatwave. It’s been rescheduled for 16th July at the Town Hall. We are now actively making plans for more public meetings with New Forest communities across the district. We think it is vital to reach those people who may not use social media or who simply prefer the chance to talk face-to-face about what’s going on.

9000

9000 Businesses across the New Forest face being impacted by LGR. At the invitation of the New Forest Business Partnership, we were at the New Forest Business Show at New Park. It was a great opportunity to engage with local businesses, to hear their views and understand their concerns about the effects of LGR. Successful businesses provide local people with opportunity through employment and drive a vibrant rural economy, which helps to fund services throughout the New Forest District.

There's a lot more besides – from our fund-raising activities, attendance at local events to raise awareness and our social media presence. We are planning a regular update – with hard copies distributed across the district - as well as keeping people informed via our New Forest Together Facebook page and the Friends of New Forest Together group.

Our challenge now is to keep up the momentum and make sure we start talking to the new people in charge of the government as soon as we know who they are.

We firmly believe that the government's current proposals for LGR are not in the best interest of the New Forest as a whole: not the Totton and Waterside towns and parishes that will move to the Southampton-dominated unitary, nor the remaining towns and parishes which will find themselves resource and revenue poor in the new Mid-Hants Rural Authority.

We are now formally registered with Companies House as a Community Interest Company (CIC) to bring proper scrutiny and rigor to our affairs. Thank you to everybody supporting New Forest Together campaign.

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