

film:new forest

Filming Location Toolkit for Location Owners

Understanding the Production Process

1. What is Film:New Forest?

Film:New Forest is managed by New Forest District Council's (NFDC) Economic Development Team.

The project was established in 2016 because NFDC recognise the contribution the film and television industries make to our local economy. It is estimated that production teams filming in the New Forest have contributed over £3 million to the local economy since the project began.

The Film:New Forest Office helps film & TV production companies to find the perfect New Forest location through our local knowledge and via the search facility on the locations database.

Our locations database has a huge range of different properties available, and we encourage location owners to upload their details; this document details what you need to be aware of if you host a production company.

2. How will it involve you?

By signing up to Film:New Forest's locations database, your property is included in searches to find the right location for the next production. But what can you expect from the experience?

Enquiries come from a wide range of productions including:

- Feature Films
- Short Films
- TV Series/Dramas
- Documentaries
- Commercials
- Corporate videos
- Music Videos and Pop Promos
- Photo Shoots
- Students

Feature films and large-scale TV dramas often have a long lead-in time, sometimes up to a year ahead. Production companies may scout in an area several months

prior to deciding where to shoot. They could be shooting in several areas of the country and the shoots are intensive and demanding for all involved.

Do not underestimate the level of disruption you may face with a large drama crew. TV dramas have an approximate 6 to 8-week preparation time before filming and usually only shoot in one region of the country. They will generally employ predominantly local crew and facilities. TV dramas can be just as intensive as feature films but can be more demanding, as the preparation time is shorter and the budgets lower.

Commercials have a very short turn-around time with everything needed at the last minute. However, they are generally finished within a week and often have significant budgets.

Documentaries, corporate videos, short films, photographic shoots and light entertainment tend to have much lower budgets and smaller crews. The lead-in time to the shoots will vary depending on the complexity and content of the shoot. Often the crew will only be about five people and they will be happy to fit around visitors and your normal working day.

3. The Initial Enquiry

This may come direct, through Film:New Forest or via Creative England, who work with productions from the outset. If the enquiry comes direct and you would like some support, you are welcome to approach Film:New Forest or Creative England who will be able to assist.

Often the production's initial enquiries are fact-finding missions to see if the region has the locations they are looking for.

Productions are usually working to tight deadlines and will often need information very quickly. It is important to remember that productions will usually be looking in more than one area, so the quicker a location can respond, the more likely it is that they will secure the production. It is always important to check how urgent the enquiry is but try to respond within 24 hours.

It is always advisable to be as honest as possible when dealing with a location enquiry; there is no point fabricating the truth if you know that you do not have any suitable locations. If you think that your location might be suitable, but it may be tricky to film due to noise, access or availability, please make this clear from the start.

If you receive an enquiry directly it is likely to be a request from a location manager, location scout, a producer, a production manager or a line producer. Please ask the contact if they have registered their project with Film:New Forest; if they have not, then please pass on Film:New Forest's details: Filming@newforest.gov.uk

4. What Happens Next?

It is important to keep in mind that most initial requests for location suggestions are simply preliminary enquiries and will not necessarily result in filming taking place.

A production company's resources, requirements and budgets will vary depending on the size and type of project. It is essential to understand that final details of requirements will often not be available until a technical recce has taken place. Plans often change at the last minute for various reasons so it is crucial to remain as flexible as possible.

At this point you should ensure that you have understood exactly the requirements of the production company in terms of the use of buildings and land as well as any alterations to the property, use of furniture or props and use of services such as water and electricity.

Ensure that you are happy with the content and context of the script and its use of your property and that the decision-makers within your organisation are happy with the compatibility of the production with your organisation's values.

Ensure that the production company has Public Liability Insurance to a value that you are happy with. £5m is the industry standard, although some venues require £10m of coverage.

When you are fully informed about the nature of the production and the implications for your property or location, it is time to decide whether to accept or decline the enquiry in principle, subject to further discussions. It's better to be honest at this stage than accepting the enquiry if you know you are unlikely to be able to service the proposed filming requirements.

5. Project Confidentiality

Project confidentiality is paramount and should always be respected. Most production companies will not want details of their project commonly known at the early stages, so it is important to ensure that anyone dealing with filming requests respects the production company's confidentiality wishes. Failure to adhere to these requests could, in extreme circumstances, mean that your property loses the production entirely. It is quite common at this stage to ask when you will be able to promote the filming and capitalise on all your hard work.

Most production's publicity departments will be more than happy to help you when the time is right. Film:New Forest will work with Creative England's marketing department and the production company and will be happy to involve you in their PR plans.

6. The Recces

Prior to committing, the production company will want to visit a location on several occasions. The initial visit is likely to only involve the location manager and designer, and sometimes a member of Creative England's Production Liaison team and/or a Film:New Forest representative. If they decide that the location fits their brief they will need to return with the director and the producers.

They will then generally return a few more times; first with the director of photography and then the main technical crew prior to the actual shoot: this is the 'technical recce' where all the decisions about how the filming will take place will be made.

You should attend the recces to ensure that what is planned will be possible.

7. Managing Negotiations

Make any costs relating to the location clear to the production as early as possible. You should always ask for a copy of the production company's public liability insurance before agreeing use of a property. Discuss this with Film:New Forest if you are unsure.

Consider using the production's contracts for your properties, wherever possible, to avoid extra time and costs being added to the negotiations. If a production wants to use a location that will affect residents or businesses, it is important that the production consults with those affected. It is likely that they will consult, along with Film:New Forest, with some or all the following:

- Local Authority officers from other relevant departments
- Resident associations/local business forums
- Councillors and ward representatives
- Parish council leaders
- Emergency services

If you are asked to help with the negotiations by Creative England or the production company, it is important to consider everyone the shoot may affect. A full picture of the implications of the filming should be gained but negotiations should always remain positive, and alternatives should be offered if problems arise. Whilst being as accommodating as possible you should always remain clear and strong about what is, and is not, possible. Good communication is key to the experience being a positive one for all involved.

Remember that you and your property will still be around after the production company has gone, so it is important to ensure that the filming does not have any negative impact on your reputation within the local community.

8. Contracts

Your negotiations will form the basis of a location agreement with the production company. Some companies, such as the BBC, will use a standard agreement for filming at your property; others will be happy to draw up an agreement from scratch between the two parties. There is no hard and fast rule about agreements, but you should always ensure that you are happy with its contents. You should request an amendment to anything that you are unhappy with.

There are several key points to bear in mind when negotiating agreements:

- a. Ensure that the fee is indicated in the agreement.
- b. Outline the specific dates and times of filming and consider including penalty clauses for overruns.
- c. Include a clause for use of the property for reshoots - where scenes are added or changed after principal photography.
- d. Ensure you understand the subject and content of the production.
- e. Ensure that the agreement guarantees the reinstatement of the property to its original condition and the repair of any damage.
- f. Consider providing an inventory of your property.
- g. Ensure that it outlines any press or PR opportunities that you would like to exploit.
- h. Include any conservation issues that need to be abided by, i.e. the use of lights.

It is recommended you take legal advice on agreements.

9. Pre-Production

At the pre-production stage everything including locations, permissions, parking dispensation and requests to film on the highway, is all confirmed. If a production is planning on spending a length of time in the area, they may want to set up a fully operational office in a matter of weeks. They will need to find production offices and start hiring local crew and facilities companies as well as booking hotels. Film:New Forest can also help here by advising on suitable office venues and, thanks to our partnership Go New Forest, can also help advise on accommodation.

10. Communication

By the time a production starts shooting it should not come as a shock to anyone directly involved or affected by the shoot. The production company will contact all residents and businesses that are likely to be affected by the filming at least one week before filming takes place. Most productions will do this by sending out 'resident letters', which will include contact details for someone on the production to answer any queries.

11. Production

Although most productions are planned thoroughly, you must always be prepared for last minute schedule changes. In a lot of cases these changes are unavoidable and are often caused by bad weather, actor availability, script changes or re-writes or a last-minute idea by the director or producer!

Changes to the schedule may affect parking requirements, vehicle registrations or issues on exterior shoots such as changing set dressing or switching lighting off to name but a few things. It is important to be as flexible as possible and work closely with the production if changes do occur. It is also important to remain impartial if changes cause disputes with residents; Film:New Forest will be happy to work as a mediator and get the production representatives and the residents together to work through issues if necessary.

12. Parking

It is likely that a production will need to park key production vehicles as near to the location as possible. It is usual for them to require parking dispensation, often at short notice, to put this in place. If you have outdoor space suitable for parking, offer this as part of the contract.

13. Unit Bases

Major productions will need to source a unit base each day near their key location to park most of their vehicles. This can be anything from 20 to 200 trucks and cars as well as dining buses, cast caravans and catering vans. It is a good idea to have some suggestions in your area of accessible car parks, fields or wasteland for this purpose. Film:New Forest can assist with these suggestions.

14. Filming in Public Buildings

For buildings open to the public, there will often be disruption for visitors during filming. This should always be communicated as positively as possible. Relevant websites should be updated confirming when galleries, exhibits or public spaces are not available due to filming. Pre-booked groups and schools should be informed in advance. Notices should be posted on reception desks and at points of entry confirming the same information in advance and on the days of filming. All front of house staff should be fully briefed as to what is happening and the key times when there will be any disruption.

If the production company is happy to publicise this information, most visitors will appreciate knowing exactly what is being filmed, when and where they will be able to see it and if there are any celebrities involved.

Some production companies will allow visitors to watch the filming if they are very quiet and do not disturb the process. This can often be a real benefit for the visitor and more than compensates for any disruption. All communication should stress the benefits of the filming to the property or location (Film:New Forest can help advise) and thank the visitor for their patience and understanding in the matter.

Additional staff may be required to help manage visitor movements. Often the production company will be happy for visitors to be in the area whilst the shoot is prepared but will need the area to be cleared for the actual take. This kind of visitor management will be the responsibility of the property's management in partnership with the production's security staff or locations team. Close communication is always required with the production company.

If the production company wants to film the public, this should only be done with the permission of the members of the public. Parental permission should be gained for children.

15. Filming in Heritage Properties

Filming at historic locations often involves the clash of two very different agendas. One side is trying to get the footage while the other is trying to protect its unique setting. With planning and preparation, and a certain degree of compromise, this can usually be achieved peacefully. Filming can be disruptive but need not be damaging if the right precautions are taken.

Lights can be hot; equipment invariably has sharp or muddy feet. Props and costumes can be dusty, and cameras are too heavy for historic floors. Crew spray lacquer, drop coffees, hammer nails and leave blue tack all over the place... the list is endless.

Despite this, hours of filming are completed every week in historic properties without any damage because the right planning and protection has been put in place.

The secret of success is preplanning to identify sensitive areas and concerns, supervision on the day and briefing. Representatives from the property should be involved in early meetings and identify all conservation issues. They should be available during the set-up period to offer constructive advice to the technical crew and be available to move any objects throughout the filming. If needed, either the property manager or the production's location manager should give an initial briefing to all the crew about what is and is not allowed. This should cover very basic details such as the consumption of food and beverage, what objects can or cannot be handled, what artefacts can be filmed and any other sensitivities. In delicate areas, close supervision may be advisable. This, once again, should be done in a constructive but assertive fashion.

16. After Filming has Wrapped

Once the film crews have departed there may be some delay until the production is screened. The footage will need to be edited and go through postproduction, where any effects can be added. There may also be further scenes to be shot in a studio or at an alternative location.

The Location Manager is likely to be able to give you some idea of when the production is to be broadcast or released. You may want to get a quote from them before they leave about their experience of filming at your location to add into any press or marketing you plan around the project. However, all press releases about the production will need to be cleared with the production's broadcaster or publicist. Again, the Location Manager can point you in the direction of the best person to speak to on this.

17. The Benefits of Filming

Filming on location generates significant inward investment into the New Forest's local economy. Depending on its size and budget, a production can spend up to £42,000 per day on everything from local caterers, security and taxi firms to hotels and restaurants.

Film tourism is now a recognised phenomenon, estimated to be worth £1.9 billion to the UK's economy. According to industry sources, film and TV productions inspire an estimated 40% of tourists in selecting their destinations, and iconic locations used as film locations can receive on average an increase of 30% in bookings. Seeing the New Forest on screen is therefore a great marketing opportunity which may encourage film and television viewers to visit and further boost the local economy.

Data Sources: British Film Institute, Oxford Economics, Visit Britain, Halifax Travel Insurance