

### News from around the Parks

*Any items in italics are from the CNP staff. Apologies for any stylistic errors, which are caused by the variety of formats in which the reports are received. Some reports have been edited for length.*

#### International News – Adrian Phillips

**Draft IUCN resolution on dark skies and nature conservation:** a draft resolution on 'Dark Skies and Nature Conservation' has been prepared for the IUCN World Conservation Congress to be held in Korea in September. The draft text:

- a. Calls on environmental management agencies to recognize artificial light to be a form of pollution that should be subject to strict control,
- b. Calls on infrastructure management authorities to regulate and control outdoor lighting,
- c. Encourages natural area managers and non-governmental organizations to promote awareness of dark sky values and of the need to reduce light pollution,
- d. Recommends universities, science funding agencies etc. to support research into the impacts of artificial light on biodiversity and ecological function,
- e. Urges protected area agencies to support public appreciation and understanding of nocturnal ecology and the night sky, and
- f. Recommends protected area and other conservation agencies to cooperate with astronomy organizations and aboriginal peoples on all aspects of light pollution and its control.

The sponsors of this resolution seek comments, and support from IUCN members. CPRE have been leaders in this area, but they (like CNP) are not IUCN members. But some members of CNP, e.g. RSPB and the WTs, do belong to IUCN. Hopefully they can coordinate comments and would be ready to co-sponsor the motion. The lead contact is Ted Trzyna, President, InterEnvironment Institute, P.O. Box 99, Claremont, California 91711, USA, (1 909) 621-9018, [Ted\\_Trzyna@InterEnvironment.org](mailto:Ted_Trzyna@InterEnvironment.org).

**The Putting Nature on the Map project:** This project, led by the IUCN UK National Committee, applies new IUCN guidance on protected area management categories and government types within the UK. A Handbook for this has been prepared: (<http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/PNOTM%20Final%20January.pdf>). There will be a conference on protected areas 26 April *at which the Handbook will be discussed* - see <http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/draft%20flyer%20and%20programme%20v7.pdf>.

CNP members will ask what this means for our national parks and whether they will retain their status as IUCN protected areas (Category V). The Handbook says that the parks are likely to pass the new, tougher test, but they will need to make the case through a 'Statement of Compliance'. Discussions are underway with several national park officers, representing ANPA, on what that statement should include: I have kept CNP in the loop. Call me for more information: 01386 576147.

#### Brecon Beacons NPA – Carys Howell

**The Authority is currently undertaking a consultation on the Brecon Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Boundary Map review.** Brecon Conservation Area was designated in 1970 in recognition of its special historic character. The draft appraisal document sets out the features that contribute to the distinctiveness of the Brecon Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for its protection and enhancement. The document also proposes amendments to the boundary of the existing Conservation Area which may affect the land and property of residents in some parts of Brecon.

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is supporting a new bid to win national status encouraging walkers to come to Talgarth, Crickhowell and Hay-on-Wye by holding a series of public meetings to rally local support.** With funding support from

the Welsh Government, the EU and LEADER, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is involved in the wider 'Walkers are Welcome' Welsh and English cross border project which locally will focus on the work of the three popular tourist towns of Hay on Wye, Talgarth and Crickhowell. It is hoped that if successful the Black Mountains area will benefit from a welcome boost in the local economy, successfully contribute to the tourism industry and improve the quality of local access and footpath maintenance for residents, walkers and visitors. There are currently 70 towns and villages across the UK that have signed up to the community-led scheme which aims to strengthen a town's reputation as a place for visitors to come and enjoy the great outdoors.

**New ways of marketing Brecon Beacons National Parks' £205 million tourism industry were high on the agenda at the eighth annual Tourism in Action conference which took place last week.** Tourism in Action is hosted by the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Partnership with the support of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. It is designed to highlight how local tourism businesses can develop new ways of working in partnership in a way that respects the environment and retains the character of the Brecon Beacons.

#### **Brecon Beacons Park Society – Charles Henderson**

No report received.

#### **Broads Authority – Rashmi Varma**

##### **Extension to Duck Broad 'island' begins**

A pilot scheme to restore an eroded reed bed at Duck Broad using mud-filled gabion baskets as a frame has proved so successful that the trial is being extended. A 20m x 20m 'island', built last year, has seen good reed growth and will be extended to measure 300m by 40m across the western entrance of Duck Broad to provide shelter to over-wintering birds. The centre of the 'island' will be filled with dredgings to deepen the navigation channel in Heigham Sound. This innovative way of using dredgings is being paid for by Prisma, a project funded by the European Development Fund.

##### **Increasing commercial reed beds**

The Broads Authority has embarked on a pioneering scheme to increase the area of reeds cut commercially in order to address the decline in this ancient industry.

A second generation reed cutter is being employed to visit sites around the Broads to assess the quantity and quality of reed with a view to bringing neglected beds back into production.

He is checking the viability of sites for expansion, looking at issues such as access and how easy it would be to remove the reed. This project was featured on BBC Radio 4 Farming Today on 7 March.

##### **First Broads Biodiversity Forum**

Conservation partners celebrated World Wetlands Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup> by launching the first ever Broads Biodiversity Forum.

The Broads Authority, RSPB, Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, the Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts, BESL (Broadland Environmental Services Ltd.), and Buglife got together to celebrate their successes and investigate further opportunities for partnerships. One hundred people from conservation, boating, angling, tourism, farming and recreation backgrounds listened to six presentations by the partners. The Forum is to be an annual event.

#### **Broads Society – Peter Horsefield**

No report received.

**Dartmoor NPA – Diana Moyse****Development Management and Delivery DPD**

The Authority has recently published its *Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document* (DMD) which sets out more detailed policies and proposals including site allocations to assist in the implementation of the adopted Core Strategy. The publication version sets out the National Park Authority's agreed approach on land use policies and sites for future development. Unless there are compelling reasons for revising the document, it will be submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2012, along with copies of all the representations made on it. The 'soundness' of the document will then be considered in an independent examination undertaken by an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. The closing date for representations is Wednesday 12 April 2012 and the Public Examination will be held in Autumn 2012.

**£ for the Park**

The £ for the Park is a voluntary donation scheme initially targeted to people taking part in organised recreational events. It is hoped that a reasonable income will be achieved from the scheme. A similar scheme is already working well in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Experience suggests that people are likely to make a donation if they can see that the money will be used to undertake work that will benefit them or protect the special qualities of the National Park. The Authority will develop and promote a £ for the Park scheme with event organisers, to be implemented for all events from 1 April 2012 with any income generated ringfenced for practical access and conservation projects and progress with the scheme reported annually to the Authority.

**Dartmoor Preservation Association – James Paxman****Photovoltaic Cells on Listed Buildings**

In recent the months the list of planning application has been dominated by a flood of applications to install photovoltaic cells. Most applications relate to the roofs of houses, but some also relate to ground sited arrays of panels. NP policy encourages small scale installation of renewable energy projects subject to reasonable constraints eg landscape effects, impact on water environemnts, impact on local amenity and the "quality of the environment, including the historic built environment."

However, there appears to be an implicit assumption the PV panels are damaging to the historic environment as the Design Guide explicit discourages installation on listed buildings and on non listed buildings in conservation areas. The Design Guide does however acknowledge that advances in product development (eg solar PV slates) might make them suitable for installation on listed buildings.

To date, no PV panels have been allowed on listed buildings. But NP policies were recently tested to the limit. An application to install conventional PV panels on a listed building was only refused by a single vote. Members debated the issue at some length before deciding to stick with existing policy and refusal. But in doing so, they noted that more recent and less obtrusive PV designs may signal an overall review of the policy.

If the subsidies hold up it seems only a question of time before our historic buildings also succumb to the PV craze.

**Exmoor NPA – Andrea Davis**

No report received.

**Exmoor Society – Arabella Amory****Exmoor's Moorlands**

The management of Exmoor's moorland is complex. With the introduction of agri-environmental schemes in the late 1980s, there have been major changes in management practices and growing concern about the impact of these on the moorland landscape character. The Society has recently taken steps to look carefully at three issues. First is the reduced amount of swaling of heather per annum to very small areas, requiring the cutting of unsightly fire breaks - second is the growth of heather above 30cm with gorse and bracken destroying views and perceived open spaces - and last is the low livestock grazing numbers in some moorland areas. Natural England is beginning to consider these concerns and to encourage appropriate local flexibility.

**Reform of the CAP**

The Society is keeping a close watch on the discussions currently taking place in Brussels on the reform of the CAP, and the detailed proposals for farm grants for the period 2013-2020. The importance of these discussions and the outcome for the future of Exmoor and its farmers should not be underestimated.

**Planning Applications**

The Society continues to monitor all planning applications that come to the ENPA. Several issues have dominated recently e.g. affordable housing, wind turbines, and perhaps most controversial of all, proposed hydroelectric schemes on two large rivers, the Barle and the East Lyn. These schemes are particularly difficult to assess, as they involve engineering works which may have a detrimental impact on wildlife. A balance has to be struck with the objective for the National Park to become carbon neutral.

**Consultations**

The Society is actively participating in drawing up policies in relation to NP Purposes in the ENPA new Management Plan for 2012-2017. The Society will also be responding to the ENPA Local Development Framework.

**Lake District NPA – Bill Jefferson****Local Sustainable Transport Fund Beacon Project**

Management and delivery on the project is moving rapidly. We have taken on three staff and a dedicated programme manager will start in April 2012. We will see significant action for the 2012 visitor season: expanded electric and conventional bike hire networks – partly managed through resident community networks; pay-as-you-drive low emission cars for hire; evening buses, bike buses and new bus services – to make the central Lakes much more bus-accessible.

All of this will be wrapped up by newly designed and presented information materials, a new travel micro site as part of [www.golakes.co.uk](http://www.golakes.co.uk) website and a coherent branding and marketing campaign. Significant work is currently taking place on a strategy for developing transport hubs, auditing cycle information and looking into “smart” technologies for parking and traffic management.

We are also looking forward to successful LSTF bids by four other National Parks – a family of ambitious National Park transport projects will really put National Parks on the map as hotbeds for progressive sustainability in action.

**Windermere Consultations**

We have just completed a consultation on the siting and scale of water bus jetties on Windermere. The 300 views received put us in a much stronger position to prioritise sites for improvement and new facilities. It will also help us decide where to invest in improving lake access and travel through our Department of Transport-funded Local Sustainable Transport Beacon project.

We also want consolidated byelaws that are simple to understand and enforce, creating a safe lake environment for everyone and are currently consulting boat users and others who

appreciate and enjoy the lake. A particular aim is to measure the 10 miles per hour speed limit in knots (nautical miles per hour) rather than miles per hour (statute miles per hour) but also introduce other amendments relating to safety, information provision and authorised exemptions. The consultation, which closes on 19 March 2012, will not debate the existence of a speed limit. The National Park Authority has agreed unanimously that its decision in 1992 to implement a speed limit, confirmed by Defra in 2000, remains valid.

### **Connecting Cumbria**

This initiative aims to bring superfast broadband to every resident, business, organisation and visitor in Cumbria. Superfast broadband brings many opportunities and benefits: easier and more efficient ways to do business, better communications with family and friends, different ways of receiving public services, being able to work from home. Our Business Task Force sees the lack of National Park broadband access as the most significant barrier to growth.

Our ambition is for at least 90 per cent of properties to have access to superfast broadband by 2015 – access to speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps). Every house and business in Cumbria should have a choice of Internet Service Provider (ISP) at a cost no higher than that paid by consumers anywhere in the country. As some of the funding comes from BDUK (£17.1M), money should only be used for broadband in areas where the private sector will not be investing - so we expect that the funding will be spent in rural areas. While Cumbria County Council is the accountable body, a Partnership Board has been established on which we're represented by our Chairman.

For more information contact Bob Cartwright, Director of Park Services:  
Email: [BobCartwright@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:BobCartwright@lakedistrict.gov.uk) Tel: 01539 792679

### **Friends of the Lake District – Jack Ellerby Independent Forestry Panel**

The Government's Independent Forestry Panel visited the North Lakes and Cumbria 7 March 2012. Their focus was on forestry business and economics, including:

- Forestry Commission good practice and partnerships;
- New businesses created through a past integrated grant called 'Forest Futures';
- Major North of England timber processors needs and future support;
- Ecosystem service values and the Osprey Project in the Bassenthwaite catchment.

(Oral update of any major issues will be given at the meeting).

### **Lakes to Dales Campaign – Extending the National Parks**

The Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park Variation Orders consultation closed on 16 March. Using CPRE's web link to generate supportive responses to DEFRA and follow up letters to MPs, we anticipate a high proportion of representations will be in support of the five extension areas. Thank you to all Council Members for encouraging members and contacts to respond. The Secretary of State Caroline Spelman will announce at the beginning of April her intentions in taking forward the extension orders. There will inevitably be a public inquiry and our hope is that the level of objections will have been minimised, with debate focusing on operational issues and specific boundary additions. This work has national implications for designated landscapes and we must maintain collective effort to ensure the coalition government enact this unfinished business.

Contact: [jack-ellerby@fldorg.uk](mailto:jack-ellerby@fldorg.uk) 01538 720788 (above two items).

### **Planning Land Allocations in the South Lakeland/ Lake District and Open Green Spaces Campaign Goals:**

- De-allocation of significantly damaging large greenfield development site allocations in the South Lakeland LDF Allocations DPD, and to a lesser extent, the LDNPA LDF Allocations DPD. Support of proposed green space allocations. Recognition of the importance of green space and the contribution it makes in planning frameworks.
- Proactive work with communities to enhance and conserve local green space.

- Raise media profile of the importance of green space and the many positive contributions it makes to the economy, health and well-being – landscape, recreation, reconnecting with nature etc. (green space as FLD's 'red squirrel').
- Raise the profile of FLD – generate new members, raise funds, work on consultancy basis with community groups.

Contact: [Richard-Pearse@fld.org.uk](mailto:Richard-Pearse@fld.org.uk) 01538 720788

### **New Forest NPA – Bob Morris**

#### **New Forest remembers- World War II Project**

My previous report announced that the authority had received a lottery funded grant to record activities in the New Forest during world war II.

James Brown has been appointed to the Manger's post and the Education and Outreach officer Gareth Owen started in late January. Orders have been placed for Lidar, Infra red and aerial photographic work so that the Environment Agency can have the area flown to collect the data this spring. This data will then inform the National Mapping work to plot all the observable sites and features that will then be verified and assessed through field survey work.

#### **Water catchment plan for the New Forest**

The last update outlined that the Authority had submitted an expression of interest to DEFRA for work to produce a stakeholder vision for the water environment of the New Forest catchment. The Authority, in collaboration with the national charity Pond Conservation, has been successful in this application to DEFRA to host a Catchment project. The New Forest will be one of only ten such pilots being undertaken this year. Officers have also successfully bid for DEFRA research grant to support this work.

Work has started on the project, with an initial meeting of a steering group of local stakeholders and technical reviews of biological data underway with the assistance of Pond Conservation and the Environment Agency. The Authority has presented the project to the South East River Basin Liaison Panel and received positive feedback. A further bid to the Catchment Restoration Fund is being progressed to provide land advice to reduce diffuse pollution to the water environment.

#### **Design guidance**

The National Park Design Guide which aims to provide Park-wide design guidance to supplement the Core Strategy planning policies in maintaining and enhancing the New Forest's landscape and built character was adopted at the December meeting of the Authority. The guide was printed in January and made available on the website. It has been circulated to all parish and town councils and is being used daily by officers.

### **New Forest Association – Peter Roberts**

The NFA was one of six forest bodies who hosted a visit by members of the Independent Panel on Forestry. A useful mix of areas were shown indicating the crown lands are not just another 'plantation site in waiting'. Robust debate took place on a number of sites and on a variety of subjects with involvement from the visitors.

We are actively engaged in the debate about the Park Authority's Recreation Management Strategy. In particular there are many concerns about cycling on and around the crown lands where some events have taken precedence over the working forest.

We now 'tweet' and make use of facebook with links through to our website. This, together with mail shots to our members, has enabled faster and better communications in the last couple of months.

### **Northumberland NPA – Peter Nicholson**

### **Northumberland National Park ‘very friendly with high quality accommodation’, say visitors**

A very high level of visitor satisfaction and recognition of the Northumberland National Park brand, as well as a need to improve mobile phone and broadband coverage in rural areas, were just some of the findings from the National Park Visitor Survey of 2011. Visitors cited ‘General friendliness’ and ‘quality of accommodation’ as the main factors where experience far exceeded expectation.

### **National Park gains 4G mobile coverage boost for residents and visitors**

Northumberland National Park Authority welcomed the news that Ofcom would be increasing the mobile coverage obligation for rural UK from 95% to 98% and that 4G mobile broadband would prioritise coverage across the existing mobile coverage ‘*not spots*’. This followed a submission made to Ofcom by Northumberland National Park Authority in 2011, in conjunction with James Saunby of Grey Sky Consulting, which highlighted that the original 95% coverage scheme would isolate the residents of, and visitors to, the tops of Northumberland’s valleys and the high hills, and the Hadrian’s Wall corridor. The Authority has a stated commitment to support the improvement of rural infrastructure in its management plan, and the lack of mobile coverage is a recurring complaint by residents and visitors.

### **Cawfields is designated national Dark Sky Discovery Site!**



The secluded site of Cawfields on Hadrian’s Wall in Northumberland National Park has just succeeded in becoming recognised as a Dark Sky Discovery Site – officially one of the best places in the UK to view the wonders of the Universe!

The nomination for this heavenly amphitheatre to become a Dark Sky Discovery Site was made by Northumberland National Park Authority and supported by the Newcastle Astronomical Society, whose members carried out a Sky Quality Meter (SQM) reading to provide the evidence

to support the bid.

The National Park Authority is currently gathering the SQM data required in its bid for International **Dark Sky Reserve** status. The area of Northumberland NP, together with that of Kielder Forest which is aiming for **Dark Sky Park** status, will create the largest, darkest night sky area in the country.

### **North Tyne is Front Runner for new Neighbourhood Planning**

Three parish councils in the North Tyne Valley have been chosen by the Government to be a “Front Runner”; a national pilot of Neighbourhood Planning which aims to give local people a new way to shape how their communities will develop in the future. Bellingham, Tarsset with Greystead, and Wark Parish Councils have joined forces to create a single Neighbourhood Plan with support from Northumberland National Park Authority and Northumberland County Council. They form one of 126 Front Runners taking place in England.

By taking part, residents, local groups and businesses will be able to create planning policies for development and use of land, decide where new homes, shops and offices should be built, and influence how new buildings will look.

### **North York Moors NPA – Steve Scoffin**

#### **New appointment to strengthen National Park brand**

Catriona McLees has joined the Authority as Head of Promotion and Tourism. The role has been created to raise the profile of the National Park and to encourage more people to visit and enjoy its special qualities. Catriona was previously Sustainable Tourism Manager at Welcome to Yorkshire.

Catriona will be working to strengthen partnerships with organisations such as Welcome to Yorkshire, local tourism associations and others to maximise publicity for the National Park. She will also be tasked with promoting the Authority's two visitor centres and supporting the Events and Exhibitions Coordinator to develop innovative and exciting programmes to reach new audiences.

### **Sutton Bank becomes Dark Sky Discovery Site**

Sutton Bank has been named as an official Dark Sky Discovery Site. A combination of low light pollution levels, clear horizons and good public access helped secure Sutton Bank the accolade making it the first in the National Park and one of only two in the entire Yorkshire region (the other site is at the University of York).

Sutton Bank has been given a Milky Way class because the galaxy is often visible to the naked eye from the site. Dark Sky Discovery is an innovative network of national and local astronomy and open space organisations that helps people to enjoy the night sky.

### **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

The Authority has lined up an exciting programme of events to mark the National Park's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. An £8,000 grant from the National Lottery through Arts Council England has helped fund two exhibitions: 'Inspired Landscape' (13 May to 17 July) featuring new work from six internationally renowned artists and 'Your Place' (21 July to 19 August) which will offer 60 spaces to up and coming artists whose work is influenced by the North York Moors. Both take place at the Inspired by... Gallery.

Other events planned include a moorland festival on 29 July, performances by Yorkshire Dance in July and August and a short story competition with local schools based on unusual place names in the National Park. See [www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/60thanniversary](http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/60thanniversary)

### **North Yorkshire Moors Association – Tom Chadwick Proposed developments in the National Park Gas Production**

At the moment there are three development proposals which are giving rise to concern. The first of these is gas production from a well site at Ebberston Moor which lies within the National Park. From here, it is proposed to pipe the gas ten kilometres to a site three meters outside the NP boundary to Thornton-le-Dale. It is proposed to build a large Sour Gas Processing Facility on a farmland site at Thornton –le-Dale from where the gas will be piped to the National Gas Grid. This development was examined at a Public Inquiry last November and we understand the inspectors findings are now with the Secretary of State and we expect a decision within the next month or two.

### **Potash Mining**

Sirius Minerals PLC have acquired a company called York Potash Ltd and are proposing to build a new potash mine in the National Park between Whitby and Scarborough. Capital expenditure of more than £3 billion is being quoted as the cost of this proposal making it the largest development in forty years in the National Park. Two shafts 12m in diameter will be sunk to a depth of approx. 1500m. The spoil from this excavation would fill a football field to a height of over 300ft. This it is being suggested will be hidden forestry land.

The company have a very effective publicity machine and are energetically engaged in winning public opinion with the promise of over a thousand jobs. They have also obtained money from the Government's Regional Growth Fund to set up a "Centre of Geological Excellence" though it is not clear what this will amount to. The company have said that they hope to have a planning application in by autumn of this year, though their programme of nine exploratory boreholes has slipped behind in their timetable.



### Westerdale Gas Exploration

In another area of the NP a particularly quiet and sensitive dale, Egdon Resources UK Ltd are proposing to drill for gas from a second site further up the dale after their first attempt failed to produce a commercial flow of gas in 2005. They propose to pipe the gas out of Westerdale should they be successful in hitting the target reserve estimated at 90 billion cubic feet. It is likely that it will be piped to Teesside for electricity generation. Westerdale is surrounded by SSSI's. A pre-application meeting is to be held in Westerdale on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March.

### National Park 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year

This year is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the North York Moors National Park and there are numerous events planned. NYMA will be participating in a celebration walk probably to coincide with the AGM on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This year the guest speaker will be Andy Wilson CEO of the National Park and the meeting will be held at the NP Danby Moors Centre.

### Peak District NPA – Roger Clarke

#### First independent chair appointed for new National Park Management Plan

Former High Sheriff of Derbyshire **Dianne Jeffrey CBE, DL** has been selected as the first independent chair of the Peak District National Park Management Plan steering group. An official announcement will be made when the plan is launched in April.

Ms Jeffrey chairs the boards of Age UK and the University of Derby and was an NHS Trust chairman and chair of the NHS Confederation. She serves on the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands Committee and is vice-chair of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site at Cromford.

The new five-year management plan (2012-2017) – *A Partnership for Progress* - was approved by the Authority on Feb 3.

Its high level vision is:

#### The Peak District: where beauty, vitality and discovery meet at the heart of the nation.

The plan integrates park-wide activity between four key themes:

- **A Diverse Working and Cherished Landscape**
- **A Welcoming and Inspiring Place**
- **Thriving and Vibrant Communities**
- **An Enterprising and Sustainable Economy**



Key partners will meet every year to review progress and plan future activity.

**The plan, to be launched in April, will be web-based and interactive but until the launch you can read a print version - [CLICK HERE](#).**

**To read how it was put together and the thinking behind it, [CLICK HERE](#).**

#### More resources to manage unsurfaced routes and protect the national park

The Peak District National Park Authority has allocated an extra £100,000 over the next two years to protect the national park from damage by 4x4s and trail bikes.

Members agreed that despite budget cuts this was a top priority. The money will help to:

- Resolve problems faster
- Speed up action plans to manage the tracks
- Create capacity to deal with more Traffic Regulation Orders if necessary to protect the landscape and wildlife
- Improve engagement with user groups and local communities
- Involve volunteers more
- Contribute to the work of partners in monitoring and reporting illegal activity.

This will be achieved by creating a full time job for two years, and meeting the cost of the extra hours of legal work.

**More details: rights of way & access manager Mike Rhodes** [mike.rhodes@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:mike.rhodes@peakdistrict.gov.uk)

### **50,000th cyclist on the Monsal Trail**

The re-opening of four former railway tunnels on the Authority-owned Monsal Trail is proving a huge success, with the 50,000<sup>th</sup> cyclist recorded on New Year's Eve.

The 8.5 miles Monsal Trail is popular with walkers, horse riders, people on mobility scooters and families with pushchairs, but cycling has seen the most dramatic increase, with 226 cycles per day in the first seven months after the tunnels re-opened.

Income from the Authority's Millers Dale Station car park has increased by 50% over a comparable period since the opening of the tunnels and trail use has increased five fold. The boost in cycling has proved excellent for healthy exercise and for local businesses, with two private cycle-hire centres opening along the trail.

**More details, head of property Keith Jennings on** [keith.jennings@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:keith.jennings@peakdistrict.gov.uk)

### **Friends of the Peak District – Martin Hofman**

#### **Public Enquiry for Cowdale Quarry development scheme**

Express Park Buxton submitted plans to build a five-hectare water bottling factory and distribution site on Cowdale Quarry, near Buxton, in 2010 and again in 2011. We fought both applications along with local campaigners, and High Peak Borough Council unanimously rejected them.

Developers then appealed to the Government's Planning Inspectorate against High Peak's decision on the second application.

As a result, the future of the quarry is to be decided by a Public Inquiry. It will give the opportunity for a really thorough examination of the scheme, and we've got high hopes that it will get kicked out once and for all!

#### **Friends of the Peak District's Magnificent Charity Walk – April 15th**

Our annual 'Magnificent Charity Walk' to help raise funds for our work will take place on Sunday April 15th.

Starting and finishing at stunning Thornbridge Hall near Great Longstone, there are three walks to challenge, inspire or relax :

- 21 mile challenge - taking in some of most the iconic places of the Peak District
- The Magnificent 7 miles - a whistle stop tour round some of the most inspiring views in the Peak District
- The Three Cake Challenge - a short relaxing walk, suitable for even the smallest of feet, with 3 cake stops on route

We'd be delighted to welcome any NP Society members and colleagues who fancy a weekend in the Peaks !

#### **Illegal Off-roading arrests**

Further to our on-going 'Take Back The Tracks' campaign, Derbyshire police have reported to us that they recently spotted and intercepted eleven 4 x 4 vehicles in and around the Hope Woodlands area. The drivers were served with fixed penalty notices.

Police also charged the riders of two motorbikes for failing to stop and these cases are now awaiting court.

This is really good news; the Police are taking the issue of illegal off-roading seriously and are prepared back this up with fines and arrests in the course of their normal duties.

### **Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – Gwyneth Hayward**

#### **Quarter of a million to help people enjoy National Park**

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was awarded a quarter of a million pounds in Big Lottery funding in December 2011.

The Authority's project, Your Park, Your Future, will receive £249,864 in the latest round of the Big Lottery Fund's (BIG) People and Places programme. Over three years, the project will set up a programme of activities to promote the use of the National Park, particularly to people who face difficulties in accessing the natural outdoors.

The Park Authority's outreach programme has been extended in recent years to help remove barriers to access, such as disability, poor health, financial hardship or even just being a young person.

For more information contact Phil Roach: [philr@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:philr@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 01646 624859.

### **Off-roading causes damage in National Park**

Irresponsible off-road drivers and motorcyclists are being blamed for damaging a Scheduled Ancient Monument and common land in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

National Park Rangers report that 4x4s, quad bikers and trail bikers have recently been using land on Dinas Mountain, near Fishguard. The off-roaders are causing significant damage and scarring to common land, destroying valuable grazing and natural habitat and leaving large ruts across the landscape.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Dyfed Powys Police have teamed up to tackle the problem and are asking for the public's help to identify those responsible, who have also caused damage to Glyn Gath cairn, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

For more information contact Richard Vaughan: [richardv@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:richardv@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 01646 624887.

### **Happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday Pembrokeshire Coast**

The UK's only mainly coastal National Park celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary last month.

Designated on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1952, primarily for the breathtaking beauty of its coastline, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park remains a spectacular place 60 years on.

Accolades for the landscape – and in particular the 186-mile Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail – continue to roll in, and the duty of the National Park Authority in caring for the Park amid its ever-increasing popularity is as challenging as ever.

In early May the 870-mile Wales Coast Path will be launched, which will include the Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail, established in 1970.

For more information contact Charles Mathieson: [charlesm@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:charlesm@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 01646 624848.

### **Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park – Peter Heard**

#### **CNP in Wales**

The Friends have been heavily involved with discussions with our Sister Societies in Wales as to the best way forward for us to continue with our role of supporting the National Parks throughout Wales, given the changes in the structure and support from CNP. Whilst such discussions are a huge distraction from getting on with what is the real task in hand in the ever changing Welsh political climate, e.g., putting in responses to the Welsh Government's consultation papers such as Chapter 7 (which we have just managed), these discussions are considered to be essential to safeguarding the future of the National Parks in Wales.

As a consequence, a great deal of our energies and time has been taken up with this.

As a result of CNP's re-organisation, it has become clear to the Friends, that the three Welsh Societies will have to spend a considerable amount of additional time and costs both in safeguarding the future of the National Parks in Wales and also in our working relationships with CNP in Wales. Accordingly, it is re-viewing its current way of working to ensure that funds will continue to be utilised to their optimum. To this end, following the devolution of legislative powers to Cardiff, it now considers that travel from Pembrokeshire

to London for meetings that are now justifiably dominated by English matters is not the most cost effective use of the Charity's funds. For the time being, we will not therefore be sending anyone to Council meetings in London and will rely upon finding other ways of keeping CNP in London advised of evolving issues.

### **Scottish Campaign for National Parks – Robert Maund Loch Lomond & The Trossachs NP.**

In February the Park Authority issued the planning consent for the controversial Cononish goldmine covering a ten year period of extraction and restoration works. Announcement of the conclusion of three months of negotiations on financial and legal agreements with Scotgold Resources Ltd was heralded as a success story by the Park Authority in a news release and strangely the Park's Planning and Rural Development Director, Gordon Watson, was quoted congratulating his team on dealing with this in a short timeframe to enable the work to start this summer. This PR spin is disappointing given the Park Authority has 'temporarily' set aside the Sandford Principle which gives primacy to the special qualities of the Park.

We await with interest to see whether or not there are any breaches of the 60 or so planning conditions attached to the consent and we sincerely hope all the pledges are honoured and the development delivers all the "community benefits" that the developers and supporters claim will arise from this major industrial works in such a sensitive scenic part of the Park.

### **Cairngorms National Park.**

We will shortly know, courtesy of the Court of Session, whether the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) was exercising due diligence in adopting its Local Plan in 2010 or whether it was flying by the seat of its pants and riding roughshod over the precepts of sustainable development to allow the building of 950 houses, mostly in Badenoch and Strathspey. The appellants to the Judicial Review (Cairngorms Campaign, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group and the Scottish Campaign for National Parks) certainly feel strongly that the CNPA's primary duty to uphold the conservation value of the National Park was set aside in its determination to support its other duty to promote the social and economic development of the area, even though the legislation expressly states that where there is conflict between the two, the conservation of the National Park must come first.

### **Saving Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.**

The full horror of local planning authority, Scottish Natural Heritage, Reporter and Scottish Ministers decisions on windfarms in the Regional Park is now becoming readily apparent. 28 turbines have been built on four sites with three sites adjoining each other, with another 13 turbines on the fourth site straddling the park boundary. The affect from the A737 trunk road at Beith is to show an almost continuous bank of turbines from Ardrossan in the west to Kilbirnie in the east. Sign posting to the 108 square miles of park is not great but now you can just tell people to head for the turbines!  
At the end of last year one of the turbines immediately adjoining the park, burst into flames and self destructed. Funny things to put in a park where you encourage people to go in increasing numbers for a true countryside experience!

### **Snowdonia NPA – Denis McAteer**

#### **Twittering Safety**

It's easy to forget the importance of preparing thoroughly before setting off for some fresh air into the mountains. This year, for the first time, a new bilingual service is available for walkers which will provide the latest information on ground conditions on Snowdonia's mountains.

National Park Warden, Gruff Owen and his colleagues already supply information the Met Office website. Gruff is also responsible for the new bilingual Twitter service @eryridiogel in Welsh and @safesnowdonia in English. Not only will the tweets include weather

information, it will also tweet change to ground conditions due to the weather, general advice on walking in the mountains and will also highlight good examples of mountaineering.

### **New technology to reduce accidents on Snowdonia Mountains**

During 2011, 411 calls for assistance to Mountain Rescue Teams were made which resulted in 291 Mountain Rescue team deployments. Recent research shows that a significant number of avoidable calls were made by young male adults who were not adequately prepared or did not have the required skills or equipment for their activity. The Mountain Info Services Project was formally launched by Hywel Williams MP on 13 February and aims to give mountaineers and hill-walkers, in particular young male adults, access to state-of-the-art information, as well as traditional safety advice and enable them to plan a journey or walk in the mountains of Snowdonia safely. As part of this project, the Mountain Info app launched and has been rated as the best available app for mountain safety planning by novices by Trail magazine in autumn 2011.

### **Hedd Wyn's Home Secured for the Nation**

SNPA and its partners announced on March 1<sup>st</sup> that they have secured the family farm of the famous poet and First World War soldier, Hedd Wyn for the nation. The purchase of 'Yr "Ysgwrn"' has been made possible thanks to funding from the Welsh Government and the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Hedd Wyn won the Chair at the Eisteddfod in Birkenhead in 1917 for his poem "Yr Arwr" (The Hero), but was killed at the Battle of Passchendaele six weeks before he was posthumously awarded the Chair. The Chair was draped in black cloth and became known as Y Gadair Ddu or The Black Chair and came to symbolise a generation of Welsh youth who lost their lives in the First World War.

Conditional on receiving a further grant, the National Park Authority proposes to develop a heritage centre which will focus on the life of Hedd Wyn, the First World War, poets and writers of the period, social life in rural Wales at the turn of the 20th Century, life on a mountain farm, biodiversity and sustainable land management practice.

A Management Plan will be developed in partnership with relevant organisations, interest groups and individuals. This will also include an event hosted by Snowdonia National Park Authority to facilitate such discussions.

### **Anwen Gaffey**

**Swyddog Gwasanaethau Aelodau/Members Services Officer**

**Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri/Snowdonia National Park**

**Ffon/Tel:** 01766 772 226

### **Cymdeithas Eryri/Snowdonia Society – David Lewis**

#### **Proposed local enterprise zone**

The Welsh government is investigating two more possible local enterprise zones, at Pembroke Dock on the edge of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and at Trawsfynydd in the heart of Snowdonia. CESS does not feel it can express outright opposition to the Trawsfynydd proposal, given our support for bringing more employment to the area, which has the lowest average earnings in the UK. But we strongly endorse the stated intention not to remove planning controls, and we shall seek to ensure that new industries established do not damage the National Park. As well as the site of the former power station the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority owns a large area of surrounding land (which was landscaped when the nuclear power station was built) and the whole of Llyn Trawsfynydd (an artificial lake used for hydroelectric generation, and previously for cooling the nuclear power station). Unfortunately an essential part of the proposals seems to be to retain the 400kV link for energy generation or energy use.

### **SNPA's Recreation Strategy**

CESS pressed SNPA to produce a strategy for recreation, but we are concerned that the draft document recently published is very slim. There is virtually no quantification. The core of the document is a section of 4½ pages on 'Aims and actions', which mainly consists of a list of 60 actions without indicating how they are to be put into effect. CESS is meeting SNPA officers later this month (including Mair Huws, the new Head of Recreation and Access) in order to identify how we can contribute most constructively to the process.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

CESS has commented on important draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (important for implementation of the National Park Management Plan as well as the Local Development Plan) on *Landscapes of Eryri* and *Nature conservation and biodiversity*. We particularly welcomed the structure of *Landscapes of Eryri*, which divides the National Park into 26 landscape character areas and makes recommendations for each of these. Considerable further work will be needed to obtain the full benefits of this approach. We shall now be considering the implications for these documents of the Environment Green Paper published at the end of January.

**Contact: David Lewis drlewis27@yahoo.com**

### **South Downs NPA – Sebastian Anstruther**

#### **South Downs Way Ahead partnership success**

The South Downs Way Ahead partnership, led by the SDNPA, has been awarded £608,000 as one of 12 trailblazing Nature Improvement Areas for England.

The project has 28 partners including farmers, conservationists, NGOs, community groups, government bodies, research organisations and water companies, and will focus on joining up areas of chalk downland along the famous South Downs Way National Trail to:

- improve the natural qualities of the route and the conservation and management of chalk grassland;
- demonstrate the viability and benefits of an input based approach to the improvement of groundwater quality;
- assess and demonstrate the benefits of ecosystem services to urban populations; and
- attribute environmental, economic and social values to the benefits and services provided by chalk downland.

### **Planning: The Way Ahead**

From 1 April 2012, 11 local authorities have chosen to continue to manage the planning applications within their areas while planning services for the parts of Arun, Eastbourne, Wealden and Brighton & Hove Local Planning Authorities that fall within the National Park will be dealt with by the SDNPA.

We are continuing to work in close partnership with local authorities to develop local plans. The Core Strategy for East Hampshire district up to 2028 has been put together by East Hampshire District Council and the SDNPA and is now open for comment from developers, planning experts and local residents. <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/about-us/news/plan-for-local-development-opens-for-public-comment>

The document is open for public comment until 16 March 2012.

Neighbourhood planning provides a really good chance for communities to share and solve planning issues themselves and to contribute to making effective plans that reflect their own aspirations for where they live and work. We are working to support parish's engagement with neighbourhood planning right across the National Park:

- We jointly hosted a meeting with Lewes District Council to let parishes and the Town Council in the eastern part of the National Park find out more about neighbourhood planning.
- We have launched a neighbourhood planning subgroup on our online Forum.

- Our application for Front Runners funding for 3 of our parishes– Findon and Fernhurst Parish Councils and Petersfield Town Council – has been successful and will enable them to act as pilots for the new neighbourhood planning powers.

#### **Where are we now and where do we want to get to?**

The first draft of the State of the National Park report for the South Downs has been brought together and is being discussed with members and external stakeholders. Packed with information, graphics and maps and built around the seven Special Qualities identified for the National Park, it is hoped that once launched later this year it will become the document of choice for a wide range of users as well as the baseline on which the Management Plan is being built.

Consulting widely with partners, staff, members and other key stakeholders, we are also developing a 30-year vision for the National Park. Not only will this vision give us a shared idea of how we want the National Park to be in 30-years time, it will also help define the scope for our upcoming Management Plan. As the next stage of the vision development we will be consulting on our online Forum over the coming weeks so please keep an eye on the Forum and let us know what you think.

<http://southdownsforum.ning.com/>

#### **South Downs Society – Richard Reed**

##### **Falmer football stadium**

Brighton FC has applied to increase the capacity of its new stadium from 22,500 to 30,750. This is within the existing 'shell' but there are obviously transport implications and the Society has expressed concern as to whether the Clubs' travel plan will deal with them satisfactorily, bearing in mind the present congestion on match days on the A27. At the same time the Society has taken the opportunity to draw attention to the high level of light pollution from the complex.

##### **Former Shoreham cement works**

CNP members will recall that this is arguably the biggest blot on the National Park and certainly the biggest chalk hole in the South Downs, the cement company having walked away from it when production ceased. Since then a number of development schemes have surfaced but the site is at present used for vehicle storage. The site owners have applied for renewal of this facility. The Society has flagged it concerns to the NPA and pressed them for an overall site planning brief.

##### **Mosaic**

The Society is leading a project to secure funding for the employment of project officers to allow Mosaic to continue in the South Downs.

##### **Domestic issues**

The Society has suffered very large deficits over recent years and has been forced to reduce its reserves to meet these. In view of this, and with rates of investment income falling heavily in the present economic situation, the Society's Council considers this unsustainable and is looking to find ways of increasing income and reducing expenditure, recognizing that a significant saving will involve staff restructuring. A statement by the Chairman in the Society newsletter has already advised members of this and welcomed members thoughts so that firm proposals can be made in due course.

The Society is looking forward to the National Park Societies Conference at the end of the summer and a provisional programme was circulated following the Chairmen and CEOs meeting in February.

#### **Yorkshire Dales NPA – Malcolm Petyt**

**YDNPA shortlisted for national “Low Carbon Council” award**

YDNPA has become the first National Park Authority to be shortlisted (alongside six city and county councils) for an award by the Local Government Chronicle in the Low Carbon Council category.

YDNPA had set an objective to reduce carbon emissions by 25% from its 2005/6 figure by 2013. Measures introduced ranged from low energy light bulbs and reducing staff and volunteer mileage to supporting small-scale renewable energy developments and restoring degraded peatland.

Over the last five years carbon emissions from buildings and vehicles have actually been cut by a massive 45% - and costs reduced by nearly £60,000 a year.

#### **Relief for YDNPA toilets**

A review a few years ago led to a dramatic improvement in public reactions to the toilets provided by the Authority at its car parks. A situation where numerous complaints were received was turned round and last year there were no complaints and a number of complimentary letters, particularly about the previously "worst" toilets.

But the recent requirement to reduce Authority costs had led to a need to cut expenditure on toilets by £28,000 a year – which seemed likely to require the closure of two toilet blocks. However, careful work by a review group has identified a range of savings which can be made over the next few years without the risk of a rapid deterioration in standards, and it is hoped that no closures will be necessary in that period.

#### **Housing Development Plan**

Members of the YDNPA voted to accept a number of changes to its Housing Development Plan following an examination in public by planning inspector David Vickery in January. But the members expressed strong disappointment at the inspector's proposed rejection of four sites that would have provided 10 new homes for local people in Aysgarth, Low Row, Muker and Thornton Rust.

The public will now be given a chance to comment on the changes to the original plan which had been put together after detailed work lasting several years with the aim of delivering sites for affordable housing over the next 15 years. Originally, it identified 34 sites for development ranging in size from two houses to up to 30, potentially providing up to 246 new homes. Half would be affordable homes to rent or buy, probably through the involvement of a local housing association. The remainder would be open market housing with a legal agreement restricting their occupancy to people who need to live or work in the National Park.

#### **Yorkshire Dales Society – Colin Speakman**

##### **We've moved to Gargrave**

After more than almost six years being based in Settle, the Yorkshire Dales Society has moved office. Refurbishment of Settle Town Hall following its sale by Craven District Council to a private developer was causing major problems of disruption to the Society, and it was decided we had to move.

The new office is in an old canal warehouse in the Leeds Liverpool Canal, now converted to a modern office complex, a few hundred metres from the National Park boundary. The warehouse is on the canal wharf where in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century thousand of tons of lead from the Grassington Moor Mines were shipped all over the UK, and from where coal and manufactured goods were imported into the Dales. Being closer to the West Yorkshire conurbation, but well served by public transport, the new location will make it easier to attract the volunteers essential for the Society to function. Full details and our new address and contact details are on the Society's revamped website on [www.yds.org.uk](http://www.yds.org.uk)



**Local Housing – a planning loophole**

Much as the Society supports measures to retain affordable local housing for local communities, whether rented accommodation or owner occupied, there are concerns that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Housing Development Plan has identified some sites which are remote from good services, including regular public transport. This means locking these communities into car dependency, especially where key local services are only available by a long and dangerous walk along heavily trafficked country roads without pavements. The Society also has concerns that there are many existing affordable homes on the market which have not been sold owing to building societies not offering people on low incomes suitable mortgages – a Catch 22 situation. Worse there are reports that if mortgagees cannot keep up their payments, repossessed homes may then go on the open market, thus undermining the housing policy. The Society would prefer to see existing empty or holiday homes brought into public ownership for use by local people on low incomes.

**DalesBus success continues.**

Thanks to the Society's unique Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company with record passenger growth of 50% on the Sunday and Bank Holiday DalesBus network in 2011, and support from the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund via DITA, the DalesBus summer network will be the best ever in 2012, with new links being developed from Manchester, Dewsbury, Bradford, Lancaster and Darlington the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. However with yet further funding cuts expected in 2013, the challenge will be to find other ways of sponsoring and supporting what is now one of Britain's most successful recreational bus networks in a National Park.