

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.

Brecon Beacons NPA – Mary Taylor

East Wales launches Green Tourism Business Scheme

Tourism business from across the Brecon Beacons National Park and from as far afield as Welshpool gathered together to give the green thumbs up at the launch of the Green Tourism Business Scheme in early October.

The event celebrated the launch of the new Green Tourism Business Scheme in East Wales – an eco-certification scheme acknowledging and promoting the green credentials of tourism businesses, such as B & B's and self-catering accommodation. The Green Tourism Business Scheme is a recognised and respected international green tourism standard; so graded businesses can benefit from enhanced exposure in the rapidly growing eco-tourism market, increasing the number of visitors who stay and the amount of money they spend. The East-Wales project, which has been developed by Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority and Glasu, will provide specialist local business advisors to recruit around 50 businesses interested in becoming more sustainable and then to help them along the most appropriate path. The project will offer important opportunities for businesses to achieve cost-savings, differentiation and a marketing edge over less sustainable competitors.

Park gears up for Management Plan consultation events

People who live, work and play in the Brecon Beacons National Park were invited to attend a series of consultation events in October to help finalise the action plan for the final blueprint of the National Park Management Plan.

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority hosted the series of consultation events across the National Park asking for views to help finalise the actions for the Plan and develop steps for its implementation. Entitled 'Managing Change Together' the new management plan lays out the 20-year aims and five-year actions for all those involved in delivering the National Park's purposes and duty, from Local Authorities to local communities. These forums held across the Park plan to further engage with those people who may not have had the opportunity to put their views across to us. We will be exploring what role you and your organisation can play in supporting or delivering the action plan for the next five years. People will also be able to review actions created in previous consultation events, identify lead and partner organisations, identify potential funding sources, estimate required implementation periods, suggest desired targets and thresholds, and suggest monitoring options and indicators.

The final draft of the Management Plan and its associated documents are available for download at www.breconbeacons.org

Brecknock Farmers' Market growing success

Brecknock Farmers' Market is delighted to announce new plans to expand into an open air market throughout Brecon town thanks to a grant of £2,567 from Brecon Beacons National Park's Authority's Sustainable Development Fund.

The new grant has enabled the Farmers' Market members to purchase ten portable gazebo marquees which will enable them to use open air venues in Brecon as well as their traditional use of the Brecon Market Hall. Following a successful trial at this year's Jazz weekend in August, the next market is planned for Saturday 31st October on the pedestrian areas outside the Wellington Hotel and above the Library. The plan is to hold a regular market on the fourth Saturday of the month allowing visitors and residents to purchase

locally produced food on a more regular basis. Brecknock Farmers' Market has over 50 local produce members who regularly provide a producer managed market that sells direct to the public. They provide marketing, production and provision of facilities for the sale of members' produce, as well as supporting new and small producers promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

Brecon Beacons Park Society – Charles Henderson

The Brecon Beacons Trust is now up and running. We are represented on it, and hope to advance its aims of giving grants to suitable projects within the Brecon Beacons.

We look forward to closer cooperation between the three Welsh National Park Societies, following the signing of an agreement to that effect in September.

Broads Authority – Rashmi Varma

Implementing the Broads Act

The Broads Authority is preparing to introduce the essential safety controls of the new Broads Authority Act that was passed in July. The key provisions of the Act, which updates the 1988 Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act which set up the Broads Authority, requires all boats to have third party insurance and hire craft to be licensed from April 2010. Boats that are moored in adjacent waters will also have to be registered, insured and carry a boat safety certificate. The Act also makes the voluntary system for managing water skiing compulsory and develops the Boat Safety Scheme.

Cobweb brushes recycled to help eels

Over 14,000 cobweb brushes that have provided a safe haven for water fleas while they clean the water of Barton Broad are being recycled to help young eels on their journey upriver to find a new home. The brushes have fulfilled their purpose, as rare plants and wildlife such as otters have returned to the broad. The brushes, which were imported from Italy, have been snapped up by the Environment Agency who plans to use them as "ladders" to help eels to negotiate sluices and weirs in their journey upstream from the Sargasso sea.

Holding a Torch for Broads Safety

The Broads Authority has sold nearly 1000 wind-up LED torches at £1 each to highlight a new safety campaign, "Stay Alert-don't fall in!" Eye-catching posters give people advice for a night out off the boat, warning them to avoid high heels when aboard, limit the amount they drink, and to take a torch for the home-ward journey. Last year of the 11 injuries needing hospital treatment six were caused when people were getting on and off boats.

Hilary Franzen: hilary.franzen@broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Society – Paul Howes

Public Involvement

The Authority has begun a series of afternoon-long parish meetings to communicate better with local residents, particularly about planning, where some controversial decisions have taken place in recent years. Unfortunately, notice for the first meeting did not go out in good time and it was sparsely attended.

Habitat restoration

Each winter, the Society puts forward a small group of intrepid volunteers to spend 8 winter weekend days and a similar number of weekday afternoons with members of the Authority to clear brush and scrub off the river banks for the benefit of conservation, navigation and tourism. This effort, called Broadsword, while small is nonetheless valuable in maintaining links between the Society and the Authority and in maintaining the landscape.

Saline incursion

The Broads Forum (one of the primary means of consultation of the Authority) is “of the unanimous opinion that the region should be maintained as a predominately fresh water ecosystem for as long as possible”. The Forum also believes that one of the most obvious ways of achieving this objective would be to explore the possibility of the construction of one or more barriers (in or near the Yarmouth area) and other water management options to protect the Broads including Great Yarmouth. “This should be subject to ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency, the key organisation involved, Great Yarmouth Port Authority and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. This would require an integrated approach between the Catchment Flood Management Plan, Shoreline Management Plan and the Broads Plan.”

Dartmoor NPA – Diana Moyse**Archaeology at Tottiford**

A hitherto unrecorded prehistoric ceremonial complex at Tottiford has recently been revealed in the mud at the bottom of the reservoir. The water level at the reservoir, which was the first to be built on Dartmoor (1861) is at its lowest for many years (only 6% full).

Mike Miller from Moretonhampstead was the first to spot the sites and phoned Jane Marchand, an archaeologist with the Dartmoor National Park Authority, to report that he had found 2 stone rows and some burial cairns. Further visits to Tottiford confirmed this and also discovered a large stone circle, similar in size to the circle at Scorhill. In total the complex consists of a free standing stone circle, a double stone row and single stone row, both of which run up to cairns. There are at least 8 other cairns within the area. It is believed that these sites are at least four thousand years old.

Some finely worked flint tools were also found close to the sites (flint does not occur naturally on Dartmoor); these included knives, piercers and notched blades. Some of the tools date back to Mesolithic times (8000 years ago), indicating that this area has been the focus of activity for many thousands of years.

The area has now been surveyed and the individual sites planned in detail before they disappear beneath the water once more.

Dartmoor and Exmoor Low Carbon Festival – October 2009

The aim of the Festival was to involve communities, individuals and businesses in meeting the challenge of tackling climate change through devising and promoting innovative solutions to low carbon living. It also aimed to celebrate existing low carbon activity on the two moors and to share knowledge on how to achieve low carbon living. The new Met Office in Exeter hosted the Festival’s opening event which was attended by over 130 people who explored and debated the challenges for National Parks posed by climate change and included presentations from two schools in the area. Festival events included a farms’ carbon project workshop; a challenging walk to discuss the role of blanket bogs as a carbon store; a green street fair; a renewable energy tour and promotion of Hoppa buses.

Mosaic

Eight young people from a variety of backgrounds based in Plymouth and Exeter have just returned home after experiencing the wilderness of Dartmoor in their roles as Mosaic Young Champions. The weekend started with a series of games inside the Okehampton Youth Hostel and they gradually moved outside to explore their Dartmoor surroundings. Participants were encouraged to rely on their partners to guide them around an assault course – blindfolded! Other activities included mountain bike riding, gorge scrambling which proved popular despite a dip into freezing water, clearing of ditches, an orienteering session and the building of a camp fire using traditional materials. The final challenge was a foraging session to prepare a delicious lunch of nettle soup with fresh blackberries for

pudding. It was generally considered by those participating that it was an absolutely fantastic weekend which they would never forget.

Dartmoor Preservation Association – James Paxman

No report received.

Exmoor NPA – Andrea Davis

Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme

On 28 August the National Park Authority, on behalf of the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership, submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £668,942 (49%) towards an exciting range of projects to help more people to enjoy, learn about, look after and celebrate the moorlands of Exmoor. The Partnership, which includes the Exmoor Society, Exmoor Trust, English Heritage, Natural England, National Farmers Union, Active Exmoor, and the RSPB, – has prepared a three year programme of action, which if the application is successful, will run from 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2013. Through the scheme, more people will be able to visit Exmoor's moorland, including those who currently find it hard to get here. There will be new opportunities to discover more about the wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage and to participate in conserving and enhancing these fascinating places. Other projects will help improve the landscape of moorland areas and support those who get their living from them. A decision is expected early in December 2009.

Mosaic Project is underway

20 young people from an Anglo-Polish Group based in Tiverton visited Exmoor during a week's residential experience using the North Moor camping barn, near Dulverton. The visit, part funded through the Sustainable Development Fund, will help to establish links with the Polish community locally and regionally (Bristol). The group is preparing a glossary of some common 'countryside terms' that will be available through the website. A number of youth groups in and around Barnstaple (Mosaic 15) are planning for an Exmoor Experience staying at the YHA in Minehead. The programme is being prepared with input from the young people to enable them to continue to arrange unsupported visits in the future.

Your Future Exmoor

The first consultation event for the Local Development Framework – Your Future Exmoor – has been completed. Children at Cutcombe First School took part in an exercise with planning officers to explain what they like and dislike about their village and what they wish to see in the future. Events with other local schools are taking place over the next couple of weeks followed by the public consultation events in communities across the moor.

Exmoor Society – Arabella Amory

Report from the AGM

The Exmoor Society has launched a robust defence of National Parks and the special status they enjoy. In her annual report the Chairman outlined the many benefits this designation provides to the local economy and community as well as to the general public. She argued that many public bodies, individuals and the voluntary sector play a part in this. The Society in its own small way also contributes not only by protecting Exmoor but continually looks towards increasing the economic benefits of National Park status, as well as to the nation generally.

The Society has upped its campaign to raise awareness of National Park status, giving examples of how it attracts funding for conservation, hill farmers, tourist operators and other businesses.

Recently the Exmoor Society has fully supported the ongoing public inquiry into the proposal for 13 large-scale industrial turbines to be erected just outside the National Park

boundary. The Society's appeal for a fighting fund exceeded all expectations with contributions from members from all over the UK as well as within Exmoor. The Society has been able to pay for the landscape architect's evidence on behalf of the Exmoor Rural Alliance formed between the Society, CPRE and The Two Moors Campaign.

Currently the Society is responding in detail to the mid-term review of the Exmoor National Park Authority's Management Plan.

At the AGM this year Ruth Chambers from CNP gave a presentation which was very enthusiastically received.

CNP welcomes appointments to make presentations to Societies' AGMs or meetings – please contact Ruth Chambers (ruth@cnp.org.uk) if you would like to arrange something.

Lake District NPA – John Kerr

Low carbon Lake District™

Our campaign to lead climate change management is literally changing gear. Thanks to our commitment to replacing our fleet with low carbon vehicles, we have been shortlisted for the Energy Saving Trust's national Fleet Heroes Awards. Now, with the TATA group (India's largest vehicle manufacturing company), we are identifying projects to introduce electric vehicles throughout the National Park: in our fleet; at hotels for guests; and on the lakes as water buses. In the longer term we also plan to test the first hybrid Land Rover and open a new light railway. Discussions are at an early stage but a recent top-level visit from TATA was extremely encouraging - potentially a first for electric vehicles in a testing rural environment.

Turning the Lake District Red

In Spring 2009 HRH the Prince of Wales launched the Red Squirrel Survival Trust in the Lake District (HRH is the Trust's Patron). This new charity has been established to ensure the conservation and protection of the red squirrel in the UK. The Lake District National Park Authority has joined the Trust as a Partner with the aim to clear the Park of grey squirrels so reds can return to areas where they have died out.

We are complementing practical grey squirrel management by promoting cooperation between land managers, using our website and information centres to raise public awareness and celebrating the work of volunteers as part of the Northern Red Squirrels network.

Lake District: Adventure Capital

Adventure Capital is a major campaign to promote and develop Cumbria's outdoor activity infrastructure. The National Park Authority is playing a leading role alongside Cumbria Tourism, the Forestry Commission and others in developing and promoting sustainable world class outdoor experiences to achieve economic prosperity, health and well-being in our spectacular landscape.

The development of traditional activities such as fell running and climbing will be complemented by new Miles without Stiles routes and an extensive network of cycleways as well as mountain and walking festivals, which celebrate what the Lake District has to offer.

Friends of the Lake District – Andrew Forsyth

Windermere Byelaws – Proposed Amendments

The process of amending the Byelaws continues to move very slowly and Friends of the Lake District is becoming concerned that enforcement of the current Byelaws is less precise than hitherto, whilst the uncertainty of what might be agreed remains. There is a desire, on the part of the LDNPA, to have new policies in place for April 2010 – based on

the Authority's proposed amendments and having been the subject of consultation but time to achieve this is running short. Friends of the Lake District is not yet aware whether the form of words we offered, which seeks to ensure that the overriding need to secure safety and environmental protection is reflected in any policies to grant exemptions, has been accepted by either Defra or the LDNPA.

Low Borrowdale Farm

Following the overwhelming rejection of the application to build 'eco-lodges' at Low Borrowdale, the developer (Natural Retreats) has placed the farm on the open market. Two open days have been held and there is said to be interest from a number of prospective buyers. Friends of the Lake District has registered an interest, in order to be kept informed of progress with the sale, but is not in a position to make an offer, neither financially and because it does not fit our criteria for acquisition of property. We have been contacted by three of the interested parties, each of whom wishes to keep the farm as a farming enterprise, seeking Friends of the Lake District's views on the potential for making the purchase financially viable and options which might be available to them. Advice (without prejudice of course!) has been offered.

Extensions to the National Parks

Friends of the Lake District has now had the first two meetings of a series with the Natural England lead officer for the work to examine the potential to extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. We were pleased to hear that Natural England is taking the work forward quickly, with the intention of putting the proposals out to public consultation on 14 December, for a twelve week period. Reaching the point at which the consultation documentation can be issued is very challenging and we have offered assistance. Meanwhile we are undertaking a piece of work to demonstrate that there should be significant economic advantages from designation to the areas under consideration, drawing on the CNP work published in the 'Protection and Prosperity' report.

From the Wainwrights....

Friends of the Lake District is undertaking survey work, using our volunteers, to assess the visual impact of existing and planned wind turbine developments on views from the Wainwrights; developers invariably underrate the impact on medium and long distance views and we want to build up an evidence base which we can use in responding to future applications. We hope to extend to the YDNP and AONBs in due course.

New Forest NPA – Bob Morris

'No' to Dibden Bay

The New Forest National Park Authority is fighting proposals to expand the port of Southampton at Dibden Bay.

At its meeting on 24 September 2009, the Authority said that it considered the internationally-protected wildlife area between Hythe and Marchwood as part of the New Forest, even though it is not within the National Park boundary.

A strongly-worded response to Associated British Ports' plans was approved, highlighting the impact the proposed development would have in terms of traffic, noise, light pollution and visual intrusion.

Contact: david.illsley@newforestnpa.gov.uk

CNP has also raised concerns about the plans and their implications for the New Forest.

Fighting alien invaders

Smelly skunk cabbage and concrete-busting Japanese knotweed are among five invasive plants which are gradually taking over parts of the New Forest National Park and threatening to wipe out important native plants.

Now the New Forest National Park Authority has teamed up with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, Defra and Natural England to deal with the problem plants.

The Authority has invested more than £35,000 in the campaign, of which £20,000 is from its Sustainable Development Fund. The other 'aliens' are Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed and New Zealand pygmyweed.

Contact: stephen.trotter@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Audio tours sound the way

Walkers can take their own guide with them to discover the history and wildlife of the New Forest National Park thanks to four new audio tours.

The downloadable tours on the National Park website celebrate Alice Liddell, the inspiration behind Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland', D-Day at Lepe Country Park, the history of the airfield at Stoney Cross and a tour around the Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve taking in the local bird population.

Local experts, rangers, archaeologists and war veterans feature in the commentary which is narrated by ex-BBC presenter James Harrison. To download an audio tour visit www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/tours_and_trails

Contact: jim.mitchell@newforestnpa.gov.uk

New Forest Association – Peter Roberts

The New Forest Association has had a busy summer attending various local shows to wave the flag. We have responded to consultations from Bournemouth Airport on noise pollution and Associated British Ports on the inclusion of Dibden Bay for development in their long term plan.

We were disappointed in the revised version of the NPA Management Plan and have made comments directly to both the Members at an Authority meeting and in more detail to the Officers. We are not trying to upset the boat, merely rock it as we feel the tone no longer reflects the importance of the New Forest.

The Forestry Commission (FC) continues to push its commercial aims on camp sites although with our backing the Verderers have again resisted shops on the open forest. There is also considerable concern at the extraction damage caused in the north of the Forest, which sadly seems to be a persistent problem with FC contractors contrasting sharply with the care taken in the stream-side restoration projects in the same area.

Peter Roberts
peter.robertsnf@tiscali.co.uk

Northumberland NPA – Peter Nicholson**Britain's Cleanest Rivers are sourced in the Northumberland National Park**

Four out of the five of the cleanest rivers in Britain are sourced in Northumberland National Park, the Environment Agency's annual assessment of waterways has revealed. The rivers include the Barrow Burn catchment in the Upper Coquet Valley; the Ridlees Burn south of

the Coquet in the Otterburn Military Ranges; the Linhope Burn, a tributary of the River Breamish; and the upper Breamish itself, part of the Till catchment. All these rivers tumble down from the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland National Park. The pure nature of their water is probably related to the type of farming that has conserved the moorland character of the area and its low population which combine to make this landscape officially the most tranquil in the country (CPRE Tranquillity Mapping Report).

These high quality water courses are home to migrating salmon and sea trout, which swim upstream from the sea to lay their eggs, and to otters and other wildlife such as dippers and the water crow-foot, a floating member of the buttercup family.

Partners Sign up to Ambitious Plan for the Future of Northumberland National Park

On 5th October, representatives of the North East's public agencies, businesses, voluntary bodies and local communities put their signatures to the Northumberland National Park Management Plan – an ambitious plan for the management of 405 scenic square miles of Northumberland and one of the key environmental assets of the North East region. It was developed over two years of joint working and discussion and sets out five, far-sighted but achievable goals for the future, including providing a warm welcome and exceptional visitor experience of the landscape for everyone, including children and the less able.

Other key aims provide guidance for partners on the response to climate change and rural regeneration. The National Park Authority intends, over time, to enable a variety of renewable technologies to become the principal source of energy in communities throughout the National Park. The Authority also plans to develop a *College in the Park*, helping retain and increase the skills available locally in farming, forestry, traditional building and tourism by using the Park as a training resource.

***The Future of the Northumberland Uplands* – Public Forum Highlights Action for National Park**

There was standing room only at Northumberland National Park's first public Forum on 15th October 2009, and strong calls were made for action and innovation on education, climate change and the local economy.

Members of the public and representatives of the North East's agencies came together to hear Tony Gates, Chief Executive of Northumberland National Park Authority, report on the Authority's work and to debate the way forward for the hill country. Northumberland National Park, which covers twenty per cent of the county, has taken on the role of advocate for all of its upland rural communities.

The evening opened with a personal video message from Huw Irranca-Davies, Defra Minister, who said that he was delighted that Northumberland National Park had responded to his wish to see greater public understanding of and involvement in the running of National Parks. He hoped that the Forum would be a great success and the first of many.

Amongst many contributions from contributors, a powerful point was made by Martin Howatt, Director of the Uplands for Natural England, who said that a massive effort needed to be made to explain the value of the uplands to the British public, and gain acceptance that these social benefits would need to be maintained with public money. For example, few people realised that 70 per cent of the country's drinking water was sourced in National Parks and that they were the key to frontline efforts to lock up carbon and control water flow. He said more trees were needed.

The discussion is to continue on the National Park website forum.

North York Moors NPA – Steve Scoffin**Vehicle activated sheep signs go on trial**

Six solar-powered, vehicle-activated warning signs have been installed on two roads in the North York Moors National Park in a bid to cut the number of sheep road deaths. The signs flash with two images: a sheep warning triangle followed by 'Slow Down'.

Last year, 239 sheep and lambs were killed on open moor roads in the National Park. The signs, which have been funded by North Yorkshire County Council, are not permanent and are planned to be removed over the winter and reinstated next spring. Sheep deaths will be monitored to see if the signs make a difference.

For more information contact Rachel Pickering r.pickering@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

Nearly the best training scheme in the country!

The North York Moors National Park Authority's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme was announced as a UK national winner for Yorkshire and the Humber in the training provider category at the National Training Awards. The award was given in recognition of the outstanding contribution and commitment made by the Authority to training in the workplace.

The Modern Apprenticeship Scheme will now be put forward for the UK Gala Ceremony at London's Royal Horticultural Halls on Thursday 10th December where it will be up against winners from across the UK for the overall training provider Winner of the Year.

For more information contact Richard Gunton r.gunton@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

Simplified Moorsbus service

Changes are being made to Moorsbus – the network of buses to and around the North York Moors National Park – which should make the service easier to use. The changes follow a two-year review which has involved consultations with passengers, Authority staff and external partners and a report from an independent transport consultant.

Although Moorsbus consistently scores above 90% for passenger satisfaction, many users find the service's current 18 routes complex and the timetable difficult to understand. The revised service will feature a number of 'feeder' routes bringing people in to the National Park where they can pick up one of four tours or routes in the North York Moors.

For more information contact Michael Graham m.graham@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

North Yorkshire Moors Association – Gareth Fawcett**25th Anniversary Year 2010**

The North Yorkshire Moors Association is set to celebrate its 25th anniversary next year. Two projects are being put forward to mark the celebration. 'The History Tree' is a project centred around an iconic Copper Beech tree that was a real landmark at the National Park Centre at Danby Lodge. The tree had to be felled for safety reasons leaving a large stump. The Association wants to set a steel template over this stump engraved with appropriate dates to coincide with the annular rings which go back 200 years. The project is aimed at providing an interest for children in particular, with the addition of educational material. There is a possibility of a competition to establish a list of suitable dates which will feature on the template.

The second project is to establish an area of improved woodland and wildlife habitat including the planting of juniper trees as part of the Juniper Regeneration Project as well as Crab Apple trees which are becoming scarce in this area.

Rising Costs

Following a Strategic Planning Meeting held earlier in the year the Association has taken the decision to increase members' subscriptions at the beginning of next year. This will be the first increase for ten years and brings the amount in line with other societies. This is to ensure that the Association can continue to meet its objective to support conservation work and cover increased costs including the cost of producing 'Voice of the Moors' our quarterly magazine.

Road Signs

The Association has questioned a decision to erect vehicle activated illuminated road signs over the high moor between Castleton and Hutton-le Hole and Castleton Rigg and Rosedale. The signs are being tested as a means of reducing sheep deaths by traffic travelling along this unfenced moor road. The signs flash on when approached by a vehicle with a slow down warning and a sheep set in a red triangle. The Association would support a speed limit but agreement on this cannot be reached by the County Highways Dept and the Police. There is undoubtedly a problem with the numbers of sheep killed on the road but the Association regards these signs as being completely out of place in the wild moorland landscape.

Peak District NPA – Geoff Nickolds**Pedal power to help drive for more active lifestyles**

A proposed £1.25million project could turn the Peak District National Park into a haven for leisure and commuting cyclists.

Cycling England – an independent body funded by the Department of Transport – has offered the grant as a trial to extend its innovative Cycling Towns and Cities idea into a rural location.

The investment would aim to:

- build new cycling trails around the national park and improve existing ones
- encourage families to go cycling regularly as a leisure activity
- educate the public about the health benefits of cycling
- give commuters and visitors a genuine alternative to car-travel
- help reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

The Peak District was chosen because 32% of the UK population live within 60 miles of the National Park, the area already has 58 miles of dedicated off-road cycle trails and more than 30,000 people a year use the national park's cycle hire centres.

See: <http://tinyurl.com/yzovnzl>

£5.5 million EU boost for Peak moorland restoration

The PDNPA-managed Moors for the Future Partnership has secured £5.5million from the EU Life+ Fund to help restore more than 2,000 acres of Peak District and South Pennine moorland by 2015. It will enable a new phase of the biggest moorland restoration programme in Europe to be launched next Spring.

The five-year MoorLife project will benefit internationally-important wildlife, reduce flood-risks to nearby cities by absorbing downpours, purify water supplies and help to mitigate climate change by retaining carbon dioxide. It will regenerate vegetation on bare, eroding peat damaged by centuries of airborne industrial pollution and wildfires. Helicopters will help spread seed from the air and fly in equipment, fertiliser, and plug-plants to remote terrain.

Moors for the Future partners are the Peak District National Park Authority, Natural England, the National Trust, RSPB, Severn Trent Water, United Utilities, Yorkshire Water, Derbyshire County Council and the Environment Agency.

See: <http://tinyurl.com/nxrmjk>

Social network sites help PDNPA to reach more people

The PDNPA has set up social networking sites to widen its reach and encourage more people to interact.

People can follow Authority news on;

- Twitter: www.twitter.com/peakdistrict
- Chief executive's weekly blog: <http://jimdixon.wordpress.com>
- YouTube www.youtube.com/peakdistrictnpa

Links to all the sites can be found www.peakdistrict.gov.uk

Friends of the Peak District – Philip Hetherington

Houndkirk

As part of our off-roading campaign, FPD highlighted an area adjacent to the Houndkirk Road (an unsurfaced road) which off-roaders (scrambler motorbikes and 4x4s) were illegally riding/driving across. The area is on the summit of Houndkirk Moor which is an SSSI, therefore damage to it is a criminal offence.

We publicised the problem within the local media in an effort to get the illegal activities stopped and this encouraged the landowners (Sheffield City Council), the National Park Authority and Natural England to act. They have agreed a project plan which will repair the damage, fence off the area then regrade the area to make it less attractive to off roaders.

Work is expected to start as soon as funding is in place and will be undertaken by Moors for the Future.

Recreational bodies and their exemptions from planning permission

A resident of Hulme End informed us that they were having problems with a campsite which their neighbour had set up without planning permission. Investigating this, we discovered that as the campsite was for members of the Caravan and Camping Club, it was exempt from requiring planning permission.

In accordance with the 1995 GDPO parts 5 and 27, the Camping and Caravanning Club has been granted both a camping and touring caravan exemption certificate by Natural England which enables it to establish sites for no more than five caravans and unlimited tents

We are very concerned by this loophole which enables landowners to by-pass the planning system. This campsite is in a particularly quiet area of the National Park and is an intrusive element in the landscape. The PDNPA has sought to control the site by suggesting screening and where caravans and tents should not be sited, but these are not enforceable and have not worked.

Given the sensitivities within a National Park, this loophole must be closed.

Website

We're working with local company Hammer Design on our new Friends of the Peak District website. The graphics are just about agreed, and then we'll be adding the text and tackling the online shop, etc. We haven't agreed a launch date yet – but hopefully we'll have an attractive, interactive, accessible website that we can update easily and efficiently in the next couple of months.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – David Ellis

Artist-in-Residence leaves a lasting impression

Oriel y Parc Landscape Gallery unveils an exciting first in November as the centre's inaugural Artist-in-Residence, Brendan Stuart Burns, exhibits new work.

Completed while Brendan was at Oriel y Parc as part of his year-long residency, the work is on display from November 14th to March 14th. It will feature alongside selected artwork from the National Collection that has inspired him.

The National Park Authority owns and manages Oriel y Parc as a gallery, visitor and education centre, in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, and Brendan's exhibition coincides with the attraction's first birthday.

The exhibition is free, visit www.orielyparc.co.uk for more details.

Heritage Minister sees exciting finds at castle dig

Archaeologists working on a major excavation explained their findings to the Minister for Heritage Alun Ffred Jones recently.

The Minister was among hundreds of visitors to the site at Nevern Castle, where the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority carried out a four-week dig with Dr Chris Caple, of Durham University, Nevern Community Council and Dyfed Archaeological Trust. The team uncovered a wall of the 12th century castle and the remains of a massive masonry tower on the top of the Motte.

The on-going project is funded by Cadw and will eventually include on-site interpretation for visitors.

Iron Age Fort wins third Sandford Award for education

A unique visitor attraction run by the National Park Authority has won a prestigious award for education for the third time.

Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort has scooped a Sandford Award for Heritage Education. The award is given to heritage sites offering a high standard of educational services, from Key Stage 1 to university level.

Castell Henllys won the five-yearly award in 1999 and 2004 and reapplied in 2009, again impressing judges with its educational services.

Judge Gareth Fitzpatrick said: "Interesting learning programmes engage visiting children with hands on experiences of what life could have been like in prehistoric Celtic Wales in ways that satisfy and enhance the demands of the contemporary curriculum."

For details of the Castell Henllys schools programme log onto www.castellhenllys.com

Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park – David Holmes

Really Wild Food Show

Our society presented a stand at The Really Wild Food Show held in St. David's on the weekend of 5th and 6th of September 2009. The main aim was to make the general public aware of our society, what its aims and objectives are, and thus to recruit more members. The stand attracted considerable public interest and, although no new members were signed up at the show, subsequently new members have joined, via our website, who took away brochures and application forms from the stand.

Welsh National Parks Societies Joint Statement

Our Chairman attended the ANPA conference in Llandudno on 23rd September 2009 and signed a joint working agreement with the other Welsh Societies. The aim of this agreement is to keep Wales's most precious landscapes "fit for future generations to enjoy". The three societies have agreed to produce a joint manifesto for Welsh National Parks well ahead of the 2011 Welsh National Assembly elections. The Societies are particularly

concerned about the impact of energy policies on the National Parks. It is felt that many proposals for wind energy developments will cause environmental damage and adversely affect the appearance of the National Parks.

Welsh side of our website about to go live

The Friends of the Pembrokeshire National Park website, www.fnpn.org.uk, continues to be kept up to date and we are pleased to announce that the Welsh side of the website is about to go live.

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Scottish Campaign for National Parks – Robert Maund

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

The Park Local Plan remains on track to be published by the end of the calendar year followed by a further period of consultation through to February 2010. So far there has been no indication of progress in correcting the very damaging proposals which show an increase of about 30% to the total number of houses in Drymen. For over 40 years, the village, in the NSA, has been protected by government's refusal of 4 appeals dealing with proposals for new housing areas and also supporting policies which restricted house building to local needs housing.

Following the National Parks Review, the Park Board will be reduced from 25 to 17 made up of 6 Ministerial appointees, 6 local authority nominees and 5 directly elected. It remains to be seen whether this will produce real benefits or whether it is just a government cost cutting exercise.

Cairngorms National Park

The Public Local Inquiry into the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan is over and we await the recommendations of the two Reporters appointed to look at the Local Plan and to examine unresolved objections. The Reporter's findings are expected about November/December and until then, it is not anticipated that any decision will be taken on the so called New Community proposed in the NSA at An Camas Mor. We have been analysing the scheme and measuring it against the criteria which the Park Authority has adopted. We have also been examining the criteria against the whole ethos of what National Parks are for and sadly the concept of developing An Camas Mor is, in our view, totally inappropriate. Our objection to the planning application will be finalised shortly.

As with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, it is our considered view that the Cairngorms National Park is seriously underfunded. All the evidence is that the Park's modest budget (£4.5M pa) produces benefits far beyond that sum; the leverage is considerable and very good value for money. However, under the National Parks review, the Perthshire Highlands would be added to the Park. Whilst this is a very welcome decision, it also needs to be properly funded and the omens are not good. Also, unlike Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Cairngorms NPA does not have a Ranger Service in-house and relies on arrangements provided by private landowners. While this is useful, landowners' interests do not necessarily coincide with those of a National Park and it is important to be able to demonstrate that the wider interests of the Park can be met through one's own experienced staff. We can think of no other National Park that does not provide an in-house ranger service to be the main link between the Authority, Park users and the landowners.

Cairngorms NPA is also to have a reduced Board from October 2010 resulting from the National Parks Review and will be go down from 25 to 19 members, made up of 7 Ministerial appointees, 7 local authority nominees and 5 directly elected.

Meeting the new Minister for the Environment

We met Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for the Environment (our sixth in five years!) on 9 September in a meeting that tended to be dominated by the current financial situation and the constraint it is seen to place on chances of new initiatives. However, we live in hope that the Strategy Group that the Minister is to set up and chair will use its 18 month life wisely to see that a strategy for future national parks will be put in place so that Scotland is ready as soon as an opportunity arises.

Snowdonia NPA – Denis McAteer**Excellent Customer Service at Plas**

On July 15, Plas Tan y Bwlch, Snowdonia National Park's Environmental Study Centre, was presented "The Customer Service Excellence Award" by Elfyn Llwyd MP on behalf of the Cabinet Office. The Award is given for high level customer service and concentrates on the quality of delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. The assessor noted in particular Plas' staff's commitment to providing excellent customer service and their commitment to contribute to the lives of the community around them and further afield.

National Park Week

National Park Week was celebrated in Snowdonia at the National Eisteddfod in Bala.

At SNPA's stand, one of Wales' most famous Welsh bands, Gwibdaith Hen Frân, launched new eco-friendly SNP T-shirts and hoodies. Words from Welsh songs are featured on the T-shirts, and are a continuation of the National Parks branding, *Lle i Enaid Gael Llonydd / Britain's Breathing Spaces*. The shirts and hoodies were printed and produced by using eco-friendly printing methods.

During the week, SNPA announced the names of winners of the Bwrlwm Eryri Photography Competition. This was an opportunity to raise awareness of the wealth of Snowdonia's heritage through the medium of a camera's lens and the winning photographs were exhibited at the NPA's stand.

Also at the Eisteddfod, Owain Glyndŵr, the famous Welsh rebel was voted Snowdonia's Most Amazing Character as part of Bwrlwm Eryri's Gallery of the Famous survey.

Celebrating the Future of National Parks in Llandudno

Representatives from all the UK's National Parks met in Llandudno in September to discuss the future of National Parks in Britain. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the passing of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, this was an opportunity to reminisce about the past and how landscape and society has changed during the past 60 years. The conference encouraged nearly 200 delegates to look at the future of landscape and conservation on a national and international level and they were addressed by senior politicians from Scotland, Westminster and the National Assembly.

Cymdeithas Eryri/Snowdonia Society – David Lewis**Local Development Plan and National Park Management Plan**

The Society submitted 87 representations on the deposit draft of the Local Development Plan (LDP), and in a subsequent consultation 17 representations about alternative sites that had been proposed. The Independent Examination of the LDP is now expected to take place in June next year. SNPA has been receptive to most of our representations on the LDP, but we remain concerned at the proposal to allow new buildings in open country in future for activities undertaken as farm diversification. Nor has SNPA accepted that there should be specific and proactive policies, if not in the LDP then in the National Park Management Plan, for managing visitor pressures where those are most intense, for promoting recreation in and tourism in areas where there is capacity for that, and for

safeguarding the wildness and tranquillity of other areas. However, it has accepted our proposal that it should produce a Recreation Management Strategy and says it will do that during winter 2010. It also intends to produce during summer 2010 a more detailed description of the special qualities of the National Park and its landscape character areas, which will provide input to Supplementary Planning Guidance on landscape.

AGM 2009

The guest speaker at the Society's AGM on October 17 was Jane Davidson, Welsh Minister for Environment, Housing and Sustainability. In the business session concern was expressed that Tŷ Hyll, the Society's current headquarters, might be sold without members being consulted. The Chair explained that there are no plans to sell the house and its grounds, although Trustees had decided to look for more efficient office space elsewhere.

Sports Council funding

On the strength of the commercial sponsorship for the 14 Peaks project reported last time, the Society has obtained funding from the Sports Council for Wales, under the Sportsmatch business incentive programme, to publicise our winter programme of themed walks, plus related training and equipment.

Contact: David Lewis drlewis27@yahoo.com

South Downs Society – Richard Reed

A National Park 'network'

The South Downs Society has been in continuing discussion with the Executive of the South Downs Campaign on the way forward following the final confirmation of the National Park and the planned winding up of the Campaign. The Society and the Campaign Executive are anxious that the spirit and knowledge acquired in the long years of successful campaigning by SDC is not dispelled and the Society has proposed that a body (at present styled National Park Network) based on the leading members of SDC (of which the Society is of course part) be set up as a means of exchanging information and promoting co-operation as the National Park develops.

CNP very much supports the establishment of a network and has been assisting with the process of agreeing the details of how the network would be set up.

Good news, if temporary, from Hampshire

Volkswind's proposal, reported at our July meeting, to erect of two large wind turbines high on the Downs near East Meon has been withdrawn. The company cites the strength of local opposition and the need for clarification of government policy on turbines in National Parks and AONBs.

At Oakhanger, near Bordon, Tarmac proposed to extract 2 million tonnes of sand from farmland within the Park boundary. This was vigorously opposed by local residents, strongly backed by the South Downs Society. The company has announced it will not be submitting a planning application at this stage, pending full consideration of the implications of operating in the National Park.

Other planning and access matters

From time to time enthusiasts propose a chalk emblem or some other development on the Downs to celebrate a national occasion such as a coronation or jubilee. The latest is a scheme from the community arts group Red Earth to build a mock iron-age fort on the Sussex Downs to mark the 2012 Olympics. The Society has opposed possible Arts Council funding for this project.

In the Arun Valley a popular walking route was severed by the collapse of a bridge across a side-channel of the river. Through the leadership of the local Amberley Society the bridge

has been dismantled and rebuilt by Gurkha Engineers. This 'training exercise' has not only dramatically reduced costs and resulted in a splendid new suspension bridge but forged a rapport between the Gurkhas and the local population.

Yorkshire Dales NPA – Malcolm Petyt

Yorkshire Peat Partnership

The Yorkshire Dales NPA is to play a major role in a new partnership which seeks to bring about the restoration of Yorkshire's degraded peatland resource.

The Authority will provide £50,000 a year for four years for the management and co-ordination of the project. The Senior Wildlife Conservation Officer will be seconded for 50% of his time (funded by the Environmental Agency) to manage the Partnership and oversee the programme of practical restoration works funded by Natural England. Ranger and other staff time (roughly 1 FTE) will be allocated to provide site-based contract management and supervision of sites within the Park.

It is planned that by 2013 21,000 hectares of peatland will be restored, of which 16,000 hectares will be within the National Park.

Champion system refreshed

In 2006, largely in response to comments in the NPA that too much Member time was being devoted to planning, and that their expertise and enthusiasm could be better employed, the Authority introduced a system of "Member Champions" for each of the seven functional areas of its work (Natural Environment, Cultural Heritage, Recreation Management, Promoting Understanding, Development Control, Forward Planning, Corporate Affairs).

The system has generally worked well, though it depends on how much the individual Champion puts into the role. The Authority has recently approved a number of improvements to the system, particularly in relation to Champions reporting back, and has agreed to appoint an extra Champion for Climate Change.

Sites for Affordable Housing

Earlier this year the Authority issued a call for landowners to offer sites on which they would be prepared to see affordable housing developed. The response produced nearly 120 suggested sites.

A Housing Working Group visited all these sites and considered them alongside appraisals by Planning Officers and comments from Parish Councils and local residents. Many sites were dismissed at this stage for a variety of reasons. About 44 remain for further investigation, which will involve consultation with the Local Housing Authority, the Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, the County Council, the Water Authority and the Archaeologist and the Ecologist of the NPA. This process is bound to rule out more sites, but a final list will be recommended as a draft Housing Development Plan.

Yorkshire Dales Society – Colin Speakman

Dales Bus 2009 Success

The Yorkshire Dales Society's subsidiary, the Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company, which now operates eight Sunday and Bank Holiday DalesBus services to and within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB, has had a highly successful summer. In 2008/9, with funds of £53K from a variety of sources including Metro, YDNPA & a variety of smaller contributors, the DalesBuses carried 13,000 passenger journeys @ £3.29/passenger and took people (largely older people walkers but some Black and Minority Ethnic) all over the Dales. It's not about the journey but about the destination.

The CIC is will almost certainly exceed its 2009/10 target of a 34% growth in patronage, with several routes carrying record numbers. A core network will also operate on winter Sundays. Highlights of the year include excellent loads on the core Yorkshire Dalesman bus between Leeds and Hawes, very good patronage on the new Northern Dalesman from Ribblesdale Station on the Settle-Carlisle line into Swaledale (thus restoring a Sunday service into the northern Dales) and the mid week summer-holiday Dales Experience Buses from Bradford to Malham and Grassington. This project was developed in close partnership with the National Park's Outreach Programme and Mosaic Partnership who provided a programme of walks and other activities. The buses were so busy that not all would-be passengers could be carried, and duplicate buses had to be provided on several days. A further innovation in 2009 was to accept Metrocards, weekday train and bus commuter tickets, on Dalesbus services from West Yorkshire.

Dales Green Lane Traffic Regulation Set-back

The Yorkshire Dales Society was shocked to learn that eight of the thirteen pioneering Traffic Regulation Orders imposed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on environmentally sensitive, threatened Green Lanes in the Yorkshire Dales, including key routes in Ribblesdale and Littondale, were challenged in the High Court by the motor lobbying group LARA. This was despite them having gone through a rigorous process of prior analysis and consultation by National Park officers. As reported at the previous Council meeting four of the challenges were upheld, more on procedural matters than principle. But LARA's victory is likely to prove both hollow and short-lived. Ironically three of the four challenges were on green lanes which have no proven vehicular rights and the fourth was part of a National Trail (the new Pennine Bridleway) where there are additional powers of regulation. The Society is confident that these and future Orders will be applied in ways which will fulfil the High Court requirements as indicated in the judgment.

Stewardship Scheme confusion

The Society is currently expressing its concern about the fairly complex three-tier Stewardship system which is now in place for hill farmers in protected landscapes such as the Yorkshire Dales. The fairly well developed Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship schemes are in operation but procedures for the Upland Entry Level are not yet fully implemented. This part of the scheme is still awaiting full EU approval. One additional major concern is that there may not be enough sufficient experienced Natural England staff available to administer the schemes efficiently, to ensure farmers' needs are being met and payments are prompt. There are, however, a number of important and welcome new changes for Stewardship schemes in the uplands, including assistance for landscape conservation activities such as dry stone walling. A further complication is that some of the older schemes such as ESA are currently continuing, making it difficult for the local farming community to cope with the plethora of schemes, and resultant paperwork needed to participate and take advantage of what may be available for conservation in the uplands.

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