

## 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 – Carys Howell**

#### **Independent Inspector finds for the National Park Authority on Cwrt y Gollen appeal**

An Independent Planning Inspector from the Welsh Government has refused the Cwrt y Gollen appeal against the refusal of the planning application for the redevelopment of the former army camp for comprehensive mixed use development comprising residential development (C3), employment provision (B1), a pre-school day nursery (D1), a residential care home (C2), open space provision including allotments, community orchard, sports provision and associated infrastructure works.

Crickhowell Estates Ltd appealed to the Welsh Government after Brecon Beacons National Park Authority turned down the application near Crickhowell in 2010. Crickhowell Estates Ltd has a period of six weeks in which to issue a High Court challenge to the Inspector's decision.

#### **National Park Members give green light to Local Development Plan**

Last month Brecon Beacons National Park Authority submitted the LDP for examination to the Welsh Government. This marks the beginning of the Examination period of the Local Development Plan. We anticipate that the hearing sessions will begin in February next year, with receipt of the final Inspectors Report in September. This means that by November 2012 the Local Development Plan will hopefully become the framework by which all planning decisions in the National Park are made. Details of the submission documents can be found on the Authority's website <http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/ldp-examination>

#### **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority takes lead role in securing €10million for rural communities**

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is celebrating with its twelve partners spread across Europe, after securing more than €10million for the benefit of rural communities over the next four years. The National Park Authority played a lead role in the successful application for ERDF co-financing which was officially given the green light on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 by the European Union's Interreg IVB NWE Programme.

The new project - called Rural Alliances - will start in late November, when the twelve partners and representative businesses will attend a meeting, hosted by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority to plan their approach to challenge conventional approaches to rural development.

The partners will support rural enterprises and communities to work together in new alliances to generate new business opportunities, safeguarding and improving rural services and making their areas special places for people to visit, relocate to and raise their families. The project will last four years with support from the EU and local partner funds aimed at international networking, training, exchange visits and the benefit of exchanging best practice between different EU regions.

#### **National Parks Rights of Way scrutiny hearings start this month**

Although the extended consultation period for the Public Rights of Way network questionnaires closed last month, people still have a final opportunity to have their say on what they think of the current network at two hearings booked in November and December.

In view of the level of interest shown by the public, Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities decided to extend the initial consultation period which invited people to take part in their Public Rights of Way network questionnaire so that they can review and assess the network's current management, value, resources, effectiveness and priorities. This joint review will enhance the current work that is being undertaken by both National Parks on their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

The final report is expected to be delivered by mid February 2012 and many people have expressed an interest to give further evidence to the committee at two hearing dates in November and December – the first of which starts tomorrow 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011.

**Brecon Beacons Park Society – Jim Wilson**

No report received.

**Broads Authority – Rashmi Varma**

**The Broads are the nation's rare wildlife hotspot**

The first complete assessment of the biodiversity of the Broads, which pooled 1.5 million records collected since 1670, has revealed that this small area is the hotspot for the nation's rarest wildlife, with an incredible quarter of Britain's rare species.

The study, commissioned by the Broads Authority and carried out by the University of East Anglia, identified 11,000 species, of which 66 are special to the Broads and 31 are rarely seen elsewhere in Britain. They were found in a 834sq km area which makes up only 0.4% of the UK. The study will guide future conservation plans, particularly in the light of climate change.

**New planning document updates policy for residential moorings**

The Broads Authority has strengthened its planning policies to protect the tourism industry and the special character of the Broads by adopting its Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Broads.

The biggest change is the introduction of a new policy which allows for residential moorings in certain areas. The site will need to meet a set of criteria including the availability of local services and good access. It would mean that some residential moorings may be permitted in marinas and other built up areas. The policies also concentrate on new development in settlements and protect boatyards from inappropriate development.

**Toll charges**

Broads Authority members have unanimously agreed a toll increase of 2.85% for boats for the next financial year, the lowest rise for 17 years. The below inflation rise is in recognition of the financial pressure on many boaters and has been made possible by unanticipated extra income from the growth in the hire boat fleet. The number of boats registered on the Broads is up by 151 on 2010, with 31 more motor cruisers for hire. The new charges will mean a £12 increase for a large motor boat currently paying £425 but only an 80p rise for a canoe paying £28.

**Broads Society – Peter Horsefield**

No report received.

**Dartmoor NPA – Diana Moyse**

No report received.

**Dartmoor Preservation Association – James Paxman**

**Planning**

During the summer months the NPA issued its draft Development Plan Document to supplement the Core Strategy which has already been adopted. Doubtless following a lead

from the NPPF, policies from the former Local Plan were re-drafted in a positive manner. i.e. where a policy had stated "...development will not be allowed unless ....." was redrafted as "...development will be allowed provided that ..." Although the change in wording might seem trivial we felt that in a number of cases it resulted in a significant weakening of existing policy. This is especially so in view of the presumption in the NPPF in favour of development even when policy is either absent or out of date, and the reductions in staffing for forward planning.

We are experiencing a large number of applications for PV installations.

### **Cramber Tor**

The MoD permission to carry out "dry training" (i.e. using blank ammunition and close support helicopters) in an area of the National Park close to Princetown expires in 2013 and initial consultations have taken place regarding the requirements for the renewal of this permission. A planning application will be submitted in 2012. Interestingly, unlike the previous occasion in 2003, this application will not enjoy crown immunity and therefore the NPA has greater powers to require demonstration of the continuing need for this training and evidence that it cannot be carried out elsewhere.

### **Dog attacks**

Attacks on livestock by dogs that are out of control continue to be a pressing concern. In the last two years attempts to address the problem have been made through the appointment of a dog warden, funded by the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society and the Dartmoor Commoners Council. However, difficulties of maintaining effective vigilance, lack of interest from the local police force, and lack of effective sanctions against miscreants have all proved to be barriers to successful outcomes. The current dog warden's term will come to an end in January 2012 and alternative solutions are currently being evaluated.

### **Exmoor NPA – Andrea Davis**

No report received.

### **Exmoor Society – Arabella Amory**

#### **NP Societies Conference**

The Exmoor Society hosted the NP Societies Conference this year. From the emails we have received it seems that most delegates enjoyed the event and many thanks to those who took the trouble to give us this feedback.

The Society was congratulated on the high standard of accommodation and food and the variation of the speakers. Particular praise went to the after dinner talk on 'The Importance of Exmoor to the Romantic Poets' and the four young girls talking about their experience of the Exmoor Curriculum at Dulverton Middle School, which is supported by the Exmoor Society. Exmoor was looking its autumn best for the Saturday afternoon site visits.

Next year's conference will be hosted by the South Downs Society.

### **Hope Bourne**

Hope Bourne, who died in 2010 aged 91, was an author and artist who lived most of her life immersed in Exmoor, its landscape and its people. What made her an inspiration to others was not only her remarkable literary and artistic skills but the way she lived alone in a caravan for over 20 years in a very remote spot on Exmoor and, although physically tiny, she also undertook backbreaking farm work.

Hope has left all her estate, including books, writings, drawings, memorabilia and unpublished manuscripts to the Exmoor Society. Through the year we will be making reference to this important contribution to our archives and library, culminating in a special exhibition celebrating her life and work.

**Lake District NPA – Bill Jefferson****The Partnership's Plan – the Management Plan for the National Park 2011-2016**

The Lake District National Park Partnership has completed the annual update of its Partnership's Plan – the first National Park Management Plan ever prepared by the range of bodies that look after the National Park, rather than the Authority itself. By common consensus, the preparation and implementation of the plan, first approved in September 2010, has been instrumental in focusing efforts on delivering our shared Vision for the Lake District through unified action.

Twenty Four partners make up the Partnership and have refined the content of the updated Plan to 48 strategic actions, the majority of which are partner-led, rather than Authority-led.

**A National Park Fairtrade Zone**

Working with the Fairtrade Foundation, we are building a case with local businesses and suppliers to designate the Lake District as the world's first National Park Fairtrade Zone. Our Local and Fair campaign, successfully launched in October in partnership with a major Lake District hotel chain, the NFU and CLA, blends the promotion of buying local produce and products with the ethical value of buying Fairtrade.

**Nature Improvement Areas**

We have made the top 20, from 76 applications nationally, as a candidate for funding for a Lakes to Fells Nature Improvement Area, as mooted by the summer's Natural Environment White Paper. Our bid focuses on the Bassenthwaite and Ullswater catchments in the northern part of the Lake District. Only 12 bids will be successful nationally and a decision is due early in 2012. Another shortlisted proposal, centred on Morecambe Bay, also includes a part of the National Park.

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**

FLD played an important role in preventing the Government's planned disposal of the public forests in the Forestry Commission management and ownership. Several organisations invited the Government's Independent Forestry Panel up to Cumbria/Lake District. They are coming to the Lake District on 7 March 2012, their final regional visit before reporting to Government in the spring. FLD is working with the LDNP Farming and Forestry Task Group to facilitate the visit, which will focus on good practice landscape-scale land management partnerships and rural development initiatives involving forestry in the National Park.

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

Natural England's Board on the 28 September 2011 agreed to prepare the Variation Orders to extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. We hope these will be put to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) by Natural England early in the New Year with the statutory 28 day 'deposit' consultation period. FLD's Key Supporter Group has established an informal 'Lakes to Dales Campaign' which is gaining the support of key organisations (many CNP Council members) and important local and national individuals. Please support this work on which Ruth Chambers and Jack Ellerby are leading.

**Lake District National Park Partnership FLD Lead Projects highlighting the special qualities of the landscape:**

**Seeing the Stars** – 'See the Stars' is a pilot project highlighting in an engaging way the importance of tranquility in the NP through getting people interested in the night sky and raise awareness of the issue of light pollution. With funding from the Lake District

Sustainable Development Fund, events have included a Dark Sky Beer Festival and producing a Star Gazing Guide. A light pollution survey is taking place in Keswick during November and volunteers will be trained in basic astronomy so that we can run more events in the future. Linking in with the Windermere Reflections HLF catchment project the Friends are delivering 'Secret Windermere' highlighting tranquil places and dark skies involving school children in the Windermere area and running events in 2012 including canoeing and Tai Chi!

**Flora of the Fells** – celebrates the diverse values of upland landscape in Cumbria, engaging the public and young people through diverse and fun activities. Recently we have run two 'Fell Care Days' covering Helvellyn and Ennerdale in partnership with key landowners and conservation organisations. These involved over 200 volunteers and 140 school children in carrying out conservation work ranging from litter collection, tree planting, dry stone walling, path repairs and maintenance, building living willow hides and environmental interpretation activities focusing on water, wildlife and peat soils. Excellent media coverage and local business sponsorship helped to raise the impact of the project.

### **New Forest NPA – Bob Morris**

#### **New Forest remembers**

"Untold Stories of World War II" wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

The New Forest National Park Authority has received a confirmed grant of just over £550,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the project 'New Forest remembers - untold stories of World War II'. The project will carry out essential archaeological surveying of part of the New Forest National Park including an airborne infra-red LiDAR survey (light detection and ranging), mapping work and field surveys. These will record World War II archaeological sites and their conservation needs.

Volunteers will be recruited and an outreach programme will be designed to engage local communities, groups and organisations. Teaching resources and educational activities will also be developed to link World War II archaeology with the National Curriculum.

#### **Celebrating sausages the *New Forest Marque* way**

Raisins, blackberry wine and crab apple jelly were just some of the ingredients used in a 'blind' New Forest Marque sausage taste-test at *The Pig* in Brockenhurst to celebrate 'British Sausage Week'. All the sausages in the taste-test were supplied by New Forest Marque butcher Chris Oaks from Oakwood Butchers, who won the New Forest Marque sausage of the year 2010 for his beef, plum and raisin sausage.

The NF Marque is the only contracted scheme of this type that audits its farmers and producers to ensure a minimum New Forest content. A series of stringent standards have to be adhered to before the product receives its 'marque' of approval.

The New Forest Marque is managed by the New Forest National Park Authority and New Forest District Council. The award scheme was created to:

- give businesses a distinctive 'New Forest' banner under which to sell their goods and services
- help customers identify quality New Forest produce
- encourage people to 'buy local' and reduce the environmental impact of transporting food long distances
- help sustain the New Forest's local economy by supporting local businesses and employment.

#### **Southern Parks Conference**

On 13<sup>th</sup> October the New Forest hosted the first Southern Parks one day conference to be held to include all four National Parks Authorities in the South. The conference gathered in the New Forest Centre to see the facilities available to visitors. We then went out into the Forest to study the work being undertaken under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme for wetland regeneration by returning the river to its original meandering course. After lunch in

the historic Verderers Hall and a talk on their work, we visited the Beaulieu Road sales yard to see how it has been modernised to enable amongst other things the sale of Commoners' cattle. The tour finished with a visit to a commoner's holding to see how the New Forest Land Advisory service had enabled a commoner to find back up grazing sufficient to enable him to run cattle on the Forest. We returned to the New Forest Centre to discuss the events of the day before going our separate ways.

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

Work on re-organising the administration and running of the Association alongside improved communications to our members and the public continues. The newsletter will now appear three times a year rather than two. Our new website, facebook and twitter should be online in the New Year. We have held more events this year than for some time and have a number in the pipeline for next year. Rather belatedly we are becoming involved with the Mosaic Project. We are currently looking at schemes to enhance local children's understanding of the New Forest.

We have grave concerns about the loss of a Farm currently owned by an extraction company who are selling it off piecemeal as pony paddocks. Working with others we are trying to find a solution to the problem of potential loss of back-up land and a forest holding.

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

##### **Northumberland SDF has attracted £7 million**

Northumberland National Park SDF is managed by an independent panel of local people. 17 projects completed during the past 12 months brought the total number of supported projects to 140. Collectively, these have helped to bring in over £7 million to the communities and businesses of Northumberland National Park. This means that for every £1 invested, an additional £5 has come into the area from other sources. Tony Gates, Chief Executive said "When I look back over what has been achieved it gives me a great sense of satisfaction. Two independent assessments have confirmed that we are not just doing well, but our work in this field is exemplary."

##### **Northumberland sponsors new elite women's cycle race**

The Northern Rock (Virgin Money) Cyclone cycling festival will feature a new elite level women's road race in 2012. Called the Curlew Cup, the new race is sponsored by Northumberland National Park. It will be part of a strong eight-round National Women's Road Series of races and takes place on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Already the news has proved popular with riders. North East rider and Horizon Fitness RT member Annie Simpson is expecting to take part in the race. She said: "I can't wait to see the elite women's Curlew Cup race start up alongside the long-established Beaumont Trophy. Women's racing is really coming of age, and I'd urge other race organisers to follow the NR Cyclone lead."

The NR Cyclone weekend runs from Thursday 28 June to Sunday 1 July 2012. It is one of the UK's biggest weekends of cycling and is set to attract even more people in 2012 as it continues to expand.

The Cyclone Challenge – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June – includes a 104 mile route through the National Park.

[www.northernrockcyclone.co.uk](http://www.northernrockcyclone.co.uk)

##### **Stars of the National Park Announced**

The first winners of the Northumberland National Park Awards announced at the National Park Forum on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. The Awards were instigated this year to recognise and reward the efforts of individuals, businesses and community groups who are helping the National Park Authority and its partners to achieve the key aims in the National Park Management Plan.

Winners included: (Welcoming Park)The Bellingham & District Trade and Tourism Association – a community group that has made an exceptional effort to revive tourism in the North Tyne Valley. (Distinctive Place) Hepple Whitefield Farm – a farming family who have made a very positive contribution to conservation, enhancement, access, and understanding of the Simonside Hills Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and adjacent areas; (Living-Working Landscape)Cheviot Farms Micro-hydro Pilot Group a group of five remote farms that has showed initiative, and cooperation in undertaking a study to investigate the potential of using the water in adjacent burns to generate electricity, then continuing the rigorous process to installation; (Thriving Communities) Humshaugh Village Shop – a community enterprise run by volunteers that saved the last shop in the village and now re-invests its modest profit in its own small grants scheme.

An award for a special contribution over the long term was given to Voluntary Rangers, Trevor and Dorothy Hardy, who have given dedicated and valuable service and expertise for fifty-one years from 1960 to 2011.

### **North York Moors NPA – Steve Scoffin Management Plan Consultation**

The National Park Authority has recently launched a public consultation on a draft Management Plan for the North York Moors. In addition to setting targets for the next five years, the plan also looks further ahead to what the area could accommodate in the longer term. It argues that with the right policies, investment and management, the North York Moors could deliver more food, increase the amount of woodland and grassland and encourage more visitors without harming the area's special qualities.

The consultation is available on the Authority's website at [www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/management-plan](http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/management-plan) and runs until 23 December 2011. The plan will be formally adopted in March 2012.

For more information contact Sarah Housden ([s.housden@northyorkmoors-mpa.gov.uk](mailto:s.housden@northyorkmoors-mpa.gov.uk))

### **New Apprenticeship Scheme**

Six young people have begun a one-year apprenticeship being run by the Authority in partnership with the Environment Agency with support from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and Askham Bryan College.

The new apprentices will spend around half their time on natural flood prevention measures and at the end of the year, it is hoped all six will have achieved an NVQ Level 2 in Environmental Conservation which will stand them in good stead to find local employment.

One of the Authority's former conservation apprentices, Deborah Cunningham, recently scooped Young Achiever of the Year at the Yorkshire & Humber region Prince's Trust Celebrating Success Awards.

For more information contact (Mr) Bernie McLinden ([b.mclinden@northyorkmoors-mpa.gov.uk](mailto:b.mclinden@northyorkmoors-mpa.gov.uk))

### **Quality Badge Award**

The National Park Authority has been awarded a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge becoming the first of the UK's 15 National Park Authorities to achieve the award.

Awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, the award combines quality of learning and safety into one easily recognisable badge for all organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences.

Each year, the Authority's education staff meets around 12,000 children and young people. Through activities including walks, habitat studies, map reading and arts and crafts, the Authority aims to raise awareness of the special qualities of the North York Moors.

For more information contact Sue Wilkinson (s.wilkinson@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk)

#### **North Yorkshire Moors Association – Tom Chadwick**

No report received.

#### **Peak District NPA – Roger Clarke**

##### **Direct elections on way for Peak District National Park Authority**

The Authority is recommending to Defra that all 22 of its council and parish seats should be considered for direct election when the scheme is piloted, probably in 2013.

Defra chose the Peak District and New Forest to pilot direct elections following a governance review. It then asked for the Authorities' views on how many seats should be directly elected.

At present, the Authority is governed by 30 Members, comprising:

- 22 local (16 district, county or city councillors and 6 parish councillors)
- 8 appointed by Defra Secretary of State for their expertise in national park issues.

As Defra ruled out direct elections for the Secretary of State seats, Members decided it would be unfair to select whose council or parish seats should be given up. They therefore put forward all 22, leaving it up to Defra to decide.

##### **Update for strategy on 4x4s and trail-bikes**

The Authority has updated its strategy on 4x4 and trail-bike use of unsurfaced tracks (Dec 2).

As featured in a BBC4 documentary "Tales from the National Parks" (Oct 31), a campaign was organised by residents and interest groups objecting to the loss of tranquillity, erosion and impact on other users.

The Authority instigated its first 18-month Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, excluding motorised traffic from a track near Edale in August. This is being challenged in the High Court by the Trail Riders' Fellowship.

The new policy is designed to speed up the process of resolving problems. The Authority has also set up a consultation group of police, highways authorities and user groups to work together on practical solutions.

##### **Joint solution to save Dovedale toilets**

The Authority is bringing together local interested parties to find a way to keep public toilets open in the iconic beauty spot of Dovedale.

Faced with drastic budget cuts the Authority can no longer afford the £17,000-a-year running costs, and has no other assets nearby to subsidise the toilets.

Following a public meeting, it invited parish councils, the district council, the National Trust (which owns Dovedale) and local businesses to work together on ways to run the toilets, possibly via a non-profit making company.

The high cost is partly due to a private pumping station and sewer which have to be maintained.



**Friends of the Peak District – Philip Hetherington****Longdendale pylons**

Our Trustees recently reviewed our position on the opposing aims of rail reinstatement or pylon removal/undergrounding of National Grid's high voltage lines in Longdendale. As a result we are now prioritising undergrounding and will be launching a strong campaign in 2012 aimed at NG and Ofgem, working with other concerned amenity groups, including CNP.

**Dairy farms and wind turbines**

We have had two recent applications, near or in the PDNP, for medium-sized single turbines (c.50-70m), to offset heavy electrical demand for milking parlours. Whilst we did not object to a proposal just south of the Roaches, near Leek (which has since been withdrawn), we are currently minded to object to a proposal for a 48m turbine near Parwich on the grounds of landscape impact. We believe the turbine is over-sized and will supply much more than the annual needs of the farm.

**Hydro electric power**

For the first time in decades, electricity is now being produced by harnessing the power of the River Wye in Ashford in the Water. After over two years work, the hundred year old turbine was reinstalled in the summer, and connected to the National Grid. The mill provides 15 KW of green power for 32 homes, and it will save 63 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere every year. Local firms were involved in the restoration of the turbine and its re-instatement and grid.

We've been closely involved in supporting this project, and think it is just brilliant!

**Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – Gwyneth Hayward****Welcome funding boost for National Park conservation project**

A stock grazing project which protects important grassland and heath in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has been given the green light following a successful bid to the Welsh Government.

Grants from the government's £1m Ecosystem Resilience, Diversity and Compliance Fund have been awarded to projects which restore and protect the natural environment across Wales.

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has received £20,000 to maintain and extend its *Conserving the Park* scheme.

The scheme helps landowners in the National Park to look after their grassland and heath so that it benefits wildlife.

For more information contact Geraint Jones: geraintj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or call 0845 345 7275.

**'John Muir' Jade achieves award success**

A Pembrokeshire teenager recently received recognition from the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development for achieving the 25,000th John Muir Award to be given in Wales.

Sixteen-year-old Jade Codd was one of 30 young people from Pembrokeshire who achieved the John Muir Discovery Award while taking part in this summer's Wildcamp, an annual diversionary project organised by Safer Pembrokeshire and partner agencies.

Jade was referred by Pembrokeshire County Council Youth and Community Services onto the Wildcamp project which involves a week based at the Castlemartin MoD Range, taking

part in a range of activities. The John Muir Award aspect of the camp was organised by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Discovery Ranger Tom Moses.

For more information contact Elaine Jones: [elainej@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:elainej@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 0845 345 7275.

### **Hollywood hits the Park again**

A Pembrokeshire Coast National Park beach provided the perfect setting for the recent filming of Hollywood blockbuster Snow White and the Huntsman in September.

The Park Authority and its partners worked with the production company to ensure Marloes beach and the Coast Path were protected during the filming and that visitors could still access the area, part of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Local businesses showed significant benefit from the cast and crew using local accommodation and services, with sightseers adding spending in the local area as well. The filming has also raised the profile of the National Park's stunning coastline on both the national and international stage, with worldwide interest being generated in the filming.

For more information contact Marie Edwards: [mariee@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:mariee@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 0845 345 7275.

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

No report received.

### **Scottish Campaign for National Parks – Robert Maund**

No report received.

### **Snowdonia NPA – Denis McAteer**

#### **Visitor Gifting conference**

On October 13th, the Snowdonia National Park hosted a Visitor Gifting Conference at Plas Tan y Bwlch Study Centre, Maentwrog. With the assistance of partners from the private, public and voluntary sectors, the aim of the conference was to explore ways in which businesses, attractions and destinations in general within the National Park can offer more value to the visitor through innovative schemes, funded largely by the visitors themselves. Similar schemes in other parts of Britain such as the Lake District and in European and North American countries have shown that offering the visitor an incentive to invest or give a small amount of additional money during a holiday stay, can benefit an area significantly. The conference heard about the experiences of a number of these existing schemes. This involved speakers from Wales and other parts of Britain as well as international contributors, with considerable experience of Visitor Gifting, both in operating such schemes and researching different methods of success.

#### **Taith Arduwy Launch**

The 19th September saw the official launch of the much-anticipated new footpath, Taith Arduwy Way. This 26km footpath from Barmouth to Llandecwyn takes around 3 days to complete in its entirety and offers some of the most spectacular coastal views in the country. The footpath is a mid-level walking experience that's split into 3 sections and uses existing Public Footpaths. There is emphasis on the use of sustainable transport to begin or return along sections of the trail by using road or rail connections. The footpath takes in part of the Meirionydd coastline and is linked to the various communities along the route. It's already proving a popular trail with walkers. The 3 sections of the route are as follows: (a) Barmouth to Tal-y-Bont (b) Tal-y-Bont to Harlech (c) Harlech to Llandecwyn. The route can be walked in either direction.

#### **Wonders of Snowdonia Project**

On the 18th of October 2011 the Snowdonia National Park celebrated its 60th anniversary

and as part of the celebrations the Park's "Wonders of Snowdonia" project was presented to the public. The aim of the project is to celebrate the diverse wonders within the National Park boundaries that make this area so special and unique. During the summer, the Park appealed to the public to nominate their favourite wonders within Snowdonia. The scope for nominations was wide and there was only one rule; each wonder must be within the National Park boundary. The Snowdonia National Park secured the support of sixty of Wales' most prominent writers who interpreted these wonders through the written form in order to tell a story and create a personal experience of each wonder. Alongside the literary element, a photographer has been commissioned to interpret the wonders through visual form. The completed project will contribute to a new exhibition at the National Park Visitor Centre in Betws y Coed, on the Park's communication platforms and as part of the ongoing 60th birthday celebrations. The project is funded by Literature Wales and the Arts Council for Wales. For more information about the project, contact Naomi Jones on [naomi.jones@eryri-npa.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.jones@eryri-npa.gov.uk)

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

#### **Relations with Community Councils**

One of the Community Councils in the National Park has written to us 'to express the concern of the members that the [Snowdonia Society] has too much influence over the SNPA's work, so that the SNPA has come to listen too much to what the [Society] has to say.' As a Council we would be pleased if the [Society] would not involve itself so much in the decisions of the National Park and allow them to carry on with their day to day business.' One Society member made similar points at our Annual General Meeting in October, and claimed that other Community Councils feel the same. It seems this has been prompted by our stance on the airfield proposal at Llanbedr. It led to a lively debate at the AGM, in which other Society members emphasised the extent to which they are involved in regeneration programmes and community initiatives.

#### **Tŷ Hyll Welsh Honey Bee Project**

The project to convert the Society's former office at Ty Hyll/the Ugly House into a conservation centre for the Welsh honey bee has reached a milestone in the form of selection of preferred bidders for the works contract and for the tearoom franchise. Funding of £150,000 has come mainly in the form of grants from CCW's EU-backed Communities and Nature project and from the Heritage Lottery Fund, but with contributions also from SNPA's Sustainable Development Fund and the Esmé Kirby Snowdonia Trust. The target is to open the centre in May next year.

#### **Trawsfynydd nuclear power station site**

There has been speculation a new nuclear power station might be built at the site of the former Trawsfynydd station. That is improbable in view of the physical limitations of the location; and the Local Development Plan says a new nuclear power station would not be acceptable in the National Park. However, the loss in due course of the 600 jobs still provided on decommissioning the former power station (as many jobs as were provided when the station was operating) will be another serious blow to the economy of the area. Discussions have taken place about designating the site as a local enterprise zone, and the Society is investigating the implications of that.

**Contact: David Lewis** [drlewis27@yahoo.com](mailto:drlewis27@yahoo.com)

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

No report received.

**South Downs Society – Richard Reed****Planning matters**

The latest proposed development at the former **KING EDWARD VII HOSPITAL** in the Western Weald, reported at our last meeting, is not being objected to by Natural England or recommended for objection by the NPA Planning Officer. SDS will be objecting at the NPA Planning Committee meeting on 14 November (after this report is being written). Our Society has decided not to object to a proposal for five 126.5m/415ft wind turbines at

**SHEPHAM LANE**, north of Polegate, near Eastbourne, and the A27. The development is over two miles from the Park boundary and seen from the crest of the Downs will be beyond the sprawling settlement of Polegate and against the background of low-lying farmland. Our stance may have future use in demonstrating that we are not opposed to wind power per se.

The Society has made its response on the **NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK** and is acting on Local Development Frameworks.

**Open access mapping**

The Society has carried out extensive work on mapping some of the Open Access areas to improve public access and knowledge. It was planned that the results would be published in conjunction with the NPA but the Authority has held back because a landowner objects to some of his property being in the CROW scheme, despite the time for objection having long passed. The Society still hopes that it will be able to publish jointly.

**South Downs Songs Project**

The Society is running this project over the next two years to offer local people the opportunity to learn of the many traditional songs of Sussex and Hampshire that are part of the cultural heritage of the Downs and Weald. The costs, including the employment of a South Downs Songs Manager, have been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Email: [enquiries@southdownssociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@southdownssociety.org.uk)

**Yorkshire Dales NPA – Malcolm Petyt**

No report received.

**Yorkshire Dales Society – Colin Speakman**

No report received.