

News from around the Parks

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

International News – Adrian Phillips

It is sad to report the death of Kenton Miller who was three times Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas of IUCN and a former Director General of IUCN. I wrote an appreciation of his very significant contribution to protected areas worldwide on the WCPA web site – see http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_focus/?7646/Kenton-Miller--a-personal-appreciation

The project being overseen by the UK Committee for IUCN on the application of the new IUCN guidelines on protected area management categories in the UK has completed the design stage. The data collection phase was launched at a meeting on London on 27 June, which CNP attended. It now seems likely that the suite of UK National Parks will continue to be accepted as Category V protected areas, supported by a 'Statement of Compliance' prepared by ANPA. For more information, go to: http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/Members/Cocker_Jennifer/Invitation%20to%20PNOTM%20launch.pdf

The UK's Tentative List of World Heritage sites has been updated (this is a necessary first step to WH nomination). The list includes: "England's Lake District, Cumbria"; the Slate Industry of North Wales; and The Flow Country, Scotland. See: http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/news_stories/7970.aspx

Brecon Beacons NPA – Carys Howell

No report received.

Brecon Beacons Park Society – Jim Wilson**Dark Sky Campaign**

The Brecon Beacons Dark Sky project has now gained the necessary funding and has been approved to move into delivery phase. This is a joint initiative between the Society and the Park Authority aimed at countering the problem of encroaching light pollution and mitigating its adverse effects. It is intended that by so doing to gain International Dark Sky Reserve status from the International Dark-Sky Association for the BBNP. Negotiations are advanced on how best to interpret/modify the IDA's criteria for application to National Parks in Europe.

Proposed Developments on the fringe of the Park

Developments just outside National Parks but nevertheless with impacts on the Parks (visual etc) are a growing problem. The Brecon Beacons appear to be one of the Parks under most threat by this issue. We are working with CNP to determine how best we and other Parks in a similar position can counter this threat.

CNP will be raising concerns about fringe developments with CCW and with the new Welsh Government Environment Minister when we meet him in September.

Wildfires

More than 2,000 acres of upland common and peat bog in the Brecon Beacons have been badly damaged by large wildfires. This is disheartening for the activists who have been working hard to protect these areas for many years. As global warming increases this is likely to be an escalating problem.

Rain Powered Cars Trail

Over the summer there will be a free trial of locally developed electric cars. This will be made available to visitors and residents as a sustainable travel alternative. The catch phrase being used is "Powered by Rain" as they are to be charged using local community hydro schemes so if it rains today it will power your car tomorrow.

Broads Authority – Rashmi Varma**Innovative technology brings the Broads to life.**

The Broads Authority is the first member of the National Park family to use 'augmented reality' mobile phone technology to teach visitors about the Broads.

When visitors point their smart phones at a landmark on How Hill National Nature Reserve the phones provide information about what's in view.

Giant 42" touch screens have also been installed in two of the three visitor centres to provide an exciting way to explore what wildlife exists in the Broads through 200 film clips, stunning photographs and fascinating facts.

Both ventures have been financed by the European STEP (Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks) programme.

Green accreditation for boats

A Broads boat hire company is the first business in the country to be awarded a new Green Mark accreditation for eco-friendly boats.

Norfolk Broads Direct of Wroxham received the grading when the Green Tourism Business Scheme launched its Green Mark for holiday cruisers in partnership with Broads Tourism and the Broads Authority.

The award is based on 25 criteria specially developed for boats including eco-friendly design, energy efficiency and waste management.

This is just one of many initiatives that have contributed to the Broads Authority being re-awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, five years after it first received it.

London children's first visit to the Broads

The Broads Authority's Sustainable Development Fund has given inner London children their first taste of the countryside. It subsidised two of five residential visits to the Broads that are being organised by the Country Trust this year.

The children, most of whom have never left London or their families, have been boating aboard the Authority's Edwardian style launch Liana, and a ranger's launch, hay raking, mini beast hunting and going on a Broads discovery trail.

The children were very attentive and some said they had never had so much fun in their lives.

Hilary Franzen
01603 756034

Broads Society – Peter Horsefield

No report received.

Dartmoor NPA – Diana Moyse**‘Dartmoor Needs You’**

As part of the 60th year celebrations of Dartmoor as a National Park there are lots of projects and volunteer days on offer throughout the year, all undertaking vital work to help to conserve and enhance the wildlife, natural beauty and cultural heritage. Whether it be helping to preserve Dartmoor’s prehistoric past, maintain footpaths, undertaking ecological survey work, carrying out vital litter clearance or helping Ranger Ralph there is something for all.

‘Share your favourite Dartmoor moment’

Also to celebrate the 60th Anniversary the National Park Authority is asking people to submit their favourite Dartmoor 'moment'. This could be a favourite view, a festival, a particular walk or maybe just a snapshot when everything (weather, company, timing etc) came together to give a very special Dartmoor experience. The entries will be listed on Dartmoor National Park Authority’s blog site dartmoornpa.wordpress.com. Further details of the Favourite Moments Competition and other 60th Anniversary events can be found at www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Ten Tors and the Jubilee Challenge

In this anniversary year, Ten Tors and the associated Jubilee Challenge for less able bodied youngsters provided a unique opportunity for young people to experience Dartmoor’s special qualities and the challenge of the natural environment. To mark the 60th anniversary the Dartmoor National Park Authority presented all participants with a commemorative certificate and the Authority had information presence on-site throughout the event.

The Big Bat Count

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), in partnership with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), ran a workshop on Saturday 2 July 2011 about bats in Britain and Dartmoor. The workshop provided people with an understanding of British bats, with a focus on those that are most commonly found in the Dartmoor National Park. Participants learnt where bats live and what they need to survive, and why the National Park is so important for bats. The workshop is linked to the Big Bat Count, a national voluntary survey, which is being held over the weekend of 23/24 July, but can be carried out on any day within three weeks of that weekend (between 2 July and 14 August 2011). For further information, contact Naomi Barker on (nbarker@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)

Dartmoor Preservation Association – James Paxman

The DPA are helping to sponsor the excavation of a Bronze Age kistvaen on the upper slopes of the moor. The kistvaen was discovered in 2001 when one of the retaining stones fell out of the eroding peat which covered the monument. It is likely that further erosion will continue and there are no obvious long term measures that can be put in place to ensure the survival of the archaeological information that the kist contains. The excavation is designed to compile a comprehensive archaeological record.

Congratulations to Dunsford Community Primary School on winning the Dartmoor Preservation Association Shield as part of the Edward Morshead Award. The DPA sponsors this award in recognition of the best contribution by young people to National Park purposes on Dartmoor. The school's Playground Equipment project aimed to maximise the use and enjoyment of the school's external space in part providing equipment made from locally sourced sustainable wood which in turn helped to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of Dartmoor.

DNPA has published its Development Management & Delivery Development Plan Document containing policies to support the Core Strategy. The consultation period runs until 23 September.

Exmoor NPA – Andrea Davis**A new partnership fund launched for Exmoor National Park**

A new funding programme has been launched by Exmoor National Park Authority. The Exmoor National Park Partnership Fund seeks to invest in good ideas and projects that will help achieve National Park purposes. The fund is open to communities, voluntary groups, businesses and individuals.

The new Partnership Fund will enable the Authority to support more bids from partners and the local community than before, alongside projects being developed by staff. It will also be a more open process as people will be able to see bids at least a week before the decisions are made at public meetings of the sub-committee.

Around £500,000 is available for allocation in the current financial year towards projects that meet the criteria of the fund. Projects must contribute to at least one of the National Park purposes.

(More details at: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/index/living_in/partnership_fund.htm or by phoning Dan James on 01398 322234)

Partnership Plan for Exmoor

The current Exmoor National Park Management Plan covers the period from 2007 to 2012 and over that time good progress has been made by the many people and organisations who have worked together on the 14 priorities identified in the Plan in 2007. These are currently being reviewed and the new plan will be a Partnership Plan for Exmoor 2012-2017.

Extensive consultation on future priorities has taken place in a variety of formats including a questionnaire in the Park Life newspaper which is delivered to every household on Exmoor, an on-line survey sent to 7,000 which resulted in more than 700 responses, a touch-screen survey in National Park Centres and specific events involving Authority Members and staff and partner organisations and groups.

A workshop for Members to consider the responses is being held in August and a draft Partnership Plan will be developed over the summer and early autumn followed by a further opportunity for people to comment.

The aim is for the Exmoor National Park Authority to agree the final Plan in early 2012.

Exmoor Society – Arabella Amory

Membership: The Society is undergoing a membership campaign and any information from other Societies on how to recruit new members would be appreciated.

The Exmoor Society Pinnacle Award. In order to encourage younger members the Society will launch a new award known as The Exmoor Society Pinnacle Award. £3,000 annually is available for young people aged 16-25 (individuals or groups) who are looking for financial assistance and who live, work or are studying in the Exmoor and Great Exmoor Area and/or want to develop a business, project or idea which is land based or related to rural development (which could include tourism).

Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership Scheme: This is a partnership between various organisations including government agencies, ENPA and NGOs (including the Exmoor Society) which has evolved out of the research document called 'Moorlands at a Crossroads' commissioned by the Exmoor Society in 2004.

The purpose of the partnership is to put together an action plan to secure long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for the moorlands of Exmoor through a range of interlinked programmes and projects.

There are 3 programmes and 15 projects which are HLF funded plus partner match-funding, and some independent funding. We have a management team in place and despite taking 6 years for this scheme to come to fruition, we now have only 3 years to deliver.

The Exmoor Society is involved in a number of the education projects and also the 'Reconditioning Moorland Character' project. As the Exmoor Society's representative I now chair the partnership, taking over from Rachel Thomas.

National Park Societies Conference, hosted by the Exmoor Society, 4-6 November 2011: The Conference has an exciting and innovative programme, addressing issues of particular importance this year with likely changes in how National Park Authorities go about their business and the opportunities there will be for the Societies.
Closing date for bookings is now 1 August 2011.

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 started the annual roll forward of its Partnership's Plan – the first National Park Management Plan prepared by the range of bodies that look after the National Park, rather than the Authority itself. Preparing and implementing the plan, first approved in September 2010, has successfully unified and focused delivery of our shared Vision for the Lake District.

Two partners have left the Partnership, following the Government's decision to close the North West Development Agency and the regional Government Office, but four new partners have joined:

- Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Nurture Lakeland (a charity dedicated to responsible tourism and visitor payback).
- Lake District Local Access Forum.
- A private sector representative from our Business Task Force.

Winning Bid for Sustainable Transport

A plan to turn the central and southern Lake District into a '*world-class*' hub of sustainable transport has won £4.89m from the Government's new Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The project's ambitious remit to '*transform how people get to and travel around the Lakes*' is targeted at the National Park's 15.8m annual visitors, said to be responsible for three quarters of all carbon emissions. Local residents will also benefit from improved passenger transport services and better systems of traffic management to tackle congestion and reduce delays. The project aims to ensure that the economic benefits of changed travel behaviour are captured by delivery through local businesses.

The bid from Cumbria County Council and the National Park Authority, called the Lake District Sustainable Transport Beacon Area maps out a four-year programme of investment and improvements that will combine the £4.89m with funding from the NPA, County Council, Stagecoach and other bus operators, Windermere Lake Cruises, Cumbria Tourism, and electric bike and car providers to create a total funding pot of £6.9m.

The money will join up passenger transport services so there is more scope for hopping on and off between bus, boat and bike on a day in the Lakes using a pay-as-you-go targeted "smart" ticket. Safe, continuous networks for walking, cycling and wheelchair use will also be developed, as will a network of pay-as-you-go electric bikes and low-carbon vehicles for

hire. This will all be presented through targeted information and enhanced destination marketing.

The improvements will concentrate around the tourist hotspots of Windermere, Bowness, Coniston, Ambleside, Langdale and Grasmere. We estimate that the shift towards more sustainable transport will save over 11,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2015, generate an extra 100 full time jobs and bring in an extra £7m per year through tourism revenue.

All systems go for Bluebird

The Secretary of State has confirmed new byelaws for Coniston Water, which will allow Donald Campbell's Bluebird to undertake proving trials before final installation in a purpose built exhibition area in Coniston's Ruskin Museum. We have been working closely with partners, the Bluebird Project and Defra to enable a final programme of tests and trial of the craft, once the restoration of this historic and former world water speed record-holding craft is complete. Trials are expected to take place in late 2012 or early 2013.

For more information contact Bob Cartwright, Director of Park Services:

Email: BobCartwright@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Tel: 01539 792679

Friends of the Lake District – Andrew Forsyth

The Future of the Public Forest Estate

Success! Following considerable efforts to try and secure a visit to Cumbria by the Independent Forest Panel, it has decided that there is some value in coming to the county and will come – however, on a date yet to be announced. The plan will be to expose the Panel to as many different aspects of forest management and practice in the county as possible during the visit. The Panel will now not report back to Government until the Spring of 2012 so there is still time to make a difference. We have already planted some new trees as a result of funding collected during the public campaign earlier this year and intend this to be the start of a public appeal to create new woodlands in the National Park and wider Cumbria, to contribute towards the target of increasing woodland cover nationally.

Windermere Byelaw Review

At its meeting on 22 June the Lake District National Park Authority members endorsed the recommendation that they should seek to bring forward evidence to confirm the amendment to the Byelaws to make the speed limit on Windermere 10 knots rather than 10 miles per hour. Friends of the Lake District remains firmly of the view that this change should not be confirmed in the absence of compelling evidence that all the requirements established by Alan Alesbury, the Inspector at the Public Inquiry, can be met by the higher limit, and we will examine the NPA's evidence against that background.

National Park Boundaries – Next Stage

The second 12-week public consultation closed on 1 July and we have been working hard to encourage Members and others to respond positively. Friends of the Lake District has made some constructive comments on minor issues surrounding the proposed boundaries and, whilst agreeing that the recommendation is finely balanced, have plumped for putting the Orton Fells into the (Yorkshire) Dales National Park 'on technical grounds'. We now hope that the Natural England Board confirms the proposals at their meeting on 28 September and forwards Variation Orders to the Secretary of State – then the fun will begin!!

New Projects

We have made a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new project – Our Green Heritage. Our project focuses on the heritage of and on registered town and village greens and open green spaces in Cumbria. These spaces are multi functional and significant in number, but are under threat. The project aims to resolve this by helping communities to gain access to

information and skills and through developing a long lasting legacy via a federation of green spaces and village greens. There is a thread which connects the current Our Green Space project, which ends in December, and this new project, although this will not be a continuation project. We expect the bid to go to the Heritage Lottery Fund board in September in time for decision to enable the development year to start in January 2012.

We are also taking a significant part in a project, 'Rural Skills Cumbria – Work the View', being run by the Scottish Agricultural College and funded by RDPE Leader. FLD's part is in developing landscape/habitat skills training/demonstrations/competitions with farmers, foresters and land based contractors in areas connected with HLS Agreements (including ponds, hay meadows, walls, hedges, orchards, carbon habitats and vital uplands).

New Forest NPA – Bob Morris

Enhancing the Forest's landscapes and habitats

A landscape and wildlife spring workshop was held in April at Lyndhurst Community Centre. It was an invitation only event with all those on the New Forest Consultative Panel invited, including all the Parish Councils both within the New Forest National Park and the District Council area, as well as all the Estates that lie within the National Park or just beyond its boundaries. Those attending were able to find out more and talk to the partners involved in the landscape and biodiversity plans. The event offered the opportunity to meet others interested in projects to help to conserve and enhance the Forest's special landscape and wildlife.

Agreeing positive recreation management

The Recreation Management Strategy Working Group is considering its views on the Cycle Working Group's proposals for the improvement of cycling provision. The RMS Working Group is also considering a first draft of the main connections within a proposed Core Routes network.

New Forest Association – Peter Roberts

IPF

Much thought has gone into preparing a submission to the Independent Panel on Forestry. We agreed on the importance of keeping the New Forest Crown Estate together as this provides both housing and back-up land for commoners use. The removal of commercial softwood forestry is also key together with the appointment of landscape managers. The New Forest could be the basis of an Ecological Restoration Zone linking Lawton report and White Paper 'The Natural Choice'.

Education and Events

A much fuller programme of events is starting. Links to education are being established whilst working to mesh with existing providers.

Image enhancement

Work continues on ways to improve our public image through appointment of a PR consultant. A new website is being considered along with links to social media.

Planning

Concerns were raised at industrial scale photovoltaic cell electricity generation. A local billionaire has withdrawn his original plans for a large building on an inappropriate site after considerable informed opposition by NFA. He is now attempting to bypass the planning system by obtaining a Certificate for Lawful Development for an existing building.

Northumberland NPA – Peter Nicholson

No report received.

North York Moors NPA – Steve Scoffin**Yorkshire's rarest butterfly spotted in National Park**

Pearl-bordered Fritillaries are nationally scarce and in Yorkshire the butterfly has survived on just two sites in the past decade.

The caterpillar feeds on violets growing in bracken-dominated grasslands on limestone soils. When foliage becomes overgrown, not enough light reaches the ground, preventing the wildflowers from growing.

The Authority has been working with Butterfly Conservation to clear dense areas of bracken and scrub, restoring the habitat to suit the butterfly's needs. Volunteers regularly attend the site and their hard work was rewarded last month when five butterflies were seen enjoying the spring sunshine in an area where they had previously been unrecorded.

For more information contact Rona Charles, Ecologist, 01439 770657 or r.charles@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

Recognition for apprenticeship schemes

The Authority has been included in a list of the top 100 apprenticeship employers in England compiled by the National Apprenticeship Service. We currently offer apprenticeships in business administration and conservation management.

This wonderful accolade follows on from being shortlisted for the Medium Employer of the Year at the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Apprenticeship Awards. Although we didn't win the competition, the Authority was awarded a 'highly commended'. We'll be entering again in 2012, hoping to go one better!

For more information contact Ian Nicholls, Assistant Director of Corporate Services, 01439 770657 or i.nicholls@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

New chair and deputy chair elected

At a meeting on 27 June 2011, Jim Bailey was elected chair of the North York Moors National Park Authority. At the same meeting, Philip Lawson was elected to the post of deputy-chair.

Mr Bailey has been a member for 12 years and latterly chaired the Authority's Planning Committee. He farms in the North York Moors and is a keen supporter of local economic and environmental issues.

Philip Lawson is one of the Authority's Secretary of State appointed members and joined in 2003. A former lecturer in rural planning at Nottingham University, he is involved with several local organisations including Thirsk Museum and the Thirsk Community Woodlands Group.

North Yorkshire Moors Association – Tom Chadwick

The Association has lost a long-serving (12 years) Council member with the death of John Farquhar. John had an expertise in dealing with local and government consultation exercises as well as planning matters. He was also our link with the Ryedale branch of the CPRE and will be missed by us all.

Projects

The present involvement with three projects is continuing with some success. The Cornfield Flowers Project is a flagship conservation programme of national importance in recovering endangered plants of arable land and the two Project Officers we employ have had a busy and successful year so far. Our National year of Biodiversity contribution has also progressed with bracken clearing and some Spring tree planting. Due to the extremely

dry conditions the planting had to be halted and we lost much of the Springtime planting opportunity. This will now continue in Autumn. The National Park project for development at the Sutton Bank Information Centre is still waiting for the outcome of grant application. This project includes NYMA as a partner in a conservation and improved access programme.

2011 Conservation Award

The biannual "Conservation Award" was made at our AGM in June. This award is made jointly by the North York Moors National Park and our association and worth £500. The award was shared this year between a River Corridor improvement scheme on the river Esk and a Wildflower Hay Meadow and Wetland development near Robin Hoods Bay.

Gas production and mining

The shadow of three major intrusions in the National Park is still very much a concern for us. The gas production and processing is presently on hold until matters of safety have been dealt with and this has delayed the planning application by Moorland Energy Ltd coming before the authority till at least September. Egdon Resources UK Ltd are still suggesting that they will be applying for permission to sink an appraisal well before the end of the year in a particularly sensitive area of the NP in Westerdale. Finally the threat of a major potash development, the largest for forty years, between Whitby and Scarborough along the Heritage Coast, has moved closer. The company York Potash Ltd owned by Sirius Minerals have made a start on what will be ten boreholes to determine the extent of the polyhalite they intend to mine and more importantly where they will situate the mine. The drilling operation is expected to take about a year.

Tom Chadwick
Contact tel. 01287 660 195
e-mail tomandsuechadwick@btinternet.com

Peak District NPA – Roger Clarke

Local people help draft National Park Management Plan

The Peak District National Park Authority has received more than 100 responses to a three-month public consultation on its draft National Park Management Plan. The plan, which will guide policy from 2012 to 2017, revolves around a five-part, interlinked vision statement.

The consultation (Apr-Jun) included a web-page with YouTube clip, an online questionnaire, focus groups, emails and letters.

The draft plan was produced with local businesses, farmers, land managers, voluntary and community groups, councils and environmental organisations.

All responses will be analysed and the draft amended ready for submission to the full Authority by the end of 2011.

www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp-join-our-conversation.pdf

Former railway tunnels opened for cyclists, walkers and horse-riders

The Authority's re-opening in May of four Victorian railway tunnels on the Monsal Trail has created an impressive new route for cyclists, walkers and horse-riders.

The 8.5-mile stretch of a former London-Manchester rail link that operated from 1863 to 1968, has proved immensely popular.

The re-opening was made possible through the £2.25m Pedal Peak District project, funded by the Department for Transport.

Five major surveys of the Headstone, Cressbrook, Litton and Chee Tor No.1 tunnels had to be carried out before the project could start (ecological, archaeological, bats and two structural), followed by the removal of 500 tonnes of junk, repairs, resurfacing and installation of low-energy lighting and information panels.

Interpretation includes listening posts of memories of former rail workers.
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/monsaltrail

Authority pulls back from running estates

The Authority is about to invite interest in its 524-hectare North Lees estate, which includes the spectacular Stanage Edge climbing crags.

It will invite proposals from like-minded bodies that would protect conservation, recreation, wildlife, heritage and sustainable farming, as it did with the Eastern Moors estate near Sheffield – now leased to a partnership of the National Trust and RSPB.

It is currently assessing three proposals to lease or buy its Roaches estate in Staffordshire, from the National Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the Land Trust.

It has also sold its Losehill Hall environmental learning centre at Castleton to the YHA, which will run it as a youth hostel and learning centre, with accommodation for the Authority's learning team.

The thinking behind this is not just to save money, but to work in partnership with other bodies that have considerably greater resources to invest in enhancing the National Park.

Friends of the Peak District – Philip Hetherington

No report received.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – David Ellis

Woodland centre builds house in one night

The ancient concept of building a house in one night – Ty Unnos in Welsh - was put into practice recently at Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre, owned by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority..Practitioners gathered to see a building framework made up of prefabricated Sitka spruce box beams to form a structural portal frame.

This sustainable and relatively simple building system was developed by Coed Cymru, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Welsh School of Architecture, University of Wales Bangor, with principal contractors Cowley Timberwork and Burroughs of Cardiff.

The certification of the system and this profile raising event were supported by the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Fund, managed by the National Park Authority.

For more information contact Iwan Parry, Coed Cymru Officer:
iwanp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or call 01646 624831.

Schoolchildren help launch The Secret Marsh

A previously hidden part of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was recently revealed with the opening of The Secret Marsh, a new educational resource for local schoolchildren..

The previously inaccessible area of wetland at Freshwater East Burrows is part of the only Local Nature Reserve in the National Park.

Over the winter, National Park Authority Rangers, Wardens and Voluntary Wardens joined forces with members of community group FERN (Freshwater East Reserve for Nature) to

build a boardwalk through the marshland, plus a new pond and a bird hide which was thatched using reed from the marsh itself.

For more information contact Tim Jones, Ranger (South): timj@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or call 07866 771133.

National Park beauty spot pioneers underground cables scheme

An iconic beauty spot in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has become even more beautiful thanks to the removal of overhead power lines.

Strumble Head, with its picturesque lighthouse, is a prime location for bird and porpoise watching and attracts wildlife-loving visitors all year round.

Western Power Distribution (WPD), following consultation with the National Park Authority, has moved its cables underground. BT's local network business Openreach has also removed 18 poles and placed 600m of overhead cabling underground.

National Park Ranger for the area, Ian Meopham said: "This headland is not only part of the National Park, but also part of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

For more information contact Ian Meopham, Ranger (West): ianm@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk or call 07977 53186.

Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park – Peter Heard

At the AGM of the Friends in April, Peter Heard took over as Chairman from Graham Morgan and Caroline Walmsley was elected Vice- Chairman. The Friends also recently celebrated their 20th Anniversary with a highly successful dinner (at which Sara Edwards was our after dinner speaker) and an "Anniversary" boat trip to the higher reaches of the Cleddau.

Throughout this last period the NPA has been particularly active seeking views on two significant consultation documents; one a Draft Recreation Plan, the other a Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. As a consequence a great deal of time has been spent by the Friends on framing their responses.

With regard to the Draft Recreation plan, the Friends were enthusiastic about the NPA's track record on recreation which had resulted in the National Geographic Magazine voting the Pembrokeshire's Coast the second best coastline worldwide. The magazine further applauded Pembrokeshire for having a "very mature and established tourism industry that has preserved, rather than eroded the qualities that make this region so unique". The Friends believe that the goal for the NPA in the future is the continuance of receiving such accolades whilst also ensuring that there is no erosion in the Sandford principle.

To this end, the Friends supported the view that enforcement is not the remedy of first resort but believe it is essential that if education and persuasion fail effective steps are taken to ensure that sustainability is not breached. It is their view that education and persuasion are themselves more likely to succeed if it is clear that appropriate powers are not only available but enacted upon when necessary. They wait to see the wording of the final plan.

On renewable energy, the Friends are questioning some of the suggestions in a Land Sensitivity Study and endorsing the CNP's call for a review of the TAN 8 indicative capacity figures, so that they pay greater regard to the setting of protected landscapes particularly where they abut protected areas.

Milford Haven is one such area, and is highlighted by the report as possibly being suitable for a carefully sited "renewables screen" of medium to large scale turbines. The land sensitivity study also finds that the vast majority of Pembrokeshire's coastline is of "moderate to high" sensitivity, as opposed to "high", for small scale turbines up to 25m high

(with possible clusters of 2 to 3 or more). Wind crofting by farmers with 5 turbines is mentioned as a key concern.

The Friends have generally supported the principle of individual, small scale, 'one-off', isolated turbines within the park providing that they are appropriate in relation to the sensitivity of location. They have serious concerns about the implications of "clusters" and the consequential cumulative effects and also of the indicated zoning of the coast.

The Friends have made it very clear that they do not wish to see any expansion of their current stance and have stated that since the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the only Park where National Park status has been conferred because of the coastline, they would have expected 'high sensitivity' to apply to the vast majority of the coast, rather than just to a few very small locations. The iconic site of Strumble Head, for example, is not even regarded as "Highly Sensitive" and this, a site where the undergrounding of cables was only recently completed at the expense of a million pounds by the energy company. As a consequence, the Friends have called upon the NPA to review and re-designate the zoning of the coast more appropriately.

The Friends also felt that, with the advances of technology in other areas of renewable energy (particularly tidal energy), any extra demands on meeting renewable targets within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park should be focused on developing technologies that are not going to have a detrimental impact on protected landscapes and seascapes.

Finally, they concluded that where any proposals entail new or strengthened grid infrastructures, including new transmission lines, within or close to a National Park, every effort should be made to underground cables wherever possible. If this is not feasible then there should be a strong presumption against the development in the same way as a housing development may be prevented because the sewerage system would be inadequate.

Our detailed responses to both the consultation documents mentioned can be seen by going to our web-site, then to Policy/ Current Issues :- www.fpn.org.uk

Scottish Campaign for National Parks – Robert Maund Promoting a Strategy for National Parks

We have now secured sufficient resources to be sure of funding our joint project with APRS through its second year. Further fundraising will be necessary for the third year and a new effort is being mounted.

In developing our work on a Strategy for National Parks, we are not only looking at demonstrating a consistent approach to further national park designations and priorities, but also taking a comprehensive look at the benefits of National Parks and examining whether the current approach to managing National Parks in Scotland needs amendment and if so, whether this would require changes in the legislation.

Cairngorms National Park

The legal action by three NGOs, Cairngorms Campaign, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group and SCNP is still on-going. We have now reached the stage of final adjustments to our case and in the next few days our advocate, Sir Crispin Agnew will present us with a 'prospects' paper, which will allow us to assess the chances of a successful action against the Park Authority.

To re-cap: the NGOs are concerned that the adopted Local Plan does not sufficiently protect the conservation interests of the area. This crystallised in the gross over-allocation of land for housing, the vast majority of which will be priced beyond local needs, i.e. affordable housing. History shows that about 60% of open market housing in Badenoch and Strathspey

goes to the second home market and a further proportion of high-end housing goes to the commuting market.

Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park

We were recently represented at four days of hearings conducted by Government Reporters to consider housing policies in the first finalised Local Plan for the National Park. This enabled us to present a robust case for the retention of the housing occupancy policy that has served the Loch Lomondside villages so well for more than 40 years and which the Park Authority propose to relax without providing adequate evidence and reasoned arguments for the change in policy.

The developers of the proposed goldmine near Tyndrum have withdrawn their planning appeal which means we won't be required to spend further time preparing for a local public inquiry in the near future.

A revised scheme which claims a reduction in the scale of spoil from the mine and more sympathetic restoration work is now likely to be the subject of a fresh planning application. We intend to scrutinise the revised plans carefully as this proposed development is in an area of outstanding scenic quality.

Saving Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

SCNP, in common with all but one of the other 'Relevant Persons' involved in Wind Hydrogen Limited's appeal against refusal of their wind factory proposal, have failed in their claims for costs against WHL on the basis of their unreasonable behaviour by withdrawing from the Public Inquiry at the last minute even though it had been evident for many months that they had no solution to the aviation radar interference problem. By prolonging their appeal, WHL had necessitated SCNP/SYRP to complete virtually all the work necessary for the inquiry including final precognitions by our witnesses. The Reporter decided and recommended to Ministers that we should not be awarded costs because WHL had not been 'sufficiently unreasonable'. Those involved wonder just how unreasonable they had to be and how it was measured.

Snowdonia NPA – Denis McAteer

Eryri Local Development Plan

The Snowdonia National Park Authority adopted the Eryri Local Development Plan for the National Park area. The Plan will be the basis for decisions on land use planning within the National Park. This will be the first Local Development Plan adopted in North Wales and the fifth in Wales.

The Local Development Plan replaces the Eryri Local Plan, the Gwynedd Structure Plan relating to the National Park and the Eryri Affordable Housing Delivery Statement as the policy context for assessing development proposals within Snowdonia National Park until 2022.

The Plan aims to assure that new developments promote the principles of sustainable development by promoting the purposes and duties of the National Park through conserving and enhancing the National Park's Special Qualities. The Plan attempts to manage the effects of climate change, gives special consideration for the provision of affordable housing for local people and encourages sustainable economic growth.

The Snowdonia National Park 'App'

The much-anticipated 'Enjoy Snowdonia' iPhone App is now available. Developed by the Snowdonia National Park, the App is the perfect interactive mobile guide to explore and discover the Park. Whether you're in Snowdonia for the walking opportunities or want to explore the area at your leisure, our App has all you need for a great time. You can use the App to plan your activities before you arrive or use it whilst you're here to find out about

attractions and leisure opportunities in your area. Importantly, you can use the App's map based technology to navigate safely should you wish to undertake some of Snowdonia's mountain walks.

'Enjoy Snowdonia' has something for everyone from detailed map based information and directions on a range of walks to a comprehensive guide to local attractions and points of interest; and it has a bilingual option of Welsh or English.

Our App has been designed for a specific purpose – to help visitors and locals experience Snowdonia at its best. Using the latest mapping technology that includes map based navigation, Ordnance Survey and Google maps with satellite imagery, you'll be best placed when out walking in Snowdonia. The built-in Ordnance Survey maps means you can view walks even when your phone is out of signal. What's more you can utilise your iPhone's GPS to find out about things to do in your area.

Pen y Gwryd and Pen y Pass footpath link in Snowdonia

The work on the much-anticipated footpath that links Pen-y-Gwryd to Pen-y-Pass has now been completed and is open to the public. Work on the path began in October and was funded by Snowdonia Green Key, an initiative that addresses issues on sustainable travel in Snowdonia.

The new footpath follows parts of the old track to Pen-y-Pass and will enable walkers to walk safely between the two points without having to venture on to the busy A4086, something which has been a major concern for both the highways agency and the Snowdonia National Park. For a number of years, walkers have used sections of the road and grass verges at Pen-y-Gwryd to park their cars, forcing people to walk on the road up to Pen-y-Pass.

Cymdeithas Eryri/Snowdonia Society – David Lewis

Staff changes

Gareth Clubb resigned as Director at the end of June on being appointed Director of Friends of the Earth Cymru. He had made a big impact during his year with us and, although very sorry to lose him, we wish him every success in his new role at national level. Conscious of the need to reduce our operating deficit Trustees decided to experiment with a leaner core staff. They have made our Assistant Director, Sarah Medcalf, Acting Director and recruited a part-time Office Administrator; Frances Smith will join us at the beginning of August to fill that post. One of our concerns was that the office should continue to have the capability to operate in Welsh despite Gareth's departure, and we are very pleased that (as well as being the strongest candidate in other respects) Frances speaks and writes Welsh fluently.

Conservation Snowdonia Project

The Conservation Snowdonia Project managed by Bea Kelsall has again been successful in obtaining grants from CCW and SNPA's CAE fund for managing practical conservation work by volunteers. The downside is that grants are now only for one year, and are not being decided or confirmed until well into the year to which they relate. Among other activities the Society is partnering SNPA and Forestry Commission in removing *Rhododendron ponticum* from Nant Gwynant, and partnering SNPA in seeking to eradicate Himalayan balsam from Lake Bala and its feeder streams. A steering group has now been established for the project, with representation from CCW, and hopefully in due course SNPA.

Small-scale renewables

While we would strongly oppose large windpower schemes within the National Park, and are opposing schemes we believe would damage its setting, the Society has long had a policy of supporting small-scale low-impact renewable energy schemes. We also believe,

however, that the potential contribution from any scheme has to be weighed against the damage it might do to landscape or other aspects of the environment. Because of the stage SNPA's Local Development Plan had already reached it did not have to include assessments of the potential for renewable energy in the National Park; SNPA is now looking to produce joint assessments with neighbouring planning authorities. Meanwhile there are increasing numbers of planning applications for small schemes, in part the result of canvassing by commercial firms. The Society will be pressing SNPA to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance on renewable energy in order to set out criteria against which such applications will be judged.

South Downs NPA – Sebastian Anstruther

No report received.

South Downs Society – Richard Reed

Planning matters

The Secretary of State has rejected the appeal on housing proposals at **Honey Farm** near Polgate. However, the Society was disappointed that the decision did not include the impact on the adjacent National Park amongst the reasons for refusal.

Another application previously reported, the **Horncroft Quarry**, has been withdrawn on the grounds that there has been a downturn in demand for sand from the building industry. The Barlavington Estate made it clear that the proposal has not been abandoned.

There has been strong opposition from the Society and many others to plans for further housing development on the site of the former **King Edward VII Hospital**. Housing development took place previously in the hope that it would ensure the financial future of the hospital but closure eventually followed. The current proposals are justified to pay for the restoration of the listed hospital buildings. The land is on the sandstone of the Western Weald and close to the precious heathland of Woolbeding Common. Chichester District Council, against the advice of its officers, supported the proposals but the decision will be made by the National Park Authority - an interesting test for its early days.

The National Park Authority has refused permission for the development.

Cuckmere Estuary

A decision has yet to be made about the future of the famous landscape of the Cuckmere Estuary. There has been understandable enthusiasm for preserving the status quo by strengthening the sea defences and raising the river embankments. In the face of rising sea levels this is tenable only in the short term. A solution has to be found working with nature to safeguard public access to an albeit changed landscape and avoiding greater flooding problems upstream. A public meeting with a variety of voting options showed how difficult it will be to reach a consensus. The Environment Agency, favouring a policy of managed re-alignment, is working with interested parties – particularly East Sussex County Council and the National Trust as principal landowners in the estuary.

Tea with the Chairman

The Society is arranging a number of meetings where local members are sent invitations to meet our Chairman over tea and cakes to learn more about our work. We view this as a valuable way of making personal contact with members that we never otherwise see. In June a meeting was held at East Meon in the heart of East Hampshire, where the Society so badly needs to build up its membership. Information was not one-way. The trustees attending were addressed by a local historian and guided round what must be one of the most attractive villages in the National Park.

Yorkshire Dales NPA – Malcolm Petyt**New structure for Authority comes into force on 1 July**

In the light of projected cuts in Government income of 31% over the next four years, YDNPA decided to make all necessary reductions at once rather than in stages. Around 35 staff have left (including some from senior management), almost entirely through early retirement or voluntary redundancy, and there has been a restructuring into just three Directorates. A number of work programmes have been cut entirely, following a decision to concentrate on what we do best and what is most “visible”. The most frontline staff, the ranger service, has lost only one member, but the operation of both sets of rangers has been modified. The Access Rangers will now be in two teams, rather than working to individual Area Rangers, and the latter have taken on various “specialisms” (volunteers, events, education, contracts etc) to cover areas of work where the staff formerly responsible have left the Authority.

Network Rail frustrate opening of new National Trail

Over the last eight years YDNPA has been responsible, with full funding from Natural England amounting to many hundreds of thousands of pounds, for establishing over 50 miles of the route of the new Pennine Bridleway as it winds through the National Park. Some parts of the route have involved repairing or upgrading existing tracks, but others have required the creation of new bridleway (including the crossing of Ribblesdale and a 50m timber bridge over the Ribble). The route through the Park is complete (and is already being used by horseriders, cyclists and walkers) – but it cannot be formally opened or signposted over three of the new sections because these involve places where it passes under or over the Settle-Carlisle line (via long-established bridges or underpasses). One of the train operators has insisted that YDNPA accept liability for any claims arising from a horse being “spooked” by a train at these places. The Authority (under its delegated responsibility from North Yorkshire CC) has been advised not to do so, and the position is currently deadlocked.

YDNPA cuts emissions by half

Carbon emissions from buildings and vehicles owned by YDNPA have been cut by nearly half over the last five years. And the Authority has cut its costs by nearly £60,000 a year in the same period. Latest figures show that in 2005/06 the Authority’s carbon emissions were 701 tonnes of CO₂ and in 2010/11 they stood at 385, a massive reduction of 45 per cent. In 2007 the Authority signed up to the Nottingham Declaration, committing to ensuring that tackling climate change was a cornerstone of its strategy. As part of this process, the Authority has since been implementing carbon reduction and wider environmental sustainability initiatives. It has invested in several projects, including a ground source heat pump in the Yoredale offices in Bainbridge and a biomass (wood-fuelled) heating boiler in the Colvend offices in Grassington. There have also been a number of smaller projects, ranging from energy saving improvements to buildings to fewer and lower-emission vehicles in the Authority’s fleet. Staff mileage has also been cut by a fifth.

Yorkshire Dales Society – Colin Speakman

No report received.