

# Peak District National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2019-20

## Foreword

The second year's delivery of the 2018-23 Peak District National Park Management Plan has been highly eventful. The pressures placed on farmers and local communities due to flood water and wildfires, in turn have been over taken by the singular priority of responding to Covid 19 with radical measures to protect the population from the spread of the disease.

Despite being over-shadowed by events I feel it is still important to recognise the hard work and endeavour of all who care for the National Park and draw attention to their achievements. The Management Plan was built on a new approach and I feel confident in saying that it is starting to provide results.

The Moors for the Future Partnership continues to deliver excellent results. This has been one of the busiest years for moorland restoration with 1024 Ha of sphagnum planted, 5300 gully blocks installed, 108 Ha of invasive species controlled and 27 Ha of bare peat restored. Alongside the practical work, scientific monitoring has continued apace with over 600 quadrats surveyed and water table measurements taken at 1000 locations producing 11,000 individual readings to build our understanding of the valuable moorland habitat.

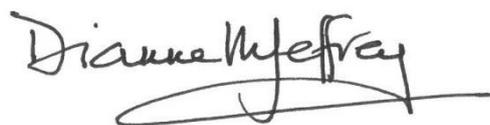
I would also like to cautiously welcome the first signs of improvement from our upland birds. Survey work has recorded good progress with some birds of prey species, a reduction in wildlife crime and improving relationships between raptor groups and game keepers. However there is still some way to go to restore breeding birds to the levels seen in the 1990s showing how important it is that we continue to support this areas of work.

Our work to support a future for farming is progressing. The White Peak has been selected as part of DEFRA's tests and trials programme to develop the new Environmental Land Management Scheme which will fund farmers and land managers after our departure from the European Union. This raises the prospect of being able to tailor future funding arrangements to best suit local needs.

We are maintaining our focus on encouraging enjoyment with understanding. There is a new system for recording and advertising public events which provides a clear opportunity for event organisers to make their events as successful and compatible with the place as possible. Plus a promotional drive to breathe new life into the countryside code via the #PeakDistrictProud initiative and I would encourage you all to support this via your own local networks.

The following pages provide more detail on our progress in 2019/20 delivery of the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23. Please feel proud of what we have achieved so far and consider how you may continue to support delivering these intentions in the future.

Yours sincerely



Dianne Jeffrey  
Independent Chair of the Peak District National Park Management Plan Advisory Group

## Introduction

The National Park Management Plan provides the framework that encourages everyone to work together to achieve national park purposes. It is not a plan for an individual organisation or group but a plan for the place. It is, therefore, a partnership plan. It is the single most important strategic document for the Peak District National Park. It shares with everyone what the main issues and priorities are. It then sets out how, together, we are going to tackle those issues over the next five years.

Since 2007 the National Park Management Plan has been overseen by an Advisory Group of partners who have monitored delivery and provided advice to the organisations involved. The group contains representatives from the following organisations:

Business Peak District  
Derbyshire County Council  
Environment Agency  
Farmers & Land Managers Forum  
Friends of the Peak District  
Historic England  
Local Access Forum  
Local Nature Partnership  
National Park Authority  
National Trust  
Natural England  
Peak Park Parishes Forum  
Rural Action Derbyshire  
Sheffield City Council  
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council  
Experience Peak District and Derbyshire

The management plan is organised around six main themes known as Areas of Impact, which are in turn broken down into a series of intentions.

### Areas of Impact

- 1: Preparing for a future climate
- 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management
- 3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale
- 4: A National Park for everyone
- 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding
- 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

## Area of Impact 1: Preparing for a future climate

### **Intention 1.1: Reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities**

To reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities, we will know which special qualities are most affected by climate change, and focus action on reducing these impacts. We will undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment on the special qualities of the National Park & produce a mitigation/adaptation plan setting out priority actions.

#### Update

We have completed the technical analysis for the vulnerability assessment on the priority 25% of National Park features that make up the special qualities. The assessment has looked at the most up-to-date climate projections (UKCP18) and reviewed all available scientific research on the sensitivity, exposure and the adaptive capacity of each feature in the context of predicted climate trends. This approach has used likely trends and processes to assign an overall score for the vulnerability of each feature. We are now using the feature assessments to determine the National Park special qualities vulnerability to climate change. Then the report will be finalised prior to publication next year.

To expand our actions to address climate change a summit took place on October 15th 2019 at the Pavilion Arts Centre, Buxton. The summit focussed on transport and agriculture / land management, as with the exception of Hope Cement works, these are the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the National Park. The cement works were excluded from the summit, as mechanisms to reduce those emissions do not involve a partnership approach. A total of 94 delegates attended from potential partner organisations with the ability to support initiatives to reduce the impacts of climate change. The outcome of the summit resulted in two new areas of action being included in the Delivery Plan linked to sustainable transport and land management.

#### Future Actions:

- Identify mitigation actions & priorities 2020-2021.
- Establish / determine delivery partnership 2021.
- Start implementing mitigation / adaptation plan

## Area of Impact 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management

### **Intention 2.1: Secure funding for future land management to benefit all**

To secure funding for future land management to benefit all, we will seek to create an ideal future farming and land management payment scheme in the Peak District National Park which helps to conserve and enhance the special qualities.

#### Update

The Defra contract for the delivery of the White Peak ELMS Phase 1 Test has been signed. This focuses on testing whether the National Character Area assessment can be used as a way of prioritising the public goods to be delivered under the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs) and how farmers and land managers can develop land management plans to deliver those public goods.

Farmer and land manager engagement has taken place via two group and seven one to one engagements. These included pre and post engagement questionnaires, the use of the full White Peak National Character Area (NCA) assessment and NCA summary and the new Carbon Ready Reckoner. The remaining group event and further one to ones are now delayed due to coronavirus but in the meantime National Park farm advisers are exploring how effective it is to carry out one to ones by phone and or video link. The early findings of this exercise show limited knowledge of public goods, an appreciation of the description of the White Peak in the NCA, recognition of the need for trusted advisers and specialist support, the importance of wildlife, cultural heritage and the need to generate public understanding and support.

The Environmental Land Management scheme policy consultation was launched in quarter 4 of 2019/20 with a deadline for responses of the 5 May 2020. The consultation has been paused due to Covid 19 but a revised deadline for consultation responses is not yet known.

#### Future Actions:

To have a new support package available from 2023.

*Note: The new Agriculture Bill and policy statement provides a planned timescale of 2025 to have new environmental land management arrangements in place*

### **Intention 2.2: Ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits**

To ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits; we will seek to restore populations of birds of prey to at least the levels present in the late 1990s, with the addition of hen harrier as a regularly successful breeding species.

Focusing on:

1. Fire risk
2. Visitor engagement
3. Resilient sustainable moorland
4. Moorland birds

Regular monitoring of progress against these areas of focus is carried out in partnership between Natural England, the Moorland Association and the National Park Authority. There is also an annual up-date on progress and agreement on the focus for the future year's activity with moorland owners, agents and keepers.

#### Update

##### **Fire Operations Group**

The fire risk map has been updated using the latest data. This has shown a significant change in the risk analysis, as it places less risk on access routes which were found to be the main risk area on the previous assessment. It now also identifies the risk areas on the urban edge of the moors, with some clear high risk areas which have unfortunately proved to be correct with the most recent fire events.

Following on from the wettest February on record were a worrying number of spring fires which extended into the Covid19 lockdown period. Plans have been put in place to increase resilience in the face of greater fire risk under changing climate condition. Resources are being made available in Calderdale and other local authority areas across the South Pennines, and Dark Peak will hopefully follow. This will include rolling out the new fire risk mapping (now available for the Dark Peak) across the wider South Pennines. It will also look at improving both resilience and

response to the issue of fire across the landscape. The Fire service requested a cease to management burning in the current Covid19 lockdown.

### **Access and Engagement**

This is mostly being addressed through the #PeakDistrictProud campaign. More details on which can be found under Intention 5.1

### **Sustainable Moorland Management Group**

The number of Long Term Management Plans signed up to by landowners in the National Park now stands at ten, with one more close to signing and three others in progress. Work on these is on hold until such time as Natural England can meet with the site owners and also get back out on site safely to assess each case. These plans are Natural England's main vehicle for agreeing the objectives of management on protected uplands.

The Secretary of State has written to moorland owners to inform them that legislation on moorland burning will be forthcoming later this year. Natural England have agreed with the Moorland Association that their Position Statement on not allowing the burning of heather on blanket bog will stand. However they will take any new, independently verified research into consideration around burning heather as a management tool in the future.

The Infrastructure and Planning events that were meant to be held in March have been postponed with an intention of rescheduling them in August or September 2020.

### **Moorland Birds**

There is the first signs of improvement from our upland birds. Survey work has recorded good progress with some birds of prey species, a reduction in wildlife crime and improving relationships between raptor groups and game keepers. However there is still some way to go to restore breeding birds to the levels seen in the 1990s. The lock down is currently impacting on the ability of the raptor volunteers to carry out monitoring at the start of the bird nesting season. The Moorland Bird Survey report is being reviewed at present to ensure the data, results and conclusions are sound. It will be published as soon as that work is complete.

## **Area of Impact 3:**

### **Managing landscape conservation on a big scale**

#### **Intention 3.1: Establish monitoring at a landscape scale**

We want to work with partners to help us to understand how and why the landscape is changing, whether changes are positive or not and how we should address the changes to conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park.

#### Update

To start this process, we have begun by identifying a programme of research to help us assess how the Peak District landscape is changing in a meaningful and practical way. Landscape incorporates many components; this means that a single project or indicator cannot explain landscape change. The programme of research we have selected aims to broadly measure change across the following themes;

- Land Cover (including long term change) – *what is happening on the ground?*
- Landscape Quality – *what are the features and factors impacting positively and negatively on the landscape?*

- Public Perception – *how people feel and respond to change?*
- Built Development – *extent and visual influence and impact?*
- Recording areas of known change e.g. *what impact have our restoration activities had; what do we know about the impact of moorland fires?*
- Climate Change – *What are the vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity of National Park features?*
- Landscape metrics – *how do data and Environment Plan indicators contribute to environmental and landscape change?*

These themes will be measured by a series of research projects that will be brought together in a Landscape Assessment every 5 years that will feed in to the National Park Management Plan, National Park Authority Corporate Strategy, the Local Plan and national policy.

### **Intention 3.2: Develop a White Peak partnership**

The White Peak Partnership is working through task and finish groups on key areas for development. The White Peak Pilot Ideas proposal has been accepted for phase 1 of Defra's Tests and Trials for the new Environmental Land Management scheme and this has remained their key area of focus throughout the year.

Defra have asked us and the other proposals to look at certain key policy questions. The White Peak Project will test:

- Use of a National Character Area framework to deliver public goods and the 25 Year Environment Plan in language accessible to land managers.
- Development of a 'ready reckoner' to show the public goods being delivered e.g. carbon.
- Trial of a nature recovery network.

The partnerships success has been key to the delivery of Intention 2.1 securing funding for future land management for the benefit of all, and further information is provided under than section.

### **Intention 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery**

To maintain existing landscape scale delivery we will develop a clear long term vision, plan and have funding in place for the Dark Peak and South Pennines to 2050. We will develop a clear future plan and funding to develop and continue landscape scale delivery on the South West Peak.

This has been one of Moors for the Future's most productive years with 5200 bags of brash cut transported and spread to help stabilise the ground, 5300 gully blocks installed to raise the water table and slow erosion, 1024 Ha of sphagnum moss planted to restart the creation of new peat, 27 Ha of bare peat revegetated and 108 Ha of invasive rhododendron plants removed.

The summer vegetation campaign was completed again this year which has been providing data since 2003. Over 600 quadrats have been visited to provide a vital record of species and each quadrat is also photographed to help long term interpretation. With this information we able to monitor the progress in halting the decline of nature across the blanket bog landscape. The autumn water table campaign was completed with over 1,000 manual dip wells visited each week, producing approximately 11,000 measurements during the period.

Natural England have agreed to support Moors for the Future in the development of an environmental features map. This will help to show physical land management delivery

completed to date to help demonstrate the amount of good restoration work that has already taken place in the Peak District National Park.

Asset Management Plan 7 (AMP7) arrangements with Severn Trent Water are now approaching the delivery phase. Discussions are still underway with two other water utilities. These plans identify the water industries investment over a five year period and are linked to their charges for water by the regulator Ofwat.

Planning is also underway to work with other partnerships across the North of England linking the whole blanket bog landscape between Sheffield and Scotland in a project known as the Great North Bog.

#### Future Actions:

Agreed targets for the percentage of blanket bog in the Dark Peak and South Pennines in improved ecological condition:

- 30% of Blanket Bog across the Southern Pennines to be in state 6 by 2050
- 90% of Dark Peak Blanket Bog moved out of state 2 by 2023 (bare peat to be revegetated)
- 25% of the Southern Pennine Blanket bogs to be moved out of state 2 by 2023

## Area of Impact 4: A National Park for everyone

### **Intention 4.1 and 4.2 Overcome physical and perceived barriers to access**

By 2023 we will be encouraging a wider range of people to enjoy the Peak District National Park at an appropriate scale and adding value to the visitor economy.

#### Update

A Peak District State of Tourism Report 2019 has been produced. This consolidates information on volume and value, the market, the destination, impacts and issues.

We are working with other English National Parks partners on a proposition for Phase 2 of the 'English National Parks Experience', this time focusing on the 'final mile', our domestic audience and sustainable transport. A funding bid has been submitted but the decision is delayed by Covid19.

## Area of Impact 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding

### **Intention 5.1: Balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment**

To balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment we will provide a refreshed Countryside Code underpinning a Peak District brand which all relevant partners promote equally and consistently.

A Partner Workshop was held in summer 2019 as part of National Trust's Peoples Landscape Project to kick start our efforts to refresh the Countryside Code.

This workshop and the working group it fostered, identified the impact of visitor behaviour, the audience groups we need to work with, the key messages we would need to share, and the most effective methods to do this. The result was the #PeakDistrictProud campaign

#PeakDistrictProud shares the positive ways in which people can help care for the national park; from taking home your litter and avoiding BBQs, to keeping your dog a lead during periods of wildlife activity and the use of drones, among a range of other actions.

The campaign – using a series of montage images captured from throughout the history of the Peak District - builds upon the core messages of 'respect, protect and enjoy' found in the Countryside Code. The campaign took a deliberate step away from more traditional warning or advisory signage currently found in many outdoor locations.

Led by the Peak District National Park Authority and National Trust, the campaign has based its seasonal messages on workshops held with a wide range of national park communities including conservationists, landowners and managers, local user groups and young people.

For more information follow the following link: <https://peakdistrictproud.co.uk/>

### **Intention 5.2: Ensure shared responsibility**

To ensure shared responsibility we will review and develop the current arrangements for events management in the Peak District.

The events notification system has been replaced with event guidance and a code of conduct for event organisers to sign up to. If they do this their events will be able to be added to a calendar and promoted on the National Park Authority website. Feedback from stakeholders about the new guidance and code of conduct has been very positive. Once things are back to normal, we will monitor this closely in its first year of operation and review performance at the end of the season.

### **Intention 5.3: Develop an awareness and understanding of the benefits of the Peak District National Park**

Utilising the valuable work of Inspired by the Peak District and the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark, consider a revised approach to the promotion of the peak District brand so we establish a provenance which is coherent and effective at promoting the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park.

A group was convened in 2019 to promoting the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park. In a series of meetings discussions have taken place on how we can influence Local Industry with a focus on "Clean, green productivity linked to a high quality of life" and using "Positive planning powers; allied with a proactive enabling role from District Councils"

## Area of Impact 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

### **Intention 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy**

To support thriving and sustainable communities and economy, we will first define what is meant by thriving and sustainable communities, in the context of the National Park Management Plan.

Work commenced to complete a village statement and audit for every parish by 2020, enabling a state of communities report to be drafted and an index of key indicators to be created as part of developing issues and options for a the new Local Plan. 93 Parish Statements have now been produced. In 60 cases the Parish Councils have chosen to engage closely with National Park Officers.

Discussion has taken place between the National Park Authority and the Peak Park Parishes Forum (PPPF) on separate pieces of work to define and better understand the concept of thriving and sustainable communities. PPPF have produced their own definition and National Park Authority officers welcomed a discussion in order to move towards a common definition,

### **Intention 6.1: Improve access to services**

To improve access to services we will work with providers to improve broadband and mobile connectivity across the National Park in line with the UK's Next Generation Access (NGA) standards.

An interactive map of the current situation in Derbyshire is available via this link; [MAP](#) and Staffordshire via this link: [MAP](#). A meeting occurred with Digital Derbyshire in October to discuss the expansion of broadband. The coverage of the National Park is improving gradually, but still likely to have difficulties in the most isolated areas.

The roll-out of improved mobile coverage to more remote areas and upgrading to 4G is starting to show improvements in the parts of the National Park that were previously poorly covered such as Monyash.

There was a meeting in August between National Parks England and Mobile UK to review the roll-out in National Parks. The National Park Authority met with National Parks England and Mobile UK, the industry body, to discuss how to improve mobile coverage in national parks. The industry is seeking more deregulation and the Government is considering a scheme to encourage better coverage.

### **Intention 6.2: Support the provision of locally needed housing**

To support the provision of locally needed housing we will work through the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group Housing Sub-Group to address the local need for appropriate housing in the National Park.

During the year 2019-20 there were applications approved for four new build affordable local needs houses. The Authority also approved two agricultural worker's dwellings and 56 additional open market houses.

National Park Officers have commenced a scoping phase on the required evidence for the next planning review and have also raised the need for shared strategic evidence with constituent authorities through duty to cooperate meetings in the hope that key pieces of work may be shared to assist cross boundary planning and make effective use of resources.

A new piece of research was completed into the potential for a Community Land Trusts in the National Park to aid in the provision of affordable housing. Looking into next year Officers will make arrangements for a parish and community event focussed on positive, innovative solutions to address housing needs in the context of the constraints and conservation aims of the National Park. Intended to bring together partners and encourage communities to come forward and take up the opportunity of joint working.

**Intention 6.3: Enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and wherever possible enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park**

To enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and, wherever possible, enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, we will assist the development of businesses in conjunction with relevant bodies. Linking business support, grant aid, planning and economic development.

Business Peak District, High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and Experience Peak District and Derbyshire and the Local Enterprise Partnership have continued to meet on a regular basis to progress this action.

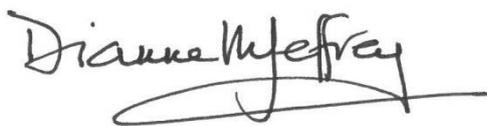
**Looking Forward – A message from the Chair of the Advisory Group**

With the dangers of Covid19 forcing the agenda and the path back to normality unclear it is a worrying time for all of us. I would like to thank everyone for doing their best under very challenging circumstances. With few exceptions, almost everyone has complied completely with the restrictions with good humour and no complaint. This time for reflection has reinforced in my mind the importance of our cherished landscapes to our health and mental wellbeing. Let us work to ensure that our National Parks can be an integral part of the National renewal that we all deserve once the outlook improves.

In the next full year of the Management Plan we intend to confront the impacts of climate change and measure our efforts against the scale of the task ahead. The services provided by the valuable landscapes of the National Park form an essential part of our ability to respond to climate change. We will push for greater peatland restoration, support regenerative agriculture and integrate more trees into the landscape.

As the current situation shows us so clearly, a National Park simply is not a National Park without visitors. To address their impacts we will seek to initiate an ambitious low carbon rural transport scheme which is both environmentally and economically sustainable. This will be one of our greatest tests and I am grateful for the support of partners in moving this forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Jeffrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the bottom.

Dianne Jeffrey