

6. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT (SLF)**

1. **Purpose of the report**

To up-date members of key items since the previous Authority meeting

2. **Recommendation**

1. **For members to note the report**

3. **Key Items**

Celebrating Peak District National Park’s 70th Birthday. April 2021 saw us celebrate our 70th Birthday, with our official birthday on 17th April 2021. We made the decision to pare back any celebration in the week before and on the day of our birthday in respect of the sad passing of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at the age of 99 and because the Duke’s funeral took place on 17th April. We instead recognised our 70th birthday the following week and on the weekend of the 24 April – coinciding with the events of the Mass Trespass, a pivotal event in national park history in its own right. A number of news channels broadcast our 70th Anniversary and we launched Chapter 3 of Voices from the Peak which can be heard [here](#).

Easing of lockdown up-date. As the government continues to progress through the four-step roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions in England, we are planning our operational activity appropriately. We continue to put the wellbeing and care of our staff, volunteers and members at the forefront of our approach. Under the government roadmap it is not until stage 3 and 4 that workplace measures are anticipated to change. We’re once again surveying staff to check how everyone is getting on and how people’s preferred working arrangements may have changed since our last survey. Alongside this, Heads of Service are identifying how factors such as combined home and office working may impact on our operations across the services. The data from both of these insights will help us in our plans as we return to the workplace over the coming weeks and months, which we’ll undertake in liaison with Staff Committee and Unison. We’ve also received approval for the Authority to offer a collect from the workplace home testing service and distribution and this will be distributed to staff when it is available. We continue to work closely with a wide range of partners to collaborate across the National Park to the easing of the lockdown restrictions. We are taking a cross park approach to consistent messaging as well as an area management approach in particularly critical areas where a multi-agency approach is required. We’re supporting a community ambassador scheme for litter picking and set up pop engagements to promote the countryside code. The most recent Parishes Bulletin 39 can be seen at appendix 1 and we are currently working on Bulletin 40.

National Park Grant confirmed for 2021-22. In early April I received notification of the National Park Grant (NPG) we’ll get from Defra for 2021/22. The National Park Grant for 2021/22 is £6,698,847.00. This represents a flat cash rollover of the budget we received in 2020/21 and includes the funding that was earmarked in 2020/21 specifically for biodiversity outcomes (and for 2021/22 this has not been ring-fenced to biodiversity). Defra have noted that “given other funding pressures across the department, we believe this represents a fair and affordable settlement.” We planned for a reasonable worst case scenario for the 2021/22 budget of a flat cash NPG settlement without the biodiversity fund. This notification that the biodiversity fund has been baselined into our budget for 2021/22 is positive news. It means the cuts we made last year to secure a balanced budget this year gives us some breathing space for this year and possibly into 2022/23, however further work is anticipated to be required from 2023/24 onwards. We will use this confirmation of our grant for 2021/22 to refresh our medium term financial plan and share this with members over the autumn to inform any

future decisions on spend. The 2021-22 Budget report to members at the February Authority meeting highlighted the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' transition proposal which is intended to provide funding to farmers via National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies. Suzanne Fletcher, alongside staff in other National Parks and AONBs, has been advising Defra as they have developed this proposal for delivery. While details of this scheme have not yet been released, we are hoping to hear imminently and any funding to be made available shortly, which will be ring-fenced for this initiative only.

Progress at Brosterfield. In 1998, the Authority gave planning permission for what was intended to be a touring caravan site at Brosterfield. This permission was subsequently contested by the then owner who argued that static homes could be sited there. The Authority challenged this interpretation, however after appeal the Authority's case was lost and the Authority accepted the permission could allow the presence of static homes. In 2012 the Authority, with the support of the community, purchased the site for £650,000, in order to protect the landscape and prevent it becoming an unconditional static caravan site, with the fully disclosed shared intention of reverting it to a touring caravan site. In February 2020 the Authority's planning committee granted planning permission to allow for plans that were in line with those intended from the original 1998 permission at Brosterfield caravan site. In February 2021, the Authority considered options for the site and agreed to sell the site to the Foolow Community at an agreed price, with exchange of contracts by 28 February 2022, subject to gateway reviews being passed by the Foolow Community proposals. The first gateway being the submission of a robust business plan by the community. In April the Brosterfield Officers Working Group reviewed the business plan presented to it by the Foolow Community (now called the Foolow Wildwood Project Community Team – 'The Team') and have confirmed this has passed the first gateway review in accordance with the National Park Authority Committee minute (Minute No 7/21). The Team have been informed and has launched wider fund raising campaign including a web site. The Team has agreed to provide regular updates to the Brosterfield Officers Working Group on their progress.

All Party Parliamentary Group for National Parks meeting on 27 April 2021: National Parks at the Heart of Nature Recovery – This meeting was supported by National Parks England (NPE). As the lead National Park Officer for nature recovery across England I provided an overview of National Parks England's Wildlife Delivery Plan, explained National Parks aspiration to be beacons for nature recovery, and made the argument for how, with our expertise, knowledge and convening power, Protected Landscapes can deliver effective landscape-scale nature recovery. Howard Davies, Chief Executive, National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty gave a brief talk to illustrate how initiatives delivered collaboratively by National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty can deliver nature recovery objectives more effectively. Neil Heseltine, Chair of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and a fourth generation farmer provided a personal perspective on how farmers in protected landscapes can be helped to make the sort of transformation that will be needed to deliver nature recovery and other public goods as part of viable future farm businesses.

National Parks Experience Collection. In January 2020, the Programme and Resources Committee gave approval to submit a bid to round five of the Visit England Discover England Fund (DEF) to further develop the English National Parks Experience Collection. In considering the report Members asked for feedback about how successful the previous project had been and suggested that the next stage should consider sustainable tourism particularly encouraging domestic overnight visitors. After some delay due to the pandemic we were successful in securing funding from Visit England. The initial phase of the project ran from in January 2018 to September 2019, with the latest phase starting in October 2020 and running to April 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted bookings and trade interest. In summary the full project has delivered in three key areas:

- **Business support and product development:** the initial phase delivered 72 new visitor experiences along with 85 accommodation providers curated into a new branded travel-trade focussed 'National Park Experience Collection' showcasing the unique offer of England's National Parks; a model for delivering ranger experiences in 6 National Parks: supporting over 150 businesses across the nine national parks with help from newly created toolkits and research and we held 250 training workshops for businesses. In this later phase we have supported the creation of 33 new experiences for domestic consumers with a total (to date) of 79 experiences bookable to the domestic consumer across all 10 National Parks and 13 new businesses entering the collection. We anticipate this number to grow, and having added the New Forest to the Collection in this phase we are already on boarding a business from Pembrokeshire Coast.
- **International market:** new marketing collateral created for the international travel trade, with a focused website and buyers guide, which has been updated with the revised Collection.
- **Domestic market:** a new consumer booking platform hosted by the UK National Parks website (www.nationalparks.uk), with the booking powered by a third party, showcasing 79 experiences across all 10 English National Parks
- **A sustainable legacy solution** for on boarding new businesses and managing this collection in the future. Welsh and Scottish Parks are now actively considering the opportunity to join the collection.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Parishes Bulletin 39

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive, 13 May 2021