



Dipper - image used as part of World Rivers Day,
credit Northumberland NPA

Aug-Sept 2022

NPE Bulletin

A Message from Andrew McCloy, NPE Chair:

"At the UK National Parks Conference in Exmoor at the end of last month we joined with colleagues in Scotland and Wales to consider how we can all rise to the key challenges of the day and show a collective vision and leadership. But for the English National Parks there is currently an inescapable backdrop of political and funding uncertainty, which is why it's never been more important for us to have our own clear, informed and authoritative voice through NPE."

Meetings and Correspondence

- **Core Grant:** NPE Chair Andrew McCloy wrote to Defra Minister Lord Benyon seeking support for the National Park core grant to assist with the financial pressures facing NPAs. We also asked for greater clarity on Government priorities for NPE and NPAs. The Minister has since replied, saying that in order to better understand the implications of financial pressures for individual organisations, Defra officials will discuss with the CEOs of the National Park Authorities NPAs in their forthcoming annual reviews, and to explore all opportunities to increase the scale and diversity of funding resources available.
- **New Government:** we have sent an introductory letter from the NPE chair to new Defra secretary of State Ranil Jayawardena. The letter invites him to visit a National Park and highlights the role of National Park Authorities in 'sustaining a high-quality environment that benefits both people and nature.' On Defra's request we have also shared case studies and statistics related to the economic value of National Parks and projects related to water quality, for Ministerial briefings.
- **Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership (LPT):** Trevor Beattie, David Butterworth and Jo Swiers have all been contributing to sessions focused on the establishment of this new partnership. At a workshop on 20th September Defra highlighted that they are keen to pick up the pace and have the structure for the partnership in place by April 2023.

- **NPE Task and Finish Working Group:** following our previous update, two meetings convening the group looking at this have taken place, and a paper is being prepared by David Butterworth for the Board meeting in November.
- **NPE Delivery Plans:** Jo Swiers is working with lead NPO's to review progress with our four delivery plans in the two years since they were launched and, looking ahead, to update their ambitions and targets.
- **Tripartite meeting of Chairs:** Chairs and CE's of NAAONB, NPE & NE met on 8th September to discuss next steps for working together as part of their Joint Agreement. We used the opportunity to highlight our work establishing a carbon baseline for each National Park, including a presentation from Chris Fairbrother, Landscape & Biodiversity Strategy Lead.

Key Events & activities

- **ENPOG update:** NPE are supporting the group with work assessing NPA's medium-term financial situation, as well as looking at income generation across National Park Authorities
- **Landscapes for Everyone** – Tony Gates, NPE Lead Officer for this delivery plan, has put together a business case to help drive forward our work in this area, which has now been shared with Defra and other potential partners and funders. This proposes that NPE establish a Landscapes for Everyone Programme Board which would involve key partners and build on established good practice.

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Spotlight

EFRA Select Committee – In August, the Parliamentary Committee approached NPE to give evidence to their inquiry into ELMS. Tom Hind, Chief Executive of the North York Moors National Park Authority, spoke on behalf of NPE. He highlighted the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme as an example of how protected landscapes are delivering on the ground - utilising local facilitators, good partnerships, and local knowledge. Our recent publication, which we reported on in the previous Bulletin, showcases some of the projects which have benefited from this funding. Discussion also focused on the need for ELMS to support partnerships between land managers and Protected Landscapes, and the importance of targeted local nature recovery schemes which enable good partnership working. Since the session, there has been more media speculation around the future of ELMS, which we will be monitoring closely. You can view the full evidence session online via the [parliament.tv](https://www.parliament.tv) channel

Key Events & activities

continued

- **Nature Recovery:** we have been working with Alison Barnes, Nature Recovery Lead Officer, to help build support for our ambitions. Following our launch in the Summer, showcasing nature recovery across the National Parks, Alison is convening Conservation Directors in October, along with the RSPB, to discuss up-scaling existing partnerships. They will also discuss how to drive forward 'Team Nature Recovery' at the pace needed.
- **Strategic Engagement Manager:** we have advertised internally across the NPA's this 1 year Defra funded post to support the establishment of the LPT, and will also advertise externally. The post will support NPE with the establishment of the Partnership along with a wider set of responsibilities to drive forward our delivery plans
- **APPG for National Parks:** the next APPG meeting date has been confirmed as 15th November and will focus on farming. More details about this will follow. We will also be meeting soon with Gary Streeter, Chair of the APPG, to discuss setting out a programme of meetings for the next 18 months.
- **National Park Management Plans:** NPE conducted a survey looking at the organisations that NPAs consider are key to successfully implementing the Management Plans in their Park, with a view to discussing how NPE can strengthen connections with those partners that are important to all NPAs nationally. We have also been busy updating the go-to place for seeing all nine National Parks Management Plans on our website, so do take a look.

- **Social Media highlights:** we worked closely with CNP to publish a guest blog by Alison Barnes about [Nature Recovery](#) (see previous section). We have also been showcasing some wonderful examples of projects across National Parks, including the re-introduction of pine martens in Exmoor, and Moors for the Future, a partnership which includes the Peak District National Park. We used [World Rivers Day](#) (25th September) to showcase some of the rivers and other wetland habitats with the English National Parks, and supported the launch of the Green Shoots element of [Green Pathways](#), the NPUK initiative which aims to inspire and support green economy careers.
- **NPE social media channels:** some of you will follow our Twitter feed @natparksengland, but did you know we are also on LinkedIn? We are utilising this platform more as a way to share our messages with a wider policy audience. Please do find us on-line and support/share our posts wherever you can!
- **Facts & Figures:** Paul Hamblin has been collating recent key data from across the English National Parks. This includes new data on the amount of ancient woodland in England's National Parks, and the health and wellbeing benefits of the 9 English National Parks. This information is invaluable for our work with stakeholders, and for giving colour and substance to our coms work.

Did you know?.....DLUHC data shows English NPAs approved **91%** of planning applications made to them in year ending September 2021 - compared with the national average of **88%**



Young group learn restorative landscape skills and management as part of Green Pathways. Credit Dan Wildey Media

UK Collaboration

- **The 2022 National Parks UK Conference** took place in Exmoor from September 27th to 29th with the theme: 'What does the nation need from National Parks today?' Key items on the agenda included nature recovery, responding to climate change, ensuring that landscapes are accessible to all, and how local communities and rural economies can be supported while delivering for the nation. External guest speakers included Julian Glover OBE, and NFU president Minette Batters.
- **Access Unlimited Coalition:** the final report on the Generation Green initiative has been finalised. Green Pathways, highlighting specific programmes undertaken within National Parks, was launched at the beginning of the current school term, and additional Generation Green material will be hosted on the National Parks UK website.
- **Net Zero with Nature Week:** this will take place in the last week of October, focusing on progress made over the past twelve months. Revere project-led restoration of natural habitats using private capital, and a significant announcement in support of sustainable tourism with a global industry partner, are among key moments of the five day campaign. Individual National Park initiatives to address climate change, improve biodiversity, and restore nature will also feature, and NPE will also be supporting with coms activity.