



Cyclists on the Keswick to Threkeld trail, Lake District NPA

Oct-Nov 2022

# NPE Bulletin

## A Message from Andrew McCloy, NPE Chair:

*"The recent political volatility has made it challenging for us to develop relationships with successive ministers and secretaries of state and explain the value of our work. Despite, or possibly because of this, we have been ever more strident in our message that National Parks need to be adequately resourced if we are to deliver our ambitious agenda for the country. However, given the seriousness of the situation now faced by us all, we have no alternative but to amplify our voice further and get across to politicians and the public alike that National Parks in England are at crisis point."*

## Meetings & correspondence

- **New Government:** as per Andrew's message above, there have been further changes to Ministerial and other senior members of Government. We have written to new Ministers Thérèse Coffey and Trudy Harrison, as well as key opposition MPs. We have also been briefing CEOs and NPE Directors on the personnel in the Rishi Sunak government and their links to National Parks
- **NPE Board:** the NPE Board meeting took place in York on 3rd November. We are delighted to say that Neil Heseltine has been elected as Vice-Chair of NPE. An important outcome from the meeting was the commitment to focus on NPE communications in the months ahead - against a backdrop of policy and financial uncertainty for National Park Authorities
- **Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership (LPT):** - NPE's contribution to the establishment of the LPT has picked up pace recently, with weekly meetings supporting the development of a Business Case for Defra to submit for funding. Trevor Beattie and Jo Swiers have been supporting this work. The aim is for the partnership to be up and running by April 2023.
- **Pre-finance meetings with Defra:** annual finance meetings between individual National Park Authorities and Defra are currently underway, with each Authority presenting an update on their achievements in the past year. A short note highlighting the NPA's joint achievements has been shared with Defra to set the context.
- **NPE Task and Finish Working Group:** a paper prepared by David Butterworth at the recent Board meeting set out options for a future funding model for the NPE secretariat, also looking at the split of NPE work between individual NPA's and the secretariat. It was agreed that the current model of delivery should be sustained for the next year, with a commitment to review this in more detail in the coming months
- **APPG for National Parks:** due to the recent changes in Government and uncertainty around personnel, a decision was made jointly with NPE and Gary Streeter, Chair of the APPG, to postpone the meeting which was due to take place on 14th November. We will be discussing next steps and will update once we have more information.

## Key events & activities

- **Landscapes for Everyone:** Generation Green, the 16 month partnership project, provided more than 115,000 opportunities to connect young people to nature, many for the first time. A case is now being prepared to obtain support from the Dormant Assets Fund and Lottery Community Fund. We have had positive feedback from DCMS to support this approach.
- **Sustainable Farming & Land Management:** our report showcasing FIPL projects has been shared widely, and Defra requested an additional copy to share with the new Minister. The FIPL programme has funded many projects, including almost 200 supporting public engagement and 150 making landscape more inclusive for visitors. 1,831 farmers have engaged in the programme, working with Protected Landscapes teams to deliver projects.

*continued overleaf...*

## Spotlight

**Core grant and National Park funding** – you will no doubt have seen coverage of the financial plight facing National Parks, both individually and as a whole, and the potential impact on future programmes. NPE issued a statement at the beginning of COP27 this month, linking the financial predicament we face and the impact this will have on our, and Government, ambitions to combat climate change. A Guardian article (8th November) highlighted some of these issues and used some of the information NPE has been gathering regarding financial shortfalls. We drafted a statement to use with media if approached for further comment, which was also highlighted in a BBC online article. In addition, we have been working with individual NPA colleagues to respond to, and support, CEO media queries.

## Key Events & activities

*continued*

- Nature Recovery:** NPE Nature Recovery lead Alison Barnes recently convened a joint meeting of the NPA Conservation Directors and RSPB, hosted by colleagues in the Lake District NPA. Attendees discussed diverse topics including the Revere Windermere water quality finance model and biodiversity net gain. A trip to RSPB Haweswater revealed nature recovery and catchment resilience in action, including tree planting on bracken areas and re-wiggling of the river. This autumn, we are offering a series of three webinars to key stakeholders, to present the findings of our Business Case earlier this year. We have also completed a program of work with each National Park to gauge progress of the Delivery Plan.
- COP27:** we ensured that the National Park voice was included as part of the wider focus on tackling climate change. NPE lead Officer for Climate Leadership Richard Leaf published a blog for CNP, highlighting the collective action we are taking to reduce carbon use across all 15 National Parks. He also echoed the message that significant Government focus and resources are urgently needed to up-scale and increase the number of projects to deliver our vision, and that of Government, to achieve net zero.
- Strategic Engagement Manager:** this Defra funded role will support NPE with the establishment of the Landscape Partnership along with a wider set of responsibilities to drive forward our delivery plans. We have recently interviewed for this post and hope to share news on the successful candidate soon.
- Landscapes Review webinar:** Paul Hamblin attended a webinar run by CNP and the Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas looking at the powers that NGOs felt NPAs need in order to take forward the ambitious agenda set by the Landscapes Review.

- North York Moors visit:** as part of the Board meeting in November, NPE Directors and secretariat were invited for a tour of the Sutton Bank Centre in the North York Moors. We got to see first-hand the great facilities available, including a new interactive exhibition of the Ryevitalise project and a family friendly cycling trail. We also visited the site marking the Battle of the Byland and tested out the seating area of the Dark Skies Discovery site!
- Social Media highlights:** with lots of discussion around **National Park budgets** and **COP27** on social media, we have been highlighting our key messages around the importance of National Parks. We have been showing what can be achieved through collaborative nature recovery projects during **Net Zero with Nature Week**, and putting National Parks at the forefront of the fight against climate change. Please do continue to share our posts if you are on social media.



*Did you know?.....National Parks have taken a lead role in over £50m of landscape management schemes in the past 10 years?*



Some of the NPE secretariat visiting the North York Moors NPA in Helmsley. *l-r: Lucy Hooper; Wendy Totts; Jo Swiers*

## UK Collaboration

- Principles for private investment into nature:** NPP and a working group have met to discuss the drafting of a Principles for Private Investment into Nature document, following NPE endorsement of this idea earlier in the year. William Hawes, NPP's Nature-based Solutions Lead, has joined the group and is helping to shape a first draft which will be shared for wider input in the coming period.
- NPUK and climate action:** it's been a busy period with Net Zero with Nature Week and COP 27 across October and November. NPUK and NPE collaborated to share messaging and social media posts across the COP27 fortnight. It was a great opportunity to showcase initiatives and projects across the National Park family, including peatland restoration and nature recovery, and a re-share of the NPE compendium from earlier this year. Net Zero with Nature Week in October included a focus on NPP and Revere's restoration work within National Parks and looking back at a year of Revere from last years launch.



NPA Conservation and RSPB colleagues visit Haweswater, in the Lake District