

## PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

### 1. Purpose

To provide Members with the annual financial and operational report on the Peak District National Park Foundation (the Foundation) for 2024-25. To seek Member approval to enable the Authority to accept funds of any value per annum from the Foundation.

### 2. Context

**2.1** The Foundation was established by the Authority to help generate sustainable income, and was registered as a separate entity with the Charity Commission in February 2019. The current Memorandum of Understanding and Grant Agreement between the Authority and Foundation began on 17 May 2023 and are for five years.

**2.2** The Memorandum of Understanding requires an annual report and accounts from the Foundation to be provided to Members. The Grant Agreement states that the Foundation shall provide the Authority with an annual financial and operational report that outlines the following.

1. Financial – the use of the grant provided by the Authority to the Foundation.
2. Financial – the additional funding the Foundation has secured from third parties, including the amounts and sources, and how the funding has been used.
3. Operational – what the Foundation has delivered.

The remainder of this report sets this information out for the financial year 2024-25. It then outlines what the Foundation is seeking to fundraise for in 2025-26.

### 3. Proposals

#### 1. Financial – the use of the grant provided from the Authority to the Foundation

**3.1** The table below outlines the overall financial position of the Foundation in 2024-25.

Grant provided by Authority	£136,613
Operating costs of the Foundation	£113,578
Funds raised by the Foundation	£617,487
Grants provided by the Foundation to the Authority	£518,067
Grants provided by the Foundation to others (community groups, parish councils, schools)	£21,185

**3.2** At the end of 2024-25, the Foundation held the following funds in reserve.

- Unrestricted reserves: £120,392. This includes 4 months operating costs for the Foundation, as well as unspent unrestricted income from 2024/2025.
- Restricted reserve: £127,292. This is funds from restricted grants to be spent in future years. Please note that this includes an underspend of £96,637 from the Authority's grant due to Foundation staff vacancies in 2023-2025. A proposal for how this will be spent will be taken to the Authority's RMM in Summer 2025.
- Designated reserve: £112,500. This is for projects the Foundation committed to funding in 2025-2026.

#### 2. Financial – the additional funding the Foundation has secured from third parties, including the amounts and sources, and how the funding has been used

**3.3** In 2024-25 the Foundation raised £617,487 from third parties. The major sources of funding were as follows.

- Grants: £25,000 including £22,500 from The National Archives representing the first half of the funding for the Landscapes Unlocked project (see paragraph 3.8).
- Corporate Partnerships & Donations: £111,851 including £28,000 from SC Johnson for the Featherbed Moss research project (see paragraph 3.6) and £40,000 from GiffGaff towards the Protect our Peatlands Appeal (see paragraph 3.6).
- Donations from Individuals: £420,736 including £374,500 received from the anonymous donor funding the Visitor Centres project (see paragraph 3.6).
- Royalties: £38,879 generated through the Foundation's partnership with Cafedirect.
- Gift Aid: £21,021 of Gift Aid claimed on donations across the year.

**3.4** These funds were used in the following three ways.

- The majority were used to make grant payments to the Authority and other organisations, which totalled £539,252 in 2024-25, as detailed in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7.
- Some have been designated for use in delivering future projects, including those detailed in paragraph 3.8.
- The remainder, a relatively small amount, forms part of the Foundation's unrestricted reserve. This is used for the following two purposes.
  1. To be held back to cover winding-down costs for the charity.
  2. To enable future, as yet unidentified, projects.

### 3. Operational – what the Foundation has delivered

**3.5** The following activity was delivered by the Foundation in 2024-2025.

- Developing the model of how the Foundation and Authority will work together, including identifying and approving projects.
- Developing a strong governance and management framework for the Foundation, ensuring it is compliant with the Code of Fundraising Practice and Charity Commission guidelines.
- Working with Authority staff to identify fundable projects or areas of work (ambitious outcomes for nature/people, value for money).
- Stewarding existing donor/supporter base, ensuring they feel valued.
- Increasing the donor/supporter base through funding applications, corporate partnership pitches, meetings with possible individual donors and appeals.
- Raising the profile of the Foundation in the National Park, Sheffield and Manchester.

**3.6** The following grants were made to the Authority in 2024-2025.

- Visitor centres – grants totalling £374,500. Creating a sustainable visitor centre function for the Peak District National Park Authority. Additional grant of £137,000

secured and granted to fund foundational infrastructure, including Business Change Manager, website updates and an online booking system for cycle hire.

- Protect our Peatlands Appeal – grant of £46,675. Flood prevention research in Castleton and planting sphagnum moss on the Kinder plateau.
- Cressbrook Mill Bridge – grant of £28,547. Build and installation of a replacement bridge over the River Wye at Cressbrook Mill Bridge, reopening the route for residents, walkers and climbers.
- Featherbed Moss research project – grant of £28,000. Creation of a field laboratory alongside the Pennine Way on Featherbed Moss to examine the impact of planting density on moorland restoration.
- Biodiversity Net Gain assessment – grant of £11,600. An assessment of the potential of Biodiversity Net Gain on Authority owned land.
- Adapt-Eco – grant of £10,000. Developing the use of AI and Deep Learning to create highly detailed habitat maps, natural capital maps and species modelling maps of Warslow Moors and the North Lees estate.
- Protecting North Lees and Stanage – grant of £8,745. Supporting the ongoing costs of protecting and enhancing this much-loved area, including the restoration and upkeep of hedges and other nature corridors, control of invasive species, maintenance of ponds for wildlife and the improvement of public paths, stiles and access gates.
- Accessible outdoor classroom at Brunts Barn - grant of £5,500. The creation of an accessible outdoor classroom at Brunts Barn, Grindleford, to support young people with disabilities into conservation volunteering.
- Footpath improvements – grants of £3000. This includes Improvements of a section of the Dane Valley Way footpath and on the Long Causeway footpath.
- Support for Peak Park Conservation Volunteers (PPCV) – grant of £1,500. General grant to support the activities of PPCV.

**3.7** The following grants were made to other organisations in 2024-2025. These were provided following consultation with relevant teams at the Authority, and they respond to gaps in provision and/or funding.

- Community Nature Fund – grants totalling £10,960. Beneficiaries: The Visionaries Collective in Bamford, Rowland Parish Council, Cavendish Village Hall.
- Connect Fund – grants totalling £10,225. 27 grants provided to remove barriers for disadvantaged and marginalised communities to access, understand and enjoy the National Park, including schools, community groups and associations.

#### 4. Foundation plans for 2025-26

**3.8** The Foundation has the following plans for projects in 2025-26.

- People of the Peak: Past, Present, Future. The Foundation has been successful in securing £198,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver the Development Phase of this project (July 2025 – February 2027). The Foundation has also contributed £7500 match funding to the project.
- Landscapes Unlocked. The Foundation has been successful in securing £45,000 from The National Archives to catalogue and digitise the extensive image collection of the Authority and open it up to the public (activity delivered October

25-September 26). The Foundation has also contributed £10,000 match funding to the project.

- Landscape Trees. We will launch a new programme to increase the planting of stand-alone trees and small copses into the farmed landscape of the White Peak. £21,000 has been raised through crowd funding (The Big Give), and the Foundation will contribute £30,000 match funding to the project.
- Moorland restoration. This continues to be an attractive area for investment, particularly amongst regional businesses. We will launch a new partnership with Ecologi (UK carbon offsetting company) to channel funds into moorland restoration in the National Park.
- Public grants. We will continue to offer our two popular public grants. The Connect Fund will distribute £10,000 annually in grants of up to £500 to help schools and community groups remove barriers they may face with visiting the National Park. The Community Nature Fund will distribute £30,000 annually grants of up to £5000 to parish councils and community groups to improve spaces for nature in the Peak District.
- Peak Park Conservation Volunteers (PPCV). We have committed £15,000 to contribute to a post help PPCV expand their activities.
- Engagement. We will be fundraising to enable a nature education project for schools/children in urban areas with high levels of deprivation and low access to green space. We will also be fundraising for a community programme for adults living in towns and cities close to the south of the National Park.
- Visitor centre project. We will continue to work closely with the donor to ensure that they feel involved in the project and to ensure the project is a success over the remainder of the grant period.

#### 5. Grant value from the Foundation to the Authority

**3.9** When approval was provided at the February 2023 Authority meeting for delegating entering into the emerging Memorandum of Understanding and Grant Agreement with the Foundation, a further recommendation in the report stated that the maximum grant the Authority can accept from the Foundation per annum is £200,000 (Minute reference 13/23).

**3.10** The total value of grants that the Authority receives from the Foundation has increased. It is now likely that the total grant value that the Foundation will provide to the Authority in the current financial year will breach the £200,000 maximum. Therefore, approval is sought to remove the maximum grant the Authority can receive from the Foundation. This will ensure we are able to accept the maximum amount of grants from the Foundation in the most efficient and timely way, as it would negate requesting Members to approve any grants that would take the value over £200,000 per annum.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 1. To note the annual financial and operational report on the Peak District National Park Foundation for 2024-25 and the Foundation's plans for 2025-26.**
- 2. To authorise applications for and acceptance of grants from the Peak District National Park Foundation, subject to approval of the relevant Head of Service and compliance with Standing Orders in all respects, except for Standing**

**Order 7.C-2 (or any subsequent equivalent reference) in respect of each individual grant.**

- 3. To delegate authority to the Authority Solicitor to enter into and determine the terms and conditions of any Grant Agreements arising from recommendation 2 in the best interests of the Authority.**

## **5. Corporate Implications**

### **a. Legal**

The Authority has a long-term ambition and need to diversify and increase income. As a statutory body, the Authority is restricted in some forms of fundraising and there is some limitation in attracting charitable donations. Hence the Authority took the decision in 2018 to establish a charity to harness fundraising opportunities and create a special purpose vehicle for fundraising. There is some natural overlap in the statutory purposes of the Authority and the charitable objectives of the Peak District National Park Foundation. However, it must always be noted that both are entirely separate legal entities that must operate independently in their own respective best interests.

### **b. Financial**

The Authority provided the Foundation with £3,863 as an in-kind contribution and £136,500 as a direct grant in 2024-25.

### **c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan**

The Foundation projects contribute to delivering the National Park Management Plan aims. In the grants that the Foundation provides to the Authority, it can help to deliver to the financial resilience of the Authority – Authority Plan objective D.

### **d. Risk Management**

The key corporate risk of this proposal is to lift the maximum annual grant that the Authority can accept from the Foundation. However, this is mitigated through the controls within Standing Orders to ensure financial viability and protect against any reputational harm to the Authority.

### **e. Net Zero**

Some of the Foundation projects will contribute to delivering net zero for the place.

## **6. Background papers (not previously published)**

None.

## **7. Appendices**

None.

## **Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Phill Mulligan, Chief Executive, Publication Date

## **Responsible Officer, Job Title**

Phill Mulligan, Chief Executive