

North York Moors National Park Authority

29 June 2026

Item 13, UK National Parks Foundation membership

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the North York Moors NPA to become a member of the UK National Parks Foundation.

2. UK National Parks Foundation background

- 2.1 The UK National Parks Foundation ('the Foundation') was registered as a charity in 2019, charity number 1182566. Its charitable objects reflect the statutory purposes of National Parks in England, Scotland and Wales. Although it is an independent charity (set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation), governed by a board of Trustees, the Foundation has in recent years been operationally supported by staff at National Parks Partnerships (NPP). The latest annual report and accounts can be found [here](#).
- 2.2 The Foundation was set up primarily for the purposes of fundraising to complement the work of NPP, which seeks to develop commercial partnerships and sponsorships to support the work of National Park Authorities. In discussions with some prospective partners, NPP has found that partners are only willing to provide financial support through a charitable intermediary. The Foundation was therefore set up initially with a view to creating a charity that could facilitate grants and donations.
- 2.3 The charitable objects of the Foundation are broadly drawn and see to benefit all National Parks. However, for various reasons, a small number of NPAs chose not to become members of the charity at its inception, including the North York Moors NPA. The reasons for not being members have related partly to questions over the process that led to the creation of the charity, its governance and initial fears that it could cannibalise potential funding from our own charitable partner, the North York Moors Trust. Whilst we have not been a member, the North York Moors NPA has benefitted from funding provided to National Parks via the Foundation, most recently funding from catering services company, Levy to support an extension of the Grubs Up! project.

3. The case for membership of the Foundation

- 3.1 Membership of the Foundation is open to anyone interested in further its purposes and is currently comprised of 12 of the 15 UK NPAs. Following a recent board skills and audit review of the Foundation, the current trustees have agreed to progress recruitment of non NPA trustees in order to strengthen the finance, legal and charity trustee experience. These changes will also strengthen the independence of the charity and respond to a challenge that NYMNPA has previously raised concerning our membership.

- 3.2 Since inception, the Foundation has delivered over £700k of grants to the National Park family. Larger funds have included AMEX (over £400k across 3 years, supporting green skills and tree planting), Estee Lauder Companies (£500k over 5 years to 5 National Parks). This has been achieved with the Foundation operating in a fairly passive way.
- 3.3 A review of funding opportunities in English National Parks in 2023 identified a potential gap in our collective fundraising capability relating to philanthropic funding via trusts and foundations, which account for a significant proportion of grant funding to the environmental sector. Whilst most National Parks have obtained some funding from foundations and philanthropists over the years (via the Authorities or local charities), the report highlighted that a stronger collective proposition could secure a higher share of grants awarded. Fears of cannibalisation of funding from local charities appear unfounded. Staff working for National Park charities have started to come together but would benefit from a stronger collective vehicle to support their work
- 3.4 As part of its future fundraising strategy, NPP is keen to work with the Foundation to exploit this gap and take a more active role in national philanthropic and charitable fundraising for National Parks collectively. This will seek to capitalise on the refresh of the UK National Parks brand which has been taking place over the last year and will see the brand narrative relaunch in 2026, putting much more focus on the role of National Parks as being places where nature inspires action. A campaign under the tagline of 'Love Landscapes' is due to be presented to UK Chairs and CEOs in a forthcoming meeting in the South Downs on 1 July.
- 3.5 That a small number of NPAs currently stand outside the membership of the Foundation somewhat weakens its ability to proactively bid for funding from trusts and foundations. The North York Moors NPA has always been amongst the most vocal supporters of collaborative national working amongst National Parks. With changes to governance expected to be made, our absence as a member seems increasingly incongruous.

4. Financial and staffing implications

- 4.1 There is no cost or additional staff commitment associated with membership of the Foundation.

5. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

- 5.1 By leveraging additional funding to benefit National Park purposes, membership of the Foundation supports the delivery of a number of outcomes of the Management Plan, particularly Outcomes 1, 2 and 4.

6. Legal and sustainability implications

- 6.1 The requirements of Members of the charity are not onerous. Membership permits nomination of and voting on new trustees, vote on approval of annual report and ability to call a general or extraordinary meeting. Members also seek to give assurance re the appropriateness of funding received, due diligence of funders and

the distribution of funds to project. Members are able to resign by serving notice should they wish.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That Members resolve that the North York Moors NPA applies to become a member of the UK National Parks Foundation, delegating the completion of the application process to the CEO.

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