

North York Moors National Park Authority Scrutiny Meeting

11 July 2016

Engagement with Young People

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To review the Authority's current work to engage with young people and to invite members to consider opportunities for future developments in this area.

2. Background and Introduction

- 2.1 The Authority's work to engage with young people takes place in a variety of ways including:

- Delivery of school visits and assemblies by the Education Service.
- Volunteering opportunities especially via The Explorer Club and for groups including Scouts, guides and schools.
- Apprenticeships, which bring a wide range of contacts with young people, schools and colleges.
- Project based activities such as "Salmon in the Classroom", the River Esk Youth Fishing Club, "Sea Life – See Life" project and This Exploited Land.
- The events programme.
- Opportunities for young people to speak directly with members at a meeting of the Authority once each year.

- 2.2 We also engage with young people through our website and social media, through interpretation such as the "Old Jacks Boat" trail at Staithes, activities and displays at visitor centres (including play areas) and via work placements, graduate traineeships and attendance at careers events.

- 2.3 Of course, much of the Authority's routine work, such as keeping rights of way open, developing cycle routes, etc is directly of service to young people and enables engagement with and enjoyment of the National Park.

- 2.4 DEFRA's 8 Point Plan for National Parks places a high priority on this area of work and early discussion with Authority members suggests that there is enthusiasm for it becoming a strategic priority for the new Business Plan.

- 2.5 This report will consider current delivery in each of the key areas in recent years and present some opportunities and ideas for consideration in developing the new Business Plan.

3. Education Service

- 3.1 This is the Authority's primary means of engaging specifically with young people. The Education Strategy, approved in 2009 set a target of engaging with all 68,400 school pupils at schools within 10 miles of the National Park Boundary at least once during their school career, twice if they go to school close to the boundary and at least three times if they go to a school within the National Park.

- 3.2 The chart at **Appendix 1** shows the numbers of contacts that the service has achieved over recent years. These contacts consist primarily of visits by school groups to the Moors Centre (red and green) or visits by Education Team staff to address assemblies in school (blue), contacts by the team at young peoples events are shown in purple. As can be seen, the number of contacts is at its highest level since 2006/7. This is despite significant cuts in staffing levels in 2013. If current levels are maintained or increased, and the service continues to target priority schools, it is expected that we will meet or exceed the long term targets set out in 3.1
- 3.3 The quality of the service is also judged via feedback from service users. The service consistently receives a satisfaction rating of over 95%, in 2014/15 the rating was 96%.
- 3.4 For the last six years, the service has achieved the Quality Badge, awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom to organisations that deliver consistently high standard teaching and learning experiences outside the classroom. It is also seen in a very positive light by the Customer Service Excellence assessor.
- 3.5 For the last two years the Authority's targeted transport scheme has been available via the Education Service offering schools in target areas of higher deprivation the cost of transport to the Moors Centre. This has proved very successful and very popular, enabling over 2100 additional contacts (shown green in figure 1) in priority areas, the fees (shown in green in figure 2) for which almost entirely cover the transport costs covered by the Authority.
- 3.6 Another recent innovation is the introduction of winter education activities based around a Yurt and themed on a popular children's book. This has been running for two years and is extremely popular.
- 3.7 The service also generates income from school visits and from events. The chart at **Appendix 2** shows income generated over recent years for school visits, the clear trend is upwards which helps offset the cost of the service. Following an initial dip in income in 2012/13 as the service adapted to cuts in staffing, in each year of the business plan period, the service has exceeded its income targets. In 2015/16 the total income, including events and fees from schools receiving targeted transport funding, was over £37,000
- 3.8 In summary, the Education Service has responded effectively and creatively to cuts in resources at the beginning of the current Business Plan period and to opportunities that have arisen since. It remains on course to meet its long term targets. It offers a high quality targeted service which is in demand and valued by its customers. Should resources be made available, there is good potential to expand this service to deliver more contacts and contribute further to both members' ambitions and to the Government's priorities for National Parks. It is proposed that the current strategy for engaging with local audiences is a good one, that further developments should not disrupt this and that the core service should continue to focus its activity on direct delivery beyond the end of the current period in 2018.

4. **Volunteering**

- 4.1 The National Park Volunteer Service aims to provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to contribute to the Authority's work. Whilst the volunteer service as a whole has grown considerably over the last 15 years and has consistently met its targets, the proportion of volunteers or of volunteer days worked by young people remains low.

- 4.2 The number of volunteer days carried out by young people in the last five years is set out in the table below:

Year	Young peoples volunteer days
2011/12	848
2012/13	462
2013/14	747
2014/15	797
2015/16	383

The low number in 2015/16 is due to an extended period of staff sickness within the volunteer team.

- 4.3 The primary means of engaging young people in the volunteer service is the Explorer Club (which developed from the Hedgehog Club). This unique scheme works with whole families who join the club for an extended period during which they undertake practical work, study and outdoor activity leading to the John Muir Award. It is extremely popular with participants and has proven effective at securing long term engagement. Participant feedback is routinely collected and is entirely positive. Of all families that join the Club, around 96% remain to complete the programme of six sessions and over 70% of those involved continue volunteering with the Authority following completion of the programme. It is clearly an effective means of securing long term significant engagement.
- 4.4 Early attempts to target the scheme at under-represented communities and areas of deprivation, working in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Council, were unsuccessful, in part due to changes in the delivery of children's and family services. Discussions regarding how best to address this are continuing with Redcar and Cleveland Public Health team.
- 4.5 There is continuing demand for the scheme from families. The barriers to further expansion of the programme primarily relate to the availability of staff to manage the scheme and supervise sessions. This is currently being addressed at the "front line" by recruiting and training volunteer leaders to run sessions but this will not overcome the demand for additional management which will need to be addressed as part of the Business Plan.

5. **Apprenticeships**

- 5.1 The Authority's apprenticeship scheme was launched in 2002. It has been a huge success with healthy demand for most places and very high levels of apprentices going straight into work or further training on completion. It also provides a significant boost to our presence on the ground and to our capacity to carry out practical work.
- 5.2 With 16 places to undertake an apprenticeship in environmental conservation, tourism and hospitality or business administration now offered, we have achieved/exceeded all of our Business Plan ambitions in this area and we now have over 15% of the Authority's workforce made up of young people engaged in training. This has a positive impact upon the nature of the organisation.
- 5.3 Whilst the Southern Conservation Management apprentice team is fully core funded, a substantial element of the funding for the Northern Team has come from a number of sources over the years. This has led to uncertainty and real difficulty in retaining Supervisors to manage the scheme on the ground.

5.4 Apprenticeships are another area of work featured in the DEFRA 8 point plan. This Authority is taking a lead on this part of the plan and is currently developing a “trailblazer” working in partnership with several other National Park Authorities and other conservation organisations.

6. **Project Based Activity with Young People**

6.1 It is now standard practice to include an element of education/young people’s engagement in appropriate externally funded projects. Recent examples include the River Esk Pearl Mussel project which gave rise to both the “salmon in the classroom” and the River Esk Youth Fishing Club initiatives and the Sea Life – See Life project which has included a children’s photography project and has engaged young people in the design and development of local environmental enhancements.

6.2 As part of the This Exploited Land project, the Education Team will soon commence work on developing new educational materials and activities relating to industrial heritage and which will form part of the team’s future offer to schools. Linked to TEL, officers are also currently in discussion with the David Ross Educational Trust regarding a joint programme of activity between the National Parks Education Service and the 33 academies supported by the Trust.

6.3 It is assumed that the Authority will continue to take the opportunity to make education and engagement of young people a key part of externally funded projects wherever appropriate. Given that the current team are fully occupied delivering our Education Strategy targets, any project related development will require fully externally funded provision for additional staff to deliver project work.

7. **The Events Programme**

7.1 Several thousand young people engage with the Authority and the National Park each year at one of our events or at one of the many events laid on by our partners. The events programme is promoted via the Website, Out and About Guide and posters on site, it is reviewed every year to assess the impact of particular events and to constantly refine what is on offer.

7.2 When reviewing workloads and staffing in 2012 we resolved to reduce the number of small events and to concentrate our resources on having fewer but bigger events. This has been largely put in place but needs to be constantly reinforced.

7.3 Events and Exhibitions Coordinator, Sally Smith, has very effectively built up a dedicated team of volunteers to assist in the delivery of the events programme. The team as a whole is thought to be working at full capacity.

8. **Governance**

8.1 Once each year, young people who have had contact with the Authority are invited to attend an Authority meeting and to explain to members how their contact with the Authority had worked, what they had valued and how we might do better for young people. This is a valuable opportunity for young people to engage directly and to influence our work and for members to understand from the “customer” point of view how the service is working and could be improved.

9. **Some Potential Opportunities for Expanding Engagement with Young People**

9.1 It is assumed, in light of the DEFRA 8 point plan and early discussions regarding the business plan and our strategic priorities, that the Authority is likely to be seeking to expand its engagement with young people. The following are some initial thoughts regarding opportunities for expansion of our work to engage with young people:

- Participation in the National Citizen Service – volunteering and community work placements of around three weeks in school holidays for pupils aged 15-17. This is cited in the DEFRA 8 point plan. First trialled in 2011, it is due to become a permanent offer with tailor made legislation and increased government investment.
- Expansion of the Explorer Club volunteers – build on the successful model, establish the team of volunteer leaders and improve targeting, possibly in partnership with local authority public health teams.
- Develop a programme of activities in partnership with the 33 academies associated with the David Ross Education Trust. Initial meetings with the Trust have confirmed an enthusiasm to build a programme of outdoor experiences for academy pupils many of whom come from disadvantaged areas.
- More youth targeted interpretation and activities at visitor centres – such as outdoor interpretive play at the Moors National Park Centre as part of This Exploited Land.
- Build international links with young people abroad, possibly through a combination of social media and the International Service which offers volunteering opportunities abroad, through a twinning arrangement with a youth ranger service overseas or similar
- Increase the number of student placements.
- Expansion of Education Service activity
- Expand the apprenticeship scheme alongside delivery of the Trailblazer scheme.
- Increase involvement via social media

9.2 Each type of engagement will of course have a different outcome. Whilst a presentation to a school assembly is an excellent means of reaching a large number of young people with a National Park message at relatively low cost, a days educational visit or a six session programme with the Explorer Club will have a deeper impact, enable more complex messages to be delivered, have a more positive effect on understanding and be more likely to affect behaviour and engagement in the longer term. It is also likely, based on experience to date, that more active and ongoing engagement, such as the Explorer Club will generate active involvement in the Authority's work as well as improved understanding. Members are invited to consider what type/level of engagement is desirable and, if a smaller number are to be targeted, who should be the target audience.

9.3 Members views are sought regarding the above opportunities or any other potential areas for expansion of our work to engage with young people.

10. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

10.1 There are no financial or staffing implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report. This is the first stage in planning future delivery and costed proposals will be prepared for inclusion in the business plan when proposals have been crystallised.

11. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

- 11.1 Expansion of the Authority's work to engage with young people will contribute to delivery of a range of National Park Management Plan policies including:

U11	Underrepresented groups will be supported to increase their awareness of and access to the National Park
U13	Children living within and outside the National Park will be engaged with in their school career
U15	Opportunities for lifelong learning about the National Park will be provided
U16	Outreach work amongst underrepresented groups (both outside and inside the National Park boundary) will be continued
C2	Opportunities for volunteering will be created

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report

13. Recommendation

- 13.1 That members view are sought regarding potential areas for expanding the Authority's engagement with young people:

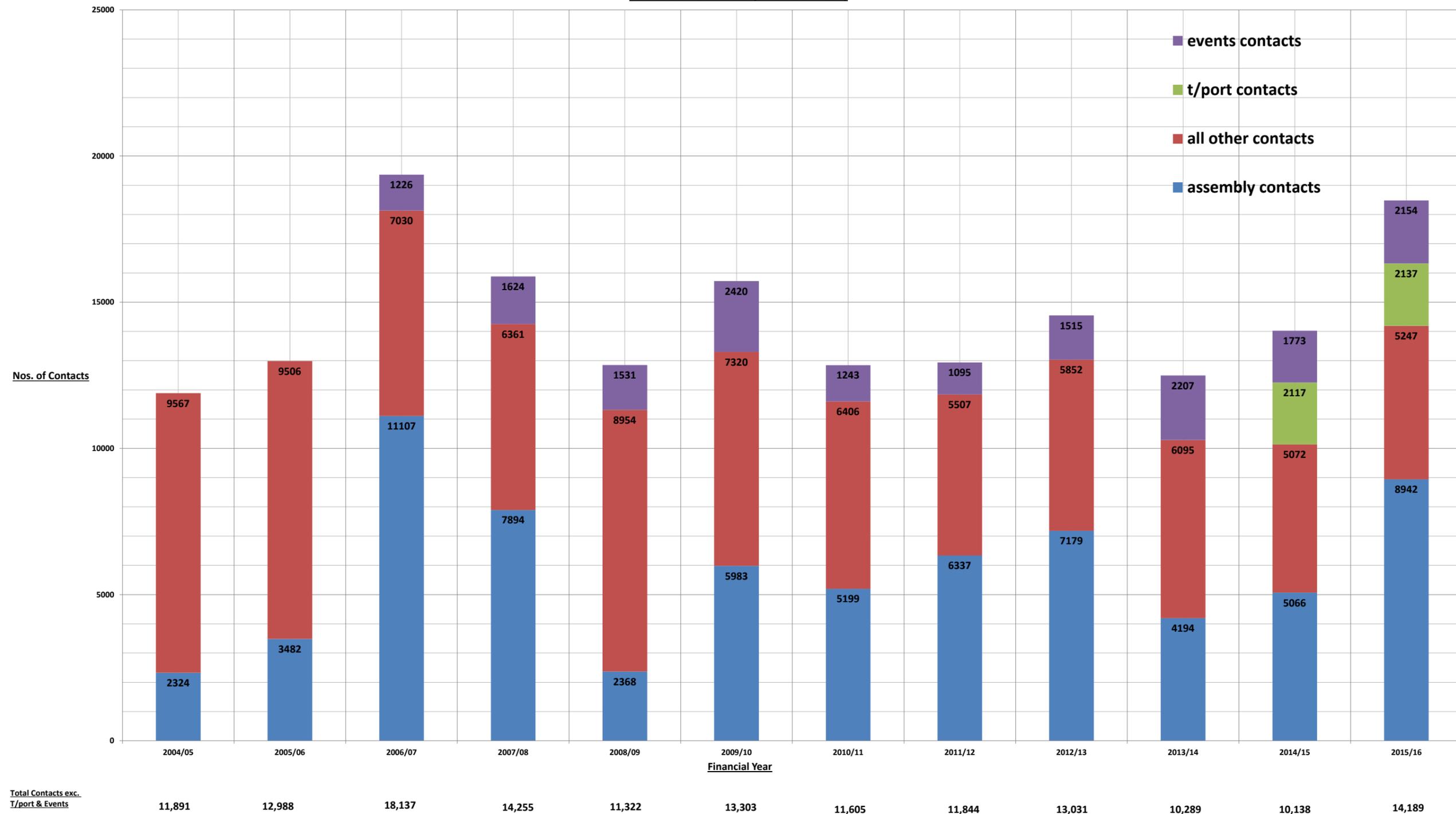
Contact Officer
Richard Gunton
Director of Park Services
Tel No 01439 772700

Background papers to this Report

File ref

1. North York Moors National Park Authority Education Strategy
2. National Park Management Plan

Education Contacts (Financial Year)



YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
School income	£19,030.90	£18,053.47	£15,641.45	£14,144.05	£17,237.00	£15,722.25	£15,884.25	£16,078.00	£15,383.25	£16,512.05	£17,952.50	£21,787.50
Event Income			£2,704.50	£3,783.50	£5,171.00	£8,912.00	£4,494.50	£3,020.00	£4,120.00	£3,482.00	£4,552.90	£6,627.98
t/port income											£7,323.50	£8,706.50
	£19,030.90	£18,053.47	£18,345.95	£17,927.55	£22,408.00	£24,634.25	£20,378.75	£19,098.00	£19,503.25	£19,994.05	£29,828.90	£37,121.98

Appendix 2

