



A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE FUTURE

Reporting on the National Park Authority's work in 2018/19 and plans going forward

THE government announced its plans for a review of protected areas, including all UK National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in May 2018.

The review, which comes 70 years since the Act of Parliament that paved the way for the creation of National Parks, seeks to ensure that designated landscapes continue to be fit for the future. The current statutory purposes of National Parks, along with their financing, governance and ability to enhance wildlife, are all being scrutinized, as is the accessibility of these beloved landscapes and whether those who live and work in them can be better supported.

Invaluable work

Leading the review has been journalist and government adviser Julian Glover, who visited the North York Moors in September 2018. During a busy 24 hours, Mr Glover heard more about the invaluable work of our staff and volunteers, our efforts to support local businesses, and our position on fracking in the area. Also covered was the importance of reaching out to the diverse social and community groups that surround the National Park.

The Authority submitted its own response to the review in December. The full docu-



● HRH The Princess Royal at the Training Award Reception in October

ment is available on the website; however, our recommendations include re-examining the current wildlife powers of National Parks. It is our belief that the public expect protected landscapes to be rich in biodiversity – and quite rightly so. However, National Park Authorities currently have no powers relating specifically to wildlife and its protection. Conservation is, after all, the first purpose of all National Park Authorities, and this should be matched by appropriate legal capabilities.

The role that National Parks can play in the health and well-being of the general public has also been a topic for discussion in the last year. In November 2018, we published our Measuring Health and Well-

being Impact report; the first piece of research which has ever calculated the return on investment for the government in terms of the health and well-being of people using National Parks. Carried out by researchers at the York Management School, the report estimated that every £1 invested by DEFRA generates approximately £7 of health and well-being benefits. Moreover, it was concluded that this figure was likely to be an under-estimate. Do National Parks have a duty to foster the health and well-being of their visitors? We believe so. The 1949 Act, which sets our purposes and duty out in law, already includes a responsibility to the economic and social well-being of local communities, and we propose that this is widened to include the health and well-being of the public.

Leading role

The North York Moors also continues to play a leading role in the provision of apprenticeships, and in September we were honoured with a prestigious 2018 Princess Royal Training Award. The National Park now stands alongside 47 other UK companies that have each been recognised for their outstanding training and development programmes. Representatives from the National Park Authority received the Award from HRH The Princess Royal at a ceremony in late October.

At a time when it seems that young people are increasingly disconnected from the natural world, our education work could not be more essential. In 2018/19, our youth groups, school visits and events reached more than 21,000 people. There are now opportunities for children to be actively engaged with the National Park from the age of three through to their late teens. We hope that these individuals, who are from areas both inside and outside the National Park, will remain involved with our work – whether that be as volunteers or visitors – throughout their lives. Ensuring that the generations to come value these beautiful spaces is surely one of the most powerful ways we can help ensure the future of National Parks.

● Young Rangers learn new skills with NPA Chair Jim Bailey



LOOKING BACK - 2018 to 2019

- The North York Moors was voted National Park of the Year in the BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards 2019. The publication credited the peace and wild beauty of the region, coupled with our rich human history, strong literary connections, dark skies and stunning National Trail.

- Alongside our 2018 Princess Royal Training Award, the Authority scooped 'Employer of the Year' at the National Apprenticeship Awards for the Yorkshire and the Humber.



- Forestry England introduced a pair of Eurasian beavers into an enclosed 16 hectare area of Cropton Forest as part of a five-year project to see how the animals affect the landscape and whether their actions can help prevent flooding. The National Park Authority has given Forestry England £20,000 towards the setting up and monitoring costs of the project.

- The Authority submitted its round two application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Ryevitalise project on 28 November 2018. We are delighted to say that the funding bid was successful, securing nearly £2 million over a four-year period to improve water quality and restore biodiversity along the River Rye and its tributaries.

- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs, Lord Gardiner, visited the North York Moors in July 2018 ahead of National Parks Week. Lord Gardiner had high praise for the Authority's apprenticeship scheme, claiming that it both helped preserve the special qualities of the area as well as providing a skilled workforce for the local economy.

- In 2018, over 15,000 acorns were collected and sent to Castle Howard Nursery for germination. It is hoped that in future years, seeds from species other than oak can also be collected. Key volunteers from last year have now been trained to lead collection days later in 2019.

- In December, DEFRA announced that the National Park's application to trial a new Environmental Land Management System had been successful. The proposed scheme would be a contemporary and Park-wide version of our Farm Scheme, which ran between 1990 and 2014 and delivered grants and support to farmers for maintaining and introducing traditional boundaries, planting woodland, establishing hay meadows and repairing old buildings. DEFRA has now assigned a Project Officer to the National Park Authority who will offer advice and guidance during the process of developing the test and trials work.

- We have been successful in securing £400k for our work to continue with the Esk and Coastal Streams Catchment Partnership. This will include working with volunteers, species monitoring, invasive species control and supporting the Yorkshire Esk Rivers Trust.

- During 2018/19, six apprentices completed their training with the Ranger Service and went on to full time jobs, including as a thatcher, a tree surgeon and a Ranger.

- In April 2019 we said goodbye to the Seated Man Sculpture, which had become a well-liked landmark on Castelton Rigg, overlooking Westerdale. The owners decided it was time to relocate him to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, where he is now in the company of other internationally renowned sculptures.

- The National Park Authority continues to monitor the Woodsmith Mine development in relation to the requirements of planning conditions, particularly in relation to noise, lighting, ground and surface water quality, site infrastructure and ecology. The Authority



- During the 2018/19 planting season (October – March). More than 30 hectares of new woodland was created over five different sites, totalling approximately 34,000 trees. All new woodland planted by the Authority is 'mixed deciduous', with species including oak, hazel, birch, aspen, crab apple and hawthorn.

also oversees the delivery of the substantial Section 106 legal agreement, designed to compensate and mitigate against the residual harmful impacts on the National Park.

- Sixty-five new, affordable homes were completed in Helmsley, 61 of which are supported 'extra care' houses for older people. The site for these extra care houses was identified for development in the Authority's adopted Helmsley Local Plan (2015). Grant funding was provided by Homes England.



- These before and after photographs demonstrate the visual transformation of Fylingdales Moor after pylons were removed in late 2018. Northern Powergrid started work to install alternative, underground cables in 2015, so the development, which is arguably one of the most dramatic environmental improvements to take place in the National Park for many years, has been a long time in the making.

LOOKING FORWARD - 2019 to 2020

- The National Park has just recruited its 700th volunteer, with volunteering in 2018/19 up by 74% compared to the previous year, to more than 22,000 days.
- Earlier this year, work was completed to improve a section of the coast to coast path by installing a boardwalk between Littlebeck and Maybeck.
- In June 2018, work was done by our coastal staff and volunteers to improve a footpath in Harwood Dale that had been badly damaged by 4x4 use. As well as drainage and repair work, a barrier was installed to prevent unauthorised vehicle access in the future.
- A section of bridleway along the A171 was diverted to provide a safe crossing point for horse riders.
- The 2019 Dark Skies Festival took place from 15 Feb to 3 March. An incredible 8,000 people attended over 100 events, providing an economic boost to the region of more than £250,000.
- Both the Moors National Park Centre and Sutton Bank National Park Centre entered the TripAdvisor 'Hall of Fame' for each achieving a Certificate of Excellence for five consecutive years.
- Our education service reached 21,496 people. This includes Explorer Club and youth groups, as well as through schools and events. Satisfaction from evaluation forms is rated at 99%.
- Our volunteer satisfaction survey rated us at 8.8, up slightly from 8.6 when we first did the survey in 2016. A staggering 36% of our volunteers scored us 10 out of 10.
- A new easy access route opened at Cod Beck reservoir, thanks to partnership between the National Park, the National Trust and Yorkshire Water.
- The Ranger Service organised a day of training for our staff, volunteers and partners on the subject of wildlife crime, including what to look out for and how to deal with any wildlife crime related concerns.
- Our 2018/19 community grant scheme helped 20 small-scale projects in communities including Boltby, Osmotherley, Staithe and East Ayton. The awards totalled £56,944.
- A total of 36 Traditional Boundary Scheme Agreements were completed, resulting in the restoration of 2.4 km of drystone wall and the planting or restoration of 1.4 km of hedgerow.
- The Coastal Communities Fund project 'Moor to Sea' concluded in March 2019 following an extremely successful 18 months. The project's purpose was to regenerate the area economically by encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more, particularly during 'off-peak' seasons. Initiatives included the Sandsend Geocache Arts Trail (ongoing), 'Sea the Sheep' (summer 2018), Capital of Cake (August/Sept 2018) and Mindful Month (Sept 2018).
- Historic Environment conservation work was carried out on 16 Scheduled Monuments in the North York Moors by contractors and volunteers, including erosion repair at Cock Howe, Bilsdale and bracken bashing on Gallows Dike, Levisham.



● We will support young people by maintaining at least 17 apprenticeships and our education service will make contact with at least 20,000 children.

- Opening summer 2019 is a brand new and fully immersive visitor experience at the Moors National Park Centre in Danby. The exhibition will provide a fascinating insight into the history and habitats of the North York Moors. Visitors will experience the dramatic story of Victorian ironstone extraction, the ingenuity of the moorland railways and the harsh realities of the people who shared in this short-lived 'gold rush' of the North York Moors.
- The National Grid has awarded a grant of £170,070 to the Authority to undertake landscape enhancement works to reduce the visual impact of the high voltage lines at Arncliffe Wood and Scarth Moor. The three year project will restore 22 hectares of ancient woodland, create 6.5 hectares of woodland and heathland, and restore 1000 metres of traditional boundaries. The work will begin this year, concluding in 2021.
- The National Park Authority will be introducing a new branding scheme from summer 2019. This will give the National Park a stronger and more consistent identity. It includes a more diverse colour palette, updated logo, and greater use of natural, non-staged imagery and film. The introduction will be kept as cost-neutral as possible, with printed materials and other branded items replaced only as required.
- The minerals and waste joint plan will be adopted as long as national policy matters relating to fracking are resolved. Developed in partnership with City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council,

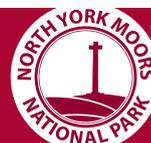
the joint plan has been produced to help guide decisions on minerals and shale gas developments (alongside other matters) across all three areas until 2030.

- The government's Landscapes Review is set to report in autumn 2019.
- The North York Moors National Park's art gallery is set to become the only venue in Northern England to host a touring nature exhibition which is a unique collaboration between an author and an artist. The Lost Words exhibition is on tour from Compton Verney Art Gallery and has been widely praised for helping reconnect adults and children with the natural world using the power of words and art.
- The Cleveland Way National Trail continues its 50th anniversary celebrations throughout 2019, including walks, talks, competitions and exhibitions.
- Two of our Young Rangers have secured the opportunity to attend the Europarc International Junior Ranger Camp in Lahemaa National Park, Estonia, in July 2019.
- Our work on footpaths will prioritise those most useful to the public, and we will therefore set a lighter target figure for these.
- We will continue to distribute grants to residents, local businesses and other groups under the following schemes: Local distinctiveness and tourism, traditional boundaries, woodland creation, Land of Iron community grants and National Park community grants.

● Our Ryevitalise project will begin its four-year delivery phase from summer 2019, employing six core members of staff, a graduate trainee and two apprentices.



Judging our performance



We set high standards of customer service and performance that are monitored through a variety of measures – including those set out below. The suite of measures reported on was reviewed in 2018 to fit with the Authority’s new Business Plan.

FUNCTION	INDICATOR	Result 2018/19	COMMENTS
Providing an excellent service	Amount spent on grants to individuals, communities and businesses in the Park	£433,926	The Authority continues to be strongly committed to offering grants for conservation and community initiatives
	Footpaths and other public rights of way that are ‘easy to use’	82%	Figure from surveys completed in November 2018
Running an effective and efficient organisation	Planning applications determined in a timely manner	81%	This meets the Authority’s overall target of 80% of applications determined within 8 weeks
	Number of free public toilets supported by NPA	16	Includes eight public toilets in NPA carpark/ Visitor Centres and financial support towards a further eight
	Number of volunteer days provided	22,774*	The target is to reach 23,000 volunteer days per year by 2021 *Data still to be collected, so likely to be slight increase in this number
	Costs of Corporate Services as a % of gross costs	3%	This meets the Authority’s target of 5%
	Phone/email answering by a real person	The Authority continues to answer all phone calls in person during office hours	
	Invoices paid within 30 days	99%	Target 100%
	Planning appeals won	60%	Based on only five appeals

Actual 2018/19

Between April 2018 and March 2019 the Authority spent £8.62 million. About half of this income came from Government with additional funding from external partners such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England, and English Heritage. We also receive money from Section 106 planning agreements, particularly the one associated with the Woodsmith Potash Mine, and earn additional income from fees and charges.

