



**Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**
Tirwedd Cenedlaethol
**Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley**
National Landscape

Meeting of the National Landscape Partnership
Friday 18th October 2024
at 10:00
held at the Old School Room
Llanarmon yn Ial

In Attendance

NL Partnership Members

Andrew Worthington OBE (Chair)
Councillor Martyn Hogg DCC
Councillor Bobby Feeley DCC
Councillor Dave Healey FCC
Ian Papworth Urban interest
Michael Skuse Landscape interest
Del Roberts Jones Urban Interest

John Roberts Access & Recreation
Interest
Les Starling Natural Environment
Interest
David Davies Individual Interest
Sandy Archdale Land Management
Rajan Madhok Urban Interest

NL Joint Committee Member

Councillor Emrys Wynne DCC

Clwydian Range & Dee Valley NL (AONB) Team

Howard Sutcliffe NL Officer
David Shiel NL Area Manager
Ceri Lloyd NL SDF Officer
Gwenno Jones NL Dark Sky Officer
Karen Weaver NL Coordinator
Ros Stockdale NL Development
Officer
Imogen Hammond NL Ranger
Rachel Jones NL Senior Ranger

Denbighshire County Council (DCC)

Huw Rees Countryside &
Heritage Services
Manager

Flintshire County Council (FCC)

Stuart Jones Access & Rights
of Way Officer

Wrexham County Borough Council

Mike Bather

Natural Resources Wales

Richard Dearing
Ash Pearce

CADW

Guy Salkeld

Translator

Catrin Gilkes (online)

Apologies for absence were submitted from:

Fiona Gale, Fiona Grant, Roger Cragg, Christine Evans, Cllr Dave Hughes (JC Chair),
Cllr Alan James, Cllr Jeremy Kent, Cllr Dan Rose, Tom Woodall,

1. Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting, and welcomed Stuart Jones, (Flintshire County Council Access Officer), explaining that Mr Jones was substituting for Tom Woodall. He also welcomed National Landscape Dark Sky Officer, Gwenno Jones and Catrin Gilkes, translator for the meeting.

Around the tables introductions were held.

2. Notes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Update on the Review of Working Groups – Farming Group

National Landscape (NL) Officer, Howard Sutcliffe explained that 1.5 million had be spent on joint projects with farmers and landowners over a period of three years. A meeting had been held at Genus, and another meeting would be convened.

Page 3 item 4.- Curlew Connections Project

National Landscape (NL) Area Manager, David Shiel, updated that four nests had produced eggs that had hatched unfortunately, none of the fledglings had survived. The farming community and landowners had integrated well with the project. The Team was now getting ready for next year with optimism. It was pointed out that although curlew is often seen, they live for 30 years and the ones that are seen may have been around a significant length of time.

Page 3 item 5 Sustainable Tourism & Action Plan

The Joint Committee had signed off the Plan, and copies of the new plan were circulated.

Page 5 item 7. Any Other Business – SDF Panel Working Group Meeting

Howard confirmed that only members of the Partnership could be added to the group, and that outside bodies were not permitted.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2b

Our Picturesque Landscape Project (OPL)

David Shiel explained that the six-year project would end on 5th November, and that a final report of the project would brought to the next meeting.

Action

OPL Final Report brought to the next meeting.

3. National Park for Northeast Wales Project

The Designated Landscapes Programme Team Leader, Ash Pearce (AP), provided an update on the progress of the project which included information on the following points: -

- Public Consultation – Autumn 2024
- Analysis and publish a Consultation Report.
- Complete evidence gathering.
- External Advisory Groups
- On going stakeholder engagement.
- NRW Board decision.
- Statutory Consultation - Autumn 2025.
- Prepare and Submit a Designation Order to Welsh Government (WG)

4. Questions and Answers

Who would manage a new National Park?

AP - Discussions were starting to be held to consider transition arrangements. The transition period would last for around 2 years. The National Park Authority would establish a Management Plan.

Had the boundary between Wales and England, Shropshire World Heritage Site (WHS) been discussed?

AP -Natural England and Shropshire had expressed an interested in the process. Welsh Government may be open to discussions with Natural England. Natural England had not expressed an interest to date.

Would there be any collaboration with the models used in England and Scotland?

AP – Natural Resources Wales (NRW) were discussing processes and legality liaising, but not the exact details of this project. There was an appetite for change, and Welsh Government would like to make a decision on the project within this Senedd term, and at

this stage NRW were still working with original model. The Models that were being considered to date were a National Park or an increased National Landscape or to stay the same.

Funding – misconceptions?

AP- Funding was critical and NRW were discussing funding with the Welsh Government however, there had been no clarity to date. The size, population and the progression of the project were firstly being considered. Clarity of funding arrangements were constantly raised we have been informed that 'new funding' ¾ from Welsh Government and a ¼ from the Local Authorities, in reality all would all come from WG. AP had been informed that Welsh Government can afford a National Park. Ongoing.

Would there be a case in the future for a boundary extension ?

AP – Probably not immediately, it would be at least 10 years plus before any consideration would be given.

Why was Halkyn Mountain taken out of the search area?

The mountain provided excellent open access for people to explore and also had the history of lead mines.

AP- the landscape did not fully meet the criteria; the main principal was that the beauty was comprised by overhead lines etc. Full information was available via the Evaluation Report.

Gronant Dunes

It was raised that Gronant Dunes, and the Natterjack Toads were a very important part of the landscape and should be considered to be reintroduced in the boundary.

Effects of the Status on the Farming Community

AP – National Park Status would not necessarily have a negative effect on farming work or business, there may be slightly more planning regulations (outside the existing NL area), however, there would be additional opportunities and grant funding. The status would not be an oppressive force coming in to effect anyone's business. Welsh Government would consider all views as part of the consultation, including that of NFU, before they make their final decision.

Was the Wind Farm project at Mynydd Mynyllod the reason that the area was taken out of the search?

The wind farm was not a factor, the area was assessed purely on the landscape, and it did not meet the criteria.

Car parks were very busy in the National Landscape, what considerations would Local Authorities be given over the car parks

AP - Visitor numbers would have to be evidence based, and not any preconceptions, models of other National Parks would be considered. Most of the areas were already designated and received a lot of visitors, how many more visitors there would be with a National Park status would be considered.

Local Authorities were financially struggling , and losing the car park fee would be a loss of income

HS -South Downs National Park did not include the Seven Sisters Country Park and therefore the car parks were kept by Local Authority. Toilets were also an issue that the National Park could assist with.

Action

AP proposed a view to be submitted from the National Landscape Team and a view from the Joint Committee and Partnership.

The Chair proposed that a briefing note of all of views and key issues to be drafted along with the Local Authority, conservation, and biodiversity views. A balanced view could then be gained.

Action

A date to be convened - A special meeting to be held before the end of the consultation period.

If anyone has a specific item that they would like to be considered, please bring to Karen's attention.

AP requested a Teams meeting.

5. **National Landscape Dark Sky Project**

David Shiel and Dark Sky Officer, Gwenno Jones provided a PowerPoint presentation which included the following points:

- Project commenced 2018 and commissioned Dark Sky Wales to consider our skies, and produced a document stating the benefits.
- 92% of the dark skies of the National Landscapes were the best in Wales and worth preserving
- Nos partnership was created in 2019 with a shared Dark Sky Officer
- Astro photography was produced for the NL
- Lots of Dark Sky events with communities were held.
- 2010- 2020 Supplementary Guidance for dark skies was produced by NL
- Dark sky friendly lighting installed at Loggerheads and won an award.
- Project was now with the 8 protected landscapes in Wales,
- The Dark Sky Team having been leading on various projects with communities and business to change the lighting in some buildings, leisure centres, tennis courts, schools
- Close to submitting application to Dark Sky International Association.

Referring to the dark sky friendly lighting David Shiel explained that essentially businesses were being asked to switch to LED and smart lighting. Gwenno was corresponding with lighting manufacturers to try to ensure that dark sky friendly lighting was produced extensively and were easy to buy. The funding was from Welsh Government.

Dark Sky Friendly Lighting at Ruthin Rugby Club Project

David Davies expressed an interest as secretary of the Club. He added that the new lighting at the club had made a huge difference with promising with efficiency savings too and thanked David and the team for all of their help.

An application had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for assistance with ecological projects - 60 % of biodiversity and pollination were dependent on dark skies.

Application to the International Dark Sky Association

David Shiel confirmed that a draft application had been submitted to International Dark Sky Association and the response received stated that the street lighting within the three Local Authorities currently did not conform, and without those authorities conforming the application would be problematic.

6. **General Update from National Landscape Officer**

Howard referred to the recent crisis with the role out of Denbighshire's CC new bin collection system, adding that he would like to thank all of the National Landscape Team for all of their help in assisting with bin collections, adding that it was a good example of the flexibility of the service, by aiding another service that was struggling.

Denbighshire County Council (DCC) Budget

Howard shared his concerns regarding the extreme financial pressure that Denbighshire Local Authority was currently under, which was a threat to the Service, with large cuts being proposed.

Ffridd booklet

HS introduced the Ffridd booklet explaining the unique landscape of the Ffridd. The booklet was a technical guide to managing the landscape and had been published in partnership with PONT.

7. **Any Other Business**

- **International Young Ranger Camp**

National Landscape Ranger, Imogen Hammond, gave brief overview of the key elements of the international camp explaining that the camp was hosted by the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

National Landscape and funded by Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales and the Welsh Government. It took place from the 20 - 27 July 2024 and was attended by 12 Mentors and 32 Junior Rangers. The participants were from 16 different Protected Areas across 11 European countries. (see attached report).

The Chair commented that it was great effort by the National Landscape Ranger Team and that it was nice to see so many young people enjoying themselves in the countryside.

8. **Future Meeting Dates**

Friday 21st February 2025 10:00

DRAFT