



Management Plan 2010-2015

in Brief

managing change together



BRECON BEACONS
NATIONAL PARK

What is the Brecon Beacons National Park?

The Brecon Beacons National Park is a beautiful area of countryside which is protected by law. Its existence is thanks to those men and women who had a vision to protect and enhance this area for future generations. The Park exists to fulfil two purposes:

- **Conservation and enhancement:**

“to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks.”

- **Understanding and enjoyment:**

“to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the Parks) by the public.”

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority - the administrative body set up to help manage the Park - also has a duty to:

“...seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters.”

What makes the Brecon Beacons National Park a special place?

While everyone has their individual impression of what makes the Park so special, consultation has shown that some experiences are shared. These shared experiences show which qualities people particularly value so that present and future generations may continue to benefit from them. These special qualities are described in the Plan:

- A National Park offering **peace and tranquillity** with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, inspiration, relaxation and spiritual renewal.
- A feeling of **vitality and well-being** that comes from enjoying the Park's fresh air, clean water, rural setting, open landscapes and locally produced food.
- A **sense of place and cultural identity** - 'Welshness' - characterised by the Welsh language, religious and spiritual connections, unique customs and events, traditional foods

rugged, remote

sense of discovery

sense of community

contrasting patterns

and crafts. Along with relatively unspoilt historic towns and villages, family farms and the continued practice of traditional skills developed by local people who live and earn a living here - such as common land practices and grazing.

- A **sense of discovery** where people can explore the Park's hidden secrets and stories such as genealogical histories, prehistoric sites, relic medieval rural settlements, early industrial sites, local myths and legends and geological treasures from time immemorial.
- The Park's **sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty** observed from a variety of harmoniously connected landscapes, including marvellous gorges and waterfalls, classic limestone geology with caves and sink holes, contrasting glacial landforms such as cliffs and broad valleys carved from old red sandstone and prominent hilltops with extensive views in all directions.
- A working, living 'patchwork' of **contrasting patterns, colours and textures** comprising well-maintained, farmed

landscapes, open uplands, lakes and meandering rivers punctuated by small-scale woodlands, country lanes, hedgerows, dry stone walls and scattered settlements.

- Extensive and widespread access to the Park's **diversity of wildlife and richness of semi-natural habitats**, such as native woodlands, heathland and grassland, natural lakes and waterside habitats, ancient walls and hedgerows, limestone pavement and blanket bogs including those of national and international importance.
- In the context of the UK, **geographically rugged, remote and challenging landscapes**.
- **Enjoyable and accessible countryside** with extensive, widespread and varied opportunities to pursue walking, cycling, fishing, horse riding, water based and other forms of sustainable recreation, adventure or relaxation.
- An **intimate sense of community** where small, pastoral towns and villages are friendly, welcoming and feel safe. They retain a spirit of hospitality and cooperation.

sweeping grandeur

diversity of wildlife

peace and tranquillity

accessible

Who manages the Brecon Beacons National Park?

People are sometimes surprised to learn that National Park status does not mean that all the land in the Park is in public ownership. In fact over 65% of the land is privately owned and managed by estate owners, farmers and, to a lesser extent, householders. The National Park Authority owns 14% of the National Park - mainly upland commons - and there are several other large public and charitable landowners too, including Forestry Commission Wales, Dŵr Cymru and the National Trust.

The National Park Management Plan is a blueprint for everyone who shares responsibility for managing the area - land owners and managers alike. To produce the Plan, the Park Authority consulted as widely as possible. The consultation process was thorough and intensive and the views of all the stakeholders are reflected in the complexity and scope of the Plan. A summary of the process along with comments and responses is available online at www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/nmp.

In the end the success of the Plan relies upon the cooperative interaction of all those who care for the Park and its future.

A beacon for the Beacons

Legend has it that when invaders came over the hills beacons were lit across the hilltops to warn the local people so that they could take action to protect their land. The Management

Plan is similarly a beacon for the National Park for the next twenty five years - a call for united stewardship of the National Park. This responsibility rests not only upon the shoulders of the Authority and other public bodies but also with all who reside, work, enjoy and have a vested interest in the Park.

The National Park Management Plan describes a future where - by 2030 - judicious management could produce a National Park that will be:

- Recognised nationally and internationally for its value as a protected area, whose character continues to be shaped by the long-standing interactions between people and the processes of nature.
- Widely acclaimed for its natural beauty and its diversity of geology, habitats and wildlife as well as cultural heritage. It will be conserved by its stakeholders using traditional and new, innovative techniques.
- A sought-after destination providing an outstanding variety of sustainable opportunities for all to understand and enjoy its tranquillity, rural character, Welsh way of life, sense of remoteness and other special qualities.
- Resilient, open and responsive to change - particularly climate change - and its stakeholders proactive in mitigating and adapting to the effects of undesirable change through local action.
- Less dependent upon external supply chains leading to increased food and energy security locally, an improved quality of life, community cohesion and conservation of natural capital.



- A living landscape where people can earn a living from the land in an innovative and sustainable manner. This could be done traditionally through farming, but also using new ideas to diversify into other areas such as producing renewable energy.
- Managed sustainably through active partnerships among the Park's stakeholders so that it continues to be a source of inspiration and enjoyment for future generations.
- Monitored over the long term to improve future policy and management practice.

Can I see the whole Plan?

The full version of the National Park Management Plan is available to everyone, this is a summary. The full version - both in Welsh and English - includes:

- a vision for the National Park, long term strategies to achieve the desired outcomes
- a five year action framework to implement positive change

The plan is available online at www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/npmp



Managing Park Landscapes



Why is it important to manage the Park for the benefit of people and for conservation?

National Park status is the highest level of protection available for landscapes and areas of scenic beauty in the UK. This protection is described in the first purpose given to the National Park Authority; it means that local land managers have to conserve the landscape, along with its biodiversity and cultural heritage. This purpose gives the landscape a value in its own right. The landscape provides valuable benefits to local communities and to visitors, looking after it ensures the prosperity and well-being of future generations.

However, the National Park cannot be preserved unchanged. Managing the landscape means confronting change. This could be the impact of climate change or the challenge of balancing large numbers of visitors. It could be the result of the desires of residents, farmers and businesses to develop a buoyant and resilient local economy. Those managing the Park have to take into consideration all these different challenges while keeping in mind the overarching need to manage conservation.

What will we achieve?

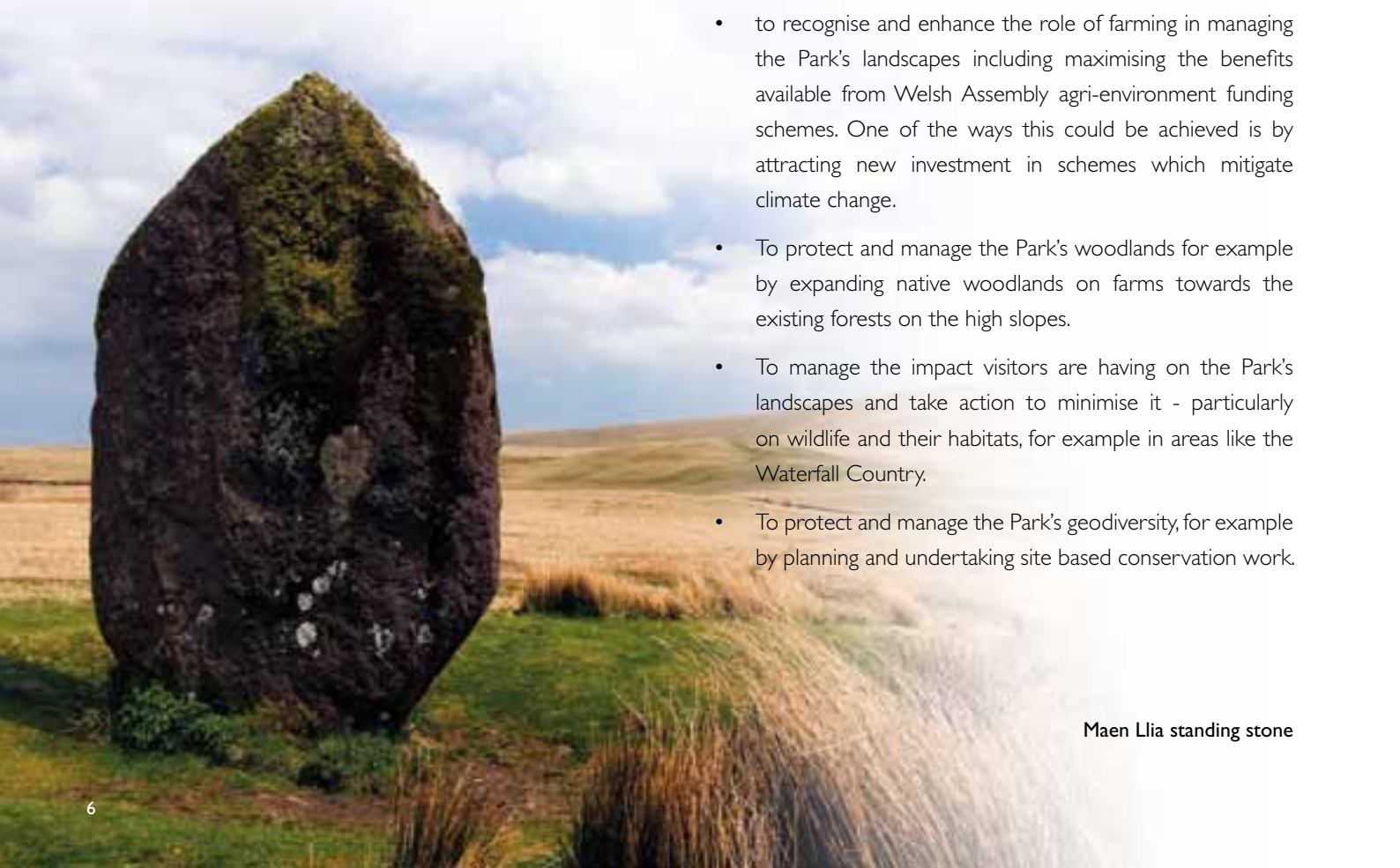
The following is a brief summary of the aims which are laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan and in the Action Plan which gives detailed lists of the actions required to deliver them and describes which organisation will lead on each.

The Plan will raise the awareness and understanding of;

- the Park's natural environment
- the Park's historic environment
- the importance of farming to managing the Park and of the issues facing the future of farming.

The Plan will develop a research and management agenda:

- to protect and manage the natural environment. This could be done by finding a demonstration project for public and conservation benefit, particularly to address climate change at a local level.
- to protect and manage the historic environment of the National Park, for example by developing a strategy for buildings at risk.
- to recognise and enhance the role of farming in managing the Park's landscapes including maximising the benefits available from Welsh Assembly agri-environment funding schemes. One of the ways this could be achieved is by attracting new investment in schemes which mitigate climate change.
- To protect and manage the Park's woodlands for example by expanding native woodlands on farms towards the existing forests on the high slopes.
- To manage the impact visitors are having on the Park's landscapes and take action to minimise it - particularly on wildlife and their habitats, for example in areas like the Waterfall Country.
- To protect and manage the Park's geodiversity, for example by planning and undertaking site based conservation work.



Maen Llïa standing stone

“What do people say?”

Chris Martin

Head of Curatorial Services, CPAT - Regional Archaeologist

“The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust is one of four Welsh Archaeological Trusts working closely with other national, regional and local bodies, to help protect, record and interpret all aspects of the historic environment, including within the National Park. The Trust maintains records of archaeological and heritage related sites. It protect sites and monuments within the National Park by providing advice and information to farmers, landowners and organisations. We see our role as working with the Park's land managers to ensure that the archaeological heritage of the National Park is recognised and then protected and promoted for generations to come.”

For more details on the work of the Archeological Trust go to www.cpat.org.uk

Gary Evans

Hawk Associates and Coordinator;
South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group

“The combination of rocky gorges and fast flowing water makes Waterfall Country an exciting and challenging location for adventurous activities. However, much of the area in and around the gorges is legally protected for the high quality and rarity of its habitats. Activity groups have joined together with the organisations managing the Waterfalls area to produce a simple Code of Conduct designed to minimise the environmental impact of a visit. Compliance with the Code is now a requirement of being permitted to access the site, which we hope means it will be available for all into the future.”

To find out more about the Activity Providers Group see www.swoapg.co.uk

Paul Dann

Area Manager, Forestry Commission Wales

“Some 10,000 hectares of the Park is Forestry Commission Wales managed woodlands and as local Area Manager I work closely with the National Park Wardens to develop new walks, paths and trails to make the best use of the forest landscape for all kinds of recreational activities.

We are involved with the Park Authority in improving the educational value of this fantastic landscape. Not only do our Education Officers work with local schools to make best use of this natural learning environment but our visitor centre at Garwnant, which sits on the A470 at the gateway to the Park, is a hub for schools and families to learn more about the woodlands, forests and associated wildlife to be found in the Brecon Beacons.

Our work also extends to ensuring that our design plans for the forestry and woodland areas fits in with the overall plans for the Park. Our Director at Forestry Commission Wales also sits on the committee for the Fforest Fawr Geopark.”

For more information on the work of the Commission go to www.forestry.gov.uk/wales



Garwnant



Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity



Why is it important to look after the species and habitats in the National Park?

Biodiversity encompasses all aspects of the living world. The loss of one particular species can lead to the demise of many others and potentially the loss of entire habitats. Every breath consumes oxygen produced by forests and seas; while every mouthful of food has at one time been living material nurtured by soil, microbes and sun. Diverse habitats support an enormous number of species and their value is becoming increasingly apparent - for example peat bogs help to store rainwater and carbon while reducing the risk of floods and drought.

Beyond all the purely practical benefits, interaction with the natural world provides the enjoyment, inspiration and spiritual benefits essential to physical and mental well-being.

The task facing National Park managers is to conserve our biological resources and enhance them where possible. National and international policies ensure that biodiversity is a prime consideration of all sectors of National Park management. This task will not be easy given the uncertainties of climate change, which could make the impacts of other pressures on biodiversity even worse. The best way forward is to manage the whole landscape in order to protect biodiversity. Such an approach needs the co-operation of all of the National Park's biodiversity partners to make sure that the needs of individual species and habitats are met. At the same time, managers can take a broader view of each habitat's position in the landscape, their relationship to each other and their interconnectedness.

What will we achieve

The species and habitats of the National Park have to be protected so they can flourish. One of the best ways to manage many of the rare and protected species in the Park is laid out in individual plans called Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs). Local organisations, like the Wildlife Trusts play a strong role implementing these plans by providing management advice and training for landowners to help them nurture protected species with safe, sustainable habitats on their land.

The following is a summary of the actions laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan:

- To develop community based projects which benefit both the public and wildlife such as volunteer activities which can be organised and targeted at delivering actions in LBAPs.
- To research and monitor the populations of particular species and the status of their habitats, particularly on sites which have been identified in LBAPs. This should establish what is happening to them over time and the impact of any interventions made to try and improve their condition.
- To raise awareness and understanding of the Park's biodiversity so that residents and visitors understand which species in the National Park are protected and what is being done to protect them. One example is the joint work the National Park Authority is undertaking with local graziers, the Hill Pony Societies of Wales and the organisation PONT to help protect the indigenous Welsh Mountain Ponies.



“What do people say?”

Stuart Reid

Team Leader, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

“The Countryside Council for Wales has a duty to look after the Welsh landscape. Our work roughly divides into three areas. We legally protect landscapes, including sites of special geological and wildlife interest; we award grants to help the environment and wildlife or improve access so that people can enjoy the countryside; we offer advice on a variety of areas including specially protected wildlife, such as bats and planning development. One of CCW's duties is to advise the Welsh Assembly Government on which areas should be designated as National Parks.

The Brecon Beacons National Park has some of the most spectacular and distinctive upland landscape in Britain, as well as a wealth of wildlife, including plant species such as rare whitebeam trees and hawkweeds, which grow here and nowhere else in the world. The National Park Management Plan is a necessary tool to help manage and conserve the landscape, habitats and species which give the Brecon Beacons National Park its distinctive qualities.”

For more information on the work of CCW go to www.ccw.gov.uk

Bev Lewis

Conservation Officer, Brecknock Wildlife Trust

“Brecknock Wildlife Trust is a registered charity based in Brecon, in the heart of the National Park. We manage 10 reserves within the Park and undertake conservation projects using volunteers. We see it as vitally important that local communities and visitors not only understand what we are doing but also support and feel a sense of ownership for the reserves on their doorstep. If local landowners and land managers appreciate the importance of maintaining habitats then in partnership we can make a substantial difference.”

For more information on the Trust go to www.brecknockwildlifetrust.org.uk

Colin Thomas

Secretary of the Hill Pony Improvement Society for Wales

“The future of the registered Section A semi-feral hill ponies in my opinion requires careful management with many partner organisations including the Welsh Assembly, PONT and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. It would be very difficult to continue keeping ponies on the hills if there isn't an arrangement to work together.

These native ponies are part of the culture and heritage of Wales; and overall figures for them in Wales are of great concern. Their decline has been noticed by leading National Parks Ecologists because of the effect of the imbalance of mixed grazing is having on conservation; where ponies are absent parts of hills and commons become impassable with bracken and gorse.

If the weather is suitable, any time in October is round up time. We cover thousands of acres to check and worm the mares, and wean the foals; this can take several attempts using quad bikes and men on horseback. Daunting tasks but worth it for the end product - a hill pony in the true sense of the word which graces itself with intelligence, beauty, and above all the hardiness to survive in what nature puts before them now and into the future.”



For more information on the work of the Society go to www.hillponies.com



Providing Opportunities for Access and Recreation



Why is it important that everyone has the chance to play in the Park?

Offering opportunities for outdoor access and recreation is at the heart of the second purpose for all of the UK National Parks. Everyone whatever their age, ethnicity or abilities has the right to access and enjoy the qualities that make this Park special. Apart from its beauty which inspires so many people, the Brecon Beacons National Park offers a wide range of activities which can improve health and well-being. These include quiet contemplation of the landscapes as well as activities such as walking, cycling, mountain biking, horse riding, kayaking and fishing. The challenge is to provide these opportunities whilst preventing the erosion of the special areas that people come here to enjoy and benefit from.

Not all activities are sustainable in all areas nor can they be practised with the same level of intensity everywhere. Managers need to work together to maintain and enhance opportunities for enjoyment of the Park's special qualities for the benefit of local communities, visitors and Park resources. People who are out and about enjoying the Park need to be aware of their legal responsibilities as well as being respectful of the habitats and wildlife they encounter.

What will we achieve?

Everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy and access the Park. The following is a summary of the actions laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan:

- To manage the public rights of way network by implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Plan's successful implementation will provide greater opportunities for walking, horse riding, cycling and other forms of open air recreation as well as looking at how accessible these activities are for people with mobility or visual impairment.
- To improve access to the countryside and to offer better information on what is available. One of the key issues is to provide more routes which are accessible to people with disabilities.
- To use any funding or resourcing opportunities to give more opportunities for people to get out and about. For example developing better access to more of the reserves owned by the Wildlife Trust.



“What do people say?”

Geoff Smart

Route finder for 'Walks around Talgarth'

“When I see a group of walkers in the car park at Talgarth with the booklet of walks, I know that all the hard work we put in was worth it. We are Destination Talgarth - a group of volunteers, local community groups and tourism operators working in partnership to encourage visitors to come and discover the special qualities of Talgarth, nestled at the foot of the Black Mountains. We used European grant money to help fund the production of the brochure and we are delighted with the impact it is having.”

For details of the walks go to www.visittalgarth.co.uk

Keith Lee

Bikes and Hikes, Brecon

“My involvement with initiatives to promote cycling in the National Park has led me to set up a cycling group to encourage local people and visitors to get out and about in the National Park. We are an informal group and go out most weeks - although it's my work, it's my hobby too and I want to share my enthusiasm for cycling in this beautiful landscape. Drop us an email to info@bikesandhikes.co.uk if you want to come along.”

For details of the business visit www.bikesandhikes.co.uk

Anne Summers

Chair of the Brecknock Access Group

“Since the 1980s, volunteers in Brecknock Access Group have been fighting for improved access for all in South Powys, and particularly for people with disabilities. We aim to improve access to streets, footpaths, public buildings, pubs, restaurants, hotels and guest houses, places of entertainment, shops, health service facilities and homes under construction or modernization.

We work with Powys County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, local businesses and other voluntary bodies. Our work includes offering advice and information to planners, developers and the general public.”

For more information on the work of the Access group visit www.brecknockaccess.org.uk



Raising Awareness and Understanding



Why is it important to understand what the Brecon Beacons National Park is?

The National Park is a major natural and cultural resource for everyone to enjoy and understand. Managing it successfully relies on everyone understanding its importance including why money and time are spent maintaining and enhancing the National Park's biodiversity, natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Understanding and awareness are particularly important for local communities who can take pride in the National Park. This pride can contribute to the social and economic well-being of local communities. Greater understanding of the management practices in the Park might encourage more people to give their time to volunteer with projects they see as worthwhile. Improved understanding encourages visitors to the Park to behave responsibly - by following the Countryside Code for example - and to develop a real sense of ownership and custodianship for the Park.

What will this achieve?

Residents and visitors will understand more about why the area has been made into a National Park and how to look after it.

The following is a summary of the actions laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan:

- To use resources to improve awareness and understanding of the National Park. One of the ways we plan to do this is by working with school teachers to help deliver

modules including information on the Park in schools. This will support the national policies of the Welsh Assembly and of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship.

- To deliver a service to visitors that exceeds their expectations. Some of the ways we are looking at achieving this is by offering training courses to tourism businesses like the Park Ambassador Scheme and star gazing for businesses.
- To promote and develop a sense of shared responsibility for both the National Park and the European designated Fforest Fawr Geopark that lies within the boundary of the National Park. For example The Green Valleys initiative offers an example to other communities how they too can mitigate climate change. The Green Valleys aims to encourage carbon neutral, financially secure and sustainable communities by promoting hydro power, community managed woodlands and allotments.
- To develop a prioritised plan for providing information to visitors and residents particularly through provision of interpretation placed at the sites which are popular - like pubs and tourism businesses.
- To provide innovative ways of engaging and interacting with visitors and residents.
- To establish an environmental science research network which will for example promote links to universities interested in the Earth Sciences such as geology.



“What do people say?”

Pupil

from Deri View Primary School, Abergavenny

“The school trip out to the Brecon Beacons was the best! The National Park was awesome - Coed y Cerrig was fun especially when we saw the bog! It was disgusting - but cool. We did a mini beast hunt and I found it surprising how many amazing bugs there are.”



Colin Passmore

Owner of Llanthony Court Farm

“The first time Court Farm was involved with Open Farm Sunday we didn't quite know what to expect, but the day proved to be a real success. Visitors were so enthusiastic and interested to learn about the farm, and the various talks and demonstrations along the route worked really well and received some excellent feedback. The burgers were a great hit too! It was good to work with the Park's staff to show farming in context with the landscape and environment. Events like Open Farm Sunday prove that when given the chance, people are eager to find out more about how farmers produce their food and manage this special landscape and we are doing it again this year.”

For more details go to www.llanthony.co.uk

Kathy Brookshaw

from Gwyn Deri Bed and Breakfast, Crickhowell
National Park Ambassador since 2010

“I can now talk to customers with more knowledge and authority about the Park, particularly areas further away from Crickhowell. I have also been encouraged to buy more books and research some of the information which was imparted.”

For more information on the business visit
www.gwynderibedandbreakfast.co.uk



Sustainable Communities, Towns and Villages



Why are the communities in the Park important?

National Park Authorities in the UK have a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of their local communities. They also recognise that the Parks are living landscapes where people live, work and farm. They are special and protected places with limits put on the use of natural resources and on the development which is accepted within them. The National Park Authority is the planning authority for all the communities within the National Park boundary. The communities will be affected by overriding issues like climate change, fossil fuel depletion, the need for affordable housing and an economic decline. Those managing the Park's landscape have to plan for the impacts of all of these. The people and the communities living and working within their boundaries themselves have a role as custodians of the environment.

Brecon Beacons National Park is home to approximately 33,000 people, and has a strong Welsh heritage along with a rich economic, social and cultural life. The largest settlement is the cathedral town of Brecon. Together with Brecon, the settlements of Crickhowell, Gilwern, Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth account for approximately 46% of the Park's inhabitants. Other larger settlements like Abergavenny, Merthyr Tydfil, Llandeilo and Llandovery lie on the border of the Park. Living in a striking landscape such as the National Park conveys considerable positive benefits for example clean air, opportunities to see the stars at night and access to an abundant array of biodiversity. There are business opportunities from the considerable numbers of visitors who specifically come to this protected area to enjoy recreational and tourism related activities.

The Welsh Government's vision for the Welsh National Parks encourages National Park Authorities to work closely with their communities to explore new and innovative ways to live. These options should encourage the vitality and viability

of the National Park's communities, towns and villages with sustainable development as the end result. Simultaneously the characteristics that provide the National Park's communities with their cultural identity must be conserved and enhanced.

What will we achieve?

The state of the National Park is inextricably linked to the well-being of its communities and as such, the National Park designation should benefit the local economy and communities in ways that work to conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities and are sustainable. The benefit should be mutual.

The following is a summary of the actions laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan:

- To encourage and support community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions. A recent example is the collaboration work with Farming Connect to identify on-farm sustainable energy projects.
- To deliver a Sustainable Development Fund (this is a grant scheme with an open application process) which meets the strategic priorities laid out in the National Park Management Plan. Its funding support can be used to develop the marketing of sustainably produced local food.
- To support initiatives which enhance community pride in and benefit from being within the National Park. For example promoting vocational training such as learning traditional farming and land management skills.
- To deliver a sound Local Development Plan. This document is produced by the National Park Authority's Strategy and Policy department after wide consultation with local communities and stakeholders. After much public review it becomes the main guide which the Authority uses when determining planning applications.



“What do people say?”

Mr Robert Jackson

Chairman of Cwmdu and District Community Council

“ We look forward to cooperating with the National Park Authority to achieve the objectives set out in the new Management Plan and hope Community Councils will be able to play their part in preserving and enhancing the National Park for the benefit of those who live and work within it, as well as those who love to visit this beautiful part of the world. ”

Chris Blake

Director, The Green Valleys

“ The Green Valleys is based in the Brecon Beacons. We are a community interest company and it is our goal to make micro-hydro power a real possibility for landowners and community groups. We can offer initial feasibility studies, manage the permission process to construction in order to produce micro-hydro power.

We also work with communities to harness local woodland resources. Our goals are to create a sustainable woodland management model that can support biodiversity and develop an income from wood fuel and other woodland products as well as supporting education.

We work to support community groups in a number of ways apart from establishing micro-hydro schemes and community woodland projects. We can also advise on community engagement and legal organisation and can direct communities to best practice in a number of areas and technologies across Wales including bio-diesel clubs, car clubs, allotments and community gardens. ”

For more details on the company visit www.thegreenvalleys.org

Gavin Hogg

Penpont

“ Living in such a uniquely beautiful area, we feel that it is our responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment wherever possible, and we positively encourage our visitors to do so too. We endeavour to source our supplies from ethical companies and support local small businesses and producers whenever possible. Over the past few years we have embraced a number of renewable energy and sustainable systems within our buildings.

We are dedicated to keeping rural crafts and skills alive and in September 2010 we hosted The Big Skill festival, which offered introductions to a range of crafts and skills from hedge laying to willow weaving. The event will be running again this September. ”

Penpont was built in 1666 and remains to this day a privately owned Grade I listed house and estate. The gardens around the house are an extensive 45 acres, and include a wide range of habitats, from lawns to woodlands, ornamental to wild areas as well as two Victorian walled gardens in full productivity with organic vegetables, fruit and flowers. The adjacent landscape and garden is listed as Grade 2* and is bisected by the River Usk which forms a natural divide from the south and north garden creating its own habitat of outstanding natural beauty. The Garden is listed with the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust and CADW.

For more details on the estate visit www.penpont.com





Sustainable Economic Development

Why is it important to support businesses in the Park to become more sustainable?

The National Park is home to a variety of businesses. Many of these are interested in how they can reduce their impact on the environment not only to protect the National Park and to attract a discerning public to their businesses but also in response to climate change impacts like soaring fuel prices.

Tourism is essential to the local economy - the Park hosts 3.6 million visitors each year. The Park's tourism businesses and activity providers will work to maximise benefits locally work. Land managers however may need to minimise the negative impacts of tourism such as eroding footpaths or increased car traffic. Local tourism businesses already work with the National Park Authority and the Fforest Fawr Geopark and have been making great strides in developing sustainable transport networks, creating local supply chains, investing in local communities and promoting sustainable economic development.

The landscape of the Brecon Beacons looks the way it does mostly as a result of generations of farming. If livestock grazing declined the characteristic green rolling appearance of the hills would soon change, as scrub grew and eventually forests and woodlands returned.

The Park's farming communities are under significant pressure from a number of challenges. Some farm businesses are responding to the changes by buying neighbouring farms, resulting in fewer but larger farms. The farming community in the Park has been characterised by small, family run farms for generations and frequently it has been those farms which supported biodiversity. Other farm businesses are simplifying their systems with less time spent on landscape management.

Subsidies for farmers are now aimed at enabling farm businesses to respond better to market trends and to deliver benefits through farming practices - for example through biodiversity conservation and increasing opportunities for more species to make use of field margins and hedgerows.

What do we want to achieve?

The development of a strong, successful and sustainable economy in tourism and farming.

The following is a summary of the aims laid out in more detail in the National Park Management Plan:

- The Park will realise its full potential for visitors. For example the businesses and land managers along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal will work together to maximise the opportunities for visitors whilst still conserving the attractive setting it wends through.
- The economic impact of sustainable tourism will be improved by encouraging more visitors to stay overnight, as well as using sustainable transport such as the Beacons Bus or public transport to reduce their environmental impact.
- More businesses within the Park will work in partnership. For example European funding could be used to create a partnership approach to bring together communities and businesses.
- Support will be offered to farmers to help them deal with the changes affecting the future of farm practices and businesses. For example, by encouraging local schools, hospitals, public services and communities to buy locally produced food.



“What do people say?”

A passenger

Beacons Bus Service, Summer 2010

“If I come again, I would like to use the service again and visit a different place like the Big Pit. It makes a good day out without the hassle of driving a car and you see so much more.”



Rev. Alan Jevons

Member of Bwlch Walks cluster group

“I first approached Brecon Beacons National Park Authority with a view to getting more visitors to my Parish of Llyn Safaddan. Eventually, an idea developed to promote a new sustainable walking break to unite the local community and welcome more visitors into the area. With the two Churches of Llangors and Llangasty firmly featured, the New Inn (Beacons Backpackers) and the Star Bunkhouse in Bwlch provided welcoming accommodation and hearty food. Together we devised a three day walking experience encouraging visitors to arrive sustainably by train or bus. The walk then takes them on a journey across two mountain ridges, past Llangors Lake, the two Churches of Llangors and Llangasty, and to a protected Nature Reserve. We developed a leaflet for the route which we called ‘Bwlch with Altitude’, it was published in March 2009 funded by the European money through the COLLABOR8 project. The collaboration has been so successful that we have launched a new walk called ‘Bwlch with Fortitude’ which takes in Tretower.”

For details of the walks visit
www.bwlchwalks.co.uk

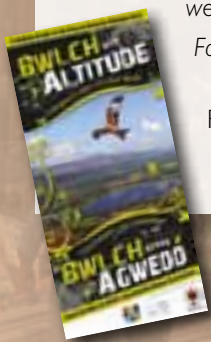
Fiona Walker

Director of the Llandovery Sheep Festival

“We wanted to organise an event to show off our lovely town - Llandovery so we decided to celebrate its driving past by organising the Sheep Festival. We interviewed local town centre businesses, exhibitors and visitors and more than three quarters of visitors rated their visit to Llandovery Sheep Festival as better than expected. Some festival exhibitors told us that they had done so much more trade than they expected, that they’d run out of stock! Just over 90% of the town centre businesses we spoke to said their turnover had increased from the additional visitors to the town over the weekend.

These are just the kinds of statistics we want to hear so we know that tourism is having a positive impact on the local economy of the area. It was great to see so many people smiling and hear comments from people such as, ‘this is just what Llandovery needs’ and ‘the town feels alive again’. We are now busy organising the next one.”

For details of the festival go to
www.llandoverysheepfestival.co.uk



and finally...

Brecon Beacons National Park is a special place which deserves the commitment and dedication of those who manage it. This plan exists to help give them a sense of purpose and a direction to their endeavours. No one can be certain what 2030 will look like but the intention of the Management Plan is that all those with an active role to play will be able to consult it to help them decide how best to protect their particular part of the National Park. The Plan is ambitious but we hope you will agree it is attainable.

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