

Dorset National Park Summer 2021 Newsletter



Dorset National Park Proposal to be Considered Later this Year

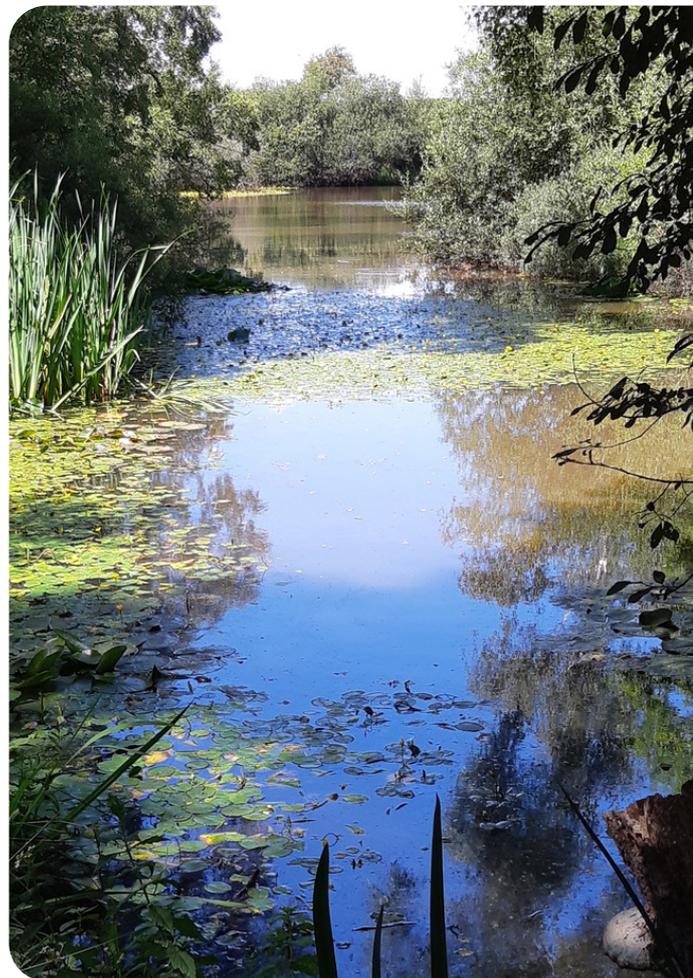
On June 24th both the Government and Natural England issued statements on how they intend to take forward proposals to improve England's protected landscapes. The Dorset National Park Team note the immediate priorities Natural England has established to meet the Government's aim that 30% of the country should be protected and improved for nature by 2030. The Team also note the Government's manifesto commitment to create new National Parks and that this commitment was repeated by the Prime Minister in November 2020 when launching the Government's 10 Point Plan for a green economic recovery. The proposal that a Dorset National Park should cover as much of rural Dorset as meets Natural England's designation criterion would help the Government meet its 30 x 30 objective.

The Team will continue to work with Natural England to help the Government deliver its commitment and has accepted an invitation from Natural England to be involved in the further assessment of the Dorset proposal which has been shortlisted for further evaluation later this year.

A Dorset National Park would help achieve the Government's strategic priorities: a thriving, greener economic future, nature recovery and community health and well-being, as well as addressing the climate and ecological emergencies. The National Park Team look forward to working with Natural England and with Councils, communities and other stakeholders in a joint approach to achieve these national commitments and priorities.

The Background

In his 1945 official report, John Dower recommended the establishment of National Parks in England and Wales. A Dorset National Park was on that original list and remains unfinished business. The report of the Glover Review in 2019 recognised this strong case and recommended that Dorset and East Devon be seriously evaluated for National Park status. John Dower set out a vision in 1945. Today his son, Michael Dower, is a Patron of the proposed Dorset & East Devon National Park which can fulfil that earlier vision and benefit the environment, economy and communities of this very special area as well as the health and well-being of all who live and work in or visit the area.



It's time for Dorset's National Park

You can support the National Park Team CIC with time, contacts, knowledge and funding.

For more information and to be kept in touch, visit www.dorsetnationalpark.com
Contact us at: info@dorsetnationalpark.com

Dorset & East Devon National Park CIC.
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www.dorsetnationalpark.com

The Opportunity for The Nation

A Dorset and East Devon National Park, in the heart of Southern England would:

- Help the Government meet its manifesto commitment to create new National Parks as part of a thriving, greener economic future.
- By encompassing as much of rural Dorset as meets Natural England's National Park designation criteria, including what remains of Thomas Hardy's Egdon Heath, contribute to the Government's aims to designate 30% of England's landscape for nature by 2030 ("30 by 30"), and to better connect more people with nature.
- By embracing the spectacular Dorset and East Devon UNESCO World Heritage "Jurassic" Coast – the only World Heritage Site in the UK designated for its natural environment – a National Park would more than double the extent of coastline, currently under-represented in English National Parks.
- Offer the unique potential for a more coordinated approach to addressing issues in the marine environment and at the offshore/onshore interface, benefiting all stakeholders in the blue/green economy.
- Take partnership working to a new level with a one-to-one relationship with a unitary Dorset Council, including the development and delivery of a shared Local Plan through a shared planning team, and partnering to address the challenges of climate, nature and health.
- Offer an unparalleled range of recreational opportunities and potential at the coast and across an area which has exceptional geodiversity, landscape diversity and heritage, as well as the greatest biodiversity in the UK.
- Be easily and sustainably accessible to local people, including in the neighbouring conurbation of Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole (the largest non-industrial conurbation in England,) and to visitors from around the country.
- Support the Government's aims for levelling up and achieving a thriving, greener economic future, by supporting and helping to strengthen and add value to Dorset's economy and communities.

The Opportunity for Dorset & East Devon

The Government aims to create the conditions for economic recovery and a thriving future, to help areas "level up" and to strengthen investment, skills and productivity. A National Park can help achieve these aims and secure a thriving, successful future for our economy and communities.

Businesses thrive where natural capital and social capital are valued and strong. A National Park would work in partnership with councils and communities to foster an environment in which natural and social capital thrive, for everyone's benefit.

- Evidence suggests that National Parks attract investment and jobs as well as additional Government and other funding.
- They are home to successful, vibrant businesses including small and micro businesses in the knowledge economy, and they work in partnership with economic stakeholders and communities to plan for and meet their needs for housing (including truly affordable homes), economic and employment space¹.
- For example, the South Downs National Park saw an increase in the number of employees in its area between 2016 and 2019 when neighbouring comparator areas had lower employment growth².

- 32.5% of businesses in the South Downs National Park in 2019 were in the knowledge economy. Only the South Downs NP and the Enterprise M3 LEP area saw a positive growth in the percentage of such businesses during the period 2016 - 2019, whereas the South East region as a whole saw a decline.
- Evidence from the South Downs suggests that National Park designation leads to higher value tourism with people staying longer and spending more, as well as to a growth of higher value eco/heritage/cultural and dark skies tourism. This in turn encourages an increase in the local skills base. National Parks also help manage tourism pressures.
- A majority of businesses in National Parks believe that the quality of the landscape and environment has a positive impact on their performance, and that National Park designation has a positive impact on their business³.
- Through investing in and enhancing the environment (Dorset's greatest economic asset⁴) and growing Dorset's natural capital, a National Park would help achieve sustainable economic growth, develop the area's potential in the "green/blue" economy and help improve young people's health and life chances⁵.
- National Parks are not subject to central housing targets. Neither would the whole of the Dorset Council and East Devon Council areas be subject to such targets since planning law enables the partner local planning authority and the National Park to develop a local approach to determining the housing need for their areas.
- National Parks support the development of affordable homes for local people to help retain and attract young families and growth businesses. In the South Downs, the number of those aged 16 to 24 increased by around 5% between 2011 (when the South Downs National Park became operational) and 2018.
- As in the South Downs, a National Park would value farmers as guardians of the countryside and producers of quality foods and products, as well as providers of vital ecosystem services (such as clean water, flood resilience, healthy soils and woodlands which contribute to nature recovery and carbon capture.) It would support them in securing "public benefit" farm funding and in diversification⁶.
- National Parks promote local products, including food and drink, and a National Park could boost the Dorset brand at home and abroad.
- A report by Bournemouth University concluded that a Dorset National Park could add many millions of pounds in value to the county's economy in tourism and other sectors.

1. A Report on the Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis on the Creation of a National Park within Dorset and East Devon Kyle Dyett, Professor Davide Parrilli and Dr Ishmael Tingbani, Jan 2018
2. For a fuller analysis on these points, see <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/thriving-economy>
3. The Economic Benefits of a Dorset National Park, Cumulus Consulting, November 2018 <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/economic-benefits>
4. Dorset's Environmental Economy, report for Dorset County Council by Ash Futures, 2016
5. <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/national-parks-help-improve-young-peoples-health-and-life-chances>
6. See eg evidence from the South Downs <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/new-farming-case-studies>

Some Questions Answered

Bureaucracy

A National Park does not introduce a new layer of bureaucracy. The National Park would bring additional Government funding and expertise to better address the challenges to our environment, help reverse the decline in nature, focus on building the homes local communities need (National Parks have a duty to respond to those needs) attract investment and jobs and provide a multi-million pound economic boost to Dorset's economy.



House Prices

Higher house prices are associated with desirable areas wherever these are. There is a need for truly affordable homes, for example to help retain and attract young families and this is a key policy of the South Downs National Park's Local Plan. <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/faq-05-21>

Business Benefits

The evidence from independent studies suggests that the majority of businesses consider their being in a National Park benefits their business: <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/benefits-of-a-national-park> In the South Downs National Park (a similar working farmed landscape with settlements of various sizes) there has been an increase in employment since the area was designated a National Park.



Young People.

Evidence from the South Downs shows an increase in the number of young people in recent years as well as a growth in businesses in the higher value knowledge economy. <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/post/faq-05-21>



Local Accountability.

National Parks are run by local people. 75% of their Boards are locally elected councillors nominated by their councils. A third of these are from Parish and Town Councils, giving them a say for the first time in the setting of policies and in planning decisions. (Currently some 25% of the Board of the Dorset AONB are local councillors.) The other 25% of National Park Board members are local people who apply for the role and are appointed by Ministers because they have particular local experience and expertise.

Further Information

Download a new flyer from the team's website

www.dorsetnationalpark.com

...and find the answers to some frequently asked questions at

www.dorsetnationalpark.com/faqs

The National Park family promotes a collective vision

England's nine National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority have agreed four collective priorities that will guide their work as a family of National Parks working with their communities and other partners.

"Our vision is for National Parks to be national beacons for a sustainable future, where nature and people flourish."

To help us get there, we have developed four Delivery Plans⁷ covering:

Wildlife and Nature Recovery:

For example ... *we commit to working through our strong local partnerships to co-create plans with farmers, landowners and communities so we achieve sustainable change that supports the community in their role as custodians and invest in nature recovery to help support viable farm businesses.*

Climate Leadership:

For example ... *Working through partnerships, National Parks aim to become carbon neutral by 2040 and achieve "net zero" by 2030 wherever practicable, demonstrate how nature-based solutions can help develop resilience to climate change, work with communities to deliver highly sustainable homes, and raise the bar in terms of design and build standards. We will also promote sustainable tourism and spread positive lifestyle messages.*

Sustainable Farming and Land Management:

For example ... *National Parks should be celebrated as living, working landscapes where sustainable farming and land management deliver a wide range of public goods, farmers receive a sustainable and realistic income, and National Park Authorities help achieve a 'triple dividend': enhanced environment, improved productivity and more vibrant communities. National Parks should be priority areas for future ELMS farm funding, supporting economic, social and environmental well-being.*

Landscapes for Everyone:

For example ... *National Parks landscapes are places that can restore and enhance people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and recovery through access and connection to nature ... inspiring people, young and old, to have pride in, a passion for and actively engage in our landscapes ... Working through our strong local partnerships, government, schools and health sector partners to meet the needs of park users including the under-represented.*

7. <https://www.nationalparksengland.org.uk/home/about-national-parks-england/national-parks-collective-vision-and-priorities>

News from the South Downs National Park

SDNP's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/natures-medicine-national-park-unveils-major-new-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

A groundbreaking plan aims to make the South Downs National Park a "natural health service" for the South East of England. The National Park's Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out a vision to connect more people with nature to help improve both mental and physical health. The plans include working with GPs, healthcare and community-based providers to deliver more opportunities for "green social prescribing".

The SDNP has a Citizens Panel which helps the NPA consult with and hear the views and interests of local people: "Our bi-annual surveys really help provide us with an insight into key areas of interest to local residents and help shape the way we plan our work. This survey will include questions on volunteering and visitor management, as well as finding out what topics you want to hear about from us"

Public and Private Partnerships

The SDNP works extensively with partners. For example, it is partnering with Brighton & Hove Council and Plumpton College (with lottery and National Park funding) in restoring a countryside estate as a key gateway to the National Park, and with neighbouring estates such as Arundel castle as part of its aim, welcomed by the Government, to work with and bring benefits to communities and the economy across wider areas. <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/spectacular-stanmer/>

Passing on our Heritage to Future Generations

Julian Fellowes is a Patron of the Dorset National Park. He writes:

"How much longer will the villages of Hardy's early years, or the views that greeted him as a world-famous author, how much longer will any of this survive, if the area does not wake up to the great responsibility of protecting these sites so that they may be enjoyed by future generations? Hardy would surely want us to conserve and enhance these very special places and the cultural heritage that is entwined in our landscapes and communities, and so should we all. To live here is a great privilege, and this brings with it a duty to protect his story and look after and pass on to future generations what we should all hold so dear.

I believe the Dorset National Park offers a great opportunity to achieve these aims."