

Report of Ranger Service Manager and Biodiversity Officer

Subject: Tree Planting Opportunity- Platinum Anniversary - 70 Years since Designation

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask Members to approve a tree planting scheme to commemorate 70 years since the National Park's designation.

Background

2. Attached is a letter from Cllr Reg Owens outlining a proposal to undertake a tree planting scheme in commemoration of our original designation 70 years ago. The proposal is supported in principle by Officers. An outline of a suggested scheme that would be feasible is set out below.

Scheme Outline

3. The Authority has experience of carrying out such schemes and this informs the thinking behind the proposal below. The proposal is likely to be met with enthusiasm by communities but gauging the level of enthusiasm is difficult. In addition there may not be readily identifiable opportunities to plant. It is useful to note that some historic schemes we undertook in the 1990's are now suffering badly from ash dieback (almost 100% affected on some sites) so there may be opportunities to replace or restock some of those areas with a more diverse range of planting.
4. There are 49 Community/Town/City Councils within or partly within our National Park. Not all 49 communities will take it up, or will have suitable sites straight off so may take time to achieve. The Ranger service would be well placed to lead the programme engaging and supporting communities with finding suitable sites and with planting and aftercare of the trees. To manage capacity it is suggested the scheme could be launched for the anniversary but could run for three years to help manage the implications for capacity on the Ranger service.
5. It is suggested that:
 - A. **Time line** - We would need the planting window to include the winter of 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24.
 - B. **Admin** – The scheme would be led and delivered by the Ranger Service and each community area would be offered the opportunity to participate. Communities can then work with their local Area Ranger to identify and propose suitable sites.

- C. **Funding** – No funding is currently identified. To provide each of the 49 community councils with 70 whips (one year old single stem saplings) and guards/stakes for every community would require approximately £12,000 over three years. Some trees such as fruit trees or half standards might be desirable and would be more expensive than whips. There are some funding sources which may be suitable, such as Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature project or the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Trust's 'Wild About Woodlands' campaign.

Risk considerations

6. The risks for this project are primarily around judging the rate of take up. This issue could be managed by inviting communities to participate in a phased way so that demand can be managed by current staff resourcing spread across three years.

Financial considerations

7. Additional Funding is required. The scheme as described will not create any additional long term financial obligations.

Welsh Language considerations

8. The publicity material will be prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.1) 2015.

Recommendations: Members are asked to:

Agree the proposed tree planting scheme as set out in the report above.

Background documents

(For further information please contact Sarah Mellor, Biodiversity Officer extension 4829 or Libby Taylor Ranger Service Manager extension 4857)

13th September 2021

Dear Tegryn & Members of P.C.N.P

In 1952 the Pembrokeshire Coast (including the Preseli Hills and Upper Daugleddau) were considered to be so special as to be designated as a National Park. Thus in common with Her Majesty the Queen 2022 will be an opportunity to mark our Platinum Anniversary, 70 years.

I believe this is an opportunity for celebration which could involve all of our communities and link to our statutory purposes to conserve and promote enjoyment of the Park.

To this end I hope Members will agree that we should explore the possibility of developing a tree planting scheme to plant 70 trees in each Park Community during the Winter 2021/2022 the planting could continue during the Winter of 2022.

In planning for this 70/70 tree planting we will need to consult fully with Community Councils and seek their advice and help. It would also be an opportunity to involve schools and our youth members in tree planting thereby providing a spin-off in relation to conservation education and objectives which are already of great interest to the younger generation. Thus we as National Park Members and Officers will demonstrate to our younger stakeholders that we are merely the National Parks current Guardians and that they are the Trustees of the Park for future generations.

To embark on a 70/70 tree planting is appropriate for two reasons –

Firstly the Botanic Gardens Conservation Report published recently and reported widely in the Press and social media stated that “40% of tree species in the UK are at risk of extinction”. The report went on to say “trees are fundamental to all life on earth” and tree conservation matters-trees are the backbone of the natural ecosystem they store 50% of the Worlds terrestrial carbon” (BGC global tree portal provides useful information and advice)

Secondly the COP 26 Conference in Glasgow in November 2021 will be the 26th such gathering with around 30,000 people to attend from around the world. It will be the biggest international Summit the UK has ever hosted COP means “Conference of Parties on Climate Change”. Our 70/70 tree planting programme will dovetail with the COP 26 focus on climate change.

The Welsh National Parks and the wider UK National Park family as a component of local, regional and national government might already be accredited to attend COP 26 we would need to clarify this and the National Parks should seek to use COP 26 platform to learn from the experience of others and demonstrate how we might assist in the decarbonizing programme. In so doing we would be acting in concert with Welsh farming in that NFU Cymru have set the ambitious goal of reaching Net Zero Gas Emissions for Agriculture by 2040.

The UK government may well be amenable to NP presence at COP 26 because they appear to be committed to a widening role for National Parks in that media reports

confirm the UK's Government intention to consider re-designating the Chiltern Hills and the Cotswolds as National Parks. There was even a report stating than“Ministers plan to create a National Park city”

I appreciate that consultation organising and the actual planting may extend the 70/70 programme for up to 2 years. However in looking forward I see that an 80th anniversary is described as an Oak Anniversary, Let us encourage us together with our communities, children, friends of the park and like-minded people to dig and set a tree – mendous precedent for the next 10 years hence.

I hope that members and the Chief Executive will give a favourable response to my proposal for 70/70 tree planting in order to take forward for formal approval and hopefully implementation.

Best Wishes Cllr Reg Owens