

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DELIVERY AND DISCOVERY

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

Part 1: Overview of grant funded work – The Discovery Team

The Discovery Team deliver a wide range of work that has inclusion as its focus, the majority of this is project/externally funded, although there is a small amount of core funded activity that might also be considered as addressing social inclusion priorities (see below)

Your Park

The Big Lottery funded 'Your Park' project provides opportunities for groups and organisations working with disadvantaged clients to access the National Park and all it has to offer, through a variety of engagement activity, from bushcraft and 'wild cooking' through to photography and arts based work. Your Park aims to build the capacity of groups to use the outdoors so training is an integral part of what we are able to offer. The project also seeks to develop the policy and practice of PCNPA to better meet needs of those facing barriers to our services.

The existing funded project comes to an end in December of 2015 having received grant funding of around £250,000 of funding in 2012. Work is underway to develop a successor project with the intention of sustaining the engagement of groups and individuals in outdoor activity in the National Park.

Mosaic

Mosaic is a 3 year Big Lottery funded project managed by the Campaign for National Parks. The existing project came to an end in March 2015, however all three Welsh National Parks have signed up to a succession strategy which will see PCNPA continue to work with Mosaic Champions and Diversity Outdoors, the group set out to support Mosaic Champions in south-east Wales.

The project set out to reduce the barriers experienced by BME communities in accessing National Parks. Mosaic worked with people from these communities as community champions and offered training and support to enable Champions to inspire and encourage others in their communities to visit and be involved in National Parks. The Champions also work with the National Park Authorities to support organisational change that will contribute to making National Parks more accessible for all. Funding is being sought for a follow-on project focussing on urban communities and their engagement with the National Parks.

Walkability

The Walkability initiative has been externally funded for more than 4 years with support from a variety of sources including Sports Wales, Let's Walk Cymru and a number of smaller grants including Hywel Dda Health Board's community funds

Walkability works with groups and individuals, accessing the National Park and its footpaths to promote health and wellbeing benefits through walking and related activity. The project officer seeks to build the capacity, skills and confidence of participants to walk independently. The project's working partners include Bike Mobility, Steps2Health, Hywel Dda Health Board, Pembrokeshire County Council, Public Health Wales and Pembrokeshire Leisure.

Skills in Action

Skills in Action is a traineeship programme for the National Park funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is a partnership between Brecon Beacon NPA, Torfaen County Borough Council and Pembrokeshire Coast NPA. Each year the Authority recruits 5 trainees who work with warden teams across the National Park, each trainee also undertakes a Level 2 Environmental Conservation award through Pembrokeshire College together with a package of other training and support designed to enhance employability. The project has 3 years of funding ending in August 2017.

Core funded activity within the Discovery Team with a social inclusion focus

In addition to the grant funded work described above the Discovery Team also delivers core funded work that addresses outcomes identified in the Welsh National Parks Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan.

Whilst much of our environmental education programme is charged for service delivering against National Curriculum targets for schools, we also undertake targeted work with groups/pupils focussing on additional learning needs. This includes work with pupil referral units, special schools and secondary school educational units.

The NPA's recently produced volunteer strategy has a clear focus on inclusive volunteering, a priority which will inform the development of future work in this area for the Discovery team and others across the Authority.

Increasingly our interpretative work and the delivery of activities and events programmes takes account of the need to be more inclusive and to provide opportunities for new audiences. Examples include the incorporation of 'walks for health' in the 2015 published activity programme for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, targeted promotion for local audiences and interpretation that is geared towards engaging young people in our National Park.

Prioritising Discovery Team inclusion work

The grant funded project work undertaken by the Discovery team is informed by the priorities and policies of the Authority. The Welsh National Parks Social Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan continues to guide our work, with a revised version more accurately reflecting local priorities. Increasingly the priorities of Welsh Government and other agencies in targeting disadvantage and exclusion help us to plan and develop work.

In general terms the work sets out to provide clear benefits for those participating, these outcomes vary depending on the audience, but might be (for example) around

health and wellbeing, improved learning, social cohesion and/or community benefits. In achieving these type of outcomes for people we are also able to address the National Parks priorities in promoting a greater understanding of National Parks and contributing to their conservation.

When looking at the specific themes of the Authority's grant funded work it seems that key areas of core activity have been developed with the use of project funding adding value and complimenting existing work.

Working with socially excluded groups: The Authority has always been able to offer opportunities for a range of groups to get involved in the activities of the National Park and in doing so improve their understanding of protected landscapes. Ranger teams have been central to delivery of this work and continue to be so. The Your Park project has taken this aspect of our service and sought to develop/test new models for delivering this work. The project has 'signed-up' more than 30 groups working with disadvantaged communities/individuals, some of which have worked with PCNPA staff through core funded work. Your Park has sought to build the capacity of groups to explore the National Park for themselves through a range of support and training, this in part is a response the limited resources we have available to us in engaging with a wide range of organisations. If the model can be shown to work we may be able to sustain a wider range of work across our public facing teams. The work adds value to what we do already in testing the feasibility of working with groups in a slightly different way, targeting engagement in a pro-active way.

There may be further added value in developing more opportunities for regular volunteering with Ranger teams that will help to sustain the involvement of groups, organisations and individuals.

The health benefits of walking: Providing guided walks has been a critical part of our offer to National Park visitors for many years. As the links between poor health and inactivity have been made so work to increasing physical activity amongst those most likely to benefit has become an accepted part of health promotion and the prevention of ill health.

The Walkability project has sought to focus on how we can deliver these benefits in the National Park, recognising that there are significant numbers of potential beneficiaries locally. In the time provided by a funded project we have been able to explore different approaches to promoting walking opportunities to new audiences, identified routes suitable for a range of audiences and built up partnerships with health professionals. The learning from the project is transferable to our ranger teams and demonstrates how the National Park can be used as a health asset in practice. As with all project funding the challenge is to sustain these benefits, as part of Walkability's work we have developed a programme of Walk Leader Training for volunteers and staff that will help to do this. The project is focussing on another sustainability issue at present – how to encourage independent walking amongst those used to the led walks provided by both walkability and the Ranger teams.

Employment and training: The Authority and the National Park itself are important to the local economy in this part of Wales. Whilst we are relatively small employer, the multi-faceted nature of our work suggests we may have a role to play in providing

opportunities for young people in particular, improving their employability skills. The NPA has in the past been able to provide work experience, placements and careers advice as a local organisation providing opportunities for local people.

The Skills in Action project comes at a time when public bodies are expected to contribute more to local economic development and also coincides with a renewed interest in apprenticeships/traineeships as a way of addressing youth unemployment in some areas and amongst our most disadvantaged communities.

The project provides the opportunity for the Authority to develop a traineeship programme that could go beyond the lifetime of the funded project. It supports the work of the warden teams and provides work experience/training in an area where we have been told by LANTRA there are still employment opportunities.

The project package has supported the training of wardens and rangers teams, increasing organisational capacity to deliver this kind of work in the future. Ten staff have taken their PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) qualification in 2015 with further staff training planned as part of the project.

An overview of the impacts of social inclusion work to date

Critical evaluation of the work undertaken is central to the grant funded projects undertaken by the Discovery Team, in part this is because funders require evidence of success or otherwise in relation to their support, but also because evidence of impact can be vital in developing our work further in the future.

Overall the impact of grant funded work has been significant, it has allowed the Authority to reach a larger audience and to engage new individuals, groups and organisations in the National Park. We have been able to try out new approaches to achieving our desired outcome and shared this learning across the Authority. We have measured performance and collected feedback in several ways across the grant funded work we have undertaken to date. **Examples are given in the table below.**

The qualitative data collected tells us more about the benefits/impact of the project work delivered. In some cases measurement in terms of 'bums on seats' doesn't reflect well on the work we have undertaken. An extreme example of this would be the Skills in Action traineeship programme where there are only 15 prime beneficiaries in Pembrokeshire for a 3 year project with more than £300,000 budget.

Similarly, the Your Park project could have achieved a greater footfall with a different project model, where the emphasis was on giving more participants shorter experiences of the national park. However this approach would have almost certainly yield less impact in terms of sustaining individual and group activity in the outdoors.

Project name	Evaluative work undertaken	Summary of impacts recorded
Mosaic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data (on sessions and numbers attending for example) • Regular participative evaluation of sessions • Interim/project end evaluation reports produced • Photographic and filmed evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external evaluation shows that the project has done well in terms in introducing BME audiences to National Parks, estimating 2,200 new people introduced by the 60 champions across 3 National Parks • It emphasises the positive impact that being involved with National Parks through Mosaic has had on Champions in areas such as community cohesion, health and wellbeing, skills and confidence. • Pembrokeshire Champions have organised 10 trips to PCNPA in 2014, bringing around 230 people to the NP. • Training: including First Aid, Walk Leader training, Fundraising, planning a visit, • 6 Champions appear in a series of short videos on You Tube talking about what they have got out of National Parks – a must see – ranging from health and wellbeing outcomes to being places where you can feel more at home in the UK and improve community cohesion.
Skills in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data (on sessions and numbers attending for example) • Regular participative evaluation of trainees activity • Training sessions attended • Pre project benchmarking of trainees undertaken • External evaluation commissioned • Photographic and filmed evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First cohort of 5 trainees commenced their 1 year placement in September 2014 following around 100 applications. All trainees are Pembrokeshire based with 3 trainees aged 25 years or under. A second cohort of 5 trainees started on the 1st September 2015 • Trainees have been place in 3 area warden teams. • Training has included chainsaw operation, brushcutter operation, hedgelaying, trailer use, first aid, walk leader training • 10 Wardens and Rangers undertake PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) training in 2015 • City and Guilds Level 2 qualification with Pembrokeshire College partially completed by all trainees
Walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data (on sessions and numbers attending for example) • Photographic and filmed evidence • Interim project evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, Walkability has provided more than 600 walks across the length and breadth of the National Park, with around 7000 participants enjoying bespoke walking activity designed to provide appropriate levels of physical activity dependent on existing health and mobility. • More than 2000 walkers in 2014 • Participants drawn from cardiac rehabilitation exercise referral patients, mental health day care patients and ex-patients, palliative care and disabled groups where the use of electric mobility

	report produced	<p>scooters is essential, Army Family Welfare Teams, local community walking (open to all-comers), Cycle mobility for people with special physical and learning needs, hospital rehabilitation day care patients and staff, pupils with special needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits identified by participants as part of project evaluation include, companionship, discovering Pembrokeshire, health, walking support, confidence to walk, motivation and inspiration, increased mobility.
Your Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data (on sessions and numbers attending for example) • Regular participative evaluation of sessions • Semi quantitative measures of impact on individuals • John Muir Awards completed • Training sessions attended • Photographic and filmed evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 2000 individual visits to the park have taken place through Your Park • The project has worked with 34 groups and organisations to date, all of which might be described as working with disadvantaged individuals. Involvement covers a range of potential audiences of beneficiaries from NEETS and young people excluded from formal education through to older people and groups specialising in rehabilitation (from addiction). • 15 young people take part in Youth Rangers • Feedback from participating groups indicated wide ranging benefits from involvement in the Your Park Programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An increase in the capacity of organisations to make use of the outdoors - Observed improvements in health and well-being, - An increased appreciation of the natural environment from both the group leaders and their clients. - Gains in knowledge and understanding of the National Park. - Improved engagement with clients, - Sustaining a commitment to outdoor activity. • Five distinct elements of the project were identified as being of particular use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and training provided to group leaders - Ability of the project to be responsive to the needs of the group - Use of John Muir awards - Accessibility of the activities (low cost and easily replicated) - Quality of input from National Park Authority staff

Part 2: Overview of core SI work undertaken by Ranger Team – The Delivery Team

The Ranger Team, based within the Park Delivery Service work on an area basis, providing a key link with their local communities. Their role is to help residents and visitors in their area to understand and become involved in the National Park and the work of the Authority through providing inclusive opportunities for volunteering, assisting communities, local groups and visitors to explore and understand the Park and to carry out local environmental improvements. The Rangers take an active role in managing recreational use of the park and the relationships between recreational users and communities, landowners and residents and they work with landowners to help them to manage the pressures of recreation, particularly the ROW network.

The rangers have strong links in their communities and have increasingly prioritised social inclusion work over the last ten years. The area rangers are well-known locally within the communities that they serve and are seen as a first point of contact for groups within their area. In the past the Authority's flexible activity programme targeted socially excluded groups, forging links with rangers which have now become a mainstream part of the team's work. Typical examples are:

- Work with Youth Workers in comprehensive schools to deliver tailored programmes of outdoor activity for pupils requiring extra support such as travellers and those with learning, social or behavioural difficulties.
- Activities for groups and organisations such as talks, visits and guided walks. Recent examples are Pembrokeshire Blind Society, the Point Youth Centre (Fishguard), St Davids over 60s Club, and the Disabled Ramblers Association. In an average year the team works with around 60 groups from a wide range of communities and engage perhaps 7,500 people. We estimate that around 20% of those will fit into one or more social inclusion category.
- Volunteering opportunities for groups and individuals. As part of the Delivery Team which is responsible for carrying out the majority of the practical work of the NPA, the rangers are well placed to provide programmes of work, tailored to the needs and abilities of the volunteers. Volunteers have the opportunity to deliver part of the Authority's programme of conservation and access management work whilst gaining new practical skills, social, health and wellbeing benefits. Typical 'SI' groups that the team work with regularly: St Davids Care in the Community, Plas Dwbl College (adults with learning disabilities), Pembrokeshire College students (courses ranging from Army Preparation to Hair and Beauty), Drug Rehabilitation volunteers and young people volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Each area ranger is able to deliver a breadth of opportunities within a small area meaning that they are able to bring a rich experience to the people they work with. Feedback from groups and participants is very positive and groups come back to the Rangers time and again because they recognise the benefits their clients will gain. The impact of this work is difficult to measure but new means of recording this qualitative data are being developed; the newly created Rangers' Facebook page has recently received its first five star rating from a client group.

One advantage which the area rangers bring is that because of their wide practical role but limited geographic area of responsibility they can know their locality and the

people and issues very well and this brings a high degree of credibility when working in the Park with local groups.

The advantage of primarily targeting organisations and groups (as opposed to trying to develop new groups comprised of unconnected individuals) means that the issues of pastoral support, transport and recruitment are dealt with by the group, rather than the Ranger Service. To widen the current offer to individuals would require a significant increase in time and resources for pastoral support and transport which to date have been provided by the Authority's grant funded programmes.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Background Documents

Report to National Park Authority: Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan for the Welsh National Park Authorities: 2011-2014 February 2012

Report to National Park Authority on the National Parks of Wales Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan – Revision of PCNPA Action Plan, December 2014

(For further information, please contact James Parkin – jamesp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's Walkability Initiative

Project evaluation 2014

Introduction

This report summarises evaluation of the Walkability initiative undertaken in 2014. The evaluation was undertaken as part of a 'users forum' event attended by a group of service users providing feedback on their experience of involvement in Walkability. The forum was chaired by Rebecca Evans of Public Health Wales, a member of the Walkability Steering Group.

Background – the Walkability Initiative

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority launched the Walkability initiative in 2011 with the support of Sports Wales, subsequently funding has been drawn from Let's Walk Cymru and from a range of small grant sources in order to develop and expand our work in this area.

To date, Walkability has provided more than 600 walks across the length and breadth of the National Park, with around 7000 participants enjoying bespoke walking activity designed to provide appropriate levels of physical activity dependent on existing health and mobility.

Most of the initiatives participants are local and drawn primarily from the following groups:

- Cardiac rehabilitation exercise referral patients;
- Mental health day care patients and ex-patients;
- Palliative care and disabled groups, where the use of electric mobility scooters is essential;
- Army Family Welfare Teams;
- Local community walking (open to all-comers);
- Cycle mobility for people with special physical and learning needs;
- Hospital rehabilitation day care patients and staff;
- Pupils with special needs.



Paul Casson, the Walkability Coordinator, suggests that: "The Walkability initiative helps people to get out and use the Park to recover from an illness or just to improve their fitness, no matter what level they are starting from. There is an increasing demand for the services we are offering and we are working with partners to look at way of providing and sustain more walking opportunities".

Walkability works with a number of local partners including Pembrokeshire County Council's Exercise Referral Team, Hywel Dda and voluntary led walking schemes such as the Steps 2 Health clubs. Some participants are referred to Walkability (through existing referral schemes), but others access walks independently or come as part of the initiative's work with local groups and organisations.



The benefits of participation in 'Walkability'

The table below highlights the key benefits of participation in Walkability activity as identified by those taking part in walking activity provided by the initiative.

Benefit	Comments
Companionship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Companionship: the value of peer support from people who can understand/relate to an individual's health issues or who has shared experiences was very important.• Companionship: walking was more interesting amongst company.
Discovering Pembrokeshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discovering Pembrokeshire: some participants had been able to start walking independently after gaining confidence with Walkability.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health benefits were all given as examples by the participants.
Walking support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality, personality, enthusiasm and commitment of the Walkability Coordinator was also rated as one of the most positive aspects of taking part by all of the participants in the evaluation.
Confidence to walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence was high amongst participants in terms of their ability to walk in the countryside.• Taking part in led walks gave a greater sense of security amongst participants when taking up exercise again.• Confidence in the walk leaders meant that people felt able to push themselves more than they would otherwise have done when walking alone.
Motivation and inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walkability is a positive focus for the day, and the week. It has become a high point in the lives of those who take part, and a valued 'point of reference' that people have great motivation and commitment to attend.
Increased mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mobility scooters have had a huge impact on some of the participants, allowing a sense of achievement, independence and the opportunity to regain a lost skill, i.e. to control their own movement.

Additional feedback from Walkability service users

- i. More people could benefit from Walkability through personal recommendation, but several people thought there might be a danger of the groups becoming too large.
- ii. Transport: Access to the minibus transport provided by Walkability was seen to be a positive by some, with the lack of it perceived to be a possible barrier; it limits numbers. It was suggested that volunteers could drive additional buses/cars.
- iii. Inspirational leaders are hard to find – the Walkability Project Officer would be irreplaceable!
- iv. The PCNPA rangers are great: people with a depth of knowledge add value to the walks. Developing Walkability style walk programmes with ranger/volunteers as leaders might mean that more walks can be provided.
- v. Could the Walkability walking routes be provided in written form/available on a website, to take away so that people can walk them independently afterwards/with family and friends?
- vi. There would be huge benefits if there was an additional mobility scooter and a more accessible minibus.



Summary and Conclusions

The consensus of opinion from those taking part in the evaluation was that Walkability had made a huge difference to their lives. Feedback highlighted the value of ‘supported walking activity’ in general, but also the specific contributions of the Walkability Officer. The responses also suggest that group walking can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of participants, providing peer support and companionship.

In developing its work Walkability is focussing on a key challenge - how walking and other physical activity might be sustained by individuals and how they might do this without an over reliance on ‘led walk opportunities’. With this in mind the Walkability team are looking to:

- Demonstrate how interesting walking venues can be accessed using sustainable transport;
- Develop organisational, route finding and social skills so that participants have the confidence to run their own walking sessions;
- To help ensure that access to walking routes for those people with restricted mobility is maintained and developed in the National Park, where practicable.

Walkability is also training volunteers, community leaders and workers from a range of organisations in walk leadership skills. Trained volunteer leaders are now running walking activity across the National Park as part of Walkability.

For more information

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Walkability Service Users Forum Feedback (2014).

The pie charts illustrates the responses of Walkability service users to a series of questions regarding their experience of Walkability activity

Has your walk leader been supportive and well organised?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Has it been good to have a group of people to meet and walk with?



- More than expected
- Very much So

Have you learnt new skills that would help you to plan and go on a walk?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Have you learnt anything about the natural or historical surroundings on your walk?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Have you visited places that are new to you?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much so

Do you feel more relaxed when you are on a walk?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Have the walks you have done been suitable for your ability?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Do you think you can walk further now than when you started with the group?



- Yes, as expected
- More than expected
- Very much So

Has Public Transport been helpful in getting you to and from walks?



- Less than expected
- More than expected
- Very much So
- Not applicable

Have you enjoyed the walks?



- More than expected
- Very much So

Extract from an article on the benefits of walking (2013)

Groups which promote walking as a means of improving health are an increasing phenomenon along the Wales Coast Path. Walking has even been endorsed as a way of getting and staying healthy in 2011 by the Chief Medical Officers (CMO) of the four UK nations.

With the latest Welsh Health Survey revealing that more than half of Welsh adults are overweight, there's never been a more pressing need to get active. From the Welsh border in the north to Chepstow in the south east, the Wales Coast Path offers 870 miles of coastline to choose from, for people all abilities to embark on walking their way to health.

Arry Beresford-Webb, the Countryside Council for Wales' Health and Recreation Advisor, said: "Brisk walking can benefit your mental and physical health and wellbeing, and provides people of all ages and abilities with a fantastic opportunity to form positive exercise habits.

"As well as reaping the health and wellbeing benefits, the Wales Coast Path offers the opportunity to explore the great outdoors, the natural environment surrounding you and potentially discover new activities to take part in."

The CMOs first UK-wide physical activity guidelines say that walking briskly for 30 minutes a day, five days a week was one way of meeting their recommendations for adult physical activity.

Little wonder, then, that the Wales Coast Path's stunning coastal landscape is a perfect stomping ground for groups such as the Pembrokeshire-based Walkability Project. Established in 2011 by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Sport Wales, it helps people take up walking and make the most of the walking opportunities on offer to them.

Paul Casson, Project Coordinator, said: "The Walkability Project helps people to get out and use the Park to recover from an illness or just to improve their fitness, no matter what level they are starting from. With more than 140 sessions delivered to over 1,800 up to June this year, it's filled a real need for this kind of service."

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Ruth Hussey, said: "Walking is easy, gentle exercise and a great way to get active. It's the perfect exercise to start doing in small amounts and build slowly, and small lifestyle changes can have a big impact on your health". "Wales boasts some of the most beautiful coastline in the world, so there's no reason not to get out and enjoy the Coast Path."

As well as a boost to physical health, putting your best foot forward on the Wales Coast Path can do wonders for mental health. A survey by mental health charity, MIND, found that:

- 90% of people who took part in green exercise activities said that the combination of nature and exercise is most important in determining how they feel.
- 94% of people commented that green exercise improves their mental health.
- 90% of people commented that taking part in green exercise activities benefits their physical health

A MIND spokesman said: "Research has demonstrated that supervised programmes of exercise can be equally effective as antidepressants in treating mild to moderate depression."

Paul added: "A group that came from a support group for those with mental health issues formed their own walking team which have been meeting at a central public spot since last December.

"Their commitment has been such that they have met weekly with very few breaks and now walk for up to three hours, covering up to six miles. They have even organised a session for themselves when I have been unavailable."

For information on walks available on the Wales Coast Path, visit <http://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk/>

YOUR PARK

Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro



Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park



ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED

Your Park interim report (July 2012 - June 2014)

Project Aim: To support other organisations to provide better outcomes for their customers by making more effective use of doorstep outdoor opportunities and the National Park

Summary

The Big Lottery funded Your Park project is in the final year of three. This interim project evaluation seeks to measure the success of the project to date in getting social inclusion groups and organisations to increase their use of the outdoors. The report suggests that the project is achieving its aims by providing targeted experience of the National Park, bespoke training opportunities and ongoing support to individuals, groups and organisations. A high proportion of group leaders and their clients are learning how to operate outdoors, feeding this into operational change in their organisations and understanding more about the importance of the outdoors to health and well-being.



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Introduction

Your Park (YP) is in the final year of a three year project funded through the Big Lottery Fund's People and Places funding stream. This report aims to examine how effective the YP project has been in achieving its objectives to date, enabling the project staff to respond to feedback in how the remainder of the project is delivered. The report is based on quantitative information gathered from project sessions and also on qualitative feedback gathered from staff from a range of engaged organisations. They were asked to reflect on what's gone well and what their organisations have gained from their involvement with the project, what challenges and barriers they've experienced, and what support they will need to continue involvement in outdoor learning.

Background and aims of project

The Your Park project was designed to complement and develop the existing social inclusion work of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA). The Authority has for some time been able to provide high quality opportunities for disadvantaged groups locally, however activities are often delivered as a 'one off' experience, with limited consideration of how engagement with the outdoors might be sustained to benefit participants in the future.

The YP project model aims to engage organisations in their use of the outdoors as a place to achieve good outcomes for their clients and to build their capacity to sustain this activity independently, or with minimal support. The YP team provide targeted experiences within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, together with training and support to an organisation, its clients, staff and volunteers in working to achieve this goal. The evaluation undertaken for this report seeks to test the effectiveness of this model, identify good practice and issues of concern that will help shape the 'Your Park approach' going forward.

Evaluation process and how data gathered

The YP model aims to respond flexibly to the needs of different groups. In addition to gathering quantitative data, participatory evaluation has been used throughout the project to evaluate the experience of customers and staff. This report draws on 3 mid-project evaluation events that took place in May/June 2014 (involving a total of 12 group leaders), and also on a reflective session with project staff.

In the last months of the project there will be another round of evaluation, giving all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to an assessment of what's been achieved and how what's worked well can be sustained. This will inform the final project report.

This report refers to group leaders and clients. These include school staff involved in alternative curriculae, youth workers and the young people they work with, public and private sector social

services employees and people involved in family support work, and older people **Update, see appendix xxx.**

What's been achieved?

A. Quantitative data cumulatively for Year 1 and 2 of the Your Park Project Table 1

No of groups worked with	No of training sessions delivered	No of sessions delivered independently by participating groups	No of John Muir Awards achieved	

B. Feedback from evaluation events

Group leaders identified a range of benefits arising from involvement in the Your Park project. Evaluation also focused on elements of the project that hadn't gone so well and identified learning points for the future:

Increases in the capacity of their clients. For example, pupils demonstrated more self-confidence and self-esteem, and some had improved attendance records at school. They took pride in their achievements - one group of girls cleared a path (for example), and then took their parents to see what they'd done.

Another teacher reported: 'it was fantastic to see a group of four boys who were extremely naughty on the first session when we went to Bosherton Lily Ponds. They loved being outdoors, they even talked to people. Swans were changing over on their nest and the boys were shushing people and telling them about what was happening.'

Observed improvements in health and well-being. Several of the group leaders commented that physical fitness of their clients had improved, and there were reports of better sleeping patterns for more than one client.

An increased appreciation of the natural environment from both the group leaders and their clients. 'As a staff team we're more aware now when we're outside - not just walking but looking at plants and wildlife, and picking up litter.' 'Young people see going out as a break from the hassles of life - a different way to escape.'

Gains in knowledge and understanding of the National Park. Groups explored areas of the National Park that they didn't know existed, or didn't understand, and increased their awareness of the range of activities available and how to access them. One example was seeing a free day out on the beach as a good value alternative to having to find the money to go to an 'attraction'.

Improved engagement with clients. In an outdoor setting it became easier for staff to engage with the individuals they work with. One school teacher said: 'The levels of enthusiasm from pupils for

literacy and numeracy work done outdoors earned us praise for our work from senior staff'. The variety of landscape and range of activities available in the NP provided a way to engage with those a 'bit bored' with indoor learning. One boy wanted to join the outdoors group to avoid having a fight, he saw the outdoors as calming. He's now progressed to doing Duke of Edinburgh award and volunteers with the Lydstep Ranger.

One organisation working with young clients had so many young people who'd left the service but still wanted to be involved in the Your Park activities that they have decided to make the current activities open to young people and families who no longer work with the service.

Sustaining a commitment to outdoor activity. As a result of these gains organisations are beginning to prepare for long term commitment. For example, several had invested in walking boots and waterproofs. Others have established stand-alone groups to support outdoor activity within their organisation.

CASE STUDY 1

Elliot's Hill Care Ltd (Private Care Organisation)

Your Park's involvement with Elliot's Hill, an organisation that works with adults with learning and physical disabilities and mental health issues, started with a group of carefully selected customers who were considered likely to engage with the project.

At the start Elliot's Hill did little in terms of independent use of the outdoors, but more than 2 years on the organisation now provides a wide range of outdoor experiences which are accessed by many customers/service users. They have a monthly 'Elliot's Hill Explorers' activity day which involves getting out and about - customers are driving the process, asking for more outdoor activities and suggesting venues. This is in large part a result of staff buying in to the concept, undertaking training and building their own confidence and motivation, whilst receiving ongoing support from Your Park staff.



Customers (and staff) attending Portfield Gate woods open day

For staff the experience has broken down barriers between staff and customers, and also provided an opportunity for a number of training days which have raised awareness of the benefits of outdoor activity and provided opportunities for teambuilding.

Elliot's Hill Care Ltd have recently purchased some land and with a view to developing additional opportunities for outdoor activities for clients.

Participants have shown a wide range of gains from their regular involvement in the outdoors. Staff have observed increasing levels of enthusiasm for getting outdoors and more willingness to socialise. One customer has been observed to escape from his usual obsessive thoughts because in outdoor activity he focusses on the here and now, another has stopped smoking and reduced levels of medication. Some customers have become more knowledgeable, and more forthcoming about their knowledge, mentioning a wide range of birds and plants.



The first ever Elliot's Hill camping weekend at Abereiddy, attended by 30 overnight and 70 in the daytime.

CASE STUDY2

Hafal

What elements of project organisation helped produce these gains?

There were five main elements they identified as being of particular use:

- Support and training provided to group leaders
- Ability of the project to be responsive to the needs of the group
- Use of John Muir awards
- Accessibility of the activities (low cost and easily replicated)
- Quality of input from National Park Authority staff.

Training where possible was set-up to suit the needs of the groups: *'The overnight training session gave us time to interact with colleagues, made for good team building and we were able to share ideas and experiences', 'the day training was very user- friendly, with not too much Powerpoint, it was very hands on'.*

Group leaders saw the YP responsiveness to the needs of each group as crucial in allowing them to increase their work outdoors in a way that suited the constraints of their professional responsibilities. It could also lead to useful and unexpected outcomes: one school was linked with a college group, and the students have gone on to further volunteering with the school as this provides useful experience for their qualifications.

Group leaders commented on how the training enabled them to go on to plan outdoor sessions themselves, and also to cascade the ideas to other members of their teams - it successfully built their confidence. For teachers the John Muir Awards structure fitted well with elements of the schools curriculum. In addition the kind of activities provided were praised as low cost, doorstep and easily accessible, so easily replicated.

Being able to work with NPA staff opened up new locations and activities to group leaders. The rangers were able to provide pointers for venues suited to different weather conditions and abilities, and also enthuse group members so they'd be willing to put up with bad weather. Even a member of staff was mentioned *'who hated the outdoors but had to go out with YP activities, and now enjoys it and would choose to go out herself'!*

An additional benefit for the organisations was the way that involvement with the Your Park project was compatible with the achievement of their targeted outcomes. For schools there is a recognised award that links to their numeracy/literacy framework. For youth workers, the activities fit with the Welsh Government youth work strategy and the youth work curriculum. Involvement in the project also provides outcomes that fit with the Welsh Government outcomes for well-being. Coming to understand how outdoor work can fit with organisational aims was one area of learning from the project: *'It's now understood by our management that the outdoors is worthwhile'.*

CASE STUDY 3

Pembrokeshire Learning Centre (Local Authority Pupil Referral Unit)

Pembrokeshire Learning Centre works with children and young people who've been excluded from schools to provide specialist inclusive education. They've been involved with Your Park for more than 18 months and have progressed from not using the outdoors at all to having run more than 30 outdoor days with a range of activities that included numeracy and literacy on the beach.

As part of the project we set out to **build relationships with key staff members and providing ongoing support and advice**. This type of approach has proved particularly useful in enabling groups to make regular use of the outdoors. Despite considerable organisational change, working with an enthusiastic and empowered staff group has meant that the commitment to outdoor learning has been able to develop and expand.



Leading her first habitat exploration activity

For example from initial work at Key Stage 3 (KS 3) , outdoor learning opportunities were rolled out to KS 4, and across three of the Learning Centres in Pembrokeshire. One of the key staff members started the project as a level 1 LSA, but through her involvement she's become a level 3 Teaching Assistant, and also used her experience of outdoor learning and the increased confidence this brought to help her succeed in a college course.

Challenges

Barriers to engagement - The main barriers identified were:

- Practical issues (logistics etc)
- Attitudes of the clients
- Skill levels and confidence of the staff and the attitudes of their organisations
- Relationship to National Park Authority (NPA).

The financial climate has meant that resources are hard to find for extras. The cost of kit can be off putting. Access to transport is crucial. Doorstep activity is good value, but the point was made that maintaining engagement in the long term requires the ability to go further afield which means access to transport. Waiting for buses with the current service isn't always feasible. In addition, there is a wide geographical spread of groups with differing access requirement and transport services available. Your Park project provided a mini-bus and other transport solutions, it was felt and this was felt that in sustaining a commitment to accessing the outdoors access to transport would be critical.

For those working with young people the issue was keeping them motivated. Some group leaders found that once they were able to get a group out for the first time, this got over the barrier. '*Young people have a fear of the unknown - a negative association with places outside their comfort zone*'. As they get into their teens it can be difficult dealing with young people who 'challenge, defy, act up to bolster their image' and in the outdoors it can be difficult to control this kind of behaviour.

A number of the group leaders lacked confidence in their ability to lead outdoor activities citing for example, lack of ideas of what to do, lack of knowledge of the geography of the area and what's available. In addition, organisations need to commit to providing adequate staff numbers to deal with the size of group going out, and this can be difficult. *'It's difficult to get out often, getting time and money together - we usually have one or other but not both at the same time! Staffing cover is the main cost'.*

Other organisational constraints were mentioned, some of them very neatly overcome: in one organisation an initial perception that going out was a reward for bad behaviour had been turned around, and outdoor literacy had become part of the framework. In another school the activities had been restrained by the Curriculum - there wasn't enough time. They got round this by redesigning the Curriculum - in the summer term they'd put aside RE and Welsh, and had 1hr less maths a week, and this allowed them to timetable in outdoor learning. In inspection this was seen as positive.

A barrier to using the National Park for learning was the lack of connection that group leaders felt with the National Park Authority. The connection with Your Park staff was good, but some group leaders had experiences that led them to feel that some National Park staff were not equipped to deal with their clients. There was also discussion of the need for more in-county promotion of the National Park, and for the NPA to acknowledge the value of increasing access for people living in the National Park.

CASE STUDY 4

Tanyard Youth Project

The Tanyard is a voluntary sector youth project, providing open-access youth club provision as well as targeted day-time work with young people. As with many voluntary sector organisations resourcing the work they do requires a significant effort in terms of fundraising, this in turn has knock-on effects for logistics, staffing and frontline delivery.

The Tanyard has always aimed to provide a mix of activities for young people, however some of these are relatively expensive opportunities once costs such as transport and admission are taken into account.

One outcome of the Tanyard's involvement with the Your Park project has been the opportunity to make the most of the wide range of free and cheap activities available locally outdoors. Reduced budgets meant fewer expensive trips, instead (in 2014) there was an emphasis on activities at outdoor locations in the National Park such as beaches or woodlands. Often these activities gave the same or better outcomes for young people. At first it was a challenge to convince young people to try the doorstep activities on offer, but feedback now suggests that the young people enjoy outdoor activities and actually ask for more of them.

The training and support provided by the Your Park team proved useful for staff particularly in identifying suitable local settings for activities.



Tanyard Youth on their doorstep (Holyland woods, Pembroke) with local young people and visitors from the Ethnic Youth Support Team, Swansea.

Gaps in engagement

From the responses to the evaluation questions it's clear that the organisations represented in the evaluation events are engaged with the aims of the project and that the project process is noticeably effective in delivering on those aims. However, not all organisations signed up to the project attended the evaluation sessions. Further follow up to gain their feedback would be valuable.

Although the aims and themes of the project have been promoted to a diverse range of organisations in Pembrokeshire, a high proportion of the organisations involved with the project work with young people. This 'imbalance' is likely to have arisen from the previous contacts of project staff - these were the 'easy wins'. It should also be recognised that there are a large number of organisations and groups working with this age group across the County. A challenge for the next phase of the project is to engage groups in a wider range of sectors. This is underway with targeted work with older people a priority in Year 3. Your Park is also aiming to engage with groups and individuals suffering from the effects of poor mental health in its final year.

The project has limited resources to fulfill the aim of training individuals to carry skills with them and be able to sustain outdoor learning independently. It's crucial to have a basis to decide how best to focus support.

Relationship to the wider National Park Authority

Your Park activity is able to make a significant contribution to PCNPA's social inclusion work, this can be sustained beyond the lifetime of the project, but will require a commitment from the NPA itself in embedding this work more widely across the Authority.

Some group leaders talked about their sense of a 'lack of connection' with the NPA and its staff apart from those working for Your Park. Achieving wider 'buy-in' and collaboration with other NPA staff has been a challenge for Your Park staff. A lack of understanding of the Your Park model and reservations about its effectiveness in delivering inclusive activity may be critical in this respect.

PCNPA Ranger teams deliver high quality one off experiences for a range of groups and have done so for many years, a shift of approach, learning from the feedback of participants, considering capacity building outcomes and training for groups and organisations represents a change in the way much of this type of work is done at present.

It is hoped that evidence presented in project evaluation both here (in this report) and in the future will help in demonstrating the value of the Your Park model in terms of resource efficiency, community engagement and the empowerment of groups, organisations and individuals to explore the National Park for themselves.

Although the NPA has a Social Inclusion plan the work on this tends to be done by externally funded projects, and therefore is not seen as central to the work of PCNPA. How can the work being done in the Your Park project be of use in changing this element of the culture of the NPA?

The funding for the Your Park project comes from a stream aimed at piloting new approaches, and addresses the issues of social inclusion. The Authority needs to make sure it captures the learning and good practice highlighted by the project and its activity and this report hopes to contribute to that learning. The original targets for the Your Park project are written in terms of changing the way external organisations work in relation to providing opportunities for their clients in an outdoor setting. However there is the opportunity to review the way the NPA undertakes work in this area.

Sustaining the outcomes

Some clear themes emerged from the three events when participants were asked what support they would need to continue with and develop their involvement with Your Park:

Continued access to training for Group Leaders is required:

- To improve their skills and confidence to deliver outdoor learning.
- Themes mentioned included both practical sessions and admin skills: bushcraft, habitats, practical conservation, green woodworking (alternative curriculum), dealing with challenging behaviour, risk assessment and ICT outdoors.
- There was also a request for 'one to one' training/shadowing.
- Regular training opportunities would provide different organisations involved with opportunities to network.

Access to information and equipment.

- A clear/accessible way to get hold of ideas about suitable places to visit and activities available.
- At one event there was discussion of putting together a resource pack to provide leaders with back up.
- Could this kind of information be provided by an internet tool such as Pinterest?
- It would also be useful to have access to a database that would list items of equipment available for loan, and link to their use.

Support from Your Park staff

- Being available to support activities, answer questions and suggest ideas
- Help with funding applications was seen as important.
- A known contact in the NPA to be able to come to with queries and feedback, and that that person would have a mailing list of local contacts to use pro-actively to support groups in accessing the outdoors.
- More 'in-county' promotion of the National Park and available opportunities avoiding the impression sometimes held locally that the NP is for 'someone else' and the National Park Authority an organisation mainly concerned with planning and promoting access to the National Park for a tourist market.
- Organise seminars that would promote the value of activity in the National Park in achieving a wide range of outcomes. In particular engaging with managers/senior staff from participating organisations to provide a better understanding of the benefits of outdoor activity. This would make it easier for group leaders to work within organisational constraints.
- Also good case studies would help make the case for this kind of work to managers.

CASE STUDY 5

PCNPA Youth Rangers scheme

National Park Authority staff have worked with diverse groups of young people for many years, however the Youth Ranger scheme is the first where recruitment, delivery and developmental support is provided by PCNPA staff. Youth Rangers take part in full day or overnight sessions every month, gaining a unique experience of the special qualities of the National Park and the natural outdoors.

The scheme was conceived as a way to give further opportunities to young people from organisations involved in Your Park, allowing them to return to their own and other organisations equipped to sustain motivation and momentum in using the outdoors. There are currently Youth Rangers from Future Works, Elliots Hill and from Plas Dwbl. In addition, Youth Rangers has provided continuity for young people from PCNPA's earlier 'Go For It!' project, two of whom have been involved with National Park projects for more than 8 years.



*Teambuilding
activity
developing
motivation and
transferable skills*

Youth Rangers are able to act as 'young ambassadors' for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, providing a young person's perspective, sharing their experiences and raising the profile of the National Park as a valuable asset for young people.

Conclusion and recommendations

The Your Park project seeks to embed the benefits of outdoor activity in achieving a range of outcomes for socially excluded and disadvantaged people, and to develop a practical model for ensuring access to opportunities are sustained for a range of groups and organisations locally.

It aims to achieve its goals by providing targeted experience of the National Park, bespoke training opportunities and ongoing support. Feedback from organisations engaged with the project in the mid-term evaluation events suggests that it is becoming increasingly successful in progressing these aims. A high proportion of group leaders and their clients are learning how to operate outdoors, feeding this into operational change in their organisations and understanding more about the importance of the outdoors to health and well-being - all of which fit closely with messages from the Welsh Government and identified good practice.

Key Learning Points/Actions:

i) Participants

- The benefits of outdoor activity to a range of individuals and groups should continue to be mapped and recorded as the project draws to a close

ii) Group leaders

- Requirements for ongoing support needs to be discussed with both staff and volunteers from participating organisations
- Specific training/skills development requirements should be identified in order to build this into the remainder of the project.

iii) Decision makers

- There will need to be recognition of the value of this type of work and appropriate ongoing support from senior staff if existing work is to be developed going forward

iv) PCNPA staff

- Continue with external evaluation and plan for more participative process with stakeholders in final year of project
- During the final year of the project (and transition period) involve NPA managers and staff as appropriate in considering - (i) how to engage core funded staff with YP groups and continue support for existing (YP) groups beyond the end of the funded project, (ii) how to link YP learning to development of SI across the Authority, (iii) how to engage NPA staff with an analysis of the NPA's approach to delivering social inclusion activity in the NP and in particular a critical assessment of the Your Park model (a consultation event might focus thinking on action to sustain gains and would also facilitate an open dialogue between NPA staff and project participants).
- Consider how to link YP learning to development of Social Inclusion work across the Authority
- Capture YP good practice and consider how to sustain the commitment of groups and organisations beyond the project's completion. For example an identified key person to keep contact and provide connections; accessible and up to date database/web pages.

For the gains made as part of the project to be sustained participating groups will need PCNPA to provide a framework of support when the project ends in order to sustain their commitment to outdoor activity, this will need to be supported by NP decision makers and service managers in order for it to be successful.

Appendixes TBC

List of organisations involved

Detailed Case studies?

Qualitative information from group leaders and group members?

REPORT CARD Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan 2014-2016 (December 2014)

OUTCOME: People Have Happy, Healthy, Hopeful Lives

POPULATION: All people in Pembrokeshire

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Who We Are:

The NPA has a staff, volunteers and key partners all of whom help deliver the [statutory purposes](#) through a range of services and projects. The Authority is the planning authority for the Park area. The Authority is also responsible for the management of the coast path, the maintenance of other public rights of way.

How Well We Are Doing.

PCNPA Performance Measures

Footpaths open in NP (%)
 'Hits on 'walking in the park' webpages (#)
 'Affordable housing' u/c & completions in NP (#)
 Local population accessing PCNPA A&E(%)
 Volunteer days with PCNPA (#)

What Difference is Made

Pembrokeshire Population Indicators

Adults active (%).
 Children active (%)
 Children in workless families (%)
 Footpath users (#)
 Domestic Violence reports (#)

See
 Report
 Card-Data
 for
 'data'
 &
 'story behind
 the 'baseline'

What we are doing now: Projects and Policies

Examples:

[Walkability
 Your Park](#)

Various Access Improvement Projects
 Outdoor schools

[Youth Rangers](#)

Orchard Project

[SDF funded projects](#)

[John Muir Awards](#)

[Ranger Community Projects](#)

[Various Policies including those on
 housing, recreation, open space,
 visitor economy, community facilities](#)

What We Plan To Do:

See:

- **Summary Card** - A1, 2,3,4; B1,2,3; C1,2; D1
- **Job Cards**

Project Ideas

- Door Step walks
- Park in a Pizza
- Disability Access Project
- Peripatetic Ranger Project
- Mental Health training
- Events (sport and leisure) supported by NP
- sustainable events management project
- Walking Counters

DATA AVAILABLE

- PCNPA Coast path and rights of way automatic counters (Linnetop Ltd 2014)
- PCNPA – Park Discovery and Delivery Service A&E (2014)
- PCNPA Rights of Way Team (2014)
- PCNPA Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2014)
- Welsh Health Survey (2013)
- Natural Resources Wales (2014)
- Stats Wales (2014)
- Dyfed Powys Police (2014)

Other DATA / Information

Mosaic Film
 Walkability Film
 Youth Ranger Film
 Your Park Film

DATA Development Needs

Qualitative data on user experiences
 Evidence on partnership working
 Downloads of Walks from PCNPA websites

Current Funding

- Big Lottery
- Let's Walk Cymru
- Natural Resources Wales (Core Funding & additional 'competitive' sources)
- Visit Wales P4G Funding
- Welsh Government (various)
- Health and Wellbeing Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund

PARTNERS

- Communities First
- [Dyfed – Powys Police](#)
- [Hywel Dda Health Board](#)
- [Friends of the National Park](#)
- [National Parks Wales](#)
- [National Trust](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales](#)
- [PAVS](#)
- [Pembrokeshire County Council](#)
- [Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter](#)
- [Public Health Wales](#)
- [Sport Wales](#)
- [West Wales Action on Mental Health](#)
- Housing Associations

Social Inclusion Expenditure 2013/14			
Dept	Gross Exp	Income / Grants	Net cost to NPA
Ranger Services 20%	37,888		37,888
Discovery 20%	30,369	1,237	29,132
Mosaic	4,000		
Walkability	37,079	23,004	14,075
Your Park	59,702	59,702	
	169,038	83,943	81,095