



# NATIONAL PARKS

Britain's breathing spaces

NFNPA 494/14 - Annex 5

## NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIPS

DRAFT Progress Report to 31 August 2015

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## NPP Board of Directors

Pending establishment of a corporate entity, the Board in waiting has been recruited. Members of the team are:

Julian Atkins	Brecon Beacons NP
Tim Barclay	BT
Steve Curl	Lake District NP
Peter Dixon	Broads Authority
John Kennedy	Moo.com
Peter Harper	Dartmoor NP
Cat Hawkins	Think! Sponsorship
Mark Holroyd	New Forest NP
Kristine Olson- Chapman	Talk Talk

Julian and Mark are National Park employees, the others have considerable private sector business experience and three of them are National Park Authority Members. The team has now met three times since they were formed on 8<sup>th</sup> June. We have also held a separate workshop to build consensus on the proposition to be offered by NPP.

Steve Curl has received support from the rest of the team to continue as Chairman of NPP.

Inevitably there has been an initial need to get to know each other, build rapport and converge thinking on the role and plans of NPP. Progress has been good. In this initial phase the team has deliberately not rushed to set up any supporting infrastructure, preferring to focus on getting a clear understanding of the way forward and the proposition offered by NPP. We don't want to make a false start, rather get the messaging right, set up the necessary operations and then approach potential Partners with confidence.

Consideration of arrangement between the US National Parks Service and the National Parks Foundation, including a meeting between Peter Harper and Sally Jewell, Chair of NPF, has been especially helpful in shaping our thinking. NPF provided \$21m to the NPS last year but did so from an asset base of more than \$100m. The UK's Canal and River Trust also benefits from a large (£500m) asset base. NPP in comparison is starting from a more modest, asset free position but it should nonetheless be our aim to build a sustainable income flow. The UK National Parks' business plan for NPP is very much more modest with business plan income of about £1.7m by year 4.

The information and documents that led to the establishment of NPP focused on Corporate *Sponsorship* with an emphasis on generating cash receipts. Whilst very attractive, straight cash is unlikely to be the most significant way in which businesses choose to help the UK National Parks. Tackling this challenge by offering *Partnership* to businesses and considering other forms of support is more likely to be successful.

### **The NPP Proposition**

In addressing businesses about partnering with UK National Parks we propose something along the following lines...

***Your opportunity to Partner with UK National Parks to support your business and ensure that future generations can benefit from Britain's Breathing Spaces.***

*You can benefit from Partnering with UK National Parks in a number of ways:*

- ***Brand Association*** with the positive attributes of National Parks
- ***Cause Related Marketing*** by making a financial or in-kind contribution towards major issues associated with National Parks
- ***Event & Project Sponsorship***
- ***Licensing*** of National Park branding to enhance product or service attractiveness
- ***Working with National Parks to help meet your Corporate Social Responsibility objectives***

We have worked up further detail and examples in each area. It is crystal clear from our work so far that business partners will need to see very real benefits for their company and its stakeholders in return for supporting National Parks. Whilst cash will always be attractive to National Parks, businesses are more likely to offer contributions in kind be that goods, services or support from their own employees under the CSR banner.

Rather than offering potential partners a menu of options, these opportunities need to be borne in mind in initial discussions about their partnering with National Parks so that we keep options open and aim to identify the optimum way forward with each business we approach. In short many partnerships are likely to be bespoke.

Further options for raising cash include establishing a charitable arm that can attract individuals' donations or bequests. This is something still to be explored. We recognize that this could be done directly or maybe in partnership with other organisations, for example, the National Trust.

## **Set Up**

What has become very clear from our first quarter of activity is that individual members of NPP do not have the time to commit to NPP that would be required to introduce a company to the idea of partnering, develop this, make the necessary arrangements to put a Partnership Agreement in place and then ensure that it is executed flawlessly.

To deliver on our overall objectives we have decided to appoint an Interim Manager to help set up NPP and initiate our activities. This post is expected to be for a six-month period. Ideally we would like to appoint someone who gives us the option of converting them to a permanent appointment if they prove exceptionally effective.

The job specification for this appointment is appended at the end of this report.

We will also seek to appoint some administrative support for both the Manager and the Directors.

These two salaried positions and the costs associated with launching NPP are expected to be the main expenditures this year, aside from Corporate set up of an NPP company.

## **Launch**

Directors of NPP have started to build a list of target partners and have socialised the idea of Partnership with a number of contacts in companies. No one is under any illusion that attracting partners is going to be easy.

Our aim is to launch NPP in the spring with an impactful campaign. The objective will be to encourage companies interested in exploring Partnerships with the Parks to approach NPP. This will complement direct approaches to target partners and hopefully add a sense of urgency in doing a deal to avoid disappointment.

The launch and our ongoing marketing activities will be supported by an appropriate web and social media presence being developed with the help of Charlotte Westney from NPUK.

## **Communications and Working with National Parks**

It is very unlikely that all or even a majority of partners will contribute solely cash to NPP and that this will be able to be distributed equally between the 15 Parks.

Where there are straightforward cash flows from activities like licensing, these maybe distributable in 15ths. However, Partners will inevitably express a preference for particular projects, locations, themes, activities etc. and we would presumably not wish to turn them away, whether their contribution is in cash or kind! So inevitably there will have to be a degree of give and take between the Parks if NPP is to deliver the maximum benefit to UK Parks overall. The contributions may or may not balance out over time.

Partnerships that deliver cash flow per se will probably be best set up and contracted through NPP, defray costs and hopefully enable dividend payments to Member Parks. Other Partnerships might be better handled directly by individual or groups of National Parks introduced and facilitated by NPP. This should and will probably be determined by the partner's preferences and a good measure of common sense. We anticipate this will have to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

As a result NPP not only has a responsibility to National Parks, as shareholders, to ensure good governance and communicate effectively with them; it must also communicate in a transparent and even-handed way in establishing all partnerships.

This will need to be an efficient two-way process if NPP is to be effective. As a first step NPP will be asking all Parks to identify events, projects, equipment and service provision and activities that it considers appropriate to potential partnerships being developed by NPP. Peter Harper, Julian Atkins and Mark Holroyd will take the lead in collecting this information and building a shared understanding with Parks so that NPP quickly establishes a portfolio of offerings to potential partners.

As NPP activities develop and Partnerships are established, NPP will continue to report routinely to the National Parks.

## **Business Plans**

Initial business plans were developed by the National Parks for a five-year period prior to agreeing to set up NPP. These made sensible assumptions and adopted a rational approach to both income and expenditure. However, the plan was in reality only a model of one possible outcome. In practice the level of anticipated income and other contributions to UK National Parks as a result of NPP activity is highly uncertain at this early stage. We will learn from experience over the next year or so but in the meantime we will continue to plan and budget expenditure prudently within the initial year 1 expenditure limit with a view to being self-sustaining in subsequent years.

## **Finances**

NPP has been allocated a budget of £150,000 for the present financial year.

Expenditure to date, and prior to forming the NPP team, is £30,421 on legal costs, tax advice, branding advice and the recruitment of the Directors.

NPP itself has not yet made any material expenditure.

### **Company Structure, Trade Marks and Tax**

NPP has not yet been established as any form of company. From an NPP Directors' perspective it seemed more important to be clear on our proposition and plans as a pre-requisite to setting up any company.

Clearly a company will be required in the short term now, both to employ staff and to provide a credible basis for forming partnerships.

### **Conclusions**

National Parks Partnerships has begun its work. An initial proposition for partners, not just sponsors, has been established. Initial staff hiring is underway. An appropriate company now needs to be set up.

Information is being requested from all National Parks to ensure that NPP has an appropriate portfolio of engagements to offer to potential partners.

NPP commits to effective communication with National Parks and looks to them to respond positively and professionally to all interactions with potential partners.