

Date: 13 December 2022**Report: CHAIR'S REPORT****ENGAGEMENTS**

- Since the last meeting of the Authority, the Chair has been involved in the following:-

Media

- An interview with the Darlington & Stockton Times about the proposed Devolution deal for York and North Yorkshire

Events

- Along with the CEO and other members, attended the UKNP Conference in Exmoor to meet, learn, share ideas and be inspired through visits, talks and discussions: [see report in member feedback report]
- Along with the CEO, Attended the Autumn Europarc Conference and Annual Assembly 2022 which focussed on the theme of Climate Change , as part of the LIFE Natur'Adapt project : [see report in member feedback report]
- On my behalf, the Deputy Chair attended the church service and laid a wreath at Skipton's annual Remembrance Sunday parade on Sunday 13th November 2022
- Autumn Parish Forum Meeting on Weds 12 October at 7pm by VC
- Along with the Deputy, attended a full staff meeting
- Ripon Cathedral Rural Forum

Meetings

- Along with the CEO, attended a National Parks Partnership meeting to discuss Defra funding
- Members' lunchtime briefing session, on the Tees-Swale project
- Along with the CEO, an informal visit to the North York Moors prior to the National Parks England Board meeting followed by an informal Chairs' dinner
- National Parks England Board meeting in York at which I was appointed Deputy Chair
- National Parks England Monthly briefing
- A meeting of the Farming in Protected Landscapes Assessment Panel
- Chaired a meeting of the Member Champions where their updates were discussed.
- A UK National Parks' Chairs' Forum
- An informal meeting of National Parks England Chairs
- Along with the CEO, a National Parks Management Plan Forum meeting
- A meeting of the Finance Sub-Group to discuss the budget

- Nature Recovery Plan Sub-Group meeting
- Farming and Land Management Forum
- National Park Management Plan Steering Group
- A joint meeting of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership Higher Nature Value Farming and Northern Hill Farming Panel
- Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum

Report on Europarc Conference 2022

Train would seem like the only appropriate mode of transport to travel to a climate change conference, so after changes in Leeds, London, Paris and Perpignan, and hurtling through swathes of French countryside at speeds close to 300kmp we arrived in Argeles sur Mer, a small seaside resort on the Mediterranean coastline and in the foothills of the Pyrenees, where our base for the few nights was the French version of Butlins.

Attended by representatives from European countries as far flung as Iceland and Slovenia it became apparent that this was an appropriate setting for the conference as the impacts of climate change on the various habitats was very evident to see. From the alpine plants that were moving higher up the mountain to find colder climes until they literally ran out of room, to native Mediterranean tree species for which conditions were becoming too arid, or the potential impact of rising sea levels, it was all very obvious, even to the most unscientific eye. We heard of several inspiring examples of how we hope to address these issues, some collaborative, some cross border, and some crossing from land to sea, all looking at either mitigation, or the adaption to the affects, of climate change. We all have the same problem, but the solutions are sometimes different depending on our own particular circumstances.

The two highlights were firstly, my visit to the now defunct dynamite factory, formerly owned by a famous Mr Nobel, who eventually sold it to the government after he became disillusioned by the fact that the dynamite was being used in war situations instead of, mainly, infrastructure generation. Now, largely reclaimed by nature, it is a state-owned visitor and engagement centre coupled with a large open coastal space freely available to residents and visitors alike.

Secondly, and my main take home message, was from one of the keynote speakers, James Stuart, Convenor of the Loch Lomond National Park. He didn't dwell on the issues, because we all know what they are, but he highlighted potential solutions, and more accurately how we fund these solutions. He was very confident that the money would be available, in fact very large amounts of money, £500 million was the figure he quoted, mainly from private sources. But to access that sort of money means collaboration amongst all the various protected landscapes across the European collective. Currently we mainly operate individually, either as protected areas or within our countries which has suited our individual circumstances, but we now face an issue which crosses all boundaries. To solve that requires large amounts of money that will only be available if we work on a continental, or even a global scale. Right or wrong, it has to be considered, and National Parks can be the 'convenors' of that approach.

Neil Heseltine
Chair
25 Nov 2022