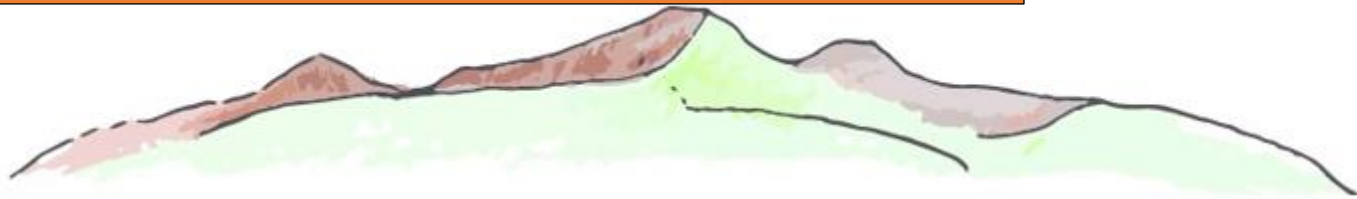


Click here for latest from the Park Authority on Covid



Brecon Beacons Park Society Cymdeithas Parc Bannau Brycheiniog

BBPS Newsletter

Hello to All Brecon Beacons Park Society Members

This is a newsletter to help keep our members informed of what the Society have been able to continue doing during lockdown and areas where progress has been paused, and additionally to provide some information and clarifications that may be of particular interest to members. Your long-lie-in-the-bath copy of *The Beacon* will be still coming to you.

Whilst we've not been able to walk and talk together there are some things that we are still able to do. Mostly emails and online meetings. The Executive committee continues to meet that way six weekly. We have continued our various collaborations.

BBPS helped found [The Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes](#) its mission is -

- conserve, protect, enhance & celebrate the three National Parks and other protected and Designated Land and Seascapes of Wales
- ensure that the National Parks, other protected Designated Landscapes and the marine environment in Wales can be enjoyed by all, both now and in the future, whether they be living in them, working in them or just visiting them.

Current Alliance activities include:

- support for the [Cambrian Mountains Society](#) in its battle against a proposed wind farm on Pumlumon and its aspiration to become an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB).
- an upcoming meeting with the chair of Natural Resources Wales on collaborative working
- Formation of the National Landscape Partnership as the interface between the Welsh Government (WG) and the designated landscapes societies like BBPS
- Consulting on the WG's new Sustainable Farming Scheme
- NRW have recently published their first Area Statements - there are seven and they cover the whole of Wales. The Alliance are looking at these, and the discussion with the Chair of NRW will help, to see how "place-based" they are and how our National Parks have been included. The challenges the Welsh Government have highlighted are improving ecosystem resilience, climate change and Brexit. And not forgetting the national priorities which include nature-based solutions and increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency.

This is a collaborative effort, so if you want to get involved find out more by going to

<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/?lang=en>



Click map to enlarge

The Society continues to collaborate with the [Campaign for National Parks](#). Janet Callear and Martin Buckle were involved in a remote meeting which was focused on the Glover Review of national parks and AONBs in England that may also influence policy in Wales.

We are also looking at our [Strategy and Action Plan](#) – not surprisingly we hadn't anticipated something with such an impact on BBPS's activities as Covid 19 and so are re-visiting the Plan, but reassuringly, there is still a lot of work that can be done by telephone or Zoom to help further the Society's aims.



Rights of Way work depends on communication between BBPS members and the Authority. Exec member Phil will continue to report as and when reports and information are received, but issues have been quiet recently. Since lockdown, just one report was received from a member. There has been an understandable delay by the Authority in responding to enquiries and reporting as the entire staff compliment has been working from home. The Wardens are out and about but most of their duties are now concerned with Covid-19 issues.

The Authority reports that "normal rights of way issues are fairly quiet but there are a lot of local people using rights of way at the moment so there is a steady trickle of reports coming in, and much time has been taken up with answering queries and dealing with criticism from the public about the restrictions the Authority has brought into force. There had been a lot of correspondence from the public, which has now slowed down but may yet increase depending on the government's announcements about continued closures."



Many of you know the [Brinore Tramway](#) but working with the Brecon Beacons National Park authority (BBNPA), the Society hope to identify all the former **tramroads** with a view to safeguarding their heritage and sustaining their roles as routes for walking.

Our Chair Martin has had extensive telephone discussions with the Park's archaeologist about how we can progress collecting information electronically while unable to access the countryside. The three archaeological trusts which cover the park each keep Historic Environment Records, which will be a good starting point.

What we are not able to do and how to minimise the impact of this pause in activities

We are in the unfortunate situation of the contract of the only member of staff with in-depth knowledge of **Dark Skies** work not being renewed by the Park and no proper handover having occurred.



Photo Martin Griffiths

However helpful discussions have taken place with several Members of the BBNPA who are strong supporters of our International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR) status, and the work we do in protecting the quality of our night skies. The IDSR Board which is composed of the organisations that gained the IDSR status for the Park (including the BBPS) have communicated what we believe is the minimum input needed from the Park to the Chair of the BBNPA and to its Chief Executive.

Jim Wilson has had several meetings with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Park's Strategy Forum and the IDSR and the threat to its future will be raised at its next meeting.

The Park have also been informed that due to CV-19 constraints it has not been possible to carry out the annual survey of the quality of the night sky in the IDSR and that the Park, as recipients of the Status need to request and dispensation for this from the awarding body.

There appears to be some movement from the Park in identifying a member of staff to lead on dark sky matters but nothing definitive even yet.

The Park have not put a project manager in place for the **Gunpowder Works Programme** (and the Bio-Diversity Improvement project within it that the Society are leading) since the previous incumbent left the Authority in December. There has been no communication on the status of this programme that the Society raised considerable financial support for since then.

Early in the new year the BBPS requested a meeting of the Project Board (the BBPS is a member) to review the status of this programme. At long last, in mid May, we were informed that a member of staff had been assigned to this essential project management role and a Project Board meeting is being arranged.

Make your home dark sky friendly A [video guide](#) on the simple things you can do to protect the dark skies of our International Dark Sky Reserve

Guided Walks Programme

As you know we can't go out in many places in numbers or too far from home but Nic, Phil and Allan, our technical adviser have been working out how to restart the walks programme when restrictions are relaxed enough. It may be months yet, but we want to be ready to go.

It's looking as though there will be many changes. Walks will be advertised in small batches, by email to members. All walks may need to be booked by walkers and a system will have been put in place to notify anyone who might have been infected during a walk. Walkers should, obviously, not join a walk if feeling ill but one can be infectious with Covid-19 two days before showing symptoms.

The walks will initially be shorter and easier than we are used to, and numbers will be limited to between six and twelve walkers, the exact number being chosen by the leaders, and dependent on parking space and the nature of the walk. There will be a waiting list if necessary, for each walk. Leaders will have had extra first aid training with C-19 and will carry slightly more safety equipment. We will probably all have to adhere to distancing and hygiene rules, and these will be clarified in the walk advertisements. However, we are looking forward very much to seeing everyone again.

Events Programme

Our six weekly Events talks have had to be postponed until it is safe for everyone to get together again, which could be some time by what we hear. Janet has a list of topics and speakers but until we have the "all clear" we won't be able to start putting the programme together; let us know if there are any speakers or topics you would like to see added to the list.

Events page has been updated and an article written by Joe Taggett, National Trust Countryside Manager, has been added [here](#).

Photography Competition

Members to submit their best photos of the Park for a gallery page on our website.



[Hay Book Festival](#) didn't happen this year but you can check out old material and the more recent digital version.