

Current Management

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Despite the notion of naturalness and even wilderness which some hold of the South West Peak, this is a very managed landscape. Swathes of the area are designated for their conservation value and much has been managed under successive forms of agri-environment schemes.

The majority 29,388ha (83%) of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership area falls within the Peak District National Park. National Parks are part of a global protected area programme and are classed as an IUCN category 2 protected area, defined as:

Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities (IUCN, 2016).

The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act set out what our National Parks would be like. The Environment Act 1995 revised the original legislation and set out two statutory purposes for National Parks in England and Wales:

1. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
2. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

When National Parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Parks.

The National Park management plan (Peak District National Park, 2012) brings together and coordinates the work of many different partners who help achieve the purposes and duty of the Peak District National Park. It aims to encourage integrated approaches that achieve National Park purposes in ways that benefit everyone. The plan is the single most important policy document for the place.

Supporting the management plan is the landscape strategy (PDNPA, 2008b) which details the characteristics of the landscape and the priorities to protect, manage and plan for the future (the table overleaf shows the priorities for each Landscape Character Type).

The Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan reviewed and revised in 2011 identifies conservation objectives and priorities for the South West Peak.

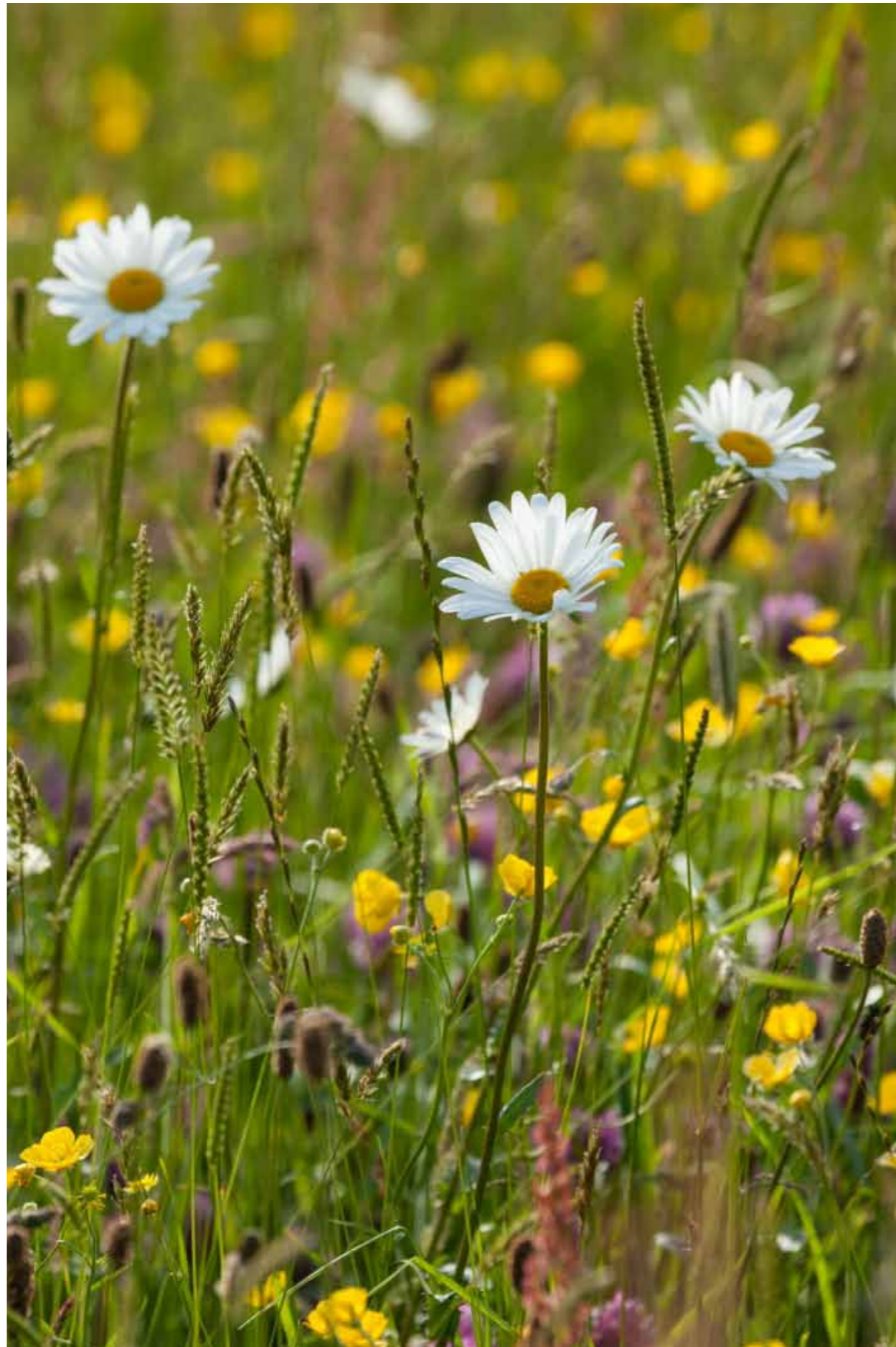
Biodiversity objectives:

1. To maintain, enhance and restore moorland fringe habitats, particularly to support wading bird species such as lapwing, curlew and snipe
2. To restore and expand upland heathland and blanket bog
3. To enhance wetland and riparian habitats and species
4. To enhance and expand native broad-leaved woodland.

Conservation Priorities:

- To prevent further declines in wader populations, and to increase breeding success
- To link and enhance semi-natural valley woodlands
- Maintenance and enhancement of moorland habitats on large estates
- Integrated management of in-bye grasslands for birds, fungi and invertebrates
- To improve species diversity in rivers and streams.

These plans and strategies, produced in partnership with a wide range of organisations, set the context, objectives and priorities for the whole area.



Oxeye daisies © PDNPA

Landscape guidelines

Open Moors	Moorland Hills and Ridges	Enclosed Gritstone Uplands	Densely Enclosed Gritstone Uplands	Slopes and Valleys with Woodland	Upland Pastures	Upper Valley Pastures	Reservoir Valleys with Woodland	Riverside Meadows
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South West Peak

Protect

Protect historic drystone walls		●	●	●	○	●	●	○
Protect historic hedgerows			○	○	●	●	●	●
Protect historic parkland landscapes			○	○	○	○	○	○

Manage

Manage and enhance woodlands					●	○	○	○
Manage and enhance clough woodlands					●	○	○	○
Manage and enhance plantation woodlands		●		●	●	○	○	○
Manage and enhance linear tree cover and amenity trees					●	○	○	○
Enhance and restore moorland landscapes	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Encourage diverse approaches to moorland management	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Enhance the diversity of agricultural grasslands			●	●	●	●	○	○
Manage the network of tracks and footpaths to maximise opportunities to enjoy the landscape	●	●	●	○	●	○	○	○
Manage the network of minor roads to maintain character and local access			●	●	●	○	○	○
Manage the dispersed and historic settlement patterns of development			○	●	●	○	○	○
Manage intrusive features on farmland and farmsteads			○	●	○	○	○	○
Manage historic mineral landscapes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Plan

Create new native broadleaved woodland					●	○	○	○
Create clough woods		○	○	○	●	○	○	○
Create, extend and link areas of heath / moor	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
Develop small-scale renewable energy for local needs		○			●	○	○	○
Develop appropriate landscapes from mineral workings					○	○	○	○

- This is a priority throughout the landscape character type
- ◐ This is a priority in some parts of the landscape character type, often associated with particular conditions/features
- This is not a priority but may be considered in some locations
- This will generally be inappropriate in this landscape character type

Agri-Environment Agreements

The importance and vulnerability of this landscape has been recognised over the years through the targeting of national agri-environment and area management schemes.

SWP Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme

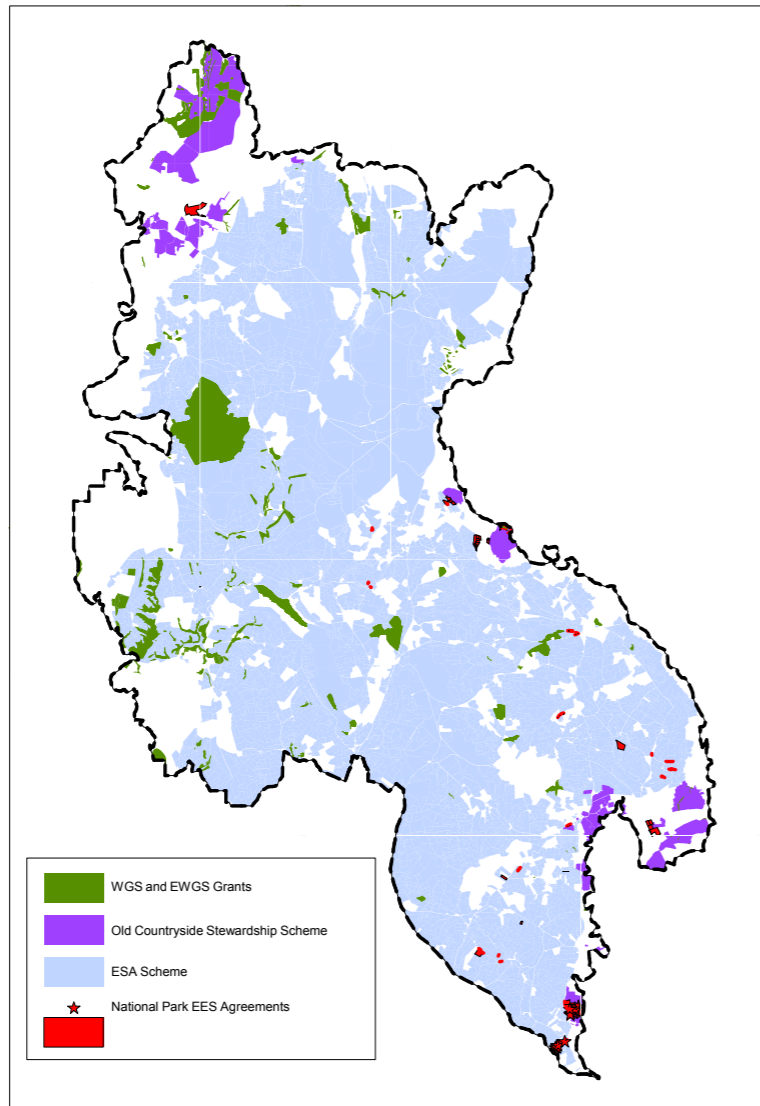
In 1992 the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) designated an area of 33,800ha of the South West Peak National Character Area (NCA) as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), which came into force in February 1993 and was one of 22 such ESAs in England. ESAs were countryside areas where landscape, wildlife and historic interest were of national importance. Countryside features like hedges, walls, ditches, field barns, hay meadows, heather moorland and river valley grasslands, created by traditional

farming methods over hundreds of years were considered highly valued both for their scenic beauty and habitats. The ESA scheme was set up to help farmers conserve the best landscape, wildlife and historic features of the countryside.

The ESAs were chosen using the following criteria:

- the area must be of national significance;
- conservation of the area must depend on adopting, maintaining or extending particular farming practices;
- farming practices must have changed or be likely to do so, in ways that pose a threat to the environment;
- it must be a distinct area of environmental interest.

Other Agri-environment Schemes



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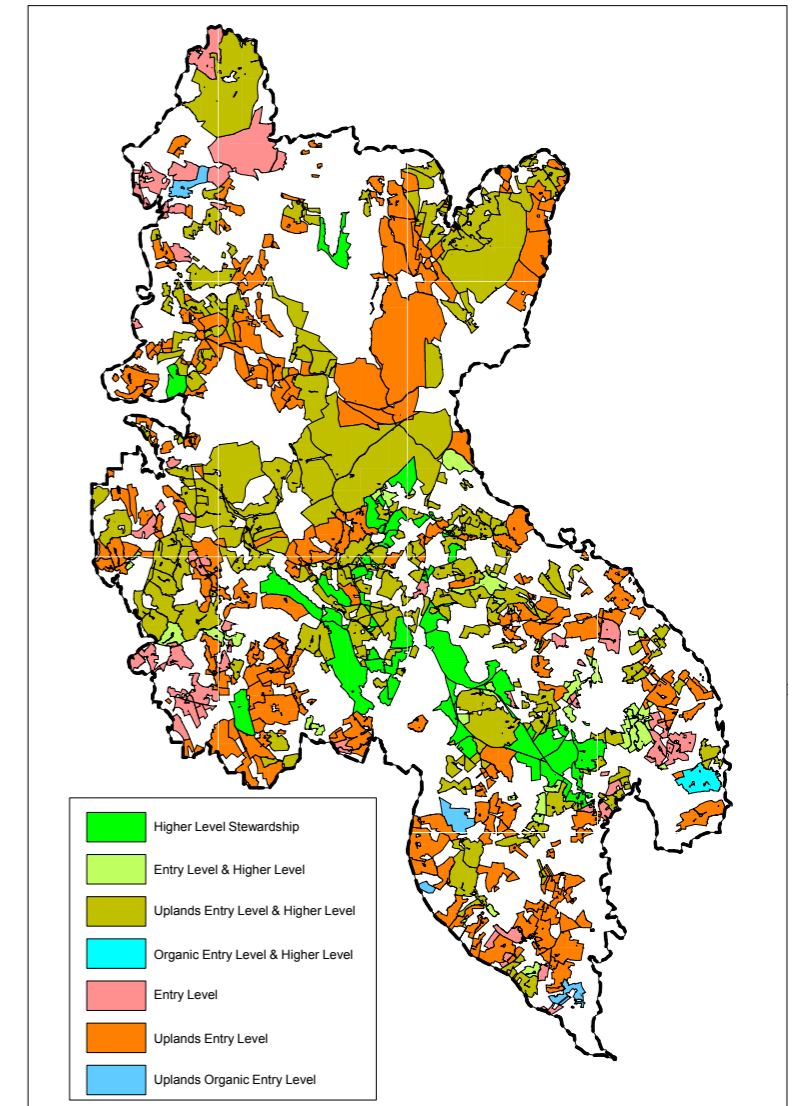
The ESA scheme was voluntary and offered farmers financial incentives (over a ten year agreement) to conserve, enhance and re-create landscape features and wildlife habitats. Additionally, farmers were also encouraged to provide opportunities for public access for walking and recreation (University of Hertfordshire, 2011).

The level of uptake of the ESA scheme was good with 84% (2002-2003), 82% (2003-2004) and 72% (2004-2005) of the eligible area in agreement with options for ley grassland, meadows, pastures, moorland and woodland. The main options in the area were for low-intensity management of grassland.

Table 1. South West Peak ESA options

Tier	Option	Hectares
1A	Arable & ley grassland	2,122
1AW	Arable & ley grassland with woodland	78
1B	Enclosed permanent grassland	8,544
1C	Enclosed permanent rough grazing	1,661
1D	Moorland	941
2A	Pasture	3,079
2B	Meadow	876
2C	Regeneration to extensive meadows	109
2D	Regeneration to extensive pastures	442
2E	Enhanced moorland	3,377
WT	Woodland	26

Environmental Stewardship



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The ESA payments were calculated on income foregone by the farmer due to being restricted from draining, reseeded, ploughing or otherwise cultivating and by limiting the numbers of stock which could be grazed, thereby aiming to protect the diverse vegetation composition and structure. Regeneration to extensive meadows attracted the highest payment of £170 per hectare per annum.

Maintenance and enhancement of the landscape and historic interest were promoted through a drystone walling supplement and various Conservation Plan items, such as hedge planting and laying, and the renovation of traditional farm buildings. The drystone walling supplement of £20 per metre (later increased to £25) was approximately 77% of the actual cost.

A review in 2009 of the grassland condition of six ESAs looked at lowland meadows and lowland dry acid grassland of the South West Peak. Of the grasslands surveyed none met the expected condition standards for the nominated type of grassland, the lowland meadows being “closer approximations to more agriculturally improved swards than to species-rich hay meadows (Manchester & Glaves, 2009).” From baseline surveys in 1994 to resurvey in 2003 the quality of the meadows had declined with species diversity having reduced. The overall number of species per plot [field] had reduced slightly but with a larger decline at the more detailed quadrat level, suggesting that the variety of species were mostly still present within fields but at lower frequencies. The authors of the survey suggest that “reinstatement of appropriate management at these apparently degrading sites should result in an increase in species richness at the scale of the nest [quadrat]” (Manchester, Carey, & Pywell, 2005).

This outcome, albeit on just a sample of sites, indicates the difficulty in applying universal and nationally agreed management prescriptions in a varied landscape and emphasises the need for a different approach.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

In 1991 DEFRA introduced the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which made payments to farmers and land managers to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside.

The Scheme was set up with the following objectives relating to landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and access:

- sustain the beauty and diversity of the landscape;

- improve and extend wildlife habitats;
- conserve archaeological sites and historic features;
- improve opportunities for enjoying the countryside;
- restore neglected land or landscape features; and
- create new wildlife habitats and landscapes (University of Hertfordshire, 2011).

In the South West Peak LPS area approximately 1,250ha of land was entered into agreements for uplands, meadows and pasture plus agreements for 94 metres of field boundaries. Countryside Stewardship covered such a small area due to the wide coverage of the ESA scheme.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmentally Sensitive Area and Countryside Stewardship schemes were superseded by Environmental Stewardship in 2005.

Environmental Stewardship provided funding to farmers and other land managers in England who delivered effective environmental management on their land. Its primary objectives were to:

- Conserve wildlife (biodiversity)
- Maintain and enhance landscape quality and character
- Protect the historic environment and natural resources
- Promote public access and understanding of the countryside
- Protect natural resources

The take-up of Environmental Stewardship in the South West Peak was very good with 19,765 ha or 55% of the LPS area covered either under Entry Level (ELS) or Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) including uplands and organic variants. At the time of writing 4,202ha of agreements have expired; a further 508ha will expire during 2016.

Table 2. Expiry dates and area of Environmental Stewardship agreements

Expiry year	Hectares
2017	1,126 ha
2018	4,377 ha
2019	834 ha
2020	1,210 ha
2021	1,811 ha
2022	1,738 ha
2023	3,959 ha

Woodland Grant Scheme

The Forestry Commission’s Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) was replaced in 2005 by their English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS), providing grants for woodland owners under

several categories: Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant, Woodland Improvement Grant, Woodland Management Grant, Woodland Creation Grant, Woodland Planning Grant, Woodland Assessment Grant and Woodland Regeneration. EWGS has now been superseded by the new Countryside Stewardship.

WGS and EWGS schemes have been operating in the South West Peak for some years, most notably in the more wooded part in the west. These grants focused on maintenance, natural regeneration, planting, thinning, selective felling and, in one notable location, clearfelling of a conifer plantation to allow for regeneration of broadleaf woodland and heathland. The latter raised considerable concern amongst local residents who campaigned against the decision for some months.

EWGS and Environmental Stewardship grants helped to deliver woodland management and creation in the HLF and SITA-funded Dane Valley Woodland project near Wincle. Woodland creation was focused in areas where it would link or extend existing high quality woodland. Other woodlands which had not been managed effectively for some years were brought into new management agreements to benefit a range of wildlife including redstart, pied and spotted flycatchers and willow warbler.

Catchment Sensitive Farming

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) was a project run by Natural England in partnership with the Environment Agency and DEFRA to raise awareness of diffuse water pollution from agriculture by giving free training, advice and capital grants to farmers in selected priority catchments. The selected catchments were those where improvements in water quality would make the greatest contribution under the Water Framework Directive objectives.

The Peak District Dales was a priority catchment, which included a small part of the South West Peak forming the catchment for Tittesworth Reservoir and the River Hamps and Manifold catchment. The main issues here were pesticides and faecal indicator organisms.

The Trent Rivers Trust has employed a dedicated project officer since 2011 in the Tittesworth Reservoir catchment, funded by Severn Trent Water. The role of the project officer is to work with farmers to promote best farming practice to reduce the risk of diffuse pollution of nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates and crop

protection chemical residues that could enter the water in the reservoir.

The project officer has developed excellent working relationships with almost every farmer in the area. By explaining to individuals how they can make a difference to water quality by changing their agricultural practices, the advice has led to a fifty per cent reduction in levels of harmful chemicals in the water (Trent Rivers Trust, 2016).

Severn Trent Water has also funded a number of high priority capital projects on farm to tackle potential diffuse and point source pollution risks such as field drainage issues and yard infrastructure improvements.

New Countryside Stewardship

In 2015, Environmental Stewardship was superseded by the new Countryside Stewardship (which also replaced EWGS and CSF) with all new agreements starting in January 2016. Unlike previous rural development schemes, applications for most elements of Countryside Stewardship are competitive, which means that applications are scored against criteria, so not everyone who applies will be successful. Targeting and scoring is used to encourage applicants to choose options that help achieve the environmental priorities which have been identified in their local area.

The main priority for Countryside Stewardship is to protect and enhance the natural environment, in particular the biodiversity and water quality. Other outcomes include:

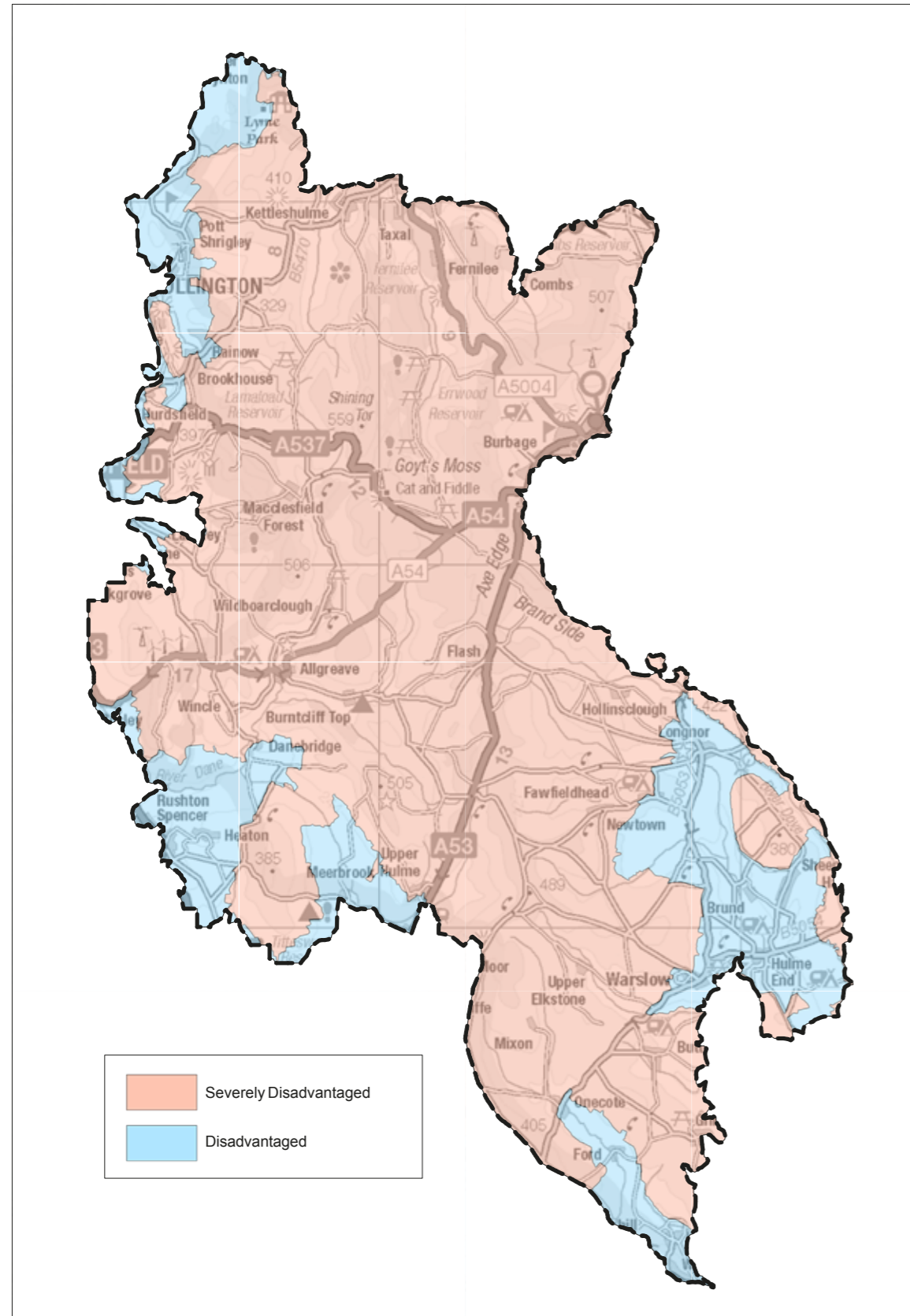
- flood management;
- the historic environment;
- landscape character;
- genetic conservation;
- educational access.

The scheme comprises three elements: higher tier for environmentally significant sites with complex management where support is required from Natural England or the Forestry Commission; mid-tier agreements for other sites which do not require the same level of support; capital grants for other items.

Due to decreased funding available under the new scheme, early projections were for a national decrease in coverage from around 70% to 40%. Across the Peak District, where coverage was at 87%, coverage is estimated to fall to between 40% and 50%. Take up generally in the first year was particularly low. There is currently only one

higher tier agreement in the South West Peak straddling the border with the White Peak and no live mid-tier agreements.

Less Favoured Area



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Environmental Enhancement Scheme

The Environmental Enhancement Scheme (EES) is a National Park scheme which has been used to help with projects that may not be suitable for national schemes. The National Park Authority (NPA) has an undertaking to use Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) measures wherever these can practically deliver the management required. However, the RDPE schemes are targeted on national priorities and therefore do not necessarily address the special qualities and local needs that have led to the designation of each National Park.

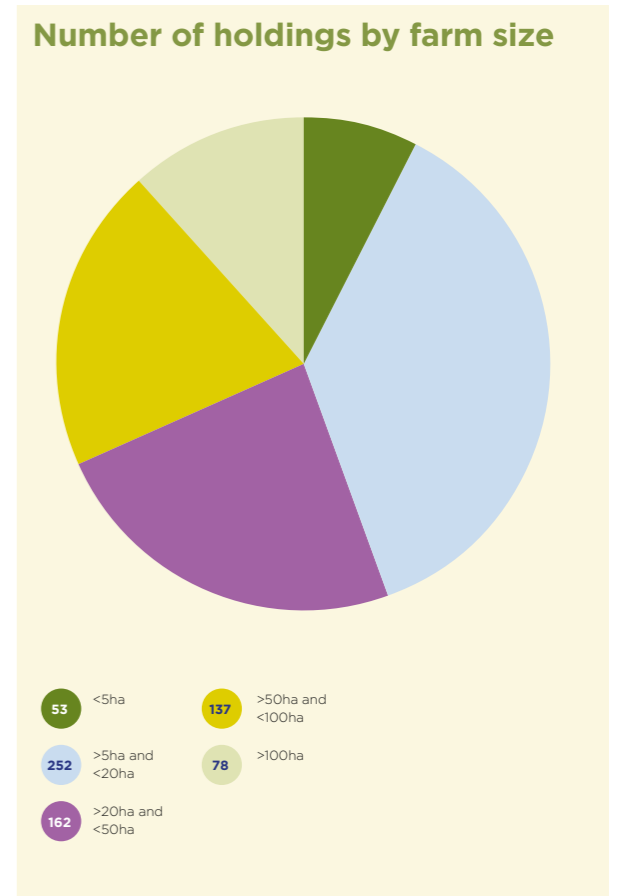
The NPA may therefore provide funding to extend the availability of agri-environment and environmental investment measures to achieve their local environmental priorities and thereby address this gap in conservation support.

In the South West Peak, few EES agreements have been put in place; these have mostly been for hay meadow management, pasture management, fencing, gates, stiles, hedgerow restoration and drystone wall restoration.

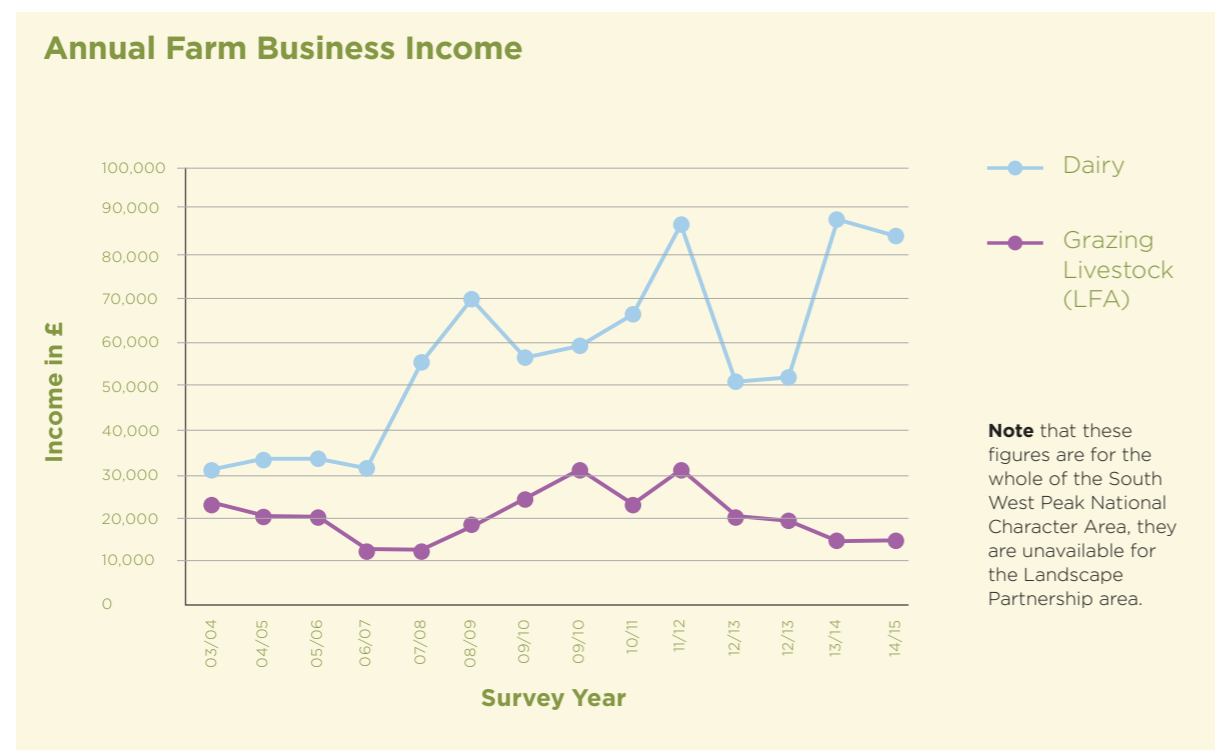
As a result of the move away from production based subsidies (following the Second World War) to payments for environmental enhancements, overgrazing became less common and the restoration of historic features and habitats increased. Substantial public funding has gone towards restoring the drystone walls and traditional farm buildings that are so distinctive of the South West Peak. Many field barns do, however, remain at risk and in need of maintenance and/or repair. Although a large proportion of the area is currently covered by Environmental Stewardship, there are still habitats in need of restoration and others that are vulnerable to loss owing to financial pressure on farming (Natural England, 2013).

Annual farm business income for livestock farming is particularly low, especially in the uplands or Less Favoured Areas. All of the South West Peak falls within a Less Favoured Area, most is classified as 'Severely Disadvantaged', while some parts, as shown on the map, are classed as 'Disadvantaged' and can support some dairy farming.

The majority (66%) of farms in the South West Peak are grazing livestock as shown on the pie chart below, with dairy making up 11%. The income from dairy farming nationally is notably higher than for livestock grazing, creating a clear disparity in annual farm business income. So the majority of farmers in the South West Peak graze sheep on Severely Disadvantaged land with an annual farm business income of under £15,000.



Note that these figures are for the whole of the South West Peak National Character Area, they are unavailable for the Landscape Partnership area.



Estate Lands

Formerly, swathes of the South West Peak were part of lorded estates and medieval hunting forests, notably Macclesfield Forest in Cheshire, Malbanc Frith in Staffordshire and part of the Royal Forest of the Peak in Derbyshire.

A noteworthy landowner for several generations was the Harpur-Crewe family. The Harpur-Crewe estate was founded in the early 1500s by Richard Harpur, a successful London solicitor. The family acquired large estates, through wealth and marriage, across Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Sir Henry Harpur (1st baronet) acquired the Calke Abbey estate at Ticknall in southern Derbyshire in 1622 and the baronetcy in 1626 (Wikipedia, 2016). At the height of its powers the Harpur-Crewe family owned a contiguous tract of land reaching from Warslow to Calke Abbey, a distance of nearly 40 miles. The house at Calke (not an abbey at all) and country shooting estate in Staffordshire were owned by a succession of baronets and their descendants. Over the generations until the late 1900s the estate gradually declined and there were some early disposals of property; the deeds of the house owned by one of the LPS board members show that it was sold from the Harpur-Crewe estate in 1928.

In July 1951 some 9,357 acres (3,787 hectares) of the Harpur-Crewe north Staffordshire estate were sold off in 212 lots comprising dairy and grazing

farms, numerous smallholdings, a licensed inn with land, country cottages and accommodation land (Beresford, 2015).

On the death of Charles Harpur-Crewe in the 1980s the family owed considerable death duties which they were unable to pay. In 1985 the Government accepted the residual estate in lieu of death duties; Calke Abbey was given over to the National Trust (National Trust, 2010), and the remaining country estate – the Warslow Moors Estate in Staffordshire was given over to the Peak District National Park.

Major Landowners

A number of other major landowners beside the National Park Authority own and manage land in the area. United Utilities owns land surrounding Fernilee and Errwood Reservoirs in the Goyt Valley, Lamaload Reservoir and its surrounding land and Macclesfield Forest. Severn Trent Water owns Tittesworth Reservoir and its surrounding land which extends northwards into the South West Peak. The National Trust owns Lyme Park at the northernmost tip of the area and two small tenanted farms near Grindon in the south. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust owns Black Brook Nature Reserve and manages the Roaches estate, while Derbyshire and Cheshire Wildlife Trusts manage one small site each. The Ministry of Defence also owns and leases land near to Warslow. Between them these public bodies own

and manage over 6,000 hectares or 17% of the South West Peak.

The largest single private landowner is Lord Derby, the 19th Earl of Derby who owns the 1,600 hectare Crag Estate in the centre of the area straddling the boundaries between the three counties. The remaining 78% of land is in private ownership, mostly small farms of 20ha or less.

Area Management and Protection

A number of area management plans are in place, covering the larger blocks of land including Macclesfield Forest, the Goyt Valley, the Warslow Moors Estate and the Roaches Estate; the management of these areas is undertaken either solely by the landowner/tenant or in partnership with other interested parties. Close working relationships between public bodies, charities and the National Park Authority over the years have secured sensitive and sustainable management practices, which are reviewed and revised as necessary.

For example, the Goyt Liaison Group is both a strategic and operational body comprising of United Utilities, the major landowner within the valley, the Forestry Commission who lease a proportion of land from United Utilities and the Peak District National Park. The working group is joined on a regular or occasional basis by other stakeholders such as Derbyshire Police, Natural England and High Peak Borough Council.

The group work together to meet the shared objectives of each organisation to deliver land management, conservation and visitor management needs within the context of the operational needs of United Utilities and the Forestry Commission. The long-term strategic aims and more daily operational objectives are designed to reflect the ecological and cultural heritage importance of the location. The day to day management of the Goyt is enhanced by on the ground delivery by the Peak District National Park Ranger Service which is jointly funded by United Utilities.

National Park status provides a degree of protection to heritage; however, the primary measures of protection come from legislation and regulations which are no different from those in force in other parts of the country.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 is the primary legislation which protects species and habitats and protects Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act of 2000 covers access to open country, public rights of way and nature conservation, strengthening protection for SSSIs by giving greater power to Natural England to enter into management agreements, to refuse consent for damaging operations, and to take action where damage is being caused through neglect or inappropriate management.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act of 2006 imposes a 'duty' on public authorities to have regard to conserving biodiversity; this includes restoration or enhancement of a population or habitat. The Act also includes a list of species and habitats which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and is designed to be used to guide decision makers in implementing their duty.

EU directives on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora are also part of English law, providing for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SACs and SPAs), the protection of 'European Protected Species' (e.g. bats, dormouse, great crested newts, otters) and the adaptation of planning controls for the protection of such sites and species.

The Water Framework Directive is an EU directive which imposes on member states a duty to ensure no deterioration and/or maintain 'good' ecological and chemical status of all watercourses.

Our oldest form of heritage protection is scheduling, designed specifically for sites of an archaeological character; this dates from the 1882 Ancient Monuments Act, when a 'Schedule' of prehistoric sites deserving of state protection was first compiled. Any works to scheduled monuments require consent from the secretary of state for culture, media and sport. Listed structures and Conservation Areas are afforded special protection through the planning process. For the former, listed building consent must be obtained before any alterations or change of use can occur, including the setting of the building. This is designed to preserve or enhance the special features of the listed building. Conservation Area status is designated to groups of buildings and their associated lanes,

paths, trees and open spaces in places of special architectural or historic interest. In Conservation Areas, planning control measures help to protect and enhance the buildings and their setting.

Need for Training and Skills

Professionals

We carried out a series of interviews with farmers and workshops with stakeholders during our development phase. Amongst the farmers who we interviewed there was concern expressed about the immense range of skills being lost by succeeding generations. The knowledge of landscape, weather, seasons, wildlife and ecology in addition to specific farming/land management skills may be lost by succeeding generations as increasing mechanisation may sever the perceived link between nature and farming productively. This was expressed as a need to get young farmers back walking the land with 'feet on the ground' or getting out of their tractor cabs. It was also felt that a loss of skills in managing/handling stock could be dangerous. There is a need for greater training and awareness-raising of more complex issues around, for instance, biodiversity losses.

The need for improved skills, training and apprenticeships for young farmers was suggested to be 'crucial' to the future of the area. Many courses, qualifications and tests (e.g. trailer tests, spraying courses) were seen as prohibitively expensive for young people. It was also suggested that training in the types of skills needed to diversify farming to consider new audiences such as 'wildlife tourists' would be beneficial.

There was a very strong desire amongst a lot of the interviewees to see walls rebuilt. Many interviewees saw walls as an important heritage and aesthetic asset as well as a practical boundary. There was a feeling across interviewees that there was a lot of walling that was in need of repair, as walls had fallen down the list of priorities for farmers due to other time and cost pressures. Supporting a project for walling was not as straightforward for many as simply providing grants, however, as this had not led to long term employment for wallers who had developed skills. A couple of interviewees therefore stressed that any trades promoted through projects should cover a number of skills and have a long term employment or progression plan.



Crumbling walls © PDNPA

Restoring dilapidated farm buildings was also mentioned as a priority for the area by several farmer interviewees. These buildings were seen as an iconic part of the landscape, and some farmers appeared saddened to see them in states of disrepair. One interviewee saw them as a solution to the housing shortage in the area, while a couple of other interviewees insisted that they should be restored but remain as agricultural buildings.

"It's a shame there isn't more money for doing these old stone barns up. Even if only just for weather-proofing. Because once roofs start going on them, it isn't long before they're dying. And them stone barns, they weren't built with machines, they were built with the sweat of somebody's brow. They were craftsmen they were."

Prioritisation and succession planning were areas of skill lacking amongst many of our farmers surveyed. Most operated on a day-to-day basis keeping things 'ticking over' rather than looking ahead or prioritising. Age and succession plans were also central to many interviewees' motivations and goals. Some older interviewees without any succession plans had reduced the amount of stock they farmed to a bare minimum, and rented out much of their land for other farmers' livestock to graze. A couple of interviewees were also considering selling up their farms at the time of interview.

"We have three sons... we keep this farm running and ticking over just in case one of them has a change of heart and comes back. That's something else we think about."

On the other hand, interviewees who had a child lined up to take over the farm were very conscious that they wanted to hand the farm over in a good state and with as much land as possible. Keeping the farm alive and in the family appears to be a strong driver amongst the farmers interviewed.

Even without a clear succession plan, it would seem that some farmers are reluctant to see their lifetime in farming go to waste, instead battling to keep the farm surviving.

"The main thing is pure stupidity. I've struggled my whole life to own it, and I don't want to let it go. It's as simple as that. And it wouldn't take many mistakes to let it go. That's what motivates most farmers of my era."

Skills around financial planning and diversification were lacking, notably about understanding the procedures involved. A frequently mentioned barrier to diversification opportunities was a perceived resistance from the Peak District National Park Authority. Whilst not all interviewees had tried, there is clearly a commonly-held perception that being granted planning permission for changes to buildings is very difficult and tends to come with many conditions attached (that apparently make the cost increasingly prohibitive) (Brook Lyndhurst, 2015).

Despite small financial margins and perceived difficulties diversifying income sources, the vast majority of farmers interviewed did not convey any particular desire for external business support or advice.

Conservationists can also benefit by listening to the views and ideas of farmers who have decades of intimate knowledge of the ecology of the landscape and its wildlife. There is felt to be a serious lack of communication. Conservationists are accused of not listening to the expertise of farmers who understand the complexity of grazing regimes and connection to the survival of rare species of flora and fauna. Several farmers expressed distrust and a culture of blame from agencies that have the role of policing with diktats from above. Interviewees commonly questioned what qualified those undertaking agri-environment scheme inspections. It was often reported that inspectors were inexperienced, and had not experienced enough 'real' farming to make accurate judgements.

"I got very tired of idiots with clipboards coming and telling me what to do with no idea of hill farming at all. They even admitted that they didn't know anything about farming, and they come up with some silly ideas that are unworkable."

There is also a failure by some farmers we spoke to to appreciate the immense difficulties faced by public agencies in terms of workloads, cutbacks and changing priorities. These discussions show that there is an urgent need to improve the communication between the farming community and some representatives of public agencies. Opportunities are therefore needed for both parties to better understand each other's drivers and viewpoints.

Volunteers

Whilst there are opportunities for volunteering in the area, there is no coordinated cross-partner programme for developing volunteers' skills. Different partners have their own local groups of volunteers such as the Peak Park Conservation Volunteers, the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust volunteers and those who take part in the now annual 'peregrine watch' at the Roaches.

The National Park has programmes for volunteer rangers and for junior rangers. Prospective volunteer rangers are interviewed, allocated a mentor from existing ranger staff, visit ranger briefing centres and are trained in the role of the ranger and national parks, biodiversity in the Dark Peak, biodiversity in the White Peak, countryside safety and navigation.

Junior rangers are young people aged 11-18 who work alongside the National Park rangers and the Learning and Discovery team to help look after the special qualities of the National Park through doing practical tasks and engaging with members of the public.

We are aware of a few local interest groups such as Hollinsclough History Live who are fairly active with monthly meetings with speakers on a variety of topics; the village website also has a message board devoted largely to ancestry and history of the village and its surroundings. The Longnor Action Group is an active community group trying to improve their village for the benefit of the community. Butterton History Group, formed by ten history buffs in 2012, is focusing on local church and family history. The Swythamley Historical Society has an active Facebook page and is similarly interested in old photographs and records of the parish. Added to these examples

are active parish councils and village hall committees, WIs and Young Farmers Clubs.

A dedicated band of people in the area are interested in archaeology and history; Eric and Margaret, both retired and long serving volunteer rangers, have been out surveying lime kilns and hollow-ways. They are also part of the Tudor farming project in Sheen which delivered a series of educational days for local primary children to help them understand how people might have lived there around the 1530s. Children were encouraged to take part in activities including cooking pottage, butter making, weaving, and dyeing wool to making a dead hedge and ploughing with oxen. In 2014 the Tudor farming project won the national Bayer/FACE award for innovative learning. The Tudor Farming Interpretation Group is now running a new HLF-funded archaeology project called 'Peeling back the layers'.

National Park residents were recently asked to complete a survey which included questions about volunteering; of those who responded (across the whole National Park) 42% regularly (at least monthly) take part in unpaid or voluntary work for clubs or organisations, the majority of this was community based volunteering. 27% of residents were aware of opportunities to become involved in the management of heritage features. Of those people who were interested in volunteering 70% were interested in surveying wildlife and 58% assisting with practical conservation tasks. The more testing question of whether people were prepared to give money for causes received a poor response; however, those who were prepared to give were most interested in conservation projects and rights of way. While these figures are for the whole National Park there is no reason to assume the response differed in the South West Peak. Just under half of the respondents in our community e-survey were interested in getting more involved with the Landscape Partnership; of these 35% were interested in habitat surveys, 15% in social media, 15% in local history information, 12.5% in providing advice on farming issues, 10% in archaeology, and 12.5% in other activities such as rights of way and the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Evidently there are skills and interests in parts of the local community which can be developed further and supported by the Landscape Partnership.

Stakeholders

There are numerous parties with an interest in this landscape; often these stakeholders do not agree on the threats and opportunities within the area. Very strong views are held by some landowners regarding the effect of predators on wildlife and farm livestock, notably the impact of TB on cattle and the number of badgers in the area is an issue of major concern for cattle farmers in particular. For the large moorland owners, their interests and concerns focus on the impact which mammalian and avian predators have on ground nesting birds such as red grouse (for the impact on commercial grouse shoots) and waders.

Farmers also have concerns about recreational access to their land, complaining about gates being left open, dogs off leads and people wandering off the designated footpaths. Some of these complaints have been countered by people who point out that if access furniture and signage better maintained there would be fewer problems with people straying off paths and so forth.

Some respondents to our community e-survey highlighted bad agricultural practices such as taking four silage cuts a year (which impacts on ground nesting birds) or farmers building or taking down buildings without planning permission; while others sympathised with the decreasing farm work force meaning fewer people to maintain walls and hedges; or noted that *"poor farm returns continue to put pressure on farmers to use cheaper, less labour-intensive alternatives, such as barbed wire or field amalgamation."*

Concerns were expressed about the impact of wind turbines in and around the area. Farmers were seen by some as *"trying to exploit wind turbines, putting up ever bigger barns and cashing in on other renewables such as solar panels that blight the countryside"*; others had a more pragmatic view: *"we are not of the opinion that wind turbines are always unacceptable because if we insist on having modern conveniences then we have to make some sacrifices, better these than the use of nuclear power."*

Whilst one person has experienced a *"lack of understanding by people who have retired to their 'rural idyll' that other people may enjoy the South West Peak differently e.g. via footpaths or other rights of way running adjacent to said rural idyll"* another notes that *"the area has a wide variety of attributes which suit a wide variety of interests... A little give and take is required from all users."*



Sheila Hine with one of her cattle © PDNPA