

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE NATIONAL PARKS OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

Purpose and context

This Joint Statement is a shared commitment to further the sustainable management of the historic environment in UK National Parks¹ and make opportunities for all to understand, appreciate, enjoy, and engage creatively with it. Working together, we will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of National Parks. We will promote the contribution that the historic environment makes to people’s lives and our National Park landscapes.

The UK’s National Parks are cultural landscapes, containing unparalleled evidence of human ingenuity, endeavour and creativity through millennia. The historic environment includes both tangible and intangible cultural heritage which people value as a reflection and expression of evolving human knowledge, beliefs and traditions. It is the cultural product of human interaction with the natural environment and is the evidence of past human activity.

Our Vision

We recognise and champion the complex interplay of cultural and natural elements within our landscapes². We will work collaboratively to ensure that the benefits and public goods provided by the historic environment in National Parks are fully realised. We will advocate for the value of the historic environment in support of integrated nature recovery and climate action, enabling people to understand their role in transitioning to a low carbon future. We will use our understanding of past human practices to enrich people’s lives and their environments, celebrating diversity, supporting wellbeing, fostering social connections, and promoting inquisitiveness and a sense of wonder in our National Park landscapes.

Through mutual support and co-ordinated programmes of work, the signatories will seek to achieve continuous improvement in these shared goals. It is an explicit intention that commitment to this Joint Statement will further the securing of appropriate resources to support this work.

National Park Authorities will:

- ensure continued access to expertise in the understanding and management of the historic environment;
- ensure that resources and procedures used to benefit the historic environment comply fully with appropriate professional standards;
- ensure the role of historic environment staff or the equivalent resources will include the enhancement of public understanding of the historic environment, the furtherance of the sustainable management of the historic environment, and participation in appropriate interdisciplinary teams;
- produce a regular summary of relevant work undertaken in each National Park as a measure of our shared objectives and impact.

Other signatories will*:

*subject to their particular roles and responsibilities

- assist the National Park Authorities in developing objectives, strategies and policies for the historic environment;
- support National Park Authorities in the preparation of their bids for resources to pursue initiatives relevant to the historic environment;
- endeavour, as consultees for relevant National Park plans, to ensure alignment between the interests of each National Park Authority;
- seek to ensure that all activities to which they are party take full account of the range of National Park and historic environment interests, including wider cultural and creative industries, and provide for appropriate liaison with voluntary bodies;
- develop and disseminate good practice in relation to the sustainable management of the historic environment;
- promote historic environment elements in education, careers, access and interpretation programmes in National Parks.

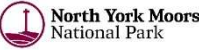
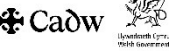
All signatories will:

- work at a national level, across government and other partners, to champion the historic environment and maximise the impact of our work;
- collaborate in research to further understanding, access and enjoyment of the historic environment;
- develop and maintain accessible data relating to the historic environment;
- explore ways to enhance the capacity of the National Park Authorities to secure better understanding, conservation, management and interpretation of the historic environment;
- arrange for officers to meet periodically to discuss and to monitor the development and implementation of cooperative programmes and share best practice;
- encourage staff to broaden their experience of National Park planning and management, supporting the secondment of staff between organisations in the furtherance of joint interests.
- collaborate in the development and testing of schemes which further the sustainable and integrated management of the historic and natural environments.

Application

This Statement applies to all National Parks and the relevant agencies in England, Scotland and Wales and has effect from the date below. The Statement does not affect the statutory duties of the respective organisations and its implementation will reflect the individual circumstances of each organisation. The Statement will be reviewed every five years.

July 2026

 Bannau Brycheiniog National Park	 Forestry Commission & Forestry England	 New Forest National Park
 Broads Authority	 Historic England	 North York Moors National Park
 Cadw	 Historic Environment Scotland	 Northumberland National Park
 Cairngorms National Park	 Lake District National Park	 Peak District National Park
 Dartmoor National Park	 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park	 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
 Exmoor National Park	 Natural England	 Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
 Eryri National Park	 Natural Resources Wales	 NatureScot
		 South Downs National Park Authority
		 Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

¹ All reference to National Parks includes the Broads Authority
² ‘Integrating the Management of the Natural and Historic Environment’ Joint Statement between Natural England, Historic England, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.