



# **The South Pennines in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – its landscape and cultural heritage**

## **Notes from a brilliant conference**

**November 8, 2017**

### **Introduction**

David Knight, Director of Pennine Prospects and Natural England Manager, welcomed everyone to Mytholmroyd for the Annual Conference 2017. He invited the 75 plus delegates to join the conversation regarding the proposed South Pennines Regional Park and to consider the physical landscape, the meaning of landscape and its value, not just in monetary terms.

Building on last year's conference – *Valuing our Distinctive Landscapes* – Pennine Prospects is keen to bring people together for a wider engagement and conversation about the South Pennines Regional Park and what such a landscape would mean to the area and its communities in terms of social, economic and environmental benefits.

***“We are keen to have your thoughts and views in the South Pennines Regional Park”***

Brought up in Surrey and now living in Yorkshire David confessed his love for this area; he remembers clearly being inspired by the Fay Godwin photographs in Ted Hughes' *Remains of Elmet*, which kindled his desire to live here.

*“There is a connection between people and landscapes; people physically shape them and are shaped by them.”*

**Regional Parks: A European perspective**  
**Carol Ritchie, Executive Director, EUROPARC Federation**

**What value do regional parks bring to people, landscapes and the rural economy?**

Carol’s presentation focussed on the experiences of regional parks around Europe and looked at different elements that gave each regional park its distinctiveness, but also brought them together, such as people and place, cultural heritage through traditions and art and the socio-economic wellbeing of communities through local produce and sustainable tourism.

*“Regional parks can fire our imaginations”*

There are about 68,200 protected areas in Europe with national and regional designated protected areas covering almost 19% of Europe; the size of Spain and Italy combined. These protected areas have an impact on almost one quarter of the continent’s population.

**Who we are:** The EUROPARC Federation aims to support parks to protect nature by bringing people together, promoting better governance and finding new solutions for problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss through the promotion of sustainable development and sustainable tourism. It is all about coming together and working collaboratively, across Europe, with a shared passion for nature and landscapes to look beyond our parks and highlight their importance to the environmental, social and economic development of our regions, countries and European society.

**What we do:** We support parks, protect nature and bring people together.

*“People are part of the landscape; not apart from it.”*

## Many different types of parks

There are 1,000s of protected areas throughout Europe with different legal frameworks and methods of governance. For example:

- In the UK there are 15 National Parks covering 9.3% of England, 19.95% of Wales and 7.2% of Scotland.
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covering 18.5%.
- In Scotland there are three Regional Parks and 40 National Scenic Areas covering 30%.
- France has ten National Parks, covering 9.5%, and 51 Nature/Regional Parks covering 15%
- Italy has 24 National Parks covering 5% and 152 Nature/Regional Parks covering 6.5%.

They have similar roles:

- They provide a locus to bring communities together
- Help to promote sustainable development
- Change the way we work, through promotion of;
  - Sustainable agriculture
  - Sustainable tourism
  - Job creation
  - Field to fork; keep the distance as short as possible to keep the money in the locality
- People can come together around a place
- Renew and promote relationships with landscapes
- Landscapes can help displaced people to heal
- By placing a value on nature there can be benefits for the community, social, economic and the well-being of people.

***“Nature and Regional Parks are Europe’s green backbone; a Sleeping Giant full of potential that can be released through better management”***

Nature parks offer an identity for people and communities. They can be hotbeds of imagination, of action and innovation. There can be a real sense of ownership and belonging. However, there is a lot of disconnect. Historical connection has been lost; we do not see ourselves as part of our landscape. But landscapes do bring people together and offer a sense of place. The parks showcase the socio-economic value and improve the value of natural environment and wellbeing.

Research has highlighted the potential of parks; through 22 case studies. For example:

- Wicklow Uplands Council is not a protected area but it does offer a platform for people to come together. It gives an opportunity for voices to be heard, for collaboration and consensus building and learning best practice from other areas. It helped people to respond to the challenges facing the uplands through innovative projects and partnerships. Through community participation, partnership and collaboration, social benefits were brought to the area through the medium of landscapes.
- France has a network of parks, which are not seen as museum pieces but instead areas of strong regional identity that work for the benefit of the local communities. If local support can be demonstrated the French Government will grant recognition for regional parks through a 12 year charter that may be renewed or revoked, depending on continued local support. Regional Nature Park status comes with permission to use a nationally recognised brand 'Marque parque'.
- Spain has concentrated on the development of tourism in parks not on the normal tourist routes to bring socio-economic benefits and new jobs to the areas targeted. The example given was the Parc Natural de la Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa. In all, there are 149 nature parks in Spain managed through regional and local government.
- Norway is taking a bottom up approach with a vision for a dynamic and long term platform to combat problems of rural depopulation. Although regional parks do not have national designation in Norway they are seen as dynamic, long-term and binding co-operation platforms for local communities, government and business

with interests in safeguarding and further developing natural and cultural values in defined landscapes.

- In Portugal seven areas came together and created the Magic Mountains area through a branding exercise to promote tourism. This area has much in common with the South Pennines, especially through its governance. The area is sustainably managed by a rural development NGO and funding is received by projects and initiatives such as the RDPE LEADER programme and through receiving a small amount from the municipalities. This is where they make the magic happen.

In conclusion, Carol noted that she sensed and was reassured by just how many of the activities within the South Pennines seemed to be bottom up and at grassroots level. She stated: “together you will succeed!”

### ***Key Messages***

- Know your unique vale and traditions of your landscape and use them for the benefit of your landscape and its communities.
- Don't wait for governance to be applied to you; create good governance that is relevant to your landscape.
- Be creative
- Be visionary and plan – change the world to see landscapes differently
- It's about teamwork and networks – capture vision
- Use voice collectively
- Walk the walk and do as you say
- Stitch everything together and work together
- Secret to success – research first. Look at the socio-economic value, but make sure it is people driven
- The South Pennines Regional Park would be welcomed into the EUROPARC Federation

***“People get fired up by their places; they provide a connection to community and landscape”***

## **Why Does the Natural Environment Matter?**

### **Chris Dean, Head of Programme Delivery, Moors for the Future Partnership**

**Who we are:** The Moors for the Future Partnership was established in 2003. Since then it has secured £32 million funding and worked across the South Pennines and the Peak District, with a focus on blanket bog preservation. Moors for the Future has been working to reverse more than 200 years of damage that left large areas of these uplands bare of vegetation.

This has resulted in:

- Improved landscape, plants and wildlife
- Improvements to water quality
- Flood prevention
- Carbon storage

***“Taking something broken and fixing it”***

#### **How does the natural environment of the South Pennines benefit your life?**

It's one thing to assess the ecosystem using accounting methods and policy makers and academics all have interesting things to say about the importance of blanket bog in the uplands but this shifts the conversation away from people. We need to regain control of the conversation and our natural capital.

***“It's vital we engage with people and make them part of the landscape.”***

Benefits of South Pennines' uplands:

- Flood risk management
- Recreation, including walking
- Water; drinking water and sewerage works

We are experiencing disconnect between people and their landscapes; how do you make people care about this?

- Think global; act local has an impact here too

- Perception of what is natural is not good for promoting change.
- Trees would grow on the edges of upland peat but have been removed
- We need to change the culture

Threats past and present:

- Historic air pollution
- Recreation
- Wildfire
- Flood risk

We need to talk about the positive things going on too. If we can give the politicians positive messages that are simple and effective they are better equipped to help us. For example, the Environment Secretary has just held a round table on soils; he's listening at the moment and we should give him support. One way is to comment on the draft 25 year Environment Plan from the Natural Capital Committee.

#### **Benefits of the South Pennines:**

- Nowhere else in the UK can this type of landscape be found cheek by jowl with large populations; stunning range of hills, surrounded by communities
- Huge opportunities with the highest densely populated area outside of London, with over 8 million people living in and around the area; within an hour's journey
- Delivers Ecosystem Services:
  - Carbon storage; there's more carbon stored in the UK's peat than in all the forests in the UK, France and Germany
  - Water quality; the South Pennines provides good quality water catchment for ten million people
  - Flood alleviation; we need to make more space for water and upland restoration helps to slow the flow of water downstream
  - Spagnum moss creates a sponge

Work continues with Moors for the Future Partnership working across boundaries in catchment areas to deliver a healthy environment and engage with people, through projects such as Community Science Monitoring.

### ***Key Messages***

- People need to regain control of their natural capital
- The South Pennines' uplands deliver many benefits for people and the environment
- We need to work to heal the disconnect people feel with their landscapes
- Positive, simple and effective messages will help our politicians help us
- Partnership working is vital for this type of work
- Look after the natural environment and it will look after you

***“How do we make people care about this?”***

## **Making a Difference by Using Landscapes: a view from Northern Ireland**

### **Martin Carey, Chief Executive, Mourne Heritage Trust**

As a former history teacher Martin particularly admired the South Pennines' links to its cultural history, in particular its landscape, townscape and the traditional stone buildings; it certainly gives the area an identity. This has been lost in many towns in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland there are 8 AONBs, including the Mourne AONB, which is on the border, 45 minutes from Belfast and 90 minutes from Dublin. AONBs in Northern Ireland are relatively weak and do not feature in planning legislation.

The Mourne AONB is a special and high quality landscape but not protected as a National Park. The #LoveMourne campaign was developed to promote the area after politicians removed funding. The campaign was successful and the funding was restored.

***“The Mournes; where the mountains dip their toes into the sea.”***



#### The Mourne AONB:

- Very diverse landscape, with mountains to the sea
- Geologically significant
- 1,500 small farm units with an average of 20 ha.
- Population dispersed
- Land management fragmented

#### Mourne Heritage Trust:

- Established in 1997
- Locally based bottom up landscape management
- Concentrates on culture, socio-economics, environment and contributions to local communities

#### Reflections:

- Attitudes and access to land is an ongoing challenge as access is by consensus
- Geographical position is a challenge as too close to both Belfast and Dublin to encourage people to stay
- Politics can be difficult
- Designation campaign was a mixed blessing
- AONB designation does give politicians a rationale for allocating funding, if not a legal obligation.
- Mistakes made included not bringing people into the trust's work earlier on
- Need to adapt other areas' projects to suit this area
- Core funding is vital as it helps to lever other funds for the area. E.g. for every £1 of core funding in the Mournes there's a return of £2.50
- Tourism can be a game changer

***“A focus on the distinctiveness of the Mourne AONB has helped to re-engage people with their landscape and heritage”***

The Mourne Heritage Trust has learned throughout its development and is getting to grips with landscape scale conservation. It's created a patchwork bringing together environmental protection and tourism by getting the funding in and delivering on projects.

***Key messages:***

- It's important to bring the people with you
- AONB designation, although legally weak, has been useful to bring in funding
- Partnership working can be challenging but ultimately successful
- A focus on the area's distinctiveness has helped to re-engage people with their landscape and heritage
- Celebrate the ordinary

***"Celebrating the ordinary"***

**Totally Locally: an adventure into Local Distinctiveness**

**Chris Sands, The Good Company**

Chris took us on a Totally Locally journey from the South Pennines to Barossa in Australia.

Local distinctiveness helps to brand and promote an area; any area. Why does it matter?:

- People want authentic
- People want unique
- They want to discover new things
- They want to go somewhere and connect with it
- A good brand connects at a deeper level
- It allows people to understand what's on offer and judge whether it's for them
- If it is for them, when they encounter it, they'll love it
- Then they'll tell others, including visitors, investors and potential new residents

The Totally Locally campaign, developed in Calderdale, has spread throughout the UK and beyond.

- It's a plan for community led town centre management and regeneration
- A free open source marketing kit for any town to download and use

- It's a well thought out strategic brand campaign that's free to use, muck about with and add to
- It offers a tool kit for towns with a step by step guide and templates, which can be adapted

The Totally Locally campaign is different:

- It's about people power
- No rules, no red tape, no politics
- Grass roots and community led
- No membership, committees, or chairman

There's a simple message: "If every adult spent £5 per week in their local shops and businesses rather than online, at the supermarket or with huge multinationals it would be worth billions going directly back into our towns."

***"This means real jobs, better facilities and nicer places to live"***

The Magic Tenner highlights the power of supporting local businesses. If £10 is spent in a local business up to £50 goes back into the local economy as the money generates employment and support for other local businesses.

These messages have recently been used to promote the South Pennines Regional Park and the Barossa region of South Australia, where 'someone's everyday is someone else's extraordinary'.

### ***Key messages***

- Local distinctiveness can be a powerful branding tool to help people connect to a place
- The Totally Locally campaign gives power back to people so they can create their own town regeneration rather than waiting for others to act
- By supporting local businesses people can really make a difference in their local community, making it a better place for everyone

- Free to use open source marketing material has helped the campaign spread around the world
- Someone's everyday is someone's else's extraordinary

*“A good brand connects at a deeper level.”*

## **Putting People at the Heart of Landscape**

### **Mike Burke, Natural England, Area Manager for Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire**

The recent funding difficulties have forced us to think about what we do; we've considered the statutory requirements but that may not be the best way forward. Partnerships can struggle with commitment; not just financial but also political and engagement. We are here to help if needed.

Putting people at the heart of the environment:

- Target delivery of environmental benefits for people and places, from Leeds to Manchester; they are the beneficiaries; we need to engage with them
  - Politically
  - With communities
  - Investment opportunities with businesses
- Investment in transport with the health benefits in mind; tap into the health agenda
- Understand the supply chains to better understand their environmental impact; Talking to farmers and supermarkets
- Natural capital; the environment: looking at this through the eyes of those that need to invest, such as water companies.

Funding for organisations associated with landscapes is becoming more difficult:

- Statutory purpose is a certain route but not always beneficial. There are merits in taking the non-statutory designation route and bringing people along for the journey.

- Limited resources make us think differently and consider how to achieve our objectives. For example, Conservation 21 is a strategy for landscapes that was co-created and sets out shared plans for places.
- Need to work together and pool resources – Natural England is exploring further how it can help and support other organisations

The 25 Year Environment Plan: Natural England helped to shape the plan through the conservation strategy, putting people at its heart and building wider commitment. Mike urged everyone to comment on it and engage with the consultation process.

#### Forest of Bowland – Upland Management Plan

- Special protection area
- Working with the biggest land owners to find out what they want to get out of a management plan

South Pennines – how might a long term management plan work here? Would it help to build up commitment?

#### Living Map – Defra Landscape Pioneer

- Shared natural capital investment plan
- Integrated approach to land assets and the services they generate
- Natural capital investment opportunities across the landscape
- Map the beneficiaries of ecosystem services and their value to the economy
- Reconnect communities with their natural environment

What do people need and want from the environment? We asked the people of the Nene Valley and assessed the demand for seven ecosystem services:

- Noise regulation
- Local climate regulation
- Air purification
- Water flow
- Water quality
- Pollination

- Accessible nature

In the River Mease focus area:

- Encouraged people to take positive decisions for the environment
- Community engagement plan

Shared plans need to be:

- Co-designed
- Delivered jointly
- Have collective ownership
- Scope – economic, environmental, social
- Flexible, opportunistic, pragmatic

***“Leadership does not have to come from Natural England”***

#### ***Key messages***

- Partnerships need commitment; not just financial but also political and engagement
- By putting people at the heart of the environment we target the delivery of environmental benefits
- Working to understand the environmental impacts of transport, agriculture and water supplies
- Understand what people want from the environment
- Shared plans have to co-designed and delivered jointly to ensure collective ownership

***“Putting people at the heart of the environment”***

## **So what was that all about? A vision for the South Pennines**

### **Regional Park: A summary**

#### **Pam Warhurst, Chair, Pennine Prospects**

Pam focussed her presentation on the vision for the South Pennines – a landscape of the people for the people – a regional park that is inclusive. She noted that the time is right and that there is a strong sense that a regional park for the South Pennines is really needed, in terms of policy, investment and the needs of the moment.

One way to achieve this is to establish a new non-statutory upland park, which reflects the importance of investing public money for public good and is championed through partnerships; a regional park with a defined social purpose with people at the heart.

There is something special about the South Pennines and its uniqueness; its partnerships that champion the area to:

- Look after the needs of our uplands to deliver clean water, carbon capture, flood mitigation and rich habitats
- Invest in our local economies to create inclusive growth and local distinctiveness
- Play its part in promoting the health and happiness of all sections of the community through a truly accessible landscape

The time is right to come together to create a ‘super service’ that will have an investment programme together with an access programme and support businesses.

So what are we doing in Pennine Prospects?

We will carry on with the conversations, to join up the dots for one landscape and one plan to support our people and communities. We wish to add value to all the partners (and new partners) involved, bring in investment and pool resources to deliver South Pennines-wide.

***“A South Pennines Regional Park is of its time”.***

Pam thanked everyone for coming and hoped that everyone will be part of the conversation to make the vision a reality.

## What next?

From the day and the workshops, the following steps were suggested:

### Workshop 1: The South Pennines – a resilient and thriving local economy

A chance to explore socio-economic opportunities and potential for a regional park through:

- Celebrating local distinctiveness
  - What is it like to have a business in a distinctive landscape?
- Local economies – rural and urban regeneration through tourism
  - Creating new but authentic tourism experiences

Action Points:

- 1) The South Pennines can make a strong offer to the economy of the city regions, providing a niche rural economy and 'green lung' attracting skilled people and entrepreneurs to desirable places to live.
- 2) A Regional Park could enhance the visibility of the South Pennines, attracting visitors with a recognition of the quality of the landscape creating an identity brand for the area and avoiding the danger of creating a theme park. Local Distinctiveness is key part of this and the original Pennine Prospects project should be continued and updated as a core activity.
- 3) The Unique Selling Point of the South Pennines is its industrial heritage, the combination of landscape and history through time and the current accessibility to this densely populated upland landscape are strengths to build on.
- 4) However, there is a danger of losing the industrial heritage through ill thought out conversions or demolition and safeguards should be stronger.
- 5) Recognition of a regional park could increase house prices. The affordability of the area promotes creativity and this could be suppressed by rising prices
- 6) South Pennines businesses can give preference to a local supply chain, recognising the benefits of co-operating and supporting each other. A Character Area pack could be prepared and then used by local businesses.

### Workshop 2: Celebrating Landscapes through Arts and Recreation

How do we identify local distinctiveness and raise the profile of landscapes with distinctive character and cultural heritage?

We identified 5 key areas to encourage people to use the landscape around them and to connect themselves with it.

1. Improved access
  - Maintenance of routes and paths to be improved
  - Better connectivity of routes and paths



- More looped cycling and walking routes for all (families, disabled access) with clearly marked distances/ease rating
  - Easy access to all walking/cycling routes e.g. Route 66 needs better access
  - Routes need to be more accessible
2. More creative tourist information
    - The information needs to be clear for all
  3. Useful walking information
    - For all families, people with young children (pushchairs), people with disabilities. Need a connected\_well thought out approach. Links to accessibility and suitability of routes.
  4. Be conscious of diversity of where we live
    - All of the people who live in the area to be involved in the landscape
    - Need to address the disconnect
  5. Create a Creative Industries 'Think Tank'
    - Collective information and idea sharing
    - How can we plan? Use our knowledge as a tool?

### **Workshop 3: A space for everyone – Let's talk about the South Pennines Regional Park**

What makes us different? Local Distinctiveness

Action Points:

- Voices
- Pride
- Lobbying
- Influential
- Health resource
- Powerhouse/Greenhouse
- Don't waste what you can't replace.
- What is unique? Couldn't answer a lot of thinking is needed.
- Suggestion of opening up the tunnels in the South Pennines

### **Workshop 4: The South Pennines in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – A vehicle for Natural Capital Investment – A Roadmap for Capital Investment?**

South Pennines Regional Park- a vehicle for natural capital investment

#### Action points:

- The South Pennines area is valuable in terms of birds, waxcap fungi and many nationally/globally important species: we need to get this across
- We should find out what is important to everyday people on the street - see what type of nature they value.
- Social deprivation is almost always linked to lack of access to green space. We need to map this and provide green space where it is needed most.
- Some people have no access to nature and these natural areas, so you need to empower them to have that. Keep things simple, don't talk about natural capital at the community level, it's not relevant to them.
- We need to make corporate companies aware that economic benefits come from working with nature. E.g. mental health benefits may appeal to investors in big corporate companies
- Funding companies need tools to compare, almost spoon feed them the investment and make it as clear as possible so funding opportunities can be compared. For example, natural capital of pollinators is very often calculated; we need this for more ecosystem services.
- Need to make landowners and farmers see the benefits and spread the word.