



**Campaign for  
National Parks**  
Keeping beautiful places safe

## **News from around the Parks**

winter – February 2013



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# Brecon Beacons National Park

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (compiled by Julia Gruffydd)**

## **1. Fforest Fawr Geopark success story as its green card is renewed – Brecon Beacons**

Fforest Fawr Geopark in the Brecon Beacons National Park received a coveted green card for the second time from the European Geoparks Network. The successful revalidation has been a cause for celebration for the Fforest Fawr Geopark Management Group, and is the result of effective partnership working between various bodies in the public and private sectors.

More info here: <http://www.breconbeacons.org/the-authority/communications-and-media/press-releases/october-2012/fforest-fawr-geopark-success-story-as-its-green-card-is-renewed/>

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## **2. New Charter between the Brecon Beacon National Park Authority and local councils**

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has achieved a first for Wales after becoming the first Welsh National Park to sign a Town and Community Council Charter with local councils.

The charter and accompanying action plan look to strengthen and improve the Authority's working relationships with town and community councils from across the National Park.

National Park Authority Chairman Julie James said:

“The signing of the Town and Community Council Charter signals an historic day and it's great for the Authority to be working so closely with our local communities on a model that I'm sure will be replicated throughout Wales. We currently have 14 town councils signed up, but we hope all 52 councils across the National Park will join us in time.”

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## **3. Rare fungi found in Brecon Beacons National Park**

A fungi find in Brecon Beacons National Park has proved to be the first Welsh find of the rare species in nearly a decade – and only the second time it has been seen anywhere in Wales.

The rare *Lepiota grangei* was spotted during a Fungal Foray walk led by fungi expert David Mitchel and Wardens from Brecon Beacons National Park Authority at Craig-y-nos Country Park, Penycae.

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#### **4. Partners make woodland bridge a home for wildlife near Brecon**

Wildlife in Priory Groves has a new home after bat refuges were incorporated into bridge walls as part of on-going maintenance work.

The renovation works to Forge Cottage Footbridge, situated in Priory Groves woodland on the outskirts of Brecon, were completed late last year thanks to funding from Powys County Council and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The bridge is located in an environmentally important area of woodland with the nearby trees home to bats and nesting birds, while the River Honddu, which runs under the bridge, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest holding protected crayfish, spawning fish and otters. Forge Cottage Footbridge itself has played an important role for local wildlife – cracks and crevices in the deteriorating bridge walls had provided room for bats to roost, and all partners felt it was important that special bat refuges were incorporated into the restored bridge walls as an integral part of the new design.

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#### **5. Brecon Beacons National Park plays fair**

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is helping even more people enjoy the region's wonderful landscapes thanks to a project supporting children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Authority's 'Fair Play in the National Park' scheme aims to support community groups working with children and young people experiencing financial hardship by providing transport to activities in the area they would usually be unable to reach.

It's all part of the Authority's commitment to delivers a Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plan that will increase the number of children and families from financially deprived backgrounds visiting the area, using services and benefitting from the National Park's stunning landscapes.

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#### **6. 'Leaf it to us!' Brecon Beacon's Volunteers plant trees to support local wildlife**

A band of volunteers turned over a new leaf in the New Year by helping to enrich the habitat of bats and other wildlife in Brecon Beacons National Park.

Around 40 helpers met at Gilestone Farm in Talybont-on-Usk in early January to plant 3,000 mixed native broadleaved trees as part of the Vincent Wildlife Trust's 'Our Beacon for Bats' project and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's 'Big Volunteer New Year'.

Gilestone Farm, situated in the picturesque Usk Valley, sits between two major roost sites managed by Vincent Wildlife Trust for lesser horseshoe bats, and this tree planting project aimed to enhance the habitat of these bats and other creatures that call the area home.

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## The Broads

### The Broads Authority (compiled by Hilary Franzen)

#### 7. Innovative dredging techniques are win-win for boaters and wildlife in The Broads

European funding and innovative thinking is solving the Broads Authority's perennial problem of dredging disposal with a win-win outcome for boaters and wildlife. Trials at Salhouse Broad on the River Bure and Heigham Sound in the Upper Thurne are re-using dredged mud to re-build eroded river banks and reedbeds.

At Salhouse Broad giant geotextile bags, big enough for a car to drive through, are being pumped full of mud from the river to form a retaining wall. The surface of the bags, which are now submerged, are being planted with reed seed and rhizomes taken from encroaching reed fringes and the space behind the bags is being filled with sediment to restore the reedbed.

The techniques are the result of sharing expertise with our Dutch, Belgian and French partners in the European funded PRISMA project (Promoting Integrated Sediment Management).

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#### 8. Restoring a reed-bed at Duck Broad

Mud-pumping is being trialled at Heigham Sound to reduce disturbance to wildlife and the channel bed. After filling a nearby soke dyke the mud will be used to restore a lost reed bed at Duck Broad using gabion baskets as retaining walls, which is also being part-funded by PRISMA.

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#### 9. Dockyard development to be Broads Authority hub

The Authority's dockyard on the River Yare is being developed as the hub for its construction and maintenance activities. A new workshop and offices is almost complete and a slipway is being re-piled. A new wherry for transporting dredged mud is being built for the Authority in Ireland. All this work is being match-funded by the PRISMA project.

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#### 10. Campaign to improve water quality – Broads Biodiversity and Water Forum

A new campaign to improve the water quality of Norfolk's rivers and broads was launched at the Second Broads Biodiversity and Water Forum to mark World Wetlands Day. Senior Environment Agency officers launched the Broadland Catchment Approach which aims to teach people that the way they live and the products they use affect the quality of our rivers. The keynote speaker was Jane Madgwick,

Chief Executive of Wetlands International, who was formerly Head of Conservation with the Broads Authority.

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## Exmoor National Park

**Exmoor National Park Authority (compiled by Clare O'Connor)**

### **11. Exmoor - The Moorland Classroom**

New web-based education resources went live at Exmoor National Park recently and won top marks from the many teachers who attended the over-subscribed launch event. Free online videos, images and materials accompany the Moorland Classroom project which has been developed by the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership and Exmoor National Park Authority.

At the launch, teachers were able to explore the new web resources [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/moorland-classroom](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/moorland-classroom) and took part in workshops with experts in a variety of subjects including Exmoor ponies, ecology, archaeology, geography, and the history of moorland villages such as Simonsbath and its water-powered sawmill.

David Rolls, who coordinates the Moorland Classroom initiative, said: "These new exciting online resources make it easy for primary school teachers to learn about the moorland landscape indoors and outdoors on Exmoor. What's more, they are totally free, thanks to its funders The Exmoor Trust, the Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund."

Detailed site guides, with unique study themes, provide printable resources for teachers to use in the classroom, and outdoor learning activities for when they are out on location at Exmoor National Park. Video clips introduce the moorland locations, key topics, and practicalities such as where to park. Photo galleries offer a wealth of visual material, and special interactive maps show walking routes, which are also available to view on Google Earth or to print out for school visits.

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### **12. Exmoor Flood Damage**

Following the recent flood damage to Tarr Steps, the longest clapper bridge in the country, early estimates showed that repairs to the rights of way network around the bridge and across Exmoor National Park were likely to cost around £100,000.

Somerset County Council, in collaboration with English Heritage and Exmoor National Authority have been working on the repair of the Tarr Steps bridge itself, but a few of the footpaths and bridleways in the area were badly affected by fallen trees with small landslips and bridges being washed away. As the expenditure needed exceeds the funding available each year to maintain public paths, a number of



local people and businesses offered financial help towards the repairs. The Authority asked people that would like to help to make a contribution through the Exmoor National Park CareMoor Fund.

Further information is available on the National Park website:

<http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-floods>.

CareMoor for Exmoor is the Conservation and Access Fund for the National Park. Over the year contributions from businesses, visitors and local communities have provided thousands of pounds towards different projects within the National Park and just recently funds had been committed to developing new interpretive material at Tarr Steps to enhance the area and provide better information to visitors including the promotion of a short circular route which will now require repair.

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### **13. Superfast Exmoor**

In a £94 million project, Connecting Devon and Somerset (CD&S) has agreed a deal with BT to transform broadband speeds within the next four years to ensure around 90% of premises have access to fibre optic broadband by the end of 2016, and deliver a minimum of 2mbs for all premises by the end of 2016.

As yet it is not clear how far the initiative will reach with fibre optics and Superfast Exmoor, which is supported by Exmoor National Park Authority, is aiming to help plug the gaps in the superfast broadband service that are left by CD&S.

The Authority is now developing a full application to the Rural Community Broadband Fund which we intend to submit by the end of May 2013. The funding bid will be for approximately £250k for a £500k project. All funds need to be committed by the end of December 2013 and spent by the end of December 2014, so the timescales are short. We are currently in the process of assessing the technology options which could include enhancing and extending an existing wireless broadband network, extending the reach of fibre optics installed by BT or a combination of the two.

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## **New Forest National Park**

**New Forest Association (compiled by Peter Roberts)**

### **14. Government responds to the Independent Panel on Forestry Report - NFA “remain concerned”**

The New Forest Association remains very concerned about the Minister's response to the Forestry Panel Report. It seems that the major land manager for the New Forest will have even stricter economic guidelines than the Forestry Commission. The importance of maintaining the power of the New Forest Acts (1877-1970) within the new legislation means that we will have to be involved in serious lobbying of MPs.

Further concerns over an exceptions scheme for Commoners Housing are emerging. This no longer appears to be achieving its original aim of assisting young commoners to have a base to work from.

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## **New Forest National Park Authority (compiled by Bob Morris)**

### **15. New Forest National Park Authority Peer Review**

The report is very positive, highlighting some real successes and is helpful in terms of clarifying the challenges ahead as we strive to continue to improve and work better together with partners for the benefit of the Forest. In summary, the report says:

“The Authority has applied itself to creating a step change in the way that it operates... [In particular it has applied considerable time, energy and effort to establishing good working relationships across the complex range of established organisations within the Forest. The distinctly different Authority is now recognised as positively changed by staff, Members, partners and communities alike and this outcome is a credit to the Authority’s dedication and resolve to make improvements.”

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#### **New tree service for New Forest residents**

### **16. A new service to save money and make it easier for residents to place tree work applications has been launched by the New Forest National Park Authority.**

The New Forest National Park Authority has taken over the existing service provided by New Forest District Council. Now all tree works in the New Forest will be carried out by the National Park Authority. It will reduce costs and improve the level of service. The new tree service will be based at the New Forest National Park Authority headquarters at Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, SO41 9ZG. [www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/trees](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/trees).

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### **17. New Forest World War II Project and Volunteering**

The work on the project is able to record a mass of information due to the flood of volunteers willing to conduct field work. This is one success from our efforts to seek voluntary involvement in Forest projects. We are again holding another volunteering fair in Lyndhurst on 2 March 2013.

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## North York Moors National Park

North Yorkshire Moors Association (compiled by Tom Chadwick)

### 18. York Potash Ltd polyhalite mine development dominating news and activities

The dominating news is still the proposed new polyhalite mine being put forward by Sirius Mineral's York Potash Ltd. The planning is complicated with the minehead being located within the planning area of the North York Moors National Park Planning Authority (NYMNP) while the mineral transport system, a pipeline from the minehead south of Whitby to Teesside, falls under the National Infrastructure Directorate (NID), which replaced the IPC (Infrastructure Planning Commission) in April last year.

Approximately 25Km of the pipeline runs through the National Park. A further planning submission is required for structures at the Teesside end which will fall within the boundary of the Redcar and Cleveland Planning authority. This fragmented planning is dealing essentially with one project and a refusal of any part will presumably stop the proposed mining development.

Sirius Minerals submitted a planning application to the National Park Planning Authority at the end of January and this is now being examined by the NYMNP. We are working closely with Campaign for National Parks and are currently going carefully through the details of the application. As usual the application comprises of a huge amount of documentation and the statutory period of 21 days for comments is well short of being a realistic time frame for a thorough examination of the submission documents. A further complication is the inclusion (in the minehead application) of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the pipeline even though an application for this part of the proposal has not yet been submitted to the Infrastructure Directorate.

The National Park has a statutory 16-week period in which to determine the minehead application which will take us to a planning decision in May. It is expected that York Potash Ltd will submit a planning application for the pipeline by the end of this month. From the date of the submission of a planning application for the pipeline to NID the period of time to determine this part of the proposal is 15 months, and requires a decision by the Secretary of State. Assuming an application is submitted by the end of this month, a decision can be expected in May 2014. This begs the question that if the minehead application is approved in May of this year, does York Potash Ltd. commence ground works and shaft sinking without a decision on the pipeline. The two parts of the proposed mining venture are completely interdependent one does not work without the other. Does approval or refusal of one part influence decision making on the other or are these completely independently assessed?

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### **19. New Potash Mine for the North York Moors?**

The biggest issue currently concerning the park is the proposed development of a potash mine in an area just south of Whitby. The \$1.7 Billion scheme is earmarked for farmland and commercial forestry on the B1416 two kilometres south of the village of Sneaton and four kilometres from Whitby. If permission is granted - a special planning meeting is scheduled to decide the plan in May - York Potash plan to develop 40 ha of the 100 ha site which encompasses Haxby Plantation and Doves Nest Farm. The scheme was originally announced some 18 months ago by Sirius Minerals, the parent company of York Potash.

The planning meeting on 21 May will be the culmination of extensive work by National Park officers and numerous public consultation meetings by York Potash. The mine is set to create 554 direct jobs initially with a further 189 jobs at the processing plant at Teesside. These are expected to increase to over 1,000 direct jobs and potentially 5,000 indirect employment opportunities in the wider area when full production is reached in 2024.

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### **20. North York Moors Publication - Management Plan & Agricultural Buildings**

In the last few weeks the National Park Authority has published its Management Plan which has been well-received as a document to take forward the Authority's aspirations over the next few years.

The National Park Authority has also just published a helpful design guide for the new agricultural buildings.

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### **21. North York Moor plans for the Tour de France 2014**

Following the news that the Tour de France is coming to Yorkshire in 2014, although it will not actually be going through the National Park, the North York Moors National Park Authority (NPA) is working closely with tourism businesses to ensure we all play a strong part in developing the legacy of the race, both before and after the Grand Depart. This will include developing soft adventure cycling opportunities for families, at which, the North York Moors excels. We will also hold discussions with Welcome to Yorkshire, the regional marketing organisation to explore how the North York Moors can benefit from the international publicity.

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## Lake District National Park

Lake District National Park Authority (compiled by Richard Leafe)

### 22. Sustainable transport in the Lake District

We are making good progress in delivering our DfT (Department for Transport) funded local sustainable transport programme Go Lakes Travel. In partnership with Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Tourism, this project aims to change how visitors travel to and around the south and central Lakes.

Delivered through nine complimentary projects, this year has seen good progress with improved public transport information and provision. Electric cars and bikes are available to hire and new off road cycle routes in place. There is a lot more to watch out for this summer, including a new ferry service for bikes.

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### 23. Lake District Affordable Housing

As of December 2012, we have seen a large number of planning permissions granted since the adoption of our Core Strategy in October 2010:

- 134 dwellings for local affordable need;
- 141 dwellings with a local occupancy condition ('local need'); and
- 20 agricultural workers' dwellings.

With planning permission granted for 295 new dwellings in just over two years, we can have some confidence in assuming that we will be able to maintain an average of 60 dwellings per year being completed - as a mean annual target over the plan period.

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Friends of the Lake District (compiled by Jack Ellerby)

### 24. MRWS Nuclear Repository Process in West Cumbria

The Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS, White Paper 2008) invited local authorities in England to 'volunteer' into a process to find a suitable site for a deep underground repository to host the UK's intermediate and high level radioactive waste.

Only Allerdale, Copeland and Cumbria council's in West Cumbria expressed an interest. The decision whether or not to proceed further into detailed siting investigation came to a head on 30 January. Cumbria County Council voted 'no' preventing any further progress under the terms of the current agreement with DECC (Department for Energy and Climate Change). The nub of the issue for the

Friends of the Lake District (FLD), and behind growing local opposition, was independent geologists saying that the geology under the Western Lakes and the Solway Coast would not provide a safe and secure host rock. If allowed to progress the scale of the drilling boreholes and seismic testing in subsequent stages could have industrialised the Ennerdale Valley.

DECC and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority remain committed to finding a suitable site somewhere – watch this space!

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## **25. Government's Response to the Independent Forestry Panel Report – Forest Campaigns Network**

The Friends of the Lake District are members of the Forest Campaigns Network who issued a press release in response to the Government's statement on the Independent Panel and Forestry's report recommendations.

Whilst much of what the Government said was supportive, the Forest Campaigns Network was disappointed by the recommended annual budget of £22million, which fell very short at just £14m for 2013/14. There was also disappointment at the news that the new body for the Public Forest Estate looked like moving away from its quasi-Government status as a Public Corporation; and the future of Forest Services (grants and regulations) had now become part of Defra's Triennial Review, along with Natural England and the Environment Agency without any public discussions.

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## **26. Honister Zip Wire and Adventure Capital UK – Lake District**

The Friends of the Lake District (FLD) was pleased that the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) Development Control Committee members agreed with their view and refused planning permission for the proposed 'temporary' zip wire up at Honister on Fleetwith Pike.

Sadly, the media polarised the arguments and latched onto Chris Bonington's resignation as one of our Vice Presidents (causing the resignation of several members). They did not report the fact that the two affected Parish Councils of Borrowdale and Buttermere objected carried significant weight in the LDNPA Members decision.

In terms of the bigger picture, FLD along with all the Lake District Partnership partner organisations has signed up to the Adventure Capital Strategy, subject to ensuring the special qualities are not damaged, i.e. Sandford principle. We are also confident that a better site can be found in a forest setting for a large zip wire facility.

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## **27. Lakes to Dales Campaign – National Park Extensions**

At last the public inquiry has been announced, starting on 4 June and lasting for four weeks. We are coordinating the 'Key Supporters Group' to support the inquiry and will agree an updated Campaign Plan. Most of the issues at the inquiry will be handled via roundtable hearing style debates concerning desirability factors rather than the fundamentals of whether the areas meet the statutory criteria, which even the objectors haven't argued against!

Campaign for National Parks and Council support maybe required following the publication of the inquiry Inspector's Report to ensure the Government get on and confirm the extension orders.

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## **28. Debris Dive on Windermere**

Following our successful Flora of the Fells Windermere Fell Care Day (a 'volunteering Glastonbury') last October, we are embarking on a major 'Debris Dive' with the support of our Patron Paul Rose (Diver, TV presenter and Explorer) and locally based Impact International.

On Saturday 2 March over 200 divers will collect litter from the lake bed of Windermere in the Bowness Bay area. We expect to collect over ten tonnes of rubbish which will then be recycled and made into a sculpture engaging local school children. The underlying purpose is to highlight the importance of water quality in the Windermere catchment and raising awareness about personal responsibility for stopping pollution.

(Contact at the Friends of the Lake District [jack-ellerby@fld.org.uk](mailto:jack-ellerby@fld.org.uk) or see [www.fld.org.uk](http://www.fld.org.uk).)

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## **Peak District National Park**

**Friends of the Peak District (compiled by Martin Hofman)**

## **29. Joint effort wins £500 million for Undergrounding Transmission Power Lines**

Thanks to concerted joint pressure from Friends of the Peak District, Campaign for National Parks, CPRE and the John Muir Trust, Ofgem has recently announced that they will *quintuple* the pylon undergrounding allowance in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from £100 million to £500 million.

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### **30. Off-Roading Update from the Peak District**

In 2011 an 18-month experimental Order banning 4x4s and trail bikes at Chapel Gate (an ancient packhorse route, which runs through a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest) was instigated by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), in order to monitor the condition of the route without the impact of motorised vehicles.

A group of recreational trail riders mounted a legal challenge on six grounds, five of which were rejected. However, the Judge ruled that the precise wording used in the reasons for the Order did not reflect fully the experiment being carried out and so quashed the Order, with immediate effect. Since this ruling in November, 4x4 and trail bikes have been legally able to use this route again. The PDNPA is consulting with local groups on the future management of the route. We continue to call for the implementation of a permanent Order banning all motorised vehicles from this sensitive route.

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### **31. Reorganisation of the Friends of the Peak District**

We've recently completed all the major reorganisations resulting from our 2012 strategic review, including moving to new offices in Sheffield. Our new address is 37 Stafford Road, Sheffield, S2 2SF.

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## **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

### **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**

### **32. Pembrokeshire Walking project groups stride to first anniversary**

A walking project that began as a part-time venture has recently seen two groups celebrate a year of committed walking.

Such has been the success of the Walkability Project, established in August 2011 by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Sport Wales, that extra funding was granted last October, enabling its programme co-ordinator to work full-time.

The Authority's Project Co-ordinator Paul Casson said:

“An open group completed more than 40 walks at venues across the National Park, from the Preseli Hills in the North to Stackpole in the South, with a group from Shalom House using walking routes all over the county, overcoming difficulties involved for people with serious medical and mobility issues.”

Additional funding secured through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Fund has enabled transport for groups to different walking routes which has been an obstacle.



More information can be found at:

<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=67&NewsItem=1327>

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### **33. Rare Pembrokeshire fungus makes world most threatened list**

An extremely rare species of fungus, found in four sites in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, has recently been included in a list of the 100 most threatened species in the world.

The list, published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Zoological Society of London, was compiled by 8,000 scientists and identifies 100 of the most threatened animals, plants and fungi on the planet.

The willow blister (*Cryptomyces maximus*) fungus is a black fruit body with a yellow/orange border found growing on dead or dying willow twigs and has been recorded in only five sites across the world, four of which are located within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

The Authority's Ecologist Jane Hodges said: "This species has been known for about 200 years in the UK, although it has never been common. "

Prior to its first discovery in the St. Davids area in the mid 1980s there were only five UK records in the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century and it is categorised by the IUCN as critically endangered worldwide. This extremely rare species has been monitored since 2008 by members of the Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network, led by County Recorder David Harries, in liaison with the site owners, which includes the National Trust.

For more information about willow blister, please contact Jane Hodges on [janeh@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:janeh@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or call 01646 624833.

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### **34. Carew Castle repairs to benefit future generations**

The medieval doors clanged shut in Carew Castle last November with a busy schedule of winter works on this iconic 13<sup>th</sup> century structure. Work on the castle, which is managed by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, involved the repair of the Lesser Hall roof, windows and doors.

Carew Castle Manager Teresa Hogsflesh said: "The work completed in the first stage of this project has given us a flavour of the pleasure visitors will gain when this important historical asset is open to the public once again from Easter.

"The second stage of the project is the refurbishment of an existing building into a new visitor reception with public toilets, which has now commenced, with the final and third stage of works involving improvements to the car park."

Funding for the Carew Castle project is provided by the European Union, Cadw, Welsh Government and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. More information can be found here:

<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=67&NewsItem=1319>

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### **35. Volunteers valued in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

Recognising the crucial support of committed and enthusiastic volunteers in the National Parks was on the agenda at a conference held last autumn in Pembrokeshire.

The UK Association of National Park Authorities All Parks Volunteer Co-ordinators Meeting was hosted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority over two days. The event hosted delegates from English, Scottish and Welsh National Park Authorities as well as Europarc Atlantic Isles.

Discovery Team Leader Graham Peake, Volunteer Co-ordinator at the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, said: "The conference aimed to look at how Volunteer Co-ordinators worked across the National Park family and to recognise and develop best practice."

"National Parks benefit hugely from enthusiastic, skilled and committed volunteers who give unstinting support to work programmes and events in all weathers and across all terrains.

"They are often the eyes and ears of the National Park, alerting Rangers to trouble spots, and contribute a huge amount to protecting and promoting these special places we love."

More information can be found at:

<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=67&NewsItem=1313>

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## **Snowdonia National Park**

### **Snowdonia National Park Authority (compiled by Llinos Angharad)**

#### **36. Snowdonia's Search for Planning Director**

After nearly forty years of working in planning and local government, Snowdonia National Park Authority's Planning Director will retire this summer. Aled Sturkey has been responsible for planning at Snowdonia National Park since August 1996, but due to his retirement later this year, the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) is advertising for a new Planning Director.

SNPA provides a high quality planning service but people's expectations are increasing and new legislation will change the planning system in Wales. It is therefore a challenging period for SNPA at present, and the new Director will be ready to lead and skillfully guide the departments in the Planning directorate, responsible for policies and strategic plans, development control and compliance, as well

as cultural heritage. The successful candidate will be a Welsh speaker, an experienced manager and a qualified Planner.

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### **37. More People in Line with Snowdonia National Park Planning**

At the end of 2012, the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) announced that more people complied with its planning regulations during the year and its Compliance Service was continuing to improve. During the year, SNPA worked closely with people and agents trying to increase their understanding of the need for compliance, and it took less time to solve cases following the publishing of guidance to those reporting cases of alleged unauthorized development.

It was also reported that:

- Fewer compliance complaints were received (160 at the end of March 2012 compared to 184 in late March 2011); and
- During the summer, more cases were resolved within the target period of 12 weeks.

However, the Authority was forced to take four cases to the Magistrates Court for non-compliance, defendants were ordered to pay a total of £11,800.

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### **38. Snowdonia - Joining Two Villages**



*Llyn y Gadair, Rhyd-Ddu*

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders who currently wish to travel from Beddgelert to Rhyd-Ddu do so by following a mix of paths and the A4085 between Caernarfon and Beddgelert which is a winding and busy road. But this summer, it will be possible to travel along a 7km long and 2m wide path, from Rhyd-Ddu to Beddgelert. Once completed, the new Lôn Gwyrfai route will include and link sections of new public footpaths, sections of existing public footpaths which have been upgraded, and Forestry Commission tracks which have been modified.

55% of the project is funded by SNPA and the rest by the CAN (Communities and Nature) strategic project which is led and managed by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), and part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government. The route can be seen on the of the Authority's website, [www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/park-authority/newsroom/2013-01-21b](http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/park-authority/newsroom/2013-01-21b).

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### 39. Government Minister Visits Ogwen, Snowdonia

Work on improving service to visitors at the former site of the National Park's Warden Office in Ogwen began in early September and in November, the Welsh Government Environment Minister, John Griffiths AM, took advantage of the offer to learn more about the project and inspect the construction work.

The new centre will improve people's understanding and enjoyment of Cwm Idwal, Ogwen Valley and the surrounding area and will also attract a wider audience to take advantage of the various recreational and educational opportunities available in this part of Snowdonia.



*Welsh Government Environment Minister, John Griffiths AM with builder Arthur Jones and representatives from the National Trust, CCW together with SNPA Chief Executive, Aneurin Phillips and Chairman, Caerwyn Roberts.*

The development is led by the Cwm Idwal Partnership (an initiative which includes SNPA, CCW and the National Trust) and funded by the CAN strategic project (Communities and Nature) through CCW and part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

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### 40. Developments at Yr Ysgwrn

On 1 March 2012, Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA), the Welsh Government and the National Heritage Memorial Fund announced that they had secured Yr Ysgwrn, for the Nation. Yr Ysgwrn is a traditional Welsh farmhouse and Grade II\* listed building in Trawsfynydd, dating from the 1830s, and came to international recognition in 1917, as the home of the Welsh well-known poet, Hedd Wyn. He was killed during the Battle of Pilkem Ridge in July 1917 and posthumously awarded the National Eisteddfod Chair at Birkenhead, six weeks later. In the absence of its winner, the chair was draped in a



*Yr Ysgwrn*

black cloth and has been known ever since as The Black Chair. In November, plans to conserve and develop Yr Ysgwrn, into a museum and interpretation centre were given a major boost. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) gave SNPA the green light to progress plans for the Grade II\* listed farmhouse, farmland and the collections relating to Hedd Wyn with the award of first-round pass and a £149,700 development grant.

An integral aspect of the sustainable management of the land was to appoint a tenant and following a rigorous appointment process in September 2012, 23 year old Meilir Jarrett from Trawsfynydd was appointed as the new tenant for Yr Ysgwrn.



*Meilir Jarrett*

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South Downs Society (compiled by Richard Reed)

### **41. South Downs – Section 62 and the Growth & Infrastructure Bill**

The Society - mainly through its Policy Officer, Steve Ankers - has been regularly in touch with Campaign for National Parks over a number of issues, including Section 62 and the Growth and Infrastructure Bill. In the House of Lords the opposition to the controversial proposal to exempt the Secretary of State from his Section 62 duty in respect of telecommunications structures in National Parks has been supported by our President, Baroness Whitaker.

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### **42. Marine Conservation Zones – Beachy Head East & West**

Among the 108 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) proposed around the coast are four off the Sussex coast. The two that are of concern for the South Downs National Park are 'Beachy Head West' and 'Beachy Head East', both alongside the long stretch of chalk cliffs where the eastern end of the Park meets the sea. Publication of the Beachy Head East section has still to come but the Society has been examining the West section.

We are disappointed to find that its width is limited to 500m, consequently covering less than the Voluntary Marine Reserve that was marked out some years ago. The Society's comments to Defra will include a request for consideration to be given to extending the Zone to include the whole chalk shelf and the estuaries of the Rivers Ouse and Cuckmere.

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### **43. National Park Entry Signs in the South Downs**

When the Park became operational the Society suggested that signs should be placed beside the roads making the main entries to the Park. At the time the National Park Authority (NPA) felt it was not a priority but has now agreed that the time is ripe to consider this. Clearly good design will be vital as will the use of local materials, say flint in the Downland chalk areas and sandstone in the Weald. It is to be hoped that the NPA will have in mind some of the excellent boundary signs in other National Parks such as Dartmoor and Snowdonia. There is frequent complaint that the public is widely unaware of the Park and erection of suitable signs seems a highly cost-effective way of showing people that the Park exists and where its boundaries are.

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#### **44. Mosaic – Drinking Ginger in the South Downs**

The National Park Authority's (NPA's) Senior Management Team is supportive of an application for Major Partnership Funding to promote Mosaic in the Park. At present, however, they are not convinced that the employment of a Project Officer is necessary. The issues will be further discussed with Vanessa McClune of 'Drinking Ginger', whom those present at the National Park Societies' Conference in Falmer last September will remember for her exhilarating address to delegates.

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#### **45. Cultural Heritage – Songs of the South Downs, Design Awards and Literary Walks**

The Society has initiated action on the oft-neglected last purpose of National Parks. The Songs project – whose leaders entertained us at the Falmer Conference dinner – winds up this spring but it is hoped to continue it afterwards in some form.

The Society is sponsoring an award for 'The best new building in the National Park within Sussex'. This will be part of the annual award programme of the Sussex Heritage Trust, which works to encourage good design in building and refurbishment throughout the County. It may later be possible to link this with a parallel organization in Hampshire but for this year it must be confined to the Sussex portion (two thirds) of the Park.

Lastly, the Society is seeking to celebrate musicians, artists, and writers strongly associated with the area of the Park. In March there will be two short walks with literary themes – Edward Thomas in Hampshire and Hilaire Belloc in Sussex.

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#### **South Downs National Park Authority (compiled by Anit Chatrath)**

#### **46. New funding for South Downs communities' sustainable transport projects**

Businesses, parish councils, voluntary groups and not for profit organisations are being called to take advantage of a new fund for projects which encourage people to travel sustainably to and in the South Downs National Park.

The Sustainable Transport Solutions Fund (STSF) is a small grants scheme fund administered by the South Downs National Park Authority which offers grants from between £250 to £15,000 and up to 75 percent of a project. To be eligible projects must demonstrate an effective plan that encourages long-term changes in the way people travel and gets more people travelling by foot, bike and public transport to and within the National Park. Plans must also set out how projects will become financially independent in the longer-term.

Barry Lipscomb, the South Downs National Park Authority lead Member for Transport, said: "As the closest National Park to London in the most populous part of the country, it's vital that we enable more

people to use public and sustainable transport to get to and around the beautiful South Downs National Park.

"We have ambitious targets to help people travel more sustainably, reduce carbon emissions and do both these things in a way that boosts the local economy but we can't do this without the support of the people of the South Downs. We're calling for local communities to take up the challenge and bring us their own projects to inspire and promote the use of buses, trains, walking and cycling by both visitors and the people who live here."

Examples of the kinds of projects the fund can support include:

- Cycle parking and cycle-friendly street furniture;
- Small scale improvements to access for cyclists and walkers of all abilities;
- Guided walking and cycling experiences, self guided walks and cycle routes maps;
- Initiatives that provide access to a bicycle;
- Update of leaflets/maps for visitor attractions;
- Charging points for electric vehicles;
- Small grants of up to £500 to promote sustainable transport.

Any business, parish council, voluntary group, partnerships or other not for profit organisation can apply for funding if they believe their project will encourage people to travel sustainably to and within the National Park. Organisations that are outside but within 5km of the National Park boundary can also apply for funding if they demonstrate a clear link to these aims.

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#### **47. Free advice to woodland owners could boost local economy**

People who own woods across the South Downs National Park are being offered free advice on how to manage their land to support wildlife and the local economy. The South Downs Forestry Partnership, a new project led by the South Downs National Park Authority in partnership with Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and the Sussex Wildlife Trust, are also offering networking opportunities for woodland owners to learn from the experts.

With 38,000 hectares of woodland the South Downs National Park has a greater area of tree coverage than any other national park in England and Wales. This varies from ancient yew forests to modern plantations but nearly half of the woodland (45 per cent) is classed as ancient or semi natural woods meaning that the land has been under constant tree cover for more than 400 years.

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#### **48. South Downs count the stars**

The people of the South Downs National Park were asked to become 'citizen scientists' by taking part in Star Count 2013 – a cosmic census to help map light pollution across the country. Stargazers were

asked to count the number of stars they could see with the naked eye within the constellation of Orion as part of a national Star Count which took place from 8 to 16 February.

The Star Count is particularly important in the South Downs as it will provide vital evidence about the quality of the National Park's night skies and whether it might be possible to gain Dark Sky status in the future. Star Count 2013 was run by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) with support from the British Astronomical Association to measure the extent of light pollution across the country.

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## Yorkshire Dales National Park

### Yorkshire Dales Society (compiled by Colin Speakman)

#### 49. Cam High Road - the saga continues in the Yorkshire Dales

The Yorkshire Dales Society has joined forces with several other amenity groups in the Dales, to fight the major application to upgrade over three miles of the ancient Cam High Way through the heartland of the National Park into a wide, surfaced forestry road in order to extract timber from the 1970s monoculture forest below Cam Fell.

Sadly an officer's report to the Panning Committee supports the application by the so called 'Cam Forest Trust' which our research indicates is based at a firm of Leeds based accountants. The Society is asking for a delay in consideration of the application to allow time for further investigation into the project and possible alternative ways of dealing with the timber.

Cam High Road carries sections of two National Trails, the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway and also a long section of the popular Dales Way. The upgrading will require massive widening of the track to take heavy wagons and will be an eyesore visible for miles.

Ironically less than four years ago, the National Park Authority succeeded in getting a Road Traffic Regulation Order on this same road to restrict its use by 4x4 and trail bikes, but if the application is successful 44 tonne timber wagons will use the historic route. The timber will be taken to the nearby railhead at Ribbleshead for transport to a chip board processing plant in North Wales. If successful there is little doubt that timber from the far larger nearby (1,000 hectare) Greenfield Forest will soon be extracted by the same route.

The Society and its allies believe this major development contradicts not only fundamental purposes of the National Park, but also the Sandford principle in that major development should not occur unless it meets a national need which could be met from sources elsewhere. We believe there are far more ecologically sensitive ways of managing the woodland, using best practice from European National Parks, including the use of heavy horse haulage to minimise damage to local ecosystems.

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## **50. Yorkshire Dales Society - Business Members Increase in Number**

The Yorkshire Dales Society now has just around 40 Business Members and the number increases each week. Most are small businesses from within and around the Dales, and membership gives full 'corporate' voting rights (single vote) plus a mention on the website and in the magazine. But our Business Members are also a major source of new energy and expertise. No less than four of the Society's very active Council are now from our Business sector. This is helping the Society to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing financial environment, with a need to widen our traditional membership base and make more effective use of the social media.

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## **Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (compiled by Lesley Knevitt)**

### **51. Boundary Review of the Yorkshire Dales National Park**

The Inquiry into the proposed extension of the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks has now been announced.

The pre-inquiry meeting will take place on 7 March 2013 at the Castle Green Hotel, Kendal. The Inquiry itself will open on Tuesday 4 June 2013 at the same venue, and is expected to last for approximately four weeks. The Inquiry Inspector is Roy Foster, who was also the Inspector for the Inquiry at the New Forest. At this stage, most of the Inquiry is expected to be in the form of an 'informal' hearing with round table discussions led by the Inspector, rather than a more 'formal' adversarial inquiry with cross-examination of opposing witnesses. Further information about the Inquiry, and all documents, are available on the inquiry website [www.lakestodales.info](http://www.lakestodales.info).

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### **52. Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan**

Work on a new National Park Management Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park is in its final stages. As in 2007, the plan is being prepared by a partnership of local organisations, including environmental bodies, local authorities, and representatives of local businesses.

The Management Plan steering group is due to meet on 5 March to agree on the final contents of the Plan. This will draw together a year long process involving two public consultation exercises, which have provided a wide range of feedback drawing on a number of methods we haven't used before including a postcard campaign, photo competition, Facebook and Twitter.

Six drafting groups representing the range of organisations, communities and businesses that look after the National Park have been involved in drafting new objectives. The objectives are structured around an ambitious Vision statement that focuses on ensuring the National Park continues to thrive and be treasured for its stunning scenery, heritage and wildlife.

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### **53. Tour de France 2014 – Yorkshire for the first stages**

We are thrilled that the first stages of the Tour de France 2014 will take place in Yorkshire. The weekend of the 5 and 6 July will see the Tour speeding through many of the roads and lanes of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Indeed, the first of those days has the riders setting off from Leeds, entering the Park north of Skipton, travelling up the Wharfedale valley over Kidstones into Bishopdale, entering Wensleydale then travelling westwards to Hawes before turning north over Buttertubs into Swaledale and then heading east along the Swaledale valley before turning South through Leyburn and onto Harrogate via Masham and Ripon.

The second stage dips into the National Park as the riders come along the A59 from Harrogate to Bolton Abbey. You can see full details of the routes at <http://letour.yorkshire.com/>.

This is clearly a huge event and it is a monumental achievement to get it here. Full credit to Gary Verity and his staff at Welcome to Yorkshire for the vision and commitment they have shown. The Tour de France attracts massive crowds – both to watch the riders live and following the event on television so we will want to use every opportunity it affords us to promote the National Park, and ensure that our local communities benefit from it.

It is still early days on developing the plans both for delivering the event and maximising the benefits from it, and this will clearly be a major area of work over the next 18 months.

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## **Scotland**

### **Scottish Campaign for National Parks (compiled by Robert Maund)**

#### **54. Cairngorms National Park**

After nine months of deliberation, the outcome of the legal challenge to the Cairngorms Local Plan over the decision to support development proposals including the An Camas Mor proposal for 1,500 houses and associated development, was a comprehensive dismissal of the appeal by SCNP, the Cairngorms Campaign and the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group to have the adoption of the Plan overturned.

The 180 page opinion by Lord Glennie has, through his deliberations, avoided the whole reason for the Habitats Directive and given the appellants the opportunity to make an argument around fundamental principles and appeal to higher authority. The appellants Senior Counsel has described Lord Glennie's judgement of the case as 'irrational' and ultimately the case may get to the European Commission and the European Court of Justice.

Jane Hope, the CEO of the Cairngorms National Park Authority since it was created, retires shortly. We wish her a long, healthy and happy retirement and thank her for always finding the time to meet with us and for her patience and unfailing courtesy. Her successor, Grant Moir, has been appointed and comes from the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority.

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#### **55. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park**

The Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs has been making great efforts in recent months to secure a footpath across the south side of the Loch Lomond where some changes in land ownership have presented opportunities. There is some vociferous opposition from one local community who fear intrusion by unwelcome visitors. If the plan cannot be implemented, it could mean that the link round the south side of the loch with its magnificent views will be lost and visitors will be confined to walking along hazardous roads.

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#### **56. A National Parks Strategy for Scotland**

The report SCNP has prepared in partnership with the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) has been completed and will be launched in early April. We hope to assist communities in areas with national park potential to establish local groups to pursue their cause with government. It may also be of assistance to government in honouring a commitment to more national parks contained in their last election manifesto.

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#### **57. Scotland's new Environment Minister**

Mr Paul Wheelhouse MSP was appointed as the new Minister for the Environment in the last re-shuffle, the eighth person to have held the post in the last 9 years. We hope to meet with him in the not too distant future as we have with his predecessors.

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## **Wales**

### **Countryside Council for Wales**

#### **58. Countryside Council for Wales to be abolished on 31 March 2013**

After 22 years the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), statutory advisor on landscape and the environment in Wales will be abolished. As from 1 April 2013 a new single environmental body for Wales will be established which covers most of the functions, powers and duties of CCW, Forestry

Commission for Wales and Environment Agency Wales. Welsh Government believes that this will save £158 million over ten years.

To date a new Chairman - Prof Peter Matthews and CX - Dr Emyr Roberts and the Executive Team have been appointed, along with a new Board. Natural Resources Wales will be one of the largest public sector bodies in Wales employing some 1,800 staff in locations across Wales to cover the breadth of the remit, which ranges from flood protection, forestry operations to nature conservation. It is anticipated that NRW will continue to work closely with Campaign for National Parks, Natural England and the National Parks on areas of mutual interest.

For more information, please contact: Carole Rothwell, Team Leader - Landscape Advice Team  
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