



National Trails UK

Member Newsletter

Issue 7 July 2025

Schools might be out, but there's no rest for NTUK!

Having bid farewell to Laura in June, I'm delighted to welcome Rob Coates to the team. As our Fundraising and Development Manager, Rob, pictured on the right, will be working closely with the rest of the team, the Board, and our members to build on Laura's excellent work, and further develop both fundraising and income generations for NTUK. He'll also be offering support to the National Trails, and running the fundraising Special Interest Groups.

We're also in the middle of a recruitment campaign for a Senior Communications Officer. I was blown away by the quality of the 150 applications we received, and it was hard work to shortlist for interviews. I'm confident that we'll appoint someone who can bring great communications skills to NTUK, and round out the team.



Policy corner

APPG for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature

Many thanks to everyone who fed back on the NTUK response to the call for evidence from the new All Party Parliamentary Group for Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature. This new All Party Parliamentary Group has been set up by members of the Outdoors for ALL coalition, of which NTUK is a member. While APPGs have no formal role in Parliament, they are a useful tool for advocacy, we'll be making sure that National Trails are well represented.

The call for evidence asked for policy and legislation which would increase people's access to green and blue spaces. While we did submit policy and legislation suggestions, including a statutory purpose for National Trails, better protection in planning, and tighter restrictions for recreational motor vehicle use, we also emphasised that the biggest impact would be from sustained, increased funding.

Expanding the role of the private sector in nature recovery: call for evidence

NTUK will also be submitting a response to the DEFRA call for evidence on private finance in nature recovery. Our response will suggest ways in which private finance might work for National Trails, while underscoring that in order for National Trails to have the capacity to engage with the private sector, they must first have sustained government funding for NTOs, maintenance and repair.

Government Spending Review

At the end of 2024, Government had an open call for submissions as they developed the Government spending for 2025/26. NTUK compiled a submission, [which you can read on our website](#), making the case for an increase in National Trails funding. On 11th June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the spending review to Parliament.

While overall, spending is increasing, in DEFRA the budget has slightly decreased. As with many other departments, revenue funding is decreasing and capital funding is increasing. NTUK will continue to call for proper revenue investment in National Trails, while also working with our members to make sure that National Trails are in the best position to make the most of capital funding.

There are some helpful indicators for National Trails in England. Firstly, the Treasury has reviewed their Green Book, guidance issued by HM Treasury on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects, and concluded that it needs to be revised to put more emphasis on place-based objectives. It has recommended that the Treasury work with MHCLG, Department for Transport (DfT) and local government to introduce place-based business cases. This is good for National Trails, as they are significant in developing people's pride of place and community.

Secondly, is set to receive an additional £3.4billion grant funding per year by 2028-29, with core spending power growing by 3.1% annually in real terms.



For Wales and Scotland, Government announced are receiving an additional £5.7 billion per year on average through the operation of the Barnett formula, with £4.8 billion resource between 2026-27 and 2028-29 and £0.9 billion capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30, on top of their combined annual baseline of over £85 billion to deliver on their priorities such as the NHS, education, transport and housing.

The budget for NatureScot has increased for the next year, from £65.563million in 2024 to £68.153 million for 2025. You can read their full business plan for this year by [clicking here](#).

As the Welsh National Trails will be aware, Natural Resources Wales has been working through a restructure in line with their 2024/25 business plan. While they have had an increased budget for this financial year, it is not year clear how this might impact National Trails. You can read more about this in the [report of NRW's annual scrutiny](#).

Protected Landscapes Outcomes and Targets Framework and EIP update published

Earlier this month, DEFRA published the first [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework \(PLTOF\) Progress Report](#). The report comes alongside the [Environmental Improvement Plan Annual Progress Report](#) and a joint [Defra/DESNZ policy paper on Actions to Jointly Address Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss in England](#).

It was good to see in the PLTOF progress report recognition of the role that National Trails can play in relation to Goal 10 of the EIP, Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment. It was also great to see recognition for North Downs Way 'Putting Down Routes' project, which was chosen as a case study of how National Trails are proactively getting more different people in to nature via the National Trail.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies

Submit a response to your Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) consultation. The following are currently open and closing by:

Dorset – 30th July (South West Coast Path (170 km) and King Charles III England Coast Path (212 km))

Lancashire - 3rd August (Pennine Bridleway (73 km), ECP (190 km))

North Yorkshire and York - 11th August (Pennine Way (104 km), Pennine Bridleway (72 km), Cleveland Way (140 km), Yorkshire Wolds Way (59 km), ECP (82 km), Coast to Coast (177km))

With the following soon to be released for consultation:

- Gloucestershire – Cotswolds Way (124 km), Offa's Dyke Path (30 km), Thames Path (16 km)
- Greater London - Thames Path (104 km), ECP (21 km)
- Hertfordshire - Ridgeway (8km)
- Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin – Offa's Dyke Path (45 km)
- Somerset - South West Coast Path (72 km), ECP (134 km)
- Surrey – North Downs Way (74 km), Thames Path (28 km)

If you don't have time, keep an eye out for an email from Hannah (Nature Recovery Programme Manager) to review, input into and/or copy her draft response.

Not sure what LNRSs are and how they relate to National Trails and coastal margin? Check out our recent blog post.

Capital spending seminar - recording available

Many thanks to Katy Owen, Christine Pope, and all the NTUK members to attended the rearrange capital spending seminar on Monday 21st July. We had lots of people in the meeting say how useful it was to hear from other about how they intend to make the most of the DEFRA Access for All funding, and hear from Katy how the Norfolk Coast Path Team have used capital funding to build one of their biggest projects, the 2km boardwalk at Branchaster.

For those of you who were unable to make the meeting, it was recorded.

Please email Polly to receive the link. , polly@nationaltails.uk

Women's Leadership in Protected Landscapes Network

After two online events last year, the third Women's Leadership in Protected Landscapes Network panel event will take place on 19th September, 11 - 13.00.

While the full programme will be released in August, already confirmed speakers include Dame Clare Moriarty, CEO Citizens Advice, former DEFRA Permanent Secretary and 3 years Chair of South Downs National Park Partnership Board; Lizzie Glithero-West CEO of Heritage Alliance; a curated panel from National Landscapes Association and Simone Lowthe-Thomas Director for Nature and Climate at Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

Hosted as ever by Ali Barnes CEO of New Forest National Park and Chaired by Anita Eade Director at WWT.

As before the event is open to anybody to attend. A focus on women's leadership is important for everyone.

To register for a free ticket, and full information, please [see the Eventbrite linked here.](#)



Protected Landscape Partnership Corner

NTUK Test & Trial Launch - England

Do you have a great idea for delivering outcomes for people and nature along your National Trail?

National Trails UK, with funding from the Protected Landscapes Partnership, is excited to launch its new and improved 2025-26 Test & Trial fund. This grant provides flexible criteria with a simple application process to deliver innovative people and nature projects. You do not need to be a National Trail Officer (NTO) to apply, but we do require that NTOs are engaged in your project development and delivery.

The funding pot, totalling £70,000, is split equally between two programmes:

1. Coastal Wildbelt: a national initiative whose vision is to see a coast where nature thrives and communities flourish—where people feel connected, the landscape is celebrated, and anyone can enjoy its beauty, culture, and opportunities.

2. National Trails Nature Recovery Programme: is supporting National Trails to become nature-rich corridors that connect people to nature. This funding is for capital works, with a maximum of £10,000 per application. Funding can only be used for projects in England and cannot make up the trail partnerships 25% match funding.

You can apply to the Coastal Wildbelt pot for all project proposals located on the English coastline.



Our Nature Recovery Programme pot is available to all other English National Trails/sections of trails (where delivery is not on the coast).

Applications are open now, with no fixed deadline. We will be reviewing applications on a rolling, first come first served basis. We will update the website when these pots are closed.

Should you wish to apply but are concerned with capacity, please reach out to the relevant fund manager below to see how we can best support you.

All projects must be delivered by 31st March 2026.

For more information and how to apply, check out our website [HERE](#).

For any further questions please contact:
Coastal Wildbelt fund – contact Kate Jury on kate@nationaltrails.uk
Nature Recovery Programme fund – contact Hannah Brightley on hannah@nationaltrails.uk

Working With National Trails to Improve Access to Data & Evidence

Thank you to everyone who joined the 'Protected Landscapes Partnership new tools/data' workshop on 24th April that introduced the Evidence Finder Tool. If you missed it, you can catch up on the recording [HERE](#).

The Evidence Finder Tool brings together nationally available evidence, including on habitats, species, landscapes, tourism, and EDI - helping enable nature recovery and make protected landscapes accessible and welcoming to all. We hope this tool will help you to find the data and evidence you need to support your important work. The session with National Trail Officers & wider partners provided incredibly useful feedback, which we've been acting on.

Key suggestions included clearer guidance on how to navigate the tool, additional support for non-GIS users, and the inclusion of several additional datasets.

In response, we've:

- Expanded the Introduction page with clearer explanations
- Added a flowchart to help non-GIS users find relevant and useful evidence tools
- Included additional datasets for linear networks, like Buglife B-Lines.

You can explore the updated version of the Evidence Finder Tool [HERE](#). Please download the tool as an Excel file to your computer to allow full functionality. We're continuing to build on the tool, so please share how you're using it. Your [feedback](#) is really helpful.

What's next?

After the success of the workshop, we plan to work with one National Trail to support their data needs in depth - this will help inform how the Protected Landscapes Partnership can further support your data and evidence needs. If you're interested in being that trail, please contact Leo (below) or Hannah (hannah@nationaltrails.uk) for more information.

Want to hear more?

[Subscribe](#) to the Data Download – the quarterly Data & Evidence PLP newsletter, with updates, inspiring stories, and practical updates on data and evidence in protected landscapes.

Leo Fisher – Senior Evidence Coordinator, PLP
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Dates for your Diary

NTUK Webinar: Responsible Dog Ownership on National Trails – 25 September 10:30-12

Please join us for an exciting agenda that will share tools, resources, and practical case studies of working with dog owners that can be replicated across the National Trails. If you haven't yet received the invite, please contact hannah@nationaltrails.uk



Coast Path Forum

Wednesday 10th September 2pm – 3:15pm

Email Helen Terry, Chair of the Coast Path Forum should you not be on the list and want to get involved at helen.terry@norfolk.gov.uk



National Trails Nature Recovery Special Interest Group – field trips September/October - TBC

For our 3rd SIG of the year, we will be meeting in person across two field trips to share lessons learned and discuss how we can support more nature recovery work along National Trails going forward.

1) Delivering for heritage & nature along Hadrian's Wall Path Mid-October – TBC

Learn from Gary Pickles, Hadrian's Wall Path Ranger, the wider team, and partners about how day to day changes in maintenance can enable trail users to continue to experience the World Heritage Site and biodiversity for generations to come.

2) Grassland management for people & nature along The Ridgeway TBC – September/October

This is open to everyone, but in the event we have an influx of attendees, priority will be given to those who attend the SIG and National Trail Officers.

If you would like to attend and/or receive more information about either/both these field trips, please contact hannah@nationaltrails.uk

