



National Trails UK

Member Newsletter

Issue 11 November 2025

November has been a busy and exciting month across our Trails family!

From celebrating 20 years of Scotland's Outdoor Access Code, to seeing our National Trails recognised in more Local Nature Recovery Strategies, it's clear the work we do together really makes a difference. We've also had some fantastic funding wins, including support from the Garfield Weston Foundation. And our Coastal Wildbelt programme continues to raise the profile of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

There's lots to catch up on, from inspiring stories along the Ridgeway to new ways you can get involved in NTUK's Nature Recovery work.

Policy corner

What Natural England's new strategy means for National Trails

Natural England has published its new five-year strategy, and there's plenty in it that affects our National Trails. Find out what the strategy means for access, health, and nature along our Trails in our latest [blog](#).

Welsh Government draft budget: Small increases amid political uncertainty

Ahead of a vote on their budget in January, Welsh Government published their draft budget earlier this month. The draft plans would give an average increase of 2% across department spending, however there are concerns that this would barely meet inflation and increases in public sector pay. As Welsh Labour are two seats short of a majority, they will have to reach an agreement with at least two opposition members. If they fail to strike a deal, the budget will pass at 75% of this year's level. [Read more](#)

POLICY WATCH: updates to GOV.UK coastal margin guidance

Those eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that the pages on access land and the coastal margin on GOV.UK have been updated. So far, it appears mainly to add sections on dog control, but we will continue to keep an eye out for further changes. [Read More](#).

Celebrating active partnerships

NTUK's Chief Executive, Polly Martin represented National Trails UK at the 90th anniversary of the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) celebrations at St James's Palace (closest National Trail – Thames Path). It was fantastic to come together with other sports and recreation colleagues and celebrate the achievements of the SRA of which NTUK is a member.

Spotlight on Scotland's Access Rights

It was great to see so many of our Scottish Long Distance Routes, NatureScot and wider colleagues at the Scottish Outdoor Access Network (SOAN)'s annual conference on 13th November in Perth. The conference celebrated 20 years of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), reflecting on the past and looking at future opportunities and challenges.

Presentations covered a broad range of perspectives on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code; from an international perspective from Sweden, to those beyond the border in Wales and England to people in Scotland who have been working long enough to remember what things were like before its fruition.

The afternoon was comprised of a series of interactive workshops including 'Hacks for access authorities', 'Newbies to the outdoor access profession', 'SOAC promotion heading to 2045' and 'A review of the Access Authority monitoring survey findings'.

At a time of celebrating 20 years of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, giving Scotland some of the best access rights in the world, it was equally recognised we cannot be complacent when there is no ring-fenced funding for access, let alone for the four designated Long Distance Routes across Scotland (West Highland Way, Southern Upland Way, Great Glen Way and Speyside Way). And whilst the Right to Responsible Access in Scotland brings joy to so many, NTUK will still advocate that well maintained, way marked, accessible paths are still required to ensure the Scottish outdoors is for everyone.

Thank you to all the SOAN organisers and presenters, who volunteered their time and we look forward to next year's event! Find out more about SOAN [HERE](#).



Local Nature Recovery Strategies

We've had some fantastic wins getting National Trails recognised in several Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRs) recently, so let's keep up the momentum!

Current consultation deadlines are:

- [East Sussex and Brighton & Hove](#) - 26th November (South Downs Way (63km), ECP (115km))
- [West Sussex](#) - 26th November (South Downs Way (72km), ECP (129km))

With the remaining 6 (of 38!) that National Trails intersect still to come: Country Durham, South of Tyne and Wear, Herefordshire, Greater Lincolnshire, North of Tyne and Tees Valley

Short on time? Hannah (NTUK Nature Recovery Programme Manager) will be in touch by email, with draft responses you can review, contribute to, or use directly.

Wondering what LNRs are and why they matter for National Trails and coastal margins? [Check out our blog](#).

Trails in Parliament

Raising the profile of National Trails in Parliament is key to influencing funding and decision making.

In September, Henley and Thame MP Freddie van Mierlo highlighted the benefits of the Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails in a Westminster Hall debate, made possible thanks to timely briefings on access and funding, by the NTUK team.

Our MPs juggle many priorities, but support like this ensures we can keep pushing for progress on more funding for the National Trails.

by Wendy Tobitt
Chair of the Thames Path



Stories from our Trails

We love celebrating the amazing work happening along our National Trails, from volunteers and rangers to local communities and partners, it's everyone who helps make our Trails the special places they are.

For our next newsletter in December, we'd love to hear your stories. Please send your suggestions to our Senior Communications Manager Kate: Katec@Nationaltrails.uk by 15 December.

Here's a small selection of what's been happening across our Trails this month.

Taking photos, gaining new perspectives

What happens when you take nearly 400 primary school children and Girl Guides to an ancient trail, show them how to use a camera and then let them loose to capture what they see? Patron of the Ridgeway National Trail, Mary Ann Ochota shares the inspiring results in [Taking photos, gaining new perspectives](#).

Find out more about what's been happening along the Ridgeway [HERE](#).



Final flagstone paves the way for National Trail status for the Coast to Coast Path

Huge congratulations to everyone involved in upgrading the Coast to Coast Path! Achieving National Trail standards is no easy feat, but it's so worth it to ensure the trail is accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for all. What an incredible milestone for the Yorkshire Dales Rangers and wider trail community! Watch the videos [HERE](#).



45 Year milestone

Last month the West Highland Way celebrated its 45th anniversary. The milestone also saw the launch of the West Highland Way Trust, a dedicated charity set up to care for and protect Scotland's most loved long-distance route. Take a moment to explore the inspiring stories and memories shared by those who've journeyed along the trail over the decades [HERE](#).



Get involved: Shape the future of our Trails

From rangers and volunteers to partners across the wider Trails family, there are lots of ways to get involved, share your ideas and expertise, and help shape NTUK's work. From influencing decisions, improving the Trails, or joining exciting projects, you can make a real difference.

Measuring Nature's Impact

As the saying goes, 'You can't manage what you don't measure'. And how can we care for National Trails as corridors for people *and* nature, if we don't fully understand the habitats they pass through? That's why our Nature Recovery Programme, funded by the Protected Landscapes Partnership, launched a tender to develop a standardised approach for surveying habitats across all National Trails. [Find out more.](#)

In early November our expert panel of Hannah Brightley, NTUK Nature Recovery Programme Manager, Andy Gattiker, NTUK Co-Chair and PLP Evidence Lead, Leo Fisher, awarded the contract to Plantlife.

We're now looking for National Trail staff for Plantlife to interview, to ensure this 'a la carte menu' of survey options is fit for purpose across the membership.

Rough time commitment can range from a one hour Teams call in December, to reviewing draft deliverables in early February, to joining a pilot next summer (pending funding). Interested? Email hannah@nationaltrails.uk by **Friday 4th December** to get involved.



Photo credit: Andrew Carter

Protected Landscapes Partnership (PLP) Corner

National Trails Test and Trial: 10 projects approved for funding

The National Trails Test and Trial funding has now been allocated, and we are excited to see the 10 projects across England's National Trails coming to life between now and the end of March.

A reminder, that the Test and Trial fund was a £70,000 fund jointly set up by our two PLP funded programmes; Coastal Wildbelt and the Nature Recovery Programme. It aims to support innovative projects delivering outcomes for people and nature along our National Trails, without them being hindered by long administrative grant processes.

[Read more](#) in our latest blog from Hannah, NTUK Nature Recovery Programme. And keep an eye out as we showcase the 10 projects over the next 4 months!

UNESCO East Coast Flyway Success

This month's win, for including the King Charles III England Coast Path and margin, goes to the preliminary assessment application for a new UNESCO World Heritage site across the East Coast of England - the East Coast Flyway!

Prior to engaging with Coastal Wildbelt, the application hadn't referenced the National Trail. Following discussions we were able to include the following statement and provide supporting evidence around King Charles III England Coast Path and coastal margin:

“Access to the ECF is important, with 3.7 million people living within 5km of the 1,435km of King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail and 101,4000ha of its coastal margin included within the site area.”

Moving forward we've been invited to sit on their Steering Committee. Interested to find out more? Read about the proposed site [HERE](#), and reach out to kate@nationaltrails.uk if you'd like to be involved.

Sign up to the Coastal Wildbelt Newsletter

For Coastal Wildbelt news and ways to get involved, sign up to our dedicated newsletter [HERE](#).

Funding Successes

Garfield Weston Foundation supports National Trails UK

We're delighted to share that the Garfield Weston Foundation has awarded National Trails UK £40,000 to help champion and strengthen the UK's 20 National Trails.

This generous support will allow us to continue enhancing the Trails for everyone to enjoy, connecting people, nature, and communities.



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

A Green Friday boost for National Trails

This Green Friday, Harvey Maps are supporting National Trails UK!

Between 26 November and 1 December, they're donating a percentage of all their online sales to NTUK to help us protect and promote the UK's 20 iconic National Trails.

Read [MORE](#).



Dates for your Diary



National Trail Officer Autumn Meeting

Wednesday 26th November 10:00-12:00 (online)

Contact: helen.terry@norfolk.gov.uk



National Trails Nature Recovery Special Interest Group

Last of 2025!

Wednesday 10th December 10:00-11:30am (online)

Contact: hannah@nationaltrails.uk



National Trails UK Coast Path Forum Meeting

Last of 2025!

Wednesday 3rd December 14:00-15:15 (online)

Contact Helen Terry, Chair of NTUK Coast Path Forum on
helen.terry@norfolk.gov.uk



Recreation in Nature Conference

Hosted by RSPB

Tuesday 3rd February 2025, 0900-16:30 (online)

Sign up to attend or present [HERE](#).