



National Trails UK

Member Newsletter

Issue 12 December 2025

It's the **final newsletter of 2025** and hasn't the year flown by! It's been a bumper year for NTUK and I'm so proud of what we have achieved alongside our amazing members. You can read more about our 2025 highlights in our latest blog [HERE](#).

We've still got plenty on our plates before wrapping up, as I'm sure you all have too. We've been hard at work on the next **NTUK Summit**. While we'd previously told you this would be in June, we're now potentially looking at a September date. We'll let you know as soon as the date and location are confirmed. Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to be launching a **Scottish Manifesto** in January, and to be continuing our work to strengthen, advocate and inspire on behalf of all the UK's National Trails.

In case you're looking to get in touch with any of the National Trails UK team, please be aware that the 'office' is closed between Christmas and New Year.

From Polly and the rest of the NTUK team, wishing you all a great Festive Break when you get there and see you in 2026!



What the Autumn Budget means for National Trails

This year's Autumn Budget may not have mentioned National Trails by name, but as our Chief Executive Polly Martin explains, its ripple-effects will be felt across funding, devolution, tourism, and the future role of our paths. Read her reflections to discover how the new growth agenda, local-authority changes and shifting government priorities could shape investment, partnerships and opportunities for every Trail.

[Learn more](#)

What the Environmental Improvement Plan signals

Wondering what the EIP means for our National Trails? Polly has also done a quick explainer of the pros and cons, the gaps and what's next. **[Read more](#)**

New planning consultation

On 16th December, the Government published a consultation on their proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. These changes include policies on data centres and onsite energy generation, reforming site thresholds, policies on 'grey belt' land, and changes to include the statutory duty on public bodies to seek to further the aims of National Parks and National Landscapes. The deadline for responses is 10 March, and we'll be in touch with members in the New Year to draft NTUK's response. **[Read the full consultation here.](#)**



West Highland Way, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park

Stories from our Trails

Across the country, our National Trails are brought to life by the people who care for them - from dedicated volunteers and rangers to passionate local communities and partners. Their efforts make each National Trail unique.

Here's a snapshot of some of the latest news and inspiring work that's taken place on our National Trails this month.

Behind the scenes on Hadrian's Wall Path

From repairing worn paths to safeguarding archaeology on a UNESCO World Heritage Site, National Trail Ranger Gary Pickles shows how **Hadrian's Wall Path** is far more than a walk from A to B.

Discover the behind-the-scenes work that protects the trail, the monument and the landscape, while supporting volunteers, communities, and wellbeing. [Read more](#)



630 miles, one powerful impact

How does the **South West Coast Path** benefit nature, people and coastal communities?

This Impact Report reveals the economic, health-and-wellbeing, conservation and access benefits that show why this National Trail matters now more than ever. [Read more](#)



The best new thing to do in the world in 2026?

Heads up: Time Out has just named the upcoming **King Charles III England Coast Path** one of the world's most exciting new experiences for 2026.

A huge win for our National Trails network and a reminder of the potential ahead. [Read more](#)



Making a splash for wildlife

Three cheers to the **South Downs Way National Trail**! A historic dew pond on the trail has been brought back to life, turning a once dry spot into a year-round oasis.

Scrub and native fruit trees provide shelter and food, while cosy hibernacula give newts, toads and other wildlife a safe winter home. It won't be long before the pond becomes a haven for all kinds of species from red-listed farmland birds to great crested newts. Read more on the National Trails Nature Corridors Map [HERE](#).



Resources for more inclusive National Trails

Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility are vital to the future of our National Trails and the wider environment sector. Here's a selection of resources to inform, inspire and guide positive change.

Changing Nature: Animated conversations on inclusion

Looking to spark discussions around diversity and inclusion?

Explore this series of eight animations that use creative storytelling designed to support reflection and learning across the environmental sector.

[Watch now](#)



Changing Nature

Nature visuals

Diversity in images of England's green and natural spaces

December 2021
Natural England Commissioned Report NEOR375

www.gov.uk/natural-england

NATURAL
ENGLAND

Who do we see in nature?

Looking for guidance on how to make our National Trails more inclusive?

This report from Natural England provides clear recommendations to ensure everyone feels welcome.

[Read the report](#)

Accessible fonts for everyone

Discover a free font designed to be highly accessible for people with visual impairments, suitable for both print and digital content.

[Download the font](#)

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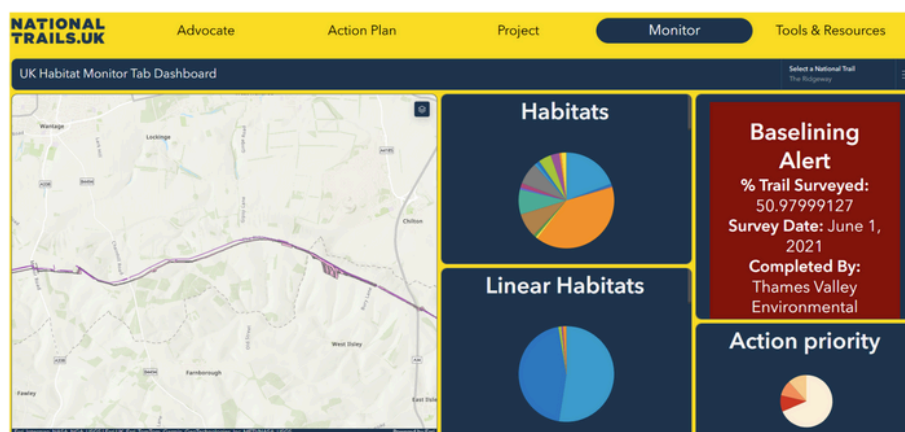
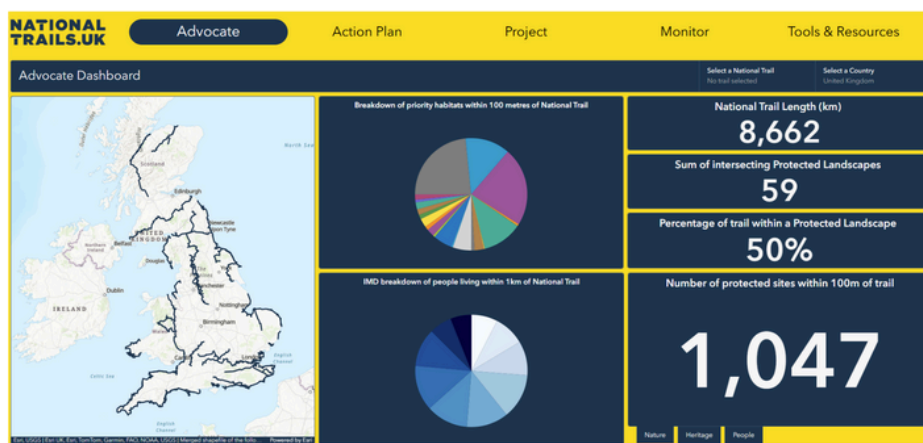
Protected Landscapes Partnership (PLP) Corner

Coastal Wildbelt: A once-in-a-generation opportunity for England's coast

Imagine transforming the entire coastal margin - dunes, saltmarshes, cliffs, beaches - into a living, connected “wildbelt” that benefits people and nature. Our new blog explains how the Coastal Wildbelt project could deliver just that: a landscape-scale opportunity to enhance biodiversity, climate resilience and public access along England's coast. Learn why this matters now, and how it could shape the future of our coastal Trails. [Discover more](#)

Driving Nature Recovery with a new Nature Hub

Discover how the National Trails Nature Hub is transforming nature recovery along all 20 UK Trails. This innovative GIS-powered tool will give trail officers and NTUK staff instant access to UK-wide habitat data, helping track impact, plan restoration, and showcase measurable results. [Find out more.](#)



Have your say

Now that the National Trails Nature Hub is live in a test version, we're inviting you to help shape its future. In early February, you can test the tool and feedback in just 1-2 hours, helping us refine its features before the official launch.

The Nature Hub is a proof of concept that could extend beyond nature recovery, so we're particularly interested in how it might support your wider work. If you'd like to take part, please contact hannah@nationaltrails.uk by **30 January 2026**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies

A reminder to submit your responses to your Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) consultation. Current deadlines are:

- North of Tyne – 9th January - Pennine Way (107km), Hadrian's Wall Path (84km), KCIIECP (178km)
- County Durham – 11th January – Pennine Way (59km), KCIIECP 23km
- South of Tyne and Wear – 18th January – KCIIECP (27km)

With the following (final ones!) still to open for consultation:

- Herefordshire – Offa's Dyke Path (22km)
- Greater Lincolnshire – KCIIECP (213km)
- Tees Valley – Cleveland Way (31km), KCIIECP (75km)

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

Last National Trails Nature Recovery SIG of 2025

Another year gone and another year of three fantastic special interest groups. Thank you to all those who attended our last SIG of the year on Wednesday 10th December. And thank you to our speakers:

- Ben Bessant from the South Downs Way for jointly presenting with Hannah on learnings from their recent field trip to the [Steps for Life Project](#) in Spain
- Dave Alcorn, from [The Conservation Volunteers](#) who shared their transformational partnership project upskilling dedicated trainees in wildlife conservation along the [John Muir Way](#) to bridge the green skills shortage and address the skills gap in the region.

Also fantastic to see the space used to bring shared expertise to address tricky questions when it comes to delivering outcomes for people and nature along the network.

If you would like access to the recording or be part of our SIG group, please contact hannah@nationaltrails.uk

Keep your eyes peeled for a series of field trips in Spring/Summer 2026!



Dates for your Diary

NTUK Talks series

Over the past three months, our Coast Path Forum talks have brought members managing coastal trails together to explore shared challenges and sticky issues. We received great feedback from attendees. We also heard that similar discussions would be valuable across other National Trails. We've listened to your feedback.

In response, we're expanding the NTUK Talks series throughout 2026. These 1-hour lunchtime sessions (mostly between 12-1pm) are for Officers only, providing a space to connect, share ideas and explore opportunities. While not formally facilitated by NTUK, they offer a chance to build community and inspire future events and resources.

The following topics were raised at the December 2025 Coast Path Forum. If you're interested in attending any of the events, or have suggestions for future NTUK Talks discussions, get in touch with events@nationaltrails.uk

Disappearing beach access

Tuesday 20th January - 12-1pm



Charging for temporary closures on National Trails

Tuesday 11th Feb - 12-1pm



Accessibility on coastal National Trails that travel through urban areas

Tuesday 24 Feb – 12 – 1pm,



Mental health and suicide prevention on National Trails

Tuesday 10th March – 12 – 1pm



Recreation in Nature Conference

Hosted by RSPB

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

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

