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## Executive Summary

The Authority's communication strategy is to be as transparent and open as possible, taking all possible opportunities both to explain the work of the Authority including publicising its achievements and goals and also to understand and respond to the views of key stakeholders, residents and visitors.

If the strategy is successful, by the end of the 2016 to 2021 period local residents will be confident that the Authority is delivering its work effectively and transparently. There will be greater understanding of the Authority's objectives. There will be enthusiasm to engage with the Authority as partners. The special qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park will achieve even greater recognition from national and international audiences.

The strategy recognises a difference in the interests of local and national/international audiences. Local audiences require information the performance of the Authority in relation to its statutory duties for example about planning applications and funding initiatives. They are also interested in information about recreational activity in the Park. The wider public – nationally and internationally – are more exclusively interested in information about the National Park as a destination to visit and what to do there. They are also interested in stories relating to the Authority's position as a conservation body – for example about new discoveries or information about rare fauna and flora.

It is important that the Authority engages with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to deliver its key messages and also to ensure that officers and Ministers understand the role the Authority can play in supporting their objectives.

Social media has become a dominant force in the Communication arena particularly in marketing and this strategy examines how the Authority relates to social media and describes what steps it needs to take to continue to engage effectively – ie identifying appropriate channels to reach its target audiences and changing these as necessary, finding new ways to use existing technology such as Webcasting or online games such as Minecraft.

The Authority encourages commercial filming and photography and the Communications Team works closely with the Wardens to maximise the opportunities for filming as a source of revenue and PR for the Park while ensuring that the landscape is protected appropriately.

The Communications team oversee the Authority's corporate bank of photography, branding and design work which is now delivered through a framework agreement run by the Communications Manager. The National Park Authority provides a service to all residents and visitors and it is important that this is reflected in photography and subject matter in the National Park's printed and online presence. The differing needs of the populations which the Authority serves should be taken account of when planning, designing and distributing material both printed and online. Photography should include representations of different ethnicities, ages, genders and abilities. Information should use language which is easy to understand and avoid acronyms.

Communicating about the work of this Authority is part of the day to day job of every member of staff and of every Member of the Authority and to some extent a responsibility for our volunteers. This strategy is intended to offer a strategic overview of where the Authority should concentrate its resources, of areas where the Authority needs to undertake more work to ensure it is reaching its full potential and to offer an insight into how the communications team is working to deliver the Authority's communications goals for the coming five years.

## **I. Context**

This strategy updates the first one produced for the Authority in 2004 and it addresses how the Authority can best communicate during the next five year period 2016-2021.

### **I.1 2004 - 2009**

The original strategy covered the period 2004-2009 and it centred on engaging staff and members in working with the Authority's Communications team to promote the work of the Authority through the press, the website and from engagement with the general public. The emphasis was on corporate discipline in setting up and then encouraging staff to follow protocols when planning and delivering projects which included a communications goal.

The new strategy builds on the work achieved under this original strategy. Broadly most staff and members now understand and follow the protocols, it is widely understood that there is a team who look after the website, write press releases and take care of the social media for the Authority. Staff are regularly invited to contribute to these channels. There is an ongoing need to emphasise the protocol requiring staff and members to approach the Communications team before speaking to members of the press as this protects the individual and the Authority.

Since the publication of the original strategy social media has become a dominant force in the Communication arena particularly in marketing and how the Authority relates to social media is an important element of the new strategy.

### **I.2 Hiatus**

There has been a hiatus since the end of the last strategy and the start of this one. Back in 2006-8 some planning decisions previously made by the Authority were publicly overturned and much criticism was levelled at the Authority and particularly at the planning service

The visiting public on the other hand have been less concerned by these issues – statistics for visitor numbers indicate that the weather has the greatest impact on visitor numbers <sup>1</sup> to the Park. Nationally and internationally there is a generally positive view of the National Parks as a brand and an enthusiasm for the aims of the organisation. This strategy addresses the communication needs of both audiences – residents and national/international.

A restructure in 2009-10 led to new management in the organisation and a new attitude to the use of communications as key to rebuilding an understanding of the Authority's work and of the special qualities of the National Park. The intervening years have seen much work on restructuring the Authority to deliver a more accountable, better performing organisation. The management team were committed to improving performance as the first step and then to communicating about the improvement.

### **I.2.3 Improvement**

Key to improving the performance of the Authority has been the production of an effective planning service – recent stats (2015/16) show the Authority's planning service to be one of the best performing in Wales<sup>2</sup>. The Authority has welcomed opportunities to meet residents and has

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<sup>1</sup> STEAM figures show a steady increase unless the weather is very poor when there is a drop in number– see <http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/oldsite/the-authority/working-in-partnership/tourism-new/sustainability-1/steam/BreRepRR12.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> In the last two quarters of 2014 the Welsh Government statistics showed the Authority in the top three performing Planning Authorities in Wales.

committed to becoming as transparent in its dealings as possible. The Authority has been proactive in offering formal opportunities for scrutiny by Members and by the general public; Since 2009 Chief Officers have adopted a policy of attending public meetings to discuss concerns about and any criticisms of the work of the Authority. The Authority has embraced opportunities offered by new technology to be at the vanguard of local Authorities offering its meetings on webcast and as the statistics later in this report show, this offer has been taken up with increasing enthusiasm by the public. Communicating these improvements is a vital part of enabling the Authority to function effectively as we believe that a renewed confidence in the Authority to deliver effectively will encourage a commitment to partnership working.. The Strategy for 2016-21 will build on this work and suggest how the Authority can continue to communicate the improvements it has made.

## **12.4 Impact of Cuts**

The public sector has seen substantial cuts during the last five years and the spectre of stringent cuts to come hovers within the timeframe for this plan. Projections on the likely impact of these cuts on the strategy are important when planning communications work going forward and, on balance, we will put our staff resources into cost neutral activity using press releases and social media rather than paying for advertising, though as of 2016 there remains a budget for both. This strategy will be reviewed in light of the recommendations arising from the review of designated landscapes in Wales to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The importance of explaining and promoting the work of the National Park Authority to Welsh Government and to National Resource Wales has been identified to gain recognition for the National Park Authority's excellent work and leadership in priority areas for Government including health and well-being and poverty reduction as well as delivering on the Authority's statutory purposes and duty.

## **2 Vision, aim and objectives**

The Authority's communication strategy is both to explain the work of the Authority including publicising its achievements and goals and also to understand and respond to the views of key stakeholders, residents and visitors. If the strategy is successful, by the end of the 2016 to 2021 period local residents will be confident that the Authority is delivering its work effectively and transparently. There will be greater understanding of the Authority's objectives. There will be enthusiasm to engage with the Authority as partners. The special qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park will achieve even greater recognition from national and international audiences.

### **2.1 Who are we reaching online?**

The Authority's web site presence reaches substantial numbers of individuals, between 1 April 2015 and 7 March 2016:

[www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) received 546,158 unique visitors.

[www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) received 111,441 unique visitors

As of March 2016 the Facebook page has more than 18 00 followers and the Twitter feed has more than 7,200 – both are usually updated daily including scheduling posts for weekends. A later part of this paper (page 13 – 15) gives detailed information on how the Authority's online presence, including the use of Social Media, is managed to deliver key messages about the work of the Authority.

On average, we respond to over 1500 enquiries and comments a year from the two main websites and these are specifically requests for information.

Since 2012 the Authority has engaged in webcasting its meetings live and has provided the resulting downloadable record of the meeting as an archive.

The following table shows the number of views of the live webcast and of the archive material from when the scheme began to March 2016:

Meeting	Number meetings webcast	Live views	Average live views	Archive views	Average archive	Total views	Average views/meeting
Audit and Scrutiny	24	244	10	11,361	473	11,605	484
National Park Authority	31	1,125	36	21,780	703	22,905	739
Planning and Rights of Way	31	930	30	20,692	667	21,622	697
Other meetings	7	156	22	3,946	576	4,102	586
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>2,455</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57,779</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>60,234</b>	<b>648</b>

As these records show, on average every meeting is viewed 648 times, at the moment we cannot extrapolate from the data how many individuals see each meeting or where the individuals are, however it seems likely that meetings would be of most interest locally. This figure is indicative of substantial interest in the webcast and more work is being undertaken to consider how webcasting can be used as a medium to reach the interested public.

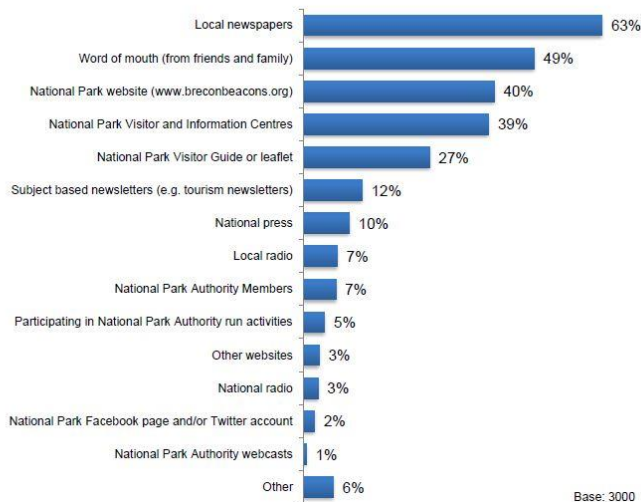
## 2.2 Information for Residents

### 2.2.1 Where do National Park residents get their information?

The Authority has various data at its disposal to gain a picture of how the public perceives its work. In 2013 the Authority undertook a survey of the National Park’s residents, which attracted responses from across the National Park, however the findings are skewed towards older respondents, with 39% aged 65+ <sup>3</sup>. The most recent national census (2011) <sup>4</sup> showed the Park having 23% of its population aged 65+.

More recently revised data from the Census indicates that internet use for 65+ group in the UK is relatively low (13.5% of 65+ year olds had ever used the net by the first quarter of 2014).

Figure 17: How find out about the work of the National Park Authority



The graph below indicates how residents receive information about the work of the Authority – it is clear that local newspaper reports and word of mouth are extremely influential for this group – which is as we would expect, given the skew in the survey respondent’s ages and the census data about internet use.

It should be noted though that 36% of respondents were ambivalent whether they believe reports in the

<sup>3</sup> Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Residents Survey August 2013, MEL research

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/index.html>

local paper and a further 33% claimed they did not believe them.

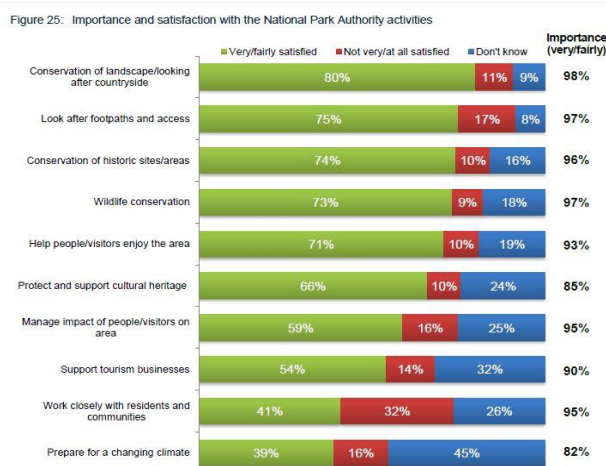
None the less 63% said that they found out about Authority work through the local paper. There is substantial interest in and comment on the performance of the Authority, particularly in relation to its statutory duties. This suggests that the Communications team will need to continue to invest some resources to building strong working relationships with journalists and editors from the local press, while providing briefings and press releases to local papers.

The opportunity to influence what messages the public receive via word of mouth probably relies on the performance of the organisation more strongly than it does on the work of the Communications team, but creating a more positive image of the National Park Authority seems likely to enable the public expression of positive views

As the data at 2.1 above shows, a conservative estimate would put the Authority’s online presence in 2016 at over 500,000 people. To put that figure in perspective the resident population for the National Park as a whole is 33,000. It is not possible to tell exactly how many of the unique visitors to our website are local residents but since the resident’s survey indicated that 40% received information from the website it seems likely that this is a key delivery mechanism for at least a third of residents. Rather unexpectedly the survey identifies Visitor Centres as a place they receive information. Clearly the title is a misnomer and this statistic speaks to the importance to residents in accessing information about leisure activities in the National Park and means the Authority should take account of this audience when considering the key messages it is delivering to visitors as these will also be consumed by residents. Increasingly, cash strapped local authorities are cutting the information service provided through Centres and it is important for the National Park to consider that the needs of residents should be taken into account when providing alternative information sources – for example the Communications team could develop a section of the website focussed on Residents looking for recreational opportunities for their families and friends.

### 2.2.3 Residents’ views on the work of the Authority.

The survey data (table below) indicates a groundswell of satisfaction with what could be perceived as much of the Authority’s most important work. 80% of respondents were satisfied with the Authority’s work in conservation, over 70% were satisfied with work on footpaths, conservation of historic buildings, looking after wildlife and helping people to enjoy the National Park. The area of most concern is the apparent alienation that local communities feel from the Authority as only 19% believed that the Authority listened and responded to their opinions. The work undertaken to address this has already been detailed above.



Evidence from feedback suggests a general level of satisfaction - social media feeds and the websites all offer viewers the opportunity to make enquiries and offer feedback. In the year 2014/15 we received 25 official complaints and 43 members of the public wrote in offering compliments on the service.

### **3. Dealing with criticism**

All public bodies receive criticism as a healthy part of democratic processes. Decisions are taken daily which impact on people's lives and some of these impacts are unwelcome and will be appealed or protested against – the Authority has existing, appropriate procedures to deal with such appeals. Any public comments made by the Authority around these should be as clear and informative as the legalities and procedures allow. Our strategy is that if an explanation is sought and it is possible to give one, the Communications department should do so. Should mistakes have been made then it is our policy to offer an explanation.

Occasionally criticism is levelled at the Authority in the public arena which can be proven to be unfair – usually we decide how to respond to such criticism on a case by case basis. One of the most useful approaches has been to offer one to one briefings and the opportunity to discuss the subject in detail. Those who agree to meet us have often professed themselves better informed subsequently and sometimes have said they had changed their minds based on the information given.

### **4. Identifying our key audiences**

The National Park Management Plan identified a substantial number of groups with an active interest in the work of National Park Authority. As part of his work updating the National Park Management Plan the officer concerned is planning the provision and maintenance of a definitive database of stakeholders and the Communications team will be involved in delivering information or messages and consultation with these groups.

Stakeholder information is usually managed within the department which deals with them most often, however press or marketing materials are delivered to these groups and Communications will work closely with the “owner” of the group to do so.

Beyond the lists of stakeholders, the destination branding project identified some groups which were most likely to be interested in visiting the Beacons as a holiday destination. The description of their likely traits is particularly useful in informing destination focused communications.

### **5. Getting the message across - deriving key messages**

In order to promote the work of the Authority the Communications team deliver press, social media feeds and events to describe the projects and activities undertaken by staff, members and volunteers across the organisation and sometimes activities undertaken by others. Officers in Communications discuss the activity and the reasons for promoting it with the principal officers working on the project. These discussions result in the iteration of key messages to underlie the promotion of the activity in particular and of the organisation in general.

Identifying which key messages are most appropriate for each piece of communication results from a conversation between the officer(s) most closely involved in the project and a member of the Communications team working with them to promote it but in essence the messages come from the team running the projects. All key messages (and ideally all communications) will in some way promote the concepts enshrined in the statutory duties and purpose laid out for the Authority even though, in all probability, they will not reference these directly. An example of the key messages



derived from the Countryside and Land Management Directorate during 2015 is attached at Appendix I.

### **5.1 Getting the message across - Locally**

There is substantial evidence across the Authority of excellent consultative working. The independent audit of “stakeholder working” across the Authority undertaken in late 2014 praised good practise in stakeholder engagement. The report cited the Ambassador scheme as a particularly excellent example of good practise. This consists of three day’s training available to businesses in the Park to enable them to act as Ambassadors to visitors to the Park with annual updating required to maintain a participant’s Ambassador status. The Authority was commended for its efforts to become more transparent by Webcasting meetings.

Planning Aid Wales commended the Authority’s exemplary consultation exercises around the development of their most recent Local Development Plan – approved in December 2013 - to help them engage most effectively in the planning process.

The Authority regularly engages with farmers and graziers associations often to deliver partnership projects. There are over 100 volunteers working for the Authority many are local and some travel from Cardiff and Newport.

A quarterly community newsletter produced by the Sustainable Communities team is disseminated widely and its publication is advertised in local papers.

Local press coverage for good news stories is substantial – 99% of the good news stories released by the Authority are picked up by the different local papers.

The Authority is proud of its recent record of positive and proactive engagement with its stakeholders.

### **5.2 Getting the message across - Nationally and Internationally**

The identity of the Authority as an organisation and the National Park as a protected area and a visitor destination tend to conflate into one in National and International coverage. Broadly National Parks are viewed as positive and desirable places to live and visit where creatures and habitats receive special protection. Nationally, the conservation/tourism/visitor services roles come to the fore. Authority staff (wardens in particular) are broadly perceived as friendly, with expert knowledge to impart – for example journalists approach wardens for opinions on conservation matters. The job for the Communications team in this arena is to ensure that appropriate stories illustrating the special qualities of the National Park and explaining how these are protected reach the eyes and ears of the nation and sometimes the world.

Programme makers regularly contact the Communications team for stories and we have had substantial success placing stories with *Countryfile*, *Coast and Country* and Iolo Williams hosted programmes on the BBC and S4C. Broadly the communications team has been punching well above its weight in terms of international coverage – for example when the Park won International Dark Skies Reserve status it was a global story which has continued to be reported in the national press, the discovery of Bronze Age Rock Art was covered by the BBC and appeared in all the UK’s broadsheets and the massive programme of path restoration funded by the Welsh Government in 2015 and 2016 proved popular with TV and broadsheets. We know that our social media feeds are regularly visited by the media looking for stories as they often share our posts to an even wider audience.

**The Communications team proactively search for stories to promote conveying the identity of our National Park using TV and radio, print press and social media to put stories in front of the general public.**

## 5.4 Explaining key plans

### 5.4.1 The National Park Management Plan

The National Park Management Plan is intended as the key management document for the National Park as a whole. This document is derived from substantial consultation with landowners across the area of the National Park including key national organisations with responsibility for land within the boundaries of the National Park. The Action Plan is derived from the policies in the National Park Plan and gives timetables for actions for the Authority and other stakeholders in the Park. As mentioned above consultation completed in 2015/16 assessed the progress of the plan and – a revised plan is available in 2016 with greater emphasis on delivering actions to support the Wellbeing and Future Generations bill – this will impact on key messages for the Authority going forward.

### 5.4.2 The Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan was adopted in 2013. It describes what development is appropriate during the time covered by the plan. Many of these policies are based on national planning policy and as such there is limited flexibility for the Authority to change them. Never the less it contains some contentious policies and designations which need to be explained fully to those they impact on. A greater understanding of the policies in turn means that any debate about this Plan and future plans start from a shared understanding of the position being taken - which can only benefit those affected. Currently communication staff work with planning department staff to put out statements and press releases as often as necessary and generate a column which appears in local papers highlighting and explaining different aspects of the planning process.

A pilot project is underway to build the geography of the National Park into the popular on-line game Minecraft – this project has substantial potential for delivering key messages from the National Park Management Plan to new audiences.

Communications will continue to proactively seek opportunities to deliver key messages from the National Park Management Plan and the Local Development Plan. Messages will clarify under what circumstances policies can be challenged and which are derived from National policy. Officers and members have a key role to play in ensuring they are communicating effectively, in particular by responding objectively rather than defensively when criticisms are offered.

**This strategy recommends that the Authority resources media training for appropriate members and staff to help them understand and deliver the key messages from our most important policies effectively.**

## 4.6 Monitoring how well we are getting the message across?

The Authority has a very limited budget for press and PR – paying for a service to monitor mentions in the news and online is expensive, undertaking press cutting monitoring in-house is time consuming.

Currently the department relies on picking up information from reading local press and from Google news which searches on-line news items and emails the links to mentions – this service often picks up mentions in the national press which are repeated in online stories so is a good indicator of

which stories are achieving a wider reach but it does not search local press which is less likely to appear on line.

As part of its partnership work with the Sustainable Destination Partnership the Communications team produces quarterly feedback to the tourism sector on which stories have been released and picked up, along with stats for the destination website and social media. The department lacks a coherent way of monitoring and reviewing all mentions. Other organisations and private bodies are engaged in monitoring press which includes mentions for the area some of which will be generated from Authority led stories.

**This strategy proposes a project to audit who is paying to monitor coverage for the National Park area, to explore whether there is any possibility of negotiating a shared resource.**

## 5. Incorporating the Welsh Language

The National Park Authority agreed its current Welsh Language Scheme in September 2013, the Scheme lays out how the Authority intends to engage through the Welsh language. As of 1 April 2016, the Scheme is being replaced by Welsh Language Standards which enshrine in law the expectations the state has of the National Park Authority in relation to the Welsh language. The standards emphasise the expectation that, if the language preference of the recipient is unknown, messages should be put out bilingually.

The 2011 census identified the Welsh speaking population for the National Park as a whole at 10.3%. The average for Wales is 19%. Nevertheless some communities within the National Park - mainly in the West - have approximately 50% Welsh Language speakers and some communities an even higher percentage. There are a number of posts in the Authority where it has been decided the post holder must be bilingual Welsh and English. The majority of Welsh Language essential posts are targeted at service delivery in the geographical areas where most Welsh is spoken. In addition both receptionist posts at our Headquarters are classed as 'Welsh Essential' posts and both are currently (2016) filled by Welsh speakers.

At the time of writing in 2015/16 the level of ability in Welsh speaking within the Authority's staff is above both the local average for the National Park and also above the national average, with 23% of the whole staff classing themselves as Fluent or Intermediate. A further 11% are learning Welsh.

The Communications team have a central role in delivering some of the key targets for providing services in Welsh, overseeing design and the Authority's online presence. The Communications Manager holds the budget for the Authority's corporate translation needs, but this provision will require review in light of the introduction of the Standards. There is an expectation that the standards will strengthen the need for the Authority to use Welsh in areas where it is not currently required to do so.

## 6 . Digital versus print – what will the future look like?

Rumours of the demise of print have been exaggerated – local newspapers continue and the consumption of paper leaflets, maps and brochures remains high. Received wisdom about visitor behaviour suggests that currently individuals access online information before they visit an area and look for paper when they arrive. Resourcing the present situation means that pre-trip planning should be predominantly delivered on line and once in the area the information would be delivered through brochures. The question for resourcing the organisation effectively in five years is whether

printed materials will continue to be required. To meet budget cuts local Councils and Authorities (including the National Park) are closing Visitor Centres, it seems likely that many organisations will phase out brochures avoiding production and distribution costs increasing the expectation that users will access all materials on line.

Traditionally local provision of broadband and WIFI have been too poor to be relied on, however the deadlines for rolling out national broadband are now being met in the towns and villages of the National Park, many coffee shops and hotels are now offering free WIFI. Mobile provision continues to lag behind national averages in the Park area however.

This strategy proposes that officers intending to deliver key messages to the public who have traditionally favoured the production of brochures consider to what extent they can “future proof” the delivery of their information – for example, while a more limited print run for a new brochure or a re-print might be a good idea in the medium term would it be sensible to fund – or work with partners to fund - the longer term development of a web presence for the information for use with mobile phones or tablets? The detail of what and how to develop is itself a thorny question when preferred platforms change so rapidly. Any approach will need to include the ability to update the information within whatever format is agreed. These variables in turn suggest the importance of taking a project based approach and working with partners, ideally including a specialist in IT to consider how to deliver widely accessible, fully up-datable information without print.

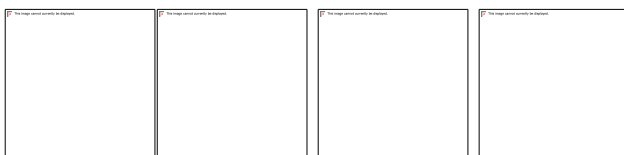
**This strategy proposes a project to consider how best to deliver widely accessible, up-datable information through other media and in particular online. However it predicts the need to continue to provide printed resources which deliver key messages for the Park (these should use a high % of recycled paper and move towards resourcing them through grants, sales and advertising) at least for the next three to five years.**

## 7. Websites

The Authority has full responsibility for one website – [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) which enables the public to find information about Planning including individual planning applications, the Sustainable Development Fund, initiatives relating to communities and information about its governance. It also produces a substantial amount of content on a partnership website – [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) - promoting the National Park as a destination on behalf of the sustainable destination partnership and delivered in partnership with Brecon Beacons Tourism. The Communications team work with colleagues across the organisation to produce and update content for these websites. Both websites have been overhauled during 2014/15 to improve their attractiveness, ease of use and where appropriate, the functionality.

## 8. Social Media – building the Authority profile and destination marketing

The National Park Authority currently (2015) runs feeds on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube.



### 8.1 Content

The Authority’s Social Media feeds are intended to contribute to:

- The promotion of enjoyment and understanding of the National Park (including promoting it as a destination for tourism)
- Delivering key messages appropriate to the audiences for the feeds – for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram these messages are conveyed through the use of photography and brief accompanying text.
- Working with other partners and organisations to promote and support joint projects, for example with Visit Wales promoting local engagement with national and international marketing campaigns they have instigated.

The demographics for different channels change—typically the audience for a feed changes over time from younger users to older. As a channel becomes more popular and widely used, the younger users then abandon it for a different one and the process starts again. This means that the content has to be targeted appropriately and over time the Authority may abandon one channel in order to deliver information through a different one. The Communications team will use google analytics and free marketing information to decide which channels are likely to be most relevant and assess the likely demographics for them. Destination marketing takes account of the traits identified in target groups most likely to find the Beacons appealing as a holiday attraction and the Communications team designs appropriate posts for these groups. Independence is a key attribute of this target group- so many of our posts are designed to appeal to independent travellers.

## 8.2 Activity and resourcing for social media feeds

The following section sums up the position on the Authority’s online presence on each of these platforms as of 2016 and the section ends with proposals on actions required.

### 8.2.1 Facebook

The decision was taken to retain one Facebook page for the Authority serviced by the Communications team but fed by all staff who would send their stories, photos and calls for action. Posts can be scheduled in advance to cover holidays and weekends and if required the Communications team will post messages directly during these times.

In order to maximise the limited resources available to undertake social media and to channel the efforts of the organisation in one direction, Communications have energetically pursued the policy of having one Facebook site. Other organisations have reached similar conclusions – notably Visit Wales – and they have explained the importance of retaining the quality of a feed while offering everyone the opportunity to post through the team maintaining it. There are no plans to change this situation at present but it will be kept under review. The policy has paid dividends in growing an audience for Facebook posts online – as of Easter 2016 standing at more than 18,000 likes, with roughly 500 more following the page each month.

One of the conditions of the Authority involvement in the partnership Destination site – [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) is the promotion of the Authority’s social media feeds, but we do not demand exclusive feeds at this site and other appropriate feeds can be featured (as long as the technical expertise exists for this to happen). Discussions are underway (2016) on options to publicise other feeds including from key businesses in the National Park area.

The Authority’s feed is the only one promoted on [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) – the Authority’s own site.

### 8.2.2 Twitter

The Communications team have taken a different position in relation to Twitter and have accepted a proliferation of twitter accounts representing aspects of the Authority's work. The justification for this position is based on the nature of the platform - Twitter lends itself more effectively to a myriad of feeds since it is more common for a feed to be associated with an individual usually tweeting from their own mobile phone. Tweets are seen as more "disposable" than Facebook posts - they appear as part the general feed individuals following the park receive. Communications runs one of the feeds and in 2015 feeds also exist for the Wardening team, Sustainable Tourism and the National Park Visitor Centre. The Communications team works with colleagues to ensure feeds remain relevant to promoting the National Park's key messages and at times have taken over responsibility for tweeting on feeds when the usual officer has been unable to do so.

### 8.2.3 Youtube

The content for the YouTube channel has mostly been developed through projects directly contracted for the Authority - the Sustainable Tourism team has provided the majority of material. As well as the YouTube feed, the Authority promotes individual films through our websites and other social media channels – for example the Authority's Dark Skies pages on both sites and the pages about Craig –y-nos Country Park have embedded videos.

### 8.2.4 Minecraft

The IT team are working with the Planning team to run a pilot project in the popular online game - Minecraft - using the development of a Community Plan for Hay on Wye. The project has ambitious goals to enter details of the geography of the whole national park into the online world. This would enable the Authority to consult with communities on the possible impacts for any plans relating to particular areas, by testing in the online world first. It engages a younger audience in considering the future of the National Park as the current demographics suggest Minecraft is played predominantly by teenagers.(stat from <http://www.quora.com/What-are-the-demographics-of-Minecraft-players> ).

### 8.2.5 Webcast and Live Chat

The Authority broadcasts its main decision-making committees on the web and the Authority has been piloting a scheme to allow viewers to chat live with each other during the debate. Members have taken the decision not to interact with the general public through social media during meetings - those accessing the system cannot talk direct to the committee. As figures quoted earlier in this report (p6) show, this is a very popular offer and Communications department are liaising with Democratic Services to consider how to deliver more interaction through the medium of webcast.

## 8.3 Members' online presence

Members of the Authority could contribute more to an online presence – options exist for them to deliver consultations, opinions and to engage with the public. It is a proposal of this strategy to identify some key opportunities to pilot such engagement and test the enthusiasm for it.

## 8.4 A bilingual online presence for the Authority

The Welsh Language Standards require a bilingual social media feed as well as fully bilingual websites – the social media feeds will begin delivering in Welsh language as of 1 April 2016. [www.beacons-npa.gov.uk](http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk) is already available bilingually. The Authority has agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner that the destination site [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) will be presented bilingually as of September 2016.

## 8.5 Actions on social media

**Develop the promotion of appropriate partner feeds on the destination website**

**Continue to proactively seek content for the feeds from staff/members and volunteers to encourage engagement, promotion opportunities and deliver content.**

**Pursue wider use of webcasting and online chat.**

**Run pilot projects on member engagement with Social Media.**

**Deliver social media in line the Welsh Language standards.**

## 9. Filming in the Beacons

The Authority promotes filming within the National Park area, working directly with filmmakers and with Screen Wales. Filming promotes the iconic landscapes of the Park while offering economic benefit to the area. There is substantial evidence for the economic multiplier effect a feature film brings for local businesses such as accommodation, outside catering, equipment hire etc.

The Authority also hires out its own land for filming in return for fees which are used for conservation work. The Communications team facilitates filming both on its own land and elsewhere – working closely with location managers to help identify landscapes which match what they are looking for. Communications team have a very close working relationship with the warden's team to deliver this service and a fee is charged to enable wardens to work on filming in this way. When a suitable set has been identified officers may be involved in gaining permissions for the filming to take place – including seeking Operation Likely to Damage the Special Interests (OLDSI) consent from Natural Resource Wales for the proposed activity. Only activity which is not directly in conflict with the purpose and duties of the National Park is permitted. Finally we will issue a contract to the filmmakers and provide a copy to the warden on the ground to ensure that the conditions laid out in the contract are complied with. Finally invoices are issued for the project.

Organising filming is time consuming but the Authority has viewed it as important both for promotion and economically.

**There is currently (2015/16) a national focus on encouraging filming to come to Wales and this strategy proposes a project with Screen Wales to consider how to entice a greater percentage of this filming to shoot in the Park.**

## 10. Events

The Authority has changed its stance on events over the last decade – up until 2006/7 the Authority supported many local shows and fayres with a stand giving information about the work of the Authority, usually staffed by the local warden, education staff and/or the information officer. The three National Parks of Wales traditionally took a joint stand at the Royal Welsh Show and the Eisteddfod. Since 2012, the Authority has drawn back from local shows and the Parks agreed to withdraw from a three Park stand at the Royal Welsh Show. When one of the County Councils with land in the Park is the Royal Welsh Show “host” the National Park Authority has continued to have a presence at the Show. It was agreed that the Authority would support the Eisteddfod when it was



being held at a venue geographically near enough to be appropriate to do so and the Communications team leads on delivering the corporate presence. Other events are supported by the Authority in line with changing priorities.–

The Communications team organises a presence at the Green Man camping event (held for three days preceding the festival ) and since 2014 has played a role in helping to co-ordinate and publicise events based at Craig-y-nos Country Park.

The Communications team also works closely with the Catering Manager and the National Park Visitor Centre to market events they organise using social media and web presence. The Communications Manager currently represents the Authority's food festivals on a National Group.

In terms of promotion the Communications team supports Brecon Beacons Tourism in ensuring local events are described on the events feed of [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) and for events that officers in the Authority wish to promote – for example the Geopark Festival - they work closely to encourage participation and publicise successful activity through press and social media.

**This strategy proposes that as budgets and resources shrink, the Communications team should continue to promote the Authority at key events organised by others, as well as identifying and supporting any new opportunities which address target stakeholder groups.**

## 11. The role of graphic design and photography

Communications oversee branding, graphic design and the Authority's photography library. A brief summary of this work follows and the actions arising from this area are summarised at the end of this section.

### 11.1 Graphic Design Framework

Following the redundancy of the Graphic Designer post in 2014, Communications Manager let the first framework agreement for the National Park Authority (covering 2015- 2017) to deliver an effective three year graphic design solution.

The framework is now running and the Communications team work with the designers to help them use the Authority's graphic design resource (maps, images, brands etc) most effectively and within the appropriate copyright licences to enhance and improve the public face of the Authority. This requires a resourcing commitment from the Communications team which is not expected to diminish during the life of the framework. Letting the framework itself required a substantial amount of work and it will be let again in 2017.

### 11.2 Photography

The provision of new photography and renewal of licensing for groups of photographs taken by individual photographers continues as an important role for Communications. Images are commissioned and sometimes taken by other departments but these need to be incorporated into the central resource and the rights ownership to be clearly documented and respected. As of 2016 a project is being discussed in IT to deliver a web based Authority wide photo library.

There is a corporate requirement to ensure that photography includes representations of all people, including people with disabilities and those from black and ethnic minority communities. To this end Communications has worked with the Mosaic project to produce photography for the Authority to use – this work is ongoing.



Though there is no longer a Graphics Designer post in the Authority, a substantial part of the work that post covered has not disappeared. In order to maintain the Authority's photography resource for the future the Communications team will work with IT to look at how best to catalogue and protect the existing collection and with colleagues to predict the likely need for photographs on particular subjects. We will then agree how best to procure them from existing galleries of work and if necessary commission new work with appropriate rights. The Communications team will continue to work with other organisations such as Visit Wales and Powys to try to negotiate rights to use commissions within the Park and to influence where images are shot.

### 11.3 Branding

In presenting itself the Authority uses its own corporate brand which incorporates Britain's Breathing Spaces and brand guidelines exist for using the corporate brand. In 2014 the Authority worked with partners to develop a brand for businesses and organisations wishing to promote their link to the destination this was tested with user groups and is now known as the "destination brand". There is a requirement to integrate elements of the destination brand into the Authority's own brands and a project will be required to produce the relevant templates and guidelines for this.

Other brands are in use in the Authority the Fforest Fawr Geopark has its own brand and style guide, the National Park is also a designated International Dark Sky Reserve and a look and feel has been developed to publicise this. The National Park Ambassador Scheme has its own badging.

### 11.4 Representation

The National Park Authority provides a service to all residents and visitors and it is important that this is reflected in photography and subject matter in the National Park's printed and online presence. The differing needs of the populations which the Authority serves should be taken account of when planning, designing and distributing material both printed and online. Photography should include representations of different ethnicities, ages, genders and abilities. Information should be presented in language which is easy to understand which avoids acronyms.

### 11.4 Graphic design summary

**This strategy recognises that while the delivery of graphic design work has changed in the Authority we continue to need a strong corporate identity across the organisation and to effectively manage graphic design to produce it. The framework requires management as described above.**

**Three projects will need to be set up to deliver during the life of the strategy:**

- 1. A project to produce guidelines and templates to integrate the destination brand into the Authority's own brand**
- 2. A project with IT to organise the co-ordination, use and internal management of the photography resource.**
- 3. A project to identify photography requirements for the next three years and plan how to deliver against these.**

## 12. Finally

Communicating about the work of this Authority is part of the day to day job of every member of staff and of every Member of the Authority and to some extent a responsibility for our volunteers. This strategy is intended to offer a strategic overview of where the Authority should concentrate its

resources, of areas where the Authority needs to undertake more work to ensure it is reaching its full potential and to offer an insight into how the communications team is working to deliver the Authority's communications goals for the coming five years.

## Appendix I

Example of key messages derived for Countryside and Landscape Management Directorate

Topic	Key messages for promotion
Dark Skies	Come and enjoy the light pollution free dark skies above the National Park in our Dark Sky Reserve
Right of Way usage	Many walks are available in the National Park – listed in detail on our website – including all levels easily accessible and upland walks.  We regularly repair upland paths by flying in stone and working with volunteers to improve the rights of way
Events Publicity	All are welcome to come and enjoy xxx event
Promotion around Ambassadors and Rural Alliance clusters	The National Park is a welcoming place where the residents are enthusiastic to meet you. We have used European funding to give them even more specialist knowledge through training.
Mosaic Project , Inspironment and Champions projects	The National Park is available for everyone to enjoy and we are actively working with groups who do not currently benefit to support them to come and visit it.
Gorge Walking/Canyoning	We do not promote gorge walking within the Park nor allow film companies to film it.
Protected species	The National Park is home to xx protected species and it is thriving here/ or it needs further help to thrive here which you can get involved with by xxx ( ie a public call to action)
Invasive species and diseases	The National Park's protected landscape is being threatened by xxxx and needs your help to protect it/we want you to know that we are striving to protect it by doing xxxx
New, rare species found	Xxx has been discovered for the first time in the protected landscape of the National Park.
Illegal offroading	Please do not drive off road on protected land – doing so could result in prosecution. The National Park Authority's wardens work with local police to stamp out illegal off-roading and prosecute miscreants. Please report illegal offroading on our website if you see it. Don't buy your child a quad for Christmas, off roading is illegal in the National Park.
Fires	The Wardens undertake controlled burning at set times of year. Illegally started fires decimates populations of ground nesting birds. The Authority works with local police and fire brigades to put out fires and to investigate acts of arson.
Education	Enjoy this photo of local children engaged in learning about the protected area of the National Park.
Wardens	Our wardens are busy looking after this protected landscape and the creatures and plants living in it, for the benefit of the habitat and for you to enjoy. Our wardens are working with volunteers to deliver projects to protect the Park.
Volunteers	Our amazing volunteers have delivered xxx project which protects the landscape as follows xxx.
Sustainable Development Fund	This wonderful project was made possible with the help of the Sustainable Development Fund and is helping deliver a viable long term future for (group/ asset /community)