

REPORT OF DISCOVERY TEAM LEADER

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

Members are asked to endorse the revised PCNPA Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan.

Introduction

The work of volunteers is vital to the National Park as well as the work of the Park Authority. There is a long tradition of volunteers working alongside PCNPA staff to provide clear conservation and recreation benefits whilst also contributing to wider socio-economic goals in Pembrokeshire such as social inclusion, economic regeneration and the development of strong and vibrant local communities.

The Park Authority has successfully involved volunteers in its work since the Authority was established in 1952 and, in particular, our work with the Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and other voluntary groups extends beyond practical conservation work to areas such as policy development, co-funded social inclusion projects and awareness raising campaigns.

However, across the Authority and within the National Park there is no up to date cohesive view of volunteering and how it might be developed to become an even more effective tool in achieving conservation goals and promoting understanding of the Park's special qualities. For this reason, the Park Authority has drafted a revised Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan to help guide future voluntary work throughout the National Park.

Volunteer Strategy 2014-2016

The revised strategy, presented before Members, seeks to define the Authority's future direction in providing opportunities for volunteering in the National Park. It takes account of good practice in this area of activity, provides an analysis of various options and proposes a series of key objectives and related actions for PCNPA to develop its work with volunteers in the years ahead.

The strategy has been informed by consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Meetings with NPA staff: Meetings with selected groups of NPA staff provided an input into the development of the strategy at various stages, these included rangers and managers with experience of volunteer management.

- Meetings with volunteers: Meetings were held with volunteers from several groups, these included volunteer wardens, walk leader volunteers and activity leaders
- E-survey of NPA Workforce: A Survey Monkey 'e-survey' was undertaken to encourage contributions from the wider workforce of the National Park. Around 60 people provided a response to the survey
- E-survey for existing NPA volunteers: A Survey Monkey 'e-survey' was chosen as a useful way of reaching a wide group of people involved in volunteering for the National Park.

Comparisons

In Pembrokeshire there are a diverse range of opportunities available to those wishing to take part in voluntary activity. Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) records around 200 registered voluntary organisations in the County, with each likely to be providing multiple opportunities. In addition, there are numerous other organisations and agencies providing opportunities for volunteers as part of their activity. There are no estimates of numbers of active volunteers across the county, but PAVS considers there to be around 500 volunteering opportunities through registered voluntary groups alone.

Given the high quality natural environment and associated heritage in Pembrokeshire it is unsurprising that numerous groups, organisations and agencies are engaged in volunteer supported activity that benefits the National Park. These include large charitable bodies such as the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales, the RSPB as well as smaller groups such as the Sea Trust and Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

PCNPA hopes that a revised Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan will help to galvanise voluntary action across a wide variety of stakeholders (including those organisations listed above) and help to deliver some of the key priorities captured within the National Park Management Plan and the Authority's own Corporate Strategy.

Volunteering in the UK's National Parks

All of the UK's National Parks provide opportunities for volunteering. However, the extent of volunteer involvement varies across the National Park family. The Lake District NPA, Dartmoor NPA and Brecon Beacons NPA for example, work with hundreds of volunteers each year. In the Lake District more than 400 volunteers currently contribute to the Authority's work across a wide range of work areas.

Some National Parks are supported by 'friends' groups which are well established and provide a great deal of volunteering opportunities:

- The Dartmoor Preservation Society contributed 800 volunteer work days to the conservation management of Dartmoor National Park in 2013.
- The friends of the Lake District provided 8,000 hours of volunteer input into the National Park.

For some National Parks the contributions of volunteers are much smaller, in the New Forest for example the number of volunteers involved directly with the NPA is relatively small, but much larger groups of volunteers are involved with the management of the National Park through other agencies including the Forestry Commission and the National Trust. New Forest National Park Authority takes a co-ordinating role in working with groups of volunteers.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority sits somewhere 'in the middle' of the above examples with volunteers contributing to 'more traditional' practical conservation work 'on the ground' but with fewer opportunities to contribute to the wider work of the Authority. The revised Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan hopes to offer a wider variety of volunteering opportunities across PCNPA and the National Park to reflect best-practice from across the UK.

Resource Implications

Resources are limited and so any expansion of our volunteering offer will need to be carefully planned in order to remain sustainable in the long-term. Volunteers provide a resource in helping to achieve park purpose, but there are management implications in developing this resource. We will also need to consider the perceived threat to the roles of paid staff in deploying greater numbers of volunteers.

Developing roles for volunteers to make them more inclusive and to involve wider sections of our communities will have wider benefits:

- Increasing skills for employability;
- Establishing sustainable links with local communities in the National Park;
- Contributing to the health and wellbeing of those involved in volunteering.

The overarching goal is to increase the contribution of volunteers to work in the National Park by developing partnerships/closer working relationships with other groups/ organisations involved in working with volunteers such as PAVS & PLANED. The ability to tap in to a larger, sometimes more skilled volunteer workforce may create new opportunities to deliver PCNPA's wider socio-economic goals and help increase the value of volunteer input across the National Park.

Financial considerations

All proposed changes are to be met from existing budgets with no additional funding available at this point in time. As a result, the revised strategy will be almost entirely dependent on re-focussing existing budgets and staff time as well as strengthening partnership working in order to share resources as far as possible. It may be possible to secure an element of grant-aid funding for certain aspects of the strategy and PCNPA staff will continue to explore all available opportunities to maximise external funding.

Risk considerations

If PCNPA fails to adopt and implement a revised Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan there is a danger that we will not be making the most of the voluntary manpower that presently exists to support the conservation of the National Park. In addition, we will be failing to adapt to the needs of volunteers and new models of service delivery across Wales.

Consequently, promoting, nurturing and guiding the work of volunteers in the National Park forms a cornerstone of PCNPA's ongoing work with local communities and forms a vital component of the Authority's work in delivering against key goals contained within the National Park Management Plan and Corporate Strategy.

Compliance

The National Park's Management Plan identifies the value of volunteering in helping to manage the National Park, its heritage and habitats, whilst the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Corporate Plan sets out four improvement outcomes, which the National Park Authority (NPA) will work towards over the next few years. Volunteering is not referred explicitly here, but voluntary activity has the capacity to contribute to all of the defined outcomes.

The National Parks in Wales Social Inclusion & Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan recognises that opportunities for volunteering are important in promoting inclusivity within National Parks. The strategy states that:

- NPA's should work with local communities to help them value the National Park and encourage them to be proactive in conserving it.
- NP facilities and services should be available to a wide audience including disabled people and/or poor health, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged communities, those on low incomes and young people. Central to this process will be the involvement of representative groups who can give a "lived experience" perspective.
- NPA's should contribute to reducing inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children.

Pembrokeshire's Single Integrated Plan (SIP), an overarching policy document produced by the County's Local Service Board (LSB), recognises the need to 'promote volunteering opportunities' across a range of policy areas from children and young people to environment, health and wellbeing. PCNPA is one of the local partners committed to delivering the goals of the Pembrokeshire SIP.

The aims of the volunteer strategy also support the aims of the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, which Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority signed up to in 2011.

Human Rights/Equality issues

The Strategy proposes an inclusive volunteer service that promotes accessibility for a wide range of people to access the full benefits of volunteering.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Increased volunteer involvement in National Park management and the 'promotion of understanding' provides real opportunities to contribute towards the National Park's Management Plan benefitting biodiversity and the heritage of the area.

Welsh Language statement

Consultation undertaken in developing this plan was undertaken in Welsh and English. Further consultation on the draft strategy will include a bilingual element. We continue to develop our offer to volunteers wishing to engage with the organisation through the medium of Welsh.

Conclusion

Volunteers are vital to the future of the National Park and the ongoing work of the Park Authority. The revised Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan sets out an agenda for change whereby the role of volunteers is better celebrated continually expanded and centrally co-ordinated.

Members are, therefore, asked to endorse the revised strategy as a key vehicle for delivering the Authority's aspirations for volunteering in-line with the National Park Management Plan and the Authority's Corporate Strategy.

Recommendation

Members are asked to endorse the revised PCNPA Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan.

Background Documents

http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/Files/files/Committee/Recreation%20and%20Tourism/26_03_14/02_14%20volunteer%20strategy.pdf

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Consultees:

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- ii. PCNPA Voluntary Wardens*
- iii. PCNPA Activity Volunteers*
- iv. PCNPA Discovery and Delivery teams*
- v. PCNPA Recreation and Tourism Committee*
- vi. PCNPA Senior Management team*



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

1 Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan

(2014-16)

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¹ Draft completed 18.07.14 Graham Peake, Discovery Team, PCNPA

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- iii. Sample task description for a volunteer role
- iv. Structure for supporting volunteer development with PCNPA

Annexe to the plan

1. A description and assessment of the present situation with regard to volunteering at PCNPA based on responses to questions taken from the Investing in Volunteers quality indicators.
2. External review and consultation - Influencing factors and consultation responses
3. Environmental Volunteering in Pembrokeshire – audit of opportunities
4. Background and Analysis - volunteering and volunteers

1. Introduction and overview

It is well understood that voluntary activity can make a significant contribution to caring for and managing the natural and built heritage. There is a long tradition of volunteering for work that benefits and engages with the natural world and there are numerous examples of good practice in this area². Environmental volunteering can involve a range of people from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds providing opportunities that bring conservation benefits, but also contribute to social cohesion, inclusion, economic regeneration, and the development of social capital.

Volunteers give time to numerous environmental projects in Wales, across the UK and further afield. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) has successfully involved volunteers in its work since the Authority was established in 1952. At present volunteers contribute to practical work undertaken to manage the National Park and support National Park staff in their 'engagement work' with visitors and across local communities. In addition, the Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and other voluntary groups and organisations give volunteer time in undertaking a range of conservation, community and education work within the Park.

However, across the Authority and within the National Park there is no up-to-date cohesive view of volunteering and how it might be developed to become an even more effective tool in achieving conservation goals and promoting understanding. The Park encompasses many local communities and is accessible to a significant population in West Wales. In providing a range of positive volunteering experiences, the National Park Authority can contribute to the lives of local people in many ways, providing skills useful for gaining employment, helping physical and mental wellbeing and improving the quality of local environment. Volunteering can also be social, contribute to a sense of personal worth and (perhaps most of all) be an enjoyable experience.

2. Purpose and Vision

The strategy builds on a review (see annexe to this document) of the role of volunteers in the Park taking into account both internal and external influences. Based on a critical assessment of PCNPA's current activity in this area, measured against good practice and taking account of extensive consultation, the strategy will put forward a series of key objectives supporting the vision identified below. Whilst the strategy sets out to develop and where appropriate, extend the role of volunteers to bring sustainable benefits to the Park and its communities, it does not propose to do this to replace any part of the existing workforce. Rather it provides the opportunity to engage the workforce in roles that will grow the voluntary contribution to the purpose of our organisation.

An action plan will provide a clear indication of how we might achieve our vision for volunteering in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Materials will be produced to support the plan's objectives and enable actions to be achieved.

2.1 Our Vision:

'The National Park benefits from a positive, involved and enthusiastic volunteer service that can support us and our partners in caring for heritage, landscape and biodiversity and which engages with local people and communities'.

² Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for volunteer management. The Standard comprises of nine indicators of volunteer management best practice. (<http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/images/stories/Investing-In-Volunteers/Documents/Other/The%20IiV%20Standard.pdf0>)

3. Our objectives

The strategy’s objectives were drawn up following review and consultation (see annexe). The review looked at what the Authority does now with regard to volunteering and volunteers. It also looked at how others work with volunteers (across the public and third sectors) and examined good practice in this area. In particular the review looked at good practice identified through the nationally recognised Investing in Volunteers quality standard. Consultation was undertaken with both the paid workforce and existing volunteers; we were also able with consult Authority Members and the lead voluntary sector infrastructure organisation in Pembrokeshire, PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services).

Our objectives address the Authority’s vision to develop a positive, involved and enthusiastic volunteer service that can support and work alongside us and our partners in caring for the National Park and which engages with local people and communities.

OBJECTIVE	
Objective 1	To be able to offer volunteering opportunities to a wider section of local people including those most likely to derive benefits from this activity.
Objective 2	To be able to offer more volunteering opportunities across a wider range of National Park work.
Objective 3	To develop, support and work with voluntary and community organisations in their work across the National Park.
Objective 4	To develop an appropriate infrastructure for volunteer management that reflects good practice and maximises the value of our work in this area.

3.2 Objectives in detail

Objective 1

To be able to offer volunteering opportunities to a wider section of local people including those most likely to derive benefits from this activity.

Volunteering can provide benefits to volunteers that are wide ranging (see the annexe to the report *‘Benefits of Volunteering’*), but can include increased employability, improved health and wellbeing and social benefits. Whilst we already engage with a wide range of groups and organisations, it is clear that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park can be more inclusive in its work across a range of activity. Volunteering has the ability to reach out to a wider audience provided barriers to effective engagement are reduced through targeted use of resources, tailored opportunities, partnership working and greater understanding of the needs of local communities.

In order to ensure that we provide accessible opportunities for volunteering to as wide an audience as possible, the strategy will need to take account of the social inclusion objectives of both the Authority and its partner organisations. In particular we should take account of the desired outcomes of Pembrokeshire’s Single Integrated Plan locally and the work of PAVS as the recognised volunteering infrastructure organisation locally.

If we are to provide targeted volunteering opportunities for groups and individuals most likely to benefit we will need to consider how, when and where volunteering takes place in the National Park.

Objective 2

To be able to offer more volunteering opportunities across a wider range of National Park work.

Whilst volunteers are already involved in a range of activity across the National Park, in relative terms the numbers of individuals involved is low. Many National Park volunteers undertake more than one role, for example, a number of the Voluntary Wardens also lead or assist with engagement activities. While in some locations it appears that suitable tasks or roles for volunteers are limited, we know that by working in partnerships and involving volunteers in new areas of activity (for example, work contributing towards

adaption and mitigation of the effects of climate change), there is likely to be increased capacity for volunteering within the National Park and for PCNPA going forward. We will need to identify and map these opportunities and consider the resource implications of providing them. 'More volunteers require more support'. The strategy needs to highlight training requirement for those managing volunteers and establish staff and volunteer supervisory structures that maximise the resources we have available.

From the outset we need to provide reassurance that engaging more volunteers in activity around the National Park does not have a direct impact on paid employment opportunities within the Authority. This is an important concern voiced regularly by existing Authority staff. However, more volunteers will result in more work done to protect and enhance the Park's heritage and engage people with the opportunities it provides.

The potential for collaboration and partnership in terms of working with volunteers should be explored locally. At least two other organisations, the National Trust and The Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales, engage volunteers in a wide range of work within the National Park.

Objective 3

To develop, support and work with voluntary and community organisations in their work across the National Park.

The existing and potential contributions of volunteers working for other groups and organisations across the National Park needs to be more widely recognised.

The Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was established (in 1991) with a clear purpose to assist in the protection, conservation and enhancement of Pembrokeshire's National Park. As part of their work, volunteers make numerous contributions towards this goal. However, there are many other groups and organisations locally, who, although not having such clearly defined aims in relation to the National Park, will have the potential to contribute on their own terms to the 'protection, conservation and enhancement of the National Park.

National Park staff currently involve a range of groups and organisations in voluntary activity across the National Park, but this work is not always targeted and would benefit from clear goals in terms of sustaining the contributions of particular groups and providing pathways for interested individuals to get more involved.

The potential for collaboration and partnership working with the voluntary sector should be considered as a viable option when assessing how PCNPA's work might be delivered. Where appropriate, opportunities to work with community groups to achieve shared goals need to be highlighted within PCNPA delivery plans.

National Park staff might be able to work alongside community/voluntary groups in project development/delivery or, in certain circumstances assist in setting up a group, for example, helping to identify honorary officers and supplying a suitable template for a group constitution. This situation might occur when Authority staff are engaged in community work to support Park purposes and where there is local interest in setting up a group to engage in related work. There is a good example of this, Newport Paths Group, where the group's volunteers regularly work alongside National Park Authority Warden and Ranger teams to undertake work on the local footpath network.

In the context of achieving this objective, PAVS and PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) can provide the support and advice required to ensure that links with the community and voluntary sector follow best practice and build on existing work in this area.

Objective 4

To develop an appropriate infrastructure for volunteer management that reflects good practice and maximises the value of our work in this area.

Working with volunteers provides many benefits for an organisation and helps us address multiple outcomes. However, in order to improve the way the Authority works with volunteers, it seems likely that a review of the infrastructure that supports volunteer involvement is required. It is clear from consultation and the wealth of existing research that the benefits of volunteering can be significantly enhanced for both volunteers and organisation if good practice is adopted in terms of volunteer management. Areas for improvement might include: co-ordination across the organisation, working more effectively with others including providers of volunteer opportunities, identifying suitable roles, recruitment, support and management of volunteers and celebrating the role of volunteers.

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4. Options evaluation

To achieve progress against our objectives we need to have clear recommendations and actions. This section looks at specific issues in relation to each objective and gives an analysis of possible actions. This section informs the Action Plan.

Objective 1 - To be able to offer volunteering opportunities to a wider section of local people including those most likely to derive benefits from this activity	
ISSUE	EVALUATION
Resourcing the provision of opportunities for volunteering with PCNPA.	<p>We have an existing pool of volunteers working with PCNPA Discovery and Delivery teams, with some volunteers having more than one voluntary role. Turnover of volunteers is low and consequently few new opportunities arise within the existing framework. The Authority's current capacity (for providing volunteering opportunities at PCNPA) is also likely to limit the effectiveness of any recruitment drive which targets a new audience of volunteers. There are exceptions to this. For example the Youth Rangers programme is structured to allow young people to leave the programme after a year of involvement to allow a new cohort to be recruited.</p> <p>We can review how and where resource is used on delivering volunteer opportunities, re-shaping the way we use existing resources to provide a targeted approach to recruiting new volunteers. This could be applied to the two distinct volunteering routes within the Authority (i) volunteer days contributed through groups and organisations (ii) volunteer days contributed by individuals supporting PCNPA activity including Voluntary Wardens and Activity Volunteers.</p> <p>With the right kind of infrastructure for volunteering it may be possible to establish groups that are managed by competent Volunteer Leaders, this freeing up the time of staff to develop new, more inclusive opportunities.</p>
Explore options for offering more bespoke volunteering opportunities for specific groups of beneficiaries with demonstrable outcomes for those involved.	<p>We can build on our existing work in this area to develop new volunteering opportunities that are accessible to 'those most likely to derive benefits'.</p> <p>Providing these opportunities may be less effective in terms of delivering practical work on the ground, for example in terms of National Park management, however there can be significant outcomes for volunteers in providing these opportunities. Examples might include volunteering packages designed to provide defined levels of physical activity or volunteering geared towards up-skilling workless individuals.</p> <p>This type of volunteering provision is likely to be more expensive to deliver. Projects funding and partnership working might be considered. An important aspect of this work is to consider how we might be able to sustain the benefits to individual and groups of their volunteering activity.</p>
Review how volunteers can contribute to the work of the National Park now and in the future and explore ways of extending voluntary involvement in activities for those most likely to benefit.	<p>A review should be undertaken of how (and where) volunteers can support the work of PCNPA in the future, looking at how these opportunities can involve a wider audience in our work, measuring benefits to the National Park and to key audiences of beneficiaries.</p>
The review should also be used to better understand why people want volunteer and how	<p>This type of review should look at the range of options available including, the roles of existing staff in relation to volunteering, working in partnerships and externally funded projects which pilot new approaches.</p>

<p>this motivation might differ locally and across different socio-economic groupings.</p>	
<p>Work more closely with other organisations and groups to extend the engagement of volunteers in the National Park.</p> <p>Develop partnerships across the inclusion and health sectors to provide more tailored volunteering opportunities.</p>	<p>There are options to collaborate with others in providing new volunteering opportunities. This approach could provide access to new audiences of potential volunteers. However, the Authority will need to identify both resources and appropriate tasks to accommodate (or retain) these new volunteers.</p> <p>A balance needs to be struck between the benefits of inclusivity in our volunteering as set against tangible benefits to the work of the Authority and the National Park itself. One option would be to pilot work in specific areas and with specific groups as a way of testing long-term viability/sustainability.</p>
<p>Building on new and existing links develop pathways that give 'hard to reach' groups and individuals improved access to opportunities for involvement and engagement in and around the National Park.</p>	<p>Some conservation management work lends itself well to the involvement of hard to reach groups, particularly where the activities are manual and require little in the way of existing experience/knowledge. There is an existing demand from various groups and agencies for National Park rangers and others to provide these kind of opportunities, however these can sometimes be one-off events with unclear benefits beyond the work achieved as part of the task (number of trees planted, bags of litter collected, etc).</p> <p>More often engagement with these groups is made more effective by providing programmes of activity or projects which the groups can take from beginning to end. In some cases the group/individuals may also be able to achieve accreditation (e.g. John Muir Award) to reward their involvement. The one-off events might be used to recruit volunteers to existing programmes such as Youth Rangers.</p>
<p>Objective 2 - To be able to offer more volunteering opportunities across a wider range of National Park work.</p>	
<p>OPTION</p>	<p>EVALUATION</p>
<p>Review specific job roles across the NPA with the aim of identifying a resource for volunteer management that will add value to our existing work and enable us to offer more volunteering opportunities across the Authority.</p>	<p>The time required to manage/co-ordinate volunteering is seen as a barrier to increased volunteer involvement in the Authority's work. Effective volunteer management needs to be in place and should be included as a stated role/responsibility for key members of staff. Who might take on these roles in relation to volunteering will be informed by a review of volunteering opportunities across the Authority, but it should be an aspiration to extend volunteering beyond the existing roles.</p>
<p>Make the links between volunteering, social inclusion and PCNPA as public body serving local communities so that across the organisation the involvement of volunteers is seen as good practice and not the role of a handful of staff in specific service areas.</p>	<p>The development of volunteering across PCNPA does not require organisational change, but a wider section of the workforce across all service areas need to be involved in 'conversations' about the benefits of volunteering and the demonstrable links with the legal requirements placed upon NPA's as well as the political guidance we receive.</p> <p>A Volunteering working group should be set up to bring together key officers (and volunteers) from across the organisation to develop and manage work in this area. The group should meet regularly and report back to the Authority's senior management.</p>

Objective 3 - To develop, support and work with voluntary and community organisations in their work across the National Park	
OPTION	EVALUATION
Build on our existing volunteering work with groups and organisations (as delivered by PCNPA ranger teams) and develop a more co-ordinated approach which might improve outcomes for all?	<p>The Authority's ranger teams have worked with a wide range of groups and organisations from across Pembrokeshire and beyond. These 'mass' volunteering opportunities already provide significant benefits to those involved (see below), although improved evaluation will help substantiate the anecdotal evidence we have.</p> <p>Work with groups and organisations provide a valuable route for NP staff to 'connect' with relatively large numbers of people. Sessions give opportunities to promote understanding of the National Park and engage individuals with a particular place or aspect of the National Park (wildlife, heritage, landscape for example). We might also be able to address issues such as beach litter, the pressures of recreational use and landowner conflicts as part of these sessions.</p> <p>In order to maximise the value of this work Authority Ranger teams should evaluate the existing process, looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The groups and organisations we work with, are there obvious gaps in terms of the type of groups/organisations we work with? Do we provide numerous opportunities for some, but very few for others? Is there replication in our work? • How can we sustain our involvement with specific groups, organisations and individuals? Are there pathways that we can identify and develop to build on connections/engagement with the Park? • Are there other ways of doing this work that can add value and maximise our use of resources?
Increase the effectiveness of existing PCNPA community engagement work to bring about recognisable for outcomes for the Authority and other groups and organisations involved	<p>PCNPA has always worked closely with communities in and around the National Park. Working alongside communities often means that community members contribute their time to projects voluntarily.</p> <p>As resources become increasingly scarce this kind of partnership working has a higher value. The approach ensures that goals are shared and that the consultative process is backed-up by grassroots support. Volunteer input into a project can reduce costs and (in some cases) enables more to be achieved by both the community group and PCNPA.</p> <p>PCNPA is not always pro-active in community engagement activity. This aspect of our work should be embedded in the roles of specific staff and developed in partnership with other organisations such as PLANED.</p>
Build effective working relationships and provide support for key organisations in the heritage/conservation management sector, in particular where there is the potential for mutual benefits and achieving shared outcomes	<p>Across the National Park there are organisations and groups involving and being led by volunteers who care for the landscape, natural and cultural heritage of the area (see Section 3.3). We undoubtedly engage with some of these in terms of delivering the Park Management Plan. There may be benefits in developing closer working relationships with some groups/ organisations around a volunteering agenda eg shared volunteering projects with the National Trust. The ability to tap in to a larger, sometimes more skilled volunteer workforce may create new opportunities to get work done and help increase the value of volunteer input across the board.</p> <p>It is sensible to develop working relationships with key organisations with actively engaged volunteer workforces in the National Park, perhaps in the first instance as part of PCNPA led workshop looking at volunteering across the National Park.</p>

Objective 4 - To develop an appropriate infrastructure for volunteer management that reflects good practice and maximises the value of our work in this area	
OPTION	EVALUATION
Provide training for staff and volunteers leading to more effective volunteer recruitment and management.	Training in volunteer management is widely recognised in the third sector and can be undertaken at various levels. An appropriate programme of training in volunteer management should improve the effectiveness of the organisation in working with volunteers and increase the likelihood of PCNPA achieving its outcomes in this area. PAVS/WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) are a recognised providers of training in this area.
Provide greater access to training for volunteers and opportunities to develop new skills 'on the job'.	<p>Training can be expensive and (as with staff), access to training for volunteers needs to be linked closely to the role of the person involved and appropriate in terms of cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Designing opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills in-house and as part of their work is more cost effective. Some volunteers bring new skill and experience to their roles and in some cases volunteers could share their skills as part of a peer learning process.</p>
Develop a new 'toolkit' for volunteer management within the National Park Authority.	As PCNPA develops its work with volunteers through the strategy and action plan we will be able to access good practice in terms of volunteer management, which will in turn increase our effectiveness in this area. Much of the good practice is readily available and the challenge will be to select 'tools' appropriate to the National Park Authority.
Set up a 'cross-service' working group to contribute to the development of volunteering good practice and embed this across the organisation.	<p>'Buy in' is critical to success in achieving the stated objectives for volunteering. The establishment of a group that can feed into work across the organisation will be a useful tool in this respect.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to a sub-group, i.e. a 'volunteers forum', set up to give volunteers a voice and develop our work in a more informed way.</p>
Use more effective volunteer recruitment processes to bring in individual volunteers with different skills which can be applied to the work of the Authority.	<p>At present PCNPA is rarely proactive in the recruitment of individual volunteers. For the most part the Authority lacks the mechanisms to do this (knowledge of where volunteers are required, no volunteer task descriptions).</p> <p>The benefits of more effective volunteer recruitment will be the ability to target recruitment, enabling us to identify suitable volunteers for specific roles and to provide those who volunteer with us with more clearly defined tasks and understandable roles ('knowing where they fit in to the organisation').</p>

5. Recommendations and Action Plan

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Volunteer Action Plan 2014/16

Recommendations have been grouped together as an Action Plan under the following headings:

- Strategy and Infrastructure
- Volunteer Management
- Resources
- Training
- Partnerships
- Projects

Actions can contribute to more than one of the strategic objectives (see below) set out earlier in this document - this is noted in the Action Plan

Objective 1: To be able to offer volunteering opportunities to a wider cross-section of local people, including those most likely to derive benefits from this activity.

Objective 2: To be able to offer more volunteering opportunities across a wider range of National Park work.

Objective 3: To develop, support and work with voluntary and community organisations in their work across the National Park.

Objective 4: To develop an appropriate infrastructure for volunteer management that reflects good practice and maximises the value of our work in this area.

ACTIVITY AREA OBJECTIVE	IDENTIFIED ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE ACHIEVED?
STRATEGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE Objective 2 Objective 4	Establish a 'volunteer working group' to contribute to the development of volunteering good practice and embed this across the organisation.	By June 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator	Regular meetings of group
Objective 1 Objective 4	Establish a 'volunteers forum' to give volunteers a voice and develop our work in a more informed way.	September 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator and Volunteer Working Group	
Objective 4	Agree a PCNPA Volunteer Charter defining the relationship between volunteers and organisation	By June 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator	An agreed volunteer charter will be produced that sets out clearly the relationship between PCNPA and its volunteers. All volunteers should have a copy made available to them

Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3	Ensure volunteering is recognised as cross-cutting theme in revisions of the National Park Management Plan, social inclusion plans and other strategic documents.	Ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator Appropriate service managers	The inclusion of volunteering in documents should be combined with a recognition of what the volunteer resource can deliver in terms of achieving PCNPA outcomes.
Objectives 1-4	Monitor and evaluate progress against achieving the strategy's goals.	Ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator, volunteer managers and Volunteer Working Group. Ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation as defined in Section 6	It will be important to record numbers of volunteers, amount of volunteering, range of volunteer activity and source of volunteer input. Appropriate increases from baseline in these areas will demonstrate success against stated objectives.
Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3	Complete a review mapping how and where volunteers can contribute to the work in the National Park now and in the future. Matching tasks/roles with required competencies/volunteer profiles. The review should also consider the likely motivations of volunteers in undertaking this work.	Spring 2015	Volunteer Working Group, Other organisations and groups with active volunteer workforces in the National Park.	A completed review document drawn from a volunteering workshop held for (green) volunteering organisations across the National Park.
VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT Objective 4	Set up a volunteer database for PCNPA to record volunteer input and facilitate communication with volunteers.	December 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator IT support Area/Discovery Ranger Teams	As part of the developing activity database we aim to have a co-ordinated park wide database for recording volunteer activity. Data on volunteering needs to be regularly input within defined parameters and progress measured against baselines.
Objective 4	Develop volunteer newsletter	April 2014	Area/Discovery Ranger Teams	Review role of existing newsletter and develop to become an effective communication tool for all PCNPA volunteers.
Objective 4	Prepare task descriptions for volunteer opportunities.	September 2014 and ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator and volunteer managers	All tasks involving volunteers to be described in task descriptions. Existing tasks need descriptions and the role of task description embedded in the recruitment of new volunteers.

Objective 4	Provide guidance and support in volunteer recruitment.	October 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Working Group	Good practice guidance on volunteer recruitment produced and adhered to by volunteer managers
RESOURCES Objective 2 Objective 4	Allocate administration time to oversee management of volunteer recruitment, monitoring and evaluation.	December 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Working Group	In setting out to achieve the key aims of the strategy a more co-ordinated administrative role would make the collection of data and overall communication with volunteers more effective. Time could be allocated from existing staff resources to pilot this role.
Objective 4	Identify budgets for volunteer activity to include training (staff and volunteers), equipment and promotion.	December 2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer working group	External funding may be appropriate for some of the resources required. We should also seek to allocate some core funding for volunteer development.
TRAINING Objective 2 Objective 4	Volunteer Management	January 2015	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Managers	Put in place volunteer management training opportunities.
Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 4	Training for volunteers	Ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Working Group Volunteer managers	Both paid for and in house training can be used to up skill volunteers involved in PCNPA's work. A programme of opportunities would demonstrate good practice in this area.
PARTNERSHIPS Objective 3 Objective 4	Develop closer link with PAVS and make better use of services offered in terms of volunteering infrastructure.	Ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator	PAVS provide a range of services to support volunteering. PCNPA should explore options for joint working with PAVS.
Objective 2 Objective 3	Develop links with groups and organisations involved in heritage/conservation volunteering across the National Park.	October 2014 Ongoing	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Working Group	Hold National Park volunteering event invite National Trust, Wildlife Trust, Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park. etc. Set-up regular communication with others engaged with volunteering.

Objective 3	Develop closer working links with community and voluntary groups across the National Park. Produce a short paper on the potential for increased work in this area across arrange of PCNPA functions.	2015	Volunteer Co-ordinator	Explore options for more pro-active engagement with groups. Identify specific areas of work and projects that can be delivered.
PROJECTS Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 4	Build on the opportunities for volunteers and volunteering in existing projects such as Your Park, Walkability and Orchards Project.	2014/15	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Managers Project Officers	Build on good practice identified in projects Ensure projects optimize the involvement of volunteers. The resource provided by externally funded projects can help PCNPA achieve its objectives in developing volunteering.
Objective 1 Objective 3	Develop and deliver one new project with volunteering as the main focus.	2014	Volunteer Co-ordinator Volunteer Working Group Partner organisation	Submit bids for agreed volunteering projects based on identified priorities.

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6. Monitoring and Evaluation

It will be important to measure how successful we are in achieving the overall objectives of the strategy and the in completing the associated actions. In order for this to happen we will adopt the monitoring and evaluation plan outlined below.

Measure	Method of recording	When and who
No. of volunteer days	Volunteer leader records submitted *We aim would to create a new volunteering record sheet to be filled in monthly by volunteer managers	Volunteer managers submit data to admin support on a monthly basis.
No. of individual volunteers	Volunteer leader records submitted	Volunteer managers submit data to admin support on a monthly basis.
Breadth of volunteer engagement across the National Park	Task descriptions logged by those (staff) requiring volunteer support and number of roles filled	Descriptions saved in central folder. Managers inform admin support when roles are filled.
Contributions to National Park Management.	Volunteer leader records submitted detailed contributions across a range of categories. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland management (hectares) • Foot path improve created (metres) • School groups worked with • Activities led 	Volunteers managers submit data to admin support on a monthly basis.
Inclusivity of volunteer engagement	Data collected from volunteer enrolment forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of birth • Postcode • Existing employment status • Reason for volunteering 	Volunteers submit forms upon successful recruitment. Information logged on database.
Volunteer management capability	No. of staff and key volunteers attending volunteer management training	From training records annually.
Partnership projects engaging with volunteers.	External partners involved External funds attracted	Data collected by Volunteer Co-ordinator and reported annually.
Overall progress in delivering against strategic goals, objectives and actions.	Work progressed through the Volunteer Working Group across the organisation. Data/evidence sets collected using the methods described above.	Data collected by Volunteer Co-ordinator and reported annually.
Volunteer satisfaction	Volunteer Forum feedback Evaluation and feedback received from individual volunteers.	Evidence collected from Volunteer Forum meeting by Volunteer Co-ordinator. Volunteers invited to respond to survey on annual basis.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan

Appendices

Appendix i Draft Volunteer Charter for PCNPA

The Volunteer Charter would comprise part of the induction for all PCNPA volunteers. It sets out what a volunteer might reasonably expect as part of their volunteering experience for PCNPA, as well as giving an indication what the Authority might expect from its volunteers. The Charter would not be used with groups and organisations, only individuals volunteering for Authority activity. The Charter does not represent any kind of contractual agreement between PCNPA and a volunteer.

PCNPA Volunteers Charter



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2014 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority undertook a review of the way it manages one of its most valuable assets, the volunteers who contribute their time in supporting the conservation work and activity delivery the Authority undertakes across the National Park.
- 1.2 The debates and discussions identified standards to which the Authority should work. It designed systems which are needed to ensure that we do not forget to review and update continually how individuals' contributions to the work of the Authority change as the organisation grows. The Authority is working towards a set of 'common standards for volunteering', which are widely recognised.
- 1.3 The Volunteer Charter comprises Statement, Recruitment, Management, Review and Communications.

2. CHARTER STATEMENT

- 2.1 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority adopted the Volunteer Charter in ??? as a guide to how everyone in the organisation should work with volunteers.
- 2.2 ***The Authority values volunteers and accordingly they will:***
 - *Receive an induction to the organisation and the role which they are to undertake;*
 - *Have access to training and development where it is relevant to their role;*
 - *Be given the opportunity for an annual review;*
 - *Be supplied with adequate tools, equipment and safety protection;*
 - *Have the right to a safe and healthy environment;*
 - *Be given opportunities for rest and refreshment;*
 - *Be paid appropriate out-of-pocket expenses.****Volunteers do not:***
 - *Have the status of employees;*
 - *Have the right to receive payment for any work done in their capacity as volunteer by or on behalf of the Authority;*
 - *Have the right to require the Authority to provide them with any particular volunteering opportunity;*
 - *Have the right to receive to receive holiday pay or sick pay.****The Authority does not:***
 - *Have the right to require volunteers to attend for work;*
 - *Have the right to require volunteers to undertake a particular task.*
- 2.3 Volunteers have the protection of the Authority's public liability insurance, both if they are the victims of injury or if they cause injury to others. However, volunteers do not have the status of employees, the right to receive payment for any work done in their capacity as volunteer by or on behalf of the Trust nor the right to work on any particular day or in any particular role or at any particular place. Whilst every effort will be made to make maximum use of the volunteer's time in a way most beneficial to the Authority and most enjoyable for the volunteer, the decision to allocate work amongst volunteers is a matter for the appropriate managers.

- 2.4 Volunteers may be involved less than once a year or every day. They may be in a key role or simply offering an extra pair of hands; all are valued equally.
- 2.5 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority operates an Equal Opportunities Policy that applies to everyone.
- 2.6 Volunteers should abide by the policies of the Authority. These policies are designed to support both volunteers and paid staff in their work for the organisation.

3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 Volunteers are recruited through different routes. They may come through various recruitment methods: by referral from the volunteer bureaux; from local groups; from personal recruitment; or by other means.
- 3.2 Volunteers will, generally, be interviewed by a member of staff or key volunteer prior to engagement. Dependent upon the nature of their anticipated role, volunteers may be asked to provide references or undergo a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check if this is adjudged to be necessary.
- 3.3 Volunteers wishing to work with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to appropriate checks and references as regards to their suitability, in order to comply with the Children's Act 1989.

4. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Authority will provide support commensurate to the volunteer's role. Each recruit will be issued with a description of the work they are to do, an induction to the organisation, an introduction to the role and what is expected of them, as well as access to the review system where appropriate, the Health & Safety Policy, together with instruction and equipment appropriate to meet any identified risk in the activity, access to agreed expenses and any additional support if required as part of the volunteers role.
- 4.2.1 Each volunteer will have a line manager who is responsible for that individual's work. The manager may be either paid or voluntary. In normal circumstances any problems should be referred to the line manager.
- 4.3 Volunteers should abide by Policies which include: i) Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
 ii) Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- 4.3.1 If a volunteer has a grievance about their voluntary work, this should be brought to the attention of their line manager (paid or voluntary) first of all. If the situation cannot be resolved at this stage, the process would continue through the Authority's management as appropriate.
- 4.3.2 An Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, which outlines the Authority's commitment in trying to ensure that the organisation is free from this type of behaviour is available. The policy outlines the Authority's procedure for dealing with cases of harassment and bullying and provides useful information for anyone concerned about these issues.
- 4.3.3 In the unlikely event of a volunteer needing to be disciplined for misconduct or unsatisfactory work or behaviour, the matter should first be discussed with their line manager (paid or voluntary) who may issue a verbal warning if appropriate. As with the grievance procedure, if the matter cannot be resolved at the earliest informal stage, the process would continue through the Authority's management as appropriate. In cases of gross misconduct eg. theft, assault, falsification of records or misconduct of such a nature that the Authority is justified in no longer tolerating the volunteer's presence he or she will be liable to instant exclusion. This process is similar to that applied to staff, but does not in any way convey employment rights on volunteers.

5. VOLUNTEER REVIEW

- 5.1 Everyone who works for the Authority has access to appropriate training and development, where it is relevant to their role. The individual's training and development needs are identified by the review system. Where appropriate the opportunity for a review will be offered to volunteers on an annual basis by the line manager.
- 5.2 The Review meeting, if requested, will take place once a year. The discussion can be written up and used as a record for comparison in following years.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 The volunteer newsletter is produced twice a year. Volunteers are encouraged to contribute articles.

Appendix ii Draft Common Standards for Volunteering

This draft set of standards is used by the Investors in Volunteers programme to guide organisations in achieving 'high standards' in volunteering.

- i. There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation
- ii. The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with volunteers such as money, management, staff time and materials
- iii. The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community, in accordance with the organisation's stated aims, and operates procedures to facilitate this
- iv. The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, and which are of value to the volunteers and create an environment where they can develop
- v. The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering
- vi. The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers
- vii. The organisation takes a considered approach to taking up references and official checks which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers, bearing in mind the nature of the work
- viii. Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel
- ix. Everybody in the organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition
- x. The organisation takes account of the varying support needs of volunteers

Appendix iii Sample task description for a volunteer role

Task descriptions are bit like job descriptions for volunteers. Task descriptions will be written for all volunteer activity. When a new role for volunteers is identified a task description is written. The presence of a description will provide greater clarity for volunteers in understanding their role, they will help inform the volunteer recruitment process and contribute to the effective management of volunteers.

PCNPA Volunteer Task Description - Activity Volunteer

Purpose:

Activity Volunteers assist and support Activity Leaders with activities and events for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

Duties/activities:

- Meeting and greeting attendees at National Park Authority activities and events
- Helping to collect money, and give out necessary paperwork
- Back-marking – the duties of a back-marker are to walk at the rear of a group and to ensure that no one is left behind, and to encourage the rear of the group to keep up with the front.
- To help participants to take part in an activity. For example, helping them to use equipment, spotter guides etc.
- To provide encouragement and ‘enthusiastic support’ for those taking part.
- Be cheerful, friendly and helpful
- Attending pre-season briefing for activity volunteers and other training opportunities as appropriate

Time scale: Most of the annual activities take place during the April to September period. Volunteers are able to sign up to activities for which they wish to volunteer, although we can't guarantee a volunteering opportunity for any given activity.

Site: Volunteers are required for activities at a variety of locations across the National Park, but can opt for venues more local to home if desired.

Supervision: Activity Volunteers work with the relevant activity leaders at each event and will be contacted by the leader ahead of the event to make necessary arrangements.

Activity Leaders are managed by the Discovery Ranger team and the Rangers will be a point of contact in addressing any issues that might arise in the course of volunteering and in ensuring health and safety, monitoring and other requirements are met.

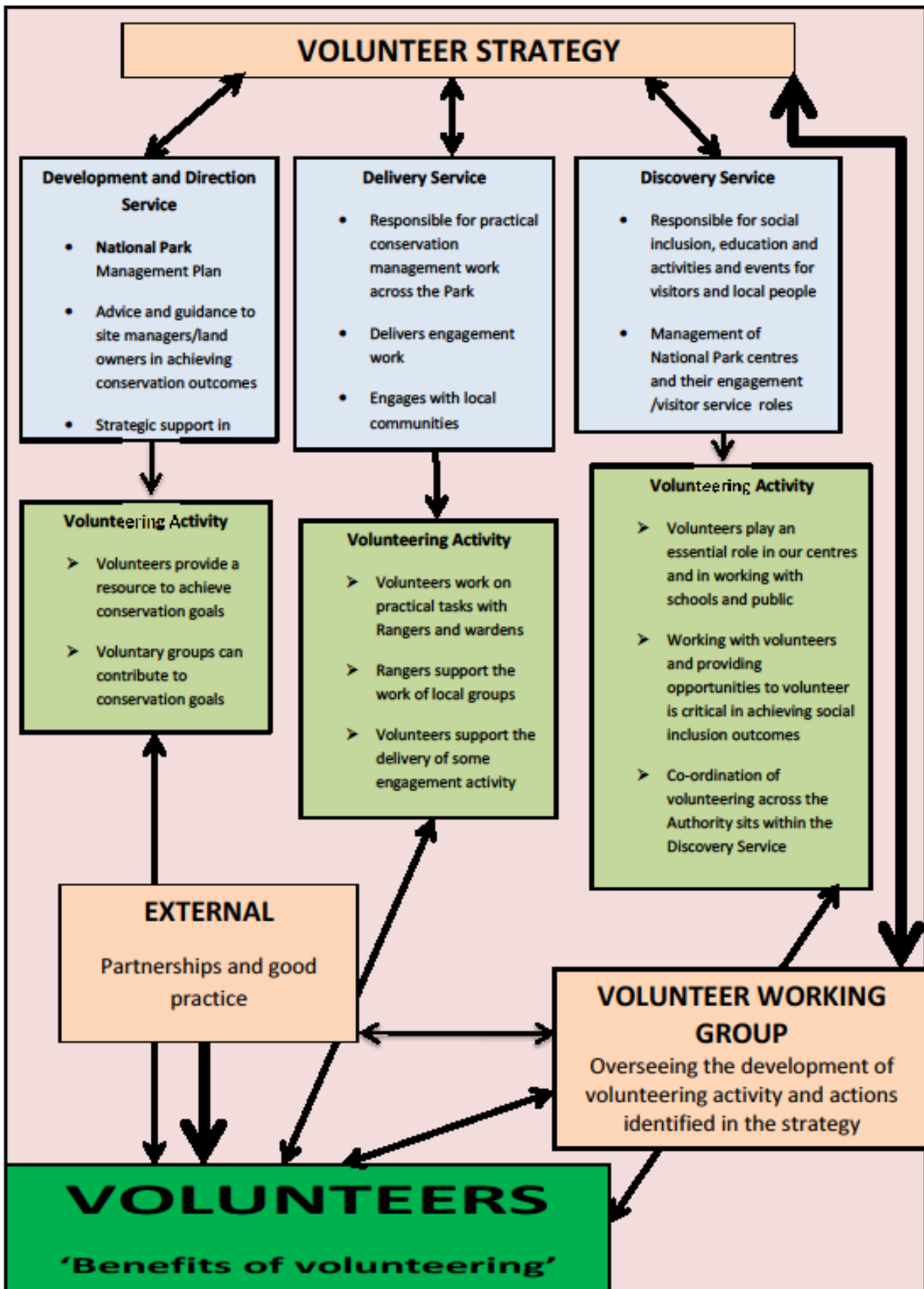
Qualities: Ultimately, the very best Activity Leaders are not simply an extra pair of hands, but ambassadors for the National Park, and Pembrokeshire.

Activity Volunteers should be able to engage with members of the public, talk to them about their interest in the National Park and suggest other activities and events they might try, or places to visit or eat out at. They are people who talk about the National Park, and what makes it special.

Benefits:

- An Activity Leader's briefing is provided each year
- Training opportunities will be available from time to time, there will also be opportunities to learn as part of the activities on offer
- A National Park branded top is provided
- Expenses are reimbursed
- We are able to provide references, certificates of attendance etc as appropriate.

TABLE 2 Proposed structure for supporting the development of volunteering at PCNPA



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan

Annexe to the Document

The Annexe to the document contains the review and consultation work which informed the development of the strategy and its objectives. It includes:

- (1) A description and assessment of the present situation with regard to volunteering at PCNPA based on responses to questions taken from the Investing in Volunteers quality indicators.
- (2) External review and consultation - influencing factors and consultation responses
- (3) Environmental volunteering in Pembrokeshire – audit of opportunities
- (4) Background and analysis - volunteering and volunteers

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Part 1: What's happening now?

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is an organisation that is used to working with volunteers. Many elements of the Authority's core activity fit well with work that volunteers often wish to do and, evidence suggests, can achieve successfully. Whilst in some organisations volunteers are engaged at different levels and with a range of different tasks, at PCNPA volunteering tends to focus on practical conservation and estate management together with supporting roles in delivering engagement activities provided for National Park visitors.

This section provides an analysis of how the Authority works with volunteers at present. It does this in response to a series of questions which are drawn from the quality indicators for the 'Investing in Volunteers' standard³.

i. Does PCNPA demonstrate a commitment to the involvement of volunteers in its work, recognising throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process, which benefits volunteers and the organisation?

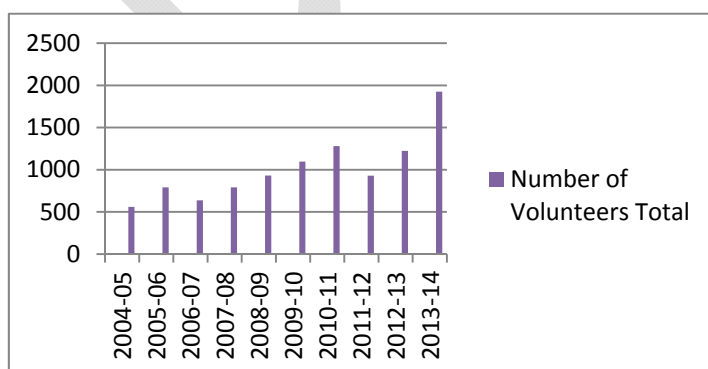
Since the establishment of a National Park in Pembrokeshire in 1952 volunteers have played an important role in assisting with its management. The National Park Authority's Voluntary Warden Service dates back to the 1960s and in the 1980s the Park had a dedicated Volunteers' Coordinator. Over the last ten years the numbers of volunteers involved in the work of the Park has increased (See table 1), with volunteers being drawn from an increasingly large pool of local groups, organisations and communities. In 2013-14 the Area Ranger team delivered over 225 separate 'sessions' for volunteers, with just under 2,000 volunteer days contributed.

Volunteering is undertaken through two distinct routes, both of which have merit in establishing a volunteer workforce across the National Park. Firstly, volunteer days are contributed by groups and organisations volunteering, often this type of volunteering is a one-off, although some individuals may choose to volunteer in the more regularly. There are around 90 individual volunteers who regularly volunteer, in the main through the Ranger teams (Discovery and Delivery) as Voluntary Wardens (VWs), but also as activity leaders and assistants.

Work with groups and organisations enables relatively large numbers of people to get a flavour of working with the Park and gain an understanding of the work of the Authority. Where possible, benefits relating to health, inclusion, education and sustainability have been included in our engagement with these volunteers, which in turn has supported a wider programme of community engagement for the NPA.

There are independent groups that regularly volunteer in the National Park, the most significant being the Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park, who run regular work parties in the National Park undertaking a variety of practical tasks and projects.

Table 1. No. of volunteers days contributed through the Area Ranger Team 2004-14



³ Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for volunteer management. The Standard comprises of nine indicators of volunteer management best practice. (<http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/images/stories/Investing-In-Volunteers/Documents/Other/The%20IiV%20Standard.pdf0>)

Whilst the Authority has overarching strategic guidance that supports our work with volunteers there is no strategic policy that relates specifically to volunteering. Until the last few years the majority of the work with volunteers has been led through the Ranger service which has meant that most planning and direction has been at Section Plan level and has developed without an Authority-wide approach.

The National Park's Management Plan identifies the value of volunteering in helping to manage the National Park, its heritage and habitats, whilst the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Corporate Plans set out improvement outcomes, which the National Park Authority will work towards over the next few years. All work or activity by our staff contributes to achieving one or more of the strategic outcomes. Volunteering is not referred to explicitly here, but voluntary activity has the capacity to contribute to all of the defined outcomes.

The National Parks in Wales Social Inclusion & Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2012-14 recognises that opportunities for volunteering are important in promoting inclusivity within National Parks. The strategy states that:

- NPA's should work with local communities to help them value the National Park and encourage them to be proactive in conserving it.
- NP facilities and services should be available to a wide audience including disabled people and/or poor health, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged communities, those on low incomes and young people. Central to this process will be the involvement of representative groups who can give a "lived experience" perspective
- NPA's should contribute to reducing inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children.

Pembrokeshire's Single Integrated Plan (SIP), an overarching policy document produced by the County's Local Service Board (LSB), recognises the need to 'promote volunteering opportunities' across a range of policy areas from children and young people to environment, health and wellbeing. PCNPA is one of the local partners committed to delivering against the SIP.

The Authority's existing work with volunteers does in part address some of desired outcomes highlighted in the policies above. In particular, we can demonstrate the breadth of engagement with National Park volunteering, especially where volunteers are drawn from local groups and organisations. We can also show that the contributions of volunteers have been directed towards their involvement in the conservation of landscape environment and culture. There are also good examples of where National Park staff and volunteers have worked with local communities in conserving the National Park.

Volunteers actively contribute to work across two service areas in the National Park, Park Delivery and Park Discovery, but within these areas involvement is limited to well defined, narrow roles. Elsewhere within the Authority the contribution of volunteers is limited.

Employees working at various levels have experience of work with volunteers, although few have this area of work identified in their job description. In general, volunteers are engaged to undertake specific duties or to fill a particular role. The benefits of volunteering are understood, but when roles are designed/identified these benefits are not given a high priority in developing the role.

ii. Does PCNPA commit appropriate resources to volunteering, such as money, management, staff-time and materials?

PCNPA has an officer, whose role includes that of 'Volunteer Co-ordinator' (Discovery Team Leader). However, no single person in the Authority has responsibility for all activity relating to volunteers and volunteering. Within the Authority there is considerable expertise/experience in working with volunteers and various officers across the organisation have roles which include a specific involvement with volunteering or whose responsibilities touch upon this area of work. However, at present co-ordination of volunteering effort is limited in terms of recruitment, selection and support for volunteers. It is intended that this document will indicate an appropriate framework for this within the Authority.

Volunteering is discussed as a topic within various staff meetings, although this tends to be on an irregular basis. Discussion varies from issues around volunteer management to mechanisms for engaging specific groups of volunteers. There is no single forum for these discussions.

Allocated internal budgets that can be applied to the support, management, training and development of volunteers exist. Rangers in the Delivery Team have small budgets to support the running of Voluntary Warden Teams (PPE, transport etc). Similar budgets exist in the Discovery Service and in particular within the Llanion-based Discovery Team. However, allocations are small and cover only PPE and transport with little available for training, management and support. Outside core budgets, the Authority has been successful in gaining support for projects such as Your Park and Walkability where funds are allocated to the training and support of volunteers, although tied to the specific objectives of the project.

Evaluation of the impact of volunteering is measured across the Authority in terms of 'number of volunteer days (Ffynnon, Welsh Government performance management system). There are also feedback mechanisms for volunteers, but qualitative data which might help us to evaluate our volunteer programmes is patchy.

iii. Is the National Park Authority open to involving volunteers that reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims?

Whilst the organisation is open in principal to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, in practice we have limited opportunities to offer individuals and do very little targeting of potential volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds except through our work with groups and organisations (see below). There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the existing regular volunteer workforce is drawn predominantly from a narrow range of socio economic groups, however it is difficult to get a clear picture of diversity from the data we have available at present.

There is strong evidence that group/organisational volunteering and some project delivery (the Big Lottery funded Your Park project for example) is more successful in engaging with volunteers from diverse backgrounds. However, it is difficult to sustain this type of volunteering both at an individual and group/organisation level without prolonged interventions by Authority staff. It seems likely that access to training, transport and equipment are amongst the barriers limiting the regular involvement of groups and organisations. There is also a reported lack of appropriate tasks available around the National Park suitable for this type of volunteering.

Projects such as the CNP (Campaign for National Parks) led Mosaic project promote diversity amongst staff and volunteers in the organisation. Mosaic Champions have the opportunity to become regular volunteers or ambassadors for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, a move which we hope in time will lead to the active engagement of more people from black minority ethnic (BME) communities.

Young people do have the opportunity to volunteer with the National Park, most often through the route of group/organisational volunteering. More regular volunteering by young people is undertaken through the Voluntary Warden scheme and through the Your Park led Youth Rangers. There is a clear opportunity to engage with young people at different levels in our organisation, perhaps following the model of Pembrokeshire's Youth Assembly as mechanism to give young people a voice across the National Park. Volunteering might also be used as a mechanism to increase the employability of local young people; this would be work that might complement the recently launched PCNPA Skills for Action traineeship

For those wishing to volunteer for the National Park there is very little information available. This is partly a function of the limited opportunities for volunteering through PCNPA at present, but it might suggest to those interested that volunteering is not valued within the organisation. When opportunities do become available, their availability is not always communicated widely so that new audiences may be unaware of the chance to become involved.

Information about volunteering and getting involved with our work does not in general present images /descriptions of a diverse group of people being involved in this work. We should be able to build on the existing

involvement of volunteers from different backgrounds to communicate a picture of 'volunteering opportunities open to all'.

iv. Does the National Park Authority develop appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims, objectives and core values?

At present we do not have a 'description' outlined for each volunteer role; however, for some roles task descriptions do exist (See appendix). Existing descriptions do refer to the necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role, but there is no consistency in this approach currently.

The range of tasks made available for volunteers is limited predominantly to (non-technical) conservation and access management and supporting roles in the Authority's engagement activity. Few in the existing volunteer workforce are required to have specific skills, or in most cases make use of the skill set acquired outside of their volunteering for the National Park. There is anecdotal evidence that some retired volunteers do not wish to be called upon to make use of the skills they developed during their working life, instead they are happy take on less demanding roles. There are exceptions to this, for example the recently established Volunteer Walk Leader programme and volunteer wardens who undertake survey or visitor management roles for example.

Practical tasks are chosen to reflect the skills and abilities of the volunteer workforce. Where a group or organisation approach the NPA for volunteering activity we aim to provide tailored activity appropriate to the group. It is generally the case that groups and organisations approach the Authority for these opportunities when required, in these cases the providers of volunteer have to be re-active in identifying suitable work and/or resources, sometimes it is difficult to meet the demands of groups in this respect.

v. Is PCNPA able to demonstrate that as far as possible volunteers are fairly recruited and have clear induction procedures?

The recruitment process for volunteers is poorly defined at present with different staff/teams taking different approaches to recruitment and selection. Best practice is to undertake short interviews with potential volunteers, but this does not happen in all cases and there is limited guidance available to staff in this respect.

The written information that the Authority is able to provide to volunteers is limited. There is no information that reflects the organisations procedures for recruitment, selection and/or ongoing support. As previously mentioned some tasks are matched by written descriptions which can be provided for people interested in specific roles.

While the personal details of volunteers are collected for health and safety purposes (in line with data protection legislation), no information is collected about the skill sets of volunteers and/or their motivation for volunteering with PCNPA.

Potential volunteers do receive feedback if their application is unsuccessful, however there is no protocol for this and the information provided is likely to be of an inconsistent quality. At present only some individuals in this group are signposted to other organisations as appropriate. Often volunteers are given the opportunity to 'try out' a role before committing to volunteering on a more regular basis.

When required, volunteers are subject to the same checks as paid staff and ongoing management and monitoring. For example, where a volunteer will be working with children and or vulnerable adults this is a compulsory policy.

In other respects the policies and guidance associated with volunteer management are poorly developed and do not reflect best practice in this area. In some cases existing (more general) policy and guidance could be adapted to account for the needs of volunteers involved in the organisation. Examples might include induction, disciplinary and complaints procedures.

All volunteers are provided with basic instruction in relation to their required duties. There is often a significant amount of work-based learning where volunteers develop new skills as part of their role – indeed, some

volunteers receive a significant amount of training in order to undertake their role. A good example is the Walk Leader volunteers, who receive a minimum of four days training before they are viewed as competent to undertake their role. In 2013 the Area Ranger team started an annual volunteer training programme providing training on topics related to volunteering in the National Park. However, in general the availability of training is patchy and lacks a co-ordinated approach.

vi. Can PCNPA demonstrate that when volunteering, individuals are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm and that account is taken of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers?

The Authority assesses the potential risk to volunteers when designing volunteer roles. It ensures that volunteers are competent to undertake their roles and there is ongoing monitoring to ensure this competency remains in place. All activities involving volunteers are subject to specific risk assessments which are reviewed annually. However there is no Authority wide guidance in this area. PCNPA are covered by adequate insurance for the tasks volunteers undertake across the Authority.

Volunteers are aware that they are able to claim out-of-pocket expenses, although in practice only a small number of our volunteers make regular claims for expenses.

One-to-one line management is not offered to volunteers on a regular basis, but volunteers can request meetings with line managers. Some groups of volunteers receive support in the form of 'briefing' sessions where a group of volunteers with similar roles are invited to meet and a range of issues and concerns are addressed in these forums. Voluntary Wardens are invited to give feedback at the biennial Voluntary Wardens meeting (see below).

At present we do not receive feedback from volunteers in an organised/systematic way outside the forums described above.

vii. The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition for their contribution

Across the organisation the contribution of volunteers is valued although this is not always reflected in the profile given to their contributions.

A biennial Voluntary Wardens gathering is organised which brings together a number of Park volunteers. Managers attend the event and ensure that volunteers are thanked for the work they have undertaken. Recognition of the contribution of specific groups of volunteers and individuals is also undertaken, at briefings, via electronic communication and through the regularly produced volunteers newsletter. The newsletter includes content that tells the story of particular volunteer activity combined with topical and articles focussing on aspects of the National Park.

The Campaign for National Parks runs a national Volunteer Award scheme for those involved in volunteering across the 15 National Parks in the UK. Pembrokeshire Coast NPA aim to submit at least one entry from the Park and encourages a wide range of entries that are representative of our volunteering effort.

There is no effective mechanism for the wider involvement and engagement of volunteers in the work of the National Park. Whilst consultation is undertaken across a range of issues relating to the National Park there is no targeted consultation with volunteers except where the issue has direct relevance to their activity.

While it must be recognised that not all volunteers wish to develop their volunteering into a future career or take on extra voluntary responsibilities, the role of volunteer can present opportunities to develop skills and abilities, some of which can lead to increased employability. The Authority could do more in this area, providing volunteering roles that build on existing experience/skill sets and in some cases, this can be supplemented by training (both internal and external).

Volunteers who leave the organisation, having made a regular commitment are offered a reference and/or other statement of their achievements on request. However, we do not routinely obtain feedback from volunteers leaving the organisation.

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Part 2: Influencing factors and consultation responses

In determining our objectives as an organisation working with volunteers we must take account of our existing work in this area (Section 3). In addition the strategy's objectives must also be informed by existing strategic guidance and policy, the views of stake holders and evidence of need.

Table 2 Factors informing PCNPA's objectives in working with volunteers

Source	Evidence
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan (PCNPA 2008)	<p>The plan explores "Quality of Life" across the National Park and recognises exclusion as a significant issue in accessing a range of services. It is suggested that the National Park can contribute to improving quality of life in many ways. An inclusive volunteer engagement programme could help in addressing many of the highlighted issues.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the Plan, it seems that effective engagement with local people as volunteers would be able to make a contribution to conservation in the National Park. Volunteering can also make a contribution to increased understanding of the National Park.</p>
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Improvement Plan (PCNPA Feb 2013)	<p>The document sets out PCNPA's corporate priorities in the years ahead and sets specific targets for the National Park Authority (see Table 1). Volunteering is not referred to explicitly in the 4 Improvement Outcomes, but voluntary activity has the capacity to contribute to all of the defined outcomes.</p> <p>Outcome 2 sets out to ensure "Residents and visitors from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy, appreciate and understand the National Park". It highlights "The number of volunteers involved with National Park activities increases in both number and range of skills involved" as a measure of success against this outcome.</p>
Pembrokeshire Single Integrated Plan 2013-18 (Pembrokeshire Local Service Board 2013)	<p>Pembrokeshire's Single Integrated Plan recognises a role for volunteers and volunteering in achieving positive outcomes for local people. Although there are few explicit references to volunteering, key outcomes such as those highlighted below provide opportunities for volunteer input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people and families have the opportunity to fulfil their learning potential and to live healthy and happy lives • People in Pembrokeshire enjoy an attractive, sustainable and diverse environment
The National Parks in Wales Social Inclusion & Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2012-14 (Pembrokeshire Coast, Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons NPA's 2012)	<p>The Welsh National Parks Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan (2012-14) recognises the value of voluntary activity in helping to ensure that National Parks are inclusive settings, providing opportunities for all. Many of the desired outcomes identified in the plan can be at least partly achieved through the involvement of volunteers in the National Park from "The National Park Authority working inclusively in local partnerships" to "Improving health outcomes for people through their use of the National Park".</p>
UK National Parks Volunteer Co-ordinators meeting	<p>Annual meetings of UK National Park Volunteers Co-ordinators organised by National Parks UK have contributed examples of good practice to inform the content of this strategy.</p>
Green volunteering in Wales: Building on good practice (WCVA 2012)	<p>The report identifies the benefits of green volunteering as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to try something new • Learning through getting involved • The opportunity to meet other people • Developing interpersonal skills and confidence • Collaborative interest in the outdoors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased wellbeing (physical, social and mental) • Increased skills and experience to develop employability <p>The report also identifies barriers to involvement in ‘green volunteering’ which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The personal circumstances of a potential volunteer • Access needs • Health issues • Lack of confidence • Costs of getting involved • Fear of the outdoors/dislike of bad weather. <p>The report highlights a number of case studies which reflect on good practice and how to overcome real and perceived barriers both for the organisation and the potential volunteer.</p>
<p>Volunteering and Forestry Commission Wales: Scope, opportunities, and Barriers (Forest Research 2014)</p>	<p>Provides a useful case study of an organisation already engaged involved in volunteering wishing to develop its offer in this area. One aspect of this is looking at organisational barriers to the development of volunteering. It suggests that the most significant barriers are “connected with clear policy steer, organisational resources and capacity”.</p>
<p>The National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales (Participation Cymru and TPAS Cymru, 2010)</p>	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is signed up to the principles outlined below as a public body in Wales. The 10 principles set out a framework for communication, participation in a broad sense. Volunteering can be seen as part of this spectrum of engagement, where individuals are actively contributing in some way. The principles do suggest that the volunteer workforce might also be engaged in other ways with the work of the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference • Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose • Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way • Work with relevant partner organisations • The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable • Make it easier for people to take part • Enable people to take part effectively • Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective • People are told the impact of their contribution • Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement.
<p>Together for Health (NHS Wales and Welsh Government, 2011)</p>	<p>There is no explicit reference to volunteering in this strategic document, however it is clear from a range of research sources that volunteering can make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of individuals in many ways, from providing respite (and assisting with recovery) from mental illness to helping rehabilitation following a physical illness/injury.</p> <p>Welsh Government ‘challenge’ public services to focus on how health can be improved through alignment of services. “Better health for all is not just about what the NHS does, but about work, the environment, leisure and family life”. Volunteering has a role to play in this respect.</p>
<p>PCNPA consultation with volunteers and workforce (Consultation undertaken to inform the strategy, 2013)</p>	<p>In order to gauge the views of those involved and/or with an interest in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority’s approach to volunteering a wide ranging consultation exercise was undertaken. A more detailed analysis of the consultation undertaken with volunteers and the Authority’s workforce is given in the Annexe to this strategy. Below is a short summary</p>

of some of the key points:

- There are resource implications to expanding our volunteer offer at PCNPA
- There is concern that volunteers might take on roles/tasks at present undertaken by paid members of staff
- Some existing volunteers are enthusiastic about taking on more responsibility
- The skill sets of some existing volunteers are under-utilised in the tasks they carry out at present
- A relatively high proportion of our existing staff have experience of working with volunteers
- Only a handful of staff receive training in volunteer management
- Some volunteers would welcome more involvement in developing roles
- Delivery Plans/JD's do not always highlight work with volunteers as a priority/key responsibility
- Amongst some of the PCNPA workforce there is a view that voluntary support is not necessary for the Authority to continue its services.
- Across the National Parks in the UK there are examples of good practice and staff with a range of skills, knowledge and experience in relation volunteers and volunteering
- The Authority recognises the need to engage with communities and work in partnership in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation. Voluntary activity has the potential to contribute significantly in this respect.
- There is a clear difference between working with established groups and organisations – where we pick up the group and work with them and (on the other hand) recruiting individual volunteers who are involved in specific activity for which they volunteer. Both types of volunteer have a role in helping to care for and promote understanding of the National Park. A cost/benefit analysis of the respective roles is likely to reveal benefits to both the Authority and the individuals concerned in both approaches.
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has always recognised and valued the role of volunteers in contributing to the management of the National Park and promoting a wider understanding of its key features. However, the extent to which volunteers are engaged with the Authority's work is limited when compared to some National Parks in the UK.
- Volunteers can contribute to the work of the NPA in ways other than time given to completing tasks
 - As ambassadors for our work
 - Promoting the National Park
 - Networking in other aspects of their lives with positive PR about PCNP.
- The breadth of work undertaken by PCNPA provides many opportunities for volunteer input and support. Volunteers might be involved in:
 - Practical estate/conservation management work
 - Engagement/learning activity
 - Visitor services
 - Ecological survey/data collection

	➤ Support services.
Additional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The localism and empowerment agenda will continue to empower communities to do things their way and diversify the supply of public services. Volunteering and voluntary activity will continue to be part of this agenda. • A role is evolving for National Parks that sees them and NPAs increasingly contributing to activity that benefits our most disadvantaged communities and individuals. Volunteering already provides an opportunity for National Parks to be more inclusive, providing opportunities that contribute to the employability, health and wellbeing of individuals as well as developing key skills such as team working and communication. • Volunteering provides opportunities to develop partnership working with other groups and organisations actively engaging with volunteers in and around the National Park. Sharing the training and development of volunteers might be outcomes from this approach to developing our volunteering work.

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Part 3: Volunteering in Pembrokeshire

Given the high quality natural environment and associated heritage in Pembrokeshire it is unsurprising that numerous groups, organisations and agencies are engaged in volunteer supported activity in and around the National Park.

The table below summarises who's involved and provides an assessment of their volunteer involving activity.

Name of group/organisation	Area of activity	Extent of activity
Community Councils	Various projects many associated with the environment	There are 70 Community Councils in Pembrokeshire and whilst they are not voluntary organisations in themselves, much of the activity undertaken is done in a voluntary capacity. Some CCs have affiliated or link groups whose focus is conservation/ environment.
Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	Practical and engagement projects in support of National Park purpose	<p>The Friends organise working parties which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park. Practical conservation work is done with National Park staff, but the volunteer group sometimes works independently on specific projects</p> <p>There is a Friends events programme offering talks, guided visits and walks. The group also produce a regular newsletter.</p>
Keep Wales Tidy	Beach cleans and community-based projects	<p>Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) is an independent national charity working towards 'a clean, safe and tidy Wales'. KWT is responsible for delivering community engagement projects across Wales and is a key partner in the Tidy Towns initiative. KWT helps people to take responsibility for their own local environment.</p> <p>In Pembrokeshire one of the most prominent aspects of the organisations work is their role in organising beach cleans. Each year many of these events are undertaken with hundreds of volunteers taking part</p>
The National Trust	Estate and conservation management, visitor and engagement services	<p>The National Trust announced in September 2013 that there are now 70,000 people working with the conservation charity as volunteers, taking part in activities ranging from spring cleaning stately homes to running a toad patrol to keep the amphibians safe on busy roads. The number of people giving their time to the Trust has doubled in the past 10 years.</p> <p>In Pembrokeshire the National Trust's estate is predominantly made up of countryside properties and so a high proportion of volunteering is either practical conservation or environmental education and engagement activities. Volunteers are a mix of local people and those from further afield. A significant number of volunteer days are contributed by those on working holidays and volunteer programmes involving people from outside Pembrokeshire.</p> <p>The Pembrokeshire National Trust Association has more than 300 members from all areas of Pembrokeshire and beyond</p>
PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services)	An organisation that assists others in the sector to recruit volunteers for their work. PAVS also provides support and training to the voluntary sector in Pembrokeshire	<p>PAVS' Volunteering Pembrokeshire service offers information, advice and guidance to people who are looking for volunteering opportunities. In partnership with WCVA they provide a regularly updated database of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Training and support for volunteers and organisations working with volunteers is also part of the PAVS offer. There is a regular newsletter produced for Pembrokeshire volunteers.</p>

Pembroke 21C Community Association	Environmental projects	Pembroke 21C CIC is a Social Enterprise which develops and implements revenue raising projects to provide a source of income for the charity, Pembroke 21C Community Association. Their projects provide training in conservation and woodland management skills as well as employment, revenue for the local community, improve disused working lands, benefit local environment and improve health and wellbeing. The activities that take place are based on real working environments to provide jobs and income whilst also improving biodiversity and habitats, and providing volunteering and leisure time activities.
Pembrokeshire County Council	Most not directly managed by PCC, but supported by the local authority. Volunteers take part in social care and community projects, some of which contribute to improvements in local environmental quality.	No overall figures for people involved in volunteering, but initiatives such as community transport, neighbourhood schemes and tenants/residents associations involve significant numbers of people.
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	Estate and conservation management, visitor and engagement services	In total around 2,000 volunteering days are contributed to PCNPA work each year. There around 90 individual volunteers. At present volunteers contribute to practical work undertaken to manage the National Park and support National Park staff in their 'engagement work' with visitors and across local communities.
Pembrokeshire Ramblers	Volunteer walk leaders and some footpath maintenance work	Regular walks programme with volunteer leaders and occasional footpath maintenance activity.
PLANED	An organisation with strong voluntary sector roots. PLANED, engages volunteers in a range of community based environmental projects	PLANED works with community organisations across Pembrokeshire and through this work generates projects which are often delivered by volunteer input. Many of these projects have an environmental theme.
Schools	There is voluntary input into various aspects of school activity from learning support and enabling school visits to fundraising and school grounds development	It is difficult to quantify the involvement of volunteers in school based environmental projects and environmental learning, but the potential for volunteer involvement with schools through initiatives such as Outdoor Schools is significant.
The Sea Trust	Monitoring, recording, engagement and conservation activity associated with the marine environment	The Sea Trust is a Pembrokeshire based voluntary organisation with volunteers contributing to all aspects of the organisations activity including staffing of the Ocean Lab centre in Fishguard. Volunteers record and monitor marine biodiversity, in particular cetaceans. Volunteers also run learning activities and events.
Walks 4 Life	Volunteer walk leaders	Steps to Health is a walking club that provides regular walking opportunities from various locations across Pembrokeshire. Volunteers lead all walks delivered as part of their programme.
The Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales	Estate and conservation management, visitor and engagement services	Volunteers contribute regularly to the work of the Wildlife Trust as part of conservation work parties, through a site warden programme and in supporting work with visitors. There are also local Wildlife Trust groups which run walks and talks programmes and contribute to fundraising.
YHA	Operational duties in relation to Youth Hostels and their surrounds	There are a wide range of opportunities for volunteering with the YHA. Locally there are 7 youth hostels in Pembrokeshire, with volunteers assisting with the management of hostels and helping with maintenance duties on YHA sites.

PART 4: Background and Analysis - volunteering and volunteers

Background and Introduction

It is estimated that 500,000 people in Wales are involved in formal volunteering with organisations and groups. According to the WCVA, volunteers make a significant contribution, in unpaid hours, to the economy of Wales. It is estimated that every year volunteers contribute 191 million hours, which is worth £2.2 billion. This is equivalent to nearly 5 per cent of Wales GDP (WCVA 2013)¹. It is increasingly recognised that volunteering provides numerous other benefits for those involved. There are potential health and wellbeing benefits, whilst volunteering can also increase employability skills. Volunteering can be a very social activity for many, providing important connections and friendships in the context of group activity. Volunteering contributes to the health of local communities and provides an outlet for communities wishing to express a collective interest or desire to see work undertaken.

In Pembrokeshire there is a diverse range of opportunities available to those wishing to take part in voluntary activity. PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services) records around 200 registered voluntary organisations in the County, with each likely to be providing multiple opportunities. In addition, there are numerous other organisations and agencies providing opportunities for volunteers as part of their activity. There are no estimates of numbers of active volunteers across the county, but PAVS considers there to be around 500 volunteering opportunities through registered voluntary groups alone.

Demographic changes and in particular, a rise in the elderly population of the UK means that there is an increasing pool of potential volunteers. Changes to employment and work patterns are also likely to impact on volunteering activity, with more flexible work meaning that individuals can choose to volunteer alongside paid employment.

According to the Cabinet Office Community Life Survey (August 2012 to April 2013), seventy two per cent of people had volunteered at least once in the last 12 months, with 44 per cent of people volunteering formally and 62 per cent volunteering informally, significant increases from 2010-11 (65%, 39% and 55% respectively). Just under half (49%) of people had volunteered at least once a month in the past year, a significant increase from 41 per cent in 2010-11.

In order to assess the viability and potential for PCNPA to invest resources in volunteering and volunteers it is important we understand the external factors that are likely to influence success in this area. Who are the potential volunteers? How many of them are there? Who else provides similar opportunities. What is expected of an organisation providing volunteer opportunities in terms of good practice and current legislation? These are just some of the questions we should answer.

4.1 An audit of the external/environmental influences relevant to the PCNPA's work with volunteers (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, Environmental).

4.1.1 Political

The UK Coalition Government has pursued a number of policies that impact upon volunteering. The Big Society agenda included the ambition to increase social action, and a desire to see citizens take a more active role in their communities. The Big Society approach also included opening up public services to be delivered by non-state providers including businesses and voluntary organisations, and community empowerment – transferring power from central government to local government and communities under the banner of 'localism'.

Government has stated that it is seeking to bring about culture change, to make social action a social norm. David Cameron said that Government must foster and support a new culture of voluntarism, philanthropy, [and] social action. This has pushed volunteering up the political agenda. The theme of community involvement and participation runs through much of the Coalition's programme for government. Policies include: the Department of Health's volunteering vision, the Department for Work and Pension's promotion of volunteering as a route into paid work through the Work Together initiative and DEFRA's Natural Environment White Paper which emphasises the benefits of volunteering in the natural environment. It is unclear whether the changing nature of public

employment policy will have an impact on volunteering in the UK, however in the past one of the recognised pathways to increased employability (for an individual) has been through voluntary work.

Welsh Government recognises the contribution made by the Third Sector to life in Wales and the contribution of volunteers to work in various areas. In the annual report 2011/12 for its Voluntary Sector Scheme the report highlights good practice in partnership working with voluntary organisations and celebrates the success of joint initiatives such as the Volunteering in Wales Fund designed to assist organisations developing structured volunteering opportunities. It is expected that the merging Future Generations bill will give some recognition to volunteering as a tool in helping to reduce inequalities.

The Welsh National Parks Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan (2012-14) recognises the value of voluntary activity in helping to ensure that National Parks are inclusive settings, providing opportunities for all.

Locally the **Pembrokeshire Single Integrated Plan** recognises a role for volunteers and volunteering in achieving positive outcomes for local people. Although there are few explicit references to volunteering, key outcomes such as those highlighted below provide opportunities for volunteer input

- *Children, young people and families have the opportunity to fulfil their learning potential and to live healthy and happy lives*
- *People in Pembrokeshire enjoy an attractive, sustainable and diverse environment*

4.1.2 Economic

The economic climate can influence volunteering patterns and the ability of individuals to volunteer in several ways:

- Unemployment can lead people to consider volunteering as a route into new employment or provide opportunities to take early retirement and use available time to undertake voluntary work.
- Changing work patterns (part-time working for example) might allow people to introduce voluntary work into their routine.
- Reductions in funding and resources can result in reduced support for volunteering initiatives, but might also mean organisations experience a reduction in capacity to do work and so consider a greater role for volunteers.

While Government has expressed its support for voluntary action, overall the level of funding available to support volunteering has fallen. It has been estimated that the voluntary and community sector is facing a reduction in funding of up to £3 billion over the next five years. Local authorities – a major funder of many voluntary and community groups – face an average budget reduction of 28 per cent over four years from 2011 (vi). These reduced levels of funding are likely to impact on voluntary sector infrastructure locally, weakening support mechanism and reducing levels of activity.

4.1.3 Sociological

Levels of volunteering in England since 2001 have stagnated, remaining constant at around 40 per cent of the adult population volunteering formally at least once a year, and 25 per cent volunteering at least once a month. This is despite the significant levels of investment over recent years. Therefore any moves to increase the levels of volunteering are likely to prove extremely challenging.

Pembrokeshire has an ageing population, Over the period 2009-2021, it is anticipated that the proportion of the total population aged 65+ will grow from 21.1% to 26.6%; an increase of 8,100 people. Whilst this group has the potential to contribute to the number of potential volunteers locally, a parallel increase in the average age of retirement means that there may actually be a decrease in those interested (and able) to volunteer in the future. At present much of the work undertaken by volunteers in the National Park is physical in nature – both the practical conservation work and support for our engagement activities requires a degree of physical fitness. If we are to appeal an older audience, PCNPA's offer to volunteers may have to be readjusted accordingly.

The population of young people in Pembrokeshire is set to decrease by 7% by 2021. This might have a lesser impact on our engagement with volunteers in the future since the age profile of existing NPA volunteers shows greatest interest amongst the 50+ age group. However, if PCNPA wish to develop an offer for young people that fulfils their needs we will have to be clear about the benefits of youth volunteering and ensure that the existing barriers to involvement are reduced.

Benefits of volunteering

The top five benefits from volunteering given by volunteers are: 'a sense of satisfaction from seeing the results' (97%), 'I really enjoy it' (96%), 'it gives me a sense of personal achievement' (88%), 'meet people and make friends' (86%), 'gives me the chance to do things that I am good at' (83%) (Helping Out, 2007).

A number of barriers to volunteering remain. The top five reasons for not getting involved were: 'not enough spare time' (82%), 'put off by bureaucracy' (49%), 'worried about risk/ liability' (47%), 'don't know how to find out about getting involved' (39%), 'not got the right skills/ experience' (39%) (Helping Out, 2007).

Why do people volunteer?

People volunteer for a number of different reasons, ranging from a desire to learn new skills, have fun or make a difference. Some are completely devoted to the cause, while others simply wish to do their bit where they can.

Give something back

One of the more obvious reasons why people volunteer is because they find something they are passionate about and want to do something good for others. People who volunteer in their community have a personal attachment to the area and want to make it a better place for themselves and for others. People who have themselves struggled with social issues usually have a certain empathy for those in a similar situation and will often wish to help out. Many people who volunteer think that they are very fortunate to live the way they do and want to give something back to society, as a way of balancing the scales.

Unique opportunities

As a volunteer in a National Park (for example) you are provided with a unique opportunity to experience the landscape and heritage, but also gain something of an insight into what is required to manage these settings. The same unique experience might be gained in volunteering for an animal charity or volunteering in a school

Personal growth

Many people choose to volunteer because of the personal benefits that volunteering has on their character. Indeed, volunteers often say that the experience has made them a better person. In most cases, volunteers also become more concerned and aware of the problems and issues facing the world and many feel that they were ignorant or narrow minded before.

Personal benefit

Volunteering provides the opportunity to develop skills, build up a CV and explore the world of work. In most cases the biggest personal benefit is simply feeling good about yourself. Volunteers make a real difference to the world we live in, be it through conservation work or teaching.

A sense of accomplishment

Many people choose to volunteer simply for the pride that comes from completing something. Imagine the sense of accomplishment when you put the last stone on a dry stone wall or successfully provided leadership on a guided walk.

Recognition and feedback

Recognition of your efforts is another thing that keeps volunteers coming back again and again. Not recognising what a good job a person is doing causes frustration and a feeling of abandonment. It can cause you to doubt your abilities, to think that maybe you aren't doing a good job and that your presence is just a waste of time.

Learning new things

Some volunteers are there to gain insight into an organisation or a field. Think of the parent who volunteers in his/her child's classroom, curious about teaching methods or the citizen who wants to learn more about local politics.

Friendship and belonging

People often find lifelong friendships through volunteer work. While meeting people is often an added bonus, many people choose to volunteer primarily for social reasons

Skills and experience

Volunteer work is a great way to gain experience in a broad range of fields. You can gain experience in education, journalism, social work, animal care, health care, marketing, politics, web design... the opportunities are endless. Volunteering is a great way to put in a little of your time and gain some valuable skills, whether professional or practical.

For health and wellbeing

Some volunteering activity can help improve physical fitness, volunteering in the National Park is likely to be perceived as a 'healthy option'. There are considered to be potential benefits to individual wellbeing from volunteering in general.

To have fun

Volunteer work can be hard, strenuous, dirty and frustrating but it is also usually great fun and extremely rewarding.

4.1.4 Technological

Technology has a limited impacted on volunteering and volunteer opportunities. New technology can improve communication with volunteers and potential volunteers. The volunteering database managed by WCVA provides an effective method for anyone to find out about volunteering in Wales.

Technology has a central role to play in volunteer management, as a communication tool between volunteers and an organisation and as a way of monitoring and evaluating the roles of volunteers. There are numerous examples of bespoke databases and adapted software used for this purpose amongst NGO's and some public bodies such as National Parks.

In some cases technology can provide the basis for voluntary work – helping to manage a social media site or ecological database for example would suit volunteers who are less keen to take on physically active roles. Increasingly the levels of knowledge and confidence in using technology mean that volunteers are able to undertake a range of work, often making use of the latest equipment, with only relatively small amounts of training.

4.1.5 Legal

In health and safety terms volunteers and staff are on an equal footing and all volunteers should be subject to the comparable policies, guidance and good practice in undertaking their activity on behalf of the authority from a H&S perspective. This approach also applies to the roles of volunteers when it comes to safeguarding issues.

Volunteers (as staff) need to be adjudged competent to undertake the work they are asked to do. Other aspects of volunteering also need to be guided by good practice and policy, for example in providing a management and disciplinary framework for volunteers.

4.1.6 Environmental

Volunteering for a National Park is about the environment and likely to be in the environment. Environmental factors and sustainability need to be at the heart of any volunteering policy. Reducing carbon emissions and promoting low impact activity and ensuring that volunteers understand and care for the special qualities of the National Park would all be considerations in this respect.