

## **Campaign for National Parks' manifesto for the next Westminster Government May 2017**

Campaign for National Parks is calling on all political parties to commit to investing in our beautiful National Parks for the long-term prosperity and health of our nation.

National Parks are inspiring and breathtaking areas of our country. They are part of our cultural heritage, are important for wildlife, contain beautiful landscapes and benefit the nation. They also play an important role in our rural economy; they are visited by millions of people each year, generating over £4 billion annually through tourism and support around 70,000 jobs.

Ninety per cent of people say that the Parks are important to them. We know, therefore, they are important assets to the nation that the next Government must seek to protect and enhance.

**Ahead of the June election, Campaign for National Parks is calling on all the political parties to commit to:**

- **Strengthening national planning protections for the National Parks;**
- **Protecting the funding currently committed to the National Parks for the next five years so they can be effectively managed and enhanced; and**
- **Increasing sustainable access to National Parks to enable everyone to access and enjoy these inspirational places.**

### Strengthening national protections

Our National Parks are living, working landscapes and we want communities in these areas to thrive. The delivery of appropriate sustainable development, particularly affordable housing that meets local need, will be central to achieving that. Inappropriate development in and close to the boundary of our National Parks, however, threatens the special qualities of these areas and must be prevented. There should, therefore, be no further relaxation of the planning system through, for example, new or extended permitted development rights or changes to national planning policy.

Our recent report, [National Parks: Planning for the Future](#), published in partnership with National Trust and Campaign to Protect Rural England, sets out how planning protections for our National Parks need to be strengthened and effectively enforced to prevent damaging development. In line with the recommendations within our report, **we ask all political parties to commit to setting out stronger protections for National Parks within a long term strategy for the environment.**

### Sufficient levels of resources

The National Parks are important national assets and they should be properly valued by the Government and supported financially. Public expenditure on National Parks in England equates to less than £1 per year per head of population. Due to the smaller population it is slightly more per head in Wales. But in light of the public benefits these areas provide this money is an important investment. National Parks need a fair share of resources if they are to continue providing these public benefits.

Past funding cuts led to the closure of information centres, an end to much of the work to keep rights of way open and a halt to much National Park Authority work on climate change, flood defence and conservation. We want the Authorities to be working to improve and enhance the National Parks so,

among other things, they are richer in biodiversity, better at capturing carbon and better able to reduce flood risk. This needs to be properly resourced. The sustainability of funding is also critical. **We ask all parties, therefore, to commit to protecting National Park budgets for the next five years.**

#### Increasing sustainable access

National Parks were created for the benefit of the nation so everyone should have an opportunity to visit them. Nationally, a quarter of households do not have access to a car and rely on public transport for most of their journeys. And there has long been an over reliance on the use of private cars by visitors to access and get around the National Parks. Campaign for National Parks wants to make sure that the National Parks really are for everyone, regardless of whether or not they own a car. We also want to make sure that the high quality environment in National Parks continues to be protected and enhanced for future generations to enjoy by promoting more sustainable access to and within the Parks.

To make the National Parks more accessible by sustainable transport, **we ask all political parties to commit to requiring relevant local transport plans to consider and address the needs of visitors to National Parks.**

#### **About Campaign for National Parks**

Campaign for National Parks is the only national charity campaigning to protect and promote all 13 of the National Parks of England and Wales. We are an umbrella body of 40 environmental and recreation groups, representing over four million people with an interest in National Parks.