



Media release

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National Parks: living, working places where beauty drives the economy

New analysisⁱ of economic data obtained from the Office of National Statistics reveals that National Park economies have prospered since the last analysis in 2013. These living, working landscapes are home to rural communities and businesses that are contributing to national prosperity and wellbeing and depend on a high quality natural environment and the special qualities of the National Parks to achieve this growth. These results were discussed by Defra Minister for National Parks, Lord Gardiner when he met with National Park Chairs yesterday (January 25th) – see photos below.

The figures show that between 2012 and 2016:

- the Gross Value Added (GVA) of National Park economies grew in real terms in the range £1.4bn to £2.4bn;
- the number of businesses in National Parks grew by 10% (to more than 25,000);
- more than 21,000 jobs were created; and
- business turnover was £13bn (up from £10.4bn in 2012).

National Park Authorities have a duty ‘to seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of their purposes’. This economic data indicates that National Park Authorities are successfully delivering on this duty. There are policies and practices in National Parks that could be used to replicate these results in other rural areas.

The [National Parks, National Assets](#) infographic published by National Parks Englandⁱⁱ highlights the scale of the economic contribution from National Parks and some of the special qualities which support these rural economies. In total, businesses in the English National Parks contribute between £5.5 to 8.7bn to the economy - equivalent to the UK textiles industry or a city the size of Coventry.

Minister for National Parks Lord Gardiner said:

“I am delighted National Parks are providing such an economic boost for the nation and the rural communities living and working in them. They are not only some of our most beautiful and precious landscapes, but also home to so many small and medium sized businesses driving the rural economy.

“Through our recently launched 25 Year Environment Plan we are committed to enhancing the beauty of these landscapes, as well as continuing to recognise the value they bring to the rural economy. I look forward to seeing even more progress over the coming years.”

Margaret Paren, Chair of National Parks England, said:

“Our National Parks are the most treasured places in the country. This data shows that they also make a significant contribution to the economy through the many businesses that rely on the high quality environments of our National Parks to attract their staff and customers.

National Park Authorities support rural businesses, communities and economies while ensuring the National Parks remain beautiful places where people want to live, work and visit. Our National Parks provide a huge range of benefits – clean water, stunning landscapes, historic places, wildlife habitats

and a place to relax to name but a few. These benefits are hard to put a figure on but immensely important to us all as are the economic benefits that flow from them.”

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Lord Gardiner meeting National Park Chairs Jan 25th

Lord Gardiner and Margaret Paren looking at National Parks National Assets

Notes

ⁱ **Gross Value Added of England’s National Parks – Update**; Cumulus Consultants for National Parks England, August 2017 http://www.nationalparksengland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1070348/Gross-Value-Added-for-England-National-Parks-2017-Update.pdf

ⁱⁱ National Parks England exists to support policy and practice by coordinating the views of the nine English National Park Authorities (NPAs) and the Broads Authority. It does this by:

- Providing a collective voice for the views of the English NPAs
- Raising the profile of the work of the authorities to policy makers, Parliamentarians and other decision makers
- Facilitating discussion amongst NPAs on issues of common concern
- Supporting the development and capacity of the NPAs to effect change
- Working in partnership with other bodies where this adds value