

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023-24

A review of the work of the Snowdonia National Park Authority



2023-24



AWDURDOD PARC CENEDLAETHOL ERYRI  
ERYRI NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## Introduction

I am honoured to present this report, capturing the significant achievements and progress made over the past year for the Eryri National Park Authority. This year has been marked by both challenges and opportunities, during which our organisation has continued to drive forward our well-being objectives for 2021-2026. Our dedicated efforts across various sectors have been instrumental in enhancing the resilience, sustainability, and cultural heritage of Eryri. In this report, I will provide an overview of our accomplishments, particularly in the areas of resilient environments, climate change response, cultural heritage

management, post-Brexit land management, and biodiversity conservation

As Chairman, it is my pleasure to share these developments, which highlight our commitment to preserving and enhancing the unique natural and cultural landscape of Eryri National Park, ensuring that it remains an important and welcoming environment for future generations.

I want to extend my heartfelt thank you to both Cllr Annwen Hughes and Mr Tim Jones for their service during their respective terms as Chair over the past 12 months, and their ongoing commitment to the National Park.



## Resilient Environments

One of the core missions of the National Park Authority is to develop resilient environments that can withstand the pressures of both natural and human activities. Over the past year, we have made substantial progress in this area, particularly in the management of recreational activities within the National Park. With the increasing popularity of Eryri as a tourist destination, it has become more important than ever to balance the needs of visitors with the preservation of our natural landscapes and communities. To this end, we have installed and utilised people counters at strategic locations across the park. These devices have provided us with critical data on visitor numbers and patterns, enabling us to implement more effective management strategies that minimise the environmental impact of tourism.

The success of the Eryri Ni 2023 visitor communications campaign is another significant achievement in our efforts to promote sustainable tourism. This campaign has taken a comprehensive approach to raising awareness about the importance of preserving our landscapes, not only among visitors but also among local businesses and communities. By engaging stakeholders in sustainable practices, we have been able to create an

increased harmonious relationship between tourism and environmental conservation. The campaign's aim was to raise awareness to increase consciousness of impact on the environment, as well as increased participation of local businesses in sustainability initiatives such as the Yr Wyddfa Plastic Free Project's business scheme.

In addition to these broader efforts, we have undertaken significant upgrades to key visitor facilities throughout the park. The Betws y Coed Information Centre, an important hub for tourists, has undergone extensive renovations to enhance its accessibility and the quality of information it provides. Similarly, the facilities at Ogwen have been improved to better accommodate the growing number of hikers and nature enthusiasts who frequent the area. These upgrades are part of our ongoing commitment to providing high-quality visitor experiences while ensuring that the natural beauty and ecological integrity of Eryri are preserved. Looking ahead, we are excited about the planned improvements at Hafod Eryri, which will further enhance the visitor experience at one of our most iconic locations, offering both educational opportunities and breathtaking views of the landscape.



## Responding to Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing our world today, and Eryri National Park is committed to playing a leading role in mitigating its impacts. Over the past year, we have made considerable progress in implementing the Local Development Plan (LDP) policies that are critical for climate resilience within the park. These policies guide our actions across all areas of Eryri, ensuring that new developments are designed with sustainability at their core and that existing infrastructures are adapted to withstand the changing climate.

A major focus of our climate response strategy has been the development of an Action Plan aimed at achieving carbon neutrality for the Eryri National Park Authority by 2030. This ambitious goal reflects our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and leading by example in the global effort to combat climate change. The Action Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to carbon reduction, emphasising the need to decrease emissions across all Authority operations, including our buildings, vehicles, and other assets. Key initiatives under this plan include promoting energy efficiency, transitioning to renewable

energy sources, and implementing sustainable land management practices that enhance carbon sequestration.

Our efforts to address climate change are further strengthened by our partnerships with the Welsh Government and other National Park Authorities. Through these collaborations, we have been able to share best practices and coordinate our actions to maximise the impact of our climate initiatives. A notable example of this collaboration is our participation in nature recovery and carbon sequestration projects that align with broader national and international climate strategies. By contributing to these initiatives, we are not only helping to mitigate the effects of climate change within Eryri but also supporting the global effort to protect our planet for future generations.

In addition to our direct climate action, we are actively involved in raising awareness about the importance of climate resilience within the community through initiatives such as the Eryri Community Fund. These efforts are critical in building a resilient community that is well-prepared to adapt to the challenges posed by a changing climate.



## Cultural Heritage Management

Eryri National Park is not only a place of outstanding natural beauty but also a region steeped in cultural heritage. Preserving and enhancing this heritage is a fundamental part of our mission, and over the past year, we have made significant strides in this area. One of our most notable achievements has been the development of the Cultural Heritage Strategy, which provides a comprehensive framework for managing and promoting Eryri's cultural assets. This strategy outlines key priorities and actions for preserving the historical and cultural fabric of the park, ensuring that these treasures are protected for future generations.

The Carneddau Landscape Partnership Scheme stands out as a flagship project in our cultural heritage management efforts. This ambitious project, which brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, heritage organizations, and conservation groups, aims to protect and celebrate the unique cultural landscape of the Carneddau mountains. The project remains on track for completion by 2025 and has already made

significant progress in preserving important historical sites, promoting traditional land use practices, and developing a greater appreciation of the area's cultural significance among residents and visitors alike. The success of this project underscores the importance of collaboration in heritage management and highlights our commitment to safeguarding the cultural identity of Eryri.

Our cultural heritage management efforts also extend to the promotion of Eryri's rich linguistic heritage. As part of our commitment to preserving the Welsh language, we have implemented various initiatives to encourage the use of Welsh in both official and informal contexts within the park. These efforts include offering Welsh language courses for staff, providing bilingual signage and information materials, and supporting events and activities that celebrate the Welsh language and culture. Through these initiatives, we are helping to ensure that the Welsh language remains a vibrant and integral part of life in Eryri.



## Post-Brexit Land Management

The post-Brexit era has brought significant changes to land management practices across the UK, and Eryri National Park has been proactive in adapting to these new realities. The withdrawal from the European Union has led to shifts in agricultural policies, funding mechanisms, and environmental regulations, all of which have a direct impact on land management within the park. In response, we have engaged closely with the Welsh Government and other partners to ensure that Eryri benefits from the evolving land management policies and funding opportunities.

Our collaboration with the land-based sector has been particularly valuable in navigating the complexities of the post-Brexit landscape. By maintaining an open and ongoing dialogue with farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders, we have been able to identify and address the challenges they face, while also promoting sustainable land management practices that align with our environmental goals. This collaborative approach has allowed us to adapt our strategies to the new policy environment and ensure that the needs of the land-based sector are effectively integrated into our broader land management efforts.

One of the key outcomes of our post-Brexit land management strategy has been the development of new partnerships with landowners to deliver conservation projects on private land. These projects, which range from habitat restoration and rewilding initiatives to the implementation of sustainable grazing practices, are helping to create a more resilient and diverse landscape across Eryri. By working closely with landowners, we are not only enhancing the ecological health of the park but also supporting the economic viability of traditional farming practices that have shaped the landscape for generations.

In addition to these partnerships, we have been actively involved in advocating for policies that support sustainable land management at the national level. Our engagement with policymakers and stakeholders has focused on ensuring that the new agricultural policies and funding streams introduced in the post-Brexit era are designed to promote environmental sustainability, protect biodiversity, and support the livelihoods of those who depend on the land. As we continue to navigate the post-Brexit landscape, we remain committed to ensuring that Eryri's land management practices are both environmentally sustainable and economically viable.



## Addressing Biodiversity Decline

Biodiversity decline is a global crisis that has profound implications for the ecosystems of Eryri National Park. Recognising the urgency of this issue, we have intensified our efforts to address biodiversity decline through a range of targeted conservation initiatives. Our approach is guided by the understanding that protecting and restoring the park's natural habitats is essential not only for the preservation of biodiversity but also for the health and well-being of the communities that depend on these ecosystems.

One of the cornerstones of our biodiversity strategy has been the continuation of key conservation projects such as the HLF Carneddau, LIFE Celtic Rainforest, and the National Peat Programme. These projects are designed to protect some of the park's most critical habitats, including ancient woodlands, peatlands, and uplands to support broader conservation efforts across Wales and beyond.

In addition to these large-scale projects, we have also made progress in our efforts to survey and protect Trees and Ancient Woodland sites (PAWS). The data collected from these surveys will inform the development of a comprehensive Tree and Woodland Strategy for Eryri, ensuring that these vital habitats are protected and managed sustainably in the years to come.

Our work on biodiversity is further supported by ongoing research and monitoring efforts. By working with academic institutions, conservation organizations, and other partners, we are gathering the data needed to inform our conservation strategies and measure the impact of our efforts. This evidence-based approach is critical to ensuring that our actions are effective in reversing biodiversity decline and protecting the natural wealth of Eryri.

## Engagement and Outreach

Engaging with the communities within and around Eryri National Park has always been a priority for us, and the past year has seen a renewed focus on outreach and engagement activities. We have continued to build strong relationships with local communities, ensuring that their voices are heard in the decision-making process. This has been achieved through a variety of channels, including public consultations, community meetings, and collaborative projects.

Our outreach efforts have also extended to education and awareness-raising activities. Through partnerships with schools, community groups, and local businesses, we have been able to deliver a range of programs aimed at developing an understanding of the park's natural and cultural heritage. These programs are not only helping to educate the next generation about the importance of conservation but are also strengthening the connection between the community and the park.





## Conclusion

In conclusion, the past year has been one of significant progress for Eryri National Park. Despite the challenges posed by climate change, post-Brexit land management, and biodiversity decline, we have continued to make substantial strides toward achieving our well-being objectives. Our efforts to enhance the resilience of our environments, preserve our cultural heritage, and engage with our communities have been met with success, and we are well-positioned to build on these achievements in the coming years.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all members, officers, and partners who have contributed to these successes. Your dedication, hard work, and passion for Eryri have been instrumental in driving our mission forward. As we look ahead, I am confident that, together, we will continue to make Eryri National Park a beacon of sustainability, resilience, and cultural richness for future generations.

**Thank you.**













