

Centre for National Parks & Protected Areas (CNPPA)

CNPPA Advisory Board Members

Rose O'Neill (Chair)



Dr Rose O'Neill is Chief Executive of the Campaign for National Parks, the only independent charity dedicated to securing the future of National Parks in England and Wales. Founded in 1936, Campaign for National Parks brings together a campaigning collective of organisations and individuals from all walks of life united in common cause: nature-rich National Parks for everyone.

Rose was previously principal social scientist at Natural England, and headed the rivers programme at WWF-UK. Rose has a Masters in geology and a PhD in environmental science. Her research background centres on application of social and behaviour sciences to environment and conservation, and people's engagement with nature. Rose is a passionate advocate of environmental justice and our collective responsibility to leave a positive legacy for future generations. She is a trustee of Wessex Rivers Trust and a member of Natural England's Landscape Advisory Panel.

Maxwell Ayamba



Maxwell A. Ayamba is Founder/Managing Director, Sheffield Environmental Movement. Currently PhD Research Student in Black Studies, Department of American & Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham, M4C/AHRC. He is an environmental journalist by profession, former Associate Lecturer/Research Associate, Sheffield Hallam University. Co-Founder, 100 Black Men Walk for Health Group which inspired the national play "Black Men Walking" in 2018. First Black person to serve on the Board of the Ramblers Association UK. Named in 2021 as one of the 70 most remarkable people in the history of the Peak District National Park since 1951. In 2021, Maxwell received the National Lottery Award in the Heritage category. He authored papers and chapters in books in relation to minoritised communities and the UK environment and was recognised in 2023 the King's New Year's Honours with Order of the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the environment.

Nigel Curry



Professor Nigel Curry is a Founding Professor of the University of Gloucestershire, where he set up the [Countryside and Community Research Institute](#), with the Royal Agricultural University.

He has worked at the Institut d'Économie Rurale in Lausanne on sustainable upland agriculture and as Specialist Adviser to the Swiss Government's, *Landscapes and Habitats of the Alps* programme. He also has worked at Lincoln University, New Zealand and the Queen's University of Belfast, on upland access rights. He has been a Secretary of State appointee to Dartmoor National Park and has chaired the South West Rural Research Priorities Board.

Nigel has been a director of the [James Hutton Institute](#) in Scotland and Currently serves as a Board Member of [Action with Communities in Rural England](#).

His contemporary interests concern rural community development having set up the Lincolnshire Food Partnership, chaired a rural community energy CIC and a community café, and been on the boards of a community farm, a community land trust and three rural community councils. He was a Lincoln Climate Commissioner and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Bishop Grosseteste University in 2021 for services to community development.

Nigel is currently a trustee of [Action with Communities in Cumbria](#).

David Higgins



David Higgins is Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Leeds. He has published widely in areas including literature and climate change, British Romanticism, and nature writing. He currently leads an international research project focused on how culture models climate futures, and supported by funders in Austria, Germany, and the UK.

David has a long-standing commitment to public engagement. Through projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), he has worked with partners such as Natural England, the Poetry Society, and the Wordsworth Trust. The focus of these collaborations has been engaging with members of the public, especially young people, to enable them to develop their own creative responses to the more-than-human world.

David has also published several personal essays focused on nature, mental health, and environmental crisis. He is writing a book about the Eurasian bittern as a cultural symbol and a conservation success.

David is a member of the AHRC Peer Review College. He has served on funding panels for the AHRC and the Natural Environment Research Council, drawing on his expertise on cultural understandings of environmental change.

Howard Hull



I have been the Director of John Ruskin's former home, Brantwood since 1996. My background is firmly rooted in the arts, initially studying and then teaching English literature and art history at Oxford. My career has included administrative roles as Director of Development at the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Royal College of Art. In addition to my work shaping the programme of its historic house and interiors, at Brantwood I have overseen the restoration and management of Ruskin's 100-hectare estate. Working with a wide range of skilled and creative individuals I have sought to develop and promote the cultural values and practical skills that sustain and inform our natural heritage. In addition to curating some 200 exhibitions and displays, I have written and lectured extensively on Ruskin and his associated ideas. I am a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the World Heritage Site; I was on the drafting team for the Statement of Universal Value. FRGS. FRSA. Companion of the Guild of St George.

Siôn McGeever



Siôn has been at DEFRA since September 2020 and leads the Access, Landscapes, Peatlands and Soil (ALPS) division. ALPS looks at how we connect with the natural world, work within protected landscapes, restore and protect peatlands and improve soil health in England to reverse biodiversity loss (including 30x30), improve the wellbeing of the nation and combat climate change. ALPS also works with our Overseas Territories to protect and improve biodiversity through the Darwin Plus programme.

Before joining DEFRA Siôn worked in International Development designing and implementing programmes and developing UK Government policy in Africa, the Middle East and around the world. Over 14 years Siôn worked in both the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Siôn's

programme and policy work has focused on transport, trade facilitation, climate resilience and climate finance, renewable energy, water and sanitation, child nutrition, land reform and migration.

Prior to that Siôn worked in manufacturing management for five years in the UK, Australia and the Pacific Islands. Siôn has degrees in Engineering and in Environment, Development and Policy.

Ruth Lovell



Ruth is the Coordinator for Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales, the partnership of the five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the three National Park Authorities in Wales.

She also works with the Welsh Government Designated Landscape and Countryside Access team, the National Association of AONBs and NRW, who are also represented on the partnership.

The partnership aims to unlock the potential of Designated Landscapes to deliver more for climate, for nature, for culture and heritage and for people.

Ruth has worked in the field of environmental policy and communications for over twenty years, including positions with Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Cardiff University, RSPB Cymru and the National Trust.

She has worked in practical conservation roles, setting up community environmental projects in Wales, and international conservation projects in Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania and Greenland.

Away from the day job, Ruth loves exploring the Wales Coast Path, running, swimming and yoga, and is a Voluntary Director of a Community Energy Pembrokeshire, in West Wales.

Steve Ratcliffe

Steve is Director of Sustainable Development for the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA); and is lead officer of the Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP), having been instrumental in its establishment. He chairs a number of groups, including the English Lake District World Heritage Site Steering Group, Lake District FiPLs Local Assessment Panel, and Cumbria's Strategic Visitor Management Group. He continues to oversee the delivery of the Partnership Plan (the statutory Management Plan for the LDNP and English Lake District



WHS) and its five key challenges of net zero carbon, nature recovery through farming, access for all, sustainable transport, and economic recovery post Covid pandemic. He is keenly exploring green finance opportunities within the National Park. Steve is also a trustee of WH:UK and chairs the Events Committee.

When away from work Steve enjoys relaxing with his family at his home in Witherslack, within the southern part of the National Park, and getting involved with his local rural parish community.