

## 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**



Dr Maxwell A. Ayamba is Founder/Managing Director, Sheffield Environmental Movement. Maxwell gained his PhD 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.

## 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.

## Siôn McGeever



Siôn McGeever is the Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, joining in November 2024.

As Chief Executive Officer of the South Downs National Park Authority, I lead a dedicated organisation committed to protecting and enhancing one of the UK's most treasured landscapes. I work to support collective action—within our teams, among partners, and across communities—to create spaces that inspire, connect people with nature, and drive effective responses to the climate and biodiversity crises. With a clear sense of purpose and collaboration at the heart of my approach, I am committed to ensuring the South Downs remains a living, thriving landscape for all, now and for the future. As Chief Executive, I am responsible for the day-to-day leadership, culture and management of the Authority, ensuring the accountability and value for money of its programmes and advising the Members on its policies, future direction and the implementation of our strategic plan. I am passionate about

nature, the environment and tackling inequality, and the importance of National Parks and National Landscapes to deliver for nature, climate and people.

I bring 25 years of experience of working in environmental policy, international development and business. Prior to this role I was Deputy Director, Access, Landscapes, Peatlands and Soil at Defra, leading the team responsible for policy and funding for all of England's protected landscapes.

## 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.