

Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Registered Charity No 1201905)

Trustees annual report for 2023 – 2024

Introduction (Clare Dow)

This year is the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

For our part we have established a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation becoming active on 1st December 2023. It continues with the same aims and objectives as the old charity but administratively will allow the charity to expand and move forward should we be in a position to do so for example take on paid staff (we currently run totally with the time given by volunteers). In line with this we have also adopted a shorter more user-friendly working name “Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast” (although the registered name remains the same Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park).

Our updated logo features not only the Pembrokeshire Coast but also the Preseli Hills and River Cleddau which are an integral part of the National Park and environment we wish to protect.

As new Chair from October 2023 I chose to walk the whole of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path from start to finish – from North to South – all 186 miles. I met many people on my way including locals and those visiting and walking the path from all over the world. The Pembrokeshire Coast is much appreciated by all.

I am considering establishing a circular route back to my start on the coast path at St Dogmaels (from Amroth – the end of the coast path) via these inland areas of the National Park.

The Friends continue to work towards its aims of protecting, conserving and enhancing the National Park for all and advancing the education of the public on matters concerned with the conservation and sustainable development of the National Park. (The objects of the Charity are set out in full in the Charity's Constitution).

We have a volunteer work party which works with other agencies to protect and conserve the fabric of the National Park.

We have a very active events programme which not only includes walks in and around the National Park but also visits to places of interest which are not necessarily open to the general public and information talks to educate our members about the National Park environment.

We are a critical friend to the National Park Authority; provide support to the Campaign for National Parks and contribute to the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes.

We aim to extend our membership to the next generation, encouraging younger members to become active so that everyone can share in the social, wellbeing, and environment benefits of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park into 2025 and beyond.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charity Commission on 10 February 2023. The governing document of the charity is the constitution as approved by the Charity Commission on registration (available on our website).

The following persons have served as trustees from the date of registration:

Ian Chambers

John Dow

Russell Downs

Steve Drinkwater

Janet Hazell

Ian Pattinson

Angus Stott

In addition, Clare Dow was appointed as a trustee on 9 August 2023; Caroline Potter was appointed as a trustee on 3 April 2024; Edward Holdaway was appointed as a trustee on 5 September 2024

New charity trustees can be appointed either by the members at the AGM or by co-option of the trustees, in accordance with clause 13 of the Constitution.

The charity trustees manage the affairs of the charity and for this purpose delegate the day to day management of the charity to an executive committee. The executive committee may exercise all the powers and functions of the trustees except the powers to:

- Employ and remunerate staff
- Appoint a new charity trustee
- Approve the annual statement of accounts and the trustees annual report

Transition from the old charity to the new charity

By a special resolution passed at an extraordinary general meeting held on 19 July 2023, the members of the Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Registered Charity No 1012091) ("the old charity") agreed to the dissolution of the old charity and the transfer of its assets to Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Registered Charity No 1201905 ("the new charity"))

The trustees of the old charity and the trustees of the new charity agreed between themselves that the new charity would start its work from 1 December 2023. With

effect from that date, the new charity took over the business, trade and affairs of the old charity. Details of the activity carried out by both charities during the period 1 May 2023 and 30 April 2024 (the last financial year) are contained in this report. This includes the activity carried out by the old charity in the period between 1 May 2023 and 30 November 2023.

Financial Review

This report relates to the financial year 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024

The final reserves of the old charity were transferred to the new charity in December 2023. The value of the transferred reserves was £36,374.42. The net income for the period from December 2023 to April 2024 was £1,813.90 increasing the overall reserves to £38,188.32.

See accounts attached

The Trustees have agreed to maintain sufficient reserves to cover running costs of the organisation for a year which they estimate as £9,500.

Policy and Planning (Gus Stott and John Dow)

A. National Issues

- **We work with the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) on issues affecting all the national parks in England and Wales.**

To mark the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, CNP published a Health Check report on the state of nature in the 13 National Parks of England and Wales. CNP ran a high profile campaign, which featured on Channel 4 and the Guardian. Using the CNP material, the Friends issued our own local press release, highlighting issues which affected Pembrokeshire Coast NP in particular.

- **We work with the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes (AfWDL or “the Alliance”) which campaigns on issues affecting the Welsh National Parks and Welsh National Landscapes (formerly AONBs).**

In February and March this year, the Welsh Government carried out a public consultation as a final step in their preparations for the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS/Scheme) which is the start of a new long-term programme to support the agricultural industry in Wales. This proved a highly contentious exercise, especially in the farming community in Wales. The Friends worked as part of the Alliance for Welsh Designated Landscapes (the Alliance) to agree a common approach to our response to the consultation, which was broadly supportive of the scheme, whilst also recognising the need for continued flexibility in how the 10% woodland and habitat thresholds are reached.

In April this year, we worked with the Alliance to develop a response to the Welsh Government consultation on their proposals for legislation on Environmental Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets.

B. Local Issues

We monitor local policies and developments which have an impact on the park.

Examples of local planning issues

- **Application to construct a 51-metre-high telecommunications tower at Pantmaenog in the Preseli Hills.**

We lodged our objections to this application in 2022. The application was rejected by the NPA on the basis that the mast would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the visual amenities and landscape character of the National Park. This decision was the subject of an appeal to the Welsh Government and we reiterated our strong objection to the application. The appeal was dismissed in November 2023.

- **Response to the Llyr 1 floating offshore wind farm proposal**

In January 2024, there was a consultation on plans for the first of the offshore floating wind farms in the Celtic Sea. The turbines will be 36km offshore but the cabling is planned to come ashore at Freshwater West with a substation located towards the Pembroke Power station.

In view of the impact that the project will have on the National Park, the Friends responded to the consultation.

We broadly supported the aims of the proposed development, recognising that wind power will contribute to the UK and Welsh Government target of achieving net zero by 2050 and that an offshore floating wind farm will have a reduced visual impact compared to wind farms closer to the shore.

We commented specifically on the following matters:

- the impact of the onshore proposals on Freshwater West particularly during the construction phase and the impact of the onshore proposals on the possible sites for the substation near Pembroke Power station.
- the impact of the offshore proposals on sea bird populations
- the employment opportunities created by the project
- the establishment of a community fund

C. NPA consultations

We respond to consultations by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (NPA).

This year, we have been considering the consultation on the NPA's draft management plan for 2025 to 2030 and will be responding before the end of the

consultation period (30 September). As this is outside the period covered by this report, information about our response is not included here but will be reported to members via Friends News Update.

We have also been considering a NPA consultation on the issue of temporary campsites. Again the end of the consultation period (20 September) is outside the period covered by this report.

Press and communications (Ian Chambers)

Transition, renaming and rebranding

This has been a busy year for the communications team. Alongside 'the day jobs', covered below, we have supported the charity's transition to CIO, managed the increase in subscriptions and the switch to payment by direct debit, facilitated the introduction of the new name and logo and the production of the new leaflet and illustrated map. Each of these has involved considerable redevelopment of our processes website and other media channels.

Friends News Update

Six editions of Friends News Update (FNU) have been produced by George Allingham and circulated to all members, associate members and interested parties over the year. John Pearn has sent out timely emails announcing and reminding members of each of the many excellent events he has organised.

News & Views

Editions of News & Views (N&V) went out in early November 2023 and late April 2024. The next edition should be nearing completion when you receive this report. We have stuck with the 32-page length adopted when inflation was running high in 2022. We have a small number of members who have opted for the e-magazine option. In addition, non-members (such as our sister societies and local councillors) now get an e-magazine rather than a printed magazine. The reduction in the costs of producing the printed magazine more than covers the costs of the e-magazine service. The cost of producing a printed magazine has stabilised, but not dropped, so we will stick at 32 pages for now.

Website

Apart from switching to the new branding and logo, the website has continued to develop and improve over the year. This has involved a lot of work by Mark Vincent and me. It is now becoming a repository of useful information about the Park, accessible to all and promoting the Friends.

Recently, all issues of News & Views back to 2017 have been made available in e-magazine format through the website (we have long had recent editions of FNU online). All of the N&V walk notes articles are also available to download and to either print or use directly from a phone during a walk. Last but not least, the videos of the Chair's Coast Path walk are slowly becoming available through the website, though getting the videos ready takes a lot of effort and we have a backlog at time of writing.

Social Media

Little has changed on Facebook. We continue to use it primarily to publicise the Children's Competitions and to re-post items put up by affiliates like the NPA and CNP. The transformation of Twitter into X has changed the character of the platform and we now make little use of it. Setting up an Instagram account is now urgent as this is the preferred platform of many younger adults. We are still searching for a dedicated volunteer to actively plan and manage our social media usage with the aim of publicising what we do and encouraging more joiners.

The Press

We issued a press release to mark the change of Chair in January which was covered by several local papers.

In April we issued a press release specific to Pembrokeshire about the findings of the Campaign for National Parks' health check of nature recovery which was covered by several local papers, alongside the CNP press coverage in the UK and Welsh national press.

A press release marking the completion of the Chair's Coast Path Walk was issued on 21 August. The Tenby Observer has covered the story.

Progress against strategic objectives

We have improved the educational content of both FNU and N&V (and also the Events programme) and, through the website and the e-magazine, made them available to a much wider audience outside the membership.

We continued the rollout of full email addresses and are now starting to implement (free to small charities) shared online storage and services from Google and also to use subscription management and accounting systems to replace our amateur spreadsheets. The aim of all this is to make the Executive Committee and officers more efficient and effective at minimal additional cost. Both the Communications team and the charity overall remain under-resourced and we need to make the most of what volunteer effort we have available.

Membership (Jacqui Janssen)

Our membership currently stands at 437, up from 409 at the last AGM report. This is a high for recent years.

The increase in subscription and our request to close old Standing Orders caused around 50 members to not renew in 2024, around twice the usual rate of attrition.

New joiners have, however, more than compensated.

160 members have signed up to pay subscriptions by direct debit.

We have recently decided to offer free membership to 18-25 year olds which we will start promoting very soon through Pembrokeshire College and other channels. These members will not get paper magazines or be able to attend subsidised events and so are effectively 'zero cost' to us.

Business membership is unchanged at 8 and we are currently planning a campaign

to attract more business members.

We are about to start trialling a proper membership and accounting system to replace the current spreadsheet used by Jacqui.

Jacqui has coped magnificently with a very disrupted first year.

Children's beach art competition (Ian Chambers)

In 2022 we switched the Children's Competition to Beach Art, attracting 80 entries in total. In 2023, we ran a similar competition, but changed the two age categories and allowed younger children to enter. Only 19 entries were received, with very few in the 11-14 age category.

So, for this year, we launched a Beach Art competition for the 5-10 age range and a combined photography/writing competition for 11-14 year olds (with increased prize money). As of time of writing, we have received only 5 entries for the Beach Art Competition, well down on this time last year.

Our plans of establishing a Young Volunteer of the Year for over 14s, aimed at local children through schools and youth groups have come to nothing. Without volunteers to drive initiatives like this it is impossible to get them off the ground.

Events (John Pearn)

Between 1st August 2023 and 1st August 2024, we have had 19 events. With an accumulated attendance of 426.

Three events unfortunately had to be cancelled. (Two walks due to poor weather and a visit to Steynton Regenerative Farm due to an accident suffered by the host. This will be rescheduled for 2025)

2023	
19 th August	Guided Walk Castlemartin Range
4 th September	Guided historic tour Tenby
4 th September	Marine Biology Field Trip St Catherines Island
7 th October	AGM Cilgerran
22 nd October	Walk Cosheston
10 th November	Visit to West Wales Maritime Museum
17 th December	Christmas Lunch and Carol Service St Brides

2024	
25 th January	Talk By Dwr Cymru and NRW
1 st February	Visit Pembroke Power Station
15 th February	Talk Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
5 th March	Visit Strumble Head Lighthouse

19 th March	Talk Non-Native Invasive Species
2 nd April	Talk Life in Antarctica
15 th April	Visit Castell Henllys
3 rd June	Visit Ty Rhyg forest
4 th July	Visit Scolton Manor
11 th July	Walk Brynberian
19 th July	Boat Trip Car y Mor
19 th July	Talk Car y Mor

I would like to express my thanks to George Allingham, Jane Mason, Brian Ball, Chris Taylor and Ian Pattinson who very kindly led the walks.

There are a number of events provisionally organised for the rest of 2024

8 th August	Walk	Llangwm
3 rd September	Visit	Ramsey Island
9 th September	Walk & Talk	Guided walk of Port of Haverfordwest by Simon Hancock Presentation by Heart of Pembrokeshire on Future of Haverfordwest
24 th September	Visit	Pembroke Power Station
5 th October	AGM	Llys Y Fran
14 th October	Visit/Walk	Southwood
14 th November	Visit/walk	Reintroduction of Beaver Lawrenny
1 st November	Visit	St Davids Lifeboat Station
15 th December		Xmas Lunch and Carol Service St Brides

Xmas Lunch and Carol Concert

Jan Hazell kindly booked St Brides for 15th December. Ian Pattinson will organise the Carol Concert, and I will organise the lunch.

I welcome any suggestions for events from members. These often prove to be the most popular events.

A huge thanks to Ian Chambers, Mark Vincent and George Allingham, who have all very patiently proof-read my circulars, articles and event reports ensuring the members get the correct information.

Friends Project Fund (Gus Stott)

The Friends' Project Fund provides small grants for up to £1500 for projects aimed at schools, community organisations working with young people and other charities for projects or activities that further the aims of the Charity.

In recent years we've focused on providing funding to the National Park education programme where we have helped to fund hundreds of additional visits to corners of the National Park that schools may otherwise not have access to. The education

team really value the additional access this has provided. We will review this approach later this year to ensure we're getting things right.

The Friends have facilitated about 450 pupils to take part in one of the special trips that the National Park education team offer over the summer. There have been about ten trips with some large school visits covering some interesting new themes. The contribution made by the Friends has amounted to about £1800 so far this year.

These trips are made possible through the contribution made by the Friends' Project Fund.

Work Party (Vicky Pearson)

The Friends' work party makes a major contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the Park.

Over the last year (September 2023 to August 2024) the Work party have carried out 41 days of work, amounting to 269 people and 1203 hours (compares to 49 days, 332 people, 1547 hours in 2022-23).

Our main focus has been working with the National Park where we have carried out our usual mix of jobs ranging from scrub clearance at Kingsmill and March Pres; tree care at St Brides Orchard, Sychpant, and Cilrhedryn; beach cleaning at Manorbier and Swanlake Bay; winter clearing at The Pump House; working on various archaeological sites such as Craig Rhosyfelin, Cresswell Quay, Newport Castle, Nevern Castle and Crugiau Cemaes Bronze Age Barrows. And not to miss out 12 sessions of Himalayan Balsam pulling at Kingsmill, Merrivale (St Davids) and Llwyngwair Manor.

With the National Trust, at Stackpole, we've had a variety of jobs including: footpath and mountain bike track maintenance, tree care at Caroline Grove (having helped plant them last year), scrub clearance, working in the walled garden. We also had some sessions with the North National Trust team, clearing willow and scrub at Cilau Moor near Llanwnda and ragwort pulling near Fishguard.

The connections we have established over the last few years, working with other organisations, continued, working with Natural Resources Wales at Canaston Woods; returning to work with local community continuing to improve a very boggy footpath at Sutton Mountain; and some tree care at Llangloffan Fen for The Wildlife Trust.

We seemed to miss quite a few sessions due to rain – no surprise there when you remember how wet the winter and spring were, but we also had to cancel two sessions as all work party members were busy doing other things!! But again, another busy and successful year!

St Brides Pump and Engine (Peter Arkle)

The Friends are responsible for the maintenance of the building, the surrounding garden, the engine and the pump.

Extensive building work is required as the dormer window frames need to be replaced and the roof tiles have been found to contain asbestos and therefore need to be replaced also. The NPA is arranging for quotations for the work as the maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the NPA as the owner.

The Pump House is still an attraction to visitors and the work to keep it so is continuing. The building is kept clean and tidy with some redecoration work required when the building work is completed. The bench at the front of the building has received a coat of wood preservative. The wildflower meadow is doing well and will need to be cut down and cleared, with assistance from the NPA and the Friends work party.

Declarations

In accordance with Charity Commission requirements, the Trustees of the Charity confirm that the activities of the Charity have been, and are being, delivered for the public benefit.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

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Full name(s)

JOHN DOW

JOHN DOW	
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Position (eg Secretary,
Chair, etc)

Trustee

Trustee	
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Date

15 February 2025

15 February 2025

Balance Sheet as at 30th April 24			
Assets & Liabilities			
Bank accounts	41,456.24		
LESS:			
Accruals	-1,401.61		
Life members advance	-1,350.00		
100 Club creditor	-516.31		
	<u>38,188.32</u>		
Reserves			
John Ratcliffe Legacy Reserve	10,000.00		
Project Reserves	18,688.32		0.00
General Reserves	9,500.00		
	<u>38,188.32</u>		
Statement of Financial Activites for the 12 months to			
Income			
Subscriptions	7,489.80		
Members' Donations	240.50		
100 Club Lottery Receipts	959.08		
Bank Interest	326.07		
Xmas Lunch	850.00		
Income			
Total Income	<u>9,865.45</u>		
Expenditure			
PP, CAF charges	56.51		
100 Club prizes	698.00		
Beach Art Competition	180.00		
Xmas lunch	1,040.00		
Insurance	455.41		
Map	900.00		
Membership expenses	41.20		
Newsletter	542.00		
Project Fund disbursement (NPA)	3,061.00		
Website cost	144.00		
Pavs	30.00		
Trustee expenses	222.68		
Work Party expesnses	680.75		
Total Expenditure	<u>8,051.55</u>		
Surplus	<u>1,813.90</u>		