

Management for sustainable recreation in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park



A brief overview of projects, partnerships and processes that assist with the management and development of recreation in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Contents

Introduction	4
Background	4
1 Planning.....	5
Why do you need to Plan for recreation?.....	5
What organisations need it?	5
Developing the Plan	6
Relationships and Partnerships.....	6
Public consultation and stakeholder engagement	7
Amending the Plan.....	7
2 Implementation	8
Implementation Group	8
3 Monitor and evaluate	8
How do you measure the Plan?	8
Wales Activity Mapping Project/Recreation Audit	9
Enjoy Pembrokeshire	11
Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey	11
Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group	12
The Pembrokeshire Marine Code Group	12

Management for Sustainable Recreation

1 Planning

- Why do you need to plan for recreation?
- What organisations need it?
- Developing the Plan
- Relationships and Partnerships
- Public Consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Amending the Plan after consultation

Enjoy Pembrokeshire

- Providing sustainable recreation and tourism messages
- Fed by the Plan and Wales Activity Mapping project
- Considers location and activity

Wales Activity Mapping

- Provides baseline data/ snapshot and trends
- Recreation overview
- Central data point
- Management and user issues

2 Implementation

- Action Plan (Partnership Approach)
- Link into other plans e.g. ROWIP, National Trails Standards, Team work Plan, Creating an Active Wales etc
- Implementation Group

3 Monitor and evaluate

- How do you measure the Plan?
- Implementation Group
- Progress against the Action Plan
- Wales Activity Mapping data
- Enjoy Pembrokeshire user numbers
- Tourism user/satisfaction surveys
- Relationships and Partnerships
- Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey update

Management for Sustainable Recreation

Introduction

Background

This document has been developed to be part of Visit Wales' online Destination Management Toolkit. It contains a brief overview of how the management for sustainable recreation is partly carried out in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNP). More detailed information on the projects, partnerships and processes can be found using the links within the document, the Destination Management website, Recreation Plan and by using the contact details on page 13.

Much of the work highlighted here is coastally focused where management is often split between agencies when crossing between land and inshore waters. Also recreational activity is often carried out in a narrow coastal corridor that is the focus of archaeological, nature conservation and landscape interest. This requires integrated coastal zone management between organisations, often with differing remits.

There is also a need to balance the differing requirements of the recreationalist, some who are attracted by the more adventurous activities whilst tranquillity and wildness are valued by others. Land ownership also a factor with a mix between public ownership e.g. the foreshore and beach heads, land in public ownership with formal access e.g. country parks, land with private ownership with informal access e.g. commons and cliff tops and land in private ownership where the only access is through the rights of way network.

To assist with the complex management and development of recreation in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park a number of projects, partnerships and processes are being used. These are described here and could be replicated in other areas of Wales assisting a national drive to manage destinations in a way that encourages sustainable economic growth. A [Recreation Plan](#), a project collating and storing [spatial data](#) on recreational use, and a [website](#) aimed at encouraging a sustainable approach to activities are just some of the processes being used. These tools fit within a wider National [Destination Management toolkit](#) that looks at the sustainable development of tourism within Wales.



1 Planning

Why do you need to Plan for recreation?

Worldwide research has shown that recreational enjoyment is essential to human health, key to human development, essential to the quality of life, reduces anti-social behaviour, builds families and communities, reduces the cost of health care, social services and policing and is a significant economic generator. In the 'Valuing our Environment 2006' report recreation was identified as providing approximately a quarter of the total income in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

While most recreation takes place informally and without adverse impact, there is clear potential for certain activities to compromise the area's special natural qualities, and for recreational users themselves to come into conflict. There is general consensus among those organisations involved in the provision of facilities or management services that we need a Plan in the PCNP for the following reasons:

1. To minimise any adverse effects of recreation on the natural environment and special qualities.
2. To make the most of healthy and sustainable recreation opportunities for the local community and visitors.
3. To make the most of limited resources, ensuring they are not focused on disproportionate, localised and short term issues and ensure that vital facilities are not lost or degraded.
4. To identify desirable levels of activities for certain locations.
5. To guide the provision of facilities and information which influence activities and the location of those activities.
6. To provide opportunities for all those using the area for recreation to become more involved in managing activities themselves, thereby taking greater ownership of the National Park.
7. To identify issues likely to affect the National Park's recreational capacity and demand in future, such as the impacts of climate change and changes in social and demographic trends.
8. To maximise benefits to the economy and support initiatives encouraging training and awareness of the recreation industry to the local community.

What organisations could benefit?

Managing recreation sustainably will only be successful if all those involved can work together in partnership. Public agencies especially, need to deliver coordinated opportunities for public enjoyment, avoiding overlapping work and conflicts and recognising others' priorities and interests. Individuals, activity providers, businesses and clubs need to cherish their opportunities and recognise where they may need to adjust for the longer-term benefit. A Recreation Plan should provide a framework to achieve this and a context of place and sustainability to interact with action

What is sustainable recreation?

When we use the words 'sustainable recreation' in the context of this document, what do we mean? We are talking about outdoor activity in the coast and countryside which makes the most of the intrinsic attractions of the natural and cultural environment and is carried out to minimise impacts on the special character of the place and on the enjoyment of other users and residents. Ideally the activity contributes to the enjoyment and health of the participants and to the economy of the host area.

There are several components to this issue for every type of recreation;

1. The nature of the activity and how it is carried out
2. The location and timing of the activity
3. The scale of the activity

We will promote activities which by their nature and levels are appropriate and viable in the proposed location.

plans such as the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy, Creating an Active Wales and more local community plans.

Developing the Plan

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) [Recreation Plan](#) was developed with key partners to produce a consultation draft. Within the draft and subsequent amended Plan the context, why it is needed, the requirements, National Park purposes and special qualities are all explained in Section 1. Principles taken from the Local Development Plan (LDP), National Park Management Plan (NPMP) and other relevant policies and strategies are included along with the powers and tools available to assist with recreation management.

Section 2 provides an overview of current recreation with further detailed information in the appendix and contained within the Wales Activity Mapping Project (WAM) [website](#). Some of the issues, challenges and opportunities associated with recreation provision and management including capacity, user conflicts, climate change and future demand are also described. Where there are issues of particular concern or good practice they are highlighted in text boxes.

The vision, strategy and objectives are covered in section 3. Section 4 shows a spatial approach incorporating Recreation Character Areas (RCA) describing how demand, recreational type and the National Park special qualities are considered when planning recreation. Section 5 details an approach to awareness, promotion, access and infrastructure. Each heading area has examples of how the NPMP and LDP influence the Plan. Monitoring and evaluation is covered in section 6 as are the triggers that could begin a review of the Plan within the recommended 5 year Plan period.

Relationships and Partnerships

The partnership approach to recreation management currently used in the Pembrokeshire region e.g. [Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group](#) / [Pembrokeshire Marine Code](#) is often viewed as ground breaking and as an example of best practice. Agreed Climbing Restrictions in Pembrokeshire are also good examples of working in partnership and highlight the importance of this method in achieving sustainable recreation. In reality the ability to control or enforce, for example through byelaws, is

Climbing agreements in Pembrokeshire have enabled significant numbers of climbers to use cliffs which contain some of the most important nesting sites for sea birds in the U.K. These areas are also within an active Ministry of Defence Range. This is example of how management, partnership working and agreement can be used to increase the capacity of an area to accommodate recreation without damaging the environment.

often limited partly because of lack of up to date regulation but more importantly because of the inability to monitor large, sparsely used areas with multiple un-staffed access points.

This situation highlights the importance of partnership working, promotion, awareness, education and creating a feeling of ownership of the local environment when managing recreation. When planning for recreation it is important to link with other agencies, policies and plans and for effective consultation and Plan development

partnerships and relationships can be crucial. More in depth details of partnership working are found within the recreation Plan

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement

Giving everyone the opportunity to influence the Plan so that it reflected the views of a wide cross section of users and communities while at the same time meeting the purposes of the National Park was key to developing a successful Plan. An independent, non biased organisation, [The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum](#) was used by the National Park Authority (NPA) to coordinate and analyse the public consultation. This brought a transparent feel to the process and utilised local experts in stakeholder engagement and partnership working. Activity Champions were identified and contacted personally for a number of activities covered in the Plan. They were asked to not only provide feedback but to raise awareness of the Plan to members of their activity groups/clubs and co-ordinate responses. A number of meetings, presentations and social media platforms were used to assist with the consultation. The use of an independent partner also allowed NPA responses to be challenged

A dedicated feedback form was designed to collect views. Certain activity and locations specific issues where a way ahead is debatable were raised throughout the Plan in separate boxes. Providing a localised view helped engage feedback to the consultation which generated over 60 responses.

Amending the Plan

After receiving responses on the Plan all of the views were considered and consultees were provided with a NPA response to each of their comments. The views were then used to amend the Plan where appropriate including the vision. The Plan after amendments and agreement with NPA committee will be launched with press and media coverage in August 2011.



Coasteering in Pembrokeshire – Part of a integrated recreation project.

2 Implementation

Action Plan

After a review of the Plan and consultation responses an Action Plan has been published which details specific actions relevant to the Plan content and other relevant policy. The Action Plan includes definite actions, who is responsible along with timescales. Partnership working is once again key to achieving the outputs highlighted in the Plan. To download a copy of the Action Plan [click here](#).

Implementation Group

An implementation group comprising representatives of the main partner organisations covering the whole Plan area will be established. This will be to review actions and agree a programme of work for 2012. It is envisaged that the group will meet annually to discuss progress against the Action Plan.

3 Monitor and evaluate

How do you measure the Plan?

Plans and policies by their very nature can often be difficult to measure particularly one covering a coastal National Park with large areas of un-monitored coastline. A number of tools highlighted below will enable the Plan and recreation management in the region to be measured.

- The Implementation Group and measuring the progress against the Action Plan
- Participation numbers and activity trends from the WAM project - providing the project continues to be fed with data
- Enjoy Pembrokeshire - user numbers and analytics
- Tourism user/satisfaction surveys
- Relationships and Partnerships e.g. feedback from Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Groups
- Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey update
- Live Recreation Plan with comments section
- Feedback from activity events and outreach programmes



Wales Activity Mapping Project/Recreation Audit

The evidence base for recreation distribution and intensity used in the Plan is the Wales Activity Mapping project, formerly known as the South West Wales Recreation Audit¹. [This web based GIS system](#) aimed at recreation, tourism and conservation managers provides in-depth detailed location and activity information for South West Wales. The Project provides important data that allows users to monitor change in recreational use over time along with any management issues that may occur. It is also important baseline data that can be used to measure relevant actions from policies and plans.

The project is a partnership of organisations involved in the management of recreation across South West Wales. The partnership seeks to assist in the sustainable management of the coastal area to the maximum benefit of all potential users by constructing a coherent and validated picture of outdoor recreational activity. This will aid in the development of a framework for future management in the region. For more detailed information please [click here](#).

Objectives

The main objectives for the project are:

- To obtain a clear understanding of the key recreational activities within the study area
- To determine the scale and distribution of key activities on a site by site basis
- To ascertain actual and perceived negative impacts of activities on a site in terms of the environment, community and human safety and identify conflicts between users and user groups
- To identify the greatest pressures on the resource including impacts on designated sites and protected species
- To provide an indication of likely future trends
- To identify opportunities for recreation

This will assist in:

- development of long term strategies and planning
- management of recreational activities so as to eliminate or prevent user conflicts between participants; between different activities; between recreational participants, local communities and business interests
- spatial planning to minimise or prevent conflicts between recreation, conservation features and socio-economic activities, planning for enhancement, development and marketing of coastal recreation development and management of infrastructure and facilities relating to recreational activities

¹ www.walesactivitymapping.org.uk is a partnership approach to mapping recreation in South West Wales

Project Uses

Information from the project has been used by a number of organisations whilst the use of the [GIS Mapping system](#) is potentially far reaching and wide ranging. The GIS mapping system can be extended into other areas e.g. inland or other coastal locations. There is also huge potential for other GIS layers and data to be displayed on the system e.g. upcoming Public Rights of Way network, a coasteering management layer and a Plans and Projects section showing consenting and planning within the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. The upcoming uses for the system can be seen in the [Planned Projects](#) page.

The database, GIS layers and further information have been provided to a number of organisations and individuals including

- CCW in relation to recreation and Highly Protected Marine Conservation Zones in Wales.
- DECC regarding the Marine Action Plan.
- Plymouth Marine Lab.
- [Finding Sanctuary](#) and the [Irish Sea Conservation Zones](#) projects.
- Tidal Energy Limited during their Environmental Impact Assessment within Ramsey Sound.
- South and West Wales Marine Federation regarding the number and location of moorings and slipways.
- Welsh Government for their upcoming Marine Renewable Energy Strategic Framework.
- Welsh Government requiring information on coastal activity when looking at Coastguard cover.



Mapping cruiser sailing in Pembrokeshire

Enjoy Pembrokeshire

The NPA have recently launched a new [recreation website](#) which aims to promote recreation in a sustainable way. The map based website provides useful information on a range of activities from



climbing and surfing to geology hotspots and rockpooling. It gives users top tips on how to minimise their impact when carrying out the activity in the Park.

The NPA have only promoted activities in suitable locations and have avoided sites that may be at capacity or have management issues. Information collected by the Wales Activity Mapping project has been used as the information source. Key messages from the Recreation Plan have been included. The site also displays relevant facilities including harbours, slipways, toilets, beaches and contains a wealth of information on easy access.

The Enjoy Pembrokeshire website actively promotes Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter and Marine Code members and can be found on the home page of the NPA website. The website sees between 1000-2000 page views per week with users spending an average time of 2 minutes per page. Enjoy is potentially a very useful management tool where messages encouraging sustainable recreational use can be passed onto the public in a cost effective efficient way.

Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey

The Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2008² measures participation in outdoor recreation among residents in Wales and has been commissioned jointly by Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Commission Wales. The Survey interviewed a representative selection of people in Wales to gain an insight into the recreational behaviour of the national population. For the Pembrokeshire Spatial Plan Area the number of respondents that had carried out activities at least once in a 12 month period was the highest in Wales for walking, outdoor swimming, running, road cycling, fishing, watersports, motorised watersports and joint highest with North West Wales for climbing and central Wales for horse riding.



For people visiting the outdoors once a day Pembrokeshire also scored higher than any other Spatial Plan area in Wales. Enjoying the scenery and wildlife was ranked highly in reasons for visiting the outdoors. This demonstrates that outdoor recreation and the natural beauty and wildlife of the National Park is valued very highly among local residents in Pembrokeshire and is an important part

² Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2008 CCW&FC

of their everyday life. This survey helped us to understand latent demand in the region and will be a useful tool to help measure actions in the Recreation Plan particularly after repeat surveys.

Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group

The [Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group](#) is a collection of outdoor activity businesses, environmental education centers, conservation groups and organisations. The group is working to ensure that adventure activities such as coasteering, kayaking, surfing and cliff climbing, do not impact on the environments and wildlife of Pembrokeshire. Activity providers and conservationists are meeting routinely, and working together to develop adventure activities in a way which is sustainable for the environment.



Agreed codes of conduct and [best practice](#) for activities have been developed, and regular environmental training events are organised for members to raise awareness of the flora, fauna, and natural heritage of Pembrokeshire. Members have also agreed to work towards combating climate change by working towards environmental accreditation schemes, recycling, reducing waste and reducing carbon emissions.

The Pembrokeshire Marine Code Group

The [Marine Code Group](#) was developed by local operators and other organisations working closely with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the RSPB. These organisations are all concerned about the long-term management of the area and the development of high standards of practice. They recognise that sustainable use must be a key theme in marine recreational activities and education.



Most of the Pembrokeshire Coastline is privately owned, and designated for its landscape and wildlife importance. The Pembrokeshire Marine Code encourages users to show respect and consideration for the marine environment, land owners, wildlife and other users when out exploring the coast and offshore areas of Pembrokeshire.

For more information please contact

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