**Discovery** in the Dark Wales

# Branding and Marketing Plan

## **PRODUCED FOR**







BY







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## **BRANDING AND MARKETING PLAN**

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Branding and Marketing Plan has been funded by Visit Wales as part of the development of their Partnership for Growth Strategy. The brief was issued by a Steering Group formed from representatives of the three National Park Authorities in Wales and the Plan was drawn up in conjunction with members of the Steering Group by a team of consultants led by TACP including heritage & tourism specialists Gareth Kiddie Associates and branding & design agency Girl & Boy Studio.

The Plan describes how the National Parks in Wales are working together to develop an exciting new programme of work that harnesses their depth of experience in working on visitor initiatives related to 'dark skies'. The Plan sets out an ambitious vision that attempts to connect visitors' appreciation of the stars and their participation in 'night-time adventure' type activities, with a desire to take practical actions to protect and enhance our dark skies - for the benefit of wildlife and of future generations. Indeed, the mission going forward is to draw in other key partners and work towards establishing Wales as the world's first 'Dark Sky Nation'.

The National Parks in Wales are well-placed to deliver on this vision and mission. They already have international standing, by virtue of the fact that two of only ten International Dark Sky Reserves in the world are located in National Parks in Wales. Add in to that mix; a treasury of iconic locations, a strong track record of delivering 'dark sky' events & activities, an established infrastructure for sustainable tourism and active support from the tourism trade, and there is much to build upon.

However, there is also a burgeoning interest in dark skies elsewhere that is leading to a rapidly increasing number of 'dark sky destinations' in the UK and world-wide many of which are seeking internationally recognised designations too. Some of these are well-established, and there is evidence to suggest that they are looking to extend their dark skies offer along similar lines to that proposed by the National Parks in Wales. The quality of other destination's branding and promotion is also improving significantly, albeit from a very low base. Despite this, there would appear to be a window of opportunity for the National Park in Wales to build on well-established partnerships with other potential delivery organisations in Wales – bringing them on board by persuading them of the benefits of working together at a national level.

The target audiences for this initiative are visitors to, and tourism businesses operating within, the National Parks in Wales. The visitor market was already broadly identified and defined by Visit Wales as 'independent explorers'. A review of the available visitor statistics and consultations undertaken by the consultancy team, enabled further refinement of these visitor audiences and prioritisation to take place. As a result, it was concluded that the initiative should initially be aimed at 'Active Family Explorers' from the domestic market, followed, in priority order, by a focus on:

- 1. Pre-family Explorers' from the domestic market;
- 2. 'Scenic Explorer Couples'; and
- 3. 'Older Cultural Explorer Couples' from both the domestic and some overseas markets.

As part of the wider Visit Wales funded project, the lead consultants also took on the task of developing the visitor product – a suite of dark sky related 'activities and adventures' for the National Parks in Wales, their partners and the tourism trade. From the outset the consultants proposed that the product should build and develop upon the established 'astronomy focussed' activities, widening the scope to include night-time activities and adventures related to visitors' interest in; culture, nature and participating in outdoor activities. Trade organisations were consulted together with a wide range of specialists and a 'long-list' was put together, before a

final shortlist of 15 activities and adventures were identified for further development. The key output of the process was the assimilation of the knowledge in the form of a 'Night-Time Adventures' Tourism Trade Manual.

Prior to the commencement of the project the National Parks in Wales were at different stages in their development of their 'dark sky' product and brand – the work of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority being recognised as having taken a strong lead in this respect. In developing an all Wales brand and identity the intention therefore was to work to build on this success without distracting from what is already in place. With this in mind the consultants decided very early on in the commission to propose a 'look and feel' brand identity rather than devising something with a strong corporate ID. The name chosen 'Discovery in the Dark – Wales' is deliberately descriptive and the 'constellation' brand-mark (see front and back covers) to go with it, is designed to geo-locate the Parks in relation to each other, together with a colour scheme that matches the lifecycle of stars. The brand identity has also been deliberately kept simple, allowing the un-impinged use of top quality photographic imagery in conjunction with short pithy strapline descriptors related strongly to the activity being portrayed in the images.

A strategy for the development of the branding and marketing has been put in place and this includes a series of 11 strategic objectives. In the context of the strategy it is proposed that a series of marketing media is developed to promote the 'night-time adventures' product. This is set to include; a mix of new and repackaged events, a new website, increased use of social media channels, new short film and with other marketing peripherals to follow as funds allow. A key aspect of the strategy is the active engagement of the tourism trade through the deployment of the 'Night-Time Adventures' Tourism Trade Manual and the recruitment of tourism businesses as 'Trailblazers' helping the National Parks in Wales by acting in an ambassadorial capacity. Once a national programme is successfully established it is anticipated that the flexibility in the 'Discovery in the Dark' brand identity will enable new angles on dark skies to be developed - helping to further reach out to target audiences in innovative ways, and acting to 'future-proof' the brand at the same time.

Finally, the consultants have suggested some parameters within which monitoring and evaluation of the project might take place. It is sincerely hoped that the project is a success and that the process of working across the three National Parks strengthens the ability of the Steering Group to work towards achieving the long-term aims of the 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' programme, not least the establishment of Wales as the world's first Dark Sky Nation.

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BRIEF AND APPROACH

The National Park Authorities of Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast are working together as National Park Wales to develop a joint programme relating to 'dark skies'.

A Steering Group of National Parks Wales' staff was formed to develop the project. This group includes:

- Hannah Buck Health and Tourism Policy Officer, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.
- Michel Regelous Conservation Policy Officer, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.
- Ruth Coulthard Funding Development Manager Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.
- Richard Tyler Sustainable Tourism Manager, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.
- Gethin Davies Ecosystems and Climate Change Officer, Snowdonia National Park Authority.
- Ifer Gwyn Principal Policy Officer, Snowdonia National Park Authority.

In November 2015 with funding support from Visit Wales and under the working title 'Dark Skies: Brilliant Parks', National Park Wales commissioned a team of consultants to develop and deliver a package of consultancy activities related to the initiative.

The team was led by TACP (UK) Ltd. and included: Gareth Kiddie Associates (GKA); Girl & Boy Studio; and Anturus Media Collective.

The brief specified the following core elements be developed and delivered:

- A branding and marketing plan.
- A suite of activities and adventures relating to the theme.
- A short film to promote the National Parks in Wales as 'dark sky' destinations to visitors and to inspire the tourism trade to be involved.
- A digital interactive manual to support trade engagement and product development.

A separate but related commission to develop a website for the project was secured by Girl & Boy Studio.

The consultants worked closely with staff from National Parks Wales to develop all elements of the commission. In particular, the consultants led interactive workshops at key milestones, these were:

- A 'Branding Workshop' held in Pembrokeshire Coast's National Park Office in Pembroke Dock on 9<sup>th</sup>
  December 2015. The workshop was concerned with laying the foundation for developing the branding for
  the project and was attended by key staff from all three National Parks in Wales. The notes from this
  workshop are included in Appendix A of this report.
- An 'Activities Workshop' held in Aberystwyth Arts Centre on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The workshop was concerned with developing and building ideas for a suite of activities and adventures that could be run 'after dark' within the National Parks in Wales. The workshop was attended by staff from National Parks in Wales, partner organisations and tourism businesses. The notes from this workshop are included in Appendix B of this report.

In addition to the workshops the consultants undertook targeted research with key partner organisations, tourism businesses and other organisations concerned with and / or interested in developing 'after dark' activities within the National Parks. The main findings of the research undertaken is included in Appendix B of this report.

This document represents the 'Branding and Marketing Plan' element of the commission. Its preparation has been led by GKA and draws on the outcomes of the Branding Workshop, targeted research and consultation with key partner organisations including Visit Wales.

#### 1.2 VISION, MISSION AND AIMS

Within the brief there was a strong sense of the direction in which the client would like to see the project taken. During the course of the commission the consultants were able to build on this and refine the thinking such that a clear and shared vision for the project could be ascertained together with a mission statement and a well-defined set of aims. These are set out below:

#### **VISION**

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

Our vision going forward is to maintain the National Parks in Wales as places where our visitors' appreciation of the stars, and their participation in night-time adventures, work hand-in-hand – helping to develop more sustainable communities and raising awareness of the need to protect and enhance our 'dark skies', for the benefit of future generations and for the benefit of the nocturnal wildlife, the plants and animals, that make our special, 'breathing' places their home.

#### **MISSION**

To successfully develop the National Parks in Wales as 'Dark Sky' places and to work with other partners to establish Wales as the world's first 'Dark Sky Nation'.

The starting point for the 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' project comes from the experience of visiting a National Park in Wales and *seeing stars after dark*.

This is because many people's view of the night sky from home is obscured by light pollution, whereas the three National Parks in Wales all offer opportunities to enjoy dark skies due to their locations. Both Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons National Parks have been designated as International Dark Sky Reserves and The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is working with partner organisations locally to promote a necklace of Dark Sky Discovery Sites.

What is difficult to capture in words is the experience that people gain from looking up at the sky on a clear night in a place that is free from light pollution - where the stars and the full magnificence of the Milky Way can be appreciated. If you add into the mix a location that has natural beauty, night-time wildlife, heritage and cultural significance, peacefulness and tranquillity, as well as an established tourism infrastructure - then there are the truly optimal conditions for the full 'dark skies' experience.

Another key factor in the development of the project is the concern that we all need to have for the other reason why 'dark skies' are important. Light pollution not only obscures our ability to see the stars, it wastes energy which in turn can lead to increased levels of greenhouse gas production, it has been proven to have a significant

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detrimental impact on human health<sup>1</sup> and can have significant adverse impacts on wildlife<sup>2</sup>, especially nocturnal species – one of the very things that National Parks in the UK are set up to conserve and protect.

During the course of the commission the consultant consulted with a range of organisations that are already encouraging visitors to enjoy the dark skies within the National Parks. One conversation stood out. It was with Andy Middleton the Founding Director of TYF<sup>3</sup>.

#### Andy said:

'People don't generally come to us for a life-changing experience, but our activities are the platform for that opportunity to be realised...sometimes we grab a blanket and go out stargazing. When we look up at the stars (in the absence of light pollution), they have a numinous<sup>4</sup> quality. People can be so affected by the experience, they choose to change the way they look and they start to see.'

We know that the experience of gazing up at the stars has the capacity to change minds and thence behaviours. This potentially transformational experience is already at the very heart of this project. We know too that National Parks have a key role in pursuing innovative approaches to sustainability.

The conclusion is therefore, that this initiative can and should move beyond the simple enjoyment of dark skies (although this remains a central aim of the project), because it has the capacity to be much more. The project has the capacity to have a clear and unequivocal focus on sustainability.

At one level, the 'Discovery in the dark' experience of visiting a National Park in Wales and 'seeing stars after dark' has a quality that enables each of our visitors to make their own connection with the universe and experience that sense of awe in places of scenic beauty, peace & tranquillity and cultural richness - places where, after dark the myths and legends of the landscape escape into the sky.

On another level the 'Discovery in the dark' experience of visiting a National Park in Wales has the capacity to be a night-time adventure! For our families and especially our younger visitors it's an opportunity to create unforgettable 'up after bed-time' experiences, and for adult 'explorer' types there will be new challenges and activities to try out at night.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 'In 2009, the American Medical Association called for a national effort to understand the effects of light pollution on humans. There is now significant evidence showing that light at night can disrupt the body's production of the brain hormone melatonin, which in turn increases the risk of developing breast cancer. Light at night also leads to restless nights and psychological stresses'. As reported by The British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies in their 'Lighting Guidelines document produced for the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For a very sobering insight into the impact that night-time lighting can have on wildlife visit the <u>Commission for Dark Skies</u> webpages on the subject.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> <u>TYF</u> is an outdoor activity company based in St David's Pembrokeshire whose mission is to 'create life changing adventures with a light touch on nature, focus young people's sight & skills for the future and help organisations with innovation & sustainability. We play for the planet.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "The numinous is experienced as a profound sense of awe, as well as connecting to nature a mysterious creative power in life" Mick Collins – The Unselfish Spirit.

#### **PRIMARY AIMS**

- Promote the National Parks in Wales, to targets audiences, as being the best locations to enjoy dark skies.
- Help tourism businesses based and / or working in the National Parks in Wales to realise the potential of
  developing dark sky activities during the evening and night-time, providing new opportunities in winter
  and in the shoulder periods of the season.
- Raise awareness amongst visitors, tourism businesses and residents of the National Parks in Wales of the harmful effects of light pollution and encourage them to reduce light pollution wherever and whenever they can.

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## 2 CURRENT PRODUCT OFFER – COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section reviews the current 'product' as it is being offered to visitors to the National Parks in Wales and to the tourism industry. The information has been assimilated from discussions with National Park staff, attendance at 'Dark Sky' events and through a review of the information available on the web.

The conclusion is that the 'competitive advantage' currently enjoyed by the National Parks in Wales is derived from the following factors:

- International standing two of only 10 International Dark Sky Reserves in the world located in National Parks in Wales.
- **Iconic locations to enjoy dark skies** places with natural beauty, varied landscapes, a wealth of night-time wildlife, heritage and cultural significance, peacefulness and tranquillity.
- A strong track record of delivery successfully meeting customer demand for 'dark sky' events and activities.
- Active support from the tourism trade good engagement of tourism businesses in helping to deliver.
- Attractive existing branding featuring stunning night-time imagery.

The above factors point to the National Parks in Wales being able to work from a position of relative strength.

#### 2.2 BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has been the lead body in Wales on the development of 'dark skies' related initiatives. The entire Brecon Beacons National Park is an International Dark Sky Reserve (designated as such by the International Dark Sky Association in 2012), the fifth such designation world-wide and the first in Wales.

The 'dark skies' product offer is currently promoted and marketed mainly through:

- The Brecon Beacons destination website <a href="www.breconbeacons.org">www.breconbeacons.org</a> which has a section with pages dedicated to <a href="Stargazing">Stargazing</a> under the strapline 'Discover our dark skies' and text header 'Come for the day, but stay for the night. Our National Park is an International Dark Sky Reserve...' The 'Stargazing' landing page features a very impactful and popular short film with some stunning time lapse photography.
- A promotional leaflet is available and features a map of where to go stargazing in the Brecon Beacons together with information about; what you can see in the night sky, being an astronomer, some unusual & amazing facts, stargazing tips and sustainability messages.
- Social media platforms including the Brecon Beacons National Park's <u>Facebook</u> Pages and <u>Twitter</u> Accounts are used for disseminating information about stargazing and other associated events.
- The Brecon Beacons National Park's <u>Flickr</u> account is well used by photographers sharing their 'dark sky' images and a <u>You Tube</u> channel features the 'Brecon Beacons Dark Sky Video' along with other films produced by or relating to events & activities taking place in the Brecon Beacons area.

The current product offer for residents, visitors to the National Park and tourism businesses operating in the Park as advertised through the Brecon Beacons destination website includes:

- Information about the Park's designation as an International Dark Sky Reserve, including messages regarding sustainability reducing light pollution and protecting nocturnal wildlife.
- Advice on where to go stargazing ten 'top spots'.
- Information about what to see in the night sky delivered via a free downloadable monthly 'Evening Sky
  Map' and calendar and an information pack 'Brecon Beacons National Park Dark Sky Wales Guide to the
  Night Sky'.
- Links to local astronomical societies' and planetarium webpages, their events and other 'dark sky'
  websites.
- Links to other useful resources including the BBC's Stargazing Live 'Event Pack'.
- National Park and partner-led 'Stargazing Events'.
- A 'Dark Sky Ambassadors' programme involving training and accreditation of over 50 tourism businesses.

#### 2.3 PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is host to six Dark Sky Discovery Sites (as designated by the UK Dark Sky Discovery Partnership) of only just over 100 in the UK.

The 'dark skies' product offer is currently promoted and marketed mainly through:

- The Visit Pembrokeshire destination website <a href="www.visitpembrokeshire.com">www.visitpembrokeshire.com</a> which has one page dedicated to 'Stargazing in Pembrokeshire'. (However, there is a disconnection in the set-up of the website which makes it difficult to come across the page 'on the off chance'. This is a distinct disadvantage as lots of potential interested visitors using the website may miss the page as a result.)
- Visit Pembrokeshire's social media channels (<u>Facebook</u> and <u>Twitter</u>) are also used to disseminate information about events & activities.

The current product offer for residents and visitors to the National Park includes:

- 'Stargazing Events' organised by the National Trust at their Stackpole Estate (see Section 3.5 below)
- Astrophotography Workshops held by local photographer Drew Buckley.

#### 2.4 SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

Snowdonia National Park is the most recent place to be designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve (designated as such by the International Dark Sky Association on December 4th 2015) the 10<sup>th</sup> such designation world-wide.

The 'dark skies' product offer is currently promoted and marketed mainly through:

- The National Park's own website under the pages entitled 'Looking After' and a landing page entitled 'Seeing Stars' together with the Park's own social media channels Facebook and Twitter.
- There is an informational leaflet also entitled 'Seeing Stars' available this includes information about what the designation means to Snowdonia and its residents.
- A credit card size folded leaflet which helps navigate around the sky at night

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The current product offer for residents and visitors to the National Park includes:

- Information about the Park's designation as an International Dark Sky Reserve.
- An online 'Guide to the Stars'.
- 'Five places to see the stars' together with online google map.
- Information about better quality lighting and the impacts of light pollution on the ability to see stars, human health and biodiversity.
- Some (limited) guidance on how tourism businesses might develop 'dark sky' activities as business
  opportunities.
- Examples of how the stars have influenced our cultural heritage in Wales.
- An image gallery hosting photographs taken by local photographers and others.
- A glossary of Welsh language names for stars, constellations and galaxies.

#### 2.5 EXISTING PRODUCT – SWOT ANALYSIS

Those attending the 'Branding Workshop' were asked to reflect on the current status of their 'dark skies' product offer and the way it was branded, from the perspective of each individual National Park. A brief summary of the key points made is presented below:

#### **STRENGTHS**

A range of night-time activities already being delivered across all three National Parks. All Parks have recognised 'dark sky' designations, two with international status; Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) and Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA). Two Parks (BBNPA and SNPA) have strong existing brands in place and some excellent promotional assets – photographic imagery (BBNPA).

#### **WEAKNESSES**

No branding in place (PCNPA), low level of awareness of brand (SNPA), lack of marketing budget leading to inability to deliver on the promise of the brand (BBNPA).

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

Develop the branding and offer a deeper experience (PCNPA), raise awareness of dark sky designation and branding (SNPA), working together to reach an international audience (BBNPA).

#### **THREATS**

Other organisations developing their own dark sky initiatives e.g. National Trust (PCNPA), corporate connotations of existing National Park Authority Brand (SNPA), remaining as brand leader / dilution of the brand (BBNPA).

#### **COMMENTARY**

It is perhaps not surprising that there were few areas in which all of the three National Parks in Wales were as one, especially as the *Discovery in the dark* – *Wales* initiative is one of the first times that the three Parks have come together to work on a joint project. However, if the project is to succeed as a truly national initiative there will indeed need to be increasing collaboration / pooling of resources going forward

## 3 'COMPETITION' PRODUCT OFFER

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section reviews the 'competition' product offer to tourists and to the tourism industry both nationally and internationally. Because of the extensive nature and scope of the potential competition, however, the focus is primarily on those initiatives developed within the UK. The information has been assimilated from a limited number of targeted consultations and through a review of the information available on the web.

The conclusion is that the 'competition' is developing strongly in a number of respects:

- Burgeoning interest in dark skies with a rapidly increasing number of places seeking international and national designations.
- Other similar national initiatives already established by, for example, the National Trust.
- Evidence that other initiatives are also extending their offer to include other night-time activities focussed on; nocturnal wildlife, physical activities (e.g. night walks) and cultural events (e.g. storytelling)
- Quality of presentation, branding and promotion is improving significantly moving away from the more 'scientific' approach to a more visitor / family friendly pitch.
- Other organisations interested in working in partnership to pursue the goal of establishing Wales as the world's first Dark Sky Nation.

The above factors suggest that the 'competition' is rapidly ramping up both in terms of the quantity and quality of the product offer.

#### 3.2 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The <u>International Dark Sky Association</u> (IDA) was set up to preserve and protect our night skies. The IDA's 'Dark Sky Places' program offers five types of designations, of which two are of relevance:

- <u>International Dark Sky Parks</u> Parks are publicly or privately-owned spaces protected for natural conservation that implement good outdoor lighting and provide dark sky programs for visitors.
- <u>International Dark Sky Reserves</u> Reserves consist of a dark "core" zone surrounded by a populated periphery where policy controls are enacted to protect the darkness of the core.

According to the IDA website there are currently 31 International Dark Sky Parks, 24 of which are in the USA. There are three in the UK at; Galloway Forest, Keilder Water and Forest Park and the most recent designation in 2015, the Elan Valley (See below).

The international product 'on the ground' is probably far more exciting and engaging for visitors than the way in which it is portrayed on the IDA website. This is undoubtedly because the pages have been uploaded by the nominating organisation, more often than not some form of government agency the equivalent of our National Parks. However, there is a distinct pattern to the way in which each Dark Sky Park is promoted that includes information about; the nomination process, the effects of light pollution, where to and how to go stargazing, together with spectacular photographs of the night sky in iconic locations across the world.

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Disappointingly, there were no websites referring to international projects outside of the UK that were worth further investigation. To complete the research it might be worth going that one step further to see if there are associated 'destination websites' that are more 'visitor friendly' and provide a better insight into how dark sky projects are being marketed and promoted abroad.

There are ten designated International Dark Sky Reserves, three of which are in the UK; the Exmoor National Park, Brecon Beacons National Park and the most recent designation in December 2015, Snowdonia National Park.

The product on offer within the internationally designated sites in the UK appears to be reasonably well established, especially at Galloway Forest and Keilder Water and Forest Park. However, and despite the work of the IDA, there is no real evidence to show that there has been much in the way of joint-working, sharing of ideas and resources across international designations in the UK as a whole.

The <u>UK Dark Sky Discovery Partnership</u> is a network of national and local astronomy and environmental organisations. The Partnership's growing network of over 100 <u>Dark Sky Discovery Sites</u> aims to pinpoint the best spots in both rural and urban areas to see the night sky in the UK.

Dark Sky Discovery Sites are places that; are away from the worst of any local light pollution, provide good sightlines of the sky, have good public access, including firm ground for wheelchairs and are generally freely accessible at all times.

There are two darkness ratings: 'Orion' sites. At these sites, the seven main stars in the winter constellation Orion are visible to the naked eye. Typically, this means away from, or shielded from, bright lights such as street lights, security lights or approaching car lights. 'Milky Way' sites. At these sites the Milky Way is visible to the naked eye. They are much darker sites found only in more rural areas.

According to the Partnership's website there are currently 29 Dark Sky Discovery Sites in Wales. Of these 11 fall within the National Parks in Wales, seven in PCNP and four in BBNP. The sites have been nominated by a limited number of active organisations; 15 by Dark Sky Wales, five by the National Trust, three by PCNP, two by BBNP (or partner organisation), two by Elenydd Wilderness Hostels (affiliated to the YHA).

The Dark Sky Discovery Sites that have been nominated by <u>Dark Sky Wales</u> are of interest, especially as they are all within the Valleys Regional Park, just to the south of the Brecon Beacons National Park and are promoted on the Valleys website under 'things to see and do' in the Valleys.

However, it is worth noting here that because of the much lower criteria threshold for site designation of 'Dark Sky Discovery Sites' there is danger that these sites are perceived by the general public as 'being on a level' with the much more stringently assessed international designations — potentially resulting in the diminution of the experience and of the message. This needs to be carefully addressed in the development of the project.

#### 3.3 OTHER NATIONAL PARKS IN THE UK

The National Parks UK <u>Dark Skies</u> pages on their website feature a number of National Parks in the UK that have already developed dark skies initiatives or are in the process of looking to gain either international or national accreditation. Of these initiatives, Exmoor and North York Moors / Yorkshire Dales National Parks appear to be most active.

#### 3.3.1 EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Exmoor National Park was designated as Europe's first International Dark Sky Reserve. The <u>Stargazing</u> pages on the Exmoor National Park website feature:

- A nicely put together Dark Skies 'pocket guide'
- Some stunning imagery.
- A quirky film.
- Information about forthcoming events that include; 'Exmoor's Dark Sky', 'Big Adventure Family Camp Out', 'Discover Exmoor's Glow Worms', 'Discover Exmoor's Bats' and 'Dunkery by moonlight'!

## 3.3.2 NORTH YORK MOORS AND YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARKS

The <u>Dark Skies</u> pages on the North York Moors National Park website describe the current offer which includes:

- A <u>Dark Skies Festival</u> (15-21 Feb 2016) interestingly being run in conjunction with the Yorkshire Dales National Park (who produce a really smart <u>Stargazing leaflet</u>).
- Information about events held with local Astronomical Societies including the annual <u>Starfest</u> held since 2001 and taking place 4-7 Aug this year.
- A <u>Creatures of the Night</u> event held as an 'alternative' to Halloween and featuring; children's crafts, forest walks, storytelling, shadow fun, and stargazing.
- An excellent summary of 'apps' available for things to see in the night sky.

#### 3.4 INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARKS IN THE UK

<u>Galloway Forest</u> promotes its offer through web pages hosted on the Forestry Commission Scotland website. There is a downloadable <u>'Dark Skies Leaflet'</u>, a podcast with handy tips and a <u>'Dark Sky Events'</u> programme. (The 'Stargazers Welcome Pack', made available to the consultants by National Parks Wales, did not appear to be available on the website – this is an excellent publication).

The <u>Northumberland International Dark Sky Park</u> promotes its dark skies offer through its own website. There is an engaging and informative film as well as an excellent range of downloadable fact sheets – one these provides an excellent guide to <u>'Outdoor lighting'</u> that is very useful for public authorities, tourism and other businesses, residents. The <u>Kielder Observatory</u> sits within the Kielder Water & Forest Park and attracts 24,000 visitors a year. The Observatory is host to a very comprehensive <u>Events</u> programme which revolves primarily around stargazing and associated activities.

<u>Elan Valley</u> promotes its offer through its website, with regular 'Dark Skies' updates through its Newsletter. The driving force behind the project, however, appears to be <u>Elan Valley Astronomy</u> run by Kris and Les Fry. Their Facebook pages are well worth delving into, packed with lots of activities – check out the way in which they let

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their followers know about their success in being designated as a Dark Sky Park (posts from July 11<sup>th</sup> through to July 17<sup>th</sup> – like it!). They also run family events such as their <u>Rocket Day</u> last August and a 'Solar System Walk' that they work into the Elan Valley Walking Festival in September.

The consultant had a brief discussion with Kris and Les. It was clear that they are keen to work closely with the National Parks in Wales to promote the idea of 'wales the first Dark Sky Nation'.

#### 3.5 NATIONAL TRUST

The National Trust have a national initiative concerned with the promotion of dark skies. Searching 'Stargazing' on their website reveals a whole host of initiatives including:

- 'A guide to Stargazing for Beginners'
- 'Things to take on a Family Stargazing Trip'
- 'Mind-boggling facts about stargazing for kids'

Their website also refers visitors on to 'Top Spots for Stargazing' and one of the sites visitors are referred on to is Stackpole in Pembrokeshire. The consultant spoke with the National Trust Education Officer about the annual 'Dark Sky' Event held at the Stackpole Outdoor Learning Centre, who indicated that the event featured a Planetarium (it was cloudy!) and rocket-making (photos can be seen on the Stackpole Facebook pages).

The event was said to be very popular (120 people attended last year), especially with families, mostly local (estimated to be 70% of total audience). The event was promoted through Facebook, Social media and the National Trust Magazine. Linking to the BBC's Stargazing Live Programme also proved very beneficial in promoting the event.

#### 3.6 **CADW**

Cadw run a series of <u>stargazing events</u> at their sites and just prior to Christmas 2015 ran their excellently put together <u>'Silent Night Under the Stars'</u> time-lapse video. Discussions with Cadw's Events Officer revealed that they are planning a further seven or eight events this year and that they would be interested in holding discussions about opportunities for joint-working on these.

One of the planned events is set to take place at Llanthony Priory timed to coincide with an astronomical event and being run in conjunction with a local astronomy group.

Further discussion revealed that Cadw was also involved with a range of other after dark activities at it sites including: Bat Walks, Banqueting Evenings and Character-led 'Spooky walks' and 'Ghost Tours'.

#### 3.7 NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

The consultant spoke with the Senior Communities & Partnerships Officer at NRW. The organisation has been working to raise awareness of the importance of protecting 'dark skies' across its estates, with its staff internally. In conjunction with Dark Sky Wales they held an event recently at Garwnant and the intention is to roll these events out further.

It was indicated that NRW are keen to use their estates, especially their woodlands - as resources for access, recreation and education and that a focus on 'dark skies' provided them with a catalyst for their work in these areas.

There was a concern expressed that the very act of designating 'dark sky' sites might in fact have the opposite of the intended effect and it was suggested that a focus on creating 'easy access' sites for stargazing might act as a 'buffer' to this potential issue. The establishment of the Dark Sky Discovery Sites in the Valleys (see section 3.2 above) was cited as a good example of sites that had the capacity to take pressure off the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The Officer also cited a series of community level projects in the Valleys of South East Wales that showed the enthusiasm for all things 'dark skies' at the present time. The <u>Bryn-y-Don 'Star Path'</u> was cited as an exemplar in using new and creative ways to reduce the need for street-lighting in a community setting.

The Officer also suggested that tourism projects around 'dark skies', especially those developed by the private sector were in his view set to increase significantly.

#### 3.8 OTHER 'DARK SKIES' AND TOURISM INITIATIVES

The <u>British Astronomical Association</u> (BAA) is the UK's largest body representing the interests of all those - astronomers and non-astronomers - who appreciate the beauty of the night sky and value it as a natural resource.

The <u>Commission for Dark Skies</u> (CfDS) was set up by concerned members of the BAA in 1989, to counter the evergrowing tide of 'skyglow' which has tainted the night sky over Britain since the 1950s. CfDS in particular has some excellent background information regarding the adverse impact of light pollution on people and wildlife.

There are a myriad of initiatives that might be highlighted. Below are a selection of three that provide examples of marketing; international tourism destinations, a celestial phenomenon, and a local accommodation provider in Wales.

The <u>Starlight Foundation</u> is an interesting international organisation that amongst other things promotes the establishment of certificated <u>'Starlight Tourist Destinations'</u> defined as 'visitable places characterised by excellent quality for the contemplation of starry skies and the practice of tourist activities based on this resource'. One of the destinations that has gained certification is <u>'Arcadian Skies'</u> in Nova Scotia.

The <u>Aurora Zone</u> is a British based company that organises holidays to destinations where the *Aurora Borealis* can be viewed from some interesting accommodation, including glass igloos!

The <u>Stargazers Retreat</u> in the Brecon Beacons is a great example of a small business that has made the most of the opportunity to promote its location as a great place to see the stars. The owners have clearly thought through their visitor's needs and provide stargazing equipment and advice via their website.

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#### 4 VISITORS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section reviews what the available research data is telling us about the nature of the visitors to National Parks in Wales. The information has been assimilated through information passed on by the client, consultation with staff of Visit Wales and additional research undertaken via the internet.

The conclusion is that the target audiences for this project in priority order are as follows:

- Active Family Explorers (from the domestic market), on a day (night!) out, travelling off peak, to specific places and / or events.
- **Pre-family Explorers** (from the domestic market) staying for a couple of nights, in a group with other of their friends, travelling off peak and looking to take part in outdoor activities.
- Scenic Explorer Couples (from the domestic and some overseas markets) doing a bit of touring around, looking for places off the beaten track.
- Older Cultural Explorer Couples (from the domestic and some overseas markets) on holiday, looking for historic attractions, interesting towns & villages, the local way of life and culture.

The priorities identified suggest that there should be a focus on families and younger people from the domestic market.

#### 4.2 VISITORS

#### **VISITORS TO WALES**

On its website Welsh Government provides some key headline statistics regarding tourism in Wales:

- In 2014, there were 10 million overnight trips to Wales by residents of Great Britain (GB). The associated spend was £1,732 million.
- 64% of GB visitors to Wales came for a holiday, 28% to visit friends or relatives and 6% on business
- The Great Britain Day Visits survey indicates that just under 90 million day visits are made to destinations in Wales annually with expenditure amounting to over £2.5 billion.
- Wales attracted 932,000 international visitors spending £368 million during 2014
- the 4 top generating countries for overseas tourism to Wales were the Republic of Ireland (148,000), France (111,000), Germany (92,000) and USA (90,000)
- 37% of International visitors were on a holiday trip, 35% were visiting friends or relatives and 18% were on business during 2013.

Visit Wales conducts a number of visitor surveys<sup>5</sup> under the umbrella title '<u>The Wales Visitor Survey</u>'. The last set of surveys were conducted during 2013. Visitors are categorised into three specific markets: UK Staying, Day and Overseas Visitors.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> <u>Wales Visitor Survey 2013 Executive Summary, Wales Visitor Survey 2013 REPORT – UK Staying Visitors, Wales Visitor Survey 2013 REPORT – UK Staying Visitors, Wales Visitor Survey 2013 REPORT – Overseas Visitors, Visitor Information Needs REPORT.</u>

Relevant information from the surveys pertaining to the **UK Staying Visitor** market:

- Significant increase in motivation to visit specific attractions / places, and to take part in outdoor activities.
- After 'the beach' visiting a castle or historic attraction is the second most frequently mentioned reason stated for visiting Wales featuring in a third (34%) of trips.
- 'Active Family Explorers' and 'Pre-family Explorers' most attracted to Wales. The two Explorer market segments are by far the most likely segments to visit Wales in comparison to the proportion of the UK population that they represent.

Relevant information from the surveys pertaining to the **Day Visitor** market:

- Significant rise in outdoor activities. The motivation to take part in outdoor activities during a day trip in/to Wales has risen from 12% in 2011 to 23% in 2013.
- Main motivation for day trips differs significantly from staying visits. 'To visit places / historical sites / specific attractions / sightseeing' is clearly the most common principal reason for taking a day trip to or in Wales
- Castles / historic attractions lead the way for daytrips. Closely followed by country / forest parks.

Relevant information from the surveys pertaining to the **Overseas Visitors** market:

- Significant rise in outdoor activities.
- Motivation to visit South East Wales differs greatly from the other regions of Wales 'To visit places / historical sites etc' (motivation for 85% of visitors) is much higher than in the rest of Wales (68%). On the other hand 'to enjoy landscape / countryside / beach' (56%) is lower than the rest of Wales (71%), and 'to take part in outdoor activities' (19%) is much lower than the rest of Wales (46%).
- Castles and historic attractions are particularly interesting to overseas visitors higher among nationalities which are not used to seeing such sites in their own country, especially Americans!

Common findings across all three sectors:

- All visitors said that they will come back to Wales for more.
- Extremely high advocacy for Wales would recommend a visit to Wales to a friend or relative.

Interestingly Visit Wales also more recently commissioned an <u>'off-peak Visitor Survey'</u><sup>6</sup> targeting UK Staying and Day Visitors:

Relevant information from the 'off-peak' survey pertaining to the **UK Staying Visitor** market:

- Many staying visitors have commented that they prefer coming to Wales outside of peak season because accommodation is cheaper and/or they enjoy the peace.
- Motivation for visiting off-peak more specific to particular people, events or activities. Off-peak staying
  visitors to / in Wales seem to have a more concrete plan of what they are planning to do compared to
  peak season visitors.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> <u>Visit Wales Off-Peak Visitor Survey 2013/14 - Staying Visitors</u>, <u>Visit Wales Off-Peak Visitor Survey 2013/14 – Day Visitors</u>,

- In spite of warmer weather during peak season, staying visitors are more likely to take part in outdoor activities off-peak.
- 'Younger Less Well Off' segment indexes much higher than in peak season. The off-peak visitor profile is somewhat younger and includes more groups of friends than in peak season. About one in eight (13%) staying parties in the off-peak are groups of friends.

Relevant information from the 'off-peak' survey pertaining to the **Day Visitor** market:

- Some people, especially families with young children, need to find things to do out of the house all year round. Families with young children are therefore an important group in the off-peak day visitor market.
- Enjoyment at attractions peaks in the festive month of December and it seems likely that the high satisfaction is linked to festive events which were on at that time.
- Events are important for bringing in visitors during the off-peak season.
- Museums a popular place to be for day visitors.
- Day visitors are more likely to be repeat visitors during off-peak than in peak season. Most (86%) off-peak day visitors are repeat visitors.

In addition to the Visitor Surveys outlined above Visit Wales undertook to find out 'Visitor Information Needs'. The report has several findings that are of relevance:

- Staying visitors have normally already decided on the region to visit at the point when they search for information. Day trips are done considerably more on the spur of the moment.
- Most consumers planning UK breaks and holidays use both online and offline information sources. The reason why they use both is because they play different roles.
- Online sources are generally more important pre-trip because they are used for following up preconceived ideas of where to go. They are important for 'nailing' the most fundamental aspects of trip
  planning such as deciding on exactly which part of a region to visit, finding and booking accommodation.
  Well over half (57%) of interviewed UK staying visitors to Wales used online sources pre-trip to plan their
  trip to Wales, compared to a much lower proportion (18%) using offline sources.
- Offline sources are generally more important during trip. Leaflets & brochures and word of mouth recommendations from local people are particularly important in influencing visitors where they go out and what they do. About two in five (38%) interviewed UK staying visitors to Wales say they used offline sources during their trip in Wales, compared to a lower proportion (17%) using online sources.
- Children raise the stakes of getting the planning right. Visitors taking children are under a certain amount
  of pressure to plan breaks and day trips well because the consequences of getting it wrong can be dire.
  This means being more meticulous in checking details before departure, and in checking that attractions
  will provide ample entertainment for children.
- Special needs dictate very careful planning. Visitors with special party needs such as disabled access and facilities need to plan more carefully than other visitors, and being able to find the information they are looking for on special needs makes the difference between going and not going to a destination / place of accommodation.
- Local people, especially accommodation providers, play a very important role in influencing visitors where to go. Their advice is sought and trusted more than online reviews because they live there, and so many visitors use local knowledge to verify their list of planned activities, or seek new ideas. Smaller accommodation providers in particular are pro-active in giving local knowledge.

#### **VISITORS TO NATIONAL PARKS - GENERAL**

The results of a '<u>Visitor Survey</u>' undertaken <u>National Parks UK</u> reveals the following relevant information about visitors to the UK's National Parks:

- About 58% of visitors come to 'enjoy the scenery and landscape' which makes this the main reason for visiting a National Park.
- Other reasons stated included 'the peace and quiet' and 'to take part in an outdoor activity'.
- Other motivations also included 'enjoyed a previous visit', 'easy to get to', 'to visit friends and family', 'never been before', 'because it is a National Park', 'recommended to visit' and 'come every year'.
- About 68% of visitors are families, most coming in a group with under five people.
- Only 7% of visitors come from outside the UK.
- Most visitors come from the densely populated South-East region, near London or from the regions closest to National Parks.
- Most visitors, 93%, travel to the National Parks in their own car.
- The most popular activities visitors do in National Parks are: Walking (40%). Driving around and sightseeing by car (19%). Relaxing (12%). Visiting towns and villages (10%).
- A smaller percentage of people were involved in other outdoor activities like horse riding, climbing or kayaking.

#### **VISITORS TO BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK (BBNP)**

The STEAM<sup>7</sup> figures for Brecon Beacons National Park reveal the following headline statistics:

- Total visitor days 4.81 M
- Staying visitor days 1.09 M
- Total visitor numbers 4.01 M
- Number of staying visitors 0.30 M
- Number of day visitors 3.72 M

The results of the <u>'Brecon Beacons Visitor Survey (2014)'</u> commissioned by the Brecon Beacons Marketing and Coordination Group reveals the following relevant additional<sup>8</sup> information about visitors to the Brecon Beacons National Park area:

- A range of visitor group types responded to the survey. Two fifths were couples (44%) and a third were families with children (33%). The remainder consisted of friends (13%), families without children (4%), lone visitors (4%), tour groups/societies or other visitor groups.
- The average party size was 3.4 people and party size ranged from 1 to 36 people. The average party size of overnight visitors is the same but is slightly lower for day visitors (3.2 people). Families with children have an average group size of 4.9 people.
- Respondent age groups vary widely although those aged 55+ make up two fifths of overnight visitors (43%) and a third of day visitors (34%). Half of overnight visitor respondents (48%) are 35-54 rising to 52% for day visitors.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> STEAM (The Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Some of the findings simply reinforce what the Wales Visitor Survey is telling us – where this is the case these findings although relevant are not included in this report.

- A high proportion of overnight visitNors (82%) are from England but the majority of day visitors (75%) are from Wales. English overnight visitors come from the South East (26%), Midlands (16%), South West (15%), London (11%) and East Anglia (8%).
- 8% of visitors come from overseas and the most common countries of origin are the Netherlands (39%), Belgium (9%), USA (8%), Germany (7%) and Australia/New Zealand (7%).
- Landscape & scenery and tranquillity are key influences on visits.
- Visiting towns and villages, walking, and eating out are key activities. The most popular towns and villages to visit include Brecon (77%), Abergavenny (52%) and Crickhowell (50%).
- The most popular attractions or popular sites visited include the Mountain Centre (26%), Brecon Cathedral (21%) and Brecon Mountain Railway (16%).
- There is a greater leaning towards visiting 'natural' sites, the most popular of which are the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (41%), the Waterfalls area (37%), Pen Y Fan (33%), Talybont Reservoir (26%) and Llangorse Lake (20%).

#### **VISITORS TO PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK (PCNP)**

The STEAM figures for Pembrokeshire (2009)<sup>9</sup> reveals the following headline statistics:

- Total visitor days 13 M
- Total visitor numbers 4.2 M

The results of the <u>'Pembrokeshire Visitor Survey (2011-12)'</u> commissioned by the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership reveals the following relevant additional information about visitors to the Brecon Beacons National Park area:

- Three quarters of visitors are in the ABC1 social class compared to a UK average of approximately half the population and this difference continues to grow.
- The home market remains key: visitor origin has been split almost 50:50 between those from Wales and those outside Wales since 2007/8. Overseas visitors remain at around 5%.
- There is an increasing strength of attachment to the region amongst its visitors: in 2011/12 a quarter now visit more than once a month (up from just under a fifth in 2007/8) and the proportions very likely to return to Pembrokeshire in the near future are at their highest levels.
- Day trips continue to account for a quarter of all visits with staying trips within Pembrokeshire accounting for nearly 70%.
- The natural environment is key to the visit experience with elements such as award winning beaches, a range of natural attractions and walking viewed as the most important elements of the trip and also seen as the best performing elements of the trip.
- With the natural environment playing an important part in motivating the trip and the enjoyment of the trip it follows that activities are focused on enjoying the landscape: over a quarter of visitors come to walk with one in ten coming to visit the beach and 8% visit natural attractions.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's 'End of Season' Reports provide a very useful insight in the National Park's Events Programme. Below are some of the most relevant findings:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> As reported on the National Parks UK website

- 543 events in total (183 in the HQ offered programme, 17 events in Oriel y Parc, 186 events at Carew, 150 events at Castell Henllys, 7 events at Tenby).
- Events previously attended None 50%, 1 or 2 23%, 3 or 4 18%, 5 or more 9%.
- Approx 55% were day visitors, 30% on a long-stay, 15% on a short stay.
- Where from? Pembrokeshire 43%, Rest of Wales 17%, Other UK 35%, Overseas 3% (Japan and France).
- Last word... 'Please continue to add to these activities!'

#### **VISITORS TO SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK (SNP)**

The STEAM figures for Snowdonia National Park reveal the following headline statistics:

- Total visitor days 9.74 M
- Staying visitor days 7.34 M
- Total visitor numbers 3.79 M
- Number of staying visitors 1.39 M
- Number of day visitors 2.40 M

There is no up to date visitor survey information available for the Snowdonia National Park area, but there are visitor statistics collated within the Destination Management Plan for Gwynedd.

'Gwynedd Destination Management Plan 2013-20' reveals the following relevant additional information about visitors to Gwynedd:

- According to the Gwynedd Visitor Survey 2009, the following proportions of visitors stating their main reasons for visiting Gwynedd as: Scenery / landscape (54%), Coast (48%), Previous visit (44%), Peace and quiet (35%), Sightseeing / attractions (28%)
- The age profile of visitors to Gwynedd is similar to Wales overall in that visitors tend to be older, rather than younger "young middle-aged". There were however, slightly fewer 55+s in Gwynedd (36% compared with 42% on average) and slightly more 35-44s (26% compared with 22% North Wales/19% all Wales).
- The demographic profile of visitors to Gwynedd reflects that of visitors to North Wales, i.e. ABC1 (62%) C2DE (36%).
- Unsurprisingly, the type of break/holiday taken by visitors to Gwynedd reflects the trend for North Wales as a whole: Short break (38%), Main holiday (36%), Secondary holiday (26%).
- As with Wales as a whole, international visitors represent a small percentage of all visitors. Domestic UK –
  and particularly English visitors represent by far the largest market for Gwynedd, both currently and for
  the foreseeable future.

#### **VISIT WALES – TARGET VISITOR GROUPS**

#### Domestic market:

• The GB domestic market is the primary market for Wales and will remain the main focus for marketing activity during this strategic period. It accounts for 92% of all staying visitor trips and 84% of staying visitor spend. Within this, the domestic holiday segment is by far the most important and valuable visitor segment for Wales with nearly 6 million trips and £1.1 billion visitor spend in 2012.

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• Within the constraints of proximity, we appear to have significant scope to grow share of holiday visitors from London and the South-East, East Midlands, Yorkshire and the South West. Accordingly, marketing activity funded by Visit Wales will focus on these geographical markets as the strategy is taken forward.

#### Overseas market:

- International visitors are a relatively high spending market but historically have been of lower importance for Wales, accounting for just 8% of all staying trips and 16% of all staying visitor expenditure.
- Accordingly marketing activity funded by Visit Wales will focus on three main international markets (Ireland, Germany and USA/Canada) as the strategy is taken forward.

Visit Wales has identified the places and people that offer the best potential for developing tourism in Wales.

#### Geographical targets:

- Priority areas Those within a two-hour drive: the M4 corridor, the Midlands, north-west England, Hampshire and the West Country. These areas get the heaviest spending on TV and press advertising and direct marketing.
- Secondary areas: The rest of the UK. Ads on satellite and digital TV networks, and in national newspapers and magazines, give nationwide coverage.

#### Consumer targets:

Visit Wales identifies its target consumer groups according to their behaviour, attitudes and motivations, rather than simple demographic factors (age, occupation, income etc). Detailed research has shown that the single most important consumer group are the so-called 'Independent Explorers'. These people are:

- in search of new places and experiences
- affluent/ slightly upmarket
- mainly adults, aged 30 and over
- keen to avoid over-commercialised tourist traps
- independent in their thinking and actions
- looking for places that inspire and challenge them
- interested in understanding the local culture and meeting local people
- wanting to return home refreshed and enriched

Visit Wales has further segmented 'Independent explorers' as follows: Older cultural explorer couples, scenic explorer couples, activity family explorers, pre-family explorers.

#### Older cultural explorer couples:

- Older (96% 40+), married, no young children living with them. They tend to be more ABC1 and in the higher income brackets. Main types of holidays taken are sightseeing and city-breaks.
- Low preference for theme / holiday parks, caravanning, touring, activities and shopping.
- Good range of historical attractions is of high importance to this segment.
- Interesting towns and cities, good quality accommodation and beautiful scenery are also very important to them.

 They like to learn about the local way of life and culture of the places they visit; and enjoy discovering new experiences and places to visit within the United Kingdom, so holiday is more to them than just a sunny beach.

#### Scenic explorer couples:

- Older (95% 40+), married, no young children living with them, not highly differentiated on social grade and income (just slightly higher).
- More likely than other segments to be touring.
- Beautiful scenery and beautiful unspoilt countryside, flora and fauna are the main things they are looking for when choosing a holiday, followed by beautiful coastline as well as good deals on accommodation.
- Suitability for families, trendiness, activities (apart from walking) as well as short travel time do not feature prominently in their decision.
- They prefer to travel independently when taking holidays and breaks, they like to visit places that are still comparatively undiscovered and they prefer to take holidays off the beaten track

#### Active family explorers:

- The vast majority (94%) are below the age of 50 and all of them live in households with children under the age of 15. Most of them are ABC1 (67%).
- They consider themselves adventurous and try to go somewhere different on holiday every time. They also like to learn about the local way of life and culture of the places they visit and family traditions and heritage are important to them.
- They are looking for places that offer lots of things for children to do in all weathers.
- Providing their children with new experiences and opportunities is very important to them.

#### Pre-family explorers:

- The vast majority (72%) are below the age of 35 and all of them live in households without any children under the age of 15. Most of them are ABC1 (69%) and they take a lot of holidays, short breaks or days out.
- They enjoy discovering new experiences and places to visit within the United Kingdom and try to go somewhere different on holiday every time.
- They are the most obviously active of Wales' target market segments: Wales as an outdoor playground is an important motivator for them

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#### 5 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section describes the work undertaken by TACP in developing a series of products, or a 'suite of activities and adventures', for the National Parks and the trade operating within them to market and run.

The consultants proposed from the outset that the suite might contain activities and adventures categorised as such:

- Astronomy activities
- Cultural/historical activities and adventures
- Nature activities and adventures
- Physical activities and adventures

This notion was then tested through a process of research and consultation together with a set of criteria that helped define the exact nature of the product, including; weather, access for all, simplicity, safety and seasonality

#### 5.2 PROCESS

The process for developing the suite activities of activities and adventures is outlined in Figure 1 (below). Trade organisations were consulted with by telephone and e-mail; surveys shared with stakeholders and visitors; and specialist knowledge was sought to identify any specific constraints and considerations. All information was compiled and presented at a workshop during which the activities and adventures in development were refined further.



Figure 1 - process used to develop the suite of activities and adventures

#### 5.3 ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The priority list for development (shown below) was put together by the consultants in conjunction with the client.

- All year Dark Sky Astronomy
- Periodic Dark Sky Astronomy

- Astronomy Society Events
- Moonlit Walks/Night Walking
- Night Trail Running
- Night Mountain Bike Adventure
- Dark Skies Camping
- Sunrise and Sunset Adventure
- Night Train Ride Adventure
- Night Time Photography
- Beacons and Bonfires
- Bat Walks
- Glow Worm Adventure
- Badger Watching Adventure
- Nocturnal Birds Listening adventure

It should be noted that this list is effectively the first 'cohort' of a much wider range of potential activities and adventures that might be developed and brought on-stream as the programme is rolled out across the three National Parks in Wales.

## 5.4 'NIGHT-TIME ADVENTURES – A TOOLKIT FOR THE TRADE' – TOURISM TRADE MANUAL

The Trade Manual will be developed as a 'toolkit' to complement tourism business development and as a training resource. The introduction will include a summary of the adventures and ways in which they might be promoted and marketed to visitors to the National Parks in Wales.

Where relevant, each activity or adventure will be described under the following headings:

- Potential markets
- Key locations
- Case studies
- Key partners
- Constraints
- Seasonality
- Access for all
- Safety considerations
- Equipment / facilities required
- Related activities
- Additional information

The toolkit will also contain links and references to other dark sky friendly business initiatives.

The Manual will be branded in line with the proposals outlined in the next section and will be promoted and marketed to the trade for successful adoption in line with the proposals outlined in Section 8.

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#### 6 BRAND DEVELOPMENT

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section reviews the work undertaken in the development of the brand. The brand identity, language and design were conceived and developed by design consultants from Girl & Boy Studio.

The main aspects of the branding are as follows:

- A deliberately descriptive name 'Discovery in the dark Wales'.
- A 'look and feel' brand identity rather than a logo and strong 'corporate ID'.
- A brand-mark and colour scheme that matches the lifecycle of stars.
- **Top quality photographic images** of stars / celestial events, and of visitors enjoying night-time adventures in iconic, National Park locations across Wales.
- **Short strapline descriptors** to go with the images and phrased so that they act to turn notions of 'the dark' on its head.

The branding sets out to significantly 'raise the bar' for projects of this nature. The focus is on the use of high quality imagery that target audiences can relate to, combined with a language that is engaging and that challenges preconceptions of being out and about at night.

#### 6.2 BRAND DEFINITION

The 'Discovery in the dark' brand is designed to raise awareness of the 'Activities and Adventures' (the product) that take place in the National Parks in Wales at night, and critically to encourage active participation – either in them (as visitors), or in setting them up (tourism industry).

#### **BRAND PROMISE**

What the 'Discovery in the dark' brand will promise the visitor is that these activities will be:

- Awe-inspiring, mind-blowing, life affirming.
- Exciting! Focussed on discovery and a sense of adventure.
- Challenging, possibly a little scary (but safe).
- Engaging and absorbing helping take people 'out of themselves'.
- Fun.
- Culturally rich.
- Different from the norm.
- Something to do at night rather than stay in with technology.

And, for the tourism industry the promise is that these activities will:

- Encourage visitors to stay longer and / or stay overnight.
- Draw in new visitor audiences.
- Attract visitors in the shoulder periods and out of season.
- Be easy to establish.
- Deliver a quality experience.

#### **BRAND PERSONALITY**

The 'personality' of the brand was established at a Marketing and Branding Workshop<sup>10</sup> attended by members of the Steering Group and National Park Communication Teams. It was generally agreed that the brand should be:

- More personable than corporate.
- More spontaneous than planned.
- More modern than classic.
- More cutting edge than traditional.
- Fun.
- Accessible.

#### 6.3 DESIGN, IDENTITY AND USE

It was agreed from the outset that the brand should be more of a 'look and feel' rather than having an overtly strong logo and corporate identity.

A primary consideration driving this decision was the fact that the three National Parks in Wales already have their own logos and in the case of Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Parks, there are already strong brands (and logos) in place for their established and emerging 'Dark Sky' initiatives.

#### 6.3.1 BRAND NAME, COLOURS AND TYPEFACE

The 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' brand name is deliberately descriptive. The name sets out to ensure that the audience knows exactly what the offer is, as well as when and where it takes place.

The 'constellation' brand-mark gives a strong sense of the subject matter and subtly shows that the three National Parks are engaged in the initiative, whilst the colour scheme mirrors the *lifecycle of the stars*.

The 'National' typeface chosen is 'confident, legible and welcoming'.

#### 6.3.2 BRAND IMAGERY

Central to the design concept for the 'Discovery in the dark' brand is the use of high quality photographic imagery. The primary subject matter (the stars and the night sky) already lends itself to stunning images and there is a wealth of great photographs already out there and available.

However, the popularity of taking photographs of the stars, in iconic locations, has led to a glut of such images and there is a danger that people will soon tire of seeing them being used for promotional purposes. Many of the existing images available (understandably) also lack people in them.

The response to this (along with the need to promote activities other than those related to astronomy) has been to propose the following strategy for using photographs:

• To select for use, only the very best of the existing images of the night sky, taken in locations (within the National Parks) that are instantly recognisable <sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Held in Pembrokeshire Coast's National Park Office in Pembroke Dock on 9th December 2015 (See Appendix A).

- To add into the mix equally high quality images of people participating in the full range of night-time adventures and activities.
- And, where there are gaps, to commission new photographs that truly capture the atmosphere in and around a particular activity.

To get a sense of the kinds of images that might be used on the website and other marketing media, the designers have provided some examples of photographs drawn from the internet as they may appear in use (See over).

Together with their associated straplines, these kinds of images (carefully targeted at the relevant audience) are designed to hook the visitor into wanting to find out more.

#### 6.3.3 BRAND LANGUAGE

Together with the photographic imagery, the 'straplines' that go with them are a key part of the design concept.

The basic premise for the brand language is that the notion that 'darkness', in relation to our world, is associated with a time when everything shuts down.

For the purpose of promoting the brand this notion is turned on its head. To 'wake' people up to the world that exists beyond our own conscious time, to the wonders that can be revealed and the discoveries to be made.

The result is a series of simple, catchy, intelligently phrased straplines that together with their appropriate image tell the audience almost everything they need to know about the product offer.

Straplines developed thus far include the following:

- 'See Wales in a new light'
- 'Legendary stories told in the sky'
- 'The best time of day'
- 'As bright as night'
- 'Find new ways'
- 'Night is the new day'
- 'Turn off and tune in'
- 'All the equipment you'll need'

New straplines that fall in line with the brand are relatively easy to develop, so long as the person developing them takes into account:

- The notion of turning things on their head
- The brand promise
- The brand personality
- That straplines should be as effective in both Welsh and English

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> There are several professional and amateur photographers that have produced work that is of the quality required – a good example can be found in the work of <u>Drew Buckley</u> in Pembrokeshire.



Figure 2 - 'Discovery in the Dark - Wales' logo (credit: Girl & Boy Studio)

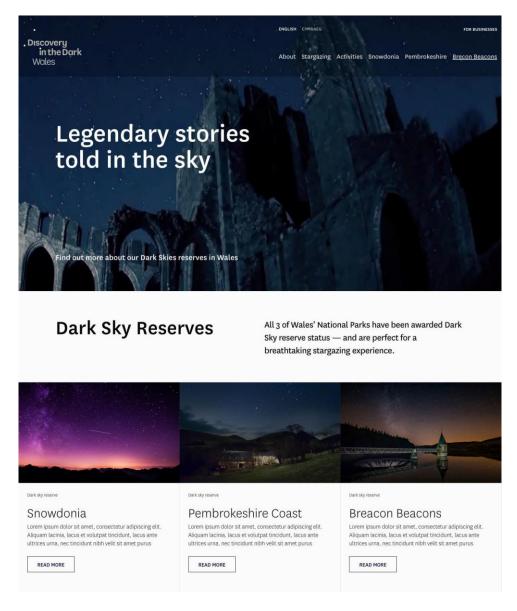


Figure 3 - 'Discovery in the Dark - Wales' website (credit: Girl & Boy Studio)

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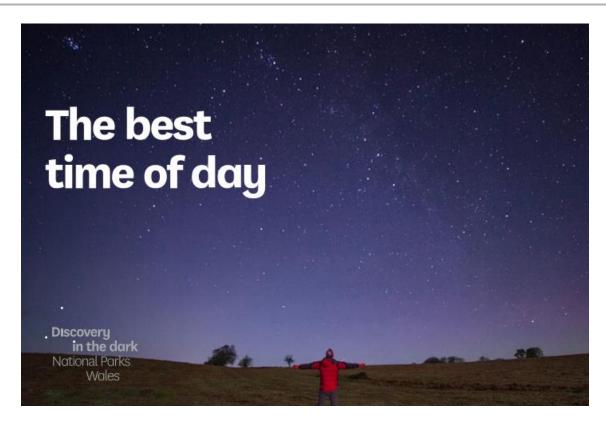


Figure 4 - 'Discovery in the Dark - Wales' imagery example (credit: Girl & Boy Studio)



Figure 5 – 'Discovery in the Dark - Wales' imagery example (credit: Girl & Boy Studio)

#### 7 MARKETING STRATEGY

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section is concerned with outlining the strategic approach to branding and marketing the project. The strategy comprises a series of 11 strategic objectives. These objectives have been derived from the brief and from an assessment of the results of the research & development work undertaken, and reported in Sections 1-6 above.

#### 7.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Below are listed the headline 'Strategic Objectives' of the Branding and Marketing Plan.

- Stay true to the vision and mission
- Realise the project's potential
- Carefully target the marketing
- Fit with Visit Wales 'themed years' marketing campaign
- Work closely with other partner organisations at the national level
- Engage the business, voluntary and community sector
- Ensure the product can be delivered to meet demand
- Develop the website as a 'starting point' to a night-time adventure
- Use social media to its best effect
- Build a bank of great stories
- Keep it simple in delivery

In the sub-sections that follow, each objective is outlined in detail, and the practical application of each to the development of marketing and promotional materials is explained.

#### 7.2.1 STAY TRUE TO THE VISION AND MISSION

The 'Discovery in the dark' project is much more than a tourism initiative and needs to be perceived as such by both internal and external audiences.

At its very heart, the project is about 'sustainability'. It has the capacity to be a platform for putting out messages about the way we live and what we can do to improve the situation we find ourselves in on 'Planet Earth', without having to preach.

It would be an opportunity missed therefore, if messages concerning the benefits of reducing light pollution (for wildlife and for human health) were not written *large and right through* the promotional content, alongside the more obvious messages about being able to see the stars more clearly in truly great locations.

#### 7.2.2 REALISE THE PROJECT'S POTENTIAL

The 'Discovery in the dark' project also has the capability of being successful at the national level and of becoming an exemplar on the international stage.

There are good reasons for making this claim:

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- The project is right down the line of what the National Parks are all about tuning people in and turning people on to their 'special qualities'.
- There are good precedents in Wales for establishing successful national level, multi-partner projects of this nature, for example, The Wales Coast Path.
- There is an onus on the National Parks (made explicit in the current Review), for them to become 'hotbeds of innovation'.
- Welsh Government policy led by 'The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' which is driving
  everyone to concerted connected action at the community and at the national level. Together with the
  'Planning (Wales) Act 2015' and the 'Environment (Wales) Bill'.

The National Parks in Wales are already ahead of the game in this respect and there is strong platform on which to build. Why not go the whole way and set out to establish Wales as the world's first 'Dark Sky Nation'?

#### 7.2.3 CAREFULLY TARGET THE MARKETING

Being focussed doesn't necessarily go without saying as there is sometimes a tendency to try to be all things to all people. In the context of an extremely tight budget careful targeting becomes even more important.

The target markets are reasonably well defined and it is case of working through each one in order to figure out the exact timing and nature of the delivery of marketing media. The analysis below is intended as a starting point:

- Active Family Explorers looking to attend a one off 'after dark' event promote available events via the
  website, social media and via posters & leaflets at National Park Visitor Centres, heritage and other
  attractions.
- Pre-family Explorers looking to try out / take part in day / night outdoor activities promote opportunities
  via the website, social media channels and via word of mouth at outdoor activity and accommodation
  providers.
- Scenic Explorer Couples looking to go Stargazing promote places 'off the beaten track' via the website, blogs and via word of mouth at accommodation providers.
- Older Cultural Explorer Couples promote 'cultural experiences' that include night-time activities via the website and via word of mouth at pubs, restaurants and accommodation providers (who are accredited 'Dark-Sky Ambassadors').

# 7.2.4 FIT WITH VISIT WALES 'THEMED YEARS' MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Ensuring a good fit with the Visit Wales campaign will be important. Visit Wales are actively supporting the 'Discovery in the dark' Project and are making available a range of opportunities to tie it in more closely. The current 'Year of...' Campaign initiated by Visit Wales has created a real 'buzz' from organisations across all sectors concerned with tourism development in Wales.

There are connections that can be made between the 'Discovery in the dark' project and all three themes, and despite the fact that Year 3 of the campaign the 'Year of the Sea' is more difficult to relate to Snowdonia and especially the Brecon Beacons, the sense from Visit Wales is that the interest and activity generated in the previous two years (of 'Adventure' and of 'Legends') will be carried over and supported rather being 'dropped'.

The Visit Wales Campaign also provides a strong framework and timetable to work within, with clear target dates already established for year launch activities for the next two years around Nov / Dec 2016 and 2017. There are

opportunities within this to realise a 'competitive advantage' in the timing and nature of launch and other promotional activities initiated for the 'Discovery in the dark' project, due to the fact that its emphasis may be more geared towards the shoulder periods of the season and in winter – generally the opposite of when others will be looking to promote their activities.

## 7.2.5 WORK CLOSELY WITH OTHER PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

There are already good / strong relationships developed with partner organisations by each National Park. The opportunity exists to develop these more fully at the national level.

This will be important going forward as there is evidence to suggest that the National Trust, Cadw and to some lesser extent National Resources Wales, are all looking to develop national 'Dark Sky' initiatives of their own.

The consultants have not been able to explore the possibilities of partnership working at the national level in any great depth, but it is recommended that these opportunities are indeed further explored. There are clear synergies that can be looked at and there is a danger in any event that the market (from the visitor's perspective) will become saturated if the National Parks in Wales do not look to work with other organisations looking to do the same thing.

# 7.2.6 ENGAGE THE BUSINESS, VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

By working together the National Parks in Wales are able to develop, market and promote a 'core' product. By working with other partners at the National Level the reach of this core product will be extended. Without the support of the business, voluntary and community sectors, however, there will be little hope that the full range of 'Activities and Adventures' can be made available to those that want to take part at the local level.

The work already undertaken by Brecon Beacons National Park in engaging all kinds of organisations concerned with sustainable tourism development through their 'Dark Sky Ambassador' programme is a model that could be developed across the other two National Parks.

There is an opportunity with the development of the 'Trade Manual' to initiate a new phase of the programme within the Brecon Beacons and to then roll this out to Pembrokeshire Coast, Snowdonia and if a truly national project develops, then beyond that to other areas such as the Elan Valley.

#### 7.2.7 ENSURE THE PRODUCT CAN BE DELIVERED TO MEET DEMAND

One of the major frustrations for a visitor, having been attracted by the lovely imagery of after-dark activities and adventures taking place, will be to find out that there is nothing going on in the area that they are staying or are looking to visit.

It will be important therefore to have a full calendar of events planned and advertised well in advance, and to provide DIY options, alternative suggestions or referral on to other organisations, so that the visitor is not left feeling disappointed. It is likely that this will not be something that can be achieved quickly and will need to be built up over time.

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### 7.2.8 DEVELOP THE WEBSITE AS A 'STARTING POINT TO A NIGHT-TIME ADVENTURE'

The website has the capacity to promote all three National Parks in Wales as places where night-time adventures and activities can begin. In its structure and content the website should take the visitor on a virtual journey to both to the stars and back, and then across the length & breadth of the National Parks in Wales, highlighting the very best of what is on offer at night.

The structure of the website will be designed to provide strong links to the individual National Park websites or 'Destination' websites as appropriate. Allowing the virtual visitor to drill down (or up) to what's happening at the local (or national) level. Maintaining the links and managing the interface between the various websites will be an important aspect of the ongoing development of the project.

# 7.2.9 USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO ITS BEST EFFECT AND MANAGE IT CAREFULLY

Social media platforms (Facebook and more especially Twitter) are the 'go to' for establishing quick and direct communication channels with target audiences, but care needs to be taken to ensure that they are used in a way that truly benefits the intended audience.

Research suggests that the different target markets for this project will use social media in different ways – indeed some target markets may not use them at all. There is also a sense that left 'unmanaged' the posts and feeds can lead to a flood of contributions that do little to enhance the presentation of the product to the visitor.

#### 7.2.10 BUILD A BANK OF GREAT STORIES

The 'Discovery in the dark' project is made for story-telling, and great stories attract big audiences.

The opportunity is to build a bank of great stories drawn from the real experiences of visitors enjoying night-time activities and adventures in Wales.

#### 7.2.11 KEEP IT SIMPLE IN DELIVERY

At the heart of many of the best marketing campaigns is a simple clear idea followed through and into the way in which the campaign is delivered.

# 8 PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING MEDIA

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section outlines how the 'night-time adventures' product is to be marketed in terms of what and is to be delivered and when. The main recommendations are as follows:

- **Develop a coherent 'Night-time Adventures' events programme** Year one of which is kicked off quickly by containing a sensible mix of new 'anchor' and 'repackaged' events (drawn from the National Parks existing programmes).
- **Ensure ongoing programme innovation** through the creative use of all the available 'hooks' to tie in activities with; the seasons, celestial activity and connection to other national and local events.
- Focus on the successful delivery of key marketing media first website, social media channels, branded events then develop other peripherals as funds allow.
- Use the trade manual to engage the trade rather than 'dishing out' the manual, make it part and parcel of an 'Ambassador style' training programme where there is a commitment to action from tourism organisations that want to be associated with the 'Discovery in the dark' brand.
- Exploit the flexibility in the branding to ensure that it is as 'future-proof' as it might be and bring in new angles focussed on delivery to key audiences, for example, by developing its appeal to family / younger audiences.

The programming and associated development of marketing media is intended to ensure the continual and consistent marketing of the competitive advantages to specific, identified target markets.

#### 8.2 PROGRAMMING

The critical success factor for the 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' programme will be in the development of exciting and engaging night-time activities and adventures that are popular and which generate a 'buzz' around them.

Achieving this will be challenging, as the majority of these activities and adventures will need to be developed and delivered at arm's length by the tourism trade, and there is the danger, as a result, that they don't develop in the way that National Parks Wales would like and hope.

In order to avoid this happening it will be important for the National Parks in Wales to develop a set of 'anchor' activities and adventures, and to roll 'exemplars' of these in the first instance. These exemplars might be National Park, Partner or Trade led. Critical to their inclusion in the programme, however, will be a well-conceived event plan and a follow up plan for evaluating success.

Some of the existing National Park activities and events (such as those associated with 'stargazing') might be repackaged, or tweaked to fit the 'Night-time Adventures' ethos. Others will need to be developed and trialled. An initial attempt has been made at drawing together all of the events and activities, going on within National Parks in Wales events programmes for 2016 - See Appendix B.

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As a result of the above it will be difficult to make firm plans for rolling out a three year programme at this stage, as it is more likely that to grow organically, as and when successful events and activities become embedded in the programme. One thing that will help in this respect is if Visit Wales, as is anticipated, continues to support and promote all activities throughout the three years, rather than dropping 'adventure' activities after year 1.

Having indicated that the task will be a challenging one there are, nevertheless, a range of factors that will assist in the design, development and successful implementation of an annual programme. They are:

- The insertion into the programme of some annual Park-led / initiated events e.g.
  - A 'Stargazing Week'.
  - 'Nightfest' a weekend celebrating night-time adventures.
- Staging activities and events according to the appropriate season in which they are best taking-place e.g.
  - Stargazing in winter.
  - o Night-time physical activities (walks, runs, rides) in late spring, summer, autumn.
  - o Camping under the stars in summer.
  - Story-telling / spooky walks in autumn.
- Alignment with particular celestial activities e.g.
  - o Moonlit walk (Full Moon / Blue Moon / Supermoon)
  - Sunrise watch (Summer Solstice)
  - Meteor Camp (Perseids Meteor Shower)
- Connection with other national events in Wales e.g.
  - The Urdd / National / International Eisteddfods
  - Hay Literary Festival
  - Various Walking Festivals
  - Halloween

A 'first draft' attempt to draw these factors together into a three year 'Calendar of Events' has been put together - See Appendix C. This will need to be refined, edited and built upon by members of the Project Steering Group and National Parks Communications / Events Teams, and developed into something that fits with current practices and is workable.

Nevertheless, the exercise (together with information provided by the client) has highlighted some things that can be placed in the 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' Calendar. A brief summary of the key events is shown below:

- Proposal to launch the website, film, manual and some of the 'Night-time adventure activities' to the trade in association with PLANED and Pembrokeshire Tourism (April / May 2016)
- Proposal to launch the 'Night-time Adventures' to visitors (late May / early June 2016)
- Proposal to launch the 'Legends of the Dark Skies' activities and adventures programme to both trade and visitors (Late summer 2016)

#### 8.3 MARKETING MEDIA

With budgetary constraints in mind, and in line with the suggestion that delivery should be kept simple and focussed on doing a few things really well, the development of marketing media will need to be sensibly prioritised – A summary of the proposed deployment of marketing media is provided in the Action Plan in Section 8.4 (below).

The following marketing media have been identified as being essential:

- The website.
- Social media.
- Film.
- The 'Night-time Adventures' story and photo bank
- The 'Night-time Adventures' Tourism Trade Manual.
- 'Discovery in the dark Wales' Branded events.
- 'Discovery in the dark Trailblazers' (Tourism business ambassadors).
- Promotional leaflets x 2 (general and family focussed).

The following marketing media have been identified as being desirable:

- Press and PR TV and radio coverage of new 'Discovery in the dark' activities
- Pop-up 'roadshow' display and other assets (e.g. branded T-shirts) for use at events and shows.
- 'Discovery in the dark' pocket size Stargazing charts and dispenser for tourism businesses.
- 'Discovery in the dark' app.

#### 8.3.1 THE WEBSITE

The website is clearly critically important to the successful delivery of the project. It will be designed to be visitor facing and visitor friendly, but it will also act as a 'Gateway' to National Park / Destination websites and as a hub for information for the tourism trade.

The proposed website structure is shown fully in Appendix D. The main pages and their sequencing are shown below:

- Homepage
  - o Rolling images / film
- Stargazing
  - o Brecon Beacons National Park
  - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
  - Snowdonia National Park
- Activities and Adventures
- Tourism trade
  - Manual
- Links and Social Media
  - 'Night-time Adventures Blog'
- Contact

In developing the website it will be important to maintain the quality of the imagery throughout and to gradually build a bank of 'great stories' around them. These stories as they are added in will help to keep the website fresh and relevant.

An important aspect of the ongoing process of updating the website will be to maintain a strong sense of seasonality. Matching the 'frontline' images and stories to seasonally appropriate activities and events.

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The structure of the website should also enable a 'Night-time Adventures' Blog to be established with contributions, by invitation only, from a range of friends and supporters of the wider vision of the initiative; astronomers, explorers, naturalists, travel-writers etc.

The blog would be set up to 'kick off' a discussion set to coincide with a particular themed campaign or event.

#### 8.3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

The primary aims for the use of social media will be to:

- Create a 'buzz' around particular events.
- Drive people, visitors and tourism trade, to the website.
- Post-up reminders of key celestial events taking place.
- Celebrate key milestones associated with 'Dark Sky' designations (progress towards their achievement / anniversary dates).

'Twitter' is likely to be the most effective social media channel and it is recognised that existing accounts already set up by Communications Teams within the respective National Parks, will be employed, rather than a new account being set up specifically for 'Discovery in the dark'.

It is proposed that the following hashtags will be used in campaigns:

- General to be used throughout: #discoveryinthedark
- Family orientated launch campaign: #upafterbedtime
- Campaign specific to be used in conjunction with Visit Wales themes e.g.
  - #darkskyadventures
  - #darkskylegends
- Activity and adventure specific e.g.
  - #stargazinginthedark
  - #runninginthedark
  - #glowwormsinthedark

One of the big opportunities with the use social media will be to engage with the audience and create a platform for 'live-sharing' of information. One way to actively engage audiences will be to invite them to post up photographs of their own night-time adventures.

#### 8.3.3 FILM

The film being developed as part of this commission by Huw James Media, will provide a focus for the website's homepage and shorter versions / clips will be made available for use on social media channels.

Visit wales have expressed strong interest in the early edits for their own use and have offered their own aerial footage to supplement what the film-makers can achieve. The active involvement of Visit Wales significantly enhances the prospects of the film being picked up and viewed by a wide audience, at home and overseas.

#### 8.3.4 THE 'NIGHT-TIME ADVENTURES' STORY AND PHOTO BANK

The 'story and photo bank' is simply a collection of the best stories and images collated from a range of sources; editorial, the blog (above) and contributions gleaned from social media.

# 8.3.5 'NIGHT-TIME ADVENTURES – A TOOLKIT FOR TRADE' – TOURISM TRADE MANUAL

The 'Trade Manual' presents an excellent opportunity to promote the initiative to tourism businesses and to engage them in supporting and or staging 'Discovery in the dark' events.

The Manual needs to be fully branded and disseminated as hard copy at awareness raising and training events for the tourism trade, as well as being freely available for upload from the website.

#### 8.3.6 'DISCOVERY IN THE DARK - WALES' - BRANDED EVENTS

Whilst many of the events in the programme will led by partner organisations or staged locally by the trade, there will be a core set that are driven by the National Parks. The opportunity is to brand these up as 'Discovery in the dark – Wales' - Branded events.

It will be important for the event organisers to be aware of the wider national picture, and for them to use branded literature, stationery (and associated digital versions) as well as other assets, both in the course of preevent communications and at the event itself.

#### 8.3.7 'DISCOVERY IN THE DARK TRAILBLAZERS'

The proposed 'Discovery in the dark Trailblazers' initiative is intended to complement and build on the work undertaken by Brecon Beacons National Park with respect to their 'Dark-Sky Ambassadors'.

The idea would be to engage with the tourism trade, inviting owners and employees to participate in a planned programme of training, which:

- Provides them with background information regarding the 'Discovery in the dark Wales' initiative, highlighting the importance and relevance of the efforts being made by the Parks to protect the night skies from light pollution.
- Raises their awareness of the benefits of engaging with 'Discovery in the dark' events and activities (those outlined in The Manual).
- Incorporates the other aspects of BBNPA's 'Dark-Sky Ambassador' programme.
- Enables them to use the 'Discovery in the dark' logo as a 'Kitemark' that they can use in their own marketing and promotion.

Clearly there will be a need for each Park to look at how far the 'Discovery in the dark' branding is integrated (if at all) with what is already in place. But for those Parks that are starting out (PCNPA and SNPA) the opportunity exists to introduce the idea of 'Trailblazers' afresh.

However, the issues regarding branding are resolved there is no escaping the fact that the engagement of the tourism trade is essential. If the initiative works well then to an increasing degree tourism businesses will become the public face of 'Discovery in the dark'.

It is well known in tourism that 'people as well as places make memories', and that the people visitors to the National Parks in Wales meet have the power to make the difference between a great memory and an awful one. Add to this the fact that visitors make recommendations to their friends and family, and that these 'word of mouth' referrals form a significant proportion of the stated reason to visit a destination, and there is a compelling case for engaging with the trade and encouraging them to take an active role.

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#### 8.3.8 PROMOTIONAL LEAFLETS

There is no great need to produce an extensive range of promotional literature but a simple general promotional leaflet would be useful, featuring:

- Information about the 'Discovery in the dark Wales' initiative.
- The best quality images of visitors to the National Parks in Wales enjoying activities and adventures.
- A map of Wales highlighting the best places to go stargazing and a simple star-chart.
- Website address and contact details.

Another leaflet targeted at a family audience would be appropriate too:

- Designed like a comic strip and featuring a cartoon character e.g. 'Numinous' the Night-Sky Superheroine.
- Star-gazers quiz.
- Spot the night-time wildlife (Images of 12 nocturnal animals to find) four each hidden in the maps of the three National Parks in Wales...
- Website address and contact details.

#### 8.3.9 PRESS AND PR

Night-time adventures (and associated imagery) are eminently attractive to the news media and it shouldn't be too difficult to engage the press in running stories.

There may also be opportunities to engage with 'Welsh celebs' who might be happy to put their spin on night-time adventures, helping to kick-off / reinvigorate campaigns, for example:

- 'Night-time walk with Derek the Weatherman'.
- 'Night hiking with Sian Williams' (First professional Welsh Women's Rugby player).
- 'Badger watching with Iolo Williams'
- 'Legends of the Night Sky as told by Ruth Madoc'
- 'Night train rides with Ivor the Engine'

Other opportunities exist to try to engage with celebrities from the worlds of stargazing / science e.g. Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock or space travel e.g. Tim Peake (he could re-tweet the launch!)

#### 8.3.10 POP-UP ROADSHOW

An opportunity exists to really 'wow' people attending trade shows or events. The amazing imagery lends itself perfectly to a pop-up display that could with a little bit of imagination be designed to be interactive.

#### 8.3.11 POCKET SIZED STARGAZING CHARTS

These are already available and (after gaining the necessary permissions) could be re-branded.

#### 8.3.12 'DISCOVERY IN THE DARK' APP.

The possibilities for an app are endless. Careful thought needs to be given to this and inspiration drawn from those 'tourism' apps that are already proven to be successful. There are plenty of examples on the internet as a starting point.

## 8.4 ACTION PLAN

Table 1 - action plan

Task	Lead body (Partners)	Outcomes	Timescale	Resources required
	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA (Visit Wales)	Website goes live in line with recommended structure and content.	■ April 2016.	<ul> <li>Web consultants (Girl &amp; Boy Studio)</li> <li>National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li> </ul>
'Discovery in the Dark' Website	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	'Night-time Adventures Blog' established with rolling programme of 'celebrity' bloggers engaged to kick off quarterly blogposts on different themes.	<ul> <li>April 2016 – First blog on 'Stargazing' theme.</li> <li>July 2016 – Second blog on 'Creatures of the night' theme.</li> <li>October 2016 – Third blog on 'Legends of the Dark Skies' theme.</li> </ul>	■ 'Celebrity' bloggers
Social media channels	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA (Visit Wales)	<ul> <li>Integration with existing NP social media channels achieved.</li> <li>External links with VW Year of Adventure and Find Your Epic campaigns</li> <li>#upafterbedtime campaign</li> </ul>	April 2016.  ■ July 2016.	<ul><li>National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li></ul>
	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA (Visit	launch.  Film launch on social media	May 2016.	■ Film consultants (Huw James
Film	Wales)	using: #discoveryinthedark	,	Media)  National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers
'Night-time Adventures' Story	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul><li>Established using social</li></ul>	<ul><li>Ongoing</li></ul>	<ul><li>National Parks Staff / Comms.</li></ul>

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Task	Lead body (Partners)	Outcomes	Timescale	Resources required
and photo bank		media channels e.g. Facebook and Twitter		Officers Photographers Bloggers
'Night-time Adventures' Tourism Trade Manual	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul><li>Manual completed and uploaded onto website.</li><li>Launch to trade.</li></ul>	<ul><li>April 2016.</li><li>May 2016.</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Trade Manual consultants (TACP)</li> <li>National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li> </ul>
'Discovery in the Dark –Wales' Events Programme	PCNPA / BBNPA / SNPA (Visit Wales, National Trust, Cadw, NRW)	<ul> <li>National Parks Wales – 'Core' Annual Events Programme established.</li> <li>Co-ordination and collaboration with key partners to secure wider events programme.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>1 Apr 2016 – Discover Dark Skies at Carew Castle</li> <li>June 2016 - 'Night-time Adventures' Launch to visitors         <ul> <li>Badger Walks</li> <li>Glow Worm Safaris</li> <li>Meteor Camps</li> <li>Astrophotography</li> <li>Bat Walks</li> </ul> </li> <li>September 2016 – 'Legends of the Dark Sky' campaign launch to visitors and trade.</li> </ul>	National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers
'Discovery in the Dark Trailblazers' - Tourism Business Ambassadors	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA (Visit Wales, regional tourism trade bodies & local partners)	National 'Trailblazer' training programme implemented building on BBNPA model.	■ June 2016?	<ul> <li>National Parks Staff / Staff from local partner organisations</li> </ul>
Promotional literature	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul> <li>General promotional leaflet designed &amp; printed</li> </ul>	■ June 2016?	<ul><li>Design consultants</li><li>National Parks Staff / Comms.</li><li>Officers</li></ul>
Press and PR	PCNPA / BBNPA / SNPA	<ul> <li>Continual use of positive stories to keep project profile high within a range of media channels.</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Ongoing</li></ul>	National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers Welsh celebs

Task	Lead body (Partners)	Outcomes	Timescale	Resources required
'Pop-up Roadshow' Display and other assets	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul><li>Pop-up display and other assets designed &amp; printed</li></ul>	■ Sept 2016?	<ul> <li>Design consultants National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li> </ul>
'Discovery in the Dark' Branded pocket-size Stargazing charts	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul><li>Stargazing charts designed &amp; printed</li></ul>	■ Sept 2016?	<ul> <li>Design consultants National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li> </ul>
'Discovery in the Dark' app	PCNPA - BBNPA / SNPA	<ul> <li>App at draft design stage and feasibility tested</li> </ul>	■ Phase 2 project - 2017	<ul><li>Design consultants National Parks Staff / Comms. Officers</li></ul>

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## 9 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This section sets out to provide a framework for the future development of the project and in particular the key indicators with which to evaluate success.

#### 9.2 FUTURE-PROOFING

The 'Discovery in the dark' activities and adventures will necessarily be developed over time, and because of this will help to keep the brand fresh and the product growing, as new activities and adventures come on stream.

The continual trawl for quality photographic imagery will be important and where gaps are identified there will be a need to commission new rather than 'make do' with photographs that aren't up to the standard.

Another way of ensuring that the product and the brand remain fresh will be to delve deeper into the needs of target audiences and establish, for example, a children's section on the website.

# 9.3 OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, IMPACTS AND TARGET SETTING

Monitoring and evaluating the success of the project can be undertaken at three levels. Firstly, the 'outputs' of the project activities can be identified. Secondly, how far the project has led to the desired 'outcomes' can be assessed. Thirdly, the longer-term 'impact' of the project can be gauged.

Setting targets for, and measuring success against each of these will be both useful and important in building an overall picture of success. However, as there are no pre-set targets to work to, the National Parks Wales Steering Group will need to establish these for themselves. What follows below is therefore an overview of the indicators that might be employed.

#### **9.3.1 OUTPUTS**

Quantitative output measures:

- Number of web hits.
- Number of tweets / re-tweets / followers.
- Number of film views.
- Numbers of stories and photos.
- Number of new activities added to Trade Manual.
- Number of branded events.
- Number of visitors participating in events and activities.
- Number of 'Trailblazer' tourism businesses / Ambassadors engaged.
- Number of promotional leaflets produced & distributed.
- Amount of press and PR coverage.
- Number of roadshows staged / events attended.

#### Qualitative output measures:

- Visitor comments on blogs / social media.
- Visitor feedback following participation in events & activities.
- Visitor stories / photographs contributed.
- Tourism business feedback following participation in events & activities.

#### 9.3.2 OUTCOMES

#### Critical outcomes:

- Increased awareness and appreciation of the night sky amongst visitors to, tourism businesses operating in, and residents of National Parks in Wales.
- Increased awareness amongst visitors of harmful effects of light pollution on health & well-being of people & wildlife.
- Increased numbers of visitors from target markets coming to / staying overnight in National Parks in Wales in season shoulder periods and in winter.
- Increased in numbers of tourism businesses and residents of National Parks n Wales taking practical steps to reduce light pollution.
- Key partners engaged in working towards a common vision of Wales as the first 'Dark Sky Nation'.

#### **9.3.3 IMPACTS**

#### Long-term impacts:

- Reduced light pollution in National Parks in Wales.
- Increased biodiversity in National Parks in Wales especially nocturnal animals.
- More sustainable communities within National Parks in Wales.
- More sustainable tourism principles and practice adopted by visitors to National Parks in Wales.

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## **APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX A: BRANDING WORKSHOP 9TH DEC 2015 NOTES

'The first 'big project' where all 3 parks are coming together and working as one'.

#### Q: WHAT DOES THE TERM 'DARK SKIES' BRING TO MIND?

- Night
- Noticing the stars
- Late
- Star gazing
- Awesome night skies
- No artificial lighting
- What we have but others are amazed to see
- Seeing Stars
- Amazing experiences

#### THE 'COMPETITION'

- The most appealing of the 'competitor sites' were the ones with the most striking images and the **most** simple ones.
- The ones where you see the images and think "the main thing I am going to do is see the stars" (in particular the **Kielder Observatory** and **Canary Island** sites).
- Imagery that "Captures the landscape and the skies" shows what the location can offer

## Q: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE THREE PARKS SO TO EQUALLY MARKET THEM WITHOUT MAKING IT A COMPETITION BETWEEN THE THREE?

[SEE ALSO APPENDIX 1]

#### Discussion points:

- Landscapes are totally different, e.g. Coastal / Mountainous / Valleys
- SALES PITCH: You have to stay the night in one of the locations to see the stars big selling point for the local communities and local facility owners
- "See all the landscapes" / "Leave the light pollution behind"
- All three parks have one thing in common you will see the same sky from each one. Maybe focus on this one aspect they share?

#### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

- Weakness No branding for any dark sky scheme and the lack of flexibility in the PCNP current website.
- <u>Threats</u> Many of the sites across Pembrokeshire are owned by National Trust, which may be a threat due to them wanting to release a Dark Sky initiative in the near future.
- <u>Strengths</u> No other park has the coastal aspect. Also Pembrokeshire already hold a number of night time activities across the county. The unifying mission statement across the Nation Parks is a strength also.
- Opportunities 5 sites and an activity site. Also a chance to develop the Dark Sky branding across
  Pembrokeshire and learn from the Brecon Beacons. There is also an opportunity to offer a deeper
  experience, more than just star gazing.

#### **Brecon Beacons**

- <u>Weakness</u> Lack of marketing budget and the delivering on the expectations of the promise of the brand (e.g. weather expectations).
- <u>Threats</u> Retaining the brand leader and the dilution/quality of the brand.
- <u>Strengths</u> Iconic photography and strong recognition that the park is the first Dark Sky Reserve in Wales.
- Opportunities Working together with the other parks to reach an international Audience.

#### Snowdonia

- <u>Weakness</u> Lack of awareness of the specific brand and what it represents (although I would prefer to call this an opportunity!).
- Threats Possible perceived corporate connotations of the SNPA brand.
- <u>Strengths</u> Compatibility with SNPA corporate branding logo is recognisable and self-explanatory! It is effective and efficient and 'fits' with what we do.
- Opportunities To raise awareness of the SNPA Dark Skies / Seeing Stars branding and of the area as an International Dark Skies Reserve.

#### Q: DO YOU LIKE THE TITLE 'DARK SKIES'?

- Gethin from Snowdonia "Misleading does it seem like the campaign is aimed towards getting people to turn off their lights, like an energy saving campaign". They are using the term 'Seeing Stars' in Snowdonia - more positive focus.
- Also added from Snowdonia National Park: "Try and avoid 'strap lines' wherever possible they can become dated and kitsch. The logo and/or title should be able to convey the message in itself"
- Could the word 'dark' be associated with negative connotations people are afraid of the dark etc.
- Could it just seem like the campaign is solely dedicated to astrology? As there are more activities available to do in the night, e.g. bat walks not just focusing on seeing the stars
- National Parks: After Dark
- Possible suggestion naming the brand after a nocturnal animal? Nothing 'Halloweeny'

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#### **TARGET AUDIENCE**

"INDEPENDENT EXPLORERS" - "TRADE" - "LOCALS"

Also factoring people with disabilities should have full access to the activities too.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park:

- People who visit tend to stay overnight as opposed to day trips due to the lack of accessibility to Pembrokeshire, as opposed to a more central location like the Beacons.
- Pembrokeshire has loyal, recurring visitors.

#### **BRAND PERSONALITY - KEYWORDS/IMAGERY**

- Comet
- Stars
- Bat (nocturnal animals)
- Dragon
- Map of Wales with stars on where the park locations are
- Naked eye At these parks you would not need a telescope or fancy equipment to see the stars that's the beauty of Dark Skies
- Myths and legends
- Constellations
- Cultural Heritage
- Infinite
- Mabinogion (welsh medieval literature)
- Celts/Saints/Pilgrims
- Archeoastronomy (Castell Henllys/Stonehenge)
- Starry skies

<sup>&</sup>quot;You, the landscape and the sky"

<sup>&</sup>quot;National Parks after dark"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Dark Skies after dark"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Where people and the landscape meet the sky"

<sup>\*</sup>Stargazing = an established activity BUT branding should be more cutting edge and attract the modern visitor also\*

#### **BRAND PERSONALITY SPECTRUM**

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park:

Personable, friendly						Corporate, professional
Spontaneous, high energy						Careful thinking, planning
Modern, high tech						Classic, traditional
Cutting edge						Established
Fun						Serious
Accessible to all						Acquired taste
Brecon Beacons National Pa	rk:					l
Personable, friendly						Corporate, professional
Spontaneous, high energy						Careful thinking, planning
Modern, high tech						Classic, traditional
Cutting edge						Established
Fun						Serious
Accessible to all						Acquired taste
Snowdonia National Park:						
Personable, friendly						Corporate, professional
Spontaneous, high energy						Careful thinking, planning
Modern, high tech						Classic, traditional
Cutting edge						Established
Fun						Serious
Accessible to all						Acquired taste

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#### NAOMI'S NOTES TO SUPPLEMENT THE ABOVE.

- Personable, friendly Absolutely, also maintaining the values of our purposes and missions.
- Spontaneous, high energy YES! But we do want people to be responsible and plan ahead too. A fine balance.
- Modern, high tech it seems to ring true with the theme....
- Cutting edge I'm on the fence here. I initially thought cutting edge, but our brand is strong and well established and we benefit from that.
- Fun YES! We seem to be afraid of encouraging (responsible) fun and adventure and awe.
- Accessible to all should definitely be accessible to all, but hopefully not in a superficial way, that could alienate the established specialist audience.

#### **DARK SKIES FIT WITH VISIT WALES THEMES**

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park:

#### 2016 - Year of Adventure

- Micro-adventures
- After dark a sense of adventure anyway, especially for children staying up past their bedtime
- New experiences and discoveries
- Camping, campfires, storytelling
- Night-walks
- Preseli walks to see Aurora Borealis

#### 2017 - Year of Legends

- Castles
- Cultural offerings
- Constellations
- Pilgrims
- Moonlight smuggling
- Ghosts of the castles (e.g. Carew)
- Rebecca riots breaking of the toll gates in the dark
- Saints Govan, David, Non, Brynach
- Archaeo-astronomy

#### 2018 - Year of the Sea

- Navigation
- Voyages
- Trade
- Wildlife
- Shipwrecks
- Invasions French, Vikings
- Night-time boat trips
- Lighthouses
- Tides/moons

- Trade
- Wildlife e.g Manx Shearwater

#### **Brecon Beacons National Park:**

#### 2016 - Year of Adventure

- Star festivals
- Night hikes
- Bat walks
- Day into night

#### 2017 - Year of Legends

- Brecon Beacons biggest USP
- Myths King Arthur, Lady of the Lake, Night Sky Legends
- Talks and stargazing nights based on constellations
- Spiritual side of Christmas star

#### 2018 - Year of Sea

All rivers lead to the sea!

#### Snowdonia National Park:

#### 2016 - Year of Adventure

- Encouraging people to discover something or somewhere new. You may have visited the Cregennan Lakes countless times, but have you ever done so by night?
- Night time guided walks / safaris etc.

#### 2017 - Year of Legends

- Place names and mythology. Idris Gawr, the giant after whom Cadair Idris is named, apparently sat in his
  'Cadair' to stargaze. He is a bit of a legend! There are strong links to the Mabinogi (Math fab Mathonwy)
  too.
- Several of the Welsh names for constellations and features in the dark skies are connected to place names, eg. Caer Arianrhod (Corona Borealis) and Sarn Badrig and others linked to the Mabinogi.

#### 2018 - Year of the Sea

• Eryri's 23 miles of coastline for night time guided walks? A challenging theme!

#### **ELEVATOR PITCH**

#### Pembrokeshire Coast National Park:

#### Key points:

- National Parks are the best places to enjoy Dark Skies Why? International recognition because it's part of our purpose to conserve all this and share it with you.
- National Parks will present you with a whole package of activities so your enjoyment isn't just star gazing.

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- Connecting people with the rich history of the county and people can go back in time.
- Rediscovering the night and seeing it as a whole new world
- "Enjoy wales' National Parks after dark" / "Isn't the dark brilliant"

#### Brecon Beacons National Park:

#### Key points:

- First international Dark Sky Reserve in Wales.
- You won't believe what you will see if you look up.
- Help us protect the beauty and clarity of the parks under the night sky.

"Stand in the Brecon Beacons international Dark Sky reserve and look up - the milky way arches over your head in the gorgeous dark skies above our Park"

#### FROM RUTH COULTHARD AFTER THE WORKSHOP

For me it's about connecting to the universe, finding your / our place in the cosmos, experiencing that sense of awe. Experience is a strong word for me. It's where after dark the myths and legends of the landscape escape into the sky. Almost nocturnal drama! Plus, as I'd mentioned, it's about protecting this night sky not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

'...it's an 'out of this world' experience that is available very close to many people's doorsteps and **something** special that we really do need to help protect.'

'In terms of the light pollution message – it comes down to ensuring people are using the right light, in the right place at the right time but this project maybe shouldn't delve into such things too deeply.'

'Personally I think we should also have a caped crusader who protects the night sky but I did suggest that when I did Countryfile a few years ago but that scene was cut from the final edit!!!'

#### **SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK:**

#### Key points:

- Wales is the country with the highest proportion of its dark skies protected in the world.
- We have 3 glorious National Parks who all have something different to offer.
- Our dark skies are embedded in our culture, from place names to mythology.
- Be inspired by breathtaking landscapes during the day and awesome skies by night.
- Help us to care for this wonder.
- Enjoy! Explore!
- We help to care for the National Park and want to help you to learn more about it and to enjoy it. We also want to help the local economy to gain from the area's special qualities (ie the dark sky) sustainably.

## APPENDIX B: PROGRAMMING CALENDARS - YEAR 1 - EXISTING EVENTS

Table 2 - programming calendar - year 1 - existing events

#### 2016 - National Parks in Wales - Dark Sky / Night-time Events

Month	Season	Brecon Beacons	Pembrokeshire Coast	Snowdonia	Campaign Activity / Events
December					
January	Winter				
February					
March		18 Mar - Astronomy Evening	Crickhowell Walking Festival		
April	Spring	29 Apr – Astronomy Evening	1 Apr – Discover Dark Skies Carew Castle	Llangollen Walking Festival	'Night-time Adventures' Launch to Trade
May		21-22 May Royal Welsh Spring festival 27 May - Astronomy Evening		13-14 May Caernarfon Food Festival 29 -30 Fairbourne Festival of Steam	'Night-time Adventures' Launch to visitors

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**Discovery in the Dark** Wales

#### 2016 - National Parks in Wales - Dark Sky / Night-time Events

Month	Season	Brecon Beacons	Pembrokeshire Coast	Snowdonia	Campaign Activity / Events
June		26 May – 5 Jun Hay Festival  24 Jun – Astronomy Evening			
July	Summer		21 Jul – Ghost Walk Carew		
August		National Eisteddfod – Abergavenny 18 – 21 Aug – Green Man Festival			
September		17-18 Sep Abergavenny Food Festival	15 Sep – Ghost walk Carew Castle		
October	Autumn				'Legends of the Dark Skies' Launch to visitors and trade
November					

## APPENDIX C: PROGRAMMING CALENDARS - THREE YEAR LINKS TO VW

Table 3 - programming calendar - 2016 - Year of Adventure

2016 - Year of Adventure							
Month	Season	Holidays	Events & Shows	Celestial Activity	Campaign Activity / Events		
December			Mari Llwyd				
January	Winter		25 Jan – St Dwynwen's Day				
February		12-21 Feb - Half-term	14 Feb - Valentine's Day				
March		25 Mar –	1 Mar – St David's Day Crickhowell Walking Festival	Spring Equinox			
April	Spring	11 Apr – Easter Holidays	4-10 Apr - International Dark Sky Week Llangollen Walking Festival		1 Apr – Discover Dark Skies Carew Castle 'Night-time Adventures' Launch to Trade		
May		27 May -	Urdd National Eisteddfod	9 May – Rare transit of Mercury across the Sun 21 May – Full / Blue Moon	'Once in a Blue Moon' Night Hike		
June	Summer	5 Jun – Half-term	Hay Festival				

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#### 2016 – Year of Adventure

Month	Season	Holidays	Events & Shows	Celestial Activity	Campaign Activity / Events
				Summer Solstice	Sunset to Sunrise Adventure
July		20 Jul -	National Badger Week Music Festival – Llangollen Royal Welsh Show	4 Jul – Juno at Jupiter	Badger Walk 'Night-time Adventures' Launch to visitors 21 Jul – Ghost Walk Carew
August		Summer Holidays	National Eisteddfod  12-15 Aug Solarsphere International Bat Weekend	12/13 Aug – Perseids Meteor Shower Aug 27 – Conjunction Venus & Jupiter	Meteor Camps Glow-worm Safaris Astrophotography Bat walks
September		1 Sep		Autumn Equinox	Night Bike  15 Sep – Ghost walk Carew Castle
October	Autumn	22 – 30 Oct – Half-term	31 Oct - Halloween		'Legends of the Dark Skies' Launch to visitors and trade Ghostly Garrisons
November			5 Nov – Bonfire Night		Astro beacons

Table 4 - programming calendar - 2017 - Year of Legends

#### 2017 – Year of Legends

Month	Season	Holidays	<b>Events &amp; Shows</b>	Celestial Activity	Campaign Activity / Events	
December		16 Dec – Christmas	Mari Llwyd	Dec 13/14 – Geminids Meteor Shower Winter Solstice	4 Dec - Xmas Fayre Carew Meteor nights Stargazing nights	
January	Winter	3 Jan	25 Jan – St Dwynwen's Day		National Parks Wales - Stargazing Week	
February		18 -26 Feb - Half-term	14 Feb - Valentine's Day		Stargazing nights	
March			1 Mar – St David's Day Crickhowell Walking Festival	Spring Equinox		
April	Spring	7 -24 Apr – Easter Holidays	International Dark Sky Week Llangollen Walking Festival			
May			Urdd National Eisteddfod			
June	Summer	Summer half-term	Hay Festival	Summer Solstice		

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#### 2017 - Year of Legends Month Holidays **Events & Shows Celestial Activity Campaign Activity / Events** Season National Badger Week Music Festival – Llangollen July Royal Welsh Show 21 Jul – National Eisteddfod 12/13 Aug – Perseids **August** Summer Holidays Meteor Shower International Bat Weekend ? Sep September Autumn Equinox 31 Oct - Halloween 'Deep Seas Dark Skies' Launch to visitors and trade October Autumn Oct – Half-term 5 Nov – Bonfire Night 13 Nov – Conjunction Venus November & Jupiter

Table 5 - programming calendar - 2018 - Year of Sea

#### 2018 - Year of the Sea **Holidays Events & Shows Celestial Activity Campaign Activity / Events** Month Season Dec 13/14 - Geminids **Meteor Shower** December Winter Solstice Christmas Mari Llwyd **January** Winter 25 Jan – St Dwynwen's Day 14 Feb - Valentine's Day **February** Feb - Half-term 1 Mar – St David's Day Crickhowell Walking Festival March Spring Equinox Easter Holidays International Dark Sky Week **April** Spring Llangollen Walking Festival May Summer – Half-term **Urdd National Eisteddfod** Hay Festival June Summer **Summer Solstice**

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#### 2018 – Year of the Sea Month Holidays **Events & Shows Celestial Activity Campaign Activity / Events** Season National Badger Week Music Festival – Llangollen July Royal Welsh Show National Eisteddfod 12/13 Aug – Perseids **August** Summer Holidays Meteor Shower International Bat Weekend September Autumn Equinox 31 Oct - Halloween October Autumn Oct – Half-term 5 Nov – Bonfire Night November

# APPENDIX D: 'DISCOVERY IN THE DARK' WEBSITE: PROPOSED STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

#### • Homepage:

- Rolling images of activities and adventures together with image appropriate mini-straplines the first mini-strapline being 'Your night-time adventure starts here...'
- o Film.
- About why and how National Parks in Wales are working together with other partners to establish the first 'Dark Sky' nation in the world!
- Sustainability messages importance of reducing light pollution for people & wildlife.

#### Stargazing:

- o The best places to see the stars in Wales.
- o Interactive 'Dark Sky' map of Wales?
- Myths & legends of the night sky.

#### Park specific pages x 3 (BBNP / PCNP / SNP)

- Rolling images of activities and adventures in recognisable park specific locations.
- Introduction to 'X' National Park.
- o Top spots for stargazing.
- o Park specific activities and adventures.
- Suggested day / night itineraries.

#### • Activities and Adventures (draft list)

- o Activity / adventure specific image appropriate mini-strapline.
- Night-time Adventures
  - Astronomy
  - Astronomy events
  - Shooting star / comet nights
  - Myths & Legends storytelling
  - Night train rides
  - Astrophotography
  - Sunrise / sunset watching
  - Camping out under the stars
  - Badger watching
  - Bat walks
  - Glow worm adventure
  - Mountain biking
  - Night-time / twilight walks
  - Trail running
- Safety information

#### • Tourism trade

- Opportunities to grow your tourism business through engaging in the 'Discovery in the dark –
   Wales' initiative.
- o Becoming a 'Discovery in the dark Trailblazer'
- 'Night-time Adventures' Tourism Trade Manual.
- Tips & tricks to reduce light pollution.
- o News

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#### • Links and Social Media

- o Links
  - International Dark-Sky Association
  - Dark-Sky Discovery Partnership
  - Etc
- 'Night-time Adventures' Blog
- o Facebook
- o Twitter
- Contact

## **. Discovery** in the Dark Wales

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