

# THE PURBECK SOCIETY

[www.purbeckociety.co.uk](http://www.purbeckociety.co.uk)

Affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

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c/o Town Hall  
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Dear NP Team

## **Application to designate the Dorset AONB as a National Park**

On behalf of the Purbeck Society, I am pleased to write in support of this application.

This special area, which is covered by the Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and the Dorset and East Devon AONBs, is of exceptional landscape, biodiversity, cultural and historical quality and importance. The Dorset Coast and Heaths were considered to be of National Park quality and deserving NP designation in key reports in 1945 and 1947. We understand that only administrative difficulties prevented this designation going forward when other NPs were recommended and designated in the years after 1945.

A National Park on the basis that you propose would, the Society believes, have economic, social and environmental benefits to the area as a whole. Designation as an NP would support increased open-air recreational use with national and community health, economic and social gains. However these opportunities need to be managed in ways which maximise health, economic and social benefits while safeguarding the environment.

The additional planning safeguards provided by an NP would protect geology, landscapes and habitats. The increased connectivity thus provided between similarly designated areas would help to enable designations across Southern and South West England collectively to deliver crucial national objectives – in line with Natural England's Designations Strategy.

Dorset's natural beauty, varied geology, landscapes and habitats support a great diversity of wildlife, including species not found elsewhere. We understand that an illustration of the biodiversity richness and importance of this area is that one 10km grid square of land in Purbeck contains more species than any other 10kms square in the country.

The proposed NP area presents great opportunities and a growing potential for open-air recreation, The Government Department DEFRA, in a 2011 report, identified many economic, social and environmental benefits associated with National Parks and National Park Authorities. These benefits included the following: Recreation and Tourism, Health and Wellbeing, Better Informed Society, Rural Development, the beneficial Economic Impact of National Park spending on the Local Economy, Social Inclusion, and Transparency and Democracy.

Natural England has already recognised parts of the Dorset AONB and the World Heritage Site as having particular qualities as well as facing certain challenges, and thus as deserving more of NE's focus and resources. NE has also recognised the need for improved conservation and management of the Heritage Coasts, especially when these are being threatened with the prospect of the huge Navitus Bay Wind Farm only 9 miles from this coast.

The Society has for some time been increasingly concerned with the inability of the present planning frameworks to prevent or even influence developments in the AONB, with many instances of totally inappropriate development being permitted. In the present Core Strategy/Purbeck Local Plan an unsustainable number of dwellings are proposed to be built for the open market, at a price out of reach of most local families. In NPs in other parts of the country, planning policies are in place and enforced to the benefit of local families and consequently the local economy. The present planning framework, we believe, has worked to the detriment of local people and the economy of the area. An NP Authority, which will take regard of the special qualities of Purbeck and the wider Dorset AONB would, in our opinion, be of particular benefit bearing in mind all the commercial and political pressures faced by this unique part of the country.

Other benefits of NP designation would include increased governmental resources and funding, together with the beneficial direct economic impact of National Park spending on the local economy. The local authorities and other partners in the long-established and the newest National Parks have access to such advantages. This area is so dependent on tourism, and therefore relies on the retention of its essential character in both its natural and built environment.

We believe it essential for its sustainability and future well-being that this area has the opportunity to experience the benefits that designation as an NP can give. The Society therefore is happy to give you our full support and wishes you well in your application.

Yours sincerely

**Mike Stollery**

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