

[Fun in the Sun at Barony Open Day](#)

A sunny warm afternoon attracted more than 3000 visitors to Sunday's Open Day at the Barony campus of Scotland's Rural College.

[Another sunny and "SRUCscessful" open day at Elmwood](#)

Scotland's Rural College's Elmwood campus in Cupar again opened its doors to the local community at its recent free family fun day.

[Press release: National Parks review launched](#)

Updated: Updated to remove Nicola Blackwood from the list of panel members following her decision to step down in October.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today committed to conserve and enhance England's most cherished landscapes as a new review launches into the nation's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Nearly 70 years after the country's National Parks were first established, opening up the countryside and allowing more people to connect with nature, an independent panel will look at how these iconic landscapes meet our needs in the 21st century – including whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks to expand.

The review, led by writer Julian Glover, will also explore how access to these beloved landscapes can be improved, how those who live and work in them can be better supported, and their role in growing the rural economy.

Weakening or undermining their existing protections or geographic scope will not be part of the review, which will instead focus on how designated areas can boost wildlife, support the recovery of natural habitats and connect more people with nature.

Undertaking a review is one of the key commitments of the government's [25](#)

[Year Environment Plan](#), which outlines our vision for improving the environment over a generation by connecting people with nature and helping wildlife to thrive.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The creation of National Parks almost 70 years ago changed the way we view our precious landscapes – helping us all access and enjoy our natural world.

Amid a growing population, changes in technology, and a decline in certain habitats, the time is right for us to look afresh at these landscapes. We want to make sure they are not only conserved, but enhanced for the next generation.

Sir Arthur Hobhouse's landmark report in 1947 paved the way for the creation of England's network of designated landscapes, with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act passed in 1949.

The Act, described at the time as a "recreational gift to Britain's returning Second World War service men and women", set out to recognise, conserve and enhance access to landscapes deemed to be "of national importance and quality".

These days the rugged mountains, unspoilt coastlines and vast moorlands of the nation's 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks attract more than 260 million visitors a year from at home and abroad.

Julian Glover, who will lead the review, said:

Our protected landscapes are England's finest gems and we owe a huge debt to past generations who had the wisdom to preserve them.

The system they created has been a strength, but it faces challenges too. It is an honour to be asked to find ways to secure them for the future. I can't wait to get started and learn from everyone who shares an interest in making England's landscapes beautiful, diverse and successful.

Chair of National Parks England, Margaret Paren, said:

National Parks are iconic and inspirational cultural landscapes. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan refers to their establishment as among the outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years. We very much welcome the announcement of the review and intend to play a full part.

Our National Parks offer so much to the country. And as we approach the 70th anniversary of the founding legislation we look forward to

a future where their beauty is enhanced; they are loved and accessible for everyone; and they continue to support thriving communities in these working landscapes.

Chair of the National Association of AONBs, Philip Hygate, said:

The world has changed significantly since the designation of Gower, the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but our fundamental requirement for beautiful, inspiring places in which to live, work, and relax is probably greater now than ever before.

The National Association for AONBs is delighted to support this exciting review and will work closely with Julian Glover and the review panel to help ensure that all of England's special landscapes are equally recognised for the value they provide to the nation, and their fundamental importance to future generations.

AONBs and National Parks are some of our most cherished sites, spanning from the Lake District, which was recently announced as a UNESCO World Heritage site, to the picturesque Cornwall AONB.

They cover a quarter of England's land and are home to over 2.3 million people – with more than 66 per cent of us living within half an hour of a National Park or AONB. They also generate over £20 billion for the rural economy, and support 75,000 jobs.

Background

Julian Glover

Associate editor at the London Evening Standard and author of the biography *Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain*. He has worked as leader writer and columnist at the Guardian and as a Special Adviser in Number 10 and the Department for Transport.

He will be supported by an advisory panel bringing a vast breadth of experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues.

The panel will be comprised of:

Lord Cameron of Dillington

Cross-bench peer, farmer and landowner. As the former Chair of the Countryside Agency, he is a strong advocate for rural affairs. He is currently the chair of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Committee and the Advisory Council for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. He is also on the Steering Board of the Government's Global Food Security Programme.

Jim Dixon

Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority for 12 years, before stepping down in 2014. He is currently a writer on countryside issues, including for the Times, and a trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Sarah Mukherjee

Former BBC environment and rural affairs correspondent and previous Director of Environment at Water UK. She is currently Chief Executive of the Crop Protection Association. She is a trustee and advisory group member for several charities, supporting both environmental stewardship and education in farming.

Dame Fiona Reynolds

Formerly the Director-General of the National Trust and current Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Chair of the Green Alliance. She is the author of *The Fight for Beauty* (2016), a history of thought and public policy on landscapes and environment in Britain.

Jake Fiennes

Estate Manager of the Raveningham Estate for the last 24 years, promoting nature conservation alongside arable farming. He will be joining the 25,000 acre Holkham Estate in autumn 2018 as their General Manager for Conservation. He is also a trustee and advisory group member of several organisations including the National Farmers' Union's Environmental Forum and the Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

Read the full [terms of reference](#).

[Independent report: Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs](#)

Updated: Added a link to the call for evidence that was launched on 20 October 2018. The closing date for responses is 18 December 2018.

We're carrying out a review into whether the protections for National Parks and AONBs are still fit for purpose. In particular, what might be done better, what changes will help and if the definitions and systems in place are still valid.

The review will be led by Julian Glover and supported by an experienced advisory group. The [members of the group have been announced](#) as Lord Cameron

of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Sarah Mukherjee, Dame Fiona Reynolds and Jake Fiennes. The review started in June 2018 and will report in 2019.

The review's terms of reference set out what it will look at and how it will be carried out.



What it's about

It is nearly 70 years since a bold decision was taken by Parliament to preserve some of England's finest landscapes and help people visit and enjoy them.

England is home to 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Their rugged mountains, unspoilt coastlines, farmed landscapes and vast moorlands attract more than 260 million visitors a year and are home to over 2.3 million people.

Now, 7 decades after a visionary report led by Sir Arthur Hobhouse led to their creation, it's time to renew the mission. As part of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), the government has asked Julian Glover to lead an expert panel looking at how these protections can be renewed.

The review's purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist these areas, and whether definitions and systems – which in many cases date back to their original creation – are still sufficient. Weakening or undermining existing protections or geographic scope are not considered.

Instead, the review will look at:

- the existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- the alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Environment Plan
- the case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- how to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- the financing of National Parks and AONBs
- how to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- how to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- how well National Parks and AONBs support communities
- the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process

What happens next

So far, the review has focused on visiting these places and talking to people that visit, live or work in and care for them. Between them, the panel have already visited many National Parks and AONBs and plan to continue this into 2019.

Please tell us what you think about our National Parks and AONBs by taking part in our [call for evidence](#). The closing date for responses is 18 December 2018.

We expect to publish the report making recommendations to government in Autumn 2019.

Who's involved

Led by Julian Glover, the panel also includes Lord Cameron of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Sarah Mukherjee, Dame Fiona Reynolds and Jake Fiennes.



Learn more about the panel members

Julian Glover – Lead Reviewer

Associate editor at the London Evening Standard and author of the biography *Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain*. He has worked as leader writer and columnist at the Guardian and as a Special Adviser in Number 10 and the Department for Transport.

Lord Cameron of Dillington

Cross-bench peer, farmer and landowner. As the former Chair of the Countryside Agency, he is a strong advocate for rural affairs. He is currently the chair of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Committee and the Advisory Council for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. He is also on the Steering Board of the Government's Global Food Security Programme.

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Protection Association. She is a trustee and advisory group member for several charities, supporting both environmental stewardship and education in farming.

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Jake Fiennes

Became General Manager for Conservation of the 25,000 acre Holkham Estate in autumn 2018 after 24 years as Estate Manager promoting nature conservation alongside arable farming at Raveningham Estate. He is also a trustee and advisory group member of several organisations including the National Farmers' Union's Environmental Forum and the Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

[Press release: Three men fined for illegal fishing](#)

Three men have been ordered to pay fines and costs totalling more than £1,300 for poaching with illegal fishing nets in the River Derwent in Gateshead.

Scott McGuire, 30, of Beach Road, South Shields, appeared at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court on Thursday 24 May, where he pleaded guilty to using gill nets to catch fish at Durham Bank, Rowlands Gill. He was fined £120, ordered to pay £300 costs and a victim surcharge of £30.

Stuart Ashall, 45, also of Beach Road, appeared previously on 4 January for the same offence where he pleaded guilty and was fined £180, ordered to pay £400 in costs and a victim surcharge of £30.

A third man, John Britten, 34, of Belgrave Road in South Shields, had also previously pleaded guilty to the same offence and was fined £45, ordered to pay costs of £200 and a victim surcharge of £30 at a court hearing on 8 November last year.

Gill nets are designed to catch fish by their gills and are rarely licensed in rivers due to their indiscriminate nature and the fact that fish caught in the nets will usually suffocate and die.

Illegal gill net

Representing the Environment Agency, solicitor Chris Bunting told the court that Environment Agency enforcement officers were patrolling the River Derwent on 22 July 2016, looking for people fishing illegally.

At 12.40pm they came across a tent with the three men asleep, two inside and one outside. In the river next to them was a gill net set across the river. There was also a salmon head on the ground.

The men said the net had been there when they arrived and they had got the salmon from a supermarket.

However, investigations from a fisheries expert concluded the remains were of an adult wild migratory salmon which had been subject to physical trauma before death and exposed to the natural environment post death. A fish bought from a supermarket would be farmed.

Two of the men attended for voluntary interviews on 8 August, 2016, where they said they did not know there was a net in the river until the enforcement officers had pointed it out, adding they had met some strangers on the riverbank the night before, who spoke to them before leaving. They reiterated the salmon was from a supermarket.

Net is extremely damaging

Following the case David Shears, Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

The River Derwent is a recovering river that had been previously affected by industry but which has been slowly improving.

Water quality has improved drastically and a fish pass has been installed in Blaydon which has resulted in fish returning and repopulating the river system.

Gill nets such as the one used in this case are designed to catch fish by their gills and can be extremely damaging to fish stocks. Illegal fishing like this can have a devastating impact, especially on recovering rivers such as the Derwent.

We're committed to tackling illegal fishing of all kinds and we'll continue to work closely with police and angling clubs, supported by the Angling Trust, to target those flouting the law and take enforcement action.

All income from rod licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – [you can buy them online](#)

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.