



7 July 2020

Dear Councillor

North York Moors National Park International Dark Sky Reserve

I'm pleased to let you know that the North York Moors National Park is applying to become an International Dark Sky Reserve and we are writing to ask for your support.

Our statutory duties are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas. We believe this duty also extends to our night-time environment and wildlife.

We live in a beautiful part of the world and the glories we see in the day are mirrored in those we can enjoy on clear nights. If we are successful in our bid, we will join a select family of designated dark sky places worldwide. In the UK they include Northumberland, Exmoor and Snowdonia, who all use their dark sky status to excellent effect.

Protecting the starry skies above the National Park and the quality of the night-time environment enhances opportunities for stargazing, wildlife, well-being and tranquillity. Dark sky visitors also help support local businesses – this year's annual Dark Skies Festival in February contributed nearly £300,000 to the National Park's economy.

Behind the scenes we have been gathering data on our dark skies, conducting lighting audits and formulating a Lighting Management Plan, which will be incorporated into our Planning work.

Happily, we can confirm that we have some of the darkest skies in England, although like elsewhere, they are threatened by the spread of inexpensive and powerful external LED lighting. We all need a certain amount of light at night so our aim is not to ask people to simply turn off all lights, but to use lighting effectively – ie, light only what you need, when you need it and at an appropriate level.

We are encouraging people to switch to Dark Skies Friendly lighting, which is far more environmentally friendly. It throws light where it is needed and doesn't shine it into the sky or into other properties. Our Dark Skies Lighting Improvement Scheme offers grants to those who would like to make their lighting Dark Skies Friendly. North Yorkshire County Council have already committed wherever possible to only installing Dark Skies Friendly street lighting, which emits no upward light and is less harmful to wildlife and human health.

We propose that the Dark Sky Reserve will cover the entire national park – 554 square miles, and a population of 23,380. As we are close to Teesside and West and South Yorkshire, this will be a very accessible Reserve. It will boost tourism during the shoulder seasons and provide a valuable education resource.

We would be delighted if you would send us a **letter of support** (ideally on headed paper) to Mike Hawtin using the address below or by emailing conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Thank you for your support
Mike Hawtin, Head of Polyhalite Projects

Working together to sustain the landscape and life of the
North York Moors for both present and future generations to enjoy

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