

PRESS RELEASE

The Thames Path Partnership

In April 2015 a new organisation, The Thames Path Partnership, became responsible for the management, development and promotion of the Thames Path National Trail from its source in Gloucestershire right and up to and beyond the Thames Barrier. It aims to achieve a co-ordinated approach to the management and maintenance of the Thames Path and involve a wide range of organisations representing many users and stakeholders in addition to Natural England, the local authorities and boroughs that have managed The Thames Path up until now.

Steve Good, Chair of the Thames Path Partnership said:

"I am honoured to be heading up a team dedicated to pursuing the advancement and promotion of The Thames Path offering such a wide range of healthy activities. This new Partnership represents a great opportunity to bring the U.K.'s most historic 'easy walking' yet all too often 'invisible' path to more people's attention.

The small staff team at Eynsham and all of our vital, dedicated volunteers working all along the River Thames deserve a massive "Thank You" for all they do. I know that they will all continue to work with me into the future to deliver the many and varied 'leisure pleasure' benefits that accessing and using the Thames Path can bring.

My first goal is to ensure a greater level of secure, on-going funding in order to allow our organisation to plan, to thrive and to continue with its vital work in perpetuity. My initial vision is of annually raising £1,000 of additional funding per linear mile of the Thames Path. If you or your organisation can help, please do contact me".

Created in response to the Natural England review of the National Trails - and the decision by Natural England that local partnerships should assume collective responsibility for management and delivery of their respective Trails - the Partnership is set to deliver the four 'E's of Natural England's New Deal:

- Experience - enable as many people as possible to enjoy a wide variety of walking and riding experiences along National Trails and through the English landscape
- Enhancement - make constant improvement to the Trail and its associated routes. Contribute to the enhancement of the landscape, nature and historic features within the trail corridor.
- Engagement - build and sustain a community of interest in caring for the Trail and the landscape through which it passes.
- Economy - creates opportunities for local businesses to benefit from the use of Trails.

Steven Tabbitt National Trails Manager said: *'We are delighted to form The new Thames Path Partnership to include Highway Authorities, and other groups such as The Environment Agency, The River Thames Alliance and Society, AONB's, Transport for London and The Thames Estuary Partnership. This means we can draw in expertise from diverse groups, societies and organisations which all have the success of the Thames Path National Trail as a key objective, and so enable our trail to reach its full potential. It's a very exciting time for all working on The Thames Path and we look forward to working as a partnership in the coming months and years!'*

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