



# **Cannock Chase National Landscape**

## **Cannock Chase National Landscape Annual Conference**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**Aquarius Ballroom, Hednesford**

### **Biographies of presenters**

#### **Councillor Victoria Wilson, Chair, Cannock Chase National Landscape Joint Committee**

Victoria is the Chair of the National Landscape Joint Committee. Victoria has been a County Councillor for six years, and Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture for three. She's also the Deputy Leader of South Staffordshire District Council, portfolio holder for Business Enterprise and Community Infrastructure, and is currently Chairman of the Conservative Association of South Staffordshire. As a keen advocate for reducing the councils' carbon footprint and keeping safe all flora and fauna within the Countryside Estate, Victoria works hard with partners in the best interests of all our country parks, from the Peak District, the Moorlands and all the way down to Kinver, which is her county seat. Anything she can do in the best interests of our precious countryside, to promote its safe use, and allow accessibility and a healthy place in which to reap health benefits for local people, will always be in the forefront of everything she does for and with the National Landscape.

#### **Emma Johnson, Midlands Deputy Director, West Midlands Team, Natural England**

Emma is not quite sure how she ended up studying agriculture having spent her formative years in NW10 (London). At University and later at College studying Rural Land Management Emma developed a passion and belief in sustainable farming methods. She joined one of NE's predecessor bodies, giving advice to farmers around how to reduce diffuse pollution. Working with inspiring colleagues her mind was opened wide to the wonders of ecology, our rich landscapes, the imperative to look after nature, and to encourage others to enjoy it. Having a family has reinforced Emma's drive to nurture and restore our precious environment for future generations.

#### **Cherry Doyle, local resident and poet**

Cherry is a poet and workshop facilitator living in Cannock Chase National Landscape (alongside her full time job working in IT in Higher Education). She has been leading writing workshops and events for 11 years across Shropshire, Staffordshire, the Black Country, and online, often in collaboration with other creatives. She has recently completed an MFA in Poetry and is the Secretary and Social Media Manager for Offa's Press, an independent publisher of West Midlands poetry. Since moving to Cannock Chase her poetry has gravitated towards writing about the landscapes and history of the area, which she visits daily. This has led to two publications - a pamphlet, 'September', and a collection, 'The Taste of Rain: A Year on Cannock Chase' (both available from Offa's Press). She is passionate about raising awareness of both the beauty of the landscape, and the need to protect it, using art to engage, inform and educate.

## **Alan Law, Chief Officer for Strategy, Natural England**



Alan has worked in conservation for 30 years. He started working at WWT Martin Mere and then joined English Nature, where he provided operational leadership across SE England.

Alan overhauled Natural England's processes for engaging with the planning system and delivering statutory advice. He delivered the first Marine Conservation Zones and was the architect of NE's conservation strategy, C21, which changed the way nature conservation is practised; working at a larger scale, securing lasting benefits, and putting people at the heart of conservation.

In his role as Chief Officer Strategy, he has developed tools to deliver the Environment Act including BNG and LNRS.

## **Meeka Tomey-Alleyne, Nature Recovery Project Manager, Staffordshire County Council**

Meeka is the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Project Manager who will be coordinating the LNRS strategy on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent Council. She is working closely with Natural England and with Staffordshire's partner District and Borough councils. Meeka has joined from the White Rose Forest where she successfully developed and delivered an urban forestry programme across West and North Yorkshire delivering a significant uplift in funding for urban trees and working across the wider partnership to develop urban forestry. Having formally trained in law, Meeka retrained in 2018 in landscape architecture and now utilises the skills and experiences of both these professions to deliver nature recovery.

## **Ian Marshall, Team Leader, Cannock Chase National Landscape Team**

Ian joined the AONB/National Landscape Team in 2019, and keeps a strategic overview of the partnership's activities and monitors the delivery of the statutory AONB Management Plan. Ian's career in environmental conservation spans 40 years and began with the Nature Conservancy Council in Hampshire. Most of his time has been spent in local government in County Ecologist roles, and later managing multi-disciplinary environmental teams. Between 1999 and 2004 he managed a European ecological network project with partners in the UK, Italy and the Netherlands. Ian is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

## **Dr Angela Julian, Co-ordinator, Amphibian and Reptile Group UK**

Dr Angela Julian is Coordinator of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK (ARG UK) a network of independent, volunteer-led county-based groups who conserve amphibians and reptiles across the UK and Northern Ireland. With over 30 years of experience in conservation, Angie also teaches for the dept of Continuing Education at the University of Oxford, and undertakes environmental consultancy. Working in partnership with UK CEH, ARG UK have helped to develop a series of models to map suitable habitat that can be used to support sympathetic land management for amphibians and reptiles. We have applied this approach to supporting a conservation strategy for adders on Cannock Chase.

## **Dr Emma Gardner, Quantitative Ecologist & Modeller, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology**

Dr Emma Gardner is a Quantitative Ecologist and Modeller at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. She studies how species interact with landscapes and how we represent the interests of other species when we make land-use decisions. Emma works with researchers, NGOs and conservation volunteers to build computer models that simulate how species use landscapes. These models can help us predict how proposed land-use changes might affect different species. Working with local, regional and national decision-makers, we then explore how these models might support biodiversity-friendly decision-making in real-life situations. Emma also collaborates with artists and communities to explore how creative

approaches could combine information from these models with other knowledge forms to better support nature recovery.

**Milly Robinson, District Ecologist, Forestry England**

Milly is Forestry England's District Ecologist for Central Forest District. She is based at Cannock Chase but covers Forestry England land in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Leicestershire. Her role is primarily to ensure operations are conducted in line with wildlife legislation and policy, but also gets involved with partnerships and conservation projects. She has worked for FE for two years and previously worked in ecological consultancy.

**Jeff Sim, Head of Nature Reserves, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**

Jeff Sim started his working life as an IT Sales Consultant before deciding to change careers, taking himself back to university to study a degree in Countryside Management in 2016. Jeff started volunteering for SWT and then got his first job in conservation at SWT 16 years ago. Since then Jeff has held several jobs for the Trust and was appointed to Head of Nature Reserves in 2018. SWT own or manage 43 nature reserves across the county covering over 2,000 hectares of land including Gentleshaw Common and The Roaches.

**Jamie Burnett, Area Ranger, National Trust**

Hi, my name is Jamie, and I am currently working as an area ranger for the National Trust. A little over 9 years ago I started as a volunteer with the rangers in the National Trust at Lyme, loved it, and then became a part-time assistant ranger. I went back to university alongside the role to learn more about environmental management and once I had finished the course, became a full-time ranger with the National Trust at Shugborough. Recently I became area ranger at Shugborough and for the next year will mostly be looking after a wood pasture project and other tree related aspects. Trees are where I'm passionate, be it tree safety or veterans, and I have also recently gone back to university part-time to study urban forestry.

**Chloe Hardman, Senior Adviser, West Midlands Area Team, Natural England**

Chloe Hardman is a Senior Adviser in the West Midlands Area Team at Natural England. She has been at Natural England for 6 years. Previously she worked on wetland projects at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the RSPB. She carried out her PhD research at the University of Reading, looking into the effectiveness of wildlife-friendly farming schemes, with a focus on pollinators.

**Tom Clarke, National Trust, Dorset National Landscape**

Hi I'm Tom and have been in the nature conservation sector for over 25 years. A Londoner by birth, I started my career in the capital – ending up as the Conservation Land Manager for London Wildlife Trust. It was the experience of managing Camley Street Natural Park, in Kings Cross, that changed my focus – I became all about people. Moving to wonderful Dorset in 2010, I've worked for the Wildlife Trust, RSPB and am now the Senior Volunteering and Community Manager for the National Trust in Purbeck. I work across the landscape of people and partnerships in Purbeck, bringing greater equity to our access to nature. I lead on the connecting people to nature part of the Purbeck Heaths NNR (the first super national nature reserve).