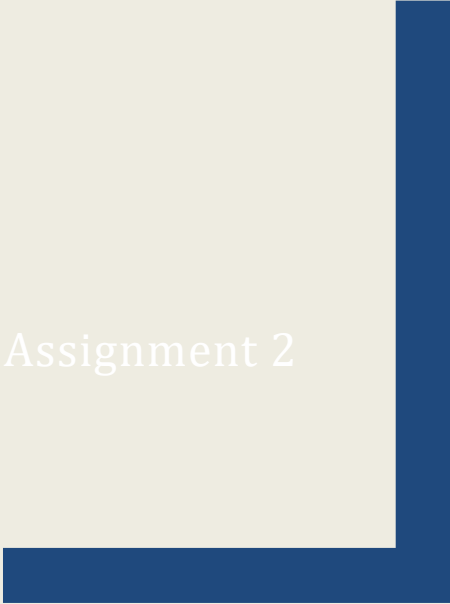




Sustainable Leadership

PEMBROKESHIRE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Assignment 2



Jessica Dando

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The Role of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in Sustainable Leadership

1. Introduction to Sustainable Leadership and its Importance

When we consider the question, "Who is the leader accountable to?" it brings to mind the idea of responsibility, which may have different implications depending on the context. In West Wales, particularly in Pembrokeshire, the majority of the land, businesses, and established human settlements are situated around the edges of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNP). Although much of the land is privately owned, a significant amount of the sea and land is owned by the National Trust or other conservation groups. (Planting, 2023)

It is widely recognised that different organisations encounter similar obstacles when it comes to contributing to the societal, economic, and environmental well-being. There is a growing interest at regional, national, and international levels in sustainable leadership for these organisations. This has significant implications for guiding and shaping employee conduct at the individual, group, and overall level. (Bradley et al, 2021)

The leadership in question should be adaptable enough to address and manage the various issues and concerns that arise within a natural environment, while also being responsible for these concerns. (Salas-Vallina et al.2021) When considering the question of "Who should lead sustainability efforts within natural reserves?" it becomes apparent that the individual must be dedicated to the ideals and principles surrounding the remaining natural environments and the species they support, as well as possessing the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience for the various tasks and roles of the natural reserve. (Henderson & Loreau, 2023; Zhang et al.2022)

1.1. Defining Sustainable Leadership

During mounting uncertainty surrounding the sustainability of global, social, economic, and environmental systems, and the formidable challenges confronting leaders of public and non-profit entities, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park stands as a prime example of an organisation poised to play a pivotal role in addressing these sustainability challenges. (Chambers et al.2022)

Tasked with the stewardship of a vast expanse of nature, the organisation is committed to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the landscape. Furthermore, it endeavours to foster public understanding and appreciation of the National Park's unique qualities, while also championing opportunities for public engagement and enrichment.

Following this definition and introduction is an exploration of the national park and the research context. Subsequently, the chapter delves into reasons why the Pembrokeshire National Park Authority demonstrates positive and sustainable leadership in Pembrokeshire and South West Wales. (Ratcliffe, 2020; Allen, 2021)

This essay aims to evaluate the performance of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park as a pioneer in sustainable development within the community. The persistent challenges faced by the public and non-profit sectors only serve to heighten the difficulty of this endeavour. (Goudie & Migoń, 2020) Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is currently in the process of assessing the new National Park Management Plan, with a specific focus on the Authority's role as a trailblazer in sustainable development.

While every segment of the Umbrella Plan plays a crucial role in fulfilling the objectives of the National Park, the leadership of the National Park Authority in sustainable development is of utmost importance. This section delves into the definitions of leadership and sustainable development. (Allen, 2021; Chambers et al. 2022)

1.2. Significance of Sustainable Leadership in Environmental Conservation

The role necessitates a comprehensive vision that not only facilitates the functioning of the ecosystem in Pembrokeshire but also links it to well-being ("Blue Planet National Park"). Additionally, it entails the day-to-day leadership of the Park authority (and indeed the National Park communities) to interpret this vision in the context of adaptation, reducing the impacts of climate change on the Park, and integrating Marine Protected areas to promote economic activity and functioning ecosystems that enhance water quality, sediment quality, species and habitats, and a diversity of ecosystems. (Finch et al, 2022) Furthermore, the cornerstone of the leadership style is to engage and influence numerous stakeholders in delivering genuine cultural, natural, and built heritage benefits that align with its designation as a National Park Authority and underpin a sense of 'place', and that can promote a region or place as a unique and special place to live, work, and visit. Lastly, the Park must continue to provide inspirational access to and interaction with the Park, both on land and sea, and to promote

widespread public awareness of the Park and provide educational benefits to current and future generations.(Strachan et al, 2022; Borger et al, 2020)

2. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park: A positive example of Sustainable Leadership.

These characteristics, in conjunction with established public access rights, provide the rationale for designating areas as "National Parks" to safeguard natural landscapes. The Pembrokeshire Coast stood as the inaugural National Park under the auspices of the UK program, championed by Lewis and Gilbert. Their reasoning for selecting this area was based on the notion that the coast held 'national significance and would benefit from preservation against coastal flooding and erosion'. Since 1952, the objective of the National Park has been defined as: "to ensure the preservation of the National Park for the enjoyment and benefit of all." Notably, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the solitary Coastal National Park. (Prost, 2023) The National Park Act established the park's boundaries, extending 5 km inland. The delineation of the plan aligned with its prescribed boundaries, which were naturally suited to manage development sensitive to conservation efforts (Crawley et al.2014; Hiscock, 2022; Hart, 2021)

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park lies in the southwest of Wales. The park was originally designated in 1952 because of its outstanding coast and landscape and is now subject to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The vision is

"A unique and cherished landscape, a diverse and healthy environment, and a vibrant and prosperous community" of which a new development in Parks Authorities' new purposes is:

"to maintain and enhance biodiversity, natural beauty, and cultural heritage of the park". (Thomas et al, 2003)

2.1. Overview of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, located in England and Wales, holds a prestigious title as the second National Park officially designated by statute in 1952. Spanning over an impressive 240 square miles, this coastal gem mesmerizes with its awe-inspiring terrain, offering breathtaking views at every turn. With an extensive stretch of 2700 miles, the park provides public rights that

allow exploration and admiration of its coastal wonders. (Groom, 2022; Baker, 2011)

Beyond its natural allure, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park holds immense cultural and historical value. It boasts an extraordinary concentration of ancient monuments, standing as a testament to the rich heritage of this region. (Lee and Giles, 2020)

2.2. Key Initiatives and Practices in Sustainable Leadership

Establishing and maintaining a standard for field-based work to be respected by professionals and volunteers continues to hold importance when key initiatives, such as providing National Coast Path health and safety work such as trail diversions, are carried out. Field work to maintain views, preserve archaeological and historic features, and repair dry-stone walls is managed by PCNPA teams and undertaken as a public sector commitment to conservation and landscape regeneration. The PCNPA is proud to be recognized as a stakeholder and provider of valued services and facilities. (Blackstock et al.2022) The cost benefits of closer alignment between the PCNPA work and desired outcomes by internal or partner-led initiatives are proving to be a key determinant of respect from the community toward the Park Authority leadership. (Matthews et al., 2022)

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has developed a number of key practices to establish a reputation for its leadership on sustainability. It has done so by encouraging the development/submission of innovative and carefully prepared planning applications, the use of modern methods and construction placed in traditionally built contexts, and by managing new visitor services in a cost and environmentally beneficial fashion. (Bond & Moore, 2020) The PCNPA undertook four pioneering efforts reflecting its goals in line with environmental, social, and cultural issues. These include support to the National Trust on an unorthodox visitor management solution at St David's Head; Skomer Marine Nature Reserve Visitor Centre; Barafundle Beach Visitor Centre; and a dramatic contemporary house on Angle Bay. (Chambers et al.2022)

3. Theoretical Frameworks and Models in Sustainable Leadership

In contrast to unitarist leaders who exert force and are often traditional in nature, sustainable office-type leaders are designated and disempowered in their leadership role. They function as facilitators of a leadership culture within work groups. The leader's role is to provide support and help colleagues find their own

solutions. Empowerment involves enabling others, fostering a sense of coherence, and passing on responsibility for encouraging action and producing results. Leaders who adopt a 'pulling' rather than 'pushing' approach possess the necessary attributes and professional knowledge to positively contribute to others' performance. (Williams et al.2022) This leads to active cooperation, commitment, and motivation. Sustainable leaders represent engaged and willing individuals, not bullied employees. The leader becomes a servant of the employees, rather than a boss. Leadership is an outcome or result, not just a role. (Care et al.2021)

Traditional leadership models, such as those proposed by Burns, suggest that a leader directs, but employee engagement is not solely based on willingness and readiness. It is also influenced by what individuals gain from the exchange. This often leads to a unitarist management approach that is built on power and domination. However, new and more inclusive leadership approaches are emerging in both the public and private sectors. (Fry & Egel, 2021)

Sustainable leadership considers fairness, equality, and persuasion, and is based on integrity and ethics rather than fear and compliance. In complex organisations or structures without a central authority, the role of power diminishes, and negotiation and adaptation become more important. Establishing a broad common stake that incorporates moral, cultural, and community values is the foundation of sustainable leadership. This represents a shift rooted in local community spirit and engagement. (Woo & Kang, 2020)

3.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

This, is our weakness seen through the lens of leaders who challenge us to accept climate change as their most important challenge! Transformational leaders, though, are also builders of teams and organisers of groups who maintain group cohesion, shift roles as they change, and are able to withhold opposition far longer than public leaders who require regular reform of mandate. (Beazley, 2024) The Parks are now run by a group of able subordinates, backed up by a public body, the National Parks Authority, whose operations go a long way to guard against the worst of the shortcomings of a market model, in this case: Wales (Allen, 2021)

Relating back to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, the idea of transformational leadership is recognised as a strength, as their challenge is to reach a wide-ranging variety of interest groups: local population, visitors, commerce and industry, tourist organisations, and park officers and authorities. Emphasis is put on life in its broadest natural and unhindered state. Nature incites brooding essays of intellectual value, which bespeaks a labor of

concentration and which until recently were received only by philosophers. But through the eyes of the National Park, they become the property of all, with strata for its appreciation.. (Ratcliffe, 2021; Piper et al.2022)

Transformational leadership theory is concerned with higher order value development and broad-based leadership, which takes into consideration needs, values, openness, and cooperation. Kovoor-Misra states specifically, "In the present context, a focus on values is necessary." (Gingerich2020; Kamau, 2021; Khangale, 2021)

3.2. Systems Thinking Approach

The existing challenges within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park conflict with the prevailing systems of governance which rely heavily on bureaucracy, changing public attitudes, and the forms of decision making that are shaped by the political arena. (Taylor et al, 2016) The conflict is reflected by mature and rational approaches to leadership. (Childs, 2020)

There is a pressing need to include more open and emergent leadership approaches that seek to sensitize the organizations to emergent responses to the complex challenges characteristic of our times. These forward-thinking approaches take into account the system tendencies, players' encounters with failures, and nuanced perceptions of developing situations. (King et al, 2018)

By becoming acutely aware of the systemic approaches in the park's operations, those involved in aiding the park can effectively capitalize on emerging trends and proactively remove the operational barriers that hinder progress and sustainable development. This proactive stance would enable the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to adapt and thrive amidst ever-evolving circumstances, while effectively addressing the needs and values of its diverse stakeholders, both human and environmental. (Solandt et al., 2020; Planting, 2023)

"To plan and act strategically is to understand these trends, anticipate the direction in which they are moving, and surf upon them." Senge (1990)

4. Evidence of Sustainable Leadership in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

A planning service led by the Future Services team, dedicated to supporting national ambitions to promote and improve well-being through a triple bottom line approach in the delivery of high-quality, prompt, consistent, customer-focused development management, enforcement, and planning services ensuring the highest standards of customer care to Park stakeholders. (Childs, 2022) This paper has focused a view of the sustainable leaders of a very large geographic

area but primarily concentrated on creating a more accessible and vibrant parkland to improve, not just the public recreation benefits to its visitors, but a commitment to sustain an employment base, and mode of transport minority, sustainable agricultural and forestry landowners. It concludes that, despite facing numerous external and internal pressures, there has developed a sustainable orientation and approach to leadership within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. (Mansfield & Wheaton, 2022; Scott, 2019)

Initially, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was a protectionist body, with a remit to support only planning issues within its boundary. The authority also has responsibility for maintaining and enhancing conservation, wildlife, visiting, recreation, cultural heritage, employment, tourism, and both urban and rural economy development. (Mansfield & Wheaton, 2022)

Gradually, the growth of sustainable leadership within the organization came to an understanding that the Park's protection and promotion roles were intricately intertwined. (Delpech, 2020) The Park could not be promoted if the qualities that were being marketed were allowed to deteriorate. Slowly, a holistic approach began to emerge which held conservation, growth, recreation, and the employment and development of people together. In the Department of Conservation and Planning, the duty of the second section is to preserve, enhance, and manage the National Park's natural beauty, wildlife, and heritage. (Adams et al.2022)

4.1. Environmental Conservation Efforts

According to the National Park Authority, conserving the environment involves not just protecting conservation sites, species, and habitats but also managing wider landscape and seascape elements to help provide a stepping stone of habitat to help species and habitat resilience to multiple pressures. The Authority also states that protecting the environment also involves working with others to help reduce light pollution and commercial seaweed extraction, while ensuring the special qualities of the National Park coasts and seas are not compromised. (Rees et al, 2020; PCNPA, 2001) The National Park Authority sees its key role

in the community as part of its stewardship mission is to provide education and interpretation services for its residents, businesses, and visitors. (Murphy et al.2021; Bennett et al.2022)

In the National Park, it is acknowledged that environmental challenges are increasing, and there is a commitment to support well-managed and legally protected areas. The National Park has ambitious and aspirational plans to help the international effort to biodiversity loss and help mitigate climate change. Commitments in the Management Plan include beach cleans and other conservation tasks, habitat restoration, and the removal of invasive non-native species. (Prost, 2023:Rees & Kilcoyne, 2022)

4.2. Community Engagement and Empowerment

They are credited with providing the "public scrutiny and public endorsement, and a sense of community ownership" of the National Park at the colloquial level. If authority is delegated, it is "on the condition that such powers can be withdrawn if the regulations and duties it imposes are not seen to be respected." Finlayson (2017) reports that national parks need to engage with the community for simple survival, and their role as a community resource is readily accepted as they are seen as conservators and interpreters of the natural landscape.

The National Park Authority works in partnership with voluntary groups in several areas. The voluntary sector has a long-standing culture in the Park of managing and conserving natural and built heritage, as well as delivering economic benefits. The partnerships developed with the voluntary groups have developed over many years, and the National Park Authority has built upon existing collaborative arrangements to ensure that the fragile relationship between the communities and the National Park Authority has developed and expanded over the years. (Harkin et al, 2020) Vozar's comment on the National Park is interesting on this point. "The participation and high levels of voluntary input at the local levels are highlighted as principles of concern." Their position highlights that all levels of local government need to be aware of these intrinsic factors before applying any formula devised elsewhere. (Childs, 2022; Vozar, 2021)

5. Comprehensive Analysis of Lessons Learned and Emerging Recommendations for Effective Future Approaches

This paper provides experience and insights about the nature and working, successes, challenges, and roles of an institutional approach to an embedded partnership for sustainability. So, as a Global Charter for Sustainable Tourism

promotes the development of alternative approaches to tourism management, the paper discusses these different types and relevant issues. (Bush,2020) The paper also offers five specific recommendations for future collaborations between national parks and universities. (Blake et al, 2017)

Expanding on this theme, it is crucial to recognize that an apolicy-centered, proactive, interdisciplinary, and educative approach from academia holds immense potential in safeguarding the natural heritage of national parks. By actively engaging with various stakeholders, such as funding agencies and the local population, academia can create a harmonious ecosystem where sustainable practices flourish. (Fischer, 2017; Clark, 2023) This transformative process requires universities to take on roles that extend beyond conventional research and education. (Crofts et al, 2021)

By aligning with the principles laid out in the Global Charter for Sustainable Tourism, academia can redefine the approach to tourism management, fostering innovative solutions and creating a pathway towards a sustainable future. (Bush, 2020) The five recommendations proposed herein further solidify the importance of collaboration between national parks and universities, serving as a guiding framework for future endeavors. Through collective efforts, academia and national parks can forge a resilient alliance that ensures the preservation of natural treasures for generations to come. (Bichler, 2021; Clark, 2023)

This article deals with how national parks can contribute to sustainable leadership using the case study of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, part of the Protected Areas, Natural Resources and Green Growth (PRONG) project in Wales. We try to answer four questions: (1) What role do national parks play in promoting sustainable leadership? (2) What have we learned from the collaboration within the national park case? (3) What factors facilitate and hinder these ties and how closely can it be perceived as sustainable leadership? and (4) What recommendations could be used to further encourage ties between protected areas and local universities. (Hestler et al., 2020; Crofts et al., 2021)

5.1. Recommendations for Enhancing Sustainable Practices

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park engagement with the public, business and community sectors, recognizing that working across institutions and with other actors (Government, Health, Social Services, Education etc.) could be facilitated by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.Piper at al, 2022)

Also, specific dedicated engagement messages, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park recognizing the strength of cross-discipline collaboration in an organization and promoting the value of working with the wider public, business and

community sectors. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park needing a greater link is reinforced also by NAPF (2007c) who suggested that the application of sustainable practices is the key driver for a more integrated relationship between National Park Authorities, leading to the best outcomes for sustainable landscapes. (Hestler et al, 2020)

Any proposals made are not meant to challenge or duplicate the commitment and current excellent delivery within the Authority but to support the crucial financial and fervent interest from them in valuing all aspects of the models of operating and to continue to stretch and support the wide variety of professional careers. (Hestler et al, 2020) The recommendations instead are offered to build on the positive organizational climate identified within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and to progress the commitment to a sustainable future. (Christie et al., 2021; Piper et al.2022)

The analysis of the role of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in relation to legislation, national policies, and national and international operational activities provides insight into how the Authority can contribute to the concept of sustainable leadership overall but also with a particular focus on Wales.(Blake et al, 2006; Adams et al, 2022)

Therefore, the research identifies four main recommendations to enhance or extend sustainable practices in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to correspond better to the Wales approach: Firstly, deeper involvement in national events, particularly Welsh Government-led initiatives, which allows Pembrokeshire Coast National Park the chance to share the unique and varied learning opportunities available. (Muskett, 2020; Sanders, 2022)

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