

## Values Statement For Tourism and Conservation Partnership

### About us

The Tourism and Conservation Partnership is a not for profit organisation that was established in 1993 (incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1997) through a partnership between Cumbria Tourist Board, The National Trust and the Lake District National Park Authority.

The organisation started as a project (with one full time Project Officer, based at the LDNPA Offices) to see if the tourism sector would welcome the opportunity to act as fundraisers for local conservation work. The initial concept remains unchanged, and is simply this: With 16 million tourism visits each year, if each visitor voluntarily gave a small donation (for example £1), this money could be reinvested into maintaining and conserving the landscape that these visitors love.

Over the past decade the organisation has grown to become a business membership structure, which funds 4 full time members of staff, based in Ambleside. Almost £1million has been raised by member businesses to date. Each fundraising member business has its own conservation 'cause' for which to fundraise. The Partnership acts as a facilitator between conservation organisations and the private sector.

As a secondary activity, we are contacted by the RDA to deliver tourism focused environmental training. This is open to any business, not just to our membership, though we do try to encourage businesses to join our organisation at the same time.

#### 1. Why do we do what we do? How widely is this understood?

We facilitate private sector fundraising for conservation work because otherwise it wouldn't happen. It could be said we 'created' the demand from businesses, however, over 200 tourism businesses to date have been receptive to the idea, and have become involved at different levels.

From an economic point of view, tourism in Cumbria is dependant on the beauty and quality of the landscape. Significant erosion occurs each year, much as a direct result of visitor pressure, and our organisation helps to mitigate for that impact. Enlightened businesses understand this need to preserve the tourism 'product', if it can be seen as such.

I believe our stakeholders understand our purpose. There is some confusion regarding the environmental training we also deliver for the sector, however this fits well with our underlying aims to encourage sustainable practices in the industry. What we do is a fairly simple concept, however as it is so innovative, most businesses need a face to face meeting to fully understand how business fundraising operates. Once they have had this meeting, they have a good understanding of what we are trying to achieve.

Staff within the organisation understand and support the work that we do. We are a very small team, and a high level of ownership is vital for effective working.

In terms of evidence on how our members 'buy in' to our vision, I have attached example statements, and marketing literature they produce.

2. What matters to you? What values are rewarded and how are these prioritised?

We are a values driven organisation. We exist for environmental and social benefit. What drives our organisation, as a vision, is to raise money for conservation. What drives our organisation at an operational level is to build the value and volume of the fundraising membership in order to ensure our longevity. Despite our financial shortages, there is always a staff training budget, and it is important that all staff are stretched and developed professionally and personally. (though when it comes to personal development, if it costs significant money, it is a force of necessity that it takes a lower priority.) Staff are rewarded verbally and financially for commitment, attitude, teamwork (we are a small team, it's important that we can all work well together) and productivity. All staff are involved in recruitment of new staff members, business planning and membership social events.

3. What are the outcomes?

We are an inclusionary organisation. Any business can be involved with our work, however, we ask for a fundraising commitment. We hope that our work goes some way to minimising long term impacts on the environment, by educating others.

4. How we treat people

I hope that our service levels are good. There are times when people are disappointed with what we can offer, sometime because of unrealistic expectations (for instance certain organisations looking for funding). Because of what we do, we have to be customer focused, as our work is about talking to a business, finding out about them and suggesting solutions for fundraising that fit them uniquely. It's like a bespoke service! In this way, we tend to identify quite quickly when we can't help people, and will try to make suggestions of other providers elsewhere that they might find useful.

5. Do others understand our ethics?

See answer to question 1. Because of what we are, and the fact that we are inclusionary by design this question possibly doesn't relate? The only exclusionary aspect of our work could be around our name. Non tourism businesses don't always realise we are happy to work with them, but this is never

done deliberately. Very occasionally we will exclude a business from our membership if we believe that their business ethics seriously conflict with ours, but this is done extremely rarely.

## 6. Engaging stakeholders

I think we are less strong here. We do not consult with our membership on strategic changes in the organisation (for example our recent name change, which was criticised by some members). There is a Board of 12 businesses (public/private sector split), with 2 additional advisors, and therefore all decisions are discussed with a broad range of business interests.

We do however, really try to gauge the feelings of businesses, and other stakeholders before making decisions. Really, the vast majority of our decision making is steered by our members – conservation organisations choose which projects to they want to submit to us for funding, businesses themselves decide which projects they want to fund, its not our decision. In this way, I think it goes back to us being a very customer focused organisation.

Staff are empowered to make their own decisions about their part of the business. As a manager, I hope that in this way they become more involved with the organisation, and take more responsibility naturally. It sometimes causes disaster, but it's all a learning experience.

## 7. How do we develop our ethics?

All staff discuss complaints, and we reach an agreement (sometimes guided by me if it is a particularly difficult decision) that we can all work with. We have fortnightly staff meetings, but a lot of informal discussion daily. Most of our discussions are about ethical issues, being the organisation we are! Examples can be around certain conservation organisations not wanting to work with certain businesses, or how to effectively 'sell' a conservation project to a business, whilst not over promising publicity and compromising the project. Our organisation is constantly changing, to reflect business and conservation demand, so we are well structured to handle this innovation. There are administrative structures in the office, but I am receptive to them evolving (as they are).

## 8. How do we link values and actions

We work in Cumbria, with both conservation bodies, and the tourism sector, which much of the time is diametrically opposed! Yes, we make brave decisions! And yes, I (as Manager) stand up to Board to defend those decisions.

In order to see the link between our values statement and our actions, I have enclosed our business plan, and action plan for the year.

We maintain a good work life balance in the office. I think we work hard, but I also encourage staff to use their TOIL, and we have a system where one day a week staff can leave a little earlier for personal interests (It started when I had a

member of staff who played football, and one who went biking once a week with friends. Staff now choose to use it if they want, most weeks they don't, but it is there).

#### 9. Our ethics journey

Working in the sector that we do, our ethics are always going to be evolving. As environmental standards rise, we will always be pushing the boundary, encouraging businesses to develop a little more.

Our organisation will be at mature stage when we have achieved our mission statement, when the majority of tourism businesses in Cumbria are operating a payback scheme, and have assessed their environmental sustainability. The main indicator of this is the number of members we have. Financial issues and staff resource are the main barriers for us.

#### 10. How we demonstrate our authenticity

We are not for profit, and as such any organisation is welcome to see our accounts and constitution. We use case studies and personal recommendation when talking to new contacts. Our whole organisation is built round our ethics, and therefore we are (I hope!) obviously authentic.

#### 11. Providing leadership in ethics

We try to lead by example. There will always be organisations out there that are better than us, but we try to be fair in how we deal with people, responsible towards the environment, and clear in how we operate as a business. As mentioned previously, on environmental issues we have a training and mentoring function for others, which fits with providing leadership. Employees all have a training and development plan, which is looked at regularly (1 month, 3 month, 6 month, from then on annually). Staff members mentor each other in relevant parts of their roles, which increases understanding and teamworking in the office. We hope, as a team that we motivate most organisations that come into contact with us.

#### 12. Are we ethical to gain an advantage

Financially? We wish!!!