

EMBARGOED UNTIL 3.30PM (UK TIME) ON FRIDAY 7 JULY 2017

Bodmin Moor first AONB to be designated an International Dark Sky Landscape

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Bodmin Moor has been designated an International Dark Sky Landscape, confirming its status as one of Cornwall's star attractions and making it the first International Dark Sky Place in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Following a bid by Cornwall Council and Caradon Observatory, the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has awarded the prestigious designation in recognition of the exceptional quality of the night sky over Bodmin Moor, commitments to avoid light pollution and the provision of educational outreach.

"While other sites in the UK have previously received International Dark Sky Places accreditation, today's announcement of Bodmin Moor's status as an International Dark Sky Park is especially noteworthy," said IDA Executive Director J. Scott Feierabend. **"Its position within the Cornwall AONB clearly establishes that the conservation of dark night skies is wholly compatible with the notion of protected landscapes where people routinely live and work."**

Bodmin Moor International Dark Sky Designation covers the portion of the moor within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty plus a two mile buffer zone around it. As an AONB, Bodmin Moor is one of the UK's most cherished and outstanding working landscapes. Its Dark Sky status is expected to boost tourism and the local economy, especially in the darker spring, autumn and winter months when star gazing opportunities are at their best.

The designation will also bring health benefits for both people and wildlife in the moor's living landscape by helping to keep artificial light at a very low level. Within the designation area residents and businesses will be encouraged to protect the night sky from light pollution by managing their lighting better. **No one will have to change their existing lights.** Instead people will be provided with a guide for dark sky friendly lighting to help them choose appropriate lights when they need to replace old lights or fit new ones. They will also be encouraged to only use lighting where it's needed and turn off lights when they aren't needed.

Bob Egerton, Cornwall Council Cabinet Member for Planning and Economy, said: **"Cornwall has a proud history in earthbound industries such as mining and agriculture. But we should not forget that we have also been at the forefront of the communications industry with the transatlantic telegraph cables from Porthcurno, then Marconi's wireless station, and in the 1960s and 70s, the Goonhilly satellite dishes. Now Goonhilly is getting a new lease of life and we have the possibility of seeing satellite launches from a potential spaceport at Newquay. So it is fitting that we are now involved with the Dark Sky project. I am sure that this will help to stimulate greater interest in astronomy and will bring more people to Bodmin Moor to view the wonders of the night sky."**

Sue James, Cornwall Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, said: **"I'm delighted that Bodmin Moor has become the first AONB to become an International Dark Sky Landscape. Most people love a starry sky, and thanks to its low levels of light pollution Bodmin Moor has some of the darkest skies in the country. This designation will support the varied wildlife living on Bodmin Moor as having defined day and night is essential for many species to survive."**

Ken Bennett, founder of Caradon Observatory, said: **"Caradon Observatory is proud to have sponsored Bodmin Moor for International Dark Sky status and worked with Cornwall Council on a truly comprehensive application. Our main mission at Caradon Observatory is to inspire students of all ages to consider careers in the sciences and engineering by showing them the wonders of the universe with images taken from our site on Bodmin Moor. We're keen to build on the area's Dark Sky designation and are now aiming to become a research grade observatory so we can offer more comprehensive education and community outreach opportunities in the future."**

Dr Wayne Thomas of Caradon Observatory said: **"The Dark Sky initiative is working to bring back our dark sky places and to help us recognise why this is so important. Seeing the Milky Way arching over our heads, the multitude of star clusters and galaxies and the dance of the planets and comets across the sky are true wonders of our World. But for most of us they go unnoticed, because the skies are not dark enough to see them. There is also a dark side to this lack of the night. Exposure to light through the day and night disrupts our normal biological rhythm. The solutions are easy, and they're free. Don't accept light at night. Shine light downwards at the amount you need and for the time you need it. By creating a Dark Sky Landscape on Bodmin Moor, we are establishing a legacy for future generations and helping to protect our own health and the health of our planet."**

Anita Grice-Goldsmith, Director of CPRE Cornwall said: **"We are delighted with today's news that Bodmin Moor has been recognised as the jewel in Cornwall's crown that it so deservedly is and pleased that data gathered for CPRE's interactive Night Blight maps was used as complementary evidence for the bid. Bodmin Moor offers exceptionally dark skies and its designation as an International Dark Sky Landscape means that 80 square miles of spectacular open countryside will now be protected from the intrusion of damaging artificial lighting. Hopefully this will act as a catalyst for education and good lighting across Cornwall. We all know that Cornwall is a great place to spot celebrities but now it's also the ideal place to go star spotting for the real stars of the night sky!"**

Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive of Visit Cornwall, said: **"Cornwall is famous for its quality of environment and this latest designation will help build our reputation, but most importantly assist the wonders of Bodmin Moor and the amazing dark sky which many of our urban dwelling visitors would have never seen in its full glory."**

Notes for editors

About the IDA Dark Sky Places Program

The IDA established the International Dark Sky Places conservation program in 2001 to recognize excellent stewardship of the night sky. Designations are based on stringent outdoor lighting standards and innovative community outreach. Since the program began, 15 Communities, 50 Parks, 11 Reserves, 3 Sanctuaries and 4 Dark Sky Friendly Developments of Distinction have received International Dark Sky designations. For more information about the International Dark Sky Places Program, visit <http://darksky.org/idsp>.

About the IDA

The International Dark-Sky Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona, advocates for the protection of the night-time environment and dark night skies by educating policymakers and the public about night sky conservation and promoting environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. More information about IDA and its mission may be found at <http://www.darksky.org>.

About the Bodmin Moor Dark Sky bid

A month long public consultation held last year found overwhelming public support for the bid for Dark Sky status for Bodmin Moor. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Visit Cornwall, many local councils, businesses, observatories and astronomers supported the bid.

Contact details

Liz Frederick-Preece
Communities Communication and Engagement Specialist
Strategy and Engagement
Customer and Support Services
Cornwall Council

Tel: 01579 341028

Mobile: 07527 470531

Internal: 441028

lfrederick-preece@cornwall.gov.uk

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