

Tarka Country Vacancy and Legacy

In its 15th year, local wildlife charity, Tarka Country Trust is offering a great opportunity to join a small team of volunteer Trustees.

Tarka the Otter was published in 1927 and immediately found success as a beautiful yet stark telling of the life and death of the otter in the country of the two rivers. 50 years on from that Devon County Council considered a report on the area in which the story was set and that report led to the setting up of the Tarka Project and "Tarka Country". That was over 25 years ago and it is worth reflecting on what has happened since.

Tarka Country Trust was set up 15 years ago and was successful in securing Millennium Fund money which was distributed as grants to local organisations and communities.

The Trust's Chairman, Richard Prowse says "Tarka Country Trust is a charitable organisation that supports environmental work across north Devon. Our current vacancy for a Volunteer Treasurer offers a great opportunity for the right person to be part of this team. This is a straightforward job where you can be part of a positive legacy to the future environment of North Devon. We would welcome approaches from people who support the Trust's aims and have the necessary skills."

One of Tarka Project's greatest achievements was the creation of the iconic Tarka Trail, a 180 mile route laid out in a figure of eight that stretches between Dartmoor and Exmoor and includes part of the South West Coast Path. The core of this route is the cycleway that follows the disused railway line between Barnstaple and Meeth. The Trail also includes part of the Barnstaple to Exeter train line,, renamed The Tarka Line, to pay homage to the countryside through which it passes.

The Tarka Project was not only about improving access to the countryside, but it applied an integrated approach to managing the countryside. This work has been followed up by North Devon's Biosphere Reserve (NDBR), working with the North Devon Coast AONB Partnership and with other organisations such as Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) and Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT).Particular successes of this approach have been the Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP), managed by WRT and supported by Tarka Country Trust, and the North Devon Nature Improvement Area (NIA) that is hosted by NDBR and led by DWT. These projects focus on land management alongside the two rivers, helping to gradually improving water quality and the environment.

The Trust is run by a group of dedicated volunteers, offering support to good quality, local, environmental initiatives. The Trust can be contacted on 01271 388534. More about the Trust's work can be found on its website www.tarkacountrytrust.org.uk .

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