

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 2 February 2022

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE MASS PARTICIPATION ARTWORKS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AS PART OF UK-WIDE CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY

20,000 people, from the Cairngorms to The Chilterns, Gower to North York Moors and Dartmoor to the Causeway Coast of Northern Ireland, are being recruited to create large-scale outdoor artworks in 20 of the UK's most outstanding landscapes for *Green Space Dark Skies*, part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, from April to September 2022.

The first gathering will be created in the Peak District National Park on 23 April. *Green Space Dark Skies* is inspired by the 90th anniversary of the 1932 Kinder Scout Mass Trespass, a pivotal event in the movement to secure access to the countryside for ordinary people that influenced the creation of the UK's network of National Parks.

The gatherings will be created at dusk by participants, referred to as Lumenators. They will be guided along pathways or waterways carrying smart lights that will enable digital choreography captured on film, while also being sensitive to the night-time environment. Each short film will incorporate the stories of the people and places featured and will be broadcast online after the event. Lumenators will also be encouraged to share their own connections to the landscape and the local areas as part of their involvement.

Green Space Dark Skies will enable people from all walks of life to forge new connections with the countryside by supporting those who experience cultural and physical barriers to experiencing our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to access events. The series of gatherings will celebrate the countryside and people's right to explore it as well as encouraging our responsibility to take care of it for future generations.

Outdoor art experts Walk the Plank are the lead creative organisation in the production of *Green Space Dark Skies*. John Wassell, Creative Producer said:

"Green Space Dark Skies is about class and landscape, race and landscape, disability and landscape. We want to build more countryside stewards for the future, and to inspire more people to see the connection between their use and enjoyment of the land and our care for the planet."

Developed by graduate engineers at Siemens specially for this project, the lighting technology uses existing wireless programmable low impact lights and incorporates something that's never been done before: the ability for these lights to be animated through geo-positioning, where the position of each light can be known in relation to the others; as well as the potential for this lighting technology to be adopted for use at future major outdoor events.

The *Green Space Dark Skies* team is working with Dark Skies representatives in many locations to explore how the project might highlight issues around light pollution in our towns, cities and rural landscapes to support wildlife to flourish. *"The moment when darkness falls, and we switch the lights off, is going to be the most important collective act of connection between people and nature within each event,"* added John Wassell.

Green Space Dark Skies is one of 10 major creative projects commissioned as part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK in 2022, designed to reach millions and bring people together. UNBOXED features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK's most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration.

Martin Green CBE, Chief Creative Officer of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK said:

“Green Space Dark Skies perfectly demonstrates the innovation and creativity we have seen harnessed through the development of the ten UNBOXED projects to explore new ideas for a better future. By engaging artists, engineers, landowners and members of the public to create a series of unique experiences, Green Space Dark Skies will both enhance people’s understanding of our natural environment and relationship to the countryside as well as show the power of creativity to inspire change.”

John Packman, CEO of the Broads Authority, lead CEO for National Parks UK Communications and one of the National Parks CEOs leading the Parks for Everyone Delivery Plan in England said:

“Green Space Dark Skies is all about helping people to discover the joys and benefits of getting out into nature and celebrating the role and value of protected landscapes in a modern society. It’s a perfect fit with our mission as National Parks.

We also think it’s very timely to explore the rights and responsibilities citizens have with respect to nature and landscapes – how to make that relationship as fruitful as possible. We are examining the means to foster that dialogue with the widest possible representation of UK society, especially those communities that are currently underrepresented in the countryside. Green Space Dark Skies is an opportunity to support that effort.”

John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty said:

“The UK’s 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are within half an hour’s journey time for the majority of people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Green Space Dark Skies will give people a truly once in a lifetime experience and the opportunity to develop their own relationship with the nationally valued landscapes on their doorstep.

The AONB family is thrilled to be part of Green Space Dark Skies, a project committed to opening up spaces for people while protecting nature. We hope that the Lumenators will continue to return to their AONBs, benefitting from the peace and rootedness that comes with a deep connection with place, and become the environmental guardians of the future.”

To protect these amazing places, the exact locations will only be revealed to the people who have registered to take part. There will be no spectators, but anyone can take part for free as long as they sign up in advance and everyone can watch the films of each event online.

Events will take place across the UK from 23 April with the finale in September featuring events in all four nations of the UK, more details to follow soon.

Walk the Plank is working with each National Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to create an event as part of *Green Space Dark Skies*. Each event will depend on the confirmation of landowner permissions, approval of event plans and local stakeholder engagement and therefore event locations and dates may be subject to change.

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- England: **Peak District National Park** (23 April); **Dartmoor National Park** (May); **Exmoor National Park** (28 May); **Dorset AONB** (11 June); **Broads National Park** (June); **North York Moors National Park** (date tbc); and **The Chilterns AONB** (date tbc).
 - Northern Ireland: **Lagan Valley AONB** (30 April); **Sperrin AONB** (June) and **Causeway Coast AONB** (date tbc).
 - Scotland: **Cairngorms National Park** (August) with more locations to be announced soon.
 - Wales: **Gower AONB** (13 May); **Brecon Beacons National Park** (July) and **Anglesey** (date tbc).

Walk the Plank is working with a number of creative partners in each location including Extraordinary Bodies, the collaboration with Diverse City and Cirque Bijou in Dartmoor, and Activate Performing Arts in Dorset; and with the University of Salford to develop some of the major public engagement for *Green Space Dark Skies*.

Walk the Plank is working with the National Trust as creative and delivery partners in a number of locations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Green Space Dark Skies places environmental and social sustainability at the heart of its design and delivery; highlighting the value of the natural environment as a core purpose and delivering significant measurable positive impact. Green Space Dark Skies will be a carbon net-positive project* combining exemplar low-emissions production with climate investments.

**The Green Space Dark Skies project is measuring and balancing 100% of its unavoidable Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. The project also acknowledges its Scope 3 emissions and the complexity associated with calculating these, and is working hard to rise to the challenge with its stakeholders.*

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

Listings information

Green Space Dark Skies part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

23 April – 30 September 2022

To take part in *Green Space Dark Skies* register at <https://greenspacedarkskies.uk/get-involved/>
[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

1 March – 2 October 2022

[Unboxed2022.uk](https://unboxed2022.uk)

Images can be downloaded at <https://greenspacedarkskies.uk/media-centre>

For further information and images

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. [Green Space Dark Skies](#) part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, is produced by UK outdoor arts pioneers Walk the Plank working in collaboration with technology company Siemens, the University of Salford, National Parks UK and The National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which are responsible for the management of the project's event sites; and working with diverse artists and creative collaborators in different locations, including integrated circus company Extraordinary Bodies, the collaboration between Diverse City and Cirque Bijou, Activate Performing Arts and film production company CC-Lab.
2. [UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK](#) is a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK in 2022, designed to reach millions and bring people together. It features free large-scale events, installations and globally accessible digital experiences in the UK's most ambitious showcase of creative collaboration. Produced by some of the brightest minds in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths, UNBOXED features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future. Events and activities take place from 1 March to 2 October 2022 – from the Outer Hebrides to Dover and from Omagh to Swansea, and across traditional and online media. UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.
3. [Walk the Plank](#)'s team of outdoor art experts work together to dream up, create and produce outstanding moments of outdoor theatre and participation. They have a long track record of making large-scale events that bring people together in public celebration. This is based on their ability to come up with big ideas that connect people from all paths in life. Storytelling is at the heart of everything they do, and the arena for their work is the great outdoors. Their mission is to enrich lives through shared creative experiences.
4. [About UK National Parks](#). There are 15 National Parks in the UK, covering 10% of Great Britain. National Parks are visited over 100 million times each year. 2021 saw the 70th anniversary of the first four National Parks – Peak District, Dartmoor, Lake District and Snowdonia.
5. [Siemens](#) is a technology company focused on industry, infrastructure, transport and healthcare. From more resource-efficient factories, resilient supply chains, and smarter buildings and grids, to cleaner and more comfortable transportation as well as advanced healthcare, the company creates technology with purpose adding real value for customers. By combining real and digital worlds, Siemens empowers its customers to transform their industries and markets, helping them to transform the everyday for billions of people.
6. [The University of Salford](#) is located in the heart of Greater Manchester. They have more than 20,000 students, 2,000 staff and a global community of over 170,000 alumni. They pioneer exceptional industry partnerships leading the way in real world experiences by preparing students for life. They work with industry to co-create the curriculum producing job-ready graduates primarily in health and wellbeing, engineering, digital and creative sectors. They are continuing to invest in their campus and facilities with a £300 million masterplan that will make them fit for the future.

7. [The National Association for AONBs](#) (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK’s 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of AONBs. It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with our membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals.

8. [About the National Trust](#). The National Trust is a conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people: Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, who saw the importance of the nation’s heritage and open spaces and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. Today, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we continue to look after places so people and nature can thrive. Entirely independent of Government, the National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves.

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