

Press Release issued by North Pennines AONB Partnership and Morgan Sindall Group plc

13 March 2023

Morgan Sindall Group invests in peatland restoration to help tackle climate change

A leading UK construction and regeneration group has signed a two-year agreement to fund peatland conservation and restoration in the uplands of the North of England.

Morgan Sindall Group plc is investing in a peatland restoration programme which will be delivered by the North Pennines AONB Partnership and Yorkshire Peat Partnership. The funding enables the two conservation partners to undertake capital works to restore over 300 hectares of blanket bog in the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark; the Yorkshire Dales National Park and in the surrounding upland areas. It is the first large-scale, private sector green financing project under the umbrella of the **Great North Bog** coalition, an ambitious peatland conservation collaboration across the protected landscapes of the North of England.

The funding represents a significant contribution to the UK's efforts to tackle climate change. It is estimated 80% of the UK's peatlands are damaged and have become a significant source of greenhouse gases, as a whole emitting over 20 million tonnes of carbon each year. Restoration of the Great North Bog will in time avoid annual carbon losses estimated at 3.7 million tonnes per year, and by doing so reduce UK peatland emissions by almost 20%. As revegetation takes hold, the blanket bog will safeguard the carbon stored in the peatland and will begin to take in and store additional carbon from the atmosphere. The

restoration of the Great North Bog will leave a living, national legacy of a functioning ecosystem providing vital services for future generations, including:

- slowing the flow of water on peatlands, helping to mitigate flooding in towns and cities downstream;
- reducing sediment load in rivers and the costs of water treatment to provide clean drinking water for millions;
- storing millions of tonnes of carbon; and
- supporting a range of wildlife.

“We recognise that healthy peatlands provide many benefits to society and are vital in helping tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. The peatland restoration programmes of northern England have developed a vision to match the scale of this ecological challenge,” said Morgan Sindall Group Chief Executive, John Morgan. *“This is a really exciting partnership for us because their vision aligns with one of our strategic aims to not only become net zero ourselves, but also to help others do the same.”*

Commenting on the new partnership, Paul Leadbitter, AONB Partnership Peatland Programme Manager said: *“The benefits for people, nature and climate are enormous and will have a lasting impact. This is the first large-scale private sector green financing project within the scope of the Great North Bog, allowing us to continue restoration on a large scale and contributes to the UK’s environmental targets. This financial support will form part of the match funding for a significant grant of £4.8 million from the UK Government through the Nature for Climate Fund. This type of blended finance with the conservation sector and private sector working together is a new and very positive model for funding peatland restoration and we hope that this is the beginning of a long-term relationship with Morgan Sindall Group and others.”*

“This dynamic partnership has hit the ground running,” said Graham Edgell, Director of Procurement and Sustainability at Morgan Sindall Group plc. *“The rewetting of the first 11 sites is already underway, accelerating the joint ambition to deliver natural vibrant habitats full of life and betterment for everyone. This exciting project is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to enhancing communities and delivering a lasting legacy.”*

ENDS

Notes to editors

Great North Bog

The Great North Bog (GNB) is an ambitious, grand-scale peatland restoration coalition being developed by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, Yorkshire Peat Partnership, Moors for the Future Partnership, Northumberland Peat Partnership, Cumbria Peat Partnership, and Lancashire Peat Partnership. It is a landscape approach to restoration across nearly 7,000 square kilometres of upland peat in the Protected Landscapes of northern England, which currently store 400 million tonnes of carbon.

Morgan Sindall Group plc

Morgan Sindall Group plc is a leading UK Construction & Regeneration group with annual revenue of £3.6bn, employing around 7,200 employees and operating in the public, regulated and private sectors. It reports through five divisions of Construction & Infrastructure, Fit Out, Property Services, Partnership Housing and Urban Regeneration.

Morgan Sindall Group is an environmental leader within its sector. In 2022, the Group was awarded an A Grade by CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, in recognition of its actions to tackle climate change, for the third year in a row.

Further information: <https://www.morgansindall.com/>

Yorkshire Peat Partnership

Yorkshire Peat Partnership is restoring peatlands in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. We are an umbrella organisation led by [Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#), funded and supported by [Defra](#), the [Environment Agency](#) the [Garfield Weston Foundation](#), [Natural England](#), [North York Moors National Park Authority](#), the [Peter De Haan Charitable Trust](#), [Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority](#), [Yorkshire Water](#), the [Moorland Association](#),

[National Farmers Union](#), [National Trust](#) and [Nidderdale AONB together with many private landowners](#). Our goal is to restore and conserve upland peatlands in order to ensure the long-term future of these unique and valuable habitats.

Further information: <https://www.yppartnership.org.uk/>

North Pennines AONB Partnership

1. The **North Pennines** is one of England's most special places – a peaceful, unspoilt landscape with a rich history and vibrant natural beauty. It was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1988. The purpose of this nationally recognised designation is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area.
2. At almost 2,000 sq. kilometres the North Pennines is the second largest of the 46 AONBs (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and is one of the most peaceful and unspoilt places in England. Visit www.landscapesforlife.org.uk for information about the AONB Family.



3. The **North Pennines** lies between the National Parks of the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, and Northumberland with the urban centres of County Durham away to the east. Parts of the AONB are within the boundaries of five local authorities; the three counties of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland, Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council.
4. **The North Pennines AONB Partnership** is an alliance of 24 public, statutory and voluntary sector bodies with an interest in the future of the AONB. The work of the Partnership is carried out by its Staff Unit which takes action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, to raise awareness of its special qualities and to improve the quality of life for local people.
5. **UNESCO Global Geopark** - As well as being an AONB the North Pennines is a UNESCO Global Geopark. This puts the area's Geopark status in the same UNESCO family as World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves. UNESCO Global Geoparks are places with outstanding geology where special effort is made to make the most of geological heritage to support community and economy. Locally this includes producing geo-trails, developing projects with school and community groups, producing displays for visitor attractions and holding geology festivals and events. Funding has been secured for a new programme of activities for 2018 – 2021 that includes new downloadable trails, interactive facilities at Bowlees Visitor Centre and a range of community and school projects.



Nature for Climate Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-for-people-climate-and-wildlife/nature-for-people-climate-and-wildlife>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nature-for-climate-peatland-grant-scheme#contact-natural-england>

Media enquiries

Sarah Hudspeth, North Pennines AONB Partnership Communications Lead

Tel: 07768 123247 / 01388 528801 | Email: shudspeth@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

Tel: 020 7307 9200 | press@morgansindall.com

Interviews: Paul Leadbitter from the North Pennines AONB Partnership and Graham Edgell from Morgan Sindall Group plc will be available for interview. Please contact Sarah Hudspeth (AONB Partnership) or Denise Nelson at Morgan Sindall Group.