

## Newport has one of the Darkest Skies in UK - official!

Written by Brendan Blake

Friday, 18 June 2010 11:08 - Last Updated Sunday, 07 January 2018 16:53

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If you like stargazing, as I do, you may have noticed just how clear the view of the Milky Way is when viewed from Newport.

In fact, we are very privileged to live in one of the best "Dark Skies" regions of the UK, and I hope that we can keep it that way! You can [click this link to view the official Dark Skies map](#) of the UK, which I obtained indirectly from the Royal Astronomical Society, while working on a web site for one of the UK's [International Year Of Astronomy](#) (IYA) projects last year.

Newport was specifically mentioned in a note written to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in March 2008 by the UK IYA co-ordinator, Steve Owens, when asking the National Park to participate in the IYA Dark Skies activities, possibly by encouraging the creation of US-style preserves - I've emphasised the section about Newport. Steve is happy for us to publish the letter. Nothing directly came of this, but Policy 46 of the new LDP will require planning applications likely to cause a problem to include a lighting plan. This will hopefully provide a means by which excessive light pollution will be reduced.

Brendan.

-----Forwarding Message-----

Hello,

I am UK Co-ordinator of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 ( [www.astronomy2009.org](http://www.astronomy2009.org) ). One of the main Global Cornerstone Projects in this UN and UNESCO endorsed international event is promoting dark skies awareness for astronomy, encouraging responsible dark skies programmes, and letting the public experience the wonder of a truly dark night sky.

You may currently be aware that there is a Scottish Dark Skies Project ( <http://www.darks skyscotland.org.uk/> ) which has very successfully used many dark sky sites in Scotland to bring astronomy to the public. The goal for this would be to roll it out UK-wide during 2009 and beyond.

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The Dark Skies activities as part of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 will have two main aims (i) to promote stargazing at dark sky sites, and (ii) to encourage the development of US-style dark sky preserves in the UK. And of course the national parks would be an ideal way to begin that process, as they already have extensive dark sky areas. In addition, one of the main aims of the year is to develop relationships and projects that have lasting legacy value.

And so to the gist of my email: I was wondering if there was anyone within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park who I could contact about the potential development of Dark Sky Parks, and whether indeed it was something that you were interested in participating in.

There is a steering group looking at this as part of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, and it might be an idea to get you and the other national parks involved at quite an early stage. **A quick look at the Dark Sky Map of the UK shows that you have some of the darkest skies, especially around St David's and Newport.**

Finally, I have to apologise if this is something you know about already - if so, could you please pass on details of who you have spoken to regarding this so that I might liaise with them

I look forward to hearing from you.

Steve Owens  
International Year of Astronomy 2009  
UK Co-ordinator