

Committee      **AUDIT AND REVIEW**  
Date:            **2 November 2007**

Report:           **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS – HALF YEARLY RETURNS**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To inform Members of compliments and complaints received by the Authority and handled under the compliments and complaints procedure during the period May to October 2007 inclusive.

### **Strategic Planning Framework**

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:
  - **Best Value Performance Plan objectives**  
We are committed to reviewing and reporting openly our successes and failures; we actively invite feedback as part of our striving to improve

### **Background**

3. The Audit & Review Committee reviews, on a half-yearly basis, the compliments and formal complaints received by the Authority under the compliments and complaints procedure.
4. **Appendix A** sets out details of compliments received during the period May to October 2007 including a summary of the compliment, and the area of Authority work to which the compliment relates. **Appendix B** is a summary of complaints handled during the period, including a summary of the complaint and the findings, the time taken complete the process, and the area of work to which the complaint relates. Details of these complaints are given in a private report later in the agenda.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

5. That the report be noted.

**Lesley Knevitt**  
**Secretariat Administrator**  
19 October 2007

Background documents:  
None



## DETAIL OF COMPLIMENTS HANDLED - during period May to October 2007 inclusive

Ref No	Date compliment received	Name of complimenter	Summary of compliment	Department	Area of work
263	10.05.07	Mr P Jaques	Letter of "immense gratitude" to Andrea Green (Information Adviser, Grassington) for her help in tracking down item of lost property in Richmond, and enabling its subsequent retrieval	External Affairs	NPCs
264	24.04.07	Mr Bill Quinton	Note thanking Daniel Child (Senior Planning Officer) "for diligent and extremely helpful attention" to planning application - "we are grateful ... for all you have done to ease its passage"	Planning	Development Control
265	01.05.07	Junie Joseph, Project Officer Mosaic	Letter of thanks and congratulations to Bill Wood (Outreach & Education Officer) and Annie Galloway (Head of External Affairs) on excellent organisation of visit for Community Champions	External Affairs	Outreach
266	14.05.07	Mr Chris Earle	Note to Alan Hulme (Ranger Services Manager) congratulating the Authority on overall standard of footpaths within the Park "which far exceeds anywhere outside the boundary – keep up the good work"	Park Management	Rangers
267	22.05.07	Mr David Elson	Telephone message congratulating Iain Mann (Area Ranger Upper Wharfedale) for the excellent work on Open Access pathway at Beckermonds enabling his walk party of elderly walkers to enjoy the walk – "brilliant"	Park Management	Rangers
268	31.05.07	Mrs Lorraine Lee	Card sent thanking Sandra Everett and Sally Howarth (Information Advisers, Hawes) for their assistance and prompt action when husband suffered heart attack whilst at NPC – calling ambulance, telephoning relatives etc	External Affairs	NPCs
269	03.06.07	Carl Lis, Chairman	Congratulations to Catherine Kemp (Outreach Officer) for organising "an absolutely splendid day" to end the Bollywood Festival which "can only result in a very positive message going out from the YDNPA"	External Affairs	Outreach
270	05.06.07	Adrian Kidd, NY Geodiversity Partnership	Letter of appreciative thanks to Robert White (Senior Conservation Archaeologist) and Don McLellan (Conservation Support Officer Historic Environment) for their work on the Your Dales Rocks Project Action Plan	Conservation & Policy	Historic Environment
271	14.06.07	Mr R Thompson, Rauceby Primary School	Congratulations to Chris Lancaster (Centre Manager, Grassington/Malham) on ensuring a very worthwhile trip from the school – "he was very informative and excellent with the children".	External Affairs	NPCs

Ref No	Date compliment received	Name of complimenter	Summary of compliment	Department	Area of work
272	20.06.07	Mr Ronald Claxton	Letter congratulating Matt Neale (Are Ranger Upper Wensleydale) on excellent presentation to The Caravan Club which offered an insight into work and responsibilities of the Authority – “a first class presentation”	Park Management	Rangers
273	25.06.07	Mr Stephen Cumbert	Letter thanking Caszandra Peterson (Senior Administration Officer) for “being so kind and patient whenever I have called” when discussing employment opportunities	Finance & Resources	Personnel
274	11.07.07	David Tayler, YDMT	Note thanking Steve Hastie (Area Ranger Ribblesdale) and Nathan Allen (Access Ranger South) for “terrific support of Settle School Conservation Club – inspiring input ... is fantastic to work with such inspiring and dedicated people”	Park Management	Rangers
275	18.07.07	Jim Wardill, RSPB	Letter of thanks to Ian Court (Species Officer) thanking the Authority and him in particular for his “considerable contribution” to a number of projects and specifically the peregrines at Malham	Conservation & Policy	Conservation
276	19.07.07	Nicola Lockwood, Grassington Festival	Letter "saying a huge thank you" to Alan Hulme (Ranger Services Manager) for help with Festival; particularly ideas which were greatly appreciated	Park Management	Rangers
277	26.07.07	Angela Camier	Visited Aysgarth NPC on holiday and sent note thanking Sue Barker (Information Adviser) for being "very helpful and enthusiastic - very well done and keep up the good work"	External Affairs	NPCs
278	08.08.07	Mary O'Neil, NYMNPA	Letter to Richard Burnett thanking his staff team for their time, patience, effort and thought given to planning informative day exploring systems	Finance & Resources	Reception/IT
279	21.08.07	David Dewhirst, Austwick PC	Note thanking Daniel Child (Senior Planning Officer) for his informative answers at parish council meeting, including “well thought-out and measured responses to tough lines of questioning”	Planning	Development control
280	22.08.07	Mrs J Jefferson	Note of congratulations to all concerned on “the wonderful facilities at DCM – toilets exceptionally clean, tempting things in shop, excellent activities for children, very pleasant staff	External Affairs	DCM, Retail
281	12.09.07	Mr D Sixsmith	Note thanking the Authority for the time, effort and money spent on replacing ladder stiles with gates at Conistone Dib (work carried out by Craig Bellwood (Access Ranger South)	Park Management	Rangers
282	01.09.07	Mr Barry Kent	Note thanking “the lovely Andrea Green” for providing accurate and helpful information about mass times	External Affairs	NPCs

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Date compliment received</b>	<b>Name of complimenter</b>	<b>Summary of compliment</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Area of work</b>
283	28.08.07	Helen Coultas	Much impressed with how DCM has developed since it first opened - plus good access for disabled, and facilities for children	External Affairs	DCM
284	17.09.07	Peter Dobson, Metcalfe Society	Thanks to Authority for help and support for the Society's "muster" which contributed to the event going without a hitch	External Affairs	DCM
285	20.09.07	Diana Hartley	Letter of appreciation of Paul Sheehan for input to school trip - "his knowledge and enthusiasm were adminrable and impressive"	Park Management	Rangers
286	26.09.07	Mr Eric Fox	Letter of thanks to Liz Bowling and Julie Taylor (Volunteers, South East Team) who came to his assistance when he injured himself on track above Grassington	Park Management	Volunteers
287	29.09.07	Nicky Vernon	Thank you note to Pam Metcalfe (Receptionist, Bainbridge) for organising assistance when car would not start after visit to Yoredale	Finance & Resources	Personnel
288	03.10.07	Narendra Bajaria, Chair PDNPA	Letter of thanks to David Butterworth (Chief Executive) for input into ANPA Conference - "taking time out to prepare such a stimulating and thoroughly researched presentation"	Secretariat	CEO



## SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS HANDLED - during period May to October 2007 inclusive

Ref No	Date complaint received	Area of work	Stage	Summary of complaint	Findings/current situation	Time taken to complete
110	07.05.07	Park Management	1	Was "aghast" at Authority condoning work carried out in Lower Wharfedale, where ploughing and planting has taken place on grass areas thus destroying species habitats.	<b>Complaint not upheld.</b> The work had been carried out by National Trust, in consultation with other organisations in area including National Park. Complainant had been sent letter from National Trust explaining the reasons for the decision - taken to avoid further major damage by illegal camping activity - in full. For completeness, a copy of this response was sent again, along with full explanation of Authority's involvement.	4 days
111	10.07.07	External Affairs – Retail	1	Complaint arose from correspondence with chairman/CEO, and referred to complaints procedure by default after unsatisfactory exchange of correspondence. Complainant had written to Retail Manager asking if he would take recently published small book for sale in NPCs. He had not received a reply and was angry at Authority's "policy" of discourteous behaviour. He maintains that he sent a second letter to which he also did not receive a response. He complains that when he rang the retail office telephone number, he received a message stating it "was not receiving incoming calls" which he felt to be discourteous.	<b>Complaint upheld in part.</b> No response had been sent to original letter, but there is no record of a second letter having been received. The telephone number used by complainant appears to be the fax number (fax had been disconnected last year as rarely used).  Letter sent from both chairman and from retail manager apologising for delay and responding to original letter..	4 days
112	02.07.07	Conservation & Policy – building conservation	1	Complainant is agent acting on behalf of client re re-instatement of building and is unhappy with decision of building	<b>Complaint not upheld but weaknesses identified.</b> No evidence to support first point - initial advice was that building	22 days

Ref No	Date complaint received	Area of work	Stage	Summary of complaint	Findings/current situation	Time taken to complete
				conservation officer that building has no architectural or historic interest and would not merit re-use, without having considered the details on the Archaeological Building Record.	would not meet criteria laid down within policy. No evidence to support second point - all material considerations would be considered by committee. However complaint has highlighted areas where procedures not sufficiently robust and may cause confusion - apology given and confirmation that internal procedures would be tightened.	
113	04.08.07	Park Management – Rangers	1; 2	<p>Complains that public bridleway is totally obstructed by a building, therefore the Authority is negligent in its duty to define and maintain it and keep it open. In addition, there are no waymarks or signposts to the route.</p> <p><i>Complainant has subsequently raised various other issues regarding waymarking, access. Ongoing exchange in attempt to arrange meeting with Access &amp; Recreation Manager. At Stage 2 of process has agreed "to suspend complaint" pending outcome of this meeting</i></p>	<p><b>Outcome of complaint pending.</b> Letter as response at Stage 1 explaining current situation in full:- some doubt over reliability of definitive map as building significantly pre-dated map; anomaly to be investigated. Confirms route not signposted but suggest this should wait until uncertainty is resolved; will investigate erection of an explanatory notice.</p> <p>Complainant not satisfied with this response but agrees to meet with officers to resolve issues – ongoing</p>	1 day (Stage 1)
114	10.08.07	Planning – development control	1	Complainants feel they are being treated with excessive restriction and harassment, and that the NPA is being "dictatorial and controlling" regarding listed building restrictions. Alleges "intrusion into their lives and an infringement of human rights".. Maintains never having met Building Conservation officer; Unhappy about way in which planning officer informed them of contravention and	<b>Complaint not upheld.</b> Having examined all correspondence it is clear that, far from being "heavy handed", planning officer has put in considerable amount of time assisting and advising complainant, particularly in respect of numerous breaches of listed building consent. Confirmed BC Officer has met complainant; planning officer did inform complainant prior to visit. Apologies given	7 days

Ref No	Date complaint received	Area of work	Stage	Summary of complaint	Findings/current situation	Time taken to complete
				potential criminal implications, without explanation, and then "disappeared on holiday", and complain that their building was inspected without prior notification.	for not having informed complainant of officers with knowledge of case prior to departing on holiday; however Authority obliged to warn of potential criminal implications.	
115	07.09.07	Planning – development control	1	Complainants are solicitors acting on behalf of clients who had wanted to obtain planning permission prior to selling barn, to maximise income; after planning permission was refused twice the barn was subsequently sold at auction. New owner then successfully applied for permission; complainant feels this was unfair treatment without apparent justification. Claims never informed of need for s106 agreement. Claims never informed of need for s106 agreement.	<b>Complaint not upheld.</b> Letter sent outlining sequence of applications, confirming that reasons for refusal had not been addressed. Property then purchased by new owner who submitted satisfactory proposals addressing reasons for refusal so that planning permission granted. Confirmed that letter had been sent to client confirming need for s106 agreement.	6 days
116	18.09.07	Planning – development control	1	Complainants are solicitors who object to direct contact with client regarding application for Lawful Use Certificate and implied insinuation that solicitors "had not been doing their job properly" thus undermining the professional relationship with their client.	<b>Complaint not upheld.</b> Do not agree that convention prevents contact being made other than via solicitors. Conversely, planning officer had acted in manner intended to be helpful and to progress the case, and actions did not justify cause for complaint.	7 days
117	04.10.07	Planning – development control	1	Complainant is agent acting on behalf of applicant. Alleges mishandling of application - unhappy that building conservation officer's report was contrary to 'external' historic appraisal, and was carried out very late in the day and not made available to the agent prior to the decision of refusal.	<b>Pending investigation</b>	