



Notes from PARISH FORUM MEETING  
at Victoria Hall, Settle  
7 pm, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Chair: Neil Heseltine

The chair introduced himself and explained the role of the National Park Authority's (NPA) four parish-appointed Members. He stressed the importance the NPA attaches to listening to parish councils. He then explained the concept of the Forum; it is principally intended as a two-way conversation to enhance communication with the parish councils who bring a very useful local dimension to dialogue. The initiative would run as a trial for two years before it is assessed.

Discussions during a very helpful meeting included:

**Overview of emerging Local Plan: What it is and how was it prepared, and what next?**

The emerging Local Plan will present quite a departure from previous Plans due to new national planning system and recent Government changes to national policy (e.g. changes to permitted development rights). The old Regional Spatial Strategy had been abolished, and replaced by a 'Duty to Co-operate' (with contiguous local authorities). The new Plan will offer more flexibility and opportunities for sustainable development – including new types of visitor accommodation and facilities; live/work units; and residential conversion of some roadside barns.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that there are not yet any 'neighbourhood plans' in the National Park (except at Gargrave, on the boundary of the Park).

**Local Occupancy criteria**

The new Local Plan widens the eligibility criteria – to try to reassure lenders that the properties will be more easily saleable (and, therefore, mortgageable). From the Parishes' perspective there were concerns that the changes would not solve the problem or would lead to houses being bought by people from outside the National Park. From the NPA's perspective, it has been very difficult to engage mortgage lenders in discussion about potential solution to the problems of lending. However, it was pointed out that local communities don't stop at the National Park boundary, it was reasonable to think that a family from Skipton was 'local' enough to be eligible to buy a house in Grassington if it hadn't been bought by someone from the locality first.

## **Fracking**

The NPA offered the view that the overall geology of the Dales was not suitable as a frackable resource. Government has announced a third tranche of licences, none of which are in a national park; national policy prevents fracking for oil/gas from inside NP/protected area though not necessarily underneath it!

## **Cycling**

Parishes and the NPA had noted an increase in cycling post-Tour de France 2014. This provided benefits to the local economy – but issues of road safety and relationships with other road users were highlighted. The NPA confirmed its support for both on-road and off-road cycling and is currently involved in several initiatives including the forthcoming Tour de Yorkshire in 2016. The NPA has no statutory remit in terms of road safety but has been trying to ‘educate’ cyclists and drivers to treat each other with respect.

## **Pennine Bridleway**

The ongoing issue of the Pennine Bridleway route through Long Preston was raised. The NPA had recently decided not to “force” an alternative route across the A65 because of the financial and legal implications of necessary Creation Orders.

## **Current Trends in NP**

A presentation on current trends was made including:

- Support for farming through ‘agri-environment’ schemes
- biodiversity, incl peat restoration; ,
- condition of rights of way/green lanes,
- condition of scheduled monuments
- renewable energy developments
- local tourist economy;
- new housing permissions/completions

There was general discussion on various individual points including:

- Extending the NP Boundaries – original boundary influenced by politics; ongoing decision re extension to north-west boundary would radically alter the map of the park in terms of “new” councils, geographical responsibilities etc;
- A Parish perception that a concrete “necklace” was developing around the south of Park from urbanisation. The Authority actively engages in cross-boundary discussions with Craven DC but has limited capacity to influence development outside the Park;
- Parking (eg in Hebden, Malham) is a big issue for some parishes; suggested that this should be taken up with county councillor (Shelagh Marshall).

A new page will shortly be available on the YDNPA website as a source of information for parish councils, including details of past and forthcoming Forum meetings.

LK

9<sup>th</sup> October 2015

