Dales

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

A newspaper for the residents of the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Summer 2023

Nature-friendly Dales farming wins plaudits

David Attenborough has lauded Malhamdale farmer Neil Heseltine in the new BBC documentary, 'Saving Our Wild Isles'.

The broadcaster and naturalist described farming practices at Hill Top Farm as a "cause for hope".

"The Heseltines have shown that farming can be profitable, while at the same time increasing biodiversity and storing carbon," he told viewers.

Mr Heseltine, who is also Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, was filmed with his family in species-rich hay meadows for a ten-minute segment of the hour-long documentary.

He told how as a younger farmer he was educated to maximise stock numbers through the use of chemicals and machinery.

"In the olden days if I'd have seen a flower in the meadows, that was a bad thing. The way we farmed was about reducing the number of flowers and it was about getting as much grass as we possibly could and it was about re-seeding land and putting fertiliser on and spraying," he said.

David Attenborough described Mr Heseltine as having taken up a "revolutionary opportunity" to re-stock with hardy beef cattle, reduce sheep numbers, and take only one late cut of the meadows.

Mr Heseltine told viewers that beef farming could be good for the environment.

"The more we put nature at the forefront we realised the profitability of the farm improved as well," he said.

The documentary was published in April and is available to watch for a year on BBC iPlayer. Reflecting on the experience for the *Dales* newspaper, he said: "The film crew were here in June last year for a week. There was a long spell before the documentary came out and I was under an embargo and couldn't even tell anyone I'd been filmed.

"To just have David Attenborough mention your name in the context of us farming in a way that benefits nature was a moving moment. We saw the whole process of being chosen to be filmed as a validation of what we were doing. It was an honour and a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Neil chose to wear haytime cottons and a flat cap for the filming. "You don't know how many times I've winced. I didn't mean to be scruffy, but I wanted to look like a farmer, not dressed up for the cameras," he said.

Mr Heseltine said he was "really upbeat" about the future for upland farming, provided that people embraced change to farm with nature and cut inputs such as fossil fuels. He pointed to recent changes to the new farm payment schemes, announced by the government in May.

He said: "The £151 per hectare payment on offer for very low input grassland management is only around £80 short of the per hectare area-based payment farmers were receiving under the Basic Payment Scheme before it began to be phased out.

"If upland farmers take further actions under the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Countryside Stewardship schemes, their incomes could be built up further.



The BBC 'Saving Our Wild Isles' film crew on location at Hill Top Farm, Malham with farmer Neil Heseltine. Credit: BBC/Silverback Films/Laura Howard

"I would also encourage people to consider the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which is administered by the National Park Authority. We can award grants linked to the four themes of climate, nature, people and place."

Free advice and guidance on payments for upland farmers is available from the National Park Authority's farm conservation team. For more details, see the reports inside this edition, or visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming**



Youth volunteer Sufiyaan from Shipley College relaying the path at Linton as part of a residential weekend

Young volunteers make a difference

The Yorkshire Dales is an amazing outdoor classroom, bringing learning to life for the next generation, The Authority's aim is to introduce young people to the wonders of the National Park landscape and inspire them to be active custodians.

Over the last decade our Dales Young Rangers programme has offered fun monthly practical sessions for 11 to 18-year-olds who love the outdoors. Hundreds of young people have learnt new skills, become more connected to nature, and played an important part in looking after our precious environment. Some have even gone on to apprenticeships and jobs with us and similar organisations.

More recently we have taken our Young Rangers programme into schools. Last summer our Youth Engagement Officer ran six weekly sessions for a group of 11 students from Upper Wharfedale School in Threshfield. Activities included camp fire and shelter building in local woodlands, drystone walling with a local farmer, natural art sessions, and footpath maintenance along the River Wharfe.

Each session ran for the full school day and across several National Park locations. The varied programme aimed to show the students different aspects of their local countryside while doing a range of activities and meeting a diverse group of people. We provided transport for most sessions and our Dales Volunteers helped support delivery.

Feedback from the participants - who were aged 13 to 15 - was really positive, with the day described as "amazing", "fun" and "cool". We asked if they felt differently about the National Park now. They replied that they "understand more" and would "look after it more".

The group also said they would take action as a result of the programme, "being outdoors more often" and "learning more about nature and how to look after things" as well as resolving to "clean up after myself".

When asked why other young people should take part, comments ranged from "because it is a good experience to learn and you find some interesting stuff you never knew" to "I think it will help them with their mental well-being".

This year we are delivering 'Young Rangers in Schools' to pupils from Settle College - follow @Young Rangers on Facebook to see what the group gets up to.

Dales Young Rangers is just one of many ways that we help young people - and others - to engage with the National Park.

To find out about all the opportunities, including education visits, Dales Action Days and our Up Skill, Down Dale programme, please visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/learning-and-engagement**

A very warm welcome to this edition of *Dales*

As we write this, the true beauty and majesty of the landscape has come into all its glory with the advent (finally!) of summer.

Since the pandemic, it's clear people are increasingly using the countryside as a place of sanctuary, somewhere they can come to detach themselves from the stress of modern life, and to take a moment for the benefit of their physical and mental wellbeing.

The importance of landscapes such as the Dales as places to decompress and recharge is not lost on us. But, without urgent intervention to address the challenges of climate change and the rapid increase in nature depletion within the UK, protected landscapes such as ours will be lost for future generations.

We need to decide now, as a country, how public funding can best be used to support the major changes taking place in how land is managed. This applies throughout the country, but particularly within protected areas like the Yorkshire Dales.

Our position on this remains consistent. Climate and nature depletion must be addressed more seriously and with more haste than has been the case in recent years. This is intrinsically linked to our desire and our ambition to develop a sustainable and profitable hill farming sector that can enrich and enhance our landscapes and our lives.

It feels like we are in the foothills of the next general election campaign, and we will be looking to see how these issues are being addressed by those who would seek to govern us over the coming years.



Neil Heseltine
Chair

David Butterworth
Chief Executive

FILM FESTIVAL PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON FARMING

The challenges of farming through the seasons across northern England - as well as how nature and farming can thrive together - are being put under the lens this summer.

As part of the second Swaledale Farming Film & Photography Festival, a free exhibition is showcasing local photographers, along with winners of an open photography competition. Catch it at The Mezzanine Gallery at The Station, Richmond, between 22 June and 5 July.

Film evenings have been taking place across Swaledale this June, with movie goers viewing a selection of films including 'Farming through the Seasons', 'Nowt but a Fleeting Thing' and 'Thriving'. Also free of charge, the next showing is at The Station Cinema at Richmond on 29 June.

The festival has been created as part of the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected Programme, a five-year major natural heritage project that focuses on the landscape and communities of Upper Swaledale and Upper Teesdale. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and led by the North Pennines AONB in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.



Ingleborough Gather. Credit: John Bentley

Find out more and book tickets at **teesswale.eventbrite.com**, or by contacting Tees-Swale Community Engagement Officer (Swaledale) Mark Holmes on 07977 344689 or mark.holmes@yorkshiredales.org.uk







New 'Changing Place' toilet provides for additional needs

An accessible toilet, designed to meet the complex needs of people with more profound physical and learning disabilities, has been installed at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes - the first of its kind to be located in the Yorkshire Dales.

The National Park Authority worked with the former Richmondshire District Council to successfully apply for Changing Places Grant Funding of £39,200 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to install the new 'Changing Places' toilet. The grant is awarded to local authorities for the sole purpose of installing these facilities.

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as those with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis, often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use toilets safely and comfortably.



The Changing Places facility at the Museum was supplied by Astor Bannerman, who have over 25 years' experience and are experts in the design and manufacture of specialist bathing and care equipment.

Writer and motivational speaker Debbie North runs the website Access the Dales and is a long-time campaigner for improved access to the countryside.

Debbie said: "To use the toilet in safety and comfort, many people need to be able to access a Changing Places toilet, which has more space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

"To have this facility in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales will be a tremendous boost in opening up the countryside for all."

Changing Places toilets need to meet strict criteria and be registered with the Changing Places Consortium, a group of organisations and individuals who work to support the rights of people with disabilities

The successful application for the Changing Places grant was achieved with the kind support of the Local Access Forum, Access For All UK, Disabled Ramblers, Experience Community, Open Country, North Yorkshire Disability Forum and Yorkshire Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Further information can be found at **www.changing-places.org**

ALL PROJECTS GREAT AND SMALL

The National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) provides a simple and accessible source of money for a wide range of initiatives. It is open to individuals, community groups, businesses and the voluntary sector.

This year we have a budget of £155,000 to allocate to worthy projects that contribute to the National Park. We encourage funding applications for schemes that will have multiple benefits and a long-term outcome.

Demand for support was particularly strong last year, with the fund's 2022/23 budget of £175,000 allocated by early December.

The projects that were supported included a number of repurposed buildings and listed buildings to be brought back into use.

An SDF grant of £50,000 has been awarded to the Hudswell Community Charity, which is trying to raise a total of £1.1m during the next 18 months to carry out the conversion of St Michael and All Angels Church into a 16-bed hostel. The aim is to offer low-cost visitor accommodation for walkers and cyclists and incorporate a residential lounge/meeting room and kitchen. The Grade II-listed church closed as a place of worship in 2017.



Trustees outside the former St Michael and All Angels Church, Hudswell. L-R Annie Sumner, Heather Swettenham, Martin Booth, Ian Whinray & the Rev Martin Fletcher.

Meanwhile the installation of a new entrance incorporating a platform lift will improve access at Settle Drill Hall, also Grade II listed. 1st Castleberg Scout Group have received £20k from SDF for the work, which will include a kitchen and accessible toilet.

People with great local projects are warmly invited to submit expressions of interest for this year's funding.

To find out more, contact us on 01969 652337 or sdf@yorkshiredales.org.uk, or visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/sustainable-development-fund**

Funding available for nature projects

Do you have an idea for a project to improve the biodiversity and quality of the natural environment? If so, the National Park Authority administers two discretionary funds that can help.

The Swinden Quarry Natural Environment Fund has been running successfully in parishes around the Swinden Quarry area for three years now, with landowners, parish councils, schools and community groups delivering schemes ranging from restoring a lowland hay meadow and creating pockets of native deciduous woodland, to a barn owl box scheme and community allotments.



A space for nature: community group Friends of Embsay with Eastby Nature Reserve have created a local wildlife haven for nature recovery, assisted by a grant from the Swinden Quarry Natural Environment Fund.

Parishes that qualify are Burnsall, Conistone with Kilnsey, Cracoe, Embsay with Eastby, Flasby with Winterburn, Grassington, Hebden, Hetton Cum Bordley, Linton, Rylstone, Stirton with Tholby, Thorpe, and Threshfield.

The new Dry Rigg Quarry Natural Environment Fund has just opened for applications from interested individuals, groups and organisations.

Ten parishes qualify in this area: Austwick, Clapham cum Newby, Giggleswick, Halton Gill, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Langcliffe, Lawkland, Malham Moor, Settle, and Stainforth.

Ideas might include improving the biodiversity of road and rail verges, replanting boundary/hedgerow trees, restoring wetland habitats to encourage wildlife and species diversity, pond and wetland creation, management of hay meadows and other grassland habitats, restoring the biodiversity value of heather moorland, hedge-laying and drystone walling, school wildlife gardens, community bird feeding stations, and community orchards.

The funding is provided by Tarmac through an agreement secured as part of the most recent planning permission at the two quarry sites.

Grants could cover tools and project materials such as stock-proof fencing, plants or seeds of local or regional provenance, first aid equipment and protective clothing, as well as contractors, management plans, specialist surveys and training.

You can apply for up to 100% of a project's cost, but applications where match-funding has been found are likely to be looked on more favourably.

For more information, please visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/dry-rigg-quarry-nef** and **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/swinden-quarry-nef**, or contact the team on wildlifeconservation@yorkshiredales.org.uk to discuss your ideas.







FARMING PROGRAMME GAINS FUNDING BOOST AND EXTENSION

The latest statistics are in! And the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant programme within the Yorkshire Dales is proving its worth, supporting over 100 farms since its launch in July 2021.

The success of the programme in England has been recognised by government, with Defra providing additional funding for year 3 and an extension of the programme to March 2025.

For the Yorkshire Dales National Park, that means an extra £450,000 for this current year, taking the grant budget to £1.47 million. For the final year of the programme (24/25), there will be £2.2 million available.

A whole range of projects have been funded here so far. They include projects that benefit nature, tourism, farming communities, farm businesses and the historic environment, as well as protecting habitats against the effects of climate change.

This year alone FiPL has grant-aided the creation of 6km of hedgerow, providing shelter for livestock, stock control and improved soil health, and increasing the habitat and space for plants and animals to live and thrive.

The programme has supported twelve farmers wanting to save costs and make the most out of their grassland using 'mob grazing' methods. Eight of these farmers have benefitted through a farmer-to-farmer skills and knowledge sharing project called Pasture for Profit, run by the Pasture for Life organisation.



The Halliday family of Mallerstang increased the amount of trees on their land (above) and restored a field barn (above right) after receiving a Farming in Protected Landscapes grant

FiPL is also funding restoration of historical features such as traditional field barns and lime kilns, as well as supporting new uses for field barns such as holiday cottages adapted for disabled users, hostels and bunk barns.

The Hallidays in Mallerstang were one of the first agreement holders, starting their project in 2021. The aim was to increase the amount of hedgerow and trees on their farm, protect the river, and manage their meadow and designated heathland. The family all took part in the hedge and tree planting. They enjoyed it so much that they applied for a second agreement to do more, including fencing woodland and restoring their field barn.

"The application process was very easy", said Dianne Halliday. "We got to choose what we wished to do, and we even started part way through the year. The whole scheme is very flexible."

"In year 1 we planted 70 trees in the permanent pasture and 390m of hedge, as well as installing fencing.



We also planted 150 trees by the River Eden. We counted flowers in our hay meadow and were surprised how many we had. In year 2 we planted 249m of hedges and added fencing.

"The big project this year was doing up a field barn. It was a big investment that we could not have done without the grant. It looks amazing now."

The Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme is very wide-ranging and the Authority is particularly keen to develop projects that focus on access, tourism and diversification enterprises. To find out more, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes** or get in touch with the team on fipl@yorkshiredales.org.uk.

Farm grants available

The Authority's Farm Team can offer advice and help with applying for two further payment schemes for farmers.

There has been good news from Defra about the latest increase in payment rate for Countryside Stewardship GS5: permanent grassland with very low inputs in severely disadvantaged areas. This is now £151 per hectare, which makes applying for Countryside Stewardship much more financially justifiable, especially with the ongoing reductions in the Basic Payment Scheme.

This option is the most widely used in the uplands as a lot of farmers can do so without much alteration to their existing management. Supplements can be applied on top, such as cattle grazing SP6 (at £37 per hectare), haymaking GS15 (£39 per hectare), and rush infestation control GS16 (£79 per hectare).

The deadline for Countryside Stewardship applications is 18 August.

Defra are also going to be making an announcement shortly about the new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) standards. This will include a low input grassland standard, which again many upland farmers might be interested in.

The payment rates will match the Countryside Stewardship rates, so there is plenty to think about in the next couple of months. There is a rolling application window so no deadline.

The Farm Team will be running a series of advisory meetings in the next couple of months dedicated to the new SFI standards and the application process.

Contact **farming@yorkshiredales.org.uk** for more information on either scheme.

More EV charging to be made available in the National Park

In the autumn, to meet the challenge of moving around protected landscapes more sustainably, BMW announced a powerful new partnership with the UK's 15 National Parks to improve the electric car charging infrastructure and support vital nature restoration, biodiversity, sustainability and well-being initiatives.

As part of the 'Recharge in Nature Project' additional EV charging points will be installed at the Authority's Grassington and Malham car parks. Separately, further EV charge points will also be installed at sites in Reeth and Askrigg by North Yorkshire Council in the coming year as part of a successful Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.

The additional chargers from the BMW partnership will be 7kw units with dual charging, which provide about 30 miles per hour of charge. This may not seem like a lot, but the idea is for drivers to top up at these points, rather than rely on them to fully charge. We hope the charging points will give electric vehicle users confidence to visit the National Park and be sure that they can 'fill up' if necessary.

More information on EV charger locations and pricing in the National Park is available at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/ev-charging-points**



More family fun than ever on offer at the Dales Countryside Museum

By Fiona Rosher, Museum Manager

Over the last year, we've been working with Kids in Museums and Museum Development Yorkshire to create an experience that meets the needs of all families and makes a visit one that everyone can enjoy.

All around the Museum there are hands-on activities, magnetic jigsaws and games, together with dressing up and selfie points. We've introduced a 'pick and mix' point where families can collect activity lanyards for different age ranges and needs so they are suited to each person in their family group. There are opportunities for families to be creative, to role play, to draw and to play. All of the activities aim to engage families with our collections and the heritage of the Yorkshire Dales.

We want to make sure that our provision responds to the needs of all families, so we've created backpacks for children with special needs or disabilities, together with communication symbols linked with collections, activity lanyards and visit planning boards.

The backpacks include a mascot toy that can be used to help direct the visit, ear defenders for those with sensory conditions, timers, fun resources and fidget toys that link with display themes or objects. We hope this will help families to manage their visit and avoid any stressful situations where possible.



The Museum is housed in Hawes' former train station and our 'Creation Station' on board the platform railway carriage has craft and other activities for little ones, plus a quiet corner for mums wishing to sit and breast feed. There are baby changing facilities in each toilet area and - to cover all eventualities - we also now have emergency nappy provision at reception. Our new 'Changing Places' space *[see page 2]* is going to be a great addition this year.

The on-site Firebox Café offers a child's lunch option, or you can make use of the picnic benches in the Museum garden. This looks onto the outdoor trail where you can get some fresh air and have a go at traditional games and activities including a willow den, hop scotch, quoits and balancing logs.

The Museum is free for children, and parents and carers can buy an Annual Pass (£10). With Cyril the Squirrel as mascot, the Scurry Club (£10) gives children a special pass that is stamped each time they visit, plus a treat!

Whatever the shape and size of your family, we look forward to welcoming you at the Dales Countryside Museum this summer.



Young museum visitor Poppy demonstrates the new activity lanyards for family and special needs groups (above) while Cyril the Squirrel is mascot for the Museum's Scurry Club for children (left)

If you are planning a family visit, there is now a dedicated section on the Museum website, together with an Accessibility Guide - see **www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk**

A brie-lliant offer for businesses for 2023 Cheese Festival



By Helen Dalton, Tourism Officer

Do you offer good local food and drink in the Yorkshire Dales National Park? Would you like to promote your business further - and for free?

In 2017 we launched the first Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival, and this has continued each Autumn, expanding the offer to look at more ways to celebrate our local produce - and generating huge interest from visitors. The National Park Authority is keen to continue to help promote this foodilicious weekend on behalf of local businesses.



In Yorkshire we love good quality, locally-produced food and drink, and here in the National Park there is no shortage of it, from the famous Yorkshire Wensleydale Cheese to a plethora of small artisan cheese producers, locally produced ice-cream, meats, baked goods, preserves and a vast array of local gins and ales. There are plenty of opportunities to sample these fresh in Dales cafes and restaurants, or to shop directly with the producers at farm shops and special retail outlets.

From 6 to 9 October the 2023 Cheese Festival will put the spotlight once again on all those that grow, produce, make, sell and serve amazing food and drink.

The weekend is a great opportunity for businesses from all over the National Park to promote what they have to offer, encouraging people to visit their venue and experience delicious Yorkshire produce. This could be through hosting talks, farm visits, meet the maker events, special tastings, food and drink pairings, or creating an amazing special menu for the weekend. You decide how you want to promote your business and we will help promote your event for you.

We will be producing a map showcasing the local businesses taking part, highlighting the special events and their locations. The map will appear in our visitor centres, and can be printed and displayed in your business. You are invited to add your event to our website for free. Additionally this year, a QR code will link to the events listing page, meaning the map can be used to promote businesses throughout the year and not just during the festival weekend, and making it extra easy for the visitor to find you.



Look out for #CheeseFest23 on social media. We'll be shouting about what you do and why it's so good with the local press and through our newsletter, helping business-to-business connections too.

We look forward to hearing from you and I hope that this year's festival will be a huge success for you and your business.

If you are interested in taking part and accessing this free promotional opportunity, contact us at tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk. Find out more about hosting events and enjoying the festival at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/cheese-festival**

HOUSING FOR THE FUTURE



By Cllr Richard Foster, North Yorkshire Council Wharfedale, and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Member Champion for Sustainable Development

Last year, the National Park Authority published a statement on housing *[see **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/authority-statement-on-housing**]*. It set out succinctly what the Authority wants to see happen, and why. That might seem a little bit odd given that the Authority is not responsible for housing, and nor do we build or manage it. However, as the local planning authority, we do have to identify sites for future development that will help to support the ambitions of the Housing Authorities - North Yorkshire Council and Westmorland & Furness Council - to build a strong local economy and resilient communities.

Evidence tells us that around 50 houses need to be built each year through to 2040 (850 in total) if we are going to address population decline in the National Park. We also know that more of those houses need to be affordable.

The recent public consultation on potential sites for that new housing attracted a huge response - some supportive, but many with strong objections to particular sites. There were some consistent themes in those objections about the capacity of local services to cope with more people, the risks of creating more second homes, or only building expensive houses that would be out of reach for most people.

This discussion is not about housing that is going to be built immediately. It is about the long-term plans for our



New affordable housing development at Hill Croft, Long Preston

communities. Any plans need to consider the needs of the next generation of residents: the children who in 10 years' time might want a house of their own to live in, or those wanting to start a family and wondering whether the local school will still be open in 2030 (four have already closed over the last decade and roll numbers are still falling). If we cannot retain and attract working age people to move into the National Park, we simply won't hang on to the services we have now. Nor will we have the entrepreneurs who could create new employment opportunities.

We know that some people are being priced out of the housing market, and - like the local councils - we want to see much more affordable housing being built. Larger sites (10 or more dwellings) provide the best opportunity to do that - because of economies of scale, and because building costs can be funded by some open market housing. Realistically, sites of this sort of size can only be accommodated in the largest of the National Park's settlements, and only where landowners are actually willing to release sites for development.

Importantly, we intend to make sure that all the new housing is subject to 'principal residency' restrictions, so that none of these new homes can be turned into second homes or more AirBnBs.

Of course, this isn't just about new housing. We also need to make much better use of the existing housing stock. The National Park Authority has previously lobbied hard for measures to tackle the impact of second homes, and we are pleased to see that North Yorkshire and Westmorland & Furness Councils are now trying to address this critical issue.

Finally, we welcome the Government's recent proposals to introduce controls on the proliferation of short-term holiday lets. We have urged them to take stronger measures - so that in future all conversions from residential use to short-term holiday letting in the National Park would require planning permission.

Local Plan moves forward

The Authority is preparing a new Local Plan that will guide future decisions on development in the National Park.

Our sixth public consultation - 'Land for Housing Development' - took place between March and May. A total of 793 responses were received, many of these focussed on the 33 potential housing development sites identified in the consultation.

A report summarising the outcome of the consultation can be found on the Authority's website at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/local-plan-2023-40**

The next phase of work is to carefully consider all of the comments that have been made and for issues such as infrastructure requirements to be more fully assessed by utility providers and local councils.

Over the summer, a small working group of National Park Authority Members will consider the site options and development boundaries in the context of the consultation response, the outcome of any additional work, and the Local Plan objectives.

The working group will make recommendations to the Authority meeting in the autumn regarding the final sites and boundaries that should be included in the Publication version of the Local Plan. The Publication Plan will then be subject to a formal period of consultation in late 2023/ early 2024 before going forward to examination by a Government Planning Inspector.

Networking events aim to address access to National Parks

A new project is aiming to give everyone the confidence to visit and enjoy our National Parks by addressing inequalities in accessing them, including for people from ethnically diverse communities.



'Championing National Parks for Everyone' is a joint project partnering the Peak District, North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities, and Peak District Mosaic.

The project's vision is that everyone should be confident to visit our National Parks, and receive the health and well-being benefits of spending time in them, as well as gaining the knowledge to help share in protecting them.

The partners have received a development grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and, during this first phase, each National Park has held a networking and consultation event, as well as taster sessions.

Thackray Museum of Medicine, Leeds, hosted the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's networking event in March (pictured right). Fifteen community leaders from across Leeds and Bradford joined for the day, sharing their experiences of visiting National Parks and any barriers to access, and co-designing the programme delivery.

Then in April and early May this year, we delivered two taster days for potential Community Champions to experience the Yorkshire Dales, meet with local stakeholders, and begin their relationship with the National Park Authority. The group visited farmer Tom Lord at Lower Winskill to explore his hay meadows and learn about farming with nature, as well as cooking lunch together (pictured left) and learning how to felt.



If the grant application is successful, in 2024 each National Park will be delivering a Community Champion training programme. This aims to provide participants with the knowledge, expertise and confidence to independently lead safe and enjoyable visits for their communities in their local National Parks.

To find out more about the Championing National Parks for Everyone partnership project, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/championing-national-parks**

Cave project shines new light on the past



Archaeologists view a fissure in Clapdale

Archaeological finds from caves on Ingleborough Common - including prehistoric animal bones from auroch (an extinct species of cattle) - are to be investigated and catalogued as part of a new project.

This area in the southern Yorkshire Dales contains England's largest and most famous network of caves.

Going right back to the 19th century there has been active exploration of this underground landscape by the caving community, including the recovery and excavation of archaeological material. Sometimes this has involved excavating new cave openings, often explored through the base of naturally occurring shafts called 'shake holes', features from the last glaciation that can be many thousands of years old.

Over the years, cavers have reported finds of animal bones from species such as red deer, wolf and wild boar from newly opened vertical cave shafts. Other archaeological finds have ranged from the Ice Age to Early Medieval period, with particular concentrations in the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Now, with support and funding from a £3m National Lottery Heritage Fund project - Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons - the need to record and investigate these sites has been recognised.

The National Park Authority's Historic Environment team is working with the Centre for Field Archaeology and Forensic Taphonomy at the University of Central Lancashire to deliver a project over the next two years that will involve specialists, students and volunteers.

Surveying will be carried out to look at the wider landscape context of caves and shafts. This may identify further archaeological features and finds which could be related to periods of use of the cave sites, as well as enhancing our understanding of known archaeological features. Cavers will receive further guidance and training from experts at club events, building on the legacy of existing advice for excavators produced by Natural England and the British Cave Research Association's Cave Archaeology Group. This new training will focus on understanding which are the most archaeologically sensitive systems and those where an archaeological impact is less likely.

Recovered archaeological evidence from previous digs by cave explorers across Ingleborough Common will be recorded, and a process will be designed for future reporting and cataloguing of archaeological material from caves and natural fissures.

Primary-aged children from Skipton will also get the chance to explore the project with the Authority's Historic Environment and Education teams as part of their residential to achieve the John Muir 'Discover' Award.

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons Project is a three-year, £3m, 25-partner project helping to secure the future of upland commons in Dartmoor, the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Shropshire Hills. It's led by the Foundation for Common Land (FCL).

The project has been made possible by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, grants from Esmée Fairbairn and Garfield Weston Foundations.

For more information, contact sarah.whiteley@yorkshiredales.org.uk, follow @ Yorkshire Dales Archaeology on Facebook or @dalesarch on Twitter, or visit **www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk**

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Helping our woodlands 'Grow Back Greener'



By Meghann Mezzanotte, Conservation Support Officer (Trees & Woodland)

Woodland is a scarce yet important component of the Yorkshire Dales environment. Trees contribute to its landscape character, provide wildlife habitats and corridors for species to move around, and play a vital role in the fight against climate change, absorbing and locking up carbon from the atmosphere.

Tree cover in the Yorkshire Dales National Park is very low - just over 4% of its area. Since 1995 the Dales Woodland Forum - a partnership of landowners, charities and public bodies - has been advising on and supporting an expansion, and over the last 25 years some 2,200ha of new woodland has been created.

In 2020 the Forum produced a new ten-year strategy which set an ambition to enhance the landscape by creating 6,000ha of woodland habitat in the National Park by 2030 - taking the area covered by woodland from 4.3% to 7%.

The strategy aims to help farmers in the Dales take advantage of increasing opportunities to plant and manage woodland, improving the viability of farm businesses as well as achieving biodiversity gains and other benefits, such as carbon sequestration, natural flood management and improving water quality.

The Authority's Trees and Woodlands team have been helping landowners and land managers plant and manage woodlands for the last 40 years, advising on all aspects of woodland creation. We work closely with partners, such as the Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, White Rose Forest and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, to find suitable sites, secure grants, design schemes and maintenance plans, and advise on suitable contractors.

We have access to a number of funding schemes and can provide advice to help you decide which is the best funding option for your particular needs.

Grow Back Greener (Woodland Trust) is one such grant, covering 100% of actual costs and providing the majority of maintenance payments soon after planting as opposed to annually. The Authority can assist with new woodland schemes from 0.1ha where planting extends or connects ancient woodland, or over 2ha in other suitable areas. Planting sites need to be at least 20 metres in width, or 10 metres for riparian (riverside) woodlands.



A Grow Back Greener-funded planting scheme at Woodhouse Farm

It's very important that new woodlands are planted in the right place. Initially, we will consult with our own experts and carry out a land assessment to identify any constraints - such as archaeology or rights of way - and opportunities - such as improving habitat for black grouse or red squirrel, connectivity and improving water quality. These will be incorporated into site design to maximise benefits to species and habitats.

If the land is suitable, a site visit is carried out to discuss design, funding, and help with contacting and liaising with contractors to undertake planting. Ongoing maintenance to ensure woodlands successfully establish can also be provided.

Once a new woodland is ten years old, and if eligibility criteria are met, further funding can be accessed for woodland management.

If you are a land owner or manager we would encourage you to get in touch with the Trees & Woodlands team on **woodlandcreation@yorkshiredales.org.uk** to discuss the range of grants available and how we can help.

Shaun the Sheep becomes new Countryside Code champion

The popular animated character, Shaun the Sheep, is fronting a new Natural England campaign with Aardman to encourage young people to "respect, protect and enjoy" the countryside, showing them how to care for nature, follow signs and share the space with others.

It follows research from Natural England's Children's People and Nature Survey which revealed that 80% of children and young people agreed that looking after the environment was important to them, and 83% said they wanted to do more to look after nature and wildlife.

In response to more people wanting to visit the countryside and green spaces since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Countryside Code has been refreshed and guidance for land managers updated, giving everyone information on how to enjoy the great outdoors safely and responsibly.

The guidance, which extends to all green space, waterways and parks in cities, has simple reminders to respect those working in the countryside, to dispose of litter responsibly, avoid feeding livestock, to not light fires, and to stay on marked footpaths to protect crops and wildlife.

To find out more, visit **www.countryside-code.org.uk**



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