Dales

A newspaper for the residents of the Yorkshire Dales National Park

YORKSHIRE DALES 1954 | National Park | 2024

Summer 2024

NATURE RECOVERY IS PEOPLE'S PRIORITY

Nature recovery should be the number one priority for the next Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan, people have said in response to an online survey.

In January a consultation was launched in which the public was asked to rank their top six priorities for organisations working in the National Park.

Nearly 1,100 individuals and 27 organisations completed the survey.

Of 18 potential priorities, 'help nature to recover by creating, restoring and connecting important habitats' was ranked first by all groups of respondents, including those who live or work in the National Park. Protecting rare and threatened species came second, with improving river water quality third.

More than 500 local people took part in the survey. Their top three priorities were nature recovery, helping younger people to live/work in the National Park, and reducing the impact of second homes and holiday lets.

A full summary of the results can be found at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/management-plan-first-consultation**

The National Park Management Plan is the most important document for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is a five-year work programme, which is produced and monitored by a Partnership of local organisations, including farming, landowning and tourism business interests.

The Partnership met in March to consider the survey results. A full draft National Park Management Plan to cover the period 2025-2030 will be published for public consultation before the end of the year.

The Chair of the Partnership, David Sharrod, who is Chief Executive of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, said: "Thank you to everyone who took the survey. Receiving well over 1,000 responses is a great result.

"It is really striking that helping nature to recover came top of the list of 18 potential priorities. It reflects growing public awareness of the national nature emergency, and the urgency with which people want to address it here in the National Park. It was also clear that - for the people who live here - helping younger people to access housing and jobs, and getting more of the housing stock back into permanent residential use are key issues.



A heron in Malhamdale: 'Nature recovery should be number one priority for the National Park' (Stephen Garnett Photography)

"The results of the consultation will be taken into account as we update the Management Plan to cover the five-year period from April 2025. Ambitious objectives on nature recovery are certain to be included. It's great that we already have a detailed Nature Recovery Plan for the National Park, which was published last September, to draw on."

The National Park Management Plan public consultation, which took the form of an online survey, was launched on 15 January 2024 and ran for a period of 6 weeks.

Follow progress on achieving the objectives in the current National Park Management Plan on page 7, and at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/national-park-management-plan**

Sustainability fund offers support for youth projects

The National Park Authority's long-running grant scheme supporting local community initiatives is being tweaked to favour projects which benefit younger people.

One-fifth of the £150,000 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) annual budget has been ring-fenced for applications from people under 30 years of age, or from anyone where the emphasis of their project is on young people.

An example of the sort of grant application that will be supported is the one brought by trustees of the former army drill hall in Settle, now owned by the Scouts.



Now owned by the Scouts, the former army drill hall in Settle is undergoing access improvements which will benefit all users

The SDF is supporting construction of a small extension of the Grade II-listed building to provide covered lift access to the drill hall. Currently access is from an external stone staircase, which has caused difficulties for some children and adult youth leaders.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Chair, Derek Twine, said: "The Sustainable Development Fund has a history of supporting projects that benefit younger people, but this tweak to the fund will allow us to make a concerted push for more of these projects to come forward.

"The drill hall in Settle, right on the edge of the National Park, is a good case study to point to because the work there will benefit so many young people. Beavers, Cubs and a 60-strong Scout group meet at the hall, and there are weekly archery and dancing classes for people of all ages."

Presently contractors are laying the foundations for the extension.

Chair of trustees of the drill hall, Cherry Flitcroft, said: "The SDF grant application process was straightforward. We came with a small ask and were told the SDF could support even more of what we were doing."

The SDF continues to fund a range of projects that deliver benefits for people that contribute to the conservation, understanding and enjoyment of the National Park. The newly ring-fenced budget is intended to encourage applications in particular from young people, or from any organisation, such as schools or charities, engaged in promoting activities and initiatives that benefit younger people.

Further information on the Sustainable Development Fund and how to apply can be found at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/sdf**

Welcome to this edition of *Dales*

We live in interesting times - to misquote Robert F Kennedy! We certainly do. By the time you are reading this newspaper we will have a new Government - of whatever political colour.

It has been a little disappointing to see climate issues, and the environment more generally, given so little coverage during the election campaign. Sadly, it seems as if we are still in a cycle where we tend to deal with the urgent rather than the important.

The penalty for that approach is becoming more evident with each passing year. We live in a nation that prides itself on being a developed country and yet our nature has a distinctly 'second class' status as it continues to deteriorate, and we fail to adequately address the issue. The only part of the election coverage that picked up on this was the continuing deterioration of the water quality of our rivers and seas.

It was certainly encouraging to see from recent surveys that the communities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park see nature recovery as THE main issue that the National Park Authority needs to tackle in the coming years. We will endeavour to do just that, working with our partners where we can and lobbying intensively to make sure that this subject is given the time and resources that are required. The consequence of not dealing with this will be a gradual deterioration of the environment that sustains us all.

Putting aside that rather gloomy message, it has been hugely encouraging to see so much good work taking place in the National Park, some of which is highlighted in the columns of this paper.

We are finally seeing some more detail regarding the new agri-environment schemes and that is bringing some much needed clarity to our beleaguered farmers and landowners. There is some excellent work taking place in relation to tree-planting and peatland restoration, and the post-Covid bounce from tourism continues to add to the economy and the viability of local services.

From a personal point of view, we have been really pleased to be able to develop schemes which provide more apprenticeship opportunities for our young people and to engage local people and visitors alike in the work of the National Park Authority and our partners. And we're immensely grateful for, and proud of, the tremendous contribution being made by all our Dales Volunteers in so many ways.



Derek Twine
CHAIR

David Butterworth
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Celebrate local at the Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival this October

Now in its eighth year, the Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival - held each autumn at venues right across the National Park - is a celebration of local produce, community spirit, and the rich culinary heritage of the Dales.

Spanning a long weekend from 11-14 October 2024, and inviting food lovers to explore tastings and workshops, market stalls and family-friendly activities, the Festival offers a unique platform for local businesses to showcase their products and engage with a diverse audience of visitors.

Participation offers numerous promotional opportunities. Hosting an event will give you the chance to introduce your business to thousands of Festival followers, including tourists, locals and food critics. This exposure can lead to increased brand recognition, new customer relationships and potential sales growth, gaining visibility that extends beyond the duration of the event.

And it's not just about cheese; the Festival is a celebration of everything that makes the region's food and drink scene special, from charcuterie to artisanal gin. This diversity attracts a broad audience, ensuring that there is something for everyone.



Ben Spence showcases the Curlew Dairy's produce to visitors as part of a Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival event

Ann and Rob of Yorkshire Dales Brewery, who hosted a beer and cheese pairing during the 2023 Cheese Festival, said:

"Saturday's event was a great success. We thoroughly enjoyed hosting it and had such a lovely mix of people; known faces, new faces, all ages, and several couples who had travelled and booked accommodation in the village just to attend".

Join us in celebrating the rich flavours of the Yorkshire Dales and make your mark at this year's Festival. Get in touch today to be a part of an event that honours tradition, promotes innovation and celebrates the best of our local produce.

To find out how to get involved as a local business visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/cheese-festival** or contact **tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk**









Quarry environmental fund invites applications

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 a discretionary fund that could help - and applications are now open.

The Dry Rigg Quarry Natural Environment Fund (NEF) has grants available for projects that specifically benefit the parishes of Austwick, Clapham cum Newby, Giggleswick, Halton Gill, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Langcliffe, Lawkland, Malham Moor, Settle and Stainforth.

The source of the Fund is money obtained from quarrying company Tarmac as part of a legal agreement in connection with a planning permission granted for works at Dry Rigg Quarry.

Grants are available to individuals, landowners and farmers, as well as parish councils and community groups. Habitat management, creation or restoration, protecting features of landscape and wildlife value, and community-led environmental initiatives will all be considered.

Last year the Ribble Rivers Trust received a grant for mapping of invasive non-native species, plus monitoring equipment and tools.

Fundraising and administration officer Charlotte Ireland Pope said: "Thanks to NEF funding, we have successfully recruited a number of volunteers for the upper parts of the Ribble catchment, and together we'll be able to work with local people to tackle invasive species. In addition, the grant has enabled us to source much-needed kit to monitor rivers and streams, ensuring these beautiful habitats are protected and conserved".

There is a huge amount of work to be done in the National Park to achieve a better functioning network of habitats and increased populations of key species - as set out in the Nature Recovery Plan [read more on page 5]. The NEF aims to improve the biodiversity and quality of the natural environment within the locality of Dry Rigg Quarry, compensating for the actual or potential environmental impacts of quarrying, with particular emphasis on the natural beauty of the landscape, tranquillity, air quality, and riverine environment.

Each financial year the Dry Rigg NEF will seek to fund projects to a total value of approximately £35,000.

Opportunities for volunteering, education and citizen science are welcomed. Projects can be funded in full, but funding from other sources is welcomed, including volunteer time contribution. Project locations can be publically accessible, but equally important are the creation of wildlife refuges where there is no public access and nature is left undisturbed.

For more information about the Dry Rigg Natural Environment Fund, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/dry-rigg-quarry-nef**

Before completing the online application form, please contact us to discuss your project and its costs on 01756 751627 or **wildlifeconservation@yorkshiredales.org.uk**

PROJECTS AIM TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL PARK

Everyone has the right to access the countryside in the Yorkshire National Park.

Improving the welcome for people with disabilities and access on appropriate public rights of way is one of the objectives agreed by the Authority and a wide range of local partner organisations in the National Park Management Plan.

Aysgarth Falls has become the latest destination in the National Park to offer free use of an all-terrain wheelchair.

The new Tramper scooter, available to borrow from Aysgarth Falls National Park Visitor Centre, is enabling people with mobility difficulties to get to the water's edge at the upper falls as well as to a viewing platform in the woods above the middle falls.

The wheelchair can be booked in advance via Access the Dales, a charity with a mission to 'make the inaccessible accessible'.

It brings to seven the number of Trampers available to borrow in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The others are at Malham, Clapham and Bolton Abbey in Craven, at Tebay and Nateby in the Westmorland Dales, and at Newbiggin near West Burton in Wensleydale.

Dales Volunteer Keith Pritchard, who meets and greets visitors at Aysgarth Falls, gives people an induction on how to use the Tramper.

He said: "I've often seen people arrive and park in one of the disabled bays, and they can then be left behind, while their family goes to enjoy this beautiful site. The Tramper now allows them to join their families and it's very fulfilling to see them all go off together.

"It's been a really popular service. We are getting five or more requests to use it some days."

The Tramper has been paid for using a grant from Defra's' 'Access for All' programme.

Member Champion for Recreation Management at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lizzie Bushby, said: "Aysgarth Falls has been a tourist favourite for well over a century. We've been working with local partners for a number of years to make it into a flagship accessible site, so there are accessible toilets and parking bays, and an accessible visitor centre and café, as well as an access guide produced for the site with maps and information.

"We are getting close to our ambition of making Aysgarth Falls and Freeholders' Wood accessible to all."

Supported by funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme [read more on page 5] an accessible 4km circular route at this 'honey pot' site is next to be developed.

Starting at Aysgarth Falls National Park Visitor Centre, the surfaced, signposted route will be suitable for most visitors, including families with pushchairs, the elderly, and those with limited mobility.

The addition of a second Tramper as part of the project will mean that even more people will be able to take advantage of the new route and experience the wonderful views to Castle Bolton and beyond.



Visitors with mobility difficulties coming to Aysgarth Falls can now hire the free Tramper – all-terrain wheelchair - to access the beautiful upper and lower waterfalls

Also coming in 2024 is a new 'digital access hub' for the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

This online resource - which is being made possible through our BMW-funded 'Reach out and Re-charge' project - will bring together accessibility-focussed information, practical advice, and opportunities to explore the National Park in one 'go to' location.

The project will also deliver a programme of supported accessible activities to enable people with disabilities, and their families, to visit the National Park. These events aim to build people's confidence in accessing and enjoying the Dales and increase their knowledge and skills outdoors, providing a springboard to plan and undertake future independent trips to boost health and well-being.

Over the next three years, as part of 'Access to Eden: breaking barriers, building bridges' - a National Heritage Lottery Fund project, led by Eden Rivers Trust - we will be improving around 1.5km of path at Smardale in the north west of the National Park, making it fully accessible from east of Smardale to the edge of Waitby Greenriggs Nature Reserve, as well as reinstating two bridges.

In addition, the project will see the creation of a Sensory Trail at Podgill, with interpretation developed with potential users.

Meanwhile, we will be replacing the existing footbridge over the River Rawthey near the Cross Keys Temperance Inn, and the steep steps leading to it, with a fully accessible bridleway bridge. This will improve access to a viewpoint for Cautley Spout waterfall for people with disabilities and families with young children, and also open up the surrounding bridleway network for horse riders and cyclists.

To find out more about these projects and access for all in the National Park, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/access-for-all** or contact **learning@yorkshiredales.org.uk**

To book the Tramper at Aysgarth Falls, visit **www.access-the-dales.com**





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What YOU think about the National Park and us

Every 5 years the National Park Authority commissions an independently conducted survey to capture your views and perceptions of the National Park as a whole, and of us, the National Park Authority.

The latest survey, carried out by Enventure Research, was conducted predominantly by telephone in September and October last year with a representative sample 1,000 National Park residents.

In terms of the National Park more widely, much has changed since the last survey in 2018 with the global pandemic impacting all of our lives through 2020 and beyond, so it comes as no surprise that some of the results reflect what was going on at that time and how life in the National Park has evolved since then.

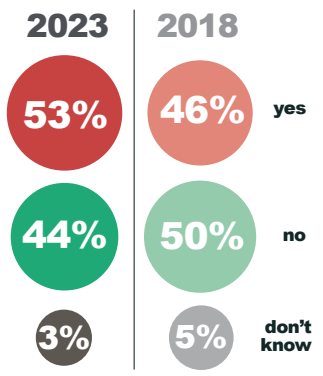
Issues and pressures

We asked if you felt there are any significant threats to, or pressures on, the National Park as an area. Five years on and there are slightly more issues in play for residents and when we asked, without prompting, what those pressures are, the most common answers included: *too much tourism, the growth in second homes and Airbnbs* and both *too much housing development,* and *not enough housing development.*

Conversely, *lack of employment* is now less of an issue than it was in 2018, which supports the view that filling vacancies continues to prove challenging for many local businesses.

Perceived threats

Do you think there are any significant threats or pressures on the National Park as an area?



Getting into the detail

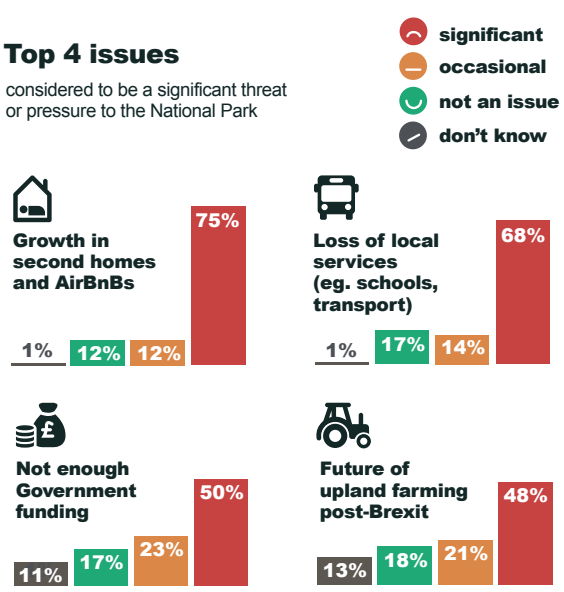
While it was interesting to hear the 'front of mind' threats and pressures expressed by residents, we also wanted to understand how you felt about some specific threats and pressures faced by the wider National Park.

We presented 14 different themes including lack of broadband and mobile coverage, the continuing decline of nature, the impacts of climate change and an increasingly elderly population, and we asked whether you thought they presented a **significant** threat or pressure, an occasional threat or pressure or just not significant at all.

From the list we presented some additional issues were teased out, including the loss of local services, not enough Government funding of National Parks, and the future of upland farming post-Brexit.

Top 4 issues

considered to be a significant threat or pressure to the National Park



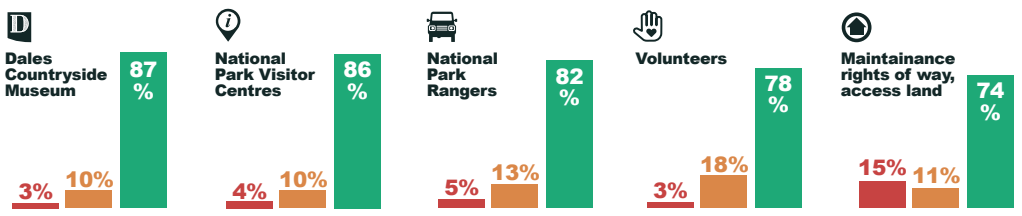
So what about us?

The second part of the survey deals with how you feel about us and asks a variety of questions covering the services we offer, your satisfaction with the services we offer, overall satisfaction levels, and identifying what the most important roles are that we do or should be doing.

Overall, it's good to see satisfaction levels steady at 61%, with 61% also saying they feel as informed as they need to be about the work we do.

Satisfaction with services

How satisfied are you with each of the services you have used or come into contact with?



Service update

The National Park Authority provides a wide variety of different services to residents and we included 16 of these in the survey.

Satisfaction with Dales Countryside Museum, National Park Visitor Centres, ranger service, volunteers, and the extent to which we maintain public rights of way all remain strong, and it's encouraging to see higher levels of satisfaction with us as an organisation, and our effectiveness, amongst younger residents.

Other services we asked about included our car parks, website, the service provided by Members, and advice we offer to tourism businesses, farmers and landowners.

Looking more closely at services where satisfaction levels are lowest in this survey, it's disappointing to see dissatisfaction with our development management service at 41%, especially when our own performance management survey - aimed at planning applicants and agents - achieved higher levels of satisfaction.

How **satisfied** are you with how the National Park Authority does its job?

	satisfied	neither	dissatisfied	don't know
2023	61	23	14	2
2018	63	22	12	3
	%	%	%	%

How **informed** do you feel about the work of the National Park Authority?

	agree	neither	disagree	don't know
2023	61	22	16	1
2018	65	17	17	2
	%	%	%	%

And finally

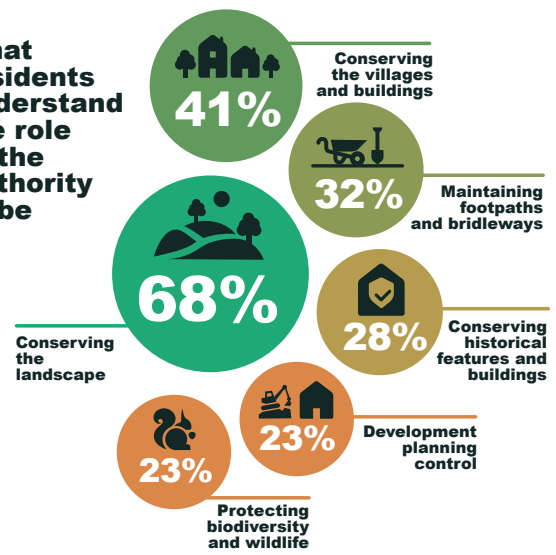
We asked how you feel we are doing delivering against our two statutory purposes. 70% of residents feel the Authority effectively meets its purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, with 67% saying the Authority effectively meets its purpose of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public.

A huge thank you to everyone who, when contacted, completed the survey. There is still lots for us to digest and understand from the results, and that work will continue.

What should we be doing?

Our role remains, in the minds of residents, that of conserving the landscape, villages and buildings, maintaining footpaths and bridleways, conserving historical features and buildings, protecting wildlife and development control. And a quick cross check of our first broad brush National Park Management consultation - which is also covered here in this edition of *Dales* - shows some similarities in terms of what you consider should be our priorities, specifically: conserving the landscape, keeping the rights of way network in good condition, development control and protecting wildlife.

What residents understand the role of the Authority to be



In total, 13 different roles were presented in the survey, and we also asked how important it is that the Authority performs these roles. You said that maintaining public rights of way, providing car parks and toilets, managing visitors and their impact, supporting others to improve public transport, and helping farmers and landowners to conserve the landscape, wildlife and woodland were amongst the most important.

What residents think our most important roles should be



Farming for nature a success, thanks to grant fund

Since 2021, the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) has enabled farmers and land managers in the Yorkshire Dales National Park to develop projects which meet at least one of four themes of climate, nature, people and place.

The programme - now in its fourth and final year - has supported 200 diverse projects in the Dales during its lifetime. These have ranged from regenerative grazing, restoration of moorland Sites of Special Scientific Interest, development of wildlife corridors by planting hedgerows, in-field trees, and protection of watercourses, to educational access, conservation of historic structures, installation of accessible footpaths, and provision of all-terrain mobility vehicles.

One successful FiPL-funded project is at Crow Trees Farm in Upper Swaledale, where a grant has facilitated regenerative farming, carbon sequestration, habitat enhancement, and the transformation of a cow house into a bunk barn.

The Hunter family are fourth generation farmers, farming sheep and native cattle on their land which features hay meadows and numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Adam and Leanne Hunter approached the FiPL team in 2022 as they were looking at ways to ensure the future economic viability of their farm business and to commit to improving the natural environment on their land.

Funding was granted to improve soil quality, increase biodiversity, sequester carbon, restore peatland through grip blocking, create scrapes for breeding waders, and plant 440 trees.

Adam said: "We found the FiPL scheme extremely easy to apply to. As is often the case with many other environmental schemes, farmers need to employ land agents to help with the application process, often at a substantial cost. We were able to complete this process ourselves, with the help of the FiPL team guiding us through the application, offering advice when necessary."

By adopting a regenerative grazing approach, the Hunters have managed to cut out artificial fertiliser completely, reducing the use of pesticides, veterinary medical treatments and bought-in feed, whilst still maintaining farm output.

A baseline measurement survey was undertaken so the family could understand the soil and plant health, carbon storage and worm count. This allowed for changes to be measured and advice sought on natural amendments to improve soil quality. Healthier soil, with increased biodiversity of soil organisms, helps to structure the soil, allow water infiltration to retain more water, sequester carbon to a greater depth, and increase the nutrient density and integrity of plants. This, in turn, leads to a greater biodiversity of plants, insects and larger terrestrial organisms.



At Crow Trees Farm in Swaledale, Adam and Leanne Hunter used Farming in Protected Landscapes funding to develop a cow house into a bunk barn to provide affordable visitor accommodation

"FiPL-funding has completely changed the way in which we graze our livestock", Adam said. "Mob grazing with regular moves and long rest periods have now become the norm. We have cut out artificial fertiliser and believe we are growing at least the same amount of grass as we were previously. Not only an environmental benefit, but the financial saving should help us to futureproof our business with the reduction in support payments."

Developing their cow house into a bunk barn will provide affordable accommodation for up to 27 people, with disabled and accessible facilities for individuals or large groups visiting Upper Swaledale. The bunk barn is close to the Pennine Way and Coast to Coast long distance walking routes, and the Swale Trail cycle route. The project was awarded an intervention rate of 40% of grant funding towards the cost of the barn conversion, with the Hunters funding the remaining building costs.

Adam and Leanne aim to share the story of their farm, its cultural history, and the high nature value farming methodology to the bunk barn guests, informing visitors about their plans for the future, and how they intend to play their part in reversing biodiversity declines and address climate change.

This project is one example of how FiPL has played a crucial role over the three years of the programme so far in providing local advice on the ground and grant funding for projects like this one in Swaledale with multiple benefits for both the farm business and the environment.

A total of £2.2 million was available to farmers and landowners in the Yorkshire Dales National Park in the final year of the programme. All of this has now been allocated to local projects.

Find out more about the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes**

'YOY' trout breeds hope for nature recovery

By Prof Jonathan Grey



It was but three months old and an inch long.

Yet this 'young of year' brown trout was found in a syke only a foot wide, right at the head of Snaizeholme.

It always amazes me that mum and dad trout are able to get to this far up the river system.

It's a reminder that there are grounds for hope that wildlife populations in the Yorkshire Dales, much depleted, do persist and can bounce back.

I am a member of the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum, which in September 2023 published a Nature Recovery Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. One of the targets in the plan is to carry out works along 1,000km of river to protect or enhance the ecological condition.

On 24 May I made a start on one river: Snaizeholme Beck, where the Woodland Trust is carrying out nature recovery at scale across a mosaic of varying habitats.

Assisted by volunteers Nick, Chris and Andy, I electro-fished 19 sections of the beck and its tributaries to assess the 'health' of the current fish community - a baseline survey.

A metal wand sends an electric current through the water, momentarily stunning any fish present; there were wild brown trout, bullhead, minnows, stone loach and white clawed crayfish. We netted the fish, counted and measured them, and put them back unharmed.

The results were revealing. In the sections where the beck had been modified, there were hardly any fish. Back in the day even a remote valley such as Snaizeholme was wholly agricultural, with about a dozen farms; long sections of the beck were straightened and then shackled by bankside rock armour and dykes. It was done so that flood water would flash quickly down and out of the valley, protecting field boundaries and meadowland.

Over time the becksides have become completely devoid of trees, meaning there is no cover or shade for the fish in the beck, and a lot of erosion. Not good for cold-adapted species with the hotter, drier summers we've experienced of late.

Now there is an opportunity to help nature recovery in this hidden dale.

Here in Snaizeholme one of the things we're going to try to do is to give the river the option of moving back into its former channels. Where the edges have been rock-armoured, we are going to return the stone to the channel and allow the beck to flow more naturally. If we get the physics right, then the biology will follow.

This will make better habitat not only for trout and crayfish but also for the smaller invertebrates like shrimp and sedges which feed a lot of birds. It'll be a bendier, wigglier - and longer - channel, so that water will take more time to flow out of the dale and that should help alleviate flooding downstream.



Prof Grey and volunteers Nick and Chris use electro-fishing methods to survey the 'health' of the fish community in Snaizeholme Beck

I'd hope to see a lot more trout soon. Where I have done this sort of work before on other becks in the Yorkshire Dales, we're getting ten times the number of trout only two to three years after starting. Build it and they will come!

The full version of Prof Grey's blog can be found at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/blog**

Read more about the Yorkshire Dales National Park's Nature Recovery Plan and the Biodiversity Forum's aspirations for conservation action at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/nature-recovery-plan**

LOCAL PLAN TO CONSIDER HOUSING SITES



By Richard Foster, Member Champion for Sustainable Development

A new Local Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park will look to ensure that 750 new homes can be built in the National Park by 2040, including a significant proportion of affordable housing.

A list of potential sites for housing development will be published this summer for public consultation.

If that sounds familiar, it is because the same thing happened in spring 2023, only then people were asked to comment on an initial list of 33 sites.

Over the course of a year, a group of seven Members of the National Park Authority has considered 800 public responses, as well as detailed technical and specialist advice on the proposed sites, including new ones that were put forward in the consultation. What the group brings forward this summer will constitute a final shortlist.

Once people have had their say on that, a list of recommended sites will go for approval to a meeting of the 25 Members of the National Park Authority board.

These allocated sites will be an important part of ensuring that housing developments in the National Park include a significant proportion of affordable housing, alongside open market housing for permanent occupation.

Housing development site allocations are only one aspect of the Local Plan, albeit a particularly important one. The new Local Plan will contain a full set of planning policies for the National Park, designed to last until 2040.

Read more about the emerging Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/local-plan-2023-40**



Upper Dales Community Land Trust Chair Stephen Stubbs, Sarah Fawcett from housing association North Starr, and Darragh Spencer from building contractor Randall Orchard view the interior of the Bainbridge Methodist Chapel conversion

New affordable homes in the National Park near completion



As the work to produce a new Local Plan enters its final stages, a well-known housing association has reaffirmed its commitment to building affordable homes in the National Park.

Broadacres Housing Association wants to build 1,000 homes in the next five years across North Yorkshire, and the organisation's Director of Development and Investment, Helen Fielding, told *Dales* she would like a 'significant proportion' of them to be built on small, rural village sites

The association is close to completing housing developments in Sedbergh, where 34 out of 49 new homes will be affordable, and in Bainbridge, where all five units in a new development are shared ownership affordable homes.

Currently Broadacres manages about 60 affordable homes in the National Park, all small developments in West Witton, Reeth, Hawes, Bainbridge and Askrigg.

Mrs Fielding said the association was actively pursuing fresh development opportunities in around half a dozen settlements in the National Park, although it was 'very early days' for these schemes.

She said: "As the operating environment got more difficult for housing associations, most pulled back from small bespoke developments in rural areas to focus on schemes with big numbers and better viability.

"But Broadacres wants to be the best rural housing provider. We understand the importance to people and communities of providing safe, warm and affordable accommodation for local people.

"We think we are helping to sustain village life. All the residents in the new development in Bainbridge are employed locally."

A housekeeper, mechanic, catering manager and ambulance practitioner are among the occupations of those moving into the Bainbridge development.

Mrs Fielding added: "There's a strong demand for rented homes and an increasingly strong demand for shared ownership offerings such as in Bainbridge. We think that's because there's a strong tradition of independence in the Dales; people want to own their own home and shared ownership is a great way for people to realise that dream.

"Traditionally we have looked at Richmondshire - and we are continuing to do that - but we are also looking at opportunities in Craven. And I would love to do another scheme in Sedbergh, such was the demand for affordable homes from local people looking to stay in their home town."

Broadacres is not the only player in the local affordable housing market. The Upper Dales Community Land Trust has also chosen to build in Bainbridge; it is converting the former Methodist Chapel into two, two-bedroom flats which are expected to be completed this summer.

Chair of the Trust Stephen Stubbs said "As well as providing affordable and sustainable housing to local people who will really benefit from this new development, we are delighted that the chapel's character and historic significance for the community will be retained."

The Trust has plans for developing more affordable homes in the Upper Dales in the near future.



One of Broadacres' completed affordable home schemes in Bainbridge (above), and a scheme in progress in Sedbergh (above left).

Discover family-friendly fun at the Dales Countryside Museum

By Fiona Rosher, Museum Manager



Calling all budding Museum curators! This year, to make it even more fun for our under 5s, we're creating a 'mini museum' in our railway carriages for you to run.

We've been chatting with our regular tiny visitors to see what they would like. Our new area will be a fun, colourful and fascinating space with plenty of things to appeal to their curiosity. Little ones can pretend to sell tickets, work in the café and shop, set up displays, and pack things in store.

Once they've enjoyed the mini museum, youngsters can burn off energy on our outdoor trail, get some fresh air, and have a go at our activities and traditional games, including a willow den, hop scotch, quoits and balancing logs.

This summer we're also introducing story sessions for under 5s, and have created the Scurry Club for children to make things simple for families.

As a club member (cost £10) your child has a special pass that is stamped each time they visit. For each stamp collected, they receive a treat. The pass gives free entry for one accompanying adult, all year round - so, if you can't make it, Grandma can bring them along!

The Museum's Firebox Café offers a child's lunch option. Or if you'd like to picnic, you can make use of the Museum garden. We're a breastfeeding friendly site and have baby changing facilities in each toilet area. To cover all eventualities, we also have emergency nappy provision at reception.

As well as appealing to families with little ones, we hope local Early Years groups will come along for interactive play sessions, story time and creative fun - please get in touch if your group might be interested in visiting.

At our new 'Family Welcome' corner - featuring Cyril the Squirrel, the museum family mascot - you can pick up all the things that will help make your visit an enjoyable one. Our age-related activity lanyards, and backpacks created for children with special needs or disabilities, help all families to engage with our collections and the heritage of the Yorkshire Dales.

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 that, together with our new Changing Places facility on site - containing extra equipment and space to allow people with profound learning disabilities and more severe physical disabilities to use the toilet safely and comfortably - the Museum's family-friendly offer will help you have an enjoyable and stress-free visit.

The Dales Countryside Museum is housed in Hawes former railway station and is open daily from 10am to 5pm. Go to **www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk** to find out more and plan your visit.



Young visitors get hands-on at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes: the site offers year round family-friendly activities and facilities

Partnership: 'Much more action needed'

A partnership of organisations working in the Yorkshire Dales National Park has published its annual progress report.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership (NPMP Partnership) says more than half of the plan's 49 objectives, set in 2019, have been achieved or are on course to be achieved.

Among the highlights of the past year are the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme, which provided £1.4 million to farmers and land managers to support environmental improvements and public access, and the completion of the £2.6m Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership programme, which has been revealing the area's hidden heritage, enabling more people to connect with, enjoy and benefit from this inspirational landscape.

More than 3,000ha of formerly degraded peatland was brought into restoration by the Yorkshire Peat Partnership, and just under 300ha of new native woodland was created - helping to support efforts to tackle climate change.

There are 15 objectives where progress has been slower than originally hoped, but there are promising signs for the future. These include improvements to mobile phone coverage, the installation of a new railhead at Horton Quarry, and the planned development of a family-friendly cycling, horse riding and walking route along the disused railway line from Garsdale Station to Hawes.

However, the annual report also says there has been little or no progress on five objectives. Objectives on nature recovery are not being met, while the Environment Agency is reporting that the proportion of rivers in the National Park in good ecological condition has fallen from 62% in 2020 to 51%, although that is still much higher than the England-wide average.

The NPMP Partnership is made up of 19 organisations/ representatives who have the main responsibility for implementing the objectives.

NPMP Partnership Chair, David Sharrod, who is also Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, said: "This annual report reflects the achievements of many organisations and individuals as we near the end of our current management plan.

"It's really good to see the difference that big projects such as the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership and Farming in Protected Landscapes have made to local communities and the environment.

"Yet we have to face the facts; it is going to be very difficult to achieve our main objectives on nature recovery and the natural environment. We have plans in place, but much more action - and the necessary resources - will be needed to make them a reality."

For more information, go to **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/national-park-management-plan**







Rights of way maintenance to be scaled back in North Yorkshire

Did you know?

- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority undertakes maintenance of public rights of way at no cost to local farmers or landowners
- The legal responsibility for rights of way maintenance actually rests with North Yorkshire Council and Westmorland & Furness Council.



Repairing a footbridge on the Swale Trail at Swinnergill in Swaledale this February

So why does the National Park Authority spend £1m a year from its own budget on rights of way maintenance?

The maintenance of 2,623km of rights of way is viewed as a priority work programme because a well-maintained rights of way network is fundamental to the enjoyment of the special qualities of the area and brings benefits to everyone. Tourism in the National Park is worth £427m a year, with 80% of visitors going for a walk, and for people who live in the National Park it's also a way of getting around and enjoying this magnificent landscape.

Sadly, however, the £1m a year cost of maintaining and improving the network is now, in view of current and future financial pressures, unsustainable, so we have asked for a funding contribution from the two unitary authorities that cover the National Park to support this work. £33k has been secured from Westmorland & Furness Council rising to £45k over three years, but North Yorkshire Council has so far been unable to find any contribution.

Consequently, we have had to scale back the rights of way programme in North Yorkshire. The impact of this two-tier approach to rights of maintenance will be felt in the longer term, with the National Park ultimately having to manage a reduction in the quality and condition of rights of way in North Yorkshire in the coming years.

Derek Twine, Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, said: "We are grateful to Westmorland & Furness Council for their contribution and remain hopeful North Yorkshire Council will also step up to support this incredibly valuable work".

Surveys aim to get to the bottom of Lake Semerwater's problems

Semerwater - the second largest natural freshwater lake in the Dales - is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), lying in an amazing location within the small valley of Raydale.

The SSSI covers just over 100 hectares and encompasses grasslands, fen, upland ash and yew woodland.

For many years the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) have been concerned about the levels of sediment and phosphate in the lake. Over the years, various organisations have undertaken research to try and work out what the main causes of these levels are, but no one has ever collated or looked at the results in a holistic way, and no definitive answer has ever been found.

In 2021 the National Park Authority and EA worked together to secure funding to be able to do just this, as well as commission a comprehensive set of surveys to get to the bottom of the problems within the lake.

The Semerwater Project began in 2023 and is guided by a steering group of local farmers, freshwater specialists, EA, NE and the National Park Authority. Last winter saw the start of the surveys and these have continued throughout the spring and early summer of this year; some people may have seen a small boat laden with people and strange bits of kit slowly moving around the lake.

A 'Bathymetric' survey - which accurately measures the different depths of the lake - has shown up the famous 'hole' in its middle, which may be an old collapsed sink hole and the reason the lake formed.



A healthier tomorrow: the Semerwater Project is looking into the levels of sediment and phosphate in the lake in Raydale

Other surveys have undertaken nutrient and sediment budgets, a detailed look at the macrophytes (aquatic plants growing in or near water), invertebrates and fish populations, goose counts on the lake and the surrounding grasslands, and - importantly - local historical and cultural studies.

The project will run until Spring 2025, and the Authority will hold a central repository for the data collected over the years, available to all.

In February next year we will be organising an end-of-project meeting for all those interested in order to showcase the results and recommendations for the healthy future of the lake and its surroundings.

To find out more about the Semerwater Project, contact **farming@yorkshiredales.org.uk**



New woodland planting at Appersett, using tree guards made from corn starch and sugar cane

Tree-planting grants available

In the Yorkshire Dales National Park we are working alongside many partner organisations to help farmers and landowners to improve and expand tree and woodland cover, driven by the ambitions set out in the Dales Woodland Strategy.

Creating new native woodland is a priority because of the vital role it can play in storing carbon, helping nature to recover, and helping to reduce flood peaks further downstream, in places like York. Woodland covers only around 4% of the National Park - lower than the woodland cover in London.

One of the leading woodland creation initiatives is the Grow Back Greener programme, co-ordinated by The Woodland Trust on behalf of the Northern Forest Partnership, and funded by the Government's Nature for Climate Fund.

If you own or manage land in the Yorkshire Dales, you can apply for up to 100% of the costs of woodland creation.

Through this tree-planting scheme, over 90ha of native woodland in the Yorkshire Dales has been created since 2021, through a mixture of natural regeneration and conventional tree-planting. It has also provided the opportunity to investigate the different types of tree protection available, such as linen tree guards, recycled plastic guards, and no guards at all.

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

Contact the Trees & Woodlands Team on **woodlandcreation@yorkshiredales.org.uk**, or visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/getting-help-with-new-woodland**