Dales

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

A newspaper for the residents of the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Winter 2023

'NATURE RECOVERY PLAN' PUBLISHED



'Electro fishing' field research in Upper Wensleydale: conserving rivers is a big part of the Nature Recovery Plan

Representatives from the major national and local conservation bodies working in the Yorkshire Dales National Park have come together to produce a 'Nature Recovery Plan'.

The Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum says the Plan - adopted at the National Park Authority meeting in September - 'puts flesh on the bones' of an ambition set out in the current National Park Management Plan, to make the National Park 'home to the finest variety of wildlife in England by 2040'.

The Forum sought advice from members of the Dales Farming & Land Management Forum and the Dales Woodland Forum to help shape the Nature Recovery Plan, which addresses key subjects such as livestock grazing, moorland management and the health of rivers.

It includes a 'position statement' on grazing that emphasises the importance of retaining and expanding the use of 'very low-input' farming systems to maintain and enhance many of the distinctive habitats for which the National Park is renowned.

The Plan also includes a list of almost 400 important species present in the National Park for which conservation action is needed. These are divided into three categories according to the approach to be taken to conserving them. 'Category 1 species' are those that will require additional, bespoke conservation action that goes beyond just good habitat management. These species include birds such as swift and hen harrier, mammals such as water vole, and plants such as burnt orchid.

The Nature Recovery Plan includes specific, measurable objectives for five broad landscape types. For freshwater rivers, the objectives include more becks being allowed to take their own course and a significant programme of woodland creation along riverbanks to provide more shade.

Mark Corner, the Authority's Member Champion for the Natural Environment, said: "Compared with much of England, the Yorkshire Dales National Park is species-rich. But even here, nature is in decline. This plan provides a road map to get us to a more natural, wildlife-rich National Park, with bigger, better, and more joined-up habitats.

"As a protected landscape, the National Park should be a stand out example of how thriving nature and profitable land management can go hand in hand. Though we have some excellent examples of this happening today, there is so much more that we could be doing for wildlife."

Mr Corner said the success of the plan depended on farmers and landowners receiving support to bring about the changes required, which he summarised as being to do with grazing management; scrub and woodland creation and management; peat restoration; and hay meadow creation and enhancement.

The Nature Recovery Plan has been shared with the National Park's local authorities: North Yorkshire Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and Lancashire County Council. Under the 2021 Environment Act these councils are each now responsible for preparing a 'Local Nature Recovery Strategy'.

It is hoped that the Nature Recovery Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park area will inform and influence those strategies, helping to channel future investment into the places where farmers and landowners can do the most for nature.

Find out more at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/nature-recovery-plan**

The Authority's Senior Wildlife Conservation Officer, Tony Serjeant, who has co-ordinated the work of the Biodiversity Forum, has spoken about the Nature Recovery Plan in a recent blog post at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/writing-a-nature-recovery-plan**

Green Routes scheme will 'educate, empower and encourage' young people



A young person from the Good Deeds project in Leeds carries stakes for tree planting at Marrick Farm in the Dales

A new scheme has been launched to provide opportunities for young people aged 16-17 from all backgrounds to experience and benefit from spending time in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have partnered with the National Citizen Service (NCS) to create Green Routes, with the aim of empowering hundreds of young people through a series of practical and inspiring experiences.

Over the next 12 months these experiences will encourage teamwork, improve health and wellbeing, and provide opportunities for social mixing for young people from Bradford, Blackburn with Darwen and North Yorkshire.

Youth groups from underrepresented and underserved communities who might otherwise face barriers to accessing nature and green spaces are invited to apply.

"We hope that through Green Routes, the young people we work with will develop life skills, confidence and resilience that can be taken forward into their future lives," said Fiona Busfield, Green Futures Programme Manager at YDMT.

"We aim to provide a supported pathway that will hopefully inspire them, whether it be a lifelong passion for the outdoors or creating positive change for the environment and their communities."

The kind of experiences on offer will include green woodworking, bushcraft and campfire cooking, tree planting, species identification, drystone wall building, path laying and natural crafts.

Lizzie Bushby, the Authority's Member Champion for Recreation Management, said: "We want to make sure everyone, regardless of ability, background or lived experience has the opportunity to come and explore our special landscapes. Providing experiences that enable people to access the special qualities of the National Park, through schemes like this, is one of our key objectives and we look forward to working with partners to deliver successful outcomes for the young people taking part."

Participants will take part in regular Youth Forum meetings which will encourage peer-to-peer learning and development through exploring different environmental challenges and identifying ways they can take action.

There will also be a Big Dales Day Out, where all the groups will come together to take positive action for the environment.

Youth groups and leaders are invited to apply to participate in the scheme by emailing alex.green@yorkshiredales.org.uk. There is a rolling application process until October 2024. For more information, visit **www.ydmt.org/green-routes**

A very warm welcome to the Winter edition of *Dales*

We live in interesting times!

As we move towards a new year, 2024 looks like it may be pivotal. At some stage there will certainly be a General Election, with all that a new Government (of whatever political colour) will mean for our work.

Locally, we will be starting a major exercise to update the National Park Management Plan. Those rather dry words hide what is the most important work that we are involved in: seeking the views of those who live and work in the National Park - and those that visit - to ask what they want to see change over the next few years.

Of course much of that change will be driven by decisions being made nationally - and even internationally - but it remains important to try to shape our own destiny in whatever way we can.

The Management Plan will cover the activities of many different bodies that work within the area, whether they are local councils, land managers, local businesses, Natural England, Environment Agency or many other partners and stakeholders. It is a plan for the National Park, not just the National Park Authority.

From our perspective the critical issues that need to be addressed to deliver our own remit remain the same as they were five years ago: tackling the nature and climate emergencies, and doing so in ways that develop and sustain a thriving farming sector. What has changed is the level of urgency.

At the same time, of course, we have national responsibilities to provide opportunities for people to be able to enjoy this special place, with all the benefits that can have for society's wider health and wellbeing.

None of this is easy but working together over the coming year we can start to deliver more for the National Park, its communities and the nation.

Enjoy this edition of *Dales*.



David Butterworth
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Neil Heseltine
CHAIR

Good progress on Management Plan objectives

Good progress is being made in delivering the objectives set out in the National Park Management Plan, the single most important document for the Yorkshire Dales National Park.



Rangers and volunteers look on as bridleway users enjoy the restored crossing at Slei Gill in Arkengarthdale

Its five-year work programme is produced and monitored by a partnership of local organisations that operate across the area.

An annual report highlighting the actions of a range of bodies in implementing the 49 specific objectives in the Plan was recently presented to Members of the National Park Authority.

Significant achievements in the previous 12 months include the undergrounding of 1.8km of overhead power lines at Gamelands Stone Circle, near Raisbeck, by Electricity North West. That brings the total so far through the current programme to almost 18km.

The Yorkshire Peat Partnership completed initial restoration of 450ha of degraded peatland, with over 23,000ha now brought into restoration since 2009. And around 600ha of broadleaved and mixed woodland was planted in 2022/23 with funding from a range of local bodies, including the White Rose Forest and Woodland Trust.

Over 90% of the 2,637km-long Rights of Way network in the National Park is now 'easy to use', up from 82% at the start of the Plan period. During 2022/23, the National Park Authority made almost 1,000 improvements to signs, gates and surfacing.

Collectively, the National Park Authority, Bolton Abbey Estate and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust ran curriculum-based outdoor sessions with primary and secondary schools inspiring just under 6,000 young people to engage with nature.

Follow progress on the objectives and actions set out in the National Park Management Plan at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/national-park-management-plan**

Yore Mill
CRAFT SHOP & GALLERY



Located at Aysgarth Falls, in 2024 have the following Saturday classes.

April 13th - Sketchbook and Journalling
May 11th - Landscape - Local Area
June 8th - Sketching in Nature
July 13th - Watercolour Painting
August 10th - Print Making
September 7th - Abstract Acrylics

Check our website for further details

Yore Mill Craft Shop and Gallery, Aysgarth DL8 3SR
yoremillcraftshopandgallery.co.uk
Tel: 01969 662829



Children from Settle and Kirkby Malham schools get creative as part of a curlew education project

Hear the Cry of the Curlew at new exhibition

There is arguably no more iconic sound than the first haunting cry of the curlew as it returns to the Dales each year to mark the start of spring.

A new exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes - running from 1 February to 11 April 2024 - celebrates this graceful bird and its evocative 'cur-lee' call, while also highlighting its plight through threats such as loss of breeding habitat.

'Cry of the Curlew' features the stunning photography of Paco Valera, insightful poetry and prose by Barbara Murray, and inspiring artwork by Sally Zaranko, Hester Cox, Judith Bromley and Robert Nicholls.

Working with artists Sarah Smith and Susan Harrison, children at local schools have created posters, poems and quilted curlew landscapes, which will also be on display.

This education work grows out of the Clapham Curlew Cluster - a group of 15 farms and 20 volunteers in the Clapham area collecting data on curlew through wader surveys, working in partnership with the RSPB and supported by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. As part of this work June Gersten Roberts has created a film giving a voice to farmers about their lived experience of curlew.

Upland areas such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park support nationally-important numbers of breeding waders such as the curlew. The Authority is working with a wide range of stakeholders to maintain the nesting habitats on the moorlands and moorland fringe that are key to protecting this species. Find out more at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/waders**





The Dales Countryside Museum is open daily, hosts year-round events and exhibitions, and is free for under 16s.

The site is fully wheelchair and pushchair-friendly, and includes a brand new 'Changing Places' toilet facility, meaning additional equipment and space for those with more profound physical and learning disabilities.

To plan your visit, see **www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk**

WESTMORLAND DALES SCHEME CREATES AN ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION

A landscape-wide scheme operating in the Westmorland Dales area of the National Park is drawing to a close after five years of delivery.

First proposed in 2015 just before the National Park was extended, the scheme aims to record, interpret, conserve and manage the natural and cultural heritage of the area and provide an essential foundation for this 'new' part of the National Park.

The Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme, based at Tebay, is a £3.5 million scheme with £2.2 million grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It has been delivered by organisations including Friends of the Lake District (the lead partner) and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the accountable body).

The scheme area is a remote and beautiful pastoral landscape with a unique mix of habitats and a remarkably intact pattern of historical settlements and features, boasting 79 Scheduled Monuments, 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and two National Nature Reserves.

Working with local communities, partner organisations and interest groups, the scheme has now completed 22 landscape-related projects, designed to deliver four key objectives.

Revealing the area's hidden heritage

Much of the scheme's focus has been on understanding the cultural and heritage assets of the area, and interpreting it for all to appreciate.

Cumbria GeoConservation designated 12 new local geological sites and produced a series of factsheets and geology walks revealing the area's geological foundations.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust surveyed species-rich meadows, verges and grasslands as a record of the area's rich flora and as a basis for site restoration. Lune Rivers Trust undertook fish and crayfish surveys of becks in the Upper Lune, helping to identify where future conservation works may be best focussed.

Scheme staff and the Authority's historic environment team, working with volunteers and Lunesdale Archaeology Society, undertook surveys of Great Asby Scar, traditional farm buildings, drystone walls and small-scale heritage features. Excavations were carried out at Little Asby Common, Pendragon Castle and Ravenstonedale.

Much of this work has been interpreted through panels, leaflets, booklets and exhibitions.



Inspecting a Shap pink granite erratic on an Ice Age Walk led by Cumbria GeoConservation in August

Engaging people in enjoying and benefitting from their heritage

Public engagement has been integral to projects to reveal, conserve, enjoy and sustain the area's rich heritage.

The Landscape Forum, hosted annually in different villages across the Westmorland Dales, saw partners, volunteers and local people gather to learn about local heritage, see projects on the ground and enjoy each other's company.

During the pandemic, 25 webinars on a variety of subjects reached audiences across the country. Volunteers contributed countless hours, most recently on the 'Our Common Heritage' oral history project, interviewing farmers, transcribing recordings and undertaking further research.

Schools across the region have been engaged by the scheme, and exciting artistic work commissioned, including a sound installation 'The Singing Drumlin' at Bowber Head Nature Reserve.

Read more about the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme and its aims and achievements at **www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/westmorland-dales-hidden-landscapes-partnership**

Conserving what makes the area special

The area's rich natural and cultural heritage has been at the heart of the scheme's projects to conserve and enhance its special character, and to improve access for all.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust has restored species-rich grasslands in the Orton, Raisbeck and Ravenstonedale areas. Eden Rivers Trust worked on river restoration projects at Crosby Ravensworth and on Scandal Beck at Bowber Head.

The Woodland Trust planted trees, woodlands and hedgerows in partnership with local farmers and tree planting groups in Crosby Ravensworth and Great Asby.

Power lines adjacent to Gamelands Stone Circle were undergrounded by Electricity North West and conservation works completed on barns at Raisbeck and Pendragon, and at Smardale lime kilns with additional funding from Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. Work funded by 'Love Your Landscape' grants included the Gilbertine ruins in Ravenstonedale, a medieval well at Asby and a railway bridge at Kirkby Stephen.

Authority rangers led on improving access, removing barriers on rights of way, extending links to the Pennine Bridleway and extending the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway.

Sustaining that heritage in the long-term

The benefits of the scheme will be sustained by the ongoing commitment of land managers, farmers, tourism businesses, volunteers and others. Projects have aimed to increase their skills and understanding of the area for their benefit and for our heritage.

Farming is the key land-use in the area, fundamental to its heritage and critical to its future. The Farmer Network worked with trainees, delivered farmer workshops and held public awareness events.

With a local economy dependent on tourism, the Authority's tourism team worked with businesses to help them make the most of the special qualities of the area, including its tranquillity and dark skies.

Eight work-based apprenticeships and one cultural heritage trainee were funded by the scheme, receiving training in countryside management and cultural heritage conservation, helping to deliver many of the projects and gain valuable experience.







PLANNING MATTERS

If you live in the Yorkshire Dales National Park you will have heard someone's story about planning - that's because planning matters. We would like to show you what we do.

Like all National Park Authority staff, the Authority's planning team care deeply about the Dales, and much of our work is about protecting what is special about it. But the Authority is also committed to supporting good quality affordable housing for local people and the growth of new and existing businesses to provide local jobs.

Of course, there are sometimes difficult decisions that have to be made.

Proposals for larger or more controversial development are always carefully considered by the Planning Committee to ensure that any new development meets the needs of the National Park's communities, whilst protecting its environment, landscape, heritage and wildlife.

New housing for local people

House prices in the National Park are higher than in neighbouring areas and a fifth of all houses are holiday lets or second homes. This can make buying a house for local people very challenging. If we want our communities and local services to be sustained into the future, we need to provide more housing for working age households.

The Authority's focus is on ensuring that enough good quality, affordable homes can be built to meet the needs of local people. Sites for new build housing are identified in the Local Plan with the majority being located in towns and villages where there are services and facilities. The requirement is for at least 50% of new build houses to be affordable and meet local need. [Read more about the emerging Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2025-2040 on page 5.]

We encourage developers to work with us from an early stage, beginning with pre-application planning advice. Our aim is to achieve a housing layout and house designs that fit in with their context with the site and its surroundings, respecting neighbours, building on the character of the village, and nestling into the landscape. This can sometimes take a lot of work and patience from officers and developers.

Reproducing pastiche copies of traditional Dales houses is not usually possible or desirable as new homes need to meet modern building standards, be sustainable and provide attractive, comfortable homes. Local building stone is also difficult to source and expensive to build with. We encourage innovative and distinctive designs that take inspiration from local building traditions and incorporate different materials.

Recent developments given approval include a well-designed scheme of 17 houses at West Witton for Hartforth Homes, 16 affordable houses at Long Preston for Adactus Housing Association, and 49 houses currently being built at Sedbergh for Broadacres Housing Association.



An affordable housing development of 16 new homes at Long Preston

> We really appreciate the collaboration and support we receive from Yorkshire Dales planning officers as we work together to achieve our shared goal of more quality, affordable homes for local people in rural areas. Knowing that we can discuss opportunities, issues and barriers openly, and receive positive advice helps us move our development plans forward with confidence.
>
> *Helen Fielding*
> *Director - Development and Investment, Broadacres Housing Association*

Since 2018 approved & built

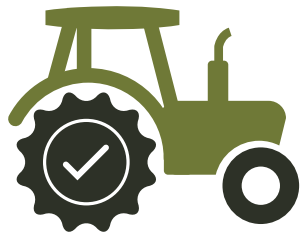
264

APPROVED

430



Homes approved **Homes built**



97%

High farm approval rates

for farm development projects

Building for business

The Authority's work in helping existing businesses to expand so that they can remain competitive, and providing land and buildings for new businesses, is crucial for the local economy. We try to take a positive approach and find solutions to help businesses through the process, which gives confidence to investors looking to develop in the Dales.

Recently, we have worked with the former Craven District Council on their proposals for Langcliffe Quarry Enterprise Centre. This is a new business development designed to accommodate a range of light industrial and office units for new or expanding businesses, co-working and meeting spaces. It includes new purpose-built buildings and the adaptation of former Craven Limeworks buildings. The business units benefit from roof mounted solar panels, rainwater collection, low voltage lighting and low emissivity glass.

Our advice helped to ensure that the proposal enhances what is a highly sensitive environment. The planning permission secures the long term restoration and management of the disused Victorian Craven limeworks, which is a Scheduled Monument, and protects the unique wildlife habitats within the former quarry and woodlands surrounding the site.

> We have been working closely with the Authority's planning officers for a number of years now to flesh out the finer details for our permanent base here in the Dales. Our experience with the officers is that they have been knowledgeable, friendly, fair and have gone out of their way to guide us through every step of the process wherever possible.
>
> Their guidance on policy, ecology and sustainability has been invaluable in helping us arrive at what I believe to be the best possible design for our business, community and the environment. They have a very difficult yet crucial role in protecting our National Park and it's clear to me that the officers we have worked with truly care about doing so.
>
> *Charlie Bayston*
> *Managing Director, DSMC Ltd*

Planning for nature

We know that the natural environment is suffering and that new development is just one pressure. The Authority has a strong track record of ensuring that new development does not just compensate for its effect on nature, but makes a contribution to improving biodiversity.

No matter how small or large the development, we look for opportunities to support wildlife, whether that's through providing bat or bird boxes on house extensions, or landscape planting schemes around new buildings.

For the largest developments like the recent extensions at Dry Rigg and Swinden Quarries we expect significant wildlife gain. The operators now provide environmental funds of £35k a year for the lifetime of each quarry which can be accessed by local groups and Parish Councils for projects such as tree planting and habitat improvement.



Nest boxes fitted near the roof line of a building at Aysgarth

High approval rates



92%

Planning application approval rate (2022-23)

661

Applications received (2022-23)

New housing

to boost population, support services and economic growth

	'20-21	'21-22	'22-23
Homes approved	55	130	63
Homes Built	47	90	55



493

Approved homes waiting to be built

(as of 28.9.23 – 2022-23)

Finding new uses to

conserve historic buildings & barns

APPROVED

293 conversions to homes approved

15 only 15 refused

We have also supported proposals for a new hotel and leisure complex at Linton and a new site for local business DSMC Ltd a commercial diving and marine contractor - which needed to relocate to larger premises. Both of these proposals will bring new job opportunities to the area.

Authority staff have also worked with Sedbergh School, the largest employer in the National Park, on their proposals for a new Technology Centre. The approved building will provide classrooms and a manufacturing hall where pupils will learn about digital design, coding, automation, and robotics. Our officers had a significant input into the final design and secured use of the building by other local schools.



The new business development at the former Craven Limeworks site, Langcliffe, featuring light industrial and office units

Need to know more?

The National Park Authority's website provides a comprehensive source of planning information, including contact details, answers to your 'Frequently Asked Questions', good advice on submitting and commenting on planning applications, updates on new legislation, and a lot more.

Visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/planning**, or contact us on **planning@yorkshiredales.org.uk**

Our Planning Advice Service

We understand that planning can be complicated! What does and doesn't need planning permission? What are the chances of getting permission for a proposed development?

To help answer those questions we provide a Planning Advice Service.

If you are a resident of the National Park you can have a free appointment with a planning officer (online or in person) to discuss your proposal.

We can also confirm in writing whether or not your proposal requires planning permission, and we offer a useful written pre-application advice service for non-domestic development. We can provide either a simple desk-based assessment, or the desk-based assessment plus site visit and additional input from our in-house experts.

Many residents have found this service particularly helpful - here are a couple of their recent comments:

"We found the Dales Planning Surgery an indispensable source of help and guidance when it came to renovating our stone barn. The staff are extremely helpful and knowledgeable and gave excellent advice and assistance from start to finish. They guided us through the planning system and enabled us to attain our lovely Dales home. Couldn't have managed without them."

"The planning process can appear a bit daunting, but when we recently made an application for listed building consent we firstly discussed the process by phone and were advised to come to a planning surgery. Having a face to face to discuss our application and getting advice on what was needed was very helpful and made the whole process less stressful, and consent was achieved without further hassle."

If you would like to discuss your proposed development with one of our planning officers, visit our website at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/planning-advice-service**

Local Plan moves forward

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

The emerging 2025-2040 Plan is now approaching its first formal publication stage.

Our sixth public consultation - 'Land for Housing Development' - took place between March and May, with 793 responses received. Many focussed on the 33 potential housing development sites identified in the consultation.

An advisory group of Members is currently considering the responses, and a more detailed investigation of the options for meeting the Plan's housing growth target over the next 15 years. This includes working through infrastructure advice about each site, provided by the two local Councils and the two regional water companies.

Once the group has completed this work, the results will be published for further informal public comment. Final recommendations and the public's comments will then be reported to the full National Park Authority board, which will decide which sites to take forward into the 'Publication Local Plan' next year.

A report summarising the housing sites consultation and the next steps towards publication can be found on the Authority's website at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/local-plan-2023-40**

Milestone reached by the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme

The Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) has already successfully allocated all of its grant funding for the Yorkshire Dales for this current financial year to a wide range of worthy projects.

Demand has been so high that more funding has been offered than previously planned on the way to reaching this milestone. If all projects are successfully implemented, the programme will be investing over £1.5 million into local projects and farm businesses.

Since the programme began in 2021, grants have gone to 154 diverse projects in the National Park under four wide-ranging themes - Climate, Nature, People and Place. FiPL has supported projects that have monitored carbon use on farms, improved habitats for species like curlew, enhanced farmer knowledge and expertise, restored traditional barns, and provided educational visits for school groups.

With £2.2m available in the programme's final year, the focus is now on ensuring that the full pot is allocated and projects delivered by March 2025.

The grant application window for 2024/5 is now open. Our officers can support you throughout the application process. We are encouraging people to get in touch as early as possible to ensure your project has enough time to be developed and implemented.

If you have a project idea you would like to discuss, contact us on fipl@yorkshiredales.org.uk

To find out how the FiPL programme can support farm businesses in the National Park, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes**

Case study 1: Orton Fells Farm Cluster, Westmorland Dales



Farmers from Orton Fells Farm Cluster and Ribblesdale Farm Group attend a FiPL-funded knowledge exchange event in the Lake District

The Orton Fells Farm Cluster came together with the idea of achieving more for the environment and for their farm businesses by working together. The group was one of the first applications to be funded, receiving £42,120 from the FiPL programme in 2021.

The funding was used mainly to employ a part-time facilitator. This allowed this group of neighbouring farmers and commoners in the Westmorland Dales to set up a proper structure and governance. It also helped them to develop collaborative relationships with local primary schools and organisations such as the Lune Rivers Trust, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust, The Farmer Network and LEAF.

The group has made substantial progress on its aim to combine the best of modern farming and traditional practices to ensure healthy, sustainable food is produced alongside a rich biodiverse landscape, as well as creating opportunities for others to connect with and better understand the links between farming and nature.

Group Chair Jane Lane said: "The Orton Fells Farm Cluster has benefited enormously both as a group and as individual members from our work with the Authority and the support we have received. It has allowed the group to develop its aspirations to build resilient businesses, producing food alongside environmental benefits and working with volunteers and our community.

"FiPL has funded in-depth business audits with a focus on reducing inputs while increasing profit margins. We have been able to support individual carbon audits for each member and specific advice covering new funding schemes. Funding has helped us run monthly events with our community group, Orton Wildlife and Landscape (OWL), and support a presence at our local farmers market.

"In addition, the funding helps us employ a part-time facilitator, which has been invaluable in terms of organising all of the above."

Jemma Wilson, the group's facilitator, added: "The flexibility of our grant and our relationship with the National Park Authority has allowed each member to stay engaged in the group.

"Unlike any other funding stream, we have been able to direct our funding based on member's interests which I think has allowed the confidence within the group to have some great discussions and ideas. We have been able to focus on a good balance of projects for environmental outcomes and projects to improve farm business profitability."

Read more about the groups aims and activities at **www.ortonfellsfarmcluster.co.uk**

Case study 2: Crow Trees Farm, Swaledale

A regenerative 'mob' grazing trial began at a Swaledale farm in May 2022 with the aim of improving soil health and boosting natural productivity to make the farm more self-sufficient and sustainable.

FiPL contributed grant funding of £4,852 to Crow Trees Farm in Gunnerside to enable paddock grazing, electric fencing and a water supply, introduction of a herbal ley (temporary diverse sown pasture), and costs for surveying and consultancy.

The trial has led to a reduction in pesticide use, veterinary treatments and bought-in feed while maintaining farm output. Improved soil health will also lead to increased biodiversity and better carbon storage.

Farmer Adam Hunter said: "We found the FiPL scheme extremely easy to apply to. For 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.

"Where existing environmental schemes have allowed, it has completely changed the way in which we graze our livestock. Mob grazing with regular moves and long rest periods has 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."



Surveying peatland vegetation on Garsdale Pike as part of the FiPL-funded Baseline project, which aims to encourage young people into the environmental employment sector

Look Wild with free app



Young nature detectives in Malhamdale

Want to learn about the wildlife you see around you? Look Wild is a free app that anyone can get on their mobile device and use to upload photos or audio of wildlife that they find on their travels

Don't worry if you don't know anything about identifying plants or animals because the app - and the community involved with it - will help identify them for you.

Use it anywhere - in your back garden, on the way to school - or while out and about in the National Park to show us what you have seen and where.

For details, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/npuk-look-wild-project**

Sustainable community projects supported by development fund

A remote farmstead in the National Park has begun operating a hydro-electric generator, with support from the National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

Kingsdale Head Farm - midway between the villages of Dent and Ingleton - was awarded a grant of £26,000, which covered about a third of the cost of the installation.

The fall of spring water down a ghyll behind the farmhouse is being harnessed to create electricity for the farm and its diversification projects, including a holiday let and an education room. Electricity is also being fed into the National Grid sufficient to power a further three homes. The hydro started generating electricity in June.

Jamie McEwan, Conservation and Farm Manager at Kingsdale Head since 2020, said: "The hydro gives us options as to how we develop the farm business. It's been an expensive project, so it wouldn't have been possible without the Sustainable Development Fund."

"One of our big opportunities is to invite people up here to share what we are doing. The hydro scheme is part of the story for the farm and it's something we can talk to people about."

The SDF is open to individuals, community groups, businesses and the voluntary sector. Grants are allocated to projects that contribute to the National Park, and we encourage funding applications for schemes that will have multiple benefits and a long-term outcome

The Grade II listed St Mary's Church in Arkengarthdale has benefitted from a £10,000 SDF grant to provide a community hub, which includes a servery, an extension with accessible toilets, an accessibility ramp, and a new flexible space at the back of the church.

Penny O'Regan from the church said: "St Mary's is very grateful for the award of the grant from the SDF. It was the first step towards our goal and gave us all the emotional boost needed to carry on working towards our funding target. It was very easy to apply for and also draw down during our project, which was a great help."

The Authority's Member Champion for Sustainable Development, Richard Foster, said: "We are delighted that the Sustainable Development Fund has been able to assist 16 great local projects this year. These projects benefit local businesses, communities and the environment."

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



Conservation and Farm Manager Jamie McEwan and Authority Member Champion for the Natural Environment Mark Corner at the hydro outflow for the new hydropower turbine at Kingsdale Head Farm

High Nature Value Farming award winners announced



Ray and Sue Ridley of Kexwith Farm near Marske (pictured above) are among the winners of the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected High Nature Value Farming Awards, scooping up the £500 prize for the 'Best Practice' category.

The Ridleys impressed the judging panel - which included eminent ecologist Professor Sir John Lawton, who chairs the Tees-Swale project board - with their thoughtful management of the diverse range of habitats on their 50ha farm. This includes wet floodplain meadows surrounded by riparian woodland in the valley bottom, steep upland hay meadows providing fodder for sheep and cattle, and rush allotments at the fell boundary, managed sensitively to benefit wading birds with the recent addition of scrapes.

Restorative grazing management is provided by White Park cattle and an impressive pressure system takes water up the fields. Ultimately, the judges felt that it was the attention to detail that really stood out.

The awards aim to recognise and reward examples of the nature-friendly upland farming practices that have helped to sustain the largest remaining area of semi-natural habitats in England.

Hazel Brow Farm in Low Row, Swaledale, was nominated in the 'Public Engagement' category. It first became a visitor destination 27 years ago when the Calvert family were pioneers in opening the farm to the public.

The judges were impressed by the breadth of activities now offered, from lambing days, alpaca walks and a nature trail to hosting school groups and running national Open Farm Sunday and Meadow Day events. It has also been a venue for Tees-Swale training events for farmers, volunteers and the public, such as worm identification and scything workshops.

The £8.5 million Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected programme is a joint venture led by the North Pennines National Landscape and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, largely funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is a truly ground-breaking initiative that collaborates with farmers and landowners across an 845 sq km area of Swaledale, Arkengarthdale and the Upper Tees catchment to put farming at the heart of nature and nature at the heart of land management.

Find out more at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/tees-swale-naturally-connected**

Do you farm in Swaledale or Arkengarthdale?

Limited places still available!

Would you like a **FREE** confidential report on your **farming business** and to know how to **maximise its profitability**?

Working with Chris Clarke at Nethergill Associates, the 'Less Is More' project is **funding 30 farm assessments** within the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected programme area through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

To find out more, contact Christa Nelson on christa.nelson@yorkshiredales.org.uk

TEES-SWALE Naturally Connected

Heritage Fund

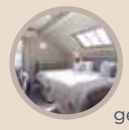


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Never a better time to create woodland

By Lee Johnson, Senior Trees and Woodlands Officer

Did you see the first prize poem at the Muker Show back in September? 'They tell farmers to plant with trees,' it begins. But that will mean 'no grass for the cows, and no hay for the yows'.

'You can't make a meal with leaves,' it concludes.

It's a sentiment we are well aware of at the National Park Authority. And yet I would like to urge farmers and land owners to bring forward land for woodland creation. There hasn't been a better time to do so in terms of the financial rewards.

First let me try to address the concerns expressed so entertainingly in the Muker Show poem.

We do not want to see woodland creation on productive grasslands. It wouldn't work anyway. All you would get would be serried ranks of trees, with none of the ground flora such as bluebells, wild garlic and primrose.

There really is a big difference between tree planting and woodland creation. We want the latter. To create a woodland you have to carefully choose the right spot, usually near existing woodland. The 'right spot' is often the least valued part of the farm, on steep fell sides or in ghylls, because that's where pockets of woodland have survived.

We'd like to see some large schemes coming forward like last winter's woodland creation at Heggs and Castle farms in Arkengarthdale across more than 30 hectares.

But large sites are hard to identify in the National Park.

So when farmers suggest small areas for woodland creation, we are delighted with that too. An excellent example is a site of just over one hectare planted at West Scrafton in Coverdale. It is on relatively poor quality farmland, by a watercourse, within seed casting distance of mature alder, sycamore and ash trees, and has a public path going through part of the site to boot.

At the moment there is absolutely no cost to the farmer. All the trees and fencing necessary to create a woodland is 100% grant funded. We also remove the administrative burden, filling out all the application forms.

The benefits for the farmer or estate owner are many. There are upfront payments of several hundred pounds per hectare, with further payments down the line. The woodland will, within a matter of a few years, add shelter and beauty to the holding and, crucially, provide a home for wildlife. In a time of climate emergency, the woodland will pull in and lock away carbon dioxide - that can be used to demonstrate the farm's 'net zero' credentials or be turned into a long-term revenue stream by selling the 'carbon credits' to private investors. Wood pasture is also a great option, creating shade for grazing livestock.

Once a woodland has established, it's true that you won't be able to harvest it for the plate. But you will be able to harvest it for fuel and construction materials.

If you remain unconvinced, here's the key statistic. At the moment about 4% of the whole area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park is woodland, with more than half of that commercial forestry. Our ambition is to increase woodland cover to 7% by 2030 using mostly native deciduous trees. That would still be far lower than the England average. Surely, at only 7% cover, there would still be ample grass for the sheep and cows?

If you are a land owner or manager in the National Park, we can advise on all the different woodland creation funding options available, and help you find the one that best meets your needs. Contact us on **woodlandcreation@yorkshiredales.org.uk**



Lee Johnson at Moorhen Farm woodland creation site



Young Rangers kayaking on Lake Semerwater

Make a difference with Young Rangers

Young Rangers is a free group for anyone aged 12 to 17 who loves the outdoors, wants to get involved in some practical conservations tasks, and is keen to learn more about our amazing National Park.

Why not join one of our friendly monthly sessions, run by experienced staff and volunteers. You could be doing anything from drystone walling and tree planting to raft building and geese herding!

To find out more, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/young-rangers** or follow our 'Dales Young Rangers' Facebook page.

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