Dales

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

A newspaper for the residents of the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Winter 2025

Bold vision for Yorkshire Dales unveiled

A bold vision for how the Yorkshire Dales National Park will be managed, cared for and developed over the next five years has been launched.

The updated National Park Management Plan 2025-2030 - unveiled at a meeting of representatives from local authorities and national bodies, farmers, business leaders and community organisations in October - is the single most important document for the National Park.

The Management Plan is not just for one organisation, it is for the whole National Park and everyone connected to it - local communities, businesses, visitors and the many bodies that operate here.

It was produced by the National Park Management Plan Partnership, made up of representatives from 15 local organisations and businesses. The Plan brings together the policies and strategies of many different organisations to support the 'statutory purposes' - the reasons National Parks were created.

Twenty four different organisations have lead responsibility for one or more of the objectives. And over 60 other organisations will be contributing to helping to achieve them.

The updated Plan contains six ambitions, which include restoring wildlife, mitigating the effects of climate change, strengthening communities, and boosting the local economy.

Representatives at the Annual Forum heard that there are 40 objectives in the Plan, six of which are described as "transformational" - reflecting both the scale of their impact and the scale of the current shortfall in the funding needed to achieve them, despite the fact that they are national government targets for wildlife and climate. This includes an objective to bring all remaining degraded peatland in the National Park into initial restoration by 2035.

Outgoing Chair of the Partnership, David Sharrod, said:



The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2025-30 seeks to address the decline in river quality and biodiversity: Jonny Grey of the Wild Trout Trust and volunteer Nick Copeland carrying out an electro fishing survey on Snaizeholme Beck

"These objectives are measurable and grounded in reality. This isn't vague 'motherhood and apple pie' - it's about putting local people at the heart of real change."

Other members of the Partnership provided more detail about the proposals in the Plan.

Neil Heseltine, a local farmer, spoke about the objectives for wildlife. His remarks highlighted the urgent need to address declining river quality and biodiversity.

He said: "As someone who has farmed in the Dales all my life, I've seen how deeply our landscapes, our farming culture and local communities are intertwined with nature. But we face real challenges. Our rivers are deteriorating in their quality. Although we are bucking the national trend with species like red squirrel and curlew, overall biodiversity is still in decline.

"This new Plan sets out a bold and a brave ambition to help nature recover at scale."

Angela Jones, Director of Thriving Places at Westmorland and Furness Council, spoke about the objectives to support strong communities. Her comments underscored the importance of affordable housing to retain and attract young people.

She said: "We're lucky we've got very strong communities across the National Park area, and really thriving community groups and networks. The challenge is a declining working age population.

"We need to retain our young families and young people and attract more young people to the area. Having the right type of new housing - affordable housing, whether that is for sale or for rent - is really important. Our objective for the next five years is to support the completion of 250 dwellings in the National Park, at least half of which will be affordable."

The updated Management Plan marks a renewed commitment to protecting and enhancing the Yorkshire Dales for future generations - with partners pledging to work together to turn ambition into action.

Ten of the key objectives in the updated Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan are illustrated on page 5.

Find out more, including progress on the Plan's objectives, at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/national-park-management-plan**

How sustainable development funding is supporting young people

In 2024, the National Park Authority's long-running grant scheme, the Sustainable Development Fund, developed a new focus on projects which benefit young people.

The Fund - now in its 22nd year of operation - provides financial support for local businesses and community projects that promote a more sustainable way of living, working and visiting the National Park. It also works to enhance and conserve the area's wildlife, landscape and local communities.

One-fifth of the Fund's £150,000 annual budget was ring-fenced for projects that aim to support or improve opportunities for young people in the Dales.

One of the successful applicants was Wensleydale Bike Club. With the help of a £4,152 grant, they have provided essential equipment and kit, including jackets and tents, to the children accessing the club, helping them enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.

Wensleydale Bike Club founder Helen Pollard explained how the funding has been transformational for the not-for-profit initiative. She said: "The Sustainable Development Fund has been absolutely essential to us being able to provide opportunities for local children that they otherwise would not have been able to access. Any activity we offer is now accessible to anybody, no matter their financial position, and that's the whole point of the Bike Club.

"It's not just about the kit; it's what the kit enables the children to do. We want to teach children practical bike riding and handling skills to help them safely and responsibly cycle around the Dales.

"The money has made a huge difference, and we received a huge amount of support from the National Park Authority throughout the grant application process."

The Fund remains open to all applications from businesses, community groups, and individuals, not just those which provide opportunities for local young people.



Young members of Wensleydale Bike Club: the club has received a Sustainable Development Fund grant to help buy essential equipment

Further information on the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund can be found at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/sustainable-development-fund**

Welcome to the winter edition of *Dales*



Derek Twine
CHAIR

David Butterworth
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This winter marks a bold new chapter for the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

We are proud to launch the 2025-2030 National Park Management Plan - a shared vision crafted by over 80 organisations, shaped by local voices, and rooted in the belief that this extraordinary landscape belongs to everyone. Whether you live here, work here, or simply love to visit, this Plan is your invitation to be part of something transformational.

At its heart are six ambitions: restoring wildlife, tackling climate change, strengthening communities, boosting the local economy, improving access, and making the Dales more inclusive.

These aren't lofty ideals - they're practical, measurable goals. From restoring peatlands and improving river health, to supporting affordable housing and welcoming under-served communities, the Plan sets out real actions for real change.

Read more about the Plan on pages 1 and 5 of this edition.

We know the challenges are significant. But so is the opportunity. The Dales has always been a place of resilience, innovation and pride. Now, more than ever, we need that spirit to shape the future.

So this is a call to arms - to farmers, volunteers, businesses, community groups and visitors. Join us. Help us deliver the ambitions of the Plan. Whether it's through conservation, community action, or simply sharing your love of the Dales, your contribution matters.

Together, we can ensure the Yorkshire Dales remains a thriving, beautiful and welcoming place for generations to come.

'Natural Health Service' to enhance wellbeing and connection with nature

A new programme is harnessing the power of protected landscapes to help people live healthier, more active lives, which are more connected to the nature around them.

The Natural Health Service for North Yorkshire is a regional green social prescribing programme. Through nature-based activities, it is designed to enhance physical and mental health, reduce social isolation, increase social and economic activity, and create healthier, more active communities across the region.

The programme is being delivered by a partnership, led by the North York Moors Trust and bringing together the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities, and the Howardian Hills and Nidderdale National Landscapes.

Ten-week nature sessions will be delivered in towns, villages and coastal communities, both within protected landscapes and across the wider region. The sessions are designed to enhance health and wellbeing, build connection, and increase the social and economic activity of participants referred into the service.

Participants will create personalised 'Nature Plans' - a simple set of achievable steps to keep engaging with nature and to connect with other community activities that sustain the benefits of being active outdoors.

On offer will be sensory and hands-on experiences, from foraging and art to habitat management, delivered through a phased approach that gently builds confidence, skills and deeper connections with nature and others.

The programme will engage professionals across the health, social care and community sectors - including GPs, link workers, social prescribers, job advisers and probation services - and help them understand the benefits of nature connection and how it can be used as a health asset to support treatment, recovery and the prevention of health and social challenges within their services. A standardised referral pathway will be developed to streamline access to nature-based interventions.



Natural Health Service: spending time connecting with nature can bring both mental and physical benefits

In December, the National Park Authority delivered a green social prescribing training session with Carers Resource, a Yorkshire-based charity that provides support for young and adult carers.

Rachel Waddington, Service Manager at Carers Resource, said: "It has inspired us to think about how we can include nature prescriptions in our work with carers. The Nature Prescription calendar provides a simple and structured way to talk to people about how to engage with nature in bite-sized chunks and with achievable goals, and we feel confident in using this with carers."

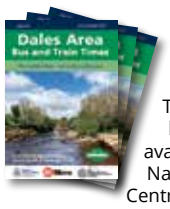
The green social prescribing programme draws on a strong body of evidence showing that time spent connecting with nature reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, lowers blood pressure, and boosts confidence. This approach can be a cost-effective way of reducing demand on NHS and other services.

Both the National Health Service and the legislation establishing National Parks and National Landscapes were created from the post-war government's aim to enhance health and quality of life through access to essential services and green spaces. The Natural Health Service programme builds on that vision, recognising protected landscapes as assets for improving people's health.

Running until April 2026, the partnership aims to lay the groundwork to make the Natural Health Service for North Yorkshire a viable, long-term service.

To find out about the green social prescribing programmes run by the Authority, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/green-social-prescribing-programmes**

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RCVS

COAST TO COAST UPGRADE COMPLETED

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority rangers have upgraded a section of the 'Coast to Coast' path to National Trail quality standard.

A three-kilometre-long stone-flagged surface has been laid over a notoriously treacherous peat bog in Birkdale, part of the Kirkby Stephen to Keld section of the trail.

The final flagstone was laid in October.

Local MP Rishi Sunak campaigned successfully for the Coast to Coast path to become a National Trail. He met rangers recently and congratulated the team for doing a "fantastic job".

Completion of the work paves the way for Natural England to formally open the Coast to Coast Path National Trail this spring.

Area Ranger for Swaledale Michael Briggs has been part of the team on the ground, engaging with walkers on the trail, while marshalling two teams each comprising three staff, including a digger driver.

After a two-month stint on White Mossy Hill, he said: "For me one of the best parts of the job has been chatting to people walking by. They all love the path we've made. There's been so many international walkers and some were dreading this section because they'd been told how boggy it can be. People could not have been more appreciative."



Above, an aerial view of the completed Coast to Coast path in Birkdale, and, below, laying flags on the trail

A coast to coast route from the Irish Sea at St Bees in Cumbria to the North Sea at Robin Hood's Bay was originally described by Alfred Wainwright in 1973. Over time, three pathways emerged to navigate the peatland at White Mossy Hill in Birkdale. The newly surfaced route uses the most popular of the three ways and has become a public right of way in agreement with the local estate.

Rangers began work on the National Park section of the route - known as Nine Standards, after the standing stones at the top - in August 2024, with a planned pause for the delivery of more materials and ground nesting bird season. Work resumed last summer for ten weeks. This path will now replace previous seasonal management of the route and become the sole route for the National Trail.

Member Champion for Recreation Management at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lizzie Bushby, said: "The funding we have received from Natural England to enhance the Coast to Coast route in Birkdale has proved to be a win-win. We have been able to protect important peatland habitat from damage, while creating a sustainable route for walkers and making it more enjoyable.

"While accessibility varies along the full Coast to Coast route, the new stone-flagged path up to White Mossy Hill is wide enough for people using mobility aids.

It's not a route for everyone, but it will give more people a better chance of getting up to the peaks above Birkdale, one of the most remote places in the National Park. On a fine day you can see all the way down Swaledale from the new path.

"We hope that National Trail status will make the Coast to Coast route even more popular, giving a boost to local businesses. There can be few better ways of experiencing the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park than walking the trail between Kirkby Stephen in Westmorland and Richmond in North Yorkshire."

In addition to the stone-flagged path at Birkdale, signage of the route is being installed throughout the Yorkshire Dales section of the trail, with more than 40 new fingerposts pointing the way and five new bridges so far.

To find out more, visit **www.nationaltrail.co.uk/coast-to-coast**





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PLANNING MATTERS

Referendum sees "community taking charge"

People in the Craven parish of Clapham cum Newby have voted overwhelmingly in favour of adopting a 'Neighbourhood Plan'.

In a referendum held last autumn, 153 people voted 'yes' to the question, 'Do you want North Yorkshire Council and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Clapham cum Newby to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'.

The Clapham cum Newby Neighbourhood Plan will now be used to help determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the Clapham cum Newby Neighbourhood Area. It is only the third neighbourhood area with land inside the National Park to have adopted a Neighbourhood Plan, following Upper Eden and Gargrave, and builds on the work of the 2008 Parish Plan.

The plan has policies to protect 'non-designated assets', such as former estate worker cottages. It contains a 'style guide' for new developments, and it identifies more than a dozen green spaces, including the grassy centre of the public car park, to be conserved.

Parish councillor and farmer John Dawson said: "Clapham sits uniquely in the Dales because of the Ingleborough estate; it is still partly an estate village. The estate owns about forty of the houses, which historically has meant families can move in.

"We're also looking forward, and that's what we've demonstrated with the Neighbourhood Plan. It shows the community taking charge. We've lost the school. We lost the shop. But the community came together [to reopen the shop] and now there are 40 volunteers running it.

"People do want to have a say in planning. We don't want the unique character of this parish spoiled with houses in the wrong place or built in the wrong style. We want to attract employment that adds to the community. Tourism is where it hinges."

Clapham cum Newby Neighbourhood Plan steering group member, Anne-Marie Bond, said: "I volunteered for Broadband for the Rural North, which was bringing fast broadband to the village, and from that got involved in the Neighbourhood Plan. Everybody has a can-do attitude here."

Steering group member Robert Klottrup added: "When we did the surveys, a lot of people kept saying, 'We want to have a voice'. This, the Neighbourhood Plan, is a way of facilitating that.

Maria Farrar said it was encouraging that the school bus taking children from the parish to the primary school in Austwick was now full.

The Authority's Member Champion for Sustainable Development, Richard Foster, said: "The Clapham cum Newby Neighbourhood Plan policy on designated heritage assets really stands out. The plan identifies buildings and other heritage assets which are not listed or scheduled, but which are important to the heritage of the parish and which local people want to protect from harmful development and ideally enhance.

"It's a really positive thing to have done. Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to establish their own policies to shape future development in and around where they live and work."

The designated Clapham cum Newby Neighbourhood Area corresponds to Clapham cum Newby Parish and is located within two Local Planning Authority Areas, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and North Yorkshire.



George Sheridan and dog Evie, John Dawson, Robert Klottrup, Anne-Marie Bond, Jill Gates and Maria Farrer outside the volunteer-run village shop. Surveys carried out by the neighbourhood plan steering group suggest that the community regards the shop as the village's most important asset. George, Robert, Anne-Marie and Jill took part in the steering group, while John and Maria are parish councillors.

Local Plan submitted for inspection

The National Park Authority formally submitted the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2025-2040 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in August for independent assessment.

A Planning Inspector is now examining the Plan for 'soundness' - whether it is fit for purpose and capable of being adopted and used for decision-making.

As well as conserving the most important aspects of the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, the Plan is attempting to provide modest housing-led growth centred on three of the area's main service centres (Grassington/Threshfield, Hawes, and Sedbergh). The aim is to help reverse de-population and mitigate against the National Park's ageing population by retaining and attracting younger working age households.

The independent examination will check whether the Plan is legally compliant and conforms with national planning policy.

A series of public hearings took place in Bainbridge during early December on a range of issues raised by the Inspector. The next stage will likely be to publish a list of modifications for public consultation, and later in the spring for the Inspector to publish his report of findings, which might include a list of amendments to the Plan.



The Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan seeks to encourage new affordable housing, as seen here, from the air, in the village of Bainbridge

The submitted Local Plan, as well as information and updates on its progress, can be found on the Authority's website at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/local-plan-2025-40**

Sedbergh Economic Partnership: working together for a stronger future



By Joanne Golton, Project Co-ordinator, SEP

Sedbergh, the largest town in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, has long been celebrated for its stunning landscapes, rich heritage and strong community spirit.

Building on this foundation, the Sedbergh Economic Partnership (SEP) brings together local businesses, organisations and public sector bodies - including the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Westmorland and Furness Council - to work collaboratively for the town's economic wellbeing.

At its heart, the SEP is about partnership. It provides a forum where different voices - from shopkeepers and tourism operators to education providers and civic leaders - can share ideas, identify challenges and shape a shared vision for Sedbergh's future.

The SEP focuses on some of Sedbergh's most pressing issues. Recruitment difficulties continue to affect businesses, with many struggling to attract and retain staff due to a limited local workforce and high housing costs. Ensuring that homes are available and affordable for all residents is therefore a key priority. The SEP advocates for development that meets community needs while respecting Sedbergh's distinctive heritage and landscape, and will be supporting implementation of the housing objectives in the new National Park Management Plan. Improving public transport, creating new employment and business opportunities, and promoting the profile of the town and district are also priorities.

Infrastructure and digital connectivity are vital areas of focus. Reliable broadband, strong transport links and modern facilities help businesses to grow and make it easier for home-based and remote workers to settle in the area. By working together, partners can coordinate efforts, share knowledge and influence wider policy decisions that support local enterprise and residents alike.

The SEP supports collaboration across Sedbergh and neighbouring communities, promoting the town's attractions, events and heritage assets.

A new tourism strategy is helping to coordinate marketing and events that attract visitors and support local shops, cafés and artisan producers. Alongside this, a refreshed promotional campaign will showcase the unique character of England's Book Town to a wider audience and celebrate what locals have always known - that Sedbergh has something truly special to offer.

The strength of the Sedbergh Economic Partnership lies in its collaborative approach. By uniting diverse voices, fostering dialogue between stakeholders and building consensus, the SEP helps turn shared challenges into shared successes. It demonstrates that Sedbergh's future is strongest when shaped together - rooted in partnership, guided by local insight, and committed to sustaining the charm, resilience and vitality that make the Yorkshire Dales National Park such a remarkable place to live, work and visit.



The Sedbergh Economic Partnership provides a forum for businesses and tourism operators to join other local stakeholders in helping to shape the town's future

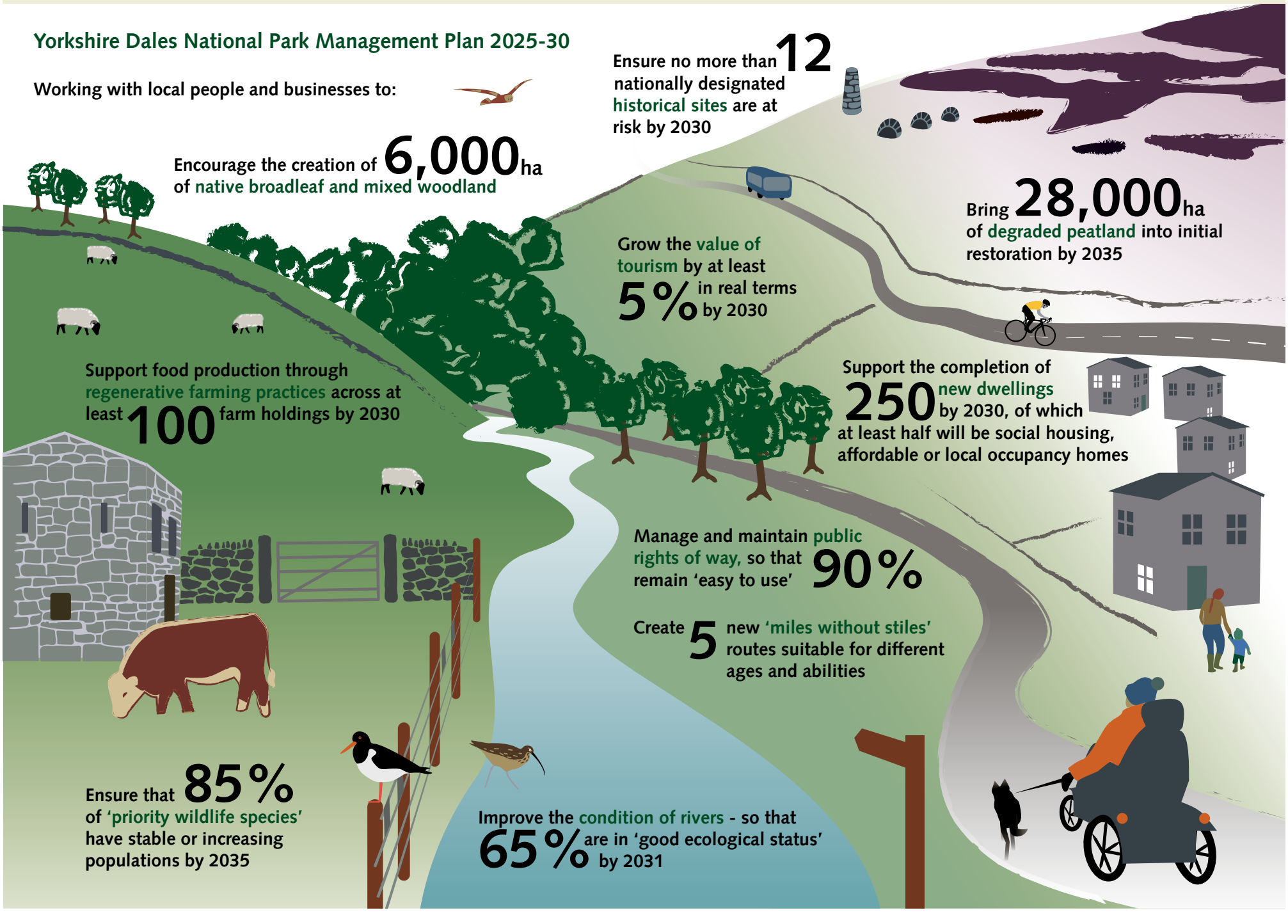
National Park Management Plan: ambitions & objectives

(continued from page 1)

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2025-30 is structured around six key ambitions, each accompanied by objectives that guide how those ambitions will be achieved.

Achieving each of these six ambitions is vital, but in the face of the climate and nature emergencies, and the response to the first public consultation, the ambitions for nature and tackling climate change have been given the greatest priority by the Management Plan Partnership in the updated Plan.

Some of the key objectives are illustrated here. These will all be achieved by working with local people and businesses.



Our 'cheesiest' festival yet!



By Tourism Officer Helen Dalton

This year's Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival, which highlights local produce and producers, has been a truly unforgettable celebration of flavour, craftsmanship and creativity.

With imaginative events, enthusiastic makers and breathtaking locations, it's no surprise that the Festival - hosted by businesses at their own venues throughout and around the National Park in October, and supported by an online interactive map - attracted a great amount of interest once again.

What were our Top 3 'cheesiest' moments?

We'd have to start with the Ledge 'n' Dairy Cheese Board. Perched high above How Stean Gorge, this daring dining experience offered guests the chance to abseil down to their own table - and then enjoy an artisan cheeseboard suspended from a bridge. With spectacular views and a tasting like no other, it became one of the Festival's most talked-about highlights.

Dave Hooker, instructor at How Stean Gorge, said: "We were discussing options to encourage more people to come, something a bit different. We do a Cheese n Climb afternoon, a via ferrata and back to the café for a cheeseboard. Then someone mentioned a cheeseboard off the bridge!

"It was a chance to support local cheese businesses and the Festival as well - and for the first time of doing it, it's gone very well. There are more mad people out there than we realised!".

For a more grounded experience, visitors were warmly welcomed to 'Meet the Maker' at Stonebeck Cheese in Nidderdale - a truly traditional farmhouse production. They learned about the farm's sustainability practices, met the native rare-breed cows, and discovered the dedication behind crafting delicious Stonebeck cheese.

Still want more cheese? A series of intimate cheese and wine tastings took place, including a brand-new experience at The Middle House, Askrigg. Here, guests enjoyed carefully chosen wines alongside artisan cheeses from Curlew Dairy - a micro dairy in Wensleydale producing traditional cheeses using milk from a small local farm.

Ben Spence of Curlew Dairy said: "For us, it's all about taking it back to those historic recipes. The National Park, Wensleydale and Yorkshire are brand advocates for any produce that comes out of the area".

Excitement is already building for next year's Festival, which will take place from 9 to 18 October 2026. Put the date in your diary. And, if you are a business wanting to take part, please get in touch.



The Ledge 'n' Dairy dining experience at How Stean Gorge - a memorable event from the 2025 Cheese Festival

To find out how to get involved as a local business, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/cheese-festival**, or contact **tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk**. And to enjoy fantastic footage from the 2025 event, visit our You Tube channel.

Next steps for new accessible multi-user trail in Wensleydale

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is pressing ahead with plans to create a safe, family-friendly accessible trail along the disused railway line between Garsdale Station and Hawes, a project shaped by strong local support and a shared desire to make the Dales safer and more accessible for everyone.



Horse riders above Mallerstang: like the Pennine Way, the Garsdale-Hawes route would be an accessible, multi-user trail

In 2022, over 2,300 people took part in a public consultation - one of the most engaged in the Authority's history - with nearly 80% backing the idea of a safe, inclusive route for walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists, and horse riders.

Since then, a dedicated Steering Group, including representatives from the National Park Authority and North Yorkshire Council, has been working to bring the route to life. A land agent has been employed to work with landowners along the route to secure access agreements, and, while many have engaged positively, some have objected, or not responded.

Owing to these objections and to keep the project moving, Members voted at the 30 September Authority meeting in favour of making a formal Public Path Creation Order (under the Highways Act 1980) to establish access. This legal process would seek to formally establish a bridleway along the former Wensleydale railway line. Members also asked for all landowners yet to agree to be contacted again to give them a further opportunity to engage and discuss the potential to offer access by agreement.

Lizzie Bushby, Deputy Chair and Member Champion for Recreation Management at the National Park Authority said: "In the initial consultation, a significant majority of those responding embraced the vision of a shared use bridleway, highlighting the community's support for a safe, inclusive travel corridor.

"In their responses, many local residents spoke movingly about the need for a safe way for children to walk and cycle away from the fast and narrow roads that pose daily risks. Their comments reveal real stories: parents picturing stress-free strolls with prams, grandparents hoping to rediscover the old line on foot, and those less mobile dreaming of barrier-free access.

"It's now down to us to make this happen and the decision that Members took is an important milestone in that journey".

The route of the former railway line has long been protected in local planning documents to preserve the option of reinstating the railway. With that unlikely in the short term, the focus is now on creating an attractive, accessible trail that benefits families, older residents, and those with limited mobility. Most importantly it gives children a safe and scenic way to explore their local community.

The project also holds real potential to boost the local economy, encouraging sustainable tourism and supporting local business in the Upper Wensleydale area.

Alongside the plans to initiate this Creation Order process, over the coming year the Authority will also be preparing information and carrying out necessary assessments to support the applications for planning consent required for the route.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Caring for the Three Peaks

Rangers have completed the third phase of works to repair one of the most well-used public paths in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

A third section of stone pitching has been installed at Brackenbottom near Horton-in-Ribblesdale on the traditional Three Peaks route up Pen-y-ghent, using 80 tonnes of stone blocks and 232 tonnes of aggregate from nearby Horton quarry.

The four-week job was led by Three Peaks Ranger Thomas Andrews, whose role is to maintain the paths on the 24-mile circuit.

The work was made possible only because of generous public support through the Three Peaks Project, which funds the post. Last year nearly £30,000 was raised from a combination of donations and sales of the Three Peaks app and merchandise.

The Three Peaks Code of Conduct for this very popular walking route helps keep the area special for everyone. Leaflets and posters are available free to local businesses who might wish to display them - please get in contact.

For more on how to support the Three Peaks Project, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/yorkshire-three-peaks**

Planting schemes to be monitored

Authority officers will be visiting sites across the National Park over the next few months as part of our annual monitoring of planting schemes.

The drop-in visits are to ensure compliance where trees, hedgerow, wildflower and other planting has been agreed as part of a granted planning application.

Further advice can be given on planting times and species, if necessary, and there will be follow-up visits in April to ensure implementation of the agreed schemes.

If you have any questions, please contact **planning.enforcement@yorkshiredales.org.uk**

Young creatives use heritage to explore green spaces

A group of young creatives is transforming the way we see nature, blending heritage, environment and creativity to explore green spaces and shared places.

The project is part of Going Places, a nationwide celebration of collections, heritage and community from Art Fund, the national charity for museums and galleries.

Going Places brings together 20 museums across the UK to share their collections through touring exhibitions, co-created with local communities, and made possible with generous support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Julia Rausing Trust.

Launched in 2025, the project will see young people exploring and connecting with nature through museum collections and creative activities, and sharing their voice through the exhibitions.

Eight young creatives, aged 18-30, are working with the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes, engaging in monthly meet-ups led by Museum staff and the Authority's Access & Engagement Project Officer, alongside external creative practitioners.

Museum Manager Fiona Rosher said: "The project is proving to be a great way to engage young people with our collections, and encourage them to explore themes linked with the environment and rural life. We're looking forward to seeing where the conversations take us and to help them share their voices through the exhibition in creative ways that will connect with other young people."

The initiative aims to strengthen the relationship between local museums and their communities through collaboration, while also engaging and providing opportunities for those who are under-represented and underserved.

The young creatives have been exploring the Museum's collections and considering potential themes to co-create the first touring exhibition. This will open at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire in May 2026, before being launched at the Dales Countryside Museum in September.

To date, the group have worked with Justine Boussard of Climate Museum UK and socially-engaged artist and photographer Jo Coates, and have made a visit to Nethergill Farm in Oughtershaw to explore the importance of peatland restoration, creating collagraph prints under the guidance of Charlotte Wilkinson.

Participant Lucy Kent said: "I really enjoyed learning more about the language used to describe different elements in and around the peat bogs. Also loved the print making, it was wonderful to try out a new technique. The event was really wonderful, and I loved being part of an activity that combined art, nature and science."

They will also get the opportunity to learn from other experienced artists and collaborate with young people across the 'Green Spaces, Shared Places' network, producing a second touring exhibition with a focus on sustainability.

Neil Heseltine, farmer and Member Champion for Promoting Understanding, said: "By giving the young creatives a platform, Going Places is shaping not just art but the future of environmental awareness."



Young creatives Emma and Rebecca taking part in a workshop on 'Self, Story & Place: Exploring Identity through Photography', with artist Joanne Coates on her farm at West Scrafton

If you are a young person interested in getting involved, contact **dcm@yorkshiredales.org.uk**, or to learn more about the project visit **www.dalescountrysidemuseum.org.uk**

FiPL brings upland farm into profit

James Newhouse (pictured) is producing beef and lamb on Meg's Farm in Long Preston. He says participating in the Farming in the Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) has helped his farm business and supported his aspiration to be a nature friendly farmer.



When we started five years ago, we didn't really know what we were doing. I'd spent 20 years working at Rolls Royce in Barnoldswick. We were fresh into farming. Then a farm officer from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Tarja Wilson, came out and helped me. She told me what cows do for the land, what nature does for your land, and she advised me on how best to farm our land. She then talked to me about grants and stewardship and all the other things that come with that.

She put me forward for a FiPL-funded 'Pasture for Life' project. That was about giving people like me a mentor. The FiPL programme has allowed me to talk to many different farmers, and use their knowledge to come up with what's best for Meg's Farm.

FiPL then supported us to pay for fences, hedges and water troughs. So, once we had the knowledge, we were supported to get the equipment to go forward.

Our land when we first got it was four fields: four big blocks, 130 acres of grazing land. What we're trying to do is split the land up. Instead of 30-acre fields, we want six-acre fields. Once we do that, we can move the stock every four days, and they'll always have a fresh bite of grass.

Our Belted Galloway cattle need 3% of their body weight in dry matter a day. Roughly, our cows will weigh 500 to 600 kg. So, what we're wanting is 25kg of dry matter per cow and calf combination per day. FiPL enabled us to buy a 'plate meter', which measures the dry matter in each field.

We want the grass to be about 3,000kg of dry matter per hectare when we put the cows on, and about 2,400kg when we take them off. They will eat some, trample some, leave some. By doing that it increases soil health, all the goodness, and starts to improve carbon sequestration.

FiPL has also allowed us to do a baseline survey. We wanted to understand the soil health, the ecology side, what the different grasses are. Now we know what we have, we will be able to see in a few years' time what difference the way we are farming has made.

Tree squares are really important as well. When the cattle are up high in hot weather they need the shelter from the sun. In the summer when it was really hot all the cows stood under the one tree that we had. Now we've planted more with help from Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. FiPL has enabled it all.

It's very hard as a farmer to set up a business. Without the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, without FiPL, there's no chance we would be where we're at. Now the farm on its own will make a profit.

FiPL is something that allows farmers to take a step back, look at their farm and say, 'how can I change it to be profitable and sustainable?'. Having the programme is really, really important for farmers at the moment. You are giving farmers a chance to be successful. And at the moment they need it, unbelievably need it.

For more information on the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant scheme and further case studies, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes**



Community Champions lead visits to the National Park

Championing National Parks for Everyone (CNPfE) is an 18-month long project that aims to give everyone the confidence to visit and enjoy our National Parks by addressing inequalities in accessing them, including for people from culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

As part of the project, 30 people have taken part in the Community Champion Training Programme to develop leadership and group management skills and learn about the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

The newly-trained Community Champions were supported to lead an activity in the National Park for members of their communities. Since completing their training, several Community Champions have gone on to establish walking groups and plan to undertake additional training with the Mountain Training Association.

The CNPfE Project Officer and Engagement Trainee have also delivered 16 visits to the Dales for community groups from Leeds, Bradford and Keighley.

For more information on the project and the Community Champions, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/championing-national-parks**



Jenny (fourth from right) and the Community Champions on a training day at Gordale Scar

Jenny Powell, a social worker and Community Champion from Huddersfield, is passionate about supporting mental wellbeing by encouraging others to access green spaces.

As a former Girl Guide, I've always loved being outdoors, camping, walking, just breathing in fresh air. It made me feel free, relaxed, and able to exhale. Later, working in mental health services, I saw how powerful nature could be for wellbeing. Walking outdoors helped people from Black and Asian communities access the countryside and improve their mental health, some even reduced or came off medication.

So, when I saw the opportunity to become a Community Champion, I jumped at it.

I did the training with a few friends, and it was one of the most positive experiences I have had. What stood out most was feeling safe and seen. As a Black woman, I have often felt like the only one in outdoor spaces. But this time, I was surrounded by people from diverse communities. I could be myself, with no need to explain. The trainers were knowledgeable, supportive, and reflective of the communities we come from; it made all the difference.

I am now leading walks with a women's group we formed this year, planning family outings, and even organising team walks at work.

The women's group have shared that going out as a group lessens their loneliness and isolation, gets them talking, laughing and sharing ideas on life, as well as doing something for themselves.

I am not alone in this journey. Maryam joined the programme while considering a career change to work more directly with her community. She told me that the training gave her the confidence to explore the Dales with my groups. She has made contacts and joined the Dales volunteers to keep supporting groups with the Learning & Engagement team.

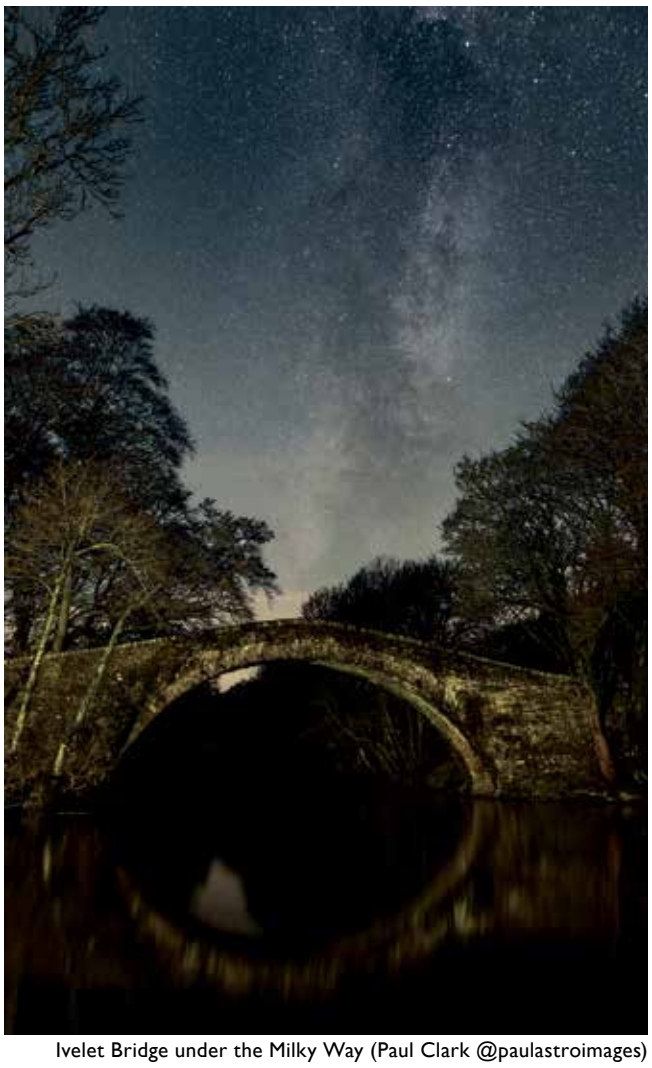
Kuli, who has always loved hiking with friends, saw the training as a chance to build leadership skills. She said: "I've learnt so much, from navigation and route planning to risk assessment."

Nas brought curiosity and enthusiasm to our group. He said: "I've learnt about the wildlife, how to commute from Leeds, and how to lead walks safely.

"I'm proud to be a Community Champion and will encourage others from my community to explore the Dales."

I truly hope the training continues and that more people from all communities get the chance to not only do the training, but to access the Yorkshire Dales and enjoy the beauty our country has to offer.

Yorkshire Dales marks five years as a Dark Sky Reserve



Ivelet Bridge under the Milky Way (Paul Clark @paulastroimages)

2025 marks the fifth anniversary of the Yorkshire Dales being designated a Dark Sky Reserve - international recognition of our exceptional night skies and minimal light pollution.

The National Park is home to some of the darkest night skies in the country. We're proud to have large expanses unspoiled by light where it's possible to see the Milky Way, planets, meteors, and even the Northern Lights.

Designation in December 2020 was the culmination of five years' hard work that was strongly supported by Parish Councils, local businesses, community groups and residents. This important status helps us raise awareness, conserve and celebrate this very special quality.

An annual report is submitted to DarkSky International (formerly International Dark-Sky Association) each year, detailing the wide range of initiatives undertaken to preserve and protect our dark skies. A key component is demonstrating their quality. This is achieved through two methods: manual readings taken with handheld sky quality meters, and continuous monitoring via permanent light sensors installed throughout the National Park.

Fortunately, we are supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who venture out on the darkest nights to gather the essential data we need.

At the heart of Dark Sky Reserve status is spreading the word about the opportunity to enhance our dark skies with appropriate lighting - reducing energy costs and carbon footprint along the way.

We have tips on choosing good lighting on our website, alongside a more detailed downloadable document with examples of lighting that should be considered to reduce nuisance and light pollution, and to benefit nocturnal wildlife. The National Park Authority has asked for details of lighting schemes as part of planning applications since 2006.

Over the past few years, the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund has contributed grant funding to four parish council-led dark-sky friendly lighting schemes. The latest is in Threshfield, where the existing incandescent streetlight bulbs will be replaced with 25 dark sky-friendly LED streetlights. These will be dark sky-compliant in terms of colour, intensity and direction, and wildlife-friendly.

With urban areas blighted by light pollution in the UK, the quality of the National Park's dark skies is becoming increasingly important and is creating a growing market for tourism businesses, including out of season stays.

Since 2016, we have worked with local businesses, dark sky experts and partner organisations to hold an annual Dark Skies Festival. Dark Sky Reserve status has helped the event to develop and encourage more year-round visitors - the 11th Festival will take place from 13 February to 1 March 2026.

Everyone should have the opportunity to experience the wonder of a truly dark night sky. Through the Generation Green project, the Authority delivered over 40 'Night Under the Stars' visits for disadvantaged young people aged 7 to 18 from under-served school and community groups, with the aim of widening access to the National Park, connection to nature, and wellbeing.

Highlights included the 'Moon Palace' observatory bus, farm experiences at Hill Top Farm, Malham, and using bat detectors. For one group from Bradford on a residential visit, the best bit was the night walk "because we got to play hide and seek, with head torches".

Achieving and maintaining Dark Sky Reserve status lends credibility and encourages meaningful public engagement. Recognition not only helps raise awareness and foster a sense of pride, but also strengthens efforts to promote responsible lighting practices beyond the boundaries of the National Park.

Find out why our dark skies need protecting and how you can help, including how to become a Dark Sky Friendly business, at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/dark-sky-reserve-guidance-for-residents**