YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY **ITEM 12**

Date: **12 December 2023**

Report: **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTATION AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS' REPORTS**

Purpose

1. To provide feedback from meetings attended by Members as representatives of the National Park Authority since the last Authority meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Members consider and note the reports from the Authority's representatives.

Background

3. Members represent the Authority on a wide variety of Partnerships and, in order to keep Members and Officers updated on this representation, formal reports are brought to each full Authority meeting.

4. Member Champions are also engaged in a wide range of activities. Champions take turns in bringing annual reports to the Authority meetings –reports were due from the Member Champions for Corporate Management and Promoting Understanding – reports attached.

5. These formal reports provide the opportunity to update members on the work of the various partnerships we are involved, a chance to question member representatives and Champions and a means by which we can continually assess the value of these partnerships and Champion roles.

6. The **Appendices** include:
   1) A list of Partnership Meetings attended in the last quarter;
   2) The reports of the Member Champions for Cultural Heritage and Recreation Management.

Rebecca Eslick
Committees Officer

23 November 2023

Appendix 1

List of Partnership Meetings September 2023 – November 2023

Title	Member	Date	Attended	Report
1. National Park Management Plan Steering Group	N Heseltine	08/09/23	Yes	See Chairs Report

Appendix 2

a) YDNPA Member Champion for Cultural Heritage Report December 2023

Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership – this multi-faceted partnership project has been running for several years with a specific focus on the landscape within the northern extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Projects have included the recent restoration of the Smardale Lime Kilns, archaeological test pits, drystone walling, historic route ways and mapping of historical features within the landscape. The project concluded with a celebration event at Shap Wells Hotel in September this year. More specifics details about the projects delivered by the Partnership can be found online at https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/westmorland-dales-hidden-landscapes-partnership



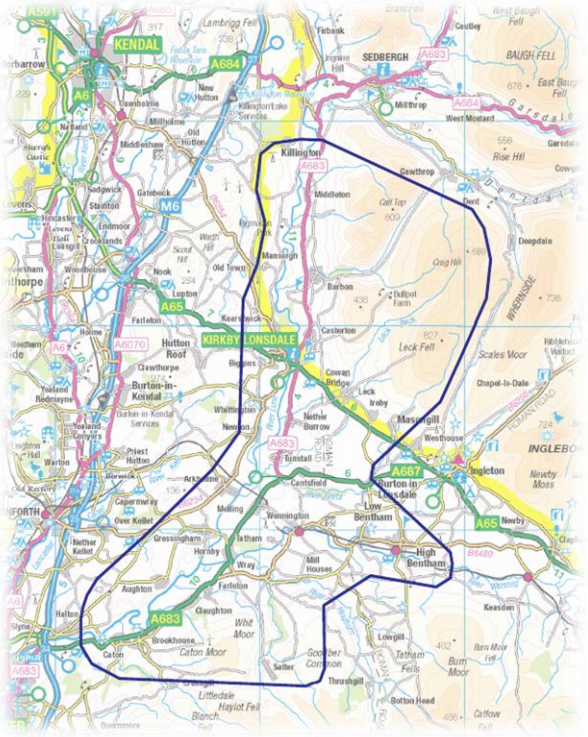
Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership celebration cake

Our Common Cause – Yorkshire Dales National Park is lead partner in this £3m partnership project which is being led by the Foundation for Common Land. The project has an ambition to conserve, enhance and broaden understanding of the culture and natural heritage of commons and commoning in upland England. YDNPA is a joint partner in this project alongside the Lake District National Park and Shropshire Hills.

Dales Archaeology Day – Saturday 11th November at Middleham. This show-case event boasted a full house with around 80 attendees. Sarah Whitley and independent landscape archaeologist, David Johnson started the event with an overview of the Smardale Lime Kilns Project; Yvonne Luke from Ingleborough Archaeology Group presented The Sleights Pasture prehistoric monument complex 'Druid's Temple'; and Roger Doonan introduced the concept of geochemical surveying to reveal 'Ghosts in the soil'. Lunch break was long enough to allow delegates time to explore the delights of Middleham before the afternoon sessions delved into the underground caves and landscapes of Ingleborough Common with

Rick Peterson from the University of Central Lancashire and Keziah Warburton talked us through her PHD research into the use of Geographical Information Systems for taphonomic analysis of early Neolithic cave burials.

Three Counties Project – this is an emerging project which forms part of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. The project will deliver archaeological investigation work in the Lune Valley, dissecting the three counties if Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire. The key themes of the project are Route Ways Through the Ages and Prehistoric Past. The initial outline bid has been approved and the YDNPA Historic Environment Team are currently working on a submission for the full application phase.



Proposed intervention are a for the Three Counties project

Out of Oblivion Website – this is an online historic landscape resource which belongs to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Initially launched in 2004, the site offers information on selected information from YDNP's Historic Environment record. The site was out of date and lacked maintenance so a revamped website was launched in autumn this year. With a new contemporary look and easy to navigate information, it is worth taking a look. https://outofoblivion.org.uk/

Historic Environment Record – The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act has brought into law a statutory duty for relevant authorities to maintain a Historic Environment Record (HER) for their area. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority maintains the Yorkshire Dales Historic Environment Record. YDNPA does not currently have a dedicated resource to undertake this task, relying instead on all members of the heritage team to update the record as and when relevant. This ad hoc approach is not ideal for the optimal maintenance of the now statutory HER. It is expected that some funding may be made available from government to bring-in

addition resource, we are awaiting further confirmation of what this might look like and how YDNPA can benefit.

Development Control – Sarah Whitley has been working closely with YDNPA Planning team to update the historic environment validation guidance to reflect requirements of NPPF. Archaeology conditions have been revised to be clearer and more robust. This will ensure better recording of the historic environment through development survey work which is delivered at the expense of the developer.

Agri-Environment advice – Countryside Archaeology Adviser, Luke Bassnett Barker has been working with farmers and landowners from across the Park on Countryside Stewardship consultations, with a total of 62 completed since January 2023. We have been involved in 100 consultations concerning the planting of trees where the site requires a historic environment assessment. We have been involved in two field surveys as part of the Farming in the Protected Landscape Scheme (FiPL) at Sawyers Garth and Gaythorne Hall. Some additional projects are using FiPL funds to protect archaeological remains from potential damage from management prescriptions.

Barns and Buildings at Risk – YDNPA Building Conservation Officer, Peter Reynolds has been working to identify barns which would benefit from investment from YDNPA barns conservation project. Work is expected to begin shortly on barns at Angram and Myers Garth. Peter is also tasked with assessing and monitoring buildings at risk, for which YDNPA has a small fund to help with repairs. This year our Buildings at Risk fund has helped to repair a milepost at Aysgarth which had be damaged by a passing vehicle, and small-scale repairs to mine buildings at the Old Gang Mines. Linton Clapper Bridge has also been identified for investment and quotes are currently being sought for the work.

Cultural Heritage Strategy – this strategy underpins cultural heritage actions in National Park Management Plan and will be updated concurrently with that Plan. The emerging strategy holds an ambition to strengthen relationships with existing archaeology groups, identify opportunities to bring wider participation into archaeological and historic environment volunteering, bringing the historic environment into nature recovery, and a renewed focus on how the historic environment can work to improve climate change outcomes and mitigate carbon emissions.

Acknowledgement

I want to conclude by commending Sarah Whiteley and the Historic Environment team for the dedication and hard work they deliver on behalf of the YDNPA. They are a small but mighty team with a vast breadth of knowledge and expertise covering many aspects of the identification, recording, advising, monitoring and conserving our valuable historic environment and cultural heritage. It is a real pleasure working with this team, all of whom bring a level of realism, tenacity and charisma to their work.

Libby Bateman

b) Annual Report of the Member Champion for Recreation Management

Rights of Way (includes National Trails and Miles without Stiles infrastructure)

- 91% of routes surveyed were easy to use in March 2023, and a further 3km of routes have been identified as accessible in 2023/24, taking the current total to 251km (9.6%) that are suitable for users of all ages and abilities.
- Work on the implementation of the Coast to Coast Path National Trail has commenced. A Land Agent has been appointed to act on behalf of the Authority in negotiations with landowners for the legal orders required to create the route on certain sections of what is currently 'Open Access' land. There are 20 potential legal orders to put in place prior to Oct 2025 when the proposed official opening of the route will take place.
- Funding from Defra has enabled the purchase of a Tramper at Aysgarth. This will be bookable from 2024 but a volunteer facilitated 'soft launch' has proved very popular.
- £18,500 has been raised so far this year to fund the cost of maintaining the Three Peaks Route and we have received two legacies, totalling over £70k.
- A new 780m public right of way in Tebay means that local people will no longer have to walk on the busy A685 road. The path better connects the Westmorland Dales with the Lake District National Park.
- Miles without Stiles was reviewed as part of the A&R programme and reported to the A&R Committee in November.

Car Parks and Toilets

- Major enhancement works at Grassington have been completed to increase the areas of green hard standing. This is a method using grassed blocks around lower areas of the car park which have suffered from increases in use during the wetter periods of the year.
- An additional £54k of car park income was received for the period April to June, indicating visitor numbers continue to be high post Covid and also the good weather during this period. Bad weather in July meant that numbers were much lower than expected, but they bounced back in August and September and we remain 5k ahead of expected income.
- A changing places toilet has been installed at DCM, and a second is due to open in Grassington in 2024.

Recreation Management (includes Open Access and Green Lanes)

- The LAF was held in June, with discussions about the public rights of way annual report, implementation of the Coast to Coast route, and potential funding to be used for access. The next meeting will be held in January, with new members to be appointed.

Cycling Infrastructure

- The Yorkshire Dales Cycleway has been extended to include the Westmorland Dales project area so people can explore and experience the heritage of the area by bike.
- Negotiations seeking creation agreements with landowners on the Hawes to Garsdale route are underway.

Volunteering

- In 2022/23 last year more than 7,000 volunteer days were provided with 22% of those days from participants coming from under-represented groups - young people (those aged 5 to 24 years inclusive), minority ethnic groups (all ethnic groups other than 'White – British'), and people who consider themselves to have a limiting long-term illness or disability.
- The third cohort of Up Skill Down Dale began in April, with a group of people aged 18 to 29 who want to learn new skills to help them develop a career in the green sector.
- I attended the Annual Volunteer Meeting, along with Neil Heseltine and Derek Twine. This was well attended and great to hear from the volunteer team at Aysgarth who have soft launched the use of the Tramper and from the Up Hill Down Dale volunteers.

Dark Skies (light meter readings and lighting compliance only)

- In March, four Dales businesses received grants from the NPA to cover the cost of introducing dark skies-friendly lighting. These are The Station Inn in Upper Ribblesdale, The Wensleydale Creamery in Hawes, the Stone House Hotel in Upper Wensleydale and the Yorebridge Sport and Leisure on the edge of Askrigg.

Other

- I was a member of the Authority's Visitor Services Review, along with Derek Twine (Member Champion for Promoting Understanding). This Review reported to the A&R Committee later in November.
- The Westmorland Dales Celebration Event held in September was a huge success. The event was well attended by 120 people who enjoyed 5-minute presentations on individual projects followed by walks and a coach tour. The project will end in February 2024.

Lizzie Bushby