Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 15**

31 March 2026

Report of the Chief Executive

Engagements

Since the last meeting of the Authority, the Chief Executive has been involved in the following:

Events

- A half day with the Northern Dales Area Manager to examine the recent works on the Coast to Coast trail (Hartley to Birkdale).
- A farewell event with the English National Park CEOs – marking the retirement of four CEOs (Broads, Dartmoor, Northumberland and Yorkshire Dales).
- Along with the Chair, hosted the Coast to Coast National Trail Launch event in Reeth.
- Unveiled a blue plaque to commemorate the life and work of Dr Arthur Raistrick (1896-1990) at Grassington National Park Centre. The event involved the Yorkshire Society and a number of local historic environment/archaeological bodies.
- Hosted an event for the York and North Yorkshire Active Travel Commissioner and her staff. This provided an overview of the Yorkshire Dales Active Travel Plan/strategic corridors and the complexities of delivering Active Travel solutions in a Protected Landscape.

Meetings

- A discussion with the consultants leading the recruitment for the new Chief Executive at the Authority.
- Two working group meetings reviewing the governance arrangements at National Parks England (NPE). These examined the Articles of Association, the Memorandum of Understanding and the Standing Orders. A report being commissioned and considered by the NPE Directors at their meeting in March.
- An interview with the Government commissioned project looking at future governance in Protected Landscapes.
- Two meetings of the English National Park CEOs Group where the following were discussed: the Office for Environmental Protection's (OEP) examination on the contribution of Protected Landscapes to the Government's environmental targets; the delivery of the Governments' 30x 30 target; Capital and Revenue grant funding in National Parks; Welcome and introduction to the new executive Director for NPE; A presentation from a staff representative on the role and function of the Society for National Park Staff; the development of 'Trusted Adviser status' for NPAs; NPE roles & responsibilities; an update from the Lead CEO for Agriculture & Rural Development;

the forthcoming NPE Board & CEOs meeting in the Lake District; an update on the work of the Nuclear Regulatory task force; A discussion on the Defra Annual Meetings with each of the NPAs.

- Two meetings of the Active Travel Officers Working Group. The following were discussed: an update on discussions with Active Travel England (ATE) on the Phase 2 scheme; sharing experiences across the ten NPAs; the rural design guidance; ATE support and training; and the replacement CEO for the group.
- The Annual Review Meeting with Defra Officials where the following were considered: the delivery of Government and NPA objectives in the YDNPA; future revenue and capital funding over the medium term; the challenges in delivering NPMP objectives; and the key issues, risks and asks over the next three years.
- Conducted five annual appraisal meetings.
- Along with the Chair, an Introductory meeting with new Executive Director NPE.
- An NPE Board Meeting hosted by Lake District NPA with the following agenda: Finance Update and Budget Approval for 2026/27; NPE Vision, Strategy and Comms Plan; Office of Environmental Protection; Governance Review; Protected Landscapes Partnership; Future of Farming in National Parks in England Paper; NPE Board schedule for 2026/27.
- A half day with the Interim CEO to discuss handover.
- Annual appraisal meeting with the Chair.

David Butterworth
Chief Executive