Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 15**

16 December 2025

Member Feedback on Partnership Representation and Member Champions' Reports for Cultural Heritage and Recreation Management.

Purpose of the Report

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.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

    - Corporate Plan Objective 31:

      Provide high quality, efficient and effective services and communications to the public and other stakeholders and so maintain the Customer.
    - Members Duties and responsibilities December 2020 (updated 2023).

Background

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

5. 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 Cultural Heritage and Recreation Management – reports attached.

6. 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.

7. The **Appendices** include:

    1) A list of Partnership Meetings attended in the last quarter;
    2) Report on Partnership meetings;
    3) The reports of the Member Champions for Cultural Heritage and Recreation Management.

Financial Implications

8. None

Legal Implications

9. None

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

10. None

Rebecca Eslick
Committees Officer

Appendix 1

List of Partnership Meetings September 2025 – December 2025

Title	Member	Date	Attended	Report
1. National Parks England	D Twine	2010/25 12/11/25 17/11/25 03/12/25 11/12/25	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	See Chair's Report
2. National Park Management Plan	D Twine	23/10/25 27/11/25	Yes Yes	See Chair's Report
3. Local Access Forum	L Bushby N Heseltine	9/12/25	Yes Yes	Verbal Report
4. Farming and Land Management Forum	Mark Corner N Heseltine	15/10/25	Yes No	See Report

Appendix 2

Partnership Meetings: Farming and Land Management Forum

The forum met on 15th October at Kingsdale Head Farm, chaired by Nick Prince who was elected chair after Adrian Thorntion-Berry stepped down having served his term, and who was thanked for his service.

Project updates were provided by Officers, on: ELMS Schemes and Catchment Sensitive Farming, Farming in Protected Landscapes, the Semerwater project, Grow Back Greener, and nature recovery projects. Iain McDonell, on secondment from the Environment Agency, is now leading the FiPL project. Member updates: the NFU has launched an Uplands vision, for prosperity, stewardship and resilience, which has some alignment with the YDNP Management Plan; a project manager is in place for the Swaledale and Wensleydale Environmental Farmers Group; the Rural Payments Agency is working on improving communication with customers.

The restructuring of the current fora - biodiversity, farming, and woodland – partly to improve focus of delivery of the NPMP was discussed, including the need for the biodiversity and farming forums to work more closely together. The membership of the Farming and Land Management Forum will be reviewed (this meeting was poorly attended) with the intention of having a more representative mix of ages and farming backgrounds.

After the meeting the group was kindly given an informative tour of the farm by co-owner Tim Yetman and the Conservation Manager, Jamie McEwan.

Mark Corner

a) Annual Report - Member Champion for Cultural Heritage

MC duties undertaken:

- Visited the exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum (DCM), celebrating the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Pennine Way.
- Toured the Thornborough Henges on a trip organised by the Upper Wharfedale Heritage group (UWHG) led by Christine Clarke from English Heritage.
- Attended a public meeting of the UWHG which presented their work on the Conistone Walls project which was followed by a walk in the afternoon led by landscape archaeologist Dr David Johnson.
- Undertook media training day at Yoredale.
- Attended the Yorkshire Dales National Park launch of the next Local Plan.

Progress

Highlights from work of Historic Environment Team from March 2025
Archaeology

- Senior Historic Environment officer's monitoring work with film company at Old Gang Mine – Wuthering Heights production Feb – March
- Austwick project, metal detector find – interim report on excavation has been produced. Initial application for funds for conservation from Historic England, resulted in additional requirements to commission a statement of significance by an appropriate specialist, scope further environmental work on the samples taken during the excavation, and confirmation of acceptance by museum and that landowner and detectorist were happy to deposit find.
- Ingleborough Caves project completed and press release about this generated significant interest. Through collaboration between Rick Peterson at UCLan and caving groups, discoveries have revealed new insights into the people and animals that once roamed the Yorkshire Dales, including the remains of a Bronze Age Auroch. Work is ongoing.
- Dudderhouse cairn Scheduled following request from SHEO resulted in press release which generated significant interest. HE subsequently undertook drone-based photogrammetry of the site and Scheduled Iron age/RB settlement near site of metal detector finds.
- New HE trainee, Clemmie Saunders, started with YDNPA in early October. Clemmie is being trained in,

- Preparing development control advice responses on applications which involved historic buildings and archaeological issue
- Historic environment record enhancement and,
- Agri-environment schemes.

Building Conservation casework

- Marske Conservation Area appraisal and extension adopted at full Authority meeting in September
- Grant aid offered to Ravenstonedale PC for repairs to roof of chapel – Listed Building consider to be at risk.
- Survey of Udals, Sedbergh, listed building at risk commissioned and funded from BAR budget.
- Input to fifteen Farming in Protected Landscapes project proposals for repair and restoration of traditional farm buildings.

Agri-environment/ infrastructure Projects

- Ongoing input to **Ure Dales Landscape Recovery Project** scheme development phase by Doug Mitcham resulting in significant HER enhancement of the project area and the scoping of field surveys.
- Work on spoil heap stabilisation on Barney Beck, Swaledale, under Tees Swale project began in September. Advice provided by Countryside Archaeological Officer, Luke Bassnett Barker, on the most appropriate locations for this intervention avoiding sensitive archaeological areas. Sites that were worked on were photographically recorded in advance of operations and subsequently monitored.
- **Coast to Coast path:** Clapper bridge repairs needed at Blakethwaite Smelt Mill, Gunnerside. Building conservation officer, Peter Reynolds, has prepared a heritage statement in support of SMC for the works to repair the bridge. Community Heritage officer, Douglas Mitcham, and HE trainee, Clemmie Saunders, have undertaken photogrammetric recording of the bridge and supporting wall also in support of the SMC. Senior Historic Environment officer, Sarah Whiteley, liaising between C2C project and Historic England on this case.

Challenges

The Senior Historic Environment officer is working on the new Cultural Heritage Strategy.

David Noland
Member Champion Cultural Heritage

b) Annual Report - Member Champion for Recreation Management.

Recreation Management – Annual Report
MC duties undertaken

- Garsdale-Hawes – attended steering group meetings, including visit to the Peak District
- Active Travel Plan – attended steering group meetings and provided comments on the draft plan
- Attended Staff Development Day
- Attended Annual Volunteer Meeting in October 2025
- Resilient Greener Car Parks – visited several car parks with Alan Hulme and discussed how they could be optimised for income, as well as made more resilient and welcoming to visitors; inputted to tender brief
- Chaired Cross Keys Member Project Briefing and Active Travel Training
- Attended LAF meetings
- Provided quotes for various YDNPA press releases
- Met with Jamila Gaskin to discuss National Parks for everyone

Progress - Garsdale-Hawes

- Following the Authority's decision to support the recommendations in the public path creation order report in September, our agents have written to all landowners with an update.
    - Letters to landowners that have either objected or been unresponsive have been offered the opportunity to contact the agents (by early December) if they wished to discuss the proposals with a view to offering access by agreement.
    - Letters to landowners in negotiation were informed of the decision and encouraged to respond to previous offers/valuations (again by early December).
    - Letters to landowners who have agreed in-principle to offer access by agreement have been re-assured that, should the Authority proceed with a creation order, their agreed settlement offer would still stand.
- Visited multi user routes (Tissington Train and Monsal Trail) in the Peak District to get an idea of how the routes are managed, risks associated, and issues around land ownership.

Active Travel Plan

- Endorsed by Members at the June Authority Meeting, and some opportunities for implementation are starting to appear.
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Coast to Coast

- Coast-to-Coast Path White Mossy Hill project is now complete and a press release issued in November after Rishi Sunak's visit to the site. A date has been set for the official opening in March 2026.
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PRoW

- The team have exceeded the 88% ease of use target with a score of 89%, and over £1.5m external funding has been brought in.
- The **new multi** access **bridge at Cross Keys, Cautley** is now in place and open but works to enhance the Public Bridleway and improve the parking area have re-programmed to be completed in early 2026.
- PRoW works have been completed in various locations including: Engineering works completed to 500m of public rights of way at Cawden (Malham) and Brackenbottom (Horton); repairs to 120m of previously engineered route at Buckden Pike; Replaced footbridges at Cotterdale, Turnbeck and Hebden Gill and repairs to Little Rayns Bridge, Wensleydale, and Hall Hill Bridge, Mallerstang.
- 7 new walks have been added to the Yorkshire Dales walking app – including at Barbondale, Clapham, Dent, Grassington and Sedbergh.
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Access

- YDNPA has been allocated £113k 'Removing Barriers' funding from DEFRA for 25/26. This is being spent on the following key projects:
    - Cautley Bridge Access Route: Works to improve 640m of bridleway and enhancing the road verge area (completed).
    - DCM: tramper/tramper storage.
    - Aysgarth: Improvement to access through woodland.
    - Stainforth Foss: Works to improve 75m of footpath to allow better access.
    - Design Guide for Inclusive Resting Places.
- As part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) funded Access to Eden project, surfacing works are ongoing to create a further 1.5km 'Miles without Stiles' route along the old railway line at Smardale (expected to finish in February).
- Installation of a Changing Places toilet at Malham National Park Centre has commenced; alongside works to make the centre more accessible and a new tramper.

Championing National Parks for everyone

- The final cohort of ‘Community Champions’ have completed their training programme, 28 in total, and Community Champions are now leading their own groups in the National Park.

Challenges

- Future capital spending.

Climate/Nature considerations

- Garsdale-Hawes and the Active Travel Plan will encourage active travel and provide corridors for nature as well as recreation.
- PRoW restoration has a positive impact on nature in the surrounding farmland, including where there are nature based designations e.g. SSSI/SAC/SPA.
- Greener, more resilient car parks will contribute to enhanced biodiversity.

Lizzie Bushby
Member Champion Recreation Management