Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 21**

24 June 2025

Member feedback on partnership representation and Member Champion reports – Natural Environment and Development Management

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 Authority meeting.

4. Member Champions are also engaged in a wide range of activities and take turns in bringing annual reports to Authority meetings.

5. These formal reports provide the opportunity to update Members on the work of the various partnerships we are involved with, 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 (**Appendix 1**);
   2) Reports from the relevant Partnership meetings (**Appendix 2**);
   3) The annual report of the Member Champion for Natural Environment and Development Management (**Appendix 3**).

Rebecca Eslick
Committees Officer

Appendix 1

List of Partnership Meetings March 2025 – June 2025

Title	Member	Date	Attended	Report
1. Campaign for National Parks	M Corner	21/05/2025	Yes	See Report
2. National Parks Management Plan Partnership	Chair	28/04/2025	Yes	See Chair's Report
3. National Parks England	Chair	08/04/2025	Yes	See Chair's Report
4. Housing Provision Advisory Group	R Foster	25/04/2025	Yes	No Report
5. Yorkshire Dales Access Forum	L Bushby N Heseltine	06/05/2025	Yes No	See Report
6. North Yorkshire Shared Prosperity Fund	R Foster	07/03/2025	Yes	NYSPF report https://yorknorthyorks-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s741/25030720Item 201020UKSPF2020252026.pdf
7. Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum	M Corner	28/4/2025	Yes	No Report

Appendix 2

Report on Partnership Meetings

Partnership Report – Campaign for National Parks Meeting - 21 May 2025

I participated in the on-line CNP Council meeting which focused exclusively on National Park governance. With the Westminster Government committed to introducing legislative changes to reform NP governance, CNP intend to campaign to promote change and wished to canvas views from its Council on what changes should be prioritised and how to best secure these changes.

Perspectives were shared by three presenters followed by break-out small group discussions which were then fed back in plenary. The presenters were Sarah Mukherjee, a Glover Review Panel member; Ashvi Daia and Hannah Corran, Future Leaders governance campaign; and Catherine Mealing-Jones, Chief Executive, Bannau Brycheiniog NPA.

The outcome of the discussions indicated a broad consensus that governance change was needed, and that effort should be made, coordinated by CNP, to identify and promote quick wins that would help whilst pursuing the more challenging changes to legislation and more wide-ranging reforms that could deliver a more fundamental improvement.

CNP recognises that NPA Boards are constrained in trying to address governance issues, which many would wish to, by legal, policy and resource issues and would like to work collaboratively with NPAs on this issue and have offered follow up discussions with interested NPA Chairs and Chief Executives.

CNP had prepared a short paper to inform discussion at the Council meeting. This includes examples of potential quick wins, possible legislative changes and more wide-ranging reforms. If Members wish to see this paper, please let me know.

Mark Corner
2 June 2025

Partnership Report - Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum - 6 May 2025

- Hannah Gardner was elected as chair, and Jon Bevan as vice chair
- Numerous suggestions were made for future agenda items, including walking routes on roads (for example on the 3 Peaks Route at Hill Inn), a proposed visit to the Coast to Coast route, car parking issues related to the 3 Peaks, fencing on open access land and a continued focus on access for all.
- In response to a recommendation in the previous meeting that blue badge holders should be able to park at YDNPA car parks for 4 hours for free,

Elliott Lorimer explained a full car park review is being undertaken due to changing government funding.

- Rachel Briggs presented the updated Terms of Reference.
- Alan Hulme presented the Public Rights of Way Annual Report – highlighting the 89% ease of use result (target – 88%), agreements made with North Yorkshire Council and Westmorland and Furness Council, and external funding supporting the rights of way networks work.
- Elliott Lorimer gave an update on the Active Travel Plan, highlighting that the draft network map had been published alongside a public consultation.
- Rachel Briggs provided an Officers Report – welcoming new and returning members. She highlighted two projects:
    - Accessible Aysgarth (2 x trampers, section of path resurfaced, new fencing for visitor management/farming – funded by FIPL)
    - Accessible Malham (new tramper, changing places toilet in production, improvements to the national park centre to make it more accessible) Projects
- Next meeting – 9th December 2025.

Lizzie Bushby

3 June 2025

a) Annual Report of the Member Champion for the Natural Environment

Member Champion duties undertaken

- Member of the Management Plan drafting group for Wildlife and participation at the Management Plan Forum.
- Representation at the Dales Biodiversity Forum.
- Representation and acting chair of the Dales Woodland Forum.
- Attendance of the Farming and Land Management Forum.
- Participation in the monthly Land Management Section (LMS) meetings, including site visits.
- Attendance of the Conservation and Community Directorate Management Team meetings.
- Participation in nature related ad hoc events, presentations, and meetings.
- Participation in the NPUK conference in Newcastle.
- Amendment/sign-off of relevant press releases.

Programme overview/current focus/challenges

Wildlife

The priority in the wildlife area has been defining the planned delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan and its linkage to the Nature Recovery Strategies of our host unitary and combined Authorities which are, or will shortly be, out for public consultation, and due for adoption by the end of the year. Sub-groups of the Biodiversity Forum are determining the monitoring regime for species that need bespoke conservation action and the approach to eradication of invasive non-native species. Jane Smart now chairs the Forum after Peter Welsh's retirement after many years of excellent leadership. The Terms of Reference of the forum are being revised to more directly support implementation of the wildlife objectives of the new Management Plan (NPMP).

The Nature Recovery Plan has informed the objectives in the 2025-2030 NPMP which will contribute to our wider aims to deliver against the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, '30x30' Target, and Land Use Framework. These and the climate objectives point to the crucial role of our farmers and landowners, including through sensitive livestock grazing.

Work has started on identifying and supporting Habitat Banks in the NP for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Regarding raptor persecution, dispiritingly, cases continue though the Police National Wildlife Crime Unit are being more active and have visited landowners in the Dales. A Dales' gamekeeper has recently been charged relating to the alleged killing of Hen Harriers. The future role of YDNP/Nidderdale Birds of Prey Group still needs to be determined.

Farming

In the farming sector, the government's faltering delivery of Environmental Land Management Schemes, including the freezing of Capital Grants, impacting our important Catchment Sensitive Farming work (where we have supported over 200 farmers in the last year), and suspension of new entrants to the Sustainable Farming Initiative has created a very challenging situation for our farmers. More positively, the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme, due to end in March 2025, has been extended for 12 months, with £1.5 m grant funding. This scheme has been a great success and is well regarded by the farming community. FiPL, since 2021, has supported just under 200 projects, with £4.5 m of funding. Officers are continuing to do a great job in helping farmers and land managers to navigate through this challenging period and the new Management Plan will develop proposals that will enable the launch of a new integrated farm advisory service to support farmers to take up regenerative farming practices and move into new agri-environment schemes will build on this important capability.

The Semer Water project collected baseline environmental data with the analysis to date suggesting that the major contribution to high phosphate levels is peat run-off from the surrounding moors, which should improve with on-going peat restoration projects.

The Yorkshire Peat Partnership celebrated its 15th birthday in October; it has been a great success and a fine example of partnership working. Its objective remains to restore all damaged peat in Yorkshire by 2035, though government has recently withdrawn the extension to the Nature for Climate Fund for peatland programmes.

Woodlands

Regarding Woodlands, our team are directly responsible for delivery of the Grow Back Greener (Woodland Trust) programme, initiated in 2021, which has been extended to March 2026, with a target of 25 ha of native woodland creation. Planting constraints, including wading bird protection and landowner withdrawals, has impacted delivery against target this year.

There continues to be a high level of applications regarding protected trees work Having overseen the update of the Dales Woodland Strategy in 2021, with the ambition to establish 600 ha of woodland each year until 2040, the Dales Woodland Forum has not been active this year. As part of the NPMP the intention is to complete a light touch review of the strategy which is an opportunity to revitalise the forum.

We are supporting the development and adoption of the White Rose Forests Strategic Plan for 2025-50 and its bid for further funding.

The 5-vear Tees-Swale nature recovery project is now in its final year.

Projects/funding.

An important initiative this year was the Authority organised Connected Landscapes: Connected Partners workshop which convened representatives from organisations involved in nature recovery projects in the NP to discuss how best to coordinate and fund these activities. There was agreement that YDNPA should continue to play the role of convenor and champion for nature recovery, and that the existing forums, perhaps with some tweaking, were the best vehicles for coordinating delivery of the NP Management Plan.

Good momentum is developing in identifying and maturing funding opportunities, and a project management framework and capability is being developed.

Emerging projects include a) House Birds project with YDMT and the RSPB, supporting local communities to take action to conserve local populations of four iconic house-nesting bird species; b) the intention
to submit a pre-development bid to NLHF for funding the “Jewels in the Dales” to revitalise the flower-filled landscape of the Dales through sustainable farming; and c) with YDMT and partners a NLHF-supported Three Counties: One River project.

I would like to thank all members of the Land Management Section for being supportive of me in the role, particularly Adrian Shepherd who will be missed after his retirement from the Authority in September.

Mark Corner
26 May 2025

b) Report of Member Champion for Development Management

Induction

In order to understand the contribution, I could make to the planning process, I spent a morning with the planning team at Yoredale. I also spent a morning visiting planning sites with Clare Bland (Senior Planning Officer). I am grateful to Richard Graham, Clare, and all those in the planning department who made these invaluable opportunities possible.

Member Champion duties undertaken

I have contributed to meetings of the Conservation and Community Directorate team, and the Champions meeting.

I have endorsed press releases in respect of several controversial planning issues.

Other activities

I chaired a well-attended Parish Council webinar at which officers gave presentations on archaeology and planning, building conservation, and an update on the local plan.

I attended the opening of the converted Methodist Chapel in Bainbridge, a project undertaken by Upper Dales Community Land Trust and North Star Housing Group and largely inspired among others by Yvonne Peacock, to convert the chapel into two affordable flats.

I attended a seminar on dark skies in the national park.

I attended a media training day at Yoredale.

Andrew Murday
June 2025