

# ***A distinctive, living, working, cultural landscape that tells the ongoing story of generations of people interacting with their environment***

## **Facts, figures and trends**

- The Yorkshire Dales National Park has a very strong and iconic identity, shaped by its distinct landscapes, geology, settlements, habitats, history and the people who live and work there<sup>1</sup>.
- The most recent quantitative assessment of landscape character<sup>2</sup> showed that between 1998 and 2003 the Yorkshire Dales landscape character area was either maintained or, in some limited instances, enhanced.
- The National Park now falls within 5 National Character Areas: ‘Yorkshire Dales’; ‘Howgill Fells’; ‘Orton Fells’; ‘South Cumbria Low Fells’ and ‘North Pennines’.
- A detailed Landscape Character Assessment in 2001, divided the former National Park into 40 character areas and provides a detailed account of the character of each<sup>3</sup>.
- Around 95% of the National Park is in private ownership. The predominant land uses are moorland, heathland and unenclosed grassland (around 52% of the land area), much of which is managed as grouse moor, and farmland (41%)<sup>4</sup>. Only 3.7% is covered by woodland, of which around half is commercial conifer plantation<sup>5</sup>.
- The farmland is enclosed by over 8,000 km of dry-stone walls and about 1,000 km of hedgerows<sup>4</sup>, the latter being found predominantly in the Cumbrian part of the Park.
- By the end of 2015, some 84% of the National Park was covered by some form of national agri-environment agreement, which rewards farmers and landowners for managing, and in some cases enhancing, key elements of the National Park’s landscape. This coverage is now declining rapidly (62% in 2018)<sup>6</sup>.
- 95% of the nationally-designated geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in ‘favourable condition’<sup>7</sup>.
- Since 2007 the number of active quarries has reduced from 7 to 5. In 2016/17 annual extraction was about 3.3 million tonnes, of which 59% was moved by road<sup>8</sup>.
- The most recent estimate was that there were some 4,250 ‘field barns’ (located outside the farmstead) within the Park<sup>9</sup> - a distinctive element of the landscape. Over 2,000 of these (45%) were assessed as being in ‘poor’ or ‘very bad’ condition<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecosystem service provision in the Yorkshire Dales National Park*, D.R.Shaw Consultancy Ltd (2017)

<sup>2</sup> *Countryside Quality Counts*, Countryside Agency (2007) – relates to the former National Park area.

<sup>3</sup> [Yorkshire Dales - Landscape Character Assessment](#) (2002)

<sup>4</sup> *Landscape Change in the National Parks of England and Wales*, Silsoe College (1991)

<sup>5</sup> Forestry Commission (2017)

<sup>6</sup> Natural England (2018)

<sup>7</sup> Natural England (2017)

<sup>8</sup> YDNPA (2017)

<sup>9</sup> *Field Barns, A Wasting Asset*, R White (1988)

<sup>10</sup> *A condition survey of traditional farm buildings in the Yorkshire Dales National Park 2006 – 2007*, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (2008)

- The National Park has the fourth darkest night skies of any local authority area in England<sup>11</sup>
- The Historic Environment Record for the National Park contains references and descriptions of over 39,000 historical features. This includes: 2,127 Listed Buildings; 292 Scheduled Monuments; and, 2 Registered Parks and Gardens.
- The National Park contains 46 designated Conservation Areas. These include the longest (Settle-Carlisle Railway) and the largest ('Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Barns and Walls') in England. The latter is on the national 'Heritage at Risk' Register.
- There are 5 Grade I or Grade II\*listed buildings on the national 'Heritage at Risk' Register<sup>12</sup>. A further 65 Grade II listed buildings had been locally assessed as being 'at risk' in the former National Park Area<sup>13</sup>. The total number of listed buildings 'at risk' (70) in the former National Park area is significantly lower than in 2006 (when 90 were 'at risk').
- 10 Scheduled monuments (3.4%) of the 292 are identified as being 'At Risk' on the national 'Heritage at Risk' Register<sup>12</sup>, with a further 57 (20%) identified as being 'vulnerable'. In 2007, 82 (40%) of scheduled monuments were deemed to be 'At Risk'.
- It is estimated that England's National Parks provide between £4bn and £6bn in gross value added for the national economy, and that many of these economic benefits are underpinned by the environmental quality of the protected landscapes<sup>14</sup>.

## Policy Context

[Yorkshire Dales National Character Area Statement \(2015\)](#); [Howgill Fells National Character Area Statement \(2014\)](#); [Orton Fells National Character Area Statement \(2013\)](#); [North Pennines National Character Area Statement \(2013\)](#); and [South Cumbria Low Fells National Character Area Statement \(2015\)](#) – describe the natural and cultural features that make up each distinctive landscape area; analyse the area's characteristics and 'ecosystem services'; and, provide guidance on the critical issues to achieve sustainable growth.

[Yorkshire Dales Landscape Character Assessment, \(2001\)](#) – describes landscape character in the Yorkshire Dales by splitting the National Park up into and landscape character areas (40 spatial divisions, with 34 covering dales/fringes and 6 covering blocks of upland) and also landscape character types (8 of these which cut across the character areas). Principally descriptive but contains some limited analysis of drivers for change.

[North Yorkshire and Lower Tees Valley historical landscape characterisation \(2010\)](#) and the [Cumbria Historical Landscape Characterisation \(2009\)](#) – characterise the landscape of the Yorkshire Dales National Park according to the physical expression of historical and cultural influences, notably field patterns and settlement form, agricultural practices and extractive industries.

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<sup>11</sup> [Night Blight](#), CPRE, (2016)

<sup>12</sup> [Heritage at Risk 2017](#), Historic England (2017)

<sup>13</sup> [Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority](#) (2012)

<sup>14</sup> [Valuing England's National Parks](#), Cumulus Consultants (2013)

**[Experiencing Landscapes: Capturing the cultural services and experiential qualities of landscape, Natural England \(2009\)](#)** – a qualitative assessment of the ‘services’ landscapes provide that contribute to people’s quality of life.

**[European Landscape Convention \(2007\)](#)** – highlights the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies.

**[National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG \(2018\)](#)** – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England, including in relation to development and policy proposals that affect heritage assets. Makes clear that “great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks”.

**[National Parks Circular 2010, Defra \(2010\)](#)** – provides an overarching statement of the Government’s policy for all National Parks with a renewed focus of achieving sustainable development through the pursuit of the dual purposes of conservation and public enjoyment/understanding.

**[Uplands Policy Review, Defra \(2011\)](#)** – sets out a range of measures to support hill farming, deliver public goods from the uplands and maintain sustainable upland communities.

**[Natural Environment White Paper, Defra \(2011\)](#)** – places renewed emphasis on the vital role of nature in a successful and sustainable society, with measures aimed at protecting and improving nature, reconnecting people with nature and growing a green economy.

**[The National Heritage Protection Plan, English Heritage \(2011\)](#)** - a framework for bringing together work by English Heritage and other partners within the sector to protect the historical environment.

**[Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment, English Heritage \(2008\)](#)** – provides guidance on conserving historic features in a manner appropriate to their significance, as well as promoting the historic environment as a shared resource that everyone can enjoy.

**[Joint Statement on the Historic Environment \(2009\)](#)** – a statement signed by all UK National Park Authorities and the principal historic environment and countryside bodies.

***An Historic Environment Research Strategy for the Yorkshire Dales National Park: 2010–2015***, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (2010) – sets out more detailed measures for enhancing the understanding of the historic environment

**[Adapting to Climate Change in the Yorkshire Dales National Park](#)**, National Park Management Plan Steering Group (2011) – anticipates some of the impacts, threats and opportunities posed by climate change in the context of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

**[8-Point Plan for England’s National Parks, Defra \(2016\)](#)** sets out Government ambitions to enhance people’s involvement in the interpretation of the historical environment and natural beauty, and to tell the story of cultural landscapes in National Parks.

**[The Dales Woodland Strategy 2013-2018, Dales Woodland Forum \(2013\)](#)** – sets out the Dales Woodland Forum’s policy towards the trees and woodlands within the National Park. Supported by the ‘Woodland Siting and Design Guide’, which includes detailed landscape character guidelines for new woodland.

## Issues

- There is a national policy drive towards managing a complex set of issues in a holistic way 'at a landscape scale'. There is overlap here with 'ecosystem services', which is an increasingly influential part of policy making.
- In view of the dynamic nature of landscape, should we be planning for new, locally distinctive landscapes, in addition to managing what we already have? Should we embrace an element of 'decline' in certain landscape features?
- With so much of the land in the National Park in private ownership, how can the economic interests of local farmers and land owners best be reconciled with delivering environmental benefits?
- What should be the long-term approach to woodland in the landscape – reducing impacts of commercial conifer plantations; more mixed woodlands; more native woodland, etc.
- What should be the long-term approach to managing the landscape impacts of the remaining active quarries?
- What are the likely impacts of Brexit on the Park's landscape and historical features (e.g. from changes in farming practice), and how should we respond to them?
- Does more need to be done to help retain and promote the value of the Park's 'dark skies'? Would there be economic and environmental value in seeking designation of all or part of the National Park as a 'Dark Skies Reserve'.
- Field barns are an intrinsic part of the landscape of large parts of the National Park – notably Swaledale, Arkengarthdale, Littondale, Upper Wensleydale and Upper Wharfedale. Many are redundant and almost half are in a state of significant disrepair. With little or no public sector funding now available, what is the realistic future for those buildings that are not located by the roadside?
- How can new development be encouraged and promoted in a way that enhances (but doesn't pastiche) the character and interest of the Dales' landscape. Is it possible to encourage more innovative and creative designs for new buildings that still sit well in the National Park's distinctive landscape?
- Potential climate change impacts on the Yorkshire Dales landscape include: trees becoming more prevalent in the landscape (but increased tree losses especially among newly established trees); increased pressure on water supplies with potential demand for increased reservoir storage; and drier summers potentially causing more erosion, subsidence and wildfires.
- The number of listed buildings 'at risk' has declined significantly in recent years. However, those that remain at risk are the most complex to tackle – often having no obvious beneficial re-use, and/or legal issues surrounding ownership, disputes etc. There are a further 133 buildings classed as 'vulnerable', which may become at risk if no action is taken. Need to look towards innovative re-use solutions to unlock the cycle of decline and incentivise repair.
- What role can local businesses play in helping to conserve and enhance the historic buildings and features of the National Park, and how can the value of these buildings and features be better used to support local businesses?

- Can historical buildings and features be put back at the centre of life in our local communities to encourage local pride, identity and distinctiveness? Does more need to be done to improve the understanding of building owners by making appropriate advice, materials, and construction skills easier to obtain? What opportunities are there for community uses of buildings that are otherwise redundant?
- How can we let people (both residents and visitors) be more 'hands-on' with heritage? What are the barriers to wider public access? Is the current balance between conservation and public access right?
- The sheer extent and variety of heritage features means that there is still much that we do not know – particularly in relation to the new areas of the National Park. What realistic options are there for filling these gaps in knowledge? What are the priorities and how significant are the risks of making decisions without this information?
- How to build on the successes of local (Ingleborough Archaeology Group, Swaledale & Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group, Upper Wharfedale Heritage Group) to increase our knowledge and promote wider understanding of the historic environment resource? How to engage a younger audience? How to make the information in the Historic Environment Record more widely accessible?
- The often harsh climate and weather has a significant impact on the condition of heritage features. This is likely to be exacerbated by the effects of climate change (hotter drier conditions in summer; increased wind and rain damage in winter). What needs to be done to understand and mitigate these impacts?
- The need to reduce carbon emissions and cut fuel bills is driving improvements in the energy efficiency of buildings, and take-up of renewable energy. How can such measures best be incorporated within the significant proportion of the building stock that pre-dates 1900?
- With the exception of field barns, efforts to protect and manage the Historic Environment have concentrated on the nationally-designated buildings and features, yet it is the commonplace which makes the largest contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the Yorkshire Dales. How should maintenance of this distinctiveness be addressed?
- Within the National Park there is a good track record of securing grants for landscape-scale projects. How can that be continued and where should be the focus for future area-based investment projects?
- What scope is there for private sector investment in the restoration and management of historical features through e.g. enabling development or corporate social responsibility programmes?
- What should the response be to Heritage crime?
- What are the opportunities for Heritage tourism?
- With 46 Conservation Areas now in the National Park (some of which haven't been fully appraised), and a statutory duty to formulate management proposals for all conservation areas, where should limited resources be targeted to achieve best outcomes for conservation areas (i.e. appraisal/designation/management).