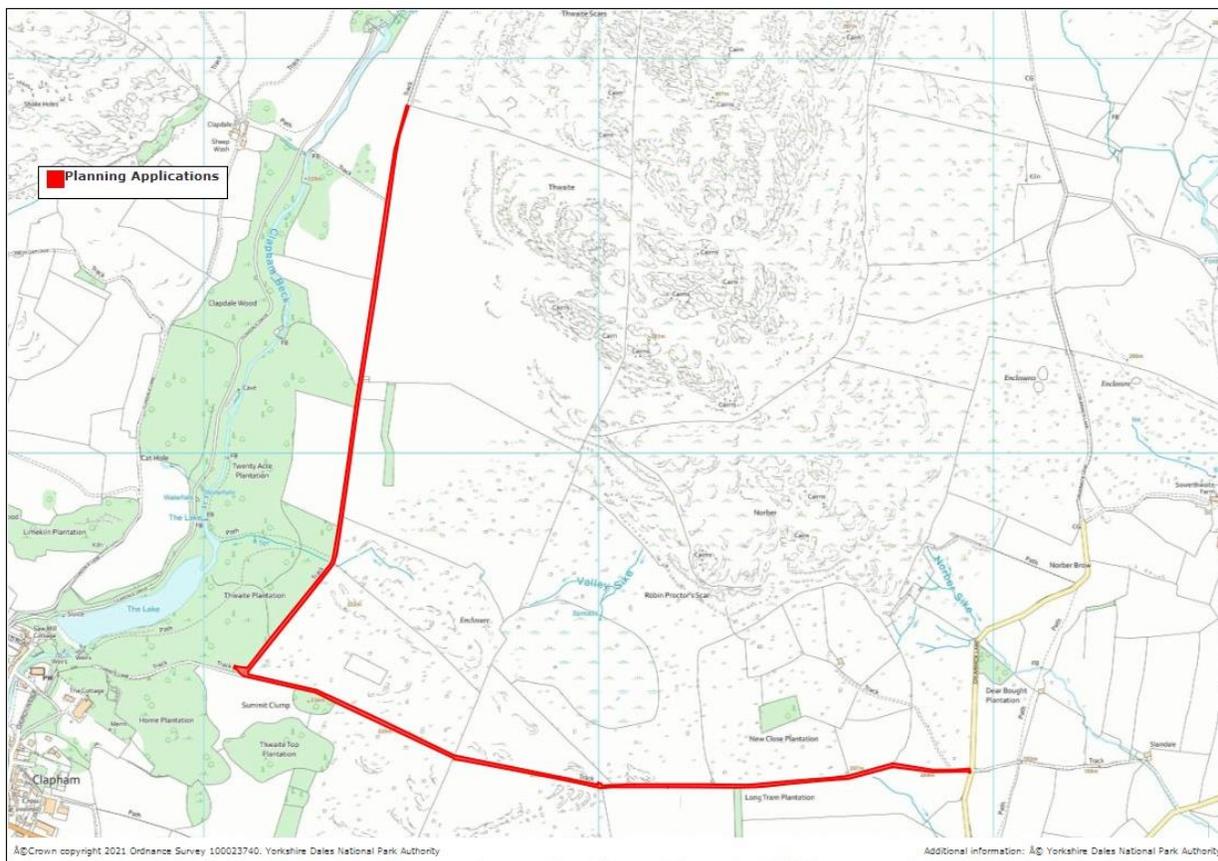


YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Committee:	Planning	Parish:	Clapham cum Newby Austwick CP
Date:	19 October 2021	Officer:	Tim Davis
Applicant:	Mr John Philip Farrer	Application No:	C/18/146E

Site Address: Long Lane, Thwaite Lane and Thwaite Wood, Ingleborough Estate, Clapham

Proposal: Full planning permission for creation of timber wagon turning and timber stacking area; maintenance and improvement of timber extraction route and installation of reinforced concrete crossing over the sheep underpass



REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

1. The Parish Council recommendation is contrary to the decision which the Head of Development Management proposes to take.

APPLICATION SITE

2. The application site includes significant sections of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane, which run between Austwick in the east and Clapham in the west, and a small section of woodland to the east of Clapham Beck.

PROPOSAL

3. Full planning permission for creation of timber wagon turning and timber stacking area; maintenance and improvement of timber extraction route and installation of reinforced concrete crossing over the sheep underpass

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4. None.

CONSULTATIONS

5. The comments of statutory and non-statutory consultees are summarized below:

Area Ranger – No objections. The proposed timber extraction route is along Public Bridleways on Thwaite Lane and Long Lane. The surface condition of the Public Bridleways should be maintained to the same standard, or above (if required by the applicant), prior to any development taking place or lorries accessing the lane. Limestone aggregate should be used for the surface of the Public Bridleways.

The applicant must consider Bridleway users whilst wagons are using the network of Public Bridleway to extract timber from the woodland. For example, signage instructing Bridleways users of heavy goods vehicles using the public right of way, adequate width for a lorry and a horse, and speed limits etc. The applicant has been notified that a method statement/risk assessment is required to ensure the safety of Bridleway users is maintained.

The proposed lorry turning area is off the Public Bridleway and therefore the applicant should consider the safe passage of Bridleway users when the site is being developed. The public bridleway should remain free from obstruction by any materials, plant, scaffold, vehicles, barriers or anything else associated with the development. The applicant should decide if the work site should be fenced off from the Bridleway, in order to ensure the health & safety of public footpath users and site personnel.

Wildlife Conservation Officer - No objections (subject to conditions).

Local Access Forum – No comments.

Natural England – No objections (subject to conditions).

Highways NYCC – No objections (subject to the details of the transport plan).

Clapham-cum-Newby PC – Concerns raised regarding the impact on the surface of the bridleway, the effect both in terms of safety and amenity of increased traffic on walkers and other users of Thwaite Lane and the likely effect of large vehicles on narrow roads in Austwick. Clapham cum Newby Parish Council would prefer a different route involving smaller vehicles and directed towards the Clapham end of the byway.

Austwick & Feizor PC – Objects to the application. It is an inevitable consequence of the proposals that heavy goods vehicles will pass, frequently and for the foreseeable future, along the length of Thwaite Lane, and through the centre of Austwick village using Townhead, High Street and Clapham Road. This entails HGVs negotiating a much-used bridleway, an extremely steep and narrow lane, and highways containing tight junctions and bends, narrow sections, many parked vehicles, a primary school, the village shop and post office, and a public house, together with many dwellings on both sides of the road. This would cause an unacceptable level of risk, damage and disturbance to the people, infrastructure and environment of the area. As such, the applicant should seek an alternative route to extracting timber, closer to Clapham and accessible to a highway, that would not require the proposed engineering to, and use of the length of Thwaite Lane and the use of the highways through Austwick village.

Trees and Woodlands – No objections. The Authority has been consulted on the Ingleborough Estate woodland management plan, which has been approved by the Forestry Commission and is in compliance with best practice. The plan includes thinning, transformation of conifer to broadleaved species, improvement of woodland margins, extension of and connective planting to improve the resilience of ancient semi-natural woodland, which are all great beneficial measures for a woodland area that has been neglected.

The estate will be keen to thin out ash affected by ash dieback (if left the timber will be worthless) and also thinning out larch and rhododendron which is susceptible to phytophthora ramorum, which is highly infectious and present in the area. Foresters are being advised to fell and sell larch before the trees become infected.

PUBLIC RESPONSES

6. A site notice was displayed on 17/6/21. Two letters received raising concerns about the impact of development on highway conditions within Austwick.

ASSESSMENT

Key Issues:

- Principle of development
- Impact on visual amenity
- Impact on highway conditions
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on public right of way

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

7. The woodland to the east of Clapham Beck has been neglected for several decades and is now in need of thinning due to the presence of ash dieback and phytophthora ramorum (a highly infectious disease present in the nearby area). The proposed woodland management plan has been approved by the Forestry Commission and is consistent with the objectives of

the new Dales Woodland Forum, which aims to bring existing woodlands back into active management.

8. The proposed turning bay and stacking area would be created at the junction of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane and within the woodland area. Timber wagons would access the stacking area from Austwick via Thwaite Lane. Forwarders (used to transport felled logs from the stump to the stacking area) would access the stacking area from the woodland via Long Lane. The proposed development would include the partial resurfacing of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane with crushed limestone and modest widening of parts of Thwaite Lane.
9. The proposed development would have a positive impact on the quality and structure of the woodland and can be supported subject to the impact on visual amenity, highway and bridleway conditions, and the nearby SAC/SSSI.

IMPACT ON VISUAL AMENITY

10. The proposed turning bay would be formed at the junction of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane and would include the removal of approximately 16m of drystone wall. The turning bay would project approximately 15m into the woodland in a westerly direction and would be finished with 75mm crushed (local) limestone. Two gates would separate the turning bay from the stacking area and a further short section of track.
11. The turning bay and stacking area would be visible from Thwaite Lane and Long Lane, which are part of the Pennine Bridleway, and would require the removal of 25-30 semi-mature trees and a small section of grass verge on the opposite side of the track. The removal of a section of walling would have a somewhat adverse impact on the appearance of the site from close views, but the overall impact would be negligible due to screening afforded by the surrounding woodland. The limestone finish of the turning bay would be consistent with the rest of the proposed works to the track.
12. The proposed works to Thwaite Lane and Long Lane could have a more significant visual impact, particularly the widening of Thwaite Lane and the loss of parts of the grass verge. At present, the track along Thwaite Lane measures approximately 2.5m wide and includes a grass verge either side. To facilitate access by timber wagons, the track would be widened by up to 50cm and re-surfaced with crushed (local) limestone (75mm). The track would not be widened where it can already accommodate a timber wagon and re-surfacing would be limited to those parts of the track where the surface has eroded because of regular use by tractors/agricultural vehicles and heavy rain.
13. A photo record and indicative cross-sections of Thwaite Lane have been submitted to demonstrate that much of the grass verge either side of the track would be retained thereby maintaining the character of Thwaite Lane. The proposed resurfacing of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane would involve spreading up to 750 tonnes of crushed (local) limestone across its most uneven sections. Whilst parts of the Thwaite Lane include a central grass strip, the crushed limestone would be spread across the full width of the track (the stone is liable to move if not spread full width and capped properly). Where no re-surfacing is required and there is an existing grass strip, the twin-wheeling character of the track would be retained.

Over time, it is expected that a central grass strip would develop as timber wagons would not use the track for significant parts of the year. That said, a full-width limestone track would be largely consistent with the character of much the existing track, particularly Long Lane.

14. A reinforced concrete crossing measuring approximately 3.75m x 2.75m and finished with crushed limestone would be formed over the sheep underpass along Thwaite Lane. The crossing would be largely undistinguishable from the rest of the track. Drainage grips would be located along the track edges to help drain water of the tracks. At present, it is not clear exactly where these would be located and what impact they would have on the appearance of the tracks. As such, further details should be secured by condition prior to any drainage grips being installed.
15. Overall, the works to both Thwaite Lane and Long Lane would make navigating the tracks significantly easier for timber wagons and other bridleway users and would have a negligible impact on their character and appearance and contribution to the wider landscape. As such, the proposed development would not have a harmful landscape impact.

IMPACT ON HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

16. Timber wagons and stone delivery lorries would access the site from Austwick via Thwaite Lane. Whilst the woodland is closer to Clapham than Austwick, several narrow tunnels close to the Clapham entrance to Thwaite Lane prevent access by timber wagons and forwarders. Consequently, the only viable route to the woodland and turning bay is from Austwick.
17. Concerns have been raised by Austwick Parish Council and residents regarding the impact of both timber wagons and stone delivery lorries on highway conditions within Austwick. Timber harvesting would take place for several months every year over the first few years, mainly during late spring, summer and early autumn (when ground conditions are favourable). In the initial years of intervention, 20-40 wagon loads of timber would leave the site per annum, reducing to 20-30 wagons every 4 to 7 years. As such, it is likely that on average only 1 wagon load of timber would leave the site on any given day. Up to 6 stone delivery lorries would access the site per day for a period of approximately 1.5 weeks whilst the re-surfacing works are ongoing.
18. The Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal, provided that the transport details contained within the Design, Access and Operational Statement are adhered to regarding the number and timing of vehicle movements. This would limit both the number of vehicle movements during the week and the time of vehicle movements to avoid the start and end of the school day. In light of these details, particularly the limited number of vehicle movements, the development is very unlikely to have a significant harmful impact on highway conditions.

IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY

19. The application site includes two sections of track that run within or immediately next to the Ingleborough Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ingleborough Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
20. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been submitted to Natural England by the Authority's Senior Wildlife Officer. The HRA found that the proposed development would not

have a significant impact on the SAC/SSSI (subject to conditions). Natural England has no objections to the proposed development provided that it is limited to the areas within the existing drystone walls and that no drainage grips would be sited under the walls and into the designated sites. This is consistent with the details of the updated Design, Access and Operational Statement submitted by the applicant and can be secured by condition.

21. Policy W2 requires development that would have an impact on biodiversity to make a proportionate on-site contribution to wildlife enhancement. In this instance, the woodland management plan includes thinning, transformation of conifer to broadleaved species, improvement of woodland margins and the extension of and connective planting to improve the resilience of ancient semi-natural woodland. These are all great beneficial measures that would improve woodland management and support biodiversity in accordance with W2.

IMPACT ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

22. Thwaite Lane and Long Lane are both public rights of way and together form part of the Pennine Bridleway. Ingleborough Estate has a right of access across the full length of Thwaite Lane.
23. The Authority's Area Ranger has been consulted and does not object to the proposal, provided the surface condition of the Public Bridleways is maintained to the same standard, or above (if required by the applicant), prior to any development work taking place or lorries accessing the lane. Limestone aggregate should be used for the surface of the Public Bridleways.
24. The Area Ranger has also commented that a risk assessment or method statement should be submitted to identify what mitigation measures are necessary to ensure that bridleway users can share the Public Bridleway safely with timber wagons. The Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager has commented that appropriate mitigation would include stopping vehicles, turning off engines and waiting for horses to walk past the site to a safe distance before proceeding. An appropriate risk assessment/method statement should be secured by condition prior to timber wagons or stone lorries accessing the site.
25. The applicant has already stated that the remaining grass verges would provide suitable passing places for bridleway users and that timber wagons are no wider than some agricultural vehicles already using Thwaite Lane.
26. The Public Bridleway should also remain free from obstruction at all time, but if a temporary closure of either of the Public Bridleways is required this is initiated by contacting the Area Ranger (6 weeks before the work).

CONCLUSION

27. The proposed works to the woodland on the east side of Clapham Beck are required to improve the quality and structure of the woodland and are consistent with the aims of the Dales Woodland Forum. The creation of a turning bay and stacking area and the alterations to Thwaite Lane and Long Lane are required to facilitate the necessary forestry works and would not have a harmful impact on visual amenity, highway conditions or the nearby SAC/SSSI. Use of Thwaite Lane as a timber extraction route is very unlikely to impede the

continued use of the Public Bridleway by members of the public. As such, the proposed development is consistent with policies SP4, W1, W2 and W3 of the Local Plan (2015-2030).

RECOMMENDATION

28. It is recommended that permission is GRANTED subject to appropriate conditions including those listed below:

- Access in accordance with haulage route. Timber wagons and stone delivery lorries shall not travel through Austwick village on weekdays between 8:45am - 9:15am and 3:15pm - 3:45pm. No more than 6 stone delivery lorries per day shall access Thwaite Lane and there shall be no more than 12 lorry loads of timber being collected in a week.
- The turning bay and re-surfacing of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane shall be finished with locally sourced 75mm to dust limestone chippings.
- The widening of Thwaite Lane be limited to a maximum of 50cm (overall) and the grass verges either side of the track shall be retained. Where no re-surfacing of Thwaite Lane and Long Lane is required, the twin-wheeling character of the tracks (with central grass strip) shall be retained where this currently exists. No widening of Long Lane.
- Approval of installation of drainage grips.
- Approval of method statement or risk assessment to ensure that timber wagons and stone delivery lorries do not have an adverse impact on the safety of Public Bridleway users.
- Creation of the turning bay and timber stacking area in accordance with the details of the Agent's email dated 23 June 2021. The stacking and turning area shall affect circa 25- 35 trees within the semi-mature age class (larch and beech species) and there shall be no veteran trees affected.