

Date: 27 June 2023

Report: MEMBER FEEDBACK ON PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTATION
AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS' REPORTS

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 full Authority meeting.
4. 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 Development Management and Natural Environment – reports attached.
5. 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.
6. The **Appendices** include:
 - 1) A list of Partnership Meetings attended in the last quarter;
 - 2) Reports from the relevant Partnership meetings; and
 - 3) The reports of the Member Champions for Development Management and Natural Environment.

Rebecca Hill
Committees Officer

13 June 2023

Appendix 1

List of Partnership Meetings March 2023 – June 2023

Title	Member	Date	Attended	Report
1. Campaign for National Parks	M Corner	23/05/23	Yes	Yes
2. Farming and Land Management Forum	N Heseltine	31/05/23	No	No
3. Local Government York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Housing Board	MC Sustainable Development	06/03/23	Yes	Verbal Report
4. National Park Management Plan Steering Group	Chair	05/06/23	Yes	See Chair's Report
5. National Parks England	Chair	08/06/23	Yes	See Chair's Report
6. Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum	MC for Natural Environment	13/04/23	No	No
7. Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum	MC for Recreation Management & N Heseltine	23/05/23	Yes Yes	See Chair's report

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Appendix 2

Report on Partnership Meetings

a) Meeting of the Campaign for National Parks Council held on 23 May 2023

I represented YDNPA at this virtual meeting which focused on the More (National Parks) element of the recently published CNP strategy, summarised as 'Better, Equal, More', preceded by an update on CNP's campaigns in England and Wales.

CNP has been active in promoting amendments to the Levelling up and Regeneration bill in the House of Lords, to: modify NP purposes to incorporate nature recovery, climate and equality; strengthen management plans; and strengthen duty on public bodies. The proposed amendments received cross party support though the amendment was withdrawn given Defra's indication that it would table a similar amendment. We will see.

CNP has established a Youth Campaigning Collective to engage with 14 to early 20 year olds. CNP will be running a series of 'health checks' on NPs. They are working on the Welsh agricultural bill and the sustainable farming scheme. In England they are supporting the Dartmoor wild camping appeal and the Peak District Mottram bypass and reservoir extension campaigns.

CNP is preparing campaign plans and policy positions to influence the party manifestos for the 2024 general election, the 75th anniversary year of the creation of the NPs. They are focusing on 1) a new deal for NPs; investment etc. 2) the need for Rapid Nature Recovery for protected landscapes (further, faster) and doubling of the budget for nature friendly farming. 3) giving NPs to the nation; night under the stars for children, expansion of freedom to roam.

The session on More National Parks was aimed to help CNP shape their campaigning on new and enlarged NPs and was informed by input from experts on the Scottish Campaign for NPs, the designation of a NP in N.E. Wales, and the development of National Marine Parks. Issues raised included the need for change to the very slow designation process, possible extensions/boundary changes to existing NPs rather than new NPs, the need for clarity on more NPs for what purpose, concern that more NPs must mean more central funding, not the same funding spread more thinly.

Mark Corner

Appendix 3

a) Annual Report of the Member Champion for Development Management

I aim to improve communication with Members, the media and public and to demonstrate the positive and user-friendly nature of YDNPA planning activities.

Since becoming Member Champion for Development Management I have participated in two reviews of our Planning activities.

Firstly, on the operation of the Planning Committee the “Review the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Planning Committee Arrangements” which concluded in 2020. All the recommendations have now been implemented. This year saw the conclusion of the somewhat delayed “Performance Review of Development Management. The final recommendations from this were agreed at the Audit & Review Committee in April this year.

The latest review concluded that the Authority provides a very good Development Management Service meeting objectives and performing well in comparison with other National Parks. One specific area of concern is the number of planning applications which not valid when received (52% in 2021/22). It was especially relevant when almost half of these had been submitted by professional agents (who should know better). Although this is similar in other Authorities – it does waste considerable staff time and reflects badly on the Development Management Service. One of my future priorities to is explore how to minimise this problem.

After some difficult years the Development Management Department is now fully staffed. Following the Development Management Review more work has been taken in-house. A revised Development Management Charter now sets out the standards of service that applicants can expect, including reductions on the time spent on negotiations so that more applications can be determined in 8 weeks

Planning performance for the last financial year has been is generally good. After a record level of applications in the previous financial year ending Mar 2022, the level of applications is back to normal with 661 applications. For comparison – 717 for the year ending March 2022, 695 for year ending March 2021 and 656 for year ending Mar 2020. Of the 661 planning applications received; 541 were determined; 502 (92%) were approved. The appeal record has also been satisfactory; of the 11 appeals received 15 have been determined (Some carried over from the previous year). Eleven were dismissed and four allowed. The level of applications which are valid on receipt was 47%.

Last year was a bumper year for housing permissions 132 with 80 - 85 homes completed. This year the housing permissions were down to 62 against the target of 85 with 55 homes completed. However, the level is expected to pick up and exceed this target for the coming year.

The 2022 training seminar for Parish Councils and Meetings majored on the subject of Enforcement. Twenty-two parishes signed up, however on the night only 9 took part – the function clashed with the election of a new Prime Minister! Nonetheless, the feedback was good and the Q & A session worthwhile. I am looking forward to chairing

this year's Planning Seminar for Parish Councils and Meetings probably in October when the main subject will be the use of the Citizens' Planning Portal.

Development Management "Facts and Figures" are currently being prepared for circulation to Members. They will highlight latest figures and current trends on key policies.

To help communicate with the media, key opinion formers and the public I have endorsed appropriate press releases, position statements and news items. These have included items on affordable housing, the above target number of homes completed in the last year and the launch of the Langcliffe Quarry Enterprise Centre.

Prepared statements on enforcement cases aim to emphasise the importance of enforcement to the effectiveness of the planning process. This will continue in the coming year. I will also look at how we can use actual case histories to help build our Planning reputation.

Going forward, I aim to continue this programme to begin to help overcome widely held misconceptions about the planning process.

Jim Munday

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

I was appointed MC for the Natural Environment, covering the Authority's Land Management and Biodiversity programmes, in June 2022. I would like to thank all members of the Land Management Section (LMS) for being welcoming to and supportive of me in the role.

My activities and contribution in the role

Representation at the Dales Biodiversity Forum.
Representation and acting chair of the Dales Woodland Forum.
Attendance of the Farming and Land Management Forum.
Member of the Nature Recovery Plan drafting group.
Chair of the Future of Farming and Land Management Policy Group, now paused until there are substantive new policy issues for it to consider.
Participation in the monthly LMS meetings, including Away Days, one of which I hosted in my woodland.
Attendance of the Conservation and Community Directorate Management Team meetings.
Amendment/sign-off of relevant press releases.

In response to the National Park Greenhouse Gas Assessment report tabled at the September 2022 Authority meeting, indicating that car usage contributes over 25% of the emissions of the NP, I presented a paper on the need for improved public transport to the February Policy Development Forum which led to agreement of a public transport position statement in the March Authority meeting.

Programme overview/current focus

The priority in the biodiversity area is the finalisation of the Nature Recovery Plan. A draft developed by the Dales Biodiversity Forum was tabled and commented on by members in the June 2022 Authority meeting and the approach to identifying Priority Species was endorsed at the December meeting. Though biodiversity in the YDNP is in somewhat better health than in many other parts of the country, much remains to be done to achieve fuller nature recovery with a functioning network of habitats. We have not met our objectives in the Management Plan on the proportions of priority species whose population are stable or increasing or in the proportions of priority habitats that are in 'good condition'. It is anticipated that the Dales Nature Recovery Plan, which will inform the statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies owned by the Unitary Councils, will enable us through a 'Bigger, Better, More Joined-Up' approach to set and deliver on new ambitious targets. The intention had been to table a finalised Plan for approval at the June Authority meeting but this has been delayed to be able to incorporate government's intended target setting for NPAs on habitat restoration and woodland creation.

Regarding our Management Plan objective to work with others, under Natural England's lead, to end illegal persecution of raptors, it is very dispiriting to note the recent cases of callous killing of hen harriers in the NP and surrounding areas. This negates the tentatively encouraging results in recent years in the successful breeding of these birds. The future of the Raptor Working Group will be reviewed after its 2023 annual report is completed.

In the farming sector there is, unfortunately, still a lack of clarity on the detail of the Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) that will replace the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and it seems likely that farm incomes in the NP will reduce as the BPS falls away. There are indications that stocking levels are being increased as a response, which isn't necessarily positive regarding nature recovery or climate breakdown (around 12% of emissions in the NP are currently attributable to agricultural activity). We continue to support farmers and landowners through this transition.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, a precursor to ELMS, managed by the Authority, is progressing well since its inception in 2021. 119 agreements to date have been made, covering projects across the Management Plan on habitats and land management, historic environment, access, education and outreach, economy and tourism. We have approved grants worth over £1 million for projects to be completed this year. The programme has now been extended to March 2025 and with significantly higher budgets of £1.8 mln for 2023/24 and 2.5 million for 2024/5, within which larger sums are allocated for administration and staff costs. We will have to work hard to promote the programme so that we spend this budget; we needed to return £300k of the year 1 allocation.

Regarding Woodlands, our team are directly responsible for delivery of the Grow Back Greener (Woodland Trust) programme where we oversaw planting of 41 ha in 2022. This was somewhat lower than the target of 65 ha partly because of the constraints of wader protection regulations. We are targeting 62 ha in each of the next two years. We also delivered a further 55 ha through other schemes including the White Rose Forest. In addition to this direct delivery, we assisted partners in the planting of a further 600 ha. These numbers are impressive but our Dales Woodland Strategy, endorsed by members in December 2020, has an ambition that we

establish 600 ha of woodland each year until 2040. We are struggling, with our partners, to establish a clear forecast and plan of how this ambition can be achieved and more effort is needed in this regard.

Opportunities to develop private financing of woodland establishment and peat restoration through payment for ecosystem services are being examined with a view to delivering a pilot scheme in the 2024 tree planting season.

As we gear up to starting work in 2024 on the next Management Plan, given our Authority priorities of nature recovery and climate change, I hope that our finalised Nature Recovery Plan will drive delivery of a more natural, wildlife-rich National Park which we can all be proud of and that we develop with partners a meaningful pathway to reduce emissions associated with the NP, particularly in transport and farming, as well as building on our tree planting and peatland restoration mitigation measures.

Mark Corner