

**NPMP Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday 23 November 2022
10:00 – 12:00
Via video conferencing**

Notes of meeting

Present:

Adrian Thornton-Berry – Dales Rural Estates Network (Yorkshire)
Dan Hudson – South Lakeland District Council
David Sharrod – Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Jim Smith – Forestry Commission
Jonathan Smith – Dales Tourism Businesses (Yorkshire);
Lord Shuttleworth – Dales Rural Estates Network (Cumbria/Lancashire);
Martin Christmas – Environment Agency
Neil Heseltine - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority;
Paul Duncan – Natural England
Rachel Briggs – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Secretariat: Gary Smith (GS), Josie Wilson (JW)

1. Apologies

Anthony Bradley – Dales Farmer Network (Yorkshire); Cllr. Richard Foster – Craven District Council; Cllr. Richard Good – Richmondshire District Council; Crispin Thorn - Forestry Commission; David Butterworth - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority; Joe Hudson - Youth Representative; Laura Day – Youth representative;

2. GHG Baseline assessment for the National Park

GS gave a presentation summarising the findings of the report undertaken by Small World Consulting Ltd. Key points mentioned:

- emissions per resident are well above the UK average reflecting both the dispersed population (emissions from driving = 42% higher than UK average); and the aged housing stock (emissions from domestic heating = 15% higher than UK average).
- emissions created by visitors (including travel to and from the Park) are broadly equal to the emissions created by residents;
- emissions from land use (livestock, fertiliser, degraded peatland etc) are also broadly equal to those from residents and visitors.

General discussion followed on the results, including: the need for different types of trees to be planted; changes to farming practices (regenerative agriculture); the future role of the new unitary councils.

3. Update on objective B3 ('Access for all')

Rachel Briggs presented the paper on Access for All – Miles without stiles.

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- 240km of public rights of way are accessible to people with limited mobility.
- 19 routes are specifically promoted as 'miles without stiles' routes.
- Lots of work done with promoting the routes via the YDNP website and a new walking app.
- Research shows that 93% of people with disabilities will look for access information using websites and that 42% of those people will not visit an area if they can't easily find the information they are looking for.
- Numerous events involving other partners, promoting and raising awareness. It's not just people with limited mobility / wheelchair users but others with sight / hearing impairment; mental health etc.
- Walking festival held last year was very successful.
- After 2024 additional progress will depend solely on creating new routes through surface improvements and/or engineering work, if it is technically feasible and desirable. This will require substantial funding.
- Larger projects already flagged up are the viewing area at Aysgarth falls and the potential new multi-user route from Hawes to Garsdale.

4. Update on objective C1 (habitats)

Paul Duncan gave an update on the current position, barriers and potential action that could be taken over the remaining lifetime of the Management Plan on objective C1.

- C1(a) - condition of some areas of blanket bog has improved, a bigger area has fallen out of 'recovering' condition.
- net loss of around 1300ha of blanket bog in recovering condition which brings the percentage down from 95% to 90%.
- two elements to the decline in Blanket Bog – 1. areas where the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement has ended and 2. the HLS agreement may have delivered improvements to the condition of the blanket bog but has not delivered the level of restoration required to achieve favourable condition.
- C1(b) – difficulty in reporting data due to changes of agreements and methodology.
- Barriers - The biggest single barrier to achieving affecting C1a and C1b is land no longer being under an agri-environment scheme.

In discussion, it was noted that Defra will soon be setting targets for each National Park, and these are likely to cover habitat restoration, and condition of SSSIs (see item 5 below). All the relevant bodies will be accountable for delivering these targets.

Action: *GS to follow up with Stuart Masheder at NE to try to quantify the scale of the likely impact of the biodiversity projects that are already underway in the NP.*

5. The next National Park Management Plan

GS gave an update on potential national developments that may influence the content of the next NPMP.

- the '[Landscapes Review](#)' recommended that Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery, climate change and diversity;
- work underway within Defra and Natural England includes:

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- looking at legislative options to change National Park purposes;
- developing a set of new national targets for NPs, as part of a wider 'outcomes framework' that will measure progress;
- new guidance on producing management plans;

None of this work will be complete before Spring 2023. An initial paper on a suggested process for updating the NPMP should come to the next Steering Group meeting (June 2023) – with a view to adopting the new Plan by the end of 2024.

Action: Secretariat to produce a timetable for the next NPMP.

6. Partner updates on NPMP objectives

- A1 – auditing of land; discussions around ELMS, CSF.
- D1 - [Northwoods](#), funded by the Forestry Commission through the Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds (WiMFIF), has been established to support all types of woodland owners, including those from across the public, private and charity sectors - particularly those interested in bringing areas of unmanaged woodland back into management, or with an interest in forestry innovation.
- 26 Nov – 4 Dec is National Tree Week;
- FC has developed a [Woodland Officer apprenticeship programme](#) that offers an exciting career pathway into the forestry sector.
- D2 – expect around 350ha of new woodland to be planted in the NP this year.
- F1 – As part of the new Yorkshire Dales Local Plan, YDNPA will be consulting on potential housing sites and housing development boundaries in the new year.

7. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from 8 June 2022 were approved as a true record. All actions completed other than objective C2.

Action: Secretariat to collate a report on objective C2 for the next meeting.

8. AOB

There were no additional items.

9. Date of next meeting

Due to the difficulties of IT for some steering group members it was generally felt that a meeting in-person would be beneficial.

Action: Secretariat to canvass dates and location for next meeting in 2023