

**NPMP Steering Group Meeting**  
**Monday 5 June 2023**  
**14:00 – 16:00**  
**Yoredale, Bainbridge**

**Notes of meeting**

**Present:**

Adrian Thornton-Berry – Dales Rural Estates Network (Yorkshire)  
Angela Jones – Westmorland & Furness Council  
Anthony Bradley – Dales farmer Network (Yorkshire)  
Crispin Thorn – Forestry Commission  
David Sharrod – Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust  
Laura Day – Youth Representative  
Neil Heseltine - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority;

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

**1. Apologies**

David Butterworth - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority; Joe Hudson - Youth Representative; Jonathan Smith – Dales Tourism Businesses (Yorkshire); Karl Battersby – North Yorkshire Council; Lord Shuttleworth – Dales Rural Estates Network (Cumbria/Lancashire); Martin Christmas - Environment Agency; Paul Duncan - Natural England;

It was noted that the relatively low attendance for this meeting was disappointing. Discussion on venue and whether hybrid meetings could be held in future.

**2. Annual Report for 2022/23**

GS gave a presentation summarising progress on the objectives last year highlighting some of the achievements and raising awareness of some of the issues. Overall, there had been positive progress on many of the objectives, with 17 of the 49 objectives 'achieved', and a further 18 still on course. Three of the objectives are being reported as 'little or no progress' being made. In discussion it was noted that:

- Objectives under the education & engagement areas (B4, B5, B6, B7) have recovered strongly from Covid impacts.
- Green Lanes compliance (slightly up on last year to 97%. Conditions of green lanes with Traffic Regulation Orders on them have massively improved over the years.
- Catchment Sensitive Farming (C3) providing lots of advice and support to farmers on how to improve water quality on farms. NH asked whether there was any monitoring carried out on the farms that had received grants.
- Recent figures from Yorkshire Peat Partnership report that more than 24,000 ha of peat units have been restored since 2009, with almost 1,400 ha being carried out in 2022/23.

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- After discussion it was agreed to retain the current rating of progress on raptors (C5) but remove the link to the RSPB's press release.
- D5 – reference to the Ribblesdale NFM group to be removed from text.
- Figure for woodland in active management (D1) has been dropping but still higher than the national average (60% vs 58%). It was suggested that the complexity of the grant application process may be putting off owners of smaller woodlands. CT explained that possible reasons for percentage not rising could be due to grant schemes coming to an end. FC analysing the data to identify the reasons.
- Woodland creation (D2) is going well. Recent [report](#) on red squirrels showed populations doing well in the National Park. Agreed to add reference to work being carried out by YDMT/FC on alternatives to plastic guards.
- AJ suggested that references to the former District Council areas be phrased as “former [name of District] locality”.

**Action:** *GS to find out what monitoring takes place of the impacts of works funded by Catchment Sensitive Farming.*

*GS to check the revised wording of C5 with Adrian Shepherd to ensure no conflict with the view of the Local Raptor Group.*

*Steering Group Members that were not present to comment on and sign off the report.*

*Secretariat to make amendments to annual report and submit to the National Park Authority meeting on 27 June, and publish final report and website progress on every objective.*

### **3. Report on objective C2 – Wildlife Species**

Gary Smith presented the report on C2 – Wildlife Species. The new Nature Recovery Plan will set out a new approach to targeting priority species. There will be a much shorter list of ‘Category 1’ Species (i.e. the ones that need additional bespoke action that goes beyond habitat improvements). The final, revised list of Category 1 species has now been signed off by the Biodiversity Forum. Working out priorities is an important part of the process but future success will also depend on new funding becoming available.

In discussion, ATB pointed out there was no farmer/land owner representation on the Forum. GS commented that drafts of the report had been shared with the Farming and Land Management Forum, and the Woodland Forum. YDNPA officers had also organised several farmer meetings.

### **4. Big issues for 2025-29**

The Steering Group discussed initial thoughts about some of the big issues that may need to be included in the next Management Plan. These included:

- Support for the local farming community;
- Future of upland farming;
- Green finance;
- Future proofing the next generation;

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- Engaging with young people and helping them to live/work/raise children in the Dales;
- Climate change;
- Speed and delivery of actions;
- Retaining the six 'ambitions' for 2040 but giving greater importance/emphasis to the two ambitions for wildlife and nature, with the other 4 ambitions supporting those.

GS reminded members of the steering group that we are still waiting for new Natural England guidance on Management Plans (now due late summer). It is certain that this will encourage greater emphasis on nature and climate.

**Action: Secretariat** to provide a detailed 'prospectus' for producing the next Management Plan at the next meeting.

### 5. Timetable for the next National Park Management Plan

GS explained that although we're still waiting on guidance (see above) we have been told we can still start to plan the next management plan. It was agreed that the proposed broad timetable was acceptable.

**Action: Secretariat** to produce a more detailed timetable for the next meeting.

### 6. Partner updates on NPMP objectives

- Forestry Commission/Natural England reviewing their guidance on Peat and Breeding waders in relation to tree planting. Also new operations note of [red squirrels and forestry operations](#).
- YDMT has £300k available for small grants for wildlife, landscape and nature.
- NH reminded group of grants still available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
- AJ highlighted the potential for the Shared Rural Prosperity Fund to support projects that could help achieve a number of the NPMP objectives.

### 7. Minutes from previous meeting

All actions completed other than Item 4 on objective C1.

**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.

### 8. AOB

There were no additional items.

### 9. Date of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 8 November via MS Teams.