Notes of Western Parishes Forum meeting
7-9pm on Wednesday 22 May 2024 at Sedbergh Old Peoples Hall

Chaired by Libby Bateman (YDNPA Board Member - parish representative for Westmorland & Furness; and Lancashire)

Parishes in attendance:

Casterton PC	Ken Humphris
Clapham with Newby	Ann Sheridan
Dent with Cowgill	Andrew Povey
Ireby with Leck Parish Council	Carol Howard
Ireby with Leck Parish Council	Andrew Makinson
Killington	J Harrison
Kirkby Lonsdale	Robin Ree
Orton	Kyle Blue
Sedbergh	Simon Arnold
Sedbergh	Kevin Lancaster

YDNPA:
David Butterworth (CEO)
Gary Smith (Director of Conservation & Community)
Neil Heseltine (Chair)
Sam Parfitt (Job-Share PA to CEO & Chair) – admin support

1. **Welcome and Introduction**
Libby Bateman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Development and Design of farm buildings** – Kyle Blue, Orton PC
Kyle gave a thought-provoking presentation on the design of farm buildings. He acknowledged that although we live in a beautiful area more could be done to ensure the quality of new farm building were more in keeping with their environment. He highlighted the role and importance of the current Yorkshire-Dales-Design-Guide.pdf. He raised concerns about building materials, particularly roofs, which he feels should blend with the natural hues of the landscape. He questioned when planning permissions are sought, is there consideration of the viability of the farming enterprise. Kyle's presentation concluded with examples of agricultural buildings in Italy featuring brown metal roofsheets, screening and solar panels on the roof, which are very unobtrusive. In response to Kyle's presentation it was acknowledged that the Design Guide cannot be enforced – it is a guide.

3. **National Park Management Plan 2025-2029** – Gary Smith
The Management Plan is a statutory document which is updated every 5 years. It is produced by a partnership of local organisations who determine the process and sign off the final version, which the YDNPA then adopts.
An initial public consultation was launched on 15 January which ran for 6 weeks.
We used a different approach with an- on-line questionnaire identifying 18 issues from which people were asked to rank their top 6. People also added their own suggestions.
The consultation was advertised on the Authority's website; through social media and email. The consultation received over 1,100 responses (compared to 600 the last time we did this exercise).

The top 6 priorities for residents were:
1. Help nature to recover;
2. Help younger people to live/work in the National Park;
3. Reduce the impact of second homes and holiday lets;

4. Reduce pollution of rivers and streams;
5. Support upland livestock farming to improve business viability and provide a wider range of public benefits;
6. Protect rare and threatened species, including ending illegal persecution of birds of prey.

These results were pretty similar to those from the general public with the exception of reducing impact of second homes/holiday lets and support upland livestock farming etc.

Evidence reports have been published *follow this link* for each of the 6 ambitions for 2040 set out in the Management Plan. These will set out the latest facts and figures, as well as a more detailed descriptions of the key issues and opportunities.

The Annual Forum was held on 7 May 2024 at Settle Victoria Hall to which all the bodies with an interest in, or role to play in, delivering the objectives in the National Park Management Plan were invited, including parish councils/meetings.
Thirty-nine organisations attended. The Forum looked at latest evidence and discussed what should be the priorities for the new Plan. A summary can be found on this link 7-May-2024-NPMP-forum-note.pdf (yorkshiredales.org.uk)

The next steps are

- 6 expert Drafting Groups set up to prepare draft objectives for the new Plan.
- NPMP Partnership will then look at the objectives and agree what to take forward.
- Full draft Plan published before end of 2024 for public consultation.
- Partnership will assess feedback and agree final objectives.
- Adopt new Management Plan (hopefully March 2025)

All details of the Plan and any updates are available here:
www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/

4. **Outcomes Framework/Levelling Up Act** – David Butterworth

Government's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework was published in January 2024. The 10 English National Parks and 34 National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) are now collectively known as Protected Landscapes.
The Framework sets out proposals for 10 new national targets (mostly around nature and climate), to which all Protected Landscapes will be expected to contribute.

All bodies who operate in the National; Park are responsible for the targets. The national figures will be divided up between each Protected Landscape. Government believes more can be achieved by setting a national direction. They haven't yet provided additional finding. The framework builds on new legislation placing a stronger requirement on partner organisations to contribute to the production and implementation of National Park Management Plans. Further advice and guidance is still being finalized by Natural England.

On 26 December 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 became law.

The clause places the following revised duty on relevant authorities:

"In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in any National Park in England, a relevant authority **must seek to further the specified purposes** of National Parks…" This replaces the existing duty to "have regard to" the specified purposes.

This revised duty will be applicable to all agencies, statutory bodies, including water companies, National Grid, Network Rail etc, local authorities & parish councils.

5. **Local Plan Progress** – Gary Smith

Objective to identify sites for new affordable housing to help to:

- Meet the need for more affordable homes
- Stabilise population decline. The population has shrunk by 3½% over the last 10 years. Almost a third of the population is over 65 years old.
- Make the National Park a more attractive place for young adults and people of working age to live in

The main changes proposed:

- A housing target of 50 new dwellings per annum. 750 over the plan period 2025 – 2040;
- Target to be met primarily on newly allocated housing sites (as these provide the only realistic way to get some affordable housing).
- All new homes to be for principal residency (so they can't become second homes)
- New or revised housing development boundaries for infill housing plots, and rural 'exceptions sites' (for 100% affordable housing)

The Key Challenges are:

- Not many suitable sites coming forward with willing landowners;
- Sites not evenly spread (more in the south, fewer in the north and west)
- Strong objections to possible scale of house building in Embsay and Threshfield

A Local Plan Advisory Group (comprising 7 members) established to '*consider the potential housing site options and make recommendations to the full Authority about which sites should go forward into the Publication Local Plan'.*

The group's two main tasks are:

1. Double-checking that we haven't missed any other suitable and deliverable sites put forward by landowners. LPAG considering a longer list of sites, including:
    - **33** already consulted on (March 2023)
    - **8** new sites submitted last year;
    - **30** other sites that were rejected in the first draft of the Housing Land Availability Assessment.
2. Getting additional information – from the local authorities, utility companies and other consultees - to check the suitability of sites and their capability of development.

The next stages are:

1. Local Plan Advisory Group revises the list of sites to meet the plan target and objectives - May 2024
2. Sites published for informal public comment – July 2024
3. National Park Authority decides final sites and content of proposed Local Plan – September 2024.
4. 'Publication version' of the Local Plan published for formal representation – November 2024
5. Local Plan submitted to Government for examination by a Planning Inspector – 2025

Parishes were encouraged to respond to the formal consultation.

6. **Update on Projects** – Gary Smith

Please see presentation (click here for link to presentation) which included:

Cross Keys Bridge – installation of a 36m long and 2.5m wide bridge at road level. Giving 750m of improved bridleway/footpath allowing for people with limited mobility; Access for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and for farmers/quad bikes. Project funding by Farming in Protect Landscapes, National Trust; Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and YDNPA.

Smardale Accessiblity Project: A partnership between Eden Rivers Trust, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and YDNPA with delivery of the project by YDNPA. Lottery Heritage Funding secured as part of a wider Access to Eden project for a 1.5km of accessible footpath for pedestrians, wheelchairs and Trampers and 2 ranger bridges to be installed.

Ravenstonedale Chapel: The early-18th century structure is currently marked as 'vulnerable' on the YDNPA's Buildings at Risk register due in part to cracking/erosion of external render, and damp ingress. In liaison with the Parish Council, a formal inspection was arranged in the autumn of 2023. YDNPA has prepared a specification, which will go out to tender to a range of conservation specialist contractors. The proposed works will include replacement of defective material using traditional lime render. It is anticipated that the project will be funded jointly by Ravenstonedale Parish Council and the YDNPA.
Coast to Coast update: Legal works are progressing, Reeth Bottoms Diversion order was confirmed on 12th March 2024 with a further 3 creation orders authorised and expected to be signed within the next few weeks. Diversion Orders located at Crack Pot, Rampsholme and Cleasby have had their informal consultations completed and orders are due to be drafted shortly.
White Mossy Hill will be the largest infrastructure improvement undertaken on the Coast to Coast path in 2025, this will see stone flags laid to improve circa 2900m of PRoW - the works are scheduled to be delivered from August-November 2025. Signage is currently being manufactured and should start been installed along the route in the coming months.

Andrew Makinson (Ireby with Leck Parish Council) enquired if YDNPA had been consulted on the Lune Valley Greenway: Cowan Bridge to Ingleton pathway being led by Sustrans. There is a public drop-in event on 5 June in Cowan Bridge to discuss the plans and invite comments from the community.
Action: NPA follow up.

7. **Residents' Survey** – David Butterworth
Every 5 years we commission a survey to capture resident's views and perceptions of the National Park and National Park Authority. The latest survey was conducted by telephone in September and October 2023 with a representative sample 1,000 National Park residents.
A summary of the results was given. Some results were contradictory but responses were dependent on communities, ie tourism volume is greater in the south of the Park.

The changes in views from 2019 to 2023: Of greater concern were
- The growth of 2nd homes and AirBnBs: up from 68% to 75%
- Not enough funding to maintain and conserve National Parks: up from 40% to 50%
- The future of farming post Brexit: up from 40% to 50%

Of less concern:
- Increasingly elderly population: down from 66% to 48%
- Lack of employment: down from 54% to 44%
- The loss of local services: down from 76% to 68%

The results will be published in the Dales newspaper in July.

8. Ideas for future Forum meetings
Libby Bateman encouraged parishes to submit any suggestions to committees@yorkshiredales.org.uk along with any areas of best practice to share with other parishes across the National Park.

9. Any other Business
Concern was raised about the wire and steel fence erected on the road from Barbondale to Dent.
Gary Smith advised the fence is on private land and is likely to be part of an agri-environment scheme. Neil Heseltine advised that the Local Access Forum had raised similar concerns at their recent meeting.

Riparian strip at Devil's Bridge to Town – land is designated a riparian strip which is overgrown/neglected. Is there anything the National Park can do to help. It has been raised with the Lune River's Trust but they don't want to take responsibility.
Action: The **Area Ranger** will follow up.