Notes of Southern Parishes Forum meeting
7-9pm on Monday 29 April 2024 at Grassington Devonshire Institute, Grassington

Chaired by Liz Appleton Hall (YDNPA Board Member - parish representative for Craven East)

Parishes in attendance:

Buckden	Richard Ingram
Embsay-with-Eastby	Judith Benjamin
Embsay-with-Eastby	Vince Smith
Grassington	Rob Charlton
Grassington	Nigel Shenton
Kettlewell with Starbotton	Ian Macefield
Kettlewell with Starbotton	Charlie Wilkinson
Long Preston	Liz Palmer
Rylstone Parish Meeting	Debbie Burton
Rylstone Parish Meeting	Georgina Scully
Thorpe Parish	Simon Bailey
Threshfield Parish Council	Andy Sellars
Threshfield Parish Council	Cathy Richardson

YDNPA:
David Butterworth (CEO)
Gary Smith (Director of Conservation & Community)
Peter Stockton (Head of Sustainable Development)
Neil Heseltine (Chair)
Derek Twine (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Richard Foster (NYC appointee)
Sam Parfitt (Job-Share PA to CEO & Chair) & Rebecca Eslick (Committees Officer) – admin support

1. Welcome and Introduction

Liz Appleton Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **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 will be published 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 takes place on 7 May at Settle Victoria Hall with all bodies invited who have an interest in, or role to play in, delivering the objectives in the National Park Management Plan. The Forum will provide an update on progress, reflect on achievements made so far, and consider challenges still ahead. All parishes are invited - we want your views about how we can work together, to tackle the significant challenges that face the communities and landscape of this special place.

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, including evidence reports are available here:
www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/

3. **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.

4. **Local Plan Progress** – Peter Stockton
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

A question was asked if the NP would consider employment opportunities. The NP can't produce a target for how many jobs would be created due to the sparsity of the National Park but it will support existing businesses where possible. The NP role is as a supporting organisation for the housing authorities in North Yorkshire and Westmorland & Furness.

A question was asked on how principal residency would be 'policed'. Conditions would be placed on planning permissions. Parish Councils could be the eyes and ears on the ground. During conveyance the Solicitor will advise of the stipulation and they should have due diligence. If there was a breach – a challenge on the occupancy could be made.

A question was asked – is there a danger of ending up with too many houses? This is about dealing with long term trends. The policy is aimed at providing benefits to those people living in the NP in the 2030s and 2040's. You have got to think to 15/20 years in the future. The current housing stock in the national park is 12,000. Most affordable housing is through housing associations and can be community-led.

Roger Ingram – Buckden PC enquired about the delay with the National Park approving phone masts in the locality in respect of the government's shared rural Network programme

together with the Mobile Network operators to provide 4G coverage for people living, working and travelling in poorly served rural areas. The phone masts are critical to the long-term sustainability of our community. Gary Smith highlighted the Authority strongly supports the roll out of 4G mobile phone coverage across the Park to address the main 'not-spots'. A large number of masts have been approved, although some have not been built, and many are yet to be switched on. The roll-out had now reached the point where the proposed sites were very sensitive, and the benefits increasingly limited – especially when some opportunities to share masts were being ignored.

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

Please see presentation (click here to access presentation) which included:

- Rights of Way: reinstating 220 metres of bridleway erosion on Buckden Pike, using reclaimed mill floor flags. Repairs to 1.4km of engineered routes/footpaths at Beechcroft and Long Lane at Horton-in-Ribblesdale
- Natural Environment Projects: Swinden Quarry & Dry Rigg Natural Environment Funds – used to enhance the environment in areas affected by impacts of quarrying. Approx £65,000 available for grants in 2024/25. Funds could be used by Parishes, individual
- Dudderhouse Cairn - stabilise and protect the site from further damage. This will involve further detailed recording, very limited investigative excavation and then repair and re-turfing of the exposed sections of the monument.
- Ingleborough Cave Project – working with University of Lancaster and volunteers. Helping to make people aware of what's been found and archived. Final phase of the work will involve a series of events aimed at raising awareness amongst the caving community of the type of archaeological remains that may be encountered when doing cave exploration and how to recognise and avoid disturbance to them.

6. **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.

A couple of comments were made on how the survey was conducted: One person was sceptical about it being a scam when they got the call. The questions were fairly leading. When you're not prepared for the phone call you don't have sufficient time to consider your answer.

The meeting closed at 8:55pm.