Notes of Northern Parishes Forum meeting
7-9pm on Wednesday 1 May 2024 at The Falls Coffee Shop, Church Bank, Aysgarth

Chaired by Allen Kirkbride (YDNPA Board Member - parish representative for northern parishes)

Parishes in attendance:

Burton-cum-Walden	Jane Ritchie
Burton-cum-Walden	Sue Ryding
East Witton	Richard Wells
West Witton	Dave Brown
Carperby cum Thoresby	John Amsden

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

1. Welcome and Introduction
   Allen Kirkbride welcomed everyone to the meeting. He was disappointed that so few parishes were in attendance.

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/

Sue Ryding asked if the questionnaire results differed in the newer Cumbrian side of the National Park. Are their concerns the same as the existing area? **Action: Gary Smith** will check.

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 – 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

North Yorkshire Council are hoping to get involved in building houses funded by the Council Tax Premium for second homes. This will potentially focus on building in areas with second homes.

Allen Kirkbride commented that some village sewage treatment works are at capacity and couldn't cope with any more housing development. He hoped Yorkshire Water would work closely with YDNPA when identifying sites. Askrigg has 25 social houses which are all rentable. The parish conducts a housing census to monitor change in housing occupancy over time (second homes, holiday cottages etc).

Dave Brown queried why some land at Grassgill, West Witton had been identified in the initial consultation without the owner being made aware.. **Action: Gary Smith** will follow this up.

5. Electric Vehicle Parking – Jane Ritchie (Burton cum Walden PC)
Jane advised of the issue in West Burton with EV charging cables trailing across footpaths whilst people charge their vehicles. The PC has taken legal advice and if they turn a blind eye to this they are culpable. She asked if YDNP would waive car parking charges in order for people to top-up/charge their vehicles in YDNPA car parks. It was acknowledged that many houses aren't designed for electric charging vehicles.
The YDNPA has 33 charging points across their public car parks which are designed for visitor use. If the Authority waived car parking fees it would have a significant impact on income for our work programmes.

6. Update on Projects – Gary Smith
Please see presentation (link here to see presentation) which included:
Unsurfaced Unclassified Road repairs: Busk Lane, Bainbridge - surfacing and drainage;

West Cam Road and Cam High Road, Hawes – surface repairs;
Dubbing Garth Lane, Low Row; Stake Road, Bainbridge; Fremington Edge, Reeth – surface repairs. 95% of the work has been carried out by Rangers.

Operation Byway - a joint operation between North Yorkshire Police (NYP) and the YDNPA, which has been running for over ten years. It typically takes place during the winter months. The aim is to target illegal off tarmac recreational motor vehicle use within the National Park through police enforcement and Ranger engagement.
The Rangers' role is to help the vehicle users understand the different status of routes and explain some of the issues surrounding green lane management in the National Park.

Coast to Coast update**:** Legal works are progressing, Swaledale, Swinner Gill, replacement footbridge has been installed with improvements to associated approach steps undertaken, the remaining works associated with Reeth Bottoms diversion are scheduled to be completed by early June (mainly tree planting).
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. Signage is currently being manufactured and should start been installed along the route in the coming months.
Tees-Swale: *Naturally connected* programme: Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North Pennines National Landscape are working with local partner organisations to implement this major natural heritage project which focuses on the landscape and communities of Upper Swaledale and Upper Teesdale. 2024/25 will be the fourth year of the programme

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. Hawes to Garsdale Multi Use Route Update – David Butterworth

A survey was conducted in 2022 seeking views on a potential route, with the proviso that nothing would potentially stop the railtrack being used again in the future. 85% of respondees were supportive; 15% against (mainly national and regional lobby groups). There are 20 landowners along the route. By the end of 2024 we hope to have a cost indication of the landowner agreements so we can create a public right of way (bridleway). All money at the moment is being spent on the legal side. The route will become part of a national network with big opportunities for transport providers.
Refer to press release subsequently issued on 21 May: Progress on Hawes-Garsdale bridleway : Yorkshire Dales National Park

The meeting closed at 9:05pm.