

Sustainable Transport

While the percentage of visitors coming to the Yorkshire Dales by car has fallen slightly since 1994, the huge number of cars in the Dales is seen as one of the major issues facing the Park today. While most people accept the need for cars, everyone acknowledges the problems caused by large traffic volumes, including: congested, dangerous roads; increased risk of road traffic accidents; ecological disturbance; pollution; excessive energy consumption; visual intrusion; destruction of verges; land taken for car parking; inappropriate road improvements and developments.

The NPA aims to increase travel, to and within the Dales, which reduces the impact of traffic, by promoting car alternatives, especially public transport. A variety of initiatives provide information on transport options. The NPA works with agriculture, quarrying and other local industries to reduce the impact of goods movement. An 'Advisory Road Hierarchy' defines the highway network within which road traffic is to be managed.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism provides enormous economic benefits and opportunities for the local community (valued at £266 million in 2003 for the wider Yorkshire Dales area). Huge numbers of visitors to the Dales make it vital that they follow the principles of sustainable tourism, minimising the negative impact of their visit on the very thing they've come to enjoy.

The challenge for sustainable tourism is to develop products, which drive economic development, while celebrating the special qualities of the National Park. This includes encouraging visitors to make visits for longer or outside of the peak season for example.

Healthy Living

The promotion of the public rights of way network can increase access to walking, cycling, sport and leisure opportunities, helping to increase levels of physical activity and improve public health. The Health Development Agency offers four main areas of proven benefits from being in the countryside:

- physical fitness through exercise
- improved mental health and well-being, including reduced stress
- social interaction and friendship through sharing activities and interests
- understanding of the natural world and the development of environmentally friendly lifestyles

Inclusion

Tackling 'social exclusion' is a national priority. The Government's Social Inclusion Unit defines 'social exclusion' as:

'... what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'

Those who experience 'social exclusion,' for whatever reason, have limited access to benefits, which many people take for granted, anything from a job or a good home, to an outing to a nearby park, for example. NPA efforts to tackle 'social exclusion', have focused mainly on 'outreach work' in nearby urban areas, e.g. through the TARGET, MOSAIC and 'Beyond the Boundary' projects. The Authority also has a role in ensuring that people experiencing exclusion in rural areas, are not overlooked because of the general 'idyllic' perception of rural life.

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Access Management

an integrated approach

THE ACCESS ISSUE

The Yorkshire Dales is a unique area, designated a National Park because of its many special qualities and the opportunities they offer for people to enjoy them. Managing these recreational opportunities is the work of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

The YDNPA statutory purposes are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

One of the main reasons for creating National Parks in England and Wales, was the belief that visiting these beautiful landscapes is a highly beneficial experience, that should be available to everyone by right.

"National Parks are not for any privileged or otherwise restricted section of the population but for all who come to refresh their minds and spirit and to exercise their bodies in a peaceful setting of natural beauty." (John Dower, 1945)

Even though they are over 50 years old, Dower's words still reflect the vision for the National Park today, just as they continue to present a major challenge. The 'National Park Management Plan: 2000 - 2005' (NPMP) states the 'aims' for access in the Park today:

"Access and recreation in the National Park will be developed so that a wide range of people can enjoy the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales. These developments will involve local communities, landowners and users. Access



Ours to Enjoy. Howgill Fells. YDNPA. 2000.

and recreation will not damage what people come to enjoy and users will act responsibly. Integrated transport will enable people to get into and around the National Park for everyday life and for leisure."

The major outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001, highlighted the fundamental inter-dependence of the local economy and the access resource, a relationship which the NPMP focuses on:

'The conservation of the special qualities of the National Park will be achieved with a local economy which provides diverse employment and maintains thriving, balanced communities. The local economy will be stronger for having its foundations in the special qualities and uniqueness of the National Park.' (NPMP 2000)

Managing access involves a complex of inseparably inter-related issues, these include: access for all, inclusion, healthy living, sustainable transport, sustainable tourism, accessibility and visitor management. These issues are outlined here in relation to the access resource.

