



SOUTHERN PARISH FORUM MEETING NOTE

Ingleborough Community Centre, 7pm Thursday 21 September 2017

Parish Attendees:

Austwick	David Dewhirst & Kate Smith
Calton	Alan Newbould & Pam Murray
Clapham	Ann Sheridan
Cowan Bridge	Andrew Makinson
Horton in Ribblesdale	Martin Hanson
Ingleton	Alison Hack & John Metcalfe
Kirkby Lonsdale	Geoffrey Buswell
Leck/Ireby	Carol Howard

NPA Attendees:

Carl Lis OBE	Chairman
Chris Clark	Secretary of State Parish appointed member on NPA Board
Neil Heseltine	Secretary of State Parish appointed member on NPA Board & Chair Southern Parish Forum
David Butterworth	Chief Executive
Gary Smith	Director of Conservation & Community
Julie Payne	Committees Officer
Susan Allison	PA to CEO/Chairman
David Ireton	NYCC member on NPA Board

The chair: Neil Heseltine welcomed attendees to the Southern Forum for Parish Councils. He explained the two way process of this forum and introduced the National Park officers and Members present.

The following topics were covered:-

Parish Initiative: Upper Wharfedale Community Bus (Chris Clark)

CC gave the overall story of the creation of the Bus Community Interest Company. The objective was to provide a bus service which connected communities in upper Wharfedale to Grassington (and the scheduled bus services from Grassington on to e.g. Skipton).

Launched in April 2016 with a £10K loan and a bus from NYCC (and £2k grant from YDNPA), and ongoing grant of £25k pa. In the first 18 months of this 4 year contract the service carried 12,000 passengers and travelled 30,000 miles. 99% of connections made and just a couple missed - one due to a puncture.

Drivers include one paid and 15 volunteers [easily recruited] and drivers sub-contracted from Pride of the Dales too when required. $\frac{1}{4}$ revenue and $\frac{1}{3}$ journeys made on Saturdays. Weekly numbers equate to roughly half visitors, half residents. Additional economic benefit to local garage where the fuel is bought.

Financially viable project and should continue to be so due to volunteer drivers. A few more would be welcomed and give greater flexibility. Initial loan of £10k already paid back to NYCC. Donations are invited [bucket on bus] and concessions asked to pay/donate. Section 19 & 22 licences for community buses were recently in the news [competition v private operators' issue].

In response to questions, CC made the following points:

- Walkers are the key to the bus's success;
- Service to Cray not possible due to time constraints to meet connections in Grassington;
- Cycle transport not possible due to room [16 seats only] but can take wheelchairs;
- Bus size restricted to smaller size due to Skipton's ability to handle larger buses at the hub;

- Concessionary fares = around 55% of the journeys made

National Park Management Plan update (Gary Smith)

NH asked the question: 'Do you know what it is?' of the PC representatives present, as he himself had little knowledge before becoming a member on the National Park board. He asked GS to explain further and asked parishes to give any feedback on the [Parish Forum web page](#) on the National Park website.

GS explained why the Plan is the most important document for the National Park. The Authority is required by law to update it every 5 years. Other organisations and bodies feed into the objectives set within it. PCs are encouraged to get involved in influencing what goes into it. He thanked those parish councils who had contributed to the first public consultation with their '3 most important things'. There were 623 e-mail responses, plus responses from 30 organisations, 60 postcards, and numerous suggestions from 2 drop-in sessions held in the new area of the National Park. The main issues for residents were: community sustainability; the future of farming after Brexit; and affordable housing. In addition, residents wanted both more flexibility from the Authority's planning service and more consistency – not really possible to achieve both!

6 detailed 'evidence reports' will be published on the website at the end of October (PCs will be sent details). These will be used to inform the drafting of a new set of objectives for the Plan. The initial ideas for objectives will be shared at the Management Plan Annual Forum, which will be held on November 23rd at Ingleborough Community Hall. Invitations will be sent to all Parish Councils and meetings. Feedback from PCs on the evidence reports or of any kind related to the Management Plan are welcomed at any time during the process

The final set of objectives will be published for public consultation in February 2018. Again, PCs will be informed at the time.

Questions following included:

A question on the caving issues re CRoW. KB will feed back to the British Caving Association.

A question on the 'myth' of birds of prey persecution. The NPA Sept report itself recorded no decline in curlew numbers on the moors. Predator control is said to increase the health of biodiversity and wildlife and birds in particular. DB affirmed that persecution cases are difficult to prosecute even with firm evidence and that reputationally the Dales has an unenviable reputation for its lack of these species when the habitat is good enough to support them.

Protecting and celebrating the dark skies of the National Park (Kathryn Beardmore)

The dark skies of the National Park are one of its special qualities. The current Management Plan has objectives to enhance and promote enjoyment of dark skies. Up to now the Authority has included policies within its Local Plan to control external lighting; run events and festivals which have been extremely popular; nominated 3 sites as 'Dark Skies Discovery' locations; and, worked with tourism businesses who want to benefit from being in a dark skies area.

The next step could be the possibility of joining a number of other National Parks in becoming a 'Dark Skies reserve' (a core zone of very dark areas with a buffer zone). The National Park already does a lot to celebrate and protect our dark skies so it would be great to have recognition for this. In addition, it would have potential to boost tourism at the quieter times of the year.

A vital part of the application process for reserve status is the support of local communities and residents. It's not about turning off street lighting, but will look to improve lighting over time. Nobody would be forced to change exterior lights which are in place. There is potential for lighting improvements for communities or businesses to be supported through the Sustainable Development Fund.

Parishes were supportive in principle of exploring this approach.

A suggestion followed to use high quality portable lighting for outside use rather than fixed lighting. Further information on the planning considerations given to lighting is available in the new 'Design Guide', which will be on the Authority's website from October. GS asked for feedback on the design guide please and especially if it *isn't* helpful to let him know.

Question and Answer Session

Parish representation. Cowan Bridge, Leck and Ireby PCs asked who represents them on the National Park Authority – they had had no contact from the representatives on the Authority for Lancashire/Lancaster. Neil confirmed that Margaret Pattison of Lancaster City Council and Cosima Towneley of Lancashire County Council had a general representative role on the Authority but that it was his role to represent the parishes in the south western area of the Park. He would be very happy to come to a Parish Council meeting if invited.

NP Signage. KB affirmed that there was a new boundary sign at Devil's Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale. A partnership with Kirkby Lonsdale office based at the old HSBC Bank building has further National Park information. This is currently being worked on by Sarah Ross in addition to the map boundary picture already on display.

Roadside barns. GS updated by affirming that around 35 have been granted planning permission since the new Local Plan policies came into effect, with only 2 or 3 turned down. It's still too early to assess the long-term impacts of this policy change.

Local Plans. DB gave brief explanation of local plans and where these were already in place that they needed to be followed by those areas coming into the national park until their end date. This hasn't been helpful for some of those newer areas with barns which they would have liked to convert but which their local plan in place restricts them from doing.

Drones. GS confirmed that [guidance was available on the Authority website](#) including the National Code of Conduct. However, there is very little that the National Park Authority could do in relation to unlicensed operators, as it has no legal powers to control or enforce national regulations.

Farming and Land Managers Forum. There was praise for the work of this Forum, and a request to roll-out the national trial of a 'Payment by Results' scheme (in Wensleydale) to the rest of the National Park. DB explained that this couldn't happen yet but hopefully in the future all the Park would benefit. A lot of work was going into trying to support hill farming in the National Park into the future – including developing proposals for a local agri-environment scheme, which would use the 'results-based' approach.

Any other business

DB reminded those present that this meeting marked the end of the 2-year pilot. The Authority will be reviewing this over the next few months to see what future liaison might be with parish councils.

The Chairman thanked all for coming to this meeting and engaging. He asked those present to fill out the feedback forms and return them either tonight or by post/email to Julie Payne following the meeting. Minutes will be posted on the [Parish Forum web page](#)

SAA
19 Oct 2017