



NOTE OF PARISH FORUM MEETING

Clapham Village Hall
7:00-9:00pm, Wednesday 16 November 2016

Attendees:

Parishes

Kate Smith	Austwick PC
Peter Goold	Austwick PC
Martin Hanson	Horton in Ribblesdale PC
John Dawson	Clapham cum Newby PC
Ann Sheridan	Clapham cum Newby PC
John Thwaite	Hellifield PC
Garry Schofield	Buckden PC
Pam Murray	Calton PC
Nick Tyrer	Long Preston PC

The following parishes had indicated attendance but were not present:
Stainforth; Beamsley; Kettlewell with Starbotton and Thorpe

YDNPA

Carl Lis	Chairman
Neil Heseltine	Secretary of State Parish Member
Chris Clark	Secretary of State Parish Member
David Butterworth	CEO
Gary Smith	Director of Conservation & Community
Peter Stockton	Head of Sustainable Development
Julie Payne	Committees Officer
Sam Parfitt	PA to CEO & Chairman (notetaker)

[Neil Heseltine](#) (Chair of the Forum) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the concept of the forums for improving communication and engagement between the NPA and Parishes. Parishes were thanked for their input into formulating the agenda. Attendees were encouraged to complete feedback forms at the end of the meeting in order to shape future meetings.

The agenda for the meeting comprised the following topics:-

Conversion of roadside barns (Peter Stockton)

An update was given following a significant expansion of local planning policy since October 2015, in particular the conversion of suitable 'roadside' barns for local housing (new Local Plan Policy L2). 'Roadside' excludes buildings that are not in close proximity to a road or track, ie isolated 'field barns'. The definition of 'roadside' is adjacent to a highway authority carriageway, or just off but connected by an existing track. Residential barn conversions are restricted to local occupancy or holiday letting. They are not permitted for unrestricted occupancy.

More isolated field barns or other traditional buildings may still be suitable for less intensive uses that do not need direct vehicular access or parking, eg barn 'pods', storage, camping barns etc.

Since the introduction of this policy twelve months ago, quite a few consents have now been granted and more applications are being submitted each week. It is evident that there is pent up demand.

Each case is judged on its merits and how it will impact on the character of the area. Attention was drawn to the NPA's '[Design Guide](#)' - setting out detailed design guidance to support the Local Plan's policies; and '[Traditional Farm Buildings Toolkit](#)'. These documents give helpful guidance on options available to assist owners and developers understand the heritage significance of their asset and also covers other traditional buildings, ie chapels and old school buildings. People are encouraged to examine these documents prior to applying for planning permission and Parish Councillors are also recommended to look at them too.

Austwick PC queried why the idea of a 'Conservation levy' charged against barn conversion permissions had been dropped from the Local Plan. Peter Stockton advised the Planning Inspector would not permit a policy that had two different objectives i.e. building conservation or local occupancy, therefore Members chose local occupancy.

On the whole councillors were supportive of the new policy.

Long Preston PC queried the local occupancy clauses - these are flawed because people can't get mortgages. It was acknowledged that barn conversions are an intermediate form of getting on the housing ladder which is more achievable but this won't solve the affordable housing issue. The new Local Plan does include changes specifically intended to ease the mortgage difficulties – but it will take a little time before we know whether they are having a positive effect.

Further modifications have been submitted to the Inspector as a consequence of the public hearings on the draft [Local Plan](#). The Inspector's report is expected in December. Once received, the new policies will be promoted in early 2017, which include:-

- Allocated housing sites (mix of house types)
- Business sites
- Farm and land management flexibilities
- Visitor accommodation
- Wensleydale Railway – developing transport corridors
- Conversion policy

Future of Farming in the Dales (Chris Clark)

This topic had been put forward for discussion by Kettlewell with Starbotton Parish Council. [Chris Clark](#) has a background in farming and farm business management and gave a presentation on his perspective of the future of farming and land management in the Dales.

He highlighted the current situation with land management and farming in the YDNPA. He feels that farmers are the Dales 'biggest' asset, and there should be an objective to maintain or increase the number of viable farm businesses in the National Park.

Research shows that farmers in the National Park receive support of between £30k-£60k; have a family income of £10k-£20k. In some instances this income includes receipt of family credit; and/or spouse's contribution. It proves the whole business model does not stack up.

There is a huge change coming and no indication that support levels will remain the same. Therefore, there has to be a fundamental change in how the National Park Authority works with farmers. This might mean NPAs taking on local delivery of the national funding for agri-environment schemes, whereby farmers demonstrate: value for money; significant environmental influence; public money for public goods in some form, ie flood mitigation, removal of peat from water.

National Parks England has recently set up a working group to look at this issue and develop a policy. Neil Heseltine will represent the Yorkshire Dales NPA on this group.

Dieter Helm (Chair of the Natural Capital Committee) is a key adviser to Government and he believes upland farmers have a key role in managing the land.

Farmers will need to adapt to change and take an environmental approach to the way they manage the land in the future. With the uncertainty with Brexit and funding levels, it was acknowledged that there will be environmental benefits if farmers can adapt to change.

YDNPA approach to nature conservation (Gary Smith)

Austwick PC had put this item forward for discussion. Gary explained the statutory provisions for National Parks and how it delivers conservation through the [National Park Management Plan](#). The Management Plan sets out what the NPA and its partners want to see happen over the next 5 years.

Austwick PC asked about the interplay between Natural England and the National Park Authority, particularly in relation to surveying and monitoring of SSSIs. Gary advised that Natural England are the 'lead body'. However, their resources are increasingly stretched now because of the on-going cuts to their budget.

YDNPA Staff Reorganisation (David Butterworth)

This item has been requested by Clapham cum Newby PC as they were concerned to lose Steve Hastie from the Area Ranger post (they had subsequently been informed that Cat Kilner will replace Steve).

David explained the Authority has increased from 100 to 108 fte staff with additional resources being put into the Ranger Service and Planning. The Ranger Service is now split into 3 areas (West, North & South), Steve has been promoted to the West Area Manager. The volunteer service is also being re-organised, adding resource into rights of way maintenance.

The Authority has been successful in a Heritage Lottery Bid which will include barn conservation, wildlife projects etc within the Westmorland Dales. There will be a lot of staff employed through this project and it will also bring in additional volunteer support and a range of apprenticeships.

Affordable housing (Peter Stockton)

The NPA has been approached by the North Yorkshire Housing Board to promote community-led housing schemes in the National Park.

Community led housing is the development of small sites (usually less than 10 homes) by Parish Councils or other locally constituted groups, for the purpose of delivering locally affordable housing. An example given is a scheme of 3 new homes in Hudswell (on the eastern boundary of the National Park) which was recently permitted by the Authority.

The advantage of these schemes is that the community is in control and can target its housing at local needs and extract a future income. Community housing also has the advantage of being exempt from right to buy and other Government regulations about rental prices.

With community led housing, Parish Councils may be able to take advantage of existing allocated sites in their area and develop new 'exception' sites. The downside is that it does require a lot of voluntary effort. The good news though is that the Government is backing schemes with substantial funding at the moment, and is particularly keen to push development in areas with high levels of second homes.

If communities are interested in developing their own housing, then the following contacts should be able to assist:

Sarah Hall – Housing Strategy Manager, York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Strategic Housing Partnership

sarah.hall@hambleton.gov.uk

Tel: 01609 767090 mobile: 07773 367 378

<http://www.nycyerhousing.co.uk/>

Leah Swain – Rural Yorkshire

Leah.swain@ruralyorkshire.org.uk

Tel: 01904 704177

Peter Duncan – Lead Partner, Social Regeneration Consultants

Tel: 07740 591680 or 01661 843643

Long Preston asked if the National Park is meeting its house building targets ? The new Local Plan is setting a house building target for the first time in the National Park. The target will be 55 dwelling per annum (unless modified by the Inspector in his report of

examination). This is a slightly higher figure than the long term average building rate in the Park. At the moment it is not being met because local and national changes to housing policy has created uncertainty for developers and partly because the house building sector is still in recovery. The Authority is keen however to support a wider range of new housing in the Park and will push for movement on the allocated sites, once the Plan is adopted. Next year the NPA is likely to begin a process to find the next supply of sites for the period after 2021.

Sustainable Development Fund (Gary Smith)

A reminder that the NPA has a fund of £175,000 available each year to support local projects that promote a more sustainable way of living, working or enjoying the National Park. Over £80,000 has been given to 11 projects so far this year. Anyone can apply for a grant (other than another public body). Examples of projects funded so far include: refurbishment of Malham Village Hall, briquette maker at Royal Oak Furniture – enhancing the economic viability of the business; set up costs for Clapham Village Shop; and [B4RN hyperfast community broadband](#) scheme, which has developed in the western area of the Park.

Parish Councils are encouraged to tell people about the [Sustainable Development Fund](#) and consider whether they have any projects of their own that might meet the criteria.

National Park Management Plan (Gary Smith)

The current Management Plan was adopted in 2013. It sets out a long term vision for the National Park. An updated Plan, which will incorporate the extended area of the National Park, is required by 2018. The review process will start next year. The Authority and its partners will be seeking views from residents, visitors and organisations to gain an insight into the issues they feel are important for the future of the Park. This will, of course, include parish councils (individually, and as part of these Parish Forums). In the meantime, Parish Councils are encouraged to look at the existing [plan](#).

Questions/AOB

Hellifield PC raised the planning application for major development of a leisure complex just outside the boundary of the National Park which has been submitted to Craven District Council. It was acknowledged there will mixed reaction to this application by local communities, particularly in respect of the perceived harm to the setting of the National Park, two conservation areas and SSSIs, as well as impact on existing tourism businesses.

The meeting closed at 9pm and Councillors were thanked for their contributions to the meeting.