

Katherine Wood [via email]

Planning Team

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

5 July 2023

**Objection to Planning Application: C/54/162**

**Full planning permission for use of the agricultural land for car parking for 56 days each calendar year (currently used for car parking for 28 days per year)**

Dear Ms Wood

Friends of the Dales cannot support this application in its current form. It simply puts a sticking plaster on a long-running and deep-seated problem.

Approving this application would significantly extend the available parking in Malham and we should like to express our view strongly that such an application must not be considered in isolation. It needs to be dealt with as part of a wider programme of visitor management, which would include preventing the widespread verge parking in the approach to Malham, and a vastly improved bus service. Simply encouraging more parking at Malham is bad for the village and its economy, for the environment and the visitor experience.

We notice that the statement on the planning platform by the Head of Visitor Services includes the following sentence: "Parking is essential in Malham where the options for public transport are limited." This is precisely our point. Doubling the amount of parking in a hot-spot like Malham does nothing to solve the real problem. If nothing else is being done it means that more and more space and more days will have to be set aside for the inevitable increase in parking.

We understand from local residents in Malham that, a few years ago, the National Park approached farmers regarding a possible Park & Ride scheme but nothing concrete materialised. Even in the short- to medium-term a lot could be done to improve public transport quickly and relatively cheaply in an effort to reduce the number of cars. If, for example, the last bus leaves at 13:35h it will do nothing to encourage people to spend a day there and leave their car behind.

We are also aware of the mistaken belief that more cars mean more contribution to the local economy, as the Head of Services response points out. There is a great deal of evidence that car visitors make the lowest contribution to the local economy when compared to other visitors, for example those who arrive by public transport or a shuttle-bus service. Event management in many parts of the UK and abroad can provide many best-case scenarios of how to improve visitor management. Making more car parking available misses all opportunities for improvement.

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It also needs to be pointed out that approving this application could well encourage other applications from sites such as Burnsall to apply for a similar extension.

Apart from our basic concern that this application must not be approved in isolation, we also want to echo the current problem with the existing public right of way. It has caused visitor conflict in the past and we do not see any measures in the application that would lead to avoiding this.

We therefore conclude that, as the application is not part of a wider programme of visitor management including more sustainable forms of transport, we must object to the application and recommend that it be refused.

Yours sincerely

Chair, Policy and Planning Committee  
On behalf of Friends of the Dales

*Friends of the Dales is a working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society which was founded in 1981 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Friends of the Dales is free of political and financial affiliations. We work to ensure that the Government, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and other relevant agencies deliver their obligations to care for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales, an internationally important area. We do this by considering major planning applications and policy development affecting the Yorkshire Dales and adjacent areas. We offer a year round programme of walks and talks so that everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. We have a membership of around 1,300 individuals, families, businesses and organisations.*