

Autumn 2024 : Issue 168

Yorkshire **DALES** review



Nature First

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Friends of the
DALES
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

Front Cover: Female emperor dragonfly
Photo courtesy of Katie Daynes

Views expressed in the *Yorkshire Dales Review* are not necessarily those of Friends of the Dales.

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Change for a Generation



Derek Twine CBE is the new Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, having previously been Deputy Chair, Chair of the finance and resources

committee and Member Champion for cultural heritage, then for promoting understanding. He is a former Chief Executive of the Scout Association and National Trust council member. **3**

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Dragons in the Dales

Sunbiggin Tarn - Jewel of the Westmorland Dales



Sir Martin Holdgate

Friends of the Dales member and President Emeritus of Friends of the Lake District Sir Martin Holdgate published the

first description of the vegetation around Sunbiggin Tarn in 1954. He has watched its changes since then, while serving as an environmental scientist and conservationist in Britain and internationally.

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Kilnsey

Change for a Generation

Young people are the key to our future, argues new Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Chair Derek Twine.

I write this on a glorious late-summer day as the sun streams down on the beauty of God's Own, and all seems well in the world. In the 70th anniversary year of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority we can celebrate much that has been achieved by our predecessors and the work currently in progress with our partners and with our officers, volunteers and members. And it is a privilege to have been elected as Chair of the authority, albeit somewhat daunting to be following in the footsteps of Neil Heseltine.

Yet we face a worsening climate and wildlife crisis; dramatic degradation and loss of flora and fauna; negative impacts from inequalities of transport, housing, education and access to communication; and continuing uncertainty about the direction and funding of the farming and tourism economies.

To address these and other challenges, we are actively preparing the new Local Plan, alongside the new National Park Management Plan, which is the most important document for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This five-year work programme is produced and monitored by a partnership of local organisations that operate across the area. Consultations have been valuable in both processes.

Building Bridges

In the wider context we are establishing and furthering our relationships with new ministers in a new government, our new local councils and mayoral offices, Defra and other funding sources and with many project partners. No matter how focussed or potentially effective our objectives may be, further resources are needed to maximise impact.

We can be encouraged by the partnerships that are working so strongly across the Dales. Projects include nature recovery; supporting agricultural transition (especially the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme and working to ensure continuity and deliverability of whatever comes next and through the Environmental Land Management Schemes); creating and supporting apprenticeships; enhancing public access and rights of way (including our work on the Coast to Coast Path); providing health and wellbeing (producing a Nature Prescription calendar to support healthcare professionals across North Yorkshire in association with the RSPB); and helping schoolchildren connect with nature (including through the Generation Green initiative).

Our collaborations with Friends of the Dales and with Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in particular give true added value towards our shared ambitions, whether through joint working or sometimes simply collaborative thinking. Also, the impact of DalesBus cannot be underestimated, enhancing the lives of residents as well as reducing carbon emissions and travel costs for visitors.

Investing in Youth

So there is much to celebrate in what is being achieved, and this can be built upon as we go forward with the new Yorkshire Dales Management Plan for the next few years. Yet just looking to 'the next few years' is not enough.

Addressing significant nature recovery and carbon reduction, developing and embedding new approaches to farming and land management, moving towards regenerative tourism and leisure, these all need strategies that have a vision way beyond just a few years. We need to be more creative and have a longer-term perspective. The challenges we face now have not just occurred as a surprise in the past few years (even if some deniers may hold that view), but have crept up on us over decades, if not over the past couple of centuries of industrialisation and its consequences. So our planning likewise needs to set a bigger period and a bigger ambition. And if we want to have a different relationship with the planet and with people, then we need to think differently and do things differently too.

To truly provide for a sustainable and regenerative future, defining our aspirations and how to achieve them, we must engage young people, the true stakeholders in their futures. Students, apprentices, young adults living or working in the Dales, all have perspectives to be considered. Likewise, upcoming cohorts of young ecologists, environmentalists, health practitioners, planners and community activists can offer new insights and energy. They can bring new ways of thinking, new ways of working, and we need to be open to enabling that to happen.

If the future is to be different for the next generation, then whilst we can have some impact through our own actions now, the biggest investment we can make is to ensure that young people are themselves engaged, empowered and encouraged to create, to own and to bring about those long-term transformative changes ready for their own successors.

Derek Twine, Chair, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



Friends of the Dales Creative Campaigners.
Photo courtesy of Harriet Gardiner



Wheelchair Users Scale New Heights

The sun shone on our first inclusive off-road walking event in July, hosted with access charity Access the Dales and walking company Where2Walk. Starting from one of the Access the Dales all-terrain wheelchair hubs at Eden Ewe-Nique Lonnin near Tebay, the mixed group of walkers and wheelchair users climbed Powson Knott, which overlooks the northern Howgill Fells. The feedback was resoundingly positive and plans are already in place to host a similar collaborative event in 2025.

Access the Dales aims to reduce barriers and ensure no one is excluded from enjoying the outdoors. It provides all-terrain wheelchairs at eight hubs across the Yorkshire Dales and Forest of Bowland and organises inclusive events. The charity is also **looking for volunteers** to support guided walks, market its activities, help plan events, assist with fundraising, create website content and maintain its wheelchairs. Contact accessthe dales@gmail.com

Access for All

Campaign for National Parks (CNP) has launched a new campaign, Race to National Parks, to raise awareness of its manifesto pledge that every child and young person should have equal access to these protected landscapes – tackling a growing societal divide for those living in urban areas exacerbated by poor and badly connected public transport provision. This chimes perfectly with the objectives of our own sustainable transport campaign – Living Access – and our Creative Campaigners have got behind the initiative to highlight some of the issues disproportionately affecting public transport users either living in, or wanting to access locations around, the Dales. In the next magazine we'll update you on the team's plans for an inspiring new film, which uses humour and creativity to shine a light on this important issue.

Funding Boost for Wool-Based Tree Guards

British Wool recently announced a strategic investment in NexGen Tree Shelters Ltd, a pioneering company specialising in bio- and environmentally degradable tree guards made from British wool. The investment will enable NexGen to begin full production of its eco-friendly tree shelters, which have undergone extensive development and testing since winning the Innovation in Wool award in 2020.



We will be watching the rollout of this innovative product carefully as it has the potential to enhance sustainability by eliminating the use of single-use plastics in tree planting – as well as enhancing demand for British wool, a commodity that has been wastefully undervalued for decades.

Help the Dales Stay Special for Years to Come...

Gifts in wills are extremely important to our charity as we receive no direct funding from government and rely almost entirely on voluntary donations and subscriptions. And a future gift might be more appealing than a gift right now, especially when times are difficult for so many of us.

October is Free Wills Month, a nationwide scheme that offers people aged 55 and older the opportunity to have a simple will written or updated for free. The campaign is organised by Capacity Marketing for Charities in partnership with various charities, including Age UK, Guide Dogs UK and Marie Curie. Hopefully you spotted the leaflet delivered with this issue of the magazine containing further information about legacy giving. Please also contact our Executive Director Ann Shadrake at ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk to discuss any questions you might have.

BFI Job for our Young Film Reviewer

She might be only (just) 17 but Beatrice Benn, our film reviewer for the last two years, has won herself a highly sought-after job with the London-based British Film Institute (BFI). Recruited as one of a team of 10 regionally based BFI Film Academy Young Programmers for its Future Film Festival, Beatrice will – alongside her studies – be turning her attention to reviewing scores of short films created by 16- to 25-year-olds and planning events for the week-long festival taking place in February 2025. You can read Beatrice's latest film review for this magazine on page 22.

Words and Action

Five groups from the Dales and Skipton are working with organisations from across North Yorkshire to fight global warming.

The 24 members of the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition are calling on regional and national politicians to implement strategies and policies aimed at creating a sustainable future. They include Malhamdale Environmental Group, which has supported volunteers to plant trees and monitor peat bogs, curlews and wildflowers. Action on Climate Emergency Settle and Area runs monthly green cafés, which often include talks, presentations or film screenings. Clapham Sustainability Group has secured funding for an infra-red camera, which identifies where households are losing heat. Richmondshire Climate Action Partnership's film *Beneath the Surface*, which premiered in June, highlights the work of local activists and aims to inspire other residents to follow their lead.

More information at www.nyclimatecoalition.org, www.acesettleandarea.org and www.richmondshireclimateaction.org



The newest houses in the national park are in Bainbridge.
Photo courtesy of YDNPA

Housing: Have Your Say

Building houses in the Yorkshire Dales is a thorny issue. On one hand, the national park authority has set itself the target of creating 50 new homes every year until 2040 in a bid to create sustainable communities with a more balanced age demographic. On the other hand, there is often opposition to developments in rural locations.

In March 2023 the national park authority launched a consultation in preparation for the new Local Plan. The public was invited to comment on 33 potential sites for 600 homes and this number has now been whittled down to around 370, many of which will be affordable housing, at 23 'preferred' locations. When added to planning permissions already granted, it is hoped that these will go a long way towards meeting the target of 750 between now and 2040.

A second consultation is now open until Tuesday 29 October. To make your voice heard, visit www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/localplanconsultation7

You can read our response to the first consultation at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/planning/planning-comments-2023-2024

War on Waste

The new Share Skipton 'Library of Things' is stocked with more than 230 tools, pieces of electrical equipment and other items that can be borrowed for free or at a fraction of the cost of buying.

The charity opened the shop at 48 Newmarket Street in July 2024, with the aim of reducing waste and unnecessary consumption at the same time as helping users to save money. There are plans to set up and run repair cafés, where members of the public can bring in broken objects to be mended, rather than replaced. Where appropriate, they may be trained to carry out these tasks themselves in future.

Donors benefit from freeing up space at home that is currently taken up by objects that would otherwise be gathering dust, and a number of volunteer roles are available.

The shop is open from 4pm -7pm on Tuesdays and 10am – 1pm on Saturdays.

More information at www.shareskipton.org

The Fight Goes On

Friends of the Lake District is seeking a judicial review over the controversial decision to give planning permission for a new visitor attraction at Elterwater Quarry.

As reported in the summer issue of this magazine, the charity was among more than 200 objectors to the proposal, which would see tourists using zip wires to explore the historic workings. An initial planning application was rejected because it would attract much more traffic into the Langdale Valley, but Friends of the Lake District says that new measures proposed in the revised submission, which was approved in May, did not go far enough to remove the risk to the tranquillity of the area.

The charity is backed by Lakes Parish Council and the International Council on Monuments and Sites. This UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) monitoring body has repeatedly objected to the development on the grounds that it poses a threat to the landscape and that it will trivialise the area's industrial heritage.

Friends of the Dales has a volunteer team, made up of trustees and members, who review and comment on planning issues that are likely to have a significant impact on the Yorkshire Dales National Park. You can read its responses to recent applications at www.friendsofthedales.org/planning



Lorayne Wall, Ruth Bradshaw, Kate Ashbrook and Victoria Benn at the NPS conference

National Park Societies Conference 2024

The annual National Park Societies conference 2024 was hosted from 11-13 September in a hot and sunny South Downs National Park. The two-day event, which is supported by Campaign for National Parks, enables the 12 national park societies of England and Wales to come together with like-minded champions, volunteers and decision makers to celebrate and share achievements, as well as discussing common issues and agreeing positive actions.

Friends of the Dales Executive Director Ann Shadrake, Membership and Events Officer Victoria Benn and Creative Campaigner Saima Bibi enjoyed inspiring sessions from Tim Slaney, South Downs National Park Interim Chief Executive, Sarah Hardy, Head of 30by30 for Landscapes, Access and People at Defra and youth ambassadors Cameron MacDonald and Freya Sareen amongst many others, along with fruitful informal opportunities to connect with peers from kindred organisations.



Natural Parks:

Is it Time to Put Nature First in our National Parks?

Campaign for National Parks Chief Executive Dr Rose O'Neill shares the findings from the first *Health Check Report*.

If you ask the public about the priority in national parks, the same answers come up time and time again. Wildlife. Nature. Wildness.

The recent public survey conducted by Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority found that nature recovery was the top priority for all respondents, including those who live and work in the park. Every test of public opinion we reviewed for our *Health Check Report* (including our own 'Big Conversation' survey and those from National

Parks UK, Rewilding Britain, RSPB and Green Alliance) has shown that nature is what people most value and want to see prioritised.

National parks are important for many reasons: their spectacular natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, opportunities for public enjoyment, health and wellbeing and, of course, local livelihoods and vibrant communities. A focus on nature should not come at the cost of these other attributes. It is simply that without nature, there is no health, no economy, no food, no future. Unless we prioritise nature in our national parks, we risk losing everything that we hold dear about them.

Cause for Concern

Our *Health Check Report*, published in April 2024, provides a detailed assessment of the state of nature across all the national parks of England and Wales. It's the first time anything on this scale has been attempted and the results are stark. No matter which indicator we looked at, nature needs a lifeline in national parks.

But all is not lost. The data also showed that national parks contain many of our most sensitive habitats including wetlands and temperate rainforest. They are often the last refuge of some of the UK's most endangered



species, such as curlew, hen harrier and cuckoo. The problems facing nature are in spite of national park status – not because of it. We have no doubt that, without the existing legal protections in place, and actions by the Friends groups, authorities and others, things could be much, much worse.

The national parks are the critical places where nature can begin to fight back.

National Parks are for Nature

The new government has promised to make national parks become 'wilder and greener, ending the destruction of nature, expanding and restoring habitats'.

This is very welcome and leadership matters. Government and national park authorities must make it absolutely clear that national parks are nature designations as well as landscape designations. This will require a complete transformation in the way these areas are run. Hearteningly, our analysis found that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is leading the way, with one of the most ambitious and comprehensive management plans when it comes to nature recovery. It's time that it had the powers and resources needed to deliver it.



Grouse moor burning.
Photo courtesy of raptorpersecutionuk.org

As well as better enforcement of existing laws in national parks, such as those aimed at ensuring SSSIs are in good condition and cleaning up water pollution, we need new laws to crack down on wildlife crime and end damaging practices such as burning on peat. We need reforms to national park governance so that boards better reflect the public they serve, can operate effectively and have the skills needed to drive nature recovery.

We want a New Deal for National Parks, with a doubling of the budget for authorities and for nature-friendly farming and land management within national parks.

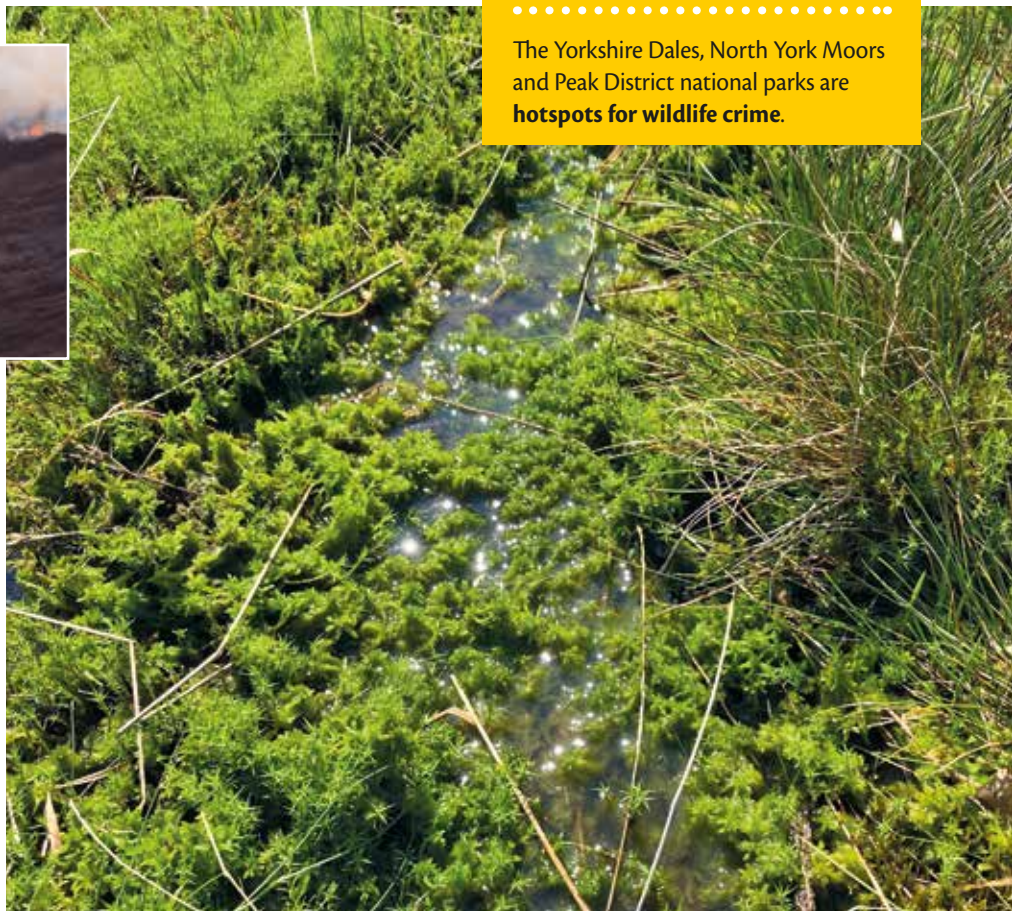
Organisations such as water companies and Forestry England should be required to put right the damage their activities cause to national parks, do far more to meet the highest standards and prevent future damage. Natural England and the Environment Agency must prioritise these landscapes and provide the evidence needed to drive nature recovery.

When national parks were created 75 years ago, it was under a 'People's Charter' – a vision for every citizen to walk completely immersed in nature, surrounded by the awe and wonder of our most special landscapes and wildlife. This vision is as relevant today. Citizens' assemblies should ensure the public has a say and there should be reforms to support greater public and community ownership of land. Above all, everyone, regardless of age, race, class or where they live, should be made welcome and feel connected to national parks. Ensuring that national parks reflect the public's priorities will be good for nature and people too.

**Dr Rose O'Neill, Chief Executive,
Campaign for National Parks**

Read the *Health Check Report* at www.cnp.org.uk/health-check-report

A healthy peat bog



Nature Under Siege

Only **6%** of all land in national parks is currently managed effectively for nature.

Only **a quarter** of wildlife Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in English national parks are in 'favourable' condition, compared to a national average of **38%**. Moorland burning and grazing regimes are some of the main reasons for failure.

National parks contain **38%** of the carbon-storing peatland in England and Wales, but the vast majority is estimated to be in poor condition.

Every lake, river and stream in English national parks is polluted. In some places the sewage scandal is even worse than in towns and cities.

Woodland expansion across all 13 national parks between 2015 and 2020 came to a total of just **eight square miles**.

The Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors and Peak District national parks are **hotspots for wildlife crime**.

Avoid Malham and Spread the Load



Cars parked at Horton-in-Ribblesdale for the Three Peaks. Photo courtesy of Hillary Fenten

Jonathan Smith set up the outdoor company Where2Walk to share his love of the uplands of northern Britain, but he asks whether more of us should now choose the path less taken.

For a number of years I have been increasingly concerned and frustrated by the 'bank holiday' crowds that flock to the most popular areas of the Yorkshire Dales. Many head for Malham. The results are chaos, with people queuing on the approach roads, dodging fellow walkers on the walk to the cove, unable to get into the pubs and cafe and returning home thoroughly fed up. It is all so unnecessary.

The frustration comes because, by contrast, most of the Yorkshire Dales is nearly empty even on 'busy' weekends. I was recently in Kettlewell on a bright, sunny Sunday and the car park was barely half full. Once I left the village (to climb Great Whernside) I saw two couples on the entire walk, and even the scout hut was empty. I had a pint in the Racehorses and there was hardly a soul in, the staff bemoaning the lack of visitors. It's such a shame.

Some may say that it is great that people come to the Dales, and that still more do since Covid, but we are now slipping backwards. More importantly, those who are visiting are increasingly arriving at the same tired places. This has three consequences. The first is that they are not spreading the load and servicing businesses outside the hotspots. The

second is the environmental impact, both on the path network and also on the facilities in the most popular places, Horton-in-Ribblesdale being a prime example.

However, the third consequence may be the most important. This involves the visitor experience. A visit to Malham with its queues, parking issues and near-concrete paths overcrowded with other visitors is hardly a wilderness experience, and in many ways no outdoor experience at all. It is particularly unsatisfactory for first-time visitors and the young and unlikely to lead to a love and understanding of the countryside.

Sadly, many will not come again, their day out spoilt by the crowds. In this day and age, when fresh air, exercise and a knowledge of our environment is key to our physical and mental wellbeing, this is a crying shame. Experiencing the countryside is vital when young in particular: a few enjoyable trips and many will return in the future, becoming champions of our precious countryside.

Far from the Madding Crowds

So how can we change things? Certainly education plays an important part: bringing schoolchildren to the less popular areas midweek is a start, and having them stay somewhere overnight would be even better. We have plenty of campsites that could



Queuing up Ingleborough

accommodate them out of season (which termtime is) and give them a night under the stars. Navigation skills and the Countryside Code should be taught on any visit. This was one of the more enlightened suggestions from the Glover Report a few years back but has never seen the light of day since.

I have also championed the opening of secondary walking hubs across the Dales, avoiding the hotspots. These must have parking, toilets, access by public transport and, importantly, a series of notice/information boards. These noticeboards should offer a combination of local walk suggestions and information on the area you are walking through (history, geology, farming practices, path management, access land etc), hopefully sponsored by local businesses such as my own. The information boards in other national parks, and even the Forest of Bowland, are so much better.

These secondary hubs will draw visitors from the main, over-promoted centres and offer a more 'real' Dales experience. Off the top of my head Buckden/Kettlewell, Garsdale/Dent Station, Long Preston/Settle, Sedbergh and Coverdale offer such opportunities.

I accept the difficulties that this all involves. It needs buy-in from all the local authorities, charity groups and private businesses. The national park authority should take the lead. A simple start, though, is for all authorities to start promoting other places and events on



Top: Jonathan Smith at the trig point on Birks, a rarely visited 'Dales 30' mountain

Above: The Best of Company near Austwick

their social media: in particular the Wharfedale Three Peaks (as opposed to the Yorkshire Three Peaks), the 'Dales 30' mountains (many climbable from the less visited areas), walks through history (lead mines, ancient castles, old farming practices) or even a challenge to visit all of our dramatic and lovely waterfalls (Cautley Spout anyone?).

If I see another post on Malham Cove claiming that it is the best limestone pavement, I will cry.

All of this is achievable if there is a will. Is there?

Jonathan Smith, Friends of the Dales Community Supporter



The Great Tree Planting Revolution



Richmond, North Yorkshire. Photo courtesy of Dan Smedley (Unsplash)

A joined-up approach to woodland creation is vital for promoting nature recovery, writes White Rose Community Forest Chair Professor Alan Simson.

The UK now has the least amount of tree cover of any country in Europe. We import over 80% of the timber we use, making us the second largest importer of timber in the world after China. The UK government is keen to reduce our timber imports and grow more ourselves. Thus planting of trees and woodland in the UK is accelerating considerably, fuelled by the England Tree Action Plan, which seeks to establish some 30,000 hectares of woodland per annum to achieve 16.5% tree cover by 2050.

The benefits that we will achieve from this increase in tree planting are considerable. Trees are life. They contain life and they protect life – economically, culturally and, of course, environmentally. Whether we're in

the presence of them or indirectly benefiting from them, we humans and the natural world have a lot to gain when it comes to the viable establishment of trees. We have a lot to lose too, however, if the increasing tree cover is not integrated with the existing landscape and other land uses so that we begin to see a more connected landscape.

A good example of this is the extensive tree planting that has been carried out at the Broughton Sanctuary near Skipton, previously known as Broughton Hall. The owner sought the help of the White Rose Forest and the Forestry Commission to carry out a programme of tree planting that would focus upon significant nature recovery. Over 350,000 native broad-leaved trees were established, creating a variety of woodlands and wood pasture areas and also providing a natural flood management system for the Aire Valley catchment area. The project has been very successful. Professor Alistair Driver,

Director of Rewilding Britain, has said, 'I've seen all of the significant rewilding projects in England and Wales in my 45 years so far in conservation. Broughton Sanctuary is the most rapidly transformational of the lot.' The project integrates extremely well with the corridors of the receiving landscape and has already allowed natural processes to create a rich tapestry of habitats that support various forms of life.

Other woodland projects such as this may well be on the horizon following the recent establishment of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). Local authorities now have a statutory duty to work with stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors to agree priorities for nature recovery. The most valuable existing areas for nature must be mapped, and it has been generally agreed that trees, woodland, wood pasture and natural colonisation are central aspects of future nature recovery.

We know, however, that our landscapes will need to accommodate uses other than trees and woodland, including food production, housing, industry and energy, and this will provide quite a challenge to integrating new planting with the corridors of the receiving landscapes.

Green Fingers

Corridors can be defined as strips of habitat that structurally connect two or more habitat fragments and serve as pathways for horizontal ecological flows, as well as visual connections. The concept of green infrastructure that emerged some time ago views landscape corridors as the most permanent and enduring elements of viable towns and cities and, when located and maintained in the right places, trees provide a key element of, and a valuable contribution to, the green infrastructure corridors. Thus there is increased interest in trees and woodland being a significant aspect of NABUCO – Nature-Based Urban Communities.

Space, or the lack of it in some tight urban communities, can sometimes limit the opportunities to plant trees and therefore the Miyawaki Mini-Forest idea can be considered. The logic of the Miyawaki method is to create, in conjunction with the local community, a permanent canopy of climax tree species (see box, right) on an area the size of a tennis court that creates a shady forest microclimate as quickly as possible. Places that have created these mini-forests for some while, such as in The Netherlands, have found the biodiversity to be far greater than in a standard clump of woodland. The first Miyawaki Mini-Forest in Leeds was created in March this year.

With trees and woodlands beginning to return to our countryside, our towns, our cities and our communities, it gives us hope that the great tree planting revolution can be realised. By working strategically, applying the key principles and focussing upon a range of creative mechanisms, our aspirations can be ramped up. It will take real vision to operate at this scale but now is the time for big ideas to deliver this vision.

Professor Alan Simson, Chair, White Rose Community Forest

Our Living Woods campaign actively supports planning applications to increase the amount of native woodland, taking account of siting and design. Find out more at www.friendsofthedailes.org/campaign



Autumnal trees. Photo courtesy of Mark Corner

Getting the Miyawaki Mix Right

Quite often mini-forests are in urban areas that lack greenery so ‘pioneer’ species are mainly selected initially to establish the new vegetation quickly. These are among the first to colonise bare ground or repopulate an area after habitat destruction and are fast-growing. However, they are more short-living, smaller, have abundant but wind-dispersed seeds and tend not to be shade-tolerant. They are also shallow-rooted, allowing them to grow in poorer soils.

It is critical therefore to also select ‘climax’ species (the ones that take over in the final stage of the development of a stable ecosystem). These are more slow-growing but larger and longer-lived. They have larger, but animal-dispersed, seeds and are shade-tolerant. They tend to have deeper roots and therefore appreciate richer soils. A number of native species fit the bill but quite a few of them are not happy growing in urban heat islands. So we’ll have to expand our choice to include species found in more southerly locations.



Tree planting at Bow Street, Leeds. Photo courtesy of www.groundwork.org.uk/yorkshire/



Dragons in the Dales



Male common hawker dragonfly. Photo courtesy of Joanne Tully

They've survived hundreds of millions of years but now they need our help to overcome damage to their fragile habitat. Skipton-based children's author Katie Daynes explains how work to restore a Dales peat bog is bringing back some of our most beautiful and fascinating insect species.



Katie with four-spotted chaser dragonfly. Photo courtesy of Katie Daynes

There's something magical about dragonflies. Flashes of emerald and sapphire and ruby in the summer sun, hovering and skimming over still pools, their four wings glinting as they rest on a reed...then darting away as soon as you dare to approach. If you're lucky enough to get close to resting dragonflies, they look even more amazing. Their huge eyes, lacy wings and dazzling long bodies seem almost prehistoric – which isn't surprising when you find out they're among the most ancient of insects.

Earlier this year, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust invited applications for the role of volunteer peat dragonfly monitor. Who could resist? Summer days spent in the wilds watching dragonflies sounded like the perfect antidote to my usual desk-bound day job, so I duly applied and was delighted to become one of eight volunteers assisting on the project. With my dragonfly knowledge hovering at next-to-nothing, it was great to receive a day's training about these fascinating insects, as well as being reassured that we'd always be with trained staff on our monitoring expeditions.



Since summer days in the Dales aren't all gloriously sunny, and dragonflies tend to favour low wind speeds and temperatures of over 14 degrees, our first outings post-training were more about getting to know the boggy terrain than notching up dragonfly sightings. The location for our monitoring project – wonderfully named Dragons in the Dales – is Swarth Moor at Helwith Bridge. It comprises a lowland raised peat bog alongside a lagg fen, which is where the bog water table meets the surrounding land, creating an unusual and nationally rare habitat.

Swarth Moor is a certified Site of Special Scientific Interest and I'd pictured somewhere remote and unspoilt – but no. It's slap bang next to a working quarry, with heavy-duty trucks regularly rumbling by, and it's been damaged over the decades by peat harvesting, and by drainage channels (grips) being carved into it, draining away the water that's so crucial to maintaining a healthy peat bog. Fortunately, Yorkshire Peat Partnership – led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – has been restoring great swathes of peatland in our area, Swarth Moor included, and its efforts are really beginning to pay off.



Swarth Moor. Photo courtesy of Liberty Firby-Fisk

Kickstarting a Virtuous Circle

For those new to peat's superpowers, here's what I've gleaned from the super-knowledgeable staff leading our monitoring expeditions...

Peatlands store twice as much carbon as all the world's forests, despite covering only 3% of the land's surface, but if they dry out and erode, their carbon is released. Unfortunately, around 80% of the UK's peat bogs are damaged and they can't recover and rewild by themselves. Installing leaky dams is the answer. Piles of stone, wooden planks, heather bales and coir (coconut fibres) can all play a role in blocking up grips and gullies and raising the water table. By trapping more water on site, vast areas of barren, dark, crumbling peat are slowly transformed into beautiful, biodiverse bogs. And the key species in this transformation is sphagnum moss. Sphagnum holds up to 20 times its own weight in water, creating the acidic, waterlogged conditions that enable other brilliant bog plants and animals to thrive. These same conditions also enable new layers of peat to form and even more carbon to be stored.

So where do the dragonflies come in? Well, it turns out that both peat bogs and dragonflies depend on the same thing for survival: a stable water table. Dragonflies need to lay their eggs in shallow pools that



Emerging common hawker dragonfly, pumping up its wings before taking its first flight. Photo courtesy of Liberty Firby-Fisk

won't dry out over time, because their larvae will then spend up to two years living underwater before finally emerging and becoming dragonflies themselves. What better way to celebrate the success of a peatland restoration project than by monitoring the increasing numbers of dragonflies that emerge in the summer months? And not only that. Evidence suggests that the rare bog habitat where our dragonfly monitoring takes place might be the perfect place to introduce...drum roll...an endangered dragonfly called the white-faced darter.

On my most recent visit to Swarth Moor, as the quarry trucks rumbled by, I was rewarded with the highest number of sightings yet. Four-spotted chasers, black-tailed skimmers, southern hawkers and an emperor dragonfly – not to mention emerald, azure and blue-tailed damselflies. The peat bog may be in a precarious position, shoehorned in by roads, developments and a quarry, but its future is looking brighter thanks to the return of the sphagnum and the arrival of the dragonflies. This autumn will see more leaky dams installed and a few more ponds created. In 10 years' time, the quarry's lease will expire and perhaps the endangered white-faced darter will join the other dragons of the Dales on this nationally rare bog with its precious layers of peat that have taken thousands of years to form.

Katie Daynes



Jurassic Giants

The ancestors of dragonflies and damselflies evolved around 300 million years ago, before dinosaurs even existed. Fossils have been found with wingspans of up to two feet, so our modern-day dragons are pretty minuscule by comparison

Sunbiggin Tarn – Jewel of the Westmorland Dales

The positive and negative impacts of human activity on sensitive ecosystems are nothing new, writes Friends of the Lake District President Emeritus Sir Martin Holdgate.

Limestone country generally lacks natural lakes, and there are only three in the Yorkshire Dales National Park – Semer Water, Malham Tarn and (since the 2016 extension) Sunbiggin Tarn. One consequence of the geology is that Sunbiggin and Malham tarns are ‘marl lakes’, fed with spring water saturated in dissolved lime, which crystallises out on submerged vegetation to form calcareous nodules. Sunbiggin also used to be celebrated for ‘hollow stones’ deposited around blue-green algae, some of them based on empty mollusc shells.

Over 70 years ago one of my lecturers at Cambridge suggested that I should go and have a look at the vegetation around Sunbiggin Tarn. In those days we thought of ‘fens’ in terms of the sedgy wetlands known mainly from East Anglia, and almost nothing was known about such vegetation in northern England. So a fellow student and I spent a rainy week surveying Sunbiggin in June 1950 and I extended the work in 1953. This confirmed the presence of genuine fens, characterised by much smaller sedges than those of East Anglia.

The tarn and a smaller second pool named Cow Dub were then fringed by the common reed, *Phragmites*, backed by a broad belt of bottle sedge with scattered tussocks of tufted sedge and with slender sedge in some of the drainage channels. A few of those channels

also contained dense stands of a sedge familiar in the South – the great fen-sedge, *Cladium mariscus*, at its highest English location. The upper fen levels, built by the accumulation of plant matter, supported a species-rich complex dominated by meadowsweet, *Filipendula ulmaria*.

But what about the tarn itself? Soundings in 1950 showed that most of it was shallow but we discovered an oval depression some 10 metres deep toward the west side. Later I probed the fens between the tarn and Cow Dub, finding around three metres of peat above up to five metres of granular marl, which must have been deposited in open water. So the tarn must once have been bigger. Do the southern fens today form a barrier across the basin, raising the water level in the tarn as their peat accumulates?

Sunbiggin Tarn in 2024 looking southwards towards the Howgill Fells. The trees on the right were planted in the 1970s. Photo courtesy of Kyle Blue



Seventy years ago I thought that the tarn and surrounding moors were little marked by human impact – though the limestone ridge they stood on had been occupied since Neolithic times. In World War II the moors were used for military training, but by 1950 they were once again grazed commons and only the south-eastern fens were protected by fencing. There was fishing in the tarn and grouse shooting on the heather moors, while the gamekeeper collected eggs of the black-headed gulls that bred around Cow Dub for sale to London clubs. These activities seemed to have little impact on the wild flora and fauna but all this was to change.

Boom and Bust

The black-headed gulls were one cause. In 1950 there were around 500 pairs but once the gamekeeper retired and egg collection was abandoned there was a massive population explosion. In 1988 a census by John Coulson of Durham University recorded 12,500 pairs, making it the largest such gullery in northern England. The aquatic habitats and sedge fens were degraded by the nutrient-rich droppings and the tufted sedge tussocks

suffered from use as nesting sites. But for some unknown reason the gull population collapsed in the 1990s and they had all gone by 2005. Livestock impact was also reduced by the extension of stock fences around the whole fenland basin from the 1960s onwards. In the 1970s a belt of trees was planted on the west side of the tarn.

We can only guess that the fencing and nutrient changes were responsible for very obvious alterations in the fenland vegetation. In the 1950s there were only one or two patches of reedmace (*Typha*) and bur-reed (*Sparganium*) in the basin but both are

now extensive. The great fen-sedge survives only in two substantial patches outside the former gullery area. The whole southern fen area appears to have more reeds and bushes. I believe that these changes need to be recorded in a new survey. Sunbiggin Tarn is, in my view, one of the most fascinating places in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and I hope another young ecologist will come forward and record today's vegetation.

Sir Martin Holdgate, former Chief Scientist, Department of the Environment and Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Sir Martin, left, pictured with Kyle Blue, member of Friends of the Dales, during a visit to Sunbiggin Tarn in summer 2024. Photo courtesy of Victoria Benn





Some of Tabby's evocatively named soaps

Clean Conscience

They say that what goes around, comes around and nowhere is that more true than when it comes to our shopping habits.

For a start, there's what's known as the local multiplier effect – invest a tenner in products and services provided by a business in your community and there's a fair chance that your supplier will also spend at least a few pounds of it close to home. In fact, some of the money from your original payment may pass from hand to hand in surrounding towns and villages several times before eventually being lost to the outside world.

And small Dales businesses can also be worth more than their weight in gold by creating much-needed skilled jobs, providing incomes for people whose employment opportunities might otherwise be restricted.

Tabby Chen-Robinson is a busy mother of four, who produces artisan soap in small batches in her cottage in upper Swaledale. While she makes every effort to minimise

her carbon footprint, cut down on waste and use British, organic and natural products and short supply chains, her main motivation is to celebrate the heritage of the national park – and eventually make a long-term contribution to the economy of her adopted home.

'The natural landscapes and icons of the Dales aren't complete without the people, past and present, and their interaction in this environment,' she says. 'But work is limited here and opportunities can be scarce outside the hospitality sector.'

'One day I'd like to create a visitor centre with a soap museum and manufacturing facilities to train and create meaningful and fulfilling employment for people who live in the Dales. I'm also motivated to inspire young adults to develop opportunities for themselves. I think protecting the environment is no use if it doesn't also benefit the community.'

For more information on Tabby's enterprise, Swaledale Soap Works, visit www.swaledalesoapworks.co.uk



Mucksread soap



Limited edition Muker Haymeadows soap

Where There's



Jamie in hay meadows below Kilnsey Park

An innovative farm diversification initiative in Kilnsey is harnessing the latest technology to grow new crops that are resilient to climate change whilst reducing carbon emissions.

Think Yorkshire Dales and you think sheep. Kilnsey Park near Grassington is no exception. Once the source of great wealth for the Fountains Abbey estate, sizeable numbers still graze the surrounding hillsides in time-honoured fashion.

But now there's a new agricultural venture at Kilnsey and it's not one that's usually associated with Pennine upland landscapes. Alfalfa, nutrient-rich wheat grass and pungent Rambo radishes, which are popular with chefs for garnishes and salads, are just some of the 'superfoods' being grown in a former shipping container using a cutting-edge technique called vertical farming.

Branching out into microgreens makes sense for owner Jamie Roberts because they can be cultivated in a controlled environment without relying on the weather. And that's important in upper Wharfedale where climate breakdown means that the river can flood the valley up to three or four times a year.

'It's a very environmentally friendly way of growing because it can be carried out 24/7, even in winter, so it's possible to achieve reliable yields all the year round,' says Jamie. 'It's not disrupted by floods, droughts or snow so it's suitable for the windy, rainy Pennines and we've been able to reap the benefits of our amazing spring water that comes out of the hillside to improve the quality of the product. We feel it's definitely the future.'



Muck, There's Cress



Branching out into microgreens

The environmental impact of the new venture – called Wild and Flo – will be further minimised by use of solar panels and there are plans to exploit biomass as a heat source. Kilnsey Park opened a trout farm and fishing lakes in an earlier diversification initiative way back in 1978 and there are now 80,000 blue, brown and rainbow trout in the water at any one time, which between them produce several large tanks of manure a year. Once, this was spread on the land as fertiliser: now the estate is working with the University of York to explore ways of using it to power the plant-growing unit.

The microgreens are currently being marketed to restaurants and hotels in the Craven area, which have received samples and invitations to a taster event, but Jamie believes there's scope for other businesses to branch out into vertical farming alongside traditional sheep rearing, perhaps in currently disused agricultural buildings.

'It's all about finding a balance,' he says. 'The Dales wouldn't look as they do unless they had been grazed for hundreds of years. The way sheep are farmed around here is sustainable, they have a good life that's almost organic and they help to maintain the landscape. Most of the food we eat has travelled hundreds, if not thousands, of miles yet we believe it's important to keep local production alive.'

Agriculture is often criticised for its contribution to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions but Kilnsey Park is carbon neutral and the two hydropower generators produce 40 kilowatt hours of electricity at peak output – enough to power 10 domestic houses at any one time. There's a biomass boiler and water heat pumps but the focus is increasingly on water quality too, which is critical to the health of the nature reserve that is home to many rare species of orchid, including the iconic lady's slipper.

Now Jamie, who is chair of the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, is planning to work in association with the conservation charity to create a 20-hectare wetland beside the River Wharfe, similar to the habitat that would have existed a few hundred years ago. The work will involve breaching the flood embankments and creating ponds and small lakes, with a view to encouraging wildlife including kingfishers and small mammals and preventing flooding downstream.

Hundreds of years ago the entrepreneurial Cistercian monks of Fountains Abbey were quick to exploit Kilnsey for fish farming. Now the clock has turned full circle, with the introduction of modern business ventures that also depend on maintaining natural habitats and improving water quality.

Lynn Leadbeater, volunteer

More information at www.kilnseypark.co.uk

250

The number of kettles that can be boiled simultaneously using electricity produced at Kilnsey Park.

1,000,000

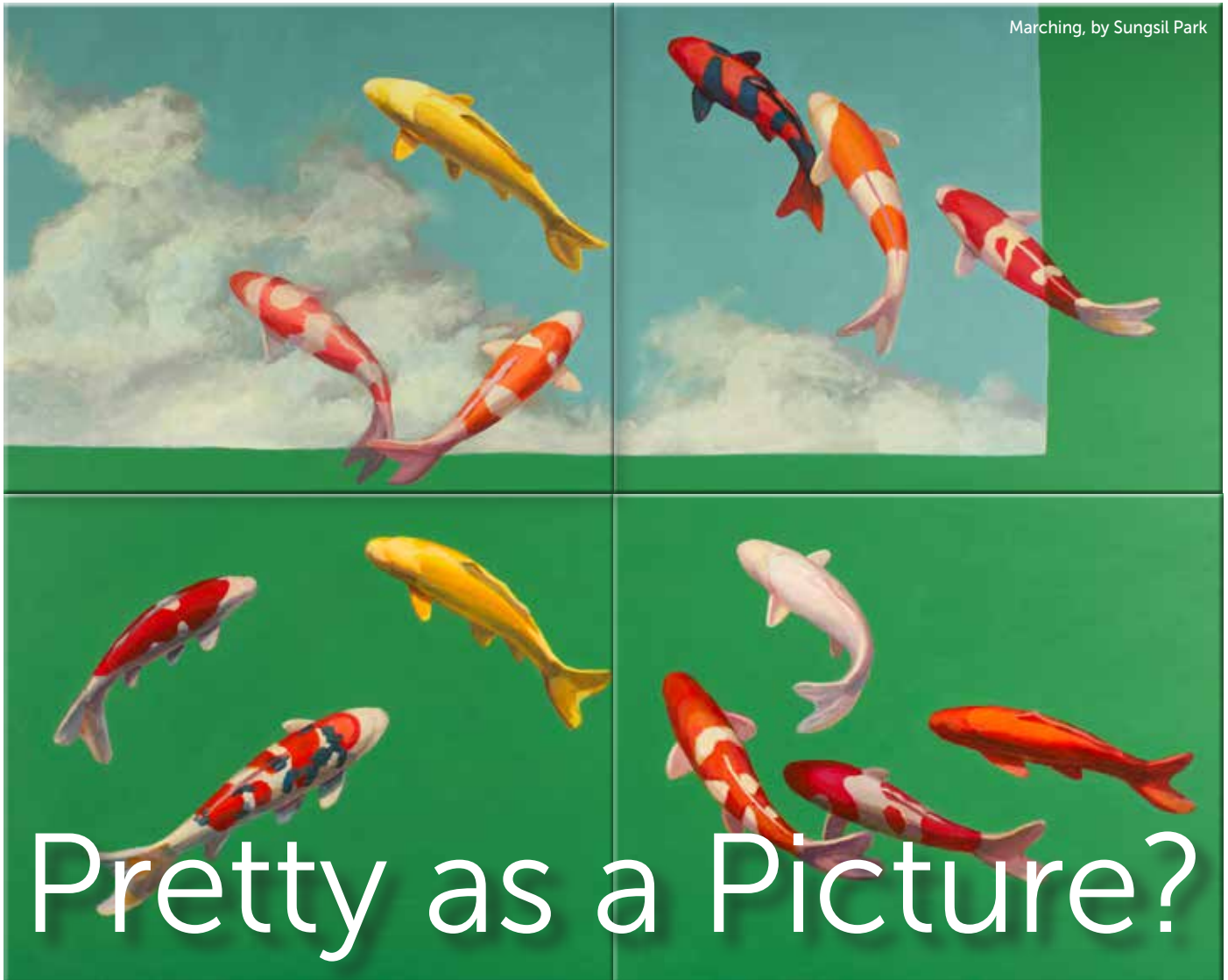
gallons of spring water flowing from the hillside each day.

60

tonnes of trout reared for restocking per year.



Kilnsey Lakes. Photos courtesy of Kilnsey Park



Artist Bridget Tempest asks whether we should challenge traditional Western views of beauty when depicting the landscape.

As someone who has always drawn, painted and made prints of the natural world, I've become, like so many of us, acutely aware and anxious about climate breakdown and species collapse. Thus I appreciate John Ruskin's acerbic comment on modernity in the late nineteenth century: 'the vile industries and vicious curiosities of modern science, while they have robbed the fields of England of a thousand living creatures, have not created in them one.' Harsh words indeed but he saw (and foresaw) the consequences of our socio-economic system, which has at its heart wanton extraction from and wasteful dumping into the natural world.

I have increasingly felt an urgent need (and responsibility) to disrupt the still dominant view of nature as a romantically sublime and picturesque landscape; a need to recognise the damage we wreak on nature, often without knowing it; a need to celebrate wildlife while acknowledging crisis; a need to look with more attention and not dismiss from the picture the litter, the scars, the absences and a sense of dissonance.

I have drawn inspiration and support from two artists, Sungsil and Jongha Park, who, coming from Korea and East Asian culture, have

a different conception of nature. Their art, I believe, counters the conception in the West of nature as something to be consumed and communed with for our exclusive benefit: a resource to enrich our lives.

While in the West there has always been a more 'master and servant relationship' as regards the natural world, the Parks point out that 'in traditional Eastern philosophy there is no hierarchy or division



Sungsil and Jongha Park at Cliffe Castle Museum



Detail from Burning World, by Bridget Tempest

between man and nature. They coexist in a symbiotic harmony, interdependent, rather than anthropocentrically. Through Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, East Asians are taught to honour and respect all living things, including the environment, whilst embracing their usefulness as food, shelter, and clothing.'

Sungsil focuses intensely on nature as a sacred, everyday presence, seeking wisdom, the principle of truth and the flourishing of life. By contrast, Jongha's work, distinctly abstract and modernist, is informed by the concept of chi, the energy underlying all creation.

Learning from and finding kinship with the Parks, my recent work registers a personal dismay at the violence inflicted by industrial-scale recreational events on familiar landscapes. A suite of monoprints, for example, depicts a vision of the real countryside where our roadside verges are waste disposal places, especially between fast food outlets, and bulldozers destroy ancient meadows to create temporary, deeply damaging structures for brief leisure entertainment.

Despite an 'ideological squint' that renders our natural world as a tidy, bucolic landscape ready for consumption, I believe it's possible to 'capture' the natural world in all its aspects: to discover a hidden world of rhythms and harmonies, a secret world full of marvellous interconnectedness. At the same time, we can mitigate against myopia and depict the degradation of the natural world. In doing so perhaps we will discover (or recover) the wisdom of a relationship with nature similar to the Eastern cultures.

From challenging art to rewilding and regenerative farming, there are hopeful signs of nature recovery. Perhaps it won't be too late for us all.

[Bridget Tempest](#)

Remembering Wilf Fenten



Staff, trustees, volunteer committee members and friends recently honoured Wilf Fenten, the former vice president of Friends of the Dales, on a walk near Orton in the Westmorland Dales. Wilf, who passed away in August 2023, gave five years' service as a trustee and as Chair of our policy and planning committee, bringing a huge wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to our work and campaigns. A small remembrance gathering was held in a SSSI species-rich meadow followed by a short talk by Emeritus President of Friends of the Lake District, Sir Martin Holdgate, at Sunbiggin Tarn in the afternoon. You can read about the important ecological status of the lake in Sir Martin's article on page 14.





New Trustee

Dr Jane Smart OBE



Nature is at the heart of Jane's career (and spare time) with a highlight being the co-founding and leadership of Plantlife to create a strong conservation voice for wild plants.

Jane started out as a botanist and plant ecologist (her PhD focussed on peatland restoration), followed by a period as Habitat Management Ecologist for the former Greater London Council. Subsequently she worked for London Wildlife Trust before her Plantlife role began.

Following 15 years as Chief Executive of Plantlife, Jane moved to Switzerland joining International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – the world's oldest and largest environmental network. She progressed from Head of the Species Programme to Global Director, Biodiversity (overseeing work on world heritage, protected areas as well as species). A high spot was leading IUCN's work on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference in 2022 (at COP15).

Having spent her whole life in nature conservation, Jane felt it was right to 'put something back'. She joined Friends of the Dales after moving back to the UK in 2022, appreciating the charity's agility and campaigning 'tone of voice'. She is also a trustee of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Chair of the Malhamdale Environmental Group and is particularly enthusiastic about helping support Friends of the Dales tackle the nature and climate crises through the conservation of biodiversity in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Seeking a New Volunteer Treasurer

We are reaching out to members (and any non-members you know who might be interested) to consider the voluntary role of Treasurer for Friends of the Dales. Ian Harrison will complete a full six-year term (a first term and an optional second term each of three years) at NEXT year's AGM, and thus must also relinquish his role as Treasurer. He will be sorely missed.

During his tenure Ian has built on and improved the financial reporting processes for

the charity, supported by our Administration Assistant, Penny Lowe. We have excellent systems in place for monthly reconciliation of the bank accounts, monitoring investments and producing clear budget and management reports. These processes enable trustees to be fully informed of the charity's financial position, with quarterly reports and interim updates as required. We have a good relationship with our accountant, enabling timely production of the trustees' Annual Report and Accounts.

The Treasurer is also normally Chair of the finance and governance committee, which is

closely supported by our Executive Director, Ann Shadrake. This committee, and the full board, meet quarterly – normally in person (usually in Gargrave) but sometimes online. Reasonable travel attendance is reimbursed for committee and other meetings on behalf of the charity. Space is available at the charity's offices in Gargrave for smaller or ad hoc meetings, plus a business e-mail.

For an informal chat and to find out more about this very important and worthwhile voluntary role, please contact Ann (in the first instance) at ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk



Treasurer's Report 2023/24

Below is a summary of our financial position for the year 2023/24. In it I have highlighted the key elements of our finances, which can be seen more fully in the formal Annual Report and Accounts available on our website. I have also provided a more detailed breakdown of the income and expenditure than is presented in the Statutory Accounts, which I hope members will find useful.

For members less familiar with charity finances, it is important to highlight the difference between *unrestricted funds* (money that is available to trustees in the pursuit of the charity's overall objectives) and *restricted funds* (money that is to be used for a specified purpose within those objectives).

Income 2023-24

We received a total of £73,875 (2022/23 £53,070) of income during the financial year. Of this, £63,224 (2022/23 £50,689) was unrestricted income and £10,651 (2022/23 £2,381) restricted. The increase in income compared to the previous year was attributable primarily to the receipt of a legacy offset by a reduction in donations.

A breakdown of our unrestricted income by source is shown in Chart 1. Of continued concern is the absence of growth in our membership; individual subscriptions were £26,243, broadly in line with the previous year, and our launch of the Community Supporter scheme to replace business membership has been disappointing, generating £737. Donations were £3,251, a significant reduction from the previous year's total of £11,237. I have previously highlighted the importance of legacy income to the charity. This is somewhat unpredictable by its very nature, as reflected in this year's legacy income of £17,962, a welcome increase from the previous year's £1,025. Additional unrestricted income included Gift Aid of £4,950 and interest from deposit accounts of £10,081 as the charity benefited from higher interest rates.

The charity received a restricted donation of £75 for the benefit of our sister rural transport organisation, Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company (D&BCIC) (2022/23 £0), while the Capturing the Past (CTP) project received a final grant of £576 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Trustees have also agreed to fund the CTP project from unrestricted reserves for the next three years; in 2023/24 a grant of £10,000 was made to the project.

Expenditure 2023-24

Our total expenditure during the year was £142,983 (2022/23 £123,576), of which £127,448 (2022/23 £113,085) was from unrestricted funds (Chart 2). Staff costs at £63,625 increased by £5,083 mainly due to a retrospective holiday pay adjustment, whilst office costs (£15,685) and the production of the quarterly *Review* (£13,941) remained broadly the same as 2022/23. These categories represent our largest operational expenditure. Grants of £10,000 each were made from unrestricted funds to CTP and D&BCIC in support of both these activities. The balance of our expenditure was on our events and membership programme, governance costs and subscriptions to third parties.

Restricted expenditure of £15,535 (2022/23 £10,491) comprised a transfer of £7,075 to D&BCIC and £8,460 to Capturing the Past.

Overall Position

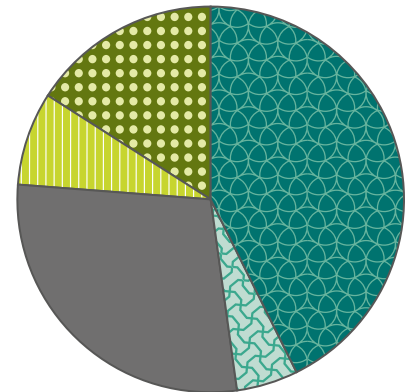
We opened the year with healthy unrestricted reserves of £374,057. Trustees are conscious of the need to use these funds in support of the charity's objectives. The excess of our expenditure over income during the year resulted in a net draw-down from unrestricted reserves of £64,224 (2022/23 £62,396), resulting in a year-end balance of £309,833. Trustees anticipate a similar draw-down for the next two to three years as we continue to support D&BCIC, extend our successful Capturing the Past project and grow our campaigns and events programme. Trustees have, however, initiated a review of the overall business model to consider alternative funding models in light of the concerns over membership income and the dependence on unpredictable legacy income.

Our year-end restricted funds balance was £19,251 for D&BCIC which, at its request, will be released in tranches over the next three years, and £3,736 for the CTP project.

Ian Harrison, Treasurer

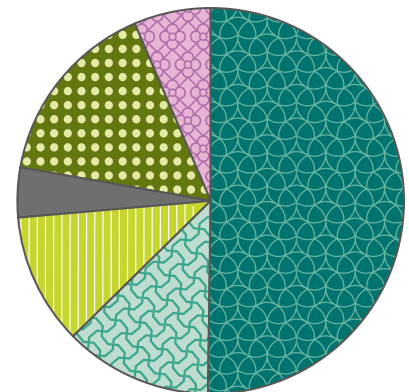
2023/2024

Unrestricted Income (Chart 1)



43%	£26,980	Membership
5%	£3,251	Donations
28%	£17,962	Legacies
8%	£4,950	Gift Aid
16%	£10,081	Other
Total	£63,224	(2022/23 £50,689)

Unrestricted Expenditure (Chart 2)



50%	£63,625	Staff
12%	£15,685	Office
11%	£13,941	Review
4%	£5,280	Events, Comms, Membership
16%	£20,000	Grants & Donations
6%	£8,150	Governance & Other
1%	£767	Depreciation*
Total	£127,448	(2022/23 £113,085)

* Depreciation not included in chart (non cash)



AGM 2024

Our AGM took place in Addingham Memorial Hall on Saturday 28 September with an excellent attendance of 44 members, and 100 notifications of apologies and/or proxy votes. Our President, Dr Amy-Jane Beer, was not able to attend but kindly provided a video welcome which was well received.

As advised to members by post in August, there were a number of voting items on the agenda during the morning. These included the re-election for a second term of three years of trustee Kevin Armstrong and election for a first term of three years of Dr Jane Smart OBE. At this AGM we also said thank you to Scarlett Armstrong, stepping down as a trustee after serving for three years. We are very grateful to Scarlett for her contributions, particularly her encouragement and support for events (including leading successful events herself!) and for developing our ideas around membership and social media. Ken Humphris, trustee, also stood down at this AGM, and was thanked in particular for his considerable contributions as Chair of the Events, Communications & Membership Committee and active membership of the Policy & Planning Committee.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by trustee Mohammed Dhalech standing in for Treasurer Ian Harrison who gave his apologies. The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024 were approved. Ian provides a snapshot of the key points on page 21.

At this AGM we also said thank you to Dr Bruce McLeod, who stepped down as Chair after five very successful years. Bruce will stay as a trustee for a further year and will also continue to have a key role on our editorial board. Over recent months Bruce has worked closely with Jonathan Riley, who was unanimously elected as the new Chair.

Jonathan introduced himself as a trustee in the Autumn 2023 edition of the *Yorkshire Dales Review*. More recently he has written in the *Review* about sustainable transport, and about mobile phone masts in the Dales. If you would like to contact Jonathan direct, please email him at jonathan.riley@friendsofthedailes.org.uk

After a light lunch, many members took advantage of an excellent and informative walk around Addingham led by Prof Rick Battarbee and Jan Hindle of Addingham Environment Group.

Ann Shadrake, Executive Director

Film Review

Six Inches of Soil

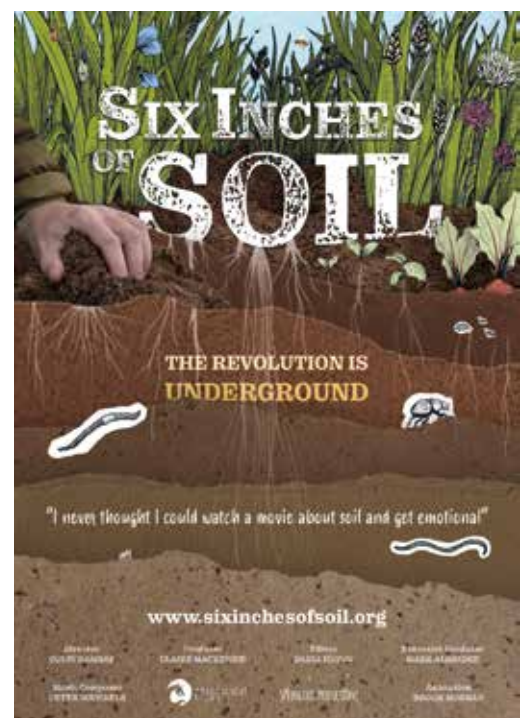
2024 saw the release of environmental documentary *Six Inches of Soil*, which tells the inspiring story of three UK-based farmers who are standing up against the industrial farming industry by working with regenerative techniques. As agriculture is the second biggest contributor to greenhouse gases worldwide, the film shows how, by changing methods, farming can be a force for good in salvaging Britain's soil, capturing greenhouse gases and producing food ethically.

The film is a rare example of an environmental documentary that provides a hopeful vision of the world's future in the face of climate change. It does, indeed, remind the viewer of terrible and depressing facts, such as the UK being one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. However, instead of offering complete pessimism for the nation's future, it offers solutions. These are often lacking in documentaries about the environment, which is why *Six Inches of Soil* is worth every minute of its running time.

Supermarkets are shown as the main antagonist to the ecological health of Britain, by simply aiming to sell food at the most affordable price with no environmental considerations. While this is a problem in itself, it also leads to consumers' disassociation from the process of how their food gets onto the shelf. Adrienne Gordon, one of the three farmers featured in the documentary, works at a coffee shop to maintain her livelihood, and she comments on how people are willing to spend a lot of money on a coffee and a cake but do not have the same attitude towards spending money on ethically produced food.

Perhaps the most enriching aspect of *Six Inches of Soil* is being given the opportunity to step into the shoes of regenerative and organic farmers and see how they are doing things differently, and better. A must-watch for anyone concerned with Britain's food industry and the future of our planet.

Bea Benn, Year 13 pupil at Skipton Girls' High School





Online Talk: An Inclusive National Park

Wednesday, 23 October

5:00pm

Trustee and Churchill Fellow Mohammed Dhalech will discuss the three challenges of organisational culture, representation and racism that must be tackled for everyone to enjoy our national parks.

Book via www.trybooking.com/uk/DNLM

Online Talk: The Yorkshire Dales National Park – 70 Years On

Wednesday, 20 November

5:00pm

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the national park movement and 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Mark Corner, our former Chair of Trustees, will review the achievements of the national park and consider the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Mark is the current Member Champion for the Natural Environment at the national park authority and will focus on nature recovery and community sustainability.

Book via www.trybooking.com/uk/DNLO

Online Talk: A Nature-based Approach to Flood Management

Wednesday, 22 January 2025

5:00pm

Ousewem is an innovative flood resilience project identifying and delivering nature-based solutions (NbS) and natural flood management (NFM) to reduce flood risk in vulnerable North Yorkshire communities, spanning Yorkshire's Swale, Ure, Nidd and Ouse catchments. The project is part of the £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes funded by Defra and managed by the Environment Agency to promote resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.

Amanda Crossfield from Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust – one of Ousewem's delivery partners – will provide insights into its ongoing work using NbS and NFM techniques to strengthen flood resilience in at-risk North Yorkshire communities whilst enhancing the local environment and supporting a sustainable, adaptive agriculture landscape.

Book via www.trybooking.com/uk/DVYJ



Catch up via E-News

Sign up to our free monthly e-news and be one of the first to receive our news, new event listings and information about hands-on volunteering opportunities arranged by Friends of the Dales and other environmental charities.

Sign up at: www.friendsofthedales.org.uk

You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Online Talk: The Flora and Fauna of Malham Tarn National Nature Reserve

Wednesday, 4 December

5:00pm

National Trust Property Ecologist Dr Elizabeth Sullivan will talk about Malham Tarn National Nature Reserve and its habitats, particularly those at the tarn – England's highest lime-rich lake – and the moss, its wetland areas. She will also introduce some of the key flora and fauna at the site, providing insight into how they are monitored and managed.

Book via www.trybooking.com/uk/DTWH



Catch up on YouTube

If you missed one of our talks first time round, you can watch them on our YouTube channel: [@friendsofthedales](https://www.youtube.com/@friendsofthedales)

There are more than 20 films – with more being added all the time – on the wide range of environmental subjects covered in our successful digital talks programme. Find out more about everything from raptor persecution in the Yorkshire Dales to the facts about our decimated peatlands to the future of rural bus services.

If you subscribe to the channel you will immediately be notified of all new content additions.



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Support us, support the Dales

Friends of the Dales is the leading voice campaigning for a sustainable future for the Dales.

Our charity needs your support to help us protect this amazing, inspiring but fragile place - for years to come.

➔ JOIN US

- More members means more clout when we campaign. Members receive this quarterly magazine and first news of our events programme.

➔ DONATE

- Our charity's running costs are funded entirely by your voluntary subscriptions, donations and legacy gifts.

➔ VOLUNTEER

- Help with our walks and other events
- Shape our charity's future: become a trustee
- Put out our leaflets on your home patch

➔ LEGACY

- Please consider making a gift in your will to Friends of the Dales.

➔ BE 'DALES-FRIENDLY'

- Try out our sociable walks and events (most are free)
- Support Dales businesses and communities
- Look for sustainable ways to visit, like **DalesBus**

www.friendsofthedales.org.uk



Please visit our website and follow us on social media. Full contact details and membership rates are on page 2

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