



# Welcome!

*Hello and welcome to 'Parklife', a new magazine for people living in the Peak District National Park. Published twice a year, we'll be bringing you news about how local organisations and communities are working together to look after this special place.*

*The Peak District was the UK's first National Park and covers over 1,400 square kilometres of some of the most beautiful countryside in the world - but it is also a living landscape, home to 38,000 people.*

*Our job at the National Park Authority is to conserve and enhance the Park, and to ensure that people enjoy what it has to offer and understand why it is so important.*

*Strong and vibrant local communities are the lifeblood of the National Park - and only by working together can we protect the area for future generations.*

*We recognise that in the past, we could have done more to communicate with local people and involve you in decisions affecting the Park's future. This is something we're working hard to address, and 'Parklife' is just one of the ways we'll be keeping in touch.*

*Our commitment to working with you has been reinforced through our on-going 'Help Shape the Future' consultation, the biggest-ever in the Park's history. Over the past 18 months a series of events, public meetings and roadshows have enabled many hundreds of people to have their say about things such housing, sustainable communities, young people and the future for farming. For more on this turn to page 4.*

*We hope you enjoy the first issue of 'Parklife'. We welcome your views on this and any other area of our work, so please get in touch. Our contact details are on pages 18 and 19.*

Tony Hams,

Chair, Peak District National Park Authority



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## Did you know?

The Peak District is one of 14 National Parks in England, Scotland and Wales. Each is looked after by an Authority. Here's just a flavour of what we do:

- Handle planning applications and planning enforcement
- Provide support, advice and environmental grants to local communities, farmers and businesses
- Organise guided walks, environmental education courses, conservation activities & volunteering opportunities
- Manage information centres, trails and cycle hire centres
- Conserve and enhance our own land holdings and work with landowners to support their conservation efforts.

This work is summarised in our Vision:

*Working together for the Peak District National Park:*

- A special environment
- A welcoming place at the heart of the nation
- Vibrant communities and a thriving economy.

To find out more about our work log on to

**[www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk)**

and for more about other National Parks visit

**[www.nationalparks.gov.uk](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk)**



Earl Sterndale



Monyash



Bakewell

# Affordable homes keep families in village

**Like many young couples in the National Park, when Lee Sawdon and Samantha Thraves had a baby they feared they would have to look elsewhere to find a family home due to high property prices.**

But last summer, Lee, Samantha and daughter Jessica moved into one of three new affordable homes in Parwich, near Ashbourne, thanks to a remarkable village effort. Lee, a rally car technician, was delighted: "I've lived in Parwich all my life," he said. "We didn't want to move away, but we were in a one-bedroom flat and it just wasn't big enough with the baby. If this hadn't been built we would've had to move out because property prices round here are so high. It's meant a lot to stay in the village."

The Peak District National Park Authority was a pioneer in promoting affordable housing policies for local people 15 years ago. Though it cannot provide housing itself, it is responsible for granting planning permission, and through this it can put an occupancy-restriction on the property, limiting it to people who:

- **have a lengthy local connection**
- **are in housing need**
- **are unable to afford a home on the open market.**

National Park Authority lead member for housing, Chris Furness, said: "More than 400 such homes, for rent, shared ownership or for sale, have been permitted in the Park in the last 15 years, with strong support from parish councils. The local occupancy restrictions result in prices about a third lower than the open market, and the same restrictions apply whenever the home changes hands, ensuring lower prices are passed on each time."



*Lee, Samantha and their daughter, Jessica, outside their new home: "It's meant a lot to stay in the village," said Lee.*

The Parwich scheme, built and run by the Nottingham Community Housing Association, came into being after the Village Action Group decided the community really needed to take drastic action to retain young families.

The Action Group identified a site – a disused former school house – and steered through all the necessary negotiations with National Park planners, local authorities and the housing association. As a result, the village not only got three new family homes, but a new classroom for the school, and the project won the Chartered Institute of Housing's Best Community-led Initiative award.

The National Park Authority works closely with housing associations, housing authorities, building developers and individuals to agree sites and designs in harmony with the existing villages of the National Park.

Over the next 12 months local people will be moving into new affordable housing in several locations, including: 36 family homes and six flats for older people in Bakewell, 22 family homes in Tideswell, 12 family homes in Bradwell, 10 in Eyam and 6 in Baslow.

Guidelines for low cost housing developers are available from Customer Services (01629 816200) or on the website [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/spg-housing](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/spg-housing)

Details of eligibility for low cost housing are available from your local council or housing associations.





# What you think counts

We believe it is vital to keep an open door for residents to express what they think about our services or other National Park matters that concern them.

This two-way communication is the best way to find out what is really important to residents, and what improvements they would like to see.

Over the past 18 months residents have given us their views at public forums across the National Park, during 'Help Shape the Future' – the biggest consultation in the Park's history. On the agenda were such issues as:

- Farming and the rural economy
- Affordable housing
- Sustainable local communities
- Young people

These events will literally "Help Shape the Future" in the form of a new National Park Management Plan which will guide future strategy for years to come. The draft will be published on the Authority's website in March,



*The public adds its views at a 'Help Shape the Future' meeting*

every parish council will receive a copy and comments will be welcome over a six-week period. The document should be finalised in the spring and published in the summer.

Since mid-2005 we have also been inviting the public to quarterly Community Forums in the Hope Valley on topics such as off-roaders and access to local services. They bring together councils, the police, housing and transport authorities to provide better co-ordinated action on matters of concern.

But the public not only attend meetings – in the case of the scenic Stanage Edge they help manage the area. The Stanage Forum was set up in

2000, with user-groups, such as climbers, walkers, riders, birdwatchers and naturalists, together with the Authority, land managers and local communities. This partnership plays a major role in looking after this protected wildlife area.

Residents have also joined us in looking after the National Park's cultural heritage – its archaeological and historic sites and age-old traditions – through

local history societies and other interested groups.

Young people have their own needs and opinions, and they expressed them at a Peak 11 Schools Conference and a 'Help Shape the Future' Young People's Forum. We have a youth engagement officer, Rachael Burton, as a contact-point, and we also have a Youth Rangers group, where youngsters learn ranger-skills and have their own website, [www.youthrangers.com](http://www.youthrangers.com)

The National Park Authority has stands at some of the major local shows, including Bakewell, Hope, Penistone and Manifold where people can talk to staff.

And the public is welcome to speak at Authority meetings and committees – just give two days notice and state the agenda-item and you can speak for up to three minutes. Agendas can be viewed on our website, [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk)

To find out more, ring Customer Services on 01629 816200.

We also welcome letters and callers to our main offices at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell, DE45 1AE or you can email us at [customer.service@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:customer.service@peakdistrict.gov.uk)

**This is your National Park – have your say!**



*Young people were given the opportunity to say how their lives could be improved in the National Park at a community forum*

# Get involved!

*It's your National Park - help look after this precious countryside*

**Why does one school bring students to the National Park nine times a year for a bout of hard labour? It's not punishment, it's not compulsory - in fact the school has a waiting list for places.**

They are Countryside Volunteers – and every year hundreds of people of all ages put their efforts into restoring walls, repairing paths, planting trees, building fences and looking after wildlife habitats.

Tibshelf Community School learning mentor Tony Booker said: "The kids really do enjoy it – it gives them life-skills, healthy exercise, experience of working in a team, and the satisfaction they've achieved something worthwhile. It also gives them an appreciation of the Peak District – what it takes to keep it up to standard, and what could be detrimental to it, like litter or vandalism or fire.

"They mix with other youngsters and make new friends. We have more wanting to come than we have places for. It's definitely worthwhile."

National Park Authority lead member for recreation Barry Neville said: "Volunteering is a great way for individuals or groups of any age to help take care of the National Park, to get out in the fresh air and to meet like-minded people locally or from all over the world."

In the past year, guides planted 300 trees in a day, youth groups helped clear eight miles



*Volunteers mix special plant-friendly cement to restore a 100-year-old wall on Ramsley Moor, near the Sheffield border.*

of worn-out snow fence on a Sheffield moor and adult volunteers helped build a wheelchair-accessible path at Surprise View, near Hathersage.

Each task is led by a trained supervisor; and tools, materials and training are supplied. All you need to get started are old warm clothes, waterproofs, sturdy boots and a packed lunch.

To find out more about Countryside Volunteering, ring Customer Services on 01629 816200.

## The Vision Project

is a concentrated drive to restore native flowers and wildlife on 35sq km around Longstone Moor, extending out to Monsal Dale, Cressbrook Dale, Coombs Dale and Stoney Middleton Dale. Volunteer activities include pond restoration, wildflower surveys and seed-sowing. Call 01629 816397 or email [visionproject@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:visionproject@peakdistrict.gov.uk)

## Protecting the Park

*Almost three quarters of all land within the National Park is managed for conservation, well above our targets*

*"To really understand the environment you need to engage all your senses, and first-hand contact with nature helps to open your eyes," says Sean Prendergast, National Park head of access and recreation. "Everyone takes home memorable views and memories of the Peak District and conservation volunteering is a great way to give something back."*



*Young people learn new skills as they rebuild a former reservoir slipway as an historic feature and wildlife habitat.*

## Dig ditches, heave rocks or simply count flowers – it's up to you

Friends of the Peak District, a charity watchdog for the National Park's finest landscapes, holds taster days and weekend projects, offering volunteers practical conservation experience.

"This is an opportunity to put something positive back into the landscapes we love," explained scheme co-ordinator Clare Kelly. "Doing conservation work we can enjoy the environment, gain great practical experience and meet many other like-minded people."

Tasks range from hedge-laying to ditch-digging, dry stone walling and footpath repair. Contact the Friends on: 0114 266 5822 or email [info@friendsofthepeak.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofthepeak.org.uk) Many other environmental groups welcome volunteers, including the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust [www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)







Birchover



Backdale



Moss Rake

# Quarries in the Peak - a national campaign

The Peak District National Park Authority has launched a national campaign for stronger powers to control quarrying in national parks.

We are lobbying MPs, councils, Defra, national parks minister Jim Knight, the Association of National Park Authorities and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for support.

Why? Because in our view current laws are inadequate and a few quarry-operators are testing them to the limits, with inevitable damage to the landscape which national parks were set up to conserve and enhance.

In addition, we are having to fight major legal cases to defend the landscape, with huge potential financial costs – and knock-on effects for our main conservation work.

We are lobbying for extra government support to tackle operators who flout planning controls and to fight major legal cases to protect the landscape.

The Peak District is leading this campaign because we have more quarries than any other national park – in total 70 active and inactive sites – and recent cases indicate the legal platform of the 1995 Environment Act is inoperable in certain instances.

The area has been quarried and mined for centuries, not only because it is so rich in valuable minerals – limestone, sandstone, vein minerals, even semi-precious stones like Blue John – but also because of its location in the centre of the country.

Some planning permissions are more than 50 years old, granted by the Government in the days before huge excavators and juggernauts and when demand was lower. Some still have many years to run. Recent sites have stronger environmental constraints, but can still be problematic.

We want the Government to change the Environment Act to enable reviews of old permissions and strengthen our enforcement powers.

National Park Authority chair Tony Hams said: "There is a national case for a re-examination of current legislation for planning control of mineral extraction, especially on issues which the 1995 Environment Act has left unclear. We are raising these issues at the highest possible level, with the strong support of other organisations."

It is a measure of the strength of local feeling that residents' campaign groups have sprung up across the Peak District, including Save Longstone Edge, Stanton Against Destruction of our Environment and the Stanton Lees Action Group.

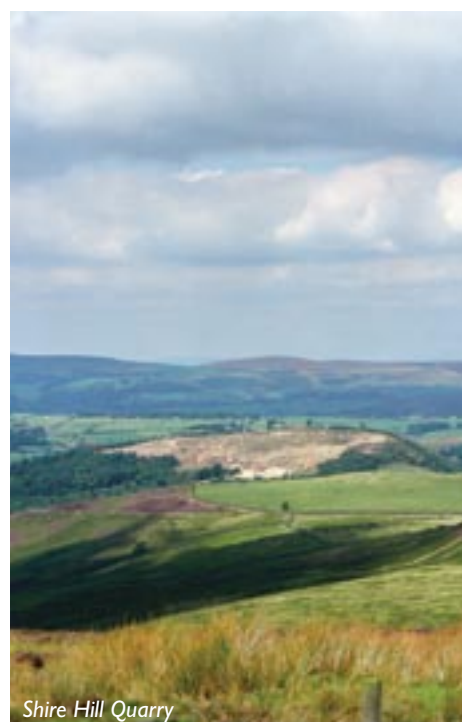
The Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Council for National Parks and the British Mountaineering Council are also strong lobby-groups on quarrying, and parish councils voice the concerns of their communities.

## Quarrying - a balancing act...

- our priority is to conserve and enhance the National Park. When looking at quarries, we need to consider:
- the detrimental effect on the landscape and the environment such as noise, dust and traffic
- the need for development - quarries provide building & manufacturing materials, boosting the local & national economy & providing jobs.

## Did you know?

- The earliest evidence of quarrying in the National Park is a 3,500-year-old Bronze Age pick found at Ecton copper mine, near the Manifold Valley.
- The Government says that major quarrying should only take place in National Parks in exceptional circumstances.
- Peak District quarrying underwent a boom in the early 1800s when the Napoleonic wars prevented millstone imports from France.
- Techniques perfected in the Peak District were used around the world, including the South African gold mines.
- Odin Mine in Castleton was active as far back as medieval times.
- Peak District lead ingots were found across the Roman Empire.



Shire Hill Quarry

# The Great Divide

Quarrying in national parks is bound to be controversial – for what gives jobs and wages on the one hand, takes away from the environment on the other.

Here, two residents with contrasting opinions, based on what each believe is good not only for them but for the National Park, give their viewpoints:



**Adrian Davie-Thornhill manages the Thornhill Settlement, landlord to three quarry companies near Stanton Moor, supporting many jobs. Expansions are proposed, and a possible new haulage road has stirred controversy. He says:** *"Quarrying is an incredibly valuable resource for the Peak District and for the nation, it has strong historical roots, provides income for the area and keeps alive traditional skills."*

*"Environmentally, the landscape in this part of the Peak District is defined by old quarry faces or backfill which have naturally re-generated into woodland or moorland, providing excellent wildlife habitats. Stanton Moor itself was worked intensively in the 19th and early 20th centuries and contains dozens of abandoned quarries. It is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and considered to be one of the most beautiful parts of the Peak District."*

*"These quarries supply stone of exceptional quality for historic and prestigious buildings – nobody would be fighting this hard to keep these quarries going if there were other sources in the country. We are very aware of residents' concerns, we are consulting them at every stage, and we are working closely with the planning officers to address the issues."*

**Nick Moor chairs local action group Stanton Against Destruction of our Environment.**

**He says:** *"It's the scale of it I object to – quarrying rips up the beautiful landscape, creates noise, dust and heavy traffic and destroys wildlife habitats."*

*"People come to national parks to see the landscape, not to see it torn apart by quarries. We're not anti-quarrying, we're anti-greed – we believe the balance is tipping the wrong way: the quarry companies need to think more about the community and environment, and less about extracting huge profits for international companies."*

*"I entirely support the National Park Authority's campaign for the whole issue of old permissions to be re-examined. It's time it was assessed at a higher level than local planning, because clearly the Authority has its hands tied, not only by inadequate laws but also the volume of work and resources available."*



Backdale Quarry, Longstone Edge

## Digging out some facts....

The Peak District was Britain's first National Park. Its boundary was drawn up to exclude some of the region's quarries. The National Park was created to protect the natural beauty of the area and ensure people's enjoyment.

**Among the National Park's 70 quarries, significant sites include:**

- 12 active limestone quarries, supplying the construction, road-making and chemical industries.
- 10 sandstone or millstone grit quarries, supplying building-stone.
- Various vein-mineral sites, extracting fluorspar, barytes, lead and calcite.

**Recent restorations using Peak District stone include:**

- Chatsworth's gate-pillars.
- Chatsworth's cascade.
- Medieval chapel-windows at Haddon Hall.
- The floor of the Burrell Collection in Glasgow.
- Bakewell's town centre redevelopment.
- House of Commons' new offices at Portcullis House.

**Sites of public concern include:**

- **Stanton Moor** – home of the Nine Ladies prehistoric stone circle & important wildlife habitats, with several active and inactive quarries nearby, including the dormant Lees Cross and Endcliffe sites, encamped by eco-protestors for five years. The Authority is currently examining the issues arising if the active Dale View quarry were to be expanded as a possible alternative to the re-opening of Lees Cross and Endcliffe.
- **Longstone Edge** – a public inquiry, postponed to the deep frustration of the Authority in September 2005, will re-open in April. It concerns Backdale Quarry, which has permission to extract vein-minerals, plus limestone won in the course of working. The National Park Authority contends too much limestone is being taken out, beyond the scope of the 1952 planning permission.

**If you have views about quarrying - for or against - you can get in touch with your parish council or local MP.**



# Planning for a living landscape

Planning is a hugely-important part of the Authority's responsibilities, and with increased property-investment it is growing larger – applications have risen by 30-40 per cent in the past three years.

In response, we are adapting and improving our services to make the application process easier. Whether on-line or on paper, we want you to get quicker answers and advice.

More than 80% of applications are approved, but planning restrictions are necessarily tighter in a national park where there are higher levels of protection, both for the open countryside and traditional villages and towns. The National Park also requires a high priority for wildlife and historic conservation.

As a result the National Park keeps its character and remains an important place to live and work in and to visit, which in turn supports the economy and sustains the quality of life for our 38,000 residents.

Now dealing with 1,300 planning applications a year, the Peak District National Park's planning service is one of the busiest of any national park in the country. Minor applications may be dealt with relatively quickly by officers, more complex ones go to the planning committee, whose decisions are largely based on whether any new development is:

- sensitive to the landscape, wildlife and heritage
- in a suitable location
- in harmony with traditional Peak District designs
- in the interests of the community.

You can attend the planning committee and speak on any application (if you give us a couple of days notice). Committee-dates and agendas are on our website at [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk)

Officers may give advice even before you make an application, and work with you to find the best solution – but please make allowances as this takes time.

Planning committee chair, Narendra Bajaria says: "We are working to make the whole application process easier and provide speedier responses. We want to provide a better service to the public in what can be a very complex area."



*Planning officers can give advice on your application.*

## Did you know?

Last year we determined 40% of major planning applications within 13 weeks, around two thirds of minor applications within eight weeks and 80% of other applications within eight weeks – we're aiming to do better this year.

## Did you know?

Over the past year, 93% of all new homes have been built on previously developed land.

Our website [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk) has recently been updated so that you can:

- find guidance on when you may need planning permission, and how to go about it
- submit applications on-line
- check on recent applications
- find out key dates for when an application will be dealt with
- make comments for consideration by the committee.

You can also find guidance on all sorts of planning issues including:

- conserving a historic building
- ensuring protected species are unharmed in any development
- requirements for affordable housing schemes.

Our Customer Service team (01629 816200) is trained to answer general planning queries and to channel more complex ones to the right person.

*Please note, we do not deal with Building Regulations or provide housing (your local council is the place to contact), nor with highways matters, such as dropping kerbs (contact your county or city council).*