

Your Vision: Your Peak District National Park - Local Development Framework and Landscape Strategy Community Consultation Workshops, October 2008

Summary of comments from each workshop

Workshop 1: Kettlethulme, Monday 6th October

Participants were in favour of small scale renewable energy generation, and commented that water power and ground source heat pumps were viable possibilities, but that large scale wind generation (wind farms) would not be appropriate. There was also a comment that all new builds should include renewables as standard to make them 'Invest to Save' compliant.

The variety of different landscape types within quite a small area was seen to be important here (Dark Peak/ White Peak/ Moors/ Valleys/ Woodlands), along with the dry stone walls, the attractive villages and the canals. There were suggestions that there should be stronger laws and penalties for damaging or removing walls. At the same time, it was also stated that people didn't want to make the area into a museum and that the landscape needs to evolve. Reviving the local mining industry (coal and quarrying) on a small scale was one suggestion for this.

There were some very specific issues regarding the management of local farmland (Mid Field, North Field, Hardy Green), mostly regarding the welfare of animals and the dumping of vehicles and machinery on the land. It was felt that this detracted from the attractiveness of the area, and put off visitors. However, there was also an awareness of the need to try and keep a healthy agricultural industry and that many farmers currently have to supplement their income with other businesses.

Although participants felt the village was well situated for businesses (close to cities with good transport links) they also felt that broadband speed and lack of funding/support for small business was a deterrent. Planning restrictions, high housing costs and low visitor spend were also thought to put small businesses off setting up in the village/local area. Having more/better holiday accommodation in the area to attract more overnight stays and local spending was suggested, as it was felt that this would encourage viable local businesses.

Walking and mountain biking were the two recreational activities that were thought to attract most visitors to the area. However the downside of this was seen to be that there were too many honey pot sites, and that walkers have a disproportionately large influence on the management of the local countryside. However, it was still felt that the footpath network and its signing could be improved. Inappropriate use of lanes/ rights of way by four wheel drive vehicles and motor bikes was thought to cause damage and there was a suggestion that old quarries in this area could be used for off-road recreation by these vehicles.

Services in the villages such as schools, village halls and local community groups and events were thought to be important in creating a sense of community. The loss of post offices and shops was felt to be an issue, as was the age profile of the communities (more retired people and less young people). The lack of affordable housing was thought to be the main reason for the latter. People felt they needed support to maintain a healthy and vibrant local community – through for example support for local community shops and providing more affordable housing for young people.

Traffic was seen to be a big issue for Kettlethulme in particular. Limited off road parking was felt to put potential visitors off, together with the very heavy traffic (and especially HGVs) at peak times. The old village pack horse bridge was thought to be being damaged by the

volume of traffic. There were suggestions for restrictions on HGVs on roads in the area and also for extending the 30 mph speed limit to further beyond the village limit. Road signage was thought to be excessive, and it was felt more could be done to ensure it was sympathetic to the local landscape. The revival of local railways was also suggested.

Workshop 2: Hathersage, Wednesday 8th October

Participants at this workshop were very much in favour of renewable and sustainable energy generation and particularly making more use of hydro and solar powered technologies. As at other workshops, wind power was a contentious issue, with some people wanting more wind power and others against large wind farms/generators. It was felt that the National Park Authority could do more to promote energy reduction measures and green energy production through for example grants and support.

Quarrying was definitely seen as a negative use of natural resources, due to Hathersage's proximity to the largest quarry complex in Western Europe.

The landscape patterns caused by small farms over the years were important to local people, including the dry stone walls, field barns and mixed livestock farming. However, there were concerns about the appearance of some farms (including the visual impact of e.g. haylage bales and modern farm buildings), the effect of intensification of farming methods, and noise/disturbance from farm operations. People felt that farming was important for the future of the landscape, but that it needed to be sustainable, with more affordable housing for local workers, more diversification perhaps, and more of an emphasis on local food and local produce. Some people felt that more use could be made of farmers' local knowledge by the National Park Authority.

The local cultural heritage, including traditions such as well dressing and Morris dancing (Winster), was very important to people, as well as the villages themselves. There was concern that there wasn't enough enforcement of planning infringements such as the installation of UPVC windows and doors, and that requiring planning permission to retain the features of older buildings was important. It was suggested that grants should be provided to maintain the fabric of older buildings (or promoted better if they already exist!). There was also concern that the Highways Authority and Utility companies didn't always take much notice of conservation areas. Winster residents were concerned about the number of holiday/second homes in the village.

People recognised that there was a growth in small businesses in the Hathersage area and this was attributed to its being a major centre for amenities in the Hope Valley, it having good broadband connectivity (for the area), and good transport links to e.g. Sheffield. There were concerns that poor broadband speed in other local villages hindered small business development and that a lot of traders were meeting the needs of tourists rather than locals. It was felt that more could be done to encourage local enterprise to the benefit of the local communities.

The excellent access opportunities for all recreational users was seen to be a big plus point for Hathersage, but the down side of this was seen to be traffic congestion at peak times, over-use of some particular areas and the damage caused by some activities such as green laning. Suggestions to improve matters for the future included improving access for disabled people, more maintenance of rights of way, reduced promotion to reduce visitor numbers to this area, zoning to separate incompatible users/uses, cheaper fares to encourage public transport use and more/less visitor centres (!)

Both Hathersage and Winster were thought to have strong village communities, with active parish councils and a community supported by still having local services such as schools, a post office, shops, pubs, churches, etc. and lots of local events and activities. The lack of affordable housing, especially for young people, was a concern in both villages, as was the aging population, the number of holiday homes and the loss of smaller housing units. Planning policy for domestic buildings was also felt to be very inconsistent. Residents wanted to see more genuinely affordable housing, more houses with the local clause, action on empty buildings and second homes, and an increased capacity of rented accommodation.

Although Hathersage residents all felt they had very good bus and train services, they also felt fares were too high and that an increase in road traffic was a major issue for them. Both Hathersage and Winster cited parking by visitors and the volume of through traffic as a problem, as was the high cost of car parks and large lorries using inappropriate routes. Hathersage residents felt there had been a large increase in the number of off road vehicles using local lanes and the residents of both villages felt that there were too many highway signs making the villages and surrounding areas seem too urban.

Cheaper fares on public transport, congestion charging or road pricing, control of visitor parking, residents parking, traffic calming, further speed reductions, road closures and charging points for electric vehicles around the Park were all suggested as ways to reduce traffic related problems in the future.

The diversity of wildlife as well as the diversity of the landscape was highly valued in this area, and it was felt more needed to be done to restore/ improve moorland through careful grazing and heather restoration. There were concerns expressed about the shooting of raptors, the management of moors by some gamekeepers, and there being too many crows, magpies and Canada geese.

Workshop 3: Hayfield, Tuesday 14th October

Renewable energy as a tool to counteract climate change was high on the agenda at this meeting, with the focus being strongly for the support of water powered and wood fuelled technologies, and definitely anti-wind farms/ wind generation.

The local abattoir and local livestock markets were considered to be important to the continuation of the farming industry in the Hayfield area, as were farm payments. People were concerned about the decline of farming and felt that subsidies should be reviewed to benefit hill farmers more, but at the same time cross-compliance should be enforced more, with no payments for farmers who were farming in an environmentally insensitive or damaging way. It was suggested that the National Park boundary needs to be moved in this area to protect more of the area from urban sprawl. The creation of transitional planning zones (TPZ) to overcome difficulties of areas inside and outside the Park and/or its conservation areas was also suggested.

The industrial heritage was of great importance to people from the Hayfield area, but it was felt that there was still too much neglect of former industrial sites and lots of old buildings not being re-used that could be. It was felt that the National park Authority had a fine line to tread between maintaining the environment in conservation areas but at the same time not stifling local people's livelihoods. It was thought that new house design needed to maintain the character of the area, but at the same time reflect 21st century lives and not hark back to the 1930's.

The need for better broadband in rural areas was cited as a problem in the High Peak too, along with too much emphasis on urban job creation. Affordable premises for rural

businesses and grants to start up new businesses were suggested, as well as joint regional action on broadband.

As well as walking and cycling, the opportunities for horse riding, sailing, canoeing and using the canals were thought to attract visitors to this area. As for other areas of the Park, it was felt that tourists were too concentrated in particular 'honey pots' and that many of them don't actually spend much (if any) money locally while they are visiting. It was felt that more could be done to improve access to canals and lakes, improve the signing of paths, and provide information for tourists on places to eat and stay (to encourage them to spend money locally). It was hoped that the re-development of the bus station area would do this.

Although the shops, post office, doctors surgeries and local village groups and activities were seen as important to the sense of community, the lack of a local sports/ recreation field was seen to be an issue in Hayfield. The lack of affordable housing and number of second homes in the area was seen as a big problem, as was the village being split on planning issues because of where the National Park boundary was. There were further comments about moving the boundary or creating a buffer zone to reduce these problems.

Transport issues were similar to in other areas, with parking problems being high on the agenda, the loss of the rail link and poor public transport to outlying areas generally. More and better integrated public transport was said to be needed, along with sensible speed restrictions, removal of excessive road signing, and bringing shops and services to the communities (travelling shops/services) to reduce the need to travel.

The opportunity to experience solitude and the wildlife was felt to be very important, especially in this area with its proximity to industry, both past and present. There were concerns about the killing of badgers and birds of prey in the area, and it was felt more could be done to conserve the wildlife and flora of this area.

Workshop 4: Warslow, Wednesday 15th October

As for other workshops, the use of renewable energy technologies was seen as important, but as well as suggestions for the promotion of water, solar and wind power, there was a lot of discussion and suggestions around making existing buildings/ houses (and especially older houses) more energy efficient. It was suggested that the Peak Park, using its experience, will need to lead the use of renewable energy and upgrade old housing and that it should learn from other national parks e.g. Lake District low energy buildings. It was felt the current planning policies are not sympathetic to renewable technologies and that there needs to be more imagination and innovation encouraged. Climate change needs to be at the heart of future planning policies.

The variety of landscapes in this area, together with the fact that traditional farming methods are still being used was very important to local people. There was a lot of concern about small, isolated farms going out of business, and a lack of understanding of farming by planners. There were concerns about some recent changes to farming practices e.g. grazing by horses and the use of paper pulp and slurry. It was felt that the public (and planners!) needed to be educated more about farming, and how farming is essential for food production and maintaining the landscape. It was also felt that more could be done to support and promote local food and produce, organic farming and support the health of farmers.

The local buildings, architecture and archaeology were felt to be very important, however there was a strong feeling that the local heritage should be 'conserved not preserved'. It was felt more could be done by the Authority to promote the history/archaeology

and imaginative planning solutions, but also to encourage residents to learn about their local history and heritage and become involved in it's interpretation.

This area was thought to be a good location for home working, with good local services and huge potential for environment and tourism related jobs. However, the need for better communications and infrastructure e.g. broadband was thought to be a big blockage to more small businesses setting up in the area, together with the affordability of property compared to wages. It was felt the PDNPA could do a lot more to encourage local enterprise through, for example, being more flexible with change of use and creating more jobs in construction and supplies through supporting the restoration and maintenance of historic buildings.

Opportunities for walking, riding, cycling, rock climbing, off roading and caravanning were all thought to bring tourists to this area. It was felt that there was a huge heritage resource for tourism in this area and the potential for low impact economic growth, and that this area of the Park more than any other needs more tourists. It was felt that the value of tourism to this area wasn't recognised by the local authorities. There were some issues with the visibility of tourism (e.g. caravans and tents) and with the noise and damage caused by some off road recreational vehicles. However, it was felt things could be improved by the PDNPA promoting and supporting greener tourism, by putting more emphasis on overnight stays rather than day visits, and by improving the rights of way network (including vehicular PROW).

The small villages and the people that live in them were thought to be key to a sense of community in this area, along with, to some extent, the facilities and services such as pubs and village halls and local events. The lack of affordable housing for local people leading to villages becoming tourist villages was a big issue for everyone in this area. It was felt that planning policy wasn't sympathetic to local people (and especially young people) staying in the area, but instead favoured conversion of buildings/barns for holiday accommodation. It was stated that the PDNPA needs to do a lot more to make housing affordable to local people through, for example, the conversion of barns and redundant buildings to rented or low cost accommodation, and to generally be more flexible to local housing needs and listen to local people. Overall, it was felt that there was a lack of flexibility in planning policies, inconsistency in applying them, and a lack of clarity in the interpretation of policies.

The lack of useable public transport and a coherent transport policy for this area was a concern, as was over use of cars, leading to parking clashes between residents and visitors. As for other areas of the park, there were thought to be too many signs on roads, and not enough on rights of way. It was suggested that innovative solutions should be sought to the traffic and transport problems, such as park and ride schemes from cities/ towns, more controls on traffic entering/passing through the Park and car sharing.

The diversity of the landscape, the tranquillity of the area and diversity of wildlife were valued by participants, and it was felt more could be done to protect the wildlife and further enhance the diversity.

This workshop concluded with a lengthy discussion between local residents and the PDNPA staff and members present, the two main points discussed being as follows:

1. A need to change the atmosphere of **mistrust** felt by residents to the intentions of the National Park in actually doing anything to address the concerns of local people on a whole range of issues. PDNPA need to do something to allay their fears that anything will actually happen:
2. **A more flexible approach** to planning issues which will take into account the variations in landscape, villages, populations and issues of people in the different parts of the Park.

Transcript of Workshop 5: Bakewell, Saturday 18th October

Renewable energy and using more of our natural resources without compromising the character of the landscape was mentioned by many people in this workshop. More legislation and education to encourage the use of renewables was proposed, as well as more research into the potential for hydro power in the Peak District (Victoria Mill was mentioned as one possible site). There was also concern that current planning policies were too restrictive to allow renewables to be included in many schemes.

Participants felt that quarrying incongruous with aims of the National Park and that minerals outside the NP should be used first. They also felt that new government legislation was needed to restrict quarrying in National Parks. Backdale was mentioned as an example of a particular problem.

The use of allotments and small market gardens and their contribution to producing local, fresh food and reducing transport costs was thought to be important, and participants felt that they weren't considered part of the Bakewell/local landscape and therefore planning policies were not favourable to their continued existence/expansion. The successful Farmers Market in Bakewell and continued existence of the agricultural market were considered to be very important to the agricultural character of the town and surrounding area.

Participants recognised that traditional farming methods have created the landscape they value and were concerned that economic circumstances could cause loss of farms and have a deleterious effect on landscape. They were pleased that many farms are becoming more wildlife friendly and dry stone walls are being repaired in some areas, but were concerned that generally farming has become more intensive and that not all development of farms is appropriate for the local landscape. Participants wanted to see more support for traditional and organic/less intensive farming methods, planting of native woodlands and the production of local food. Loss of species rich grasslands to scrub and low wildlife diversity on farmland was thought to be important and participants wanted to see better wildlife habitat management in future.

Regarding the character of Bakewell itself, participants thought that the infrastructure/facilities were inadequate for the number of residents and visitors, which has a knock on effect on other issues. They felt Bakewell shouldn't be expanded any more, and that any new housing should be affordable. It was felt there were too many holiday cottages and second homes and although participants valued the agricultural markets, they didn't like the appearance of the ABC as a building, and even suggested knocking it down and rebuilding it, re-roofing it or repainting the roof green! Participants also wanted to see the post office in the square in Bakewell restored and the continuation of policies to use local and appropriate materials for local buildings to preserve local distinctiveness.

Participants felt that Bakewell and the surrounding villages have an interesting history and important built heritage, but that these weren't necessarily appreciated by visitors and more could be done to promote, for example, the museums and churches.

Bakewell was considered to have a good range of shops and services for a small town, with both specialist shops and practical shops for local people, but participants were concerned there were too many gift shops and cafes and the loss of post offices and too many seasonal/ temporary jobs making it difficult for people to afford to live in the area (and buy houses). Participants wanted to see high speed broadband, more business services to support home working and the creation of more permanent jobs. They also wanted to see more consultation on local planning issues.

Bakewell was considered to be a good base for walking as it has good transport links, facilities and a variety of different landscapes on the doorstep. The river, the trails (e.g. Monsal Trail), the Tourist Information centre, the gardens and facilities such as the swimming pool and golf club were all thought to be important to bringing visitors into the town. However, it was felt that was little for young people and teenagers, and that visitor numbers were too high sometimes, causing problems with parking, litter and pollution (including polluting the river by feeding the ducks!). Participants wanted to see improvements in the rights of way network, more organised activities for young people, and solutions to parking problems in Bakewell and the surrounding villages.

Bakewell and many of the local villages (Bradwell was mentioned in particular) were thought to have a good sense of community, with community services such as good schools, local GPs, churches, post offices and village halls all thought to contribute to this. However, some felt that Bakewell was too big for community cohesion and some of the villages were fossilising. It was felt that there was not always enough community involvement in consultation and planning issues (especially from young and older people) and that this may be linked to the lack of affordable housing.

Although Bakewell was considered to have a good bus service (though having no train service was seen as an issue), the volume of traffic passing through and the number of vehicles trying to park in the town were considered to be a serious problem. Problems with off road vehicles and the damage they cause to paths and tracks was also a concern. Various suggestions were put forward for improving traffic issues including more affordable public transport fares, park and ride facilities, a relief road/bypass for Bakewell, a terraced car park near the church, and other heavy traffic control measures.

Transcript of Workshop 6: Bradfield, Monday 20th October

As for other workshops, quarrying and renewable energy resources were issues for participants at this workshop (from Bradfield and Sheffield). Wind energy had its supporters and those against it, but small scale hydro generation was again proposed as something to look in to for the future.

Farm diversification was seen as good thing and vital for maintaining a viable future for farmers. The link between the character of the landscape and farming was appreciated, and there were concerns that changing farms and farming practices could destroy the landscape (including inappropriate development on farms, loss of walls and derelict buildings). Participants were also keen to ensure that the relationship between Bradfield and Sheffield were maintained.

Regarding the built heritage of the area, participants thought it was important to maintain the unique character of buildings and walls, but also that the character shouldn't be fossilised and that heritage needs to continue to develop, through low impact development using natural, local and ecological building practices.

No mobile phone signal and limited/ poorly paid jobs were thought to affect people wanting to set up businesses in the area.

The good footpath network, access to open country, the variety of walks and landscapes, and climbing, cycling, sailing, rowing and fishing opportunities were thought to bring tourists to the area. However the downside of this was seen to be heavy traffic and the creation of honey pot at Bradfield. Participants felt that more could be done to encourage people to explore further than just the village, encourage minority groups into the Park and get young

people to interact with the natural environment. There was also a suggestion that more areas should be opened up for people to access responsibly, such as woods and reservoir sides.

The community in Bradfield and their care for the local environment were felt to be very important, and the new village hall was felt to give a focus to the community though apparently High and Low Bradfield have very different communities. Sports teams also play an important part in village life in Bradfield. Participants were concerned however that house prices were too expensive for local people and thus the population was ageing. They wanted to see an increase in stocks of rental accommodation and affordable housing and better promotion of community resources such as the church and village hall.

Traffic and parking (particularly at weekends) were cited as problems in Bradfield, as was access to the village in bad weather. More reliable, consistent and affordable public transport was thought to be needed to help counteract the traffic problems, together with traffic management including perhaps congestion charging or limiting car access.

Local people value the views, the fresh air and the variety of different landscapes and ecosystems in the Bradfield area, including the mixture of natural and managed (farmed) landscapes. They felt that access should be encouraged but with education for the public about the need for the protection of wildlife and habitats.

Transcript of Workshop 7: Holme, Wednesday 22nd October

Participants at this workshop, who were almost all from Holme and its adjacent settlements, were very concerned that planning restrictions didn't allow them to undertake energy conservation improvements to their homes (such as double glazing, solar panels and wind generation). The majority of participants were in favour of wind generation in appropriate settings (though some were completely against it anywhere!), and all were in favour of exploring options for hydro and solar power, and the promotion of energy saving measures such as fitting double glazing and better insulation in existing houses.

The mixture of landscapes from wild, unfarmed areas to the sheep farms and dry stone walls and reservoirs in the valleys were valued by participants. Farming and its links to the landscape was obviously important to people, and there was a strong feeling that the National Park shows a lack of understanding of the issues facing farmers, and doesn't support or communicate well with farmers. There were some specific local land management issues mentioned, such as field drains not being maintained leading to a lot of run off in wet weather, and also walls being replaced with fences. There were also concerns about forestry operations at Yateholme and the moorland between West Nab and Meltham being closed.

Participants wanted to see a more enlightened and realistic approach in future from the National Park Authority to land management (and the balance between conservation and farming in particular). They also wanted to see more sheep and deer back on the hills, more support for sheep farmers, re-building and repairing of stone walls, support for farmers to retain and use barns for farming purposes and increased woodland cover through planting indigenous trees.

The industrial built heritage was of particular importance to people in this area (textile mills, etc.), as was the history of education in the village, both religious and academic. The uniformity and style of the buildings was valued, as were historic features such as the cobbles. People were appreciative of the fact Holme is a quiet village with no major industry and an attractive vernacular architecture. They thought it was important that this character was maintained in the future, and were concerned that there had been some infringements of

planning regulations such as UPVC windows in older buildings and imitation stone instead of stone slate roofs. They didn't want to see any expansion of the village in the future (and especially no new housing estates) but did want the community to be able to evolve.

This area was considered to be an appealing location for new businesses and enterprise but broadband capacity and unsympathetic planning restrictions were thought to prevent new businesses setting up. Some participants wanted to see more flexible use of old buildings allowed, whilst others didn't want to see any new business or industrial development (unless it is a village shop).

The excellent network of footpaths and bridleways, the excellent village pub together with access to reservoirs, rock climbing, trails and a range of outdoor activities were all thought to bring tourists to the area. However, the downside to visitors was seen to be parking problems, dog related issues, litter and damage to stone walls and stiles. The introduction of open access was thought to have led to the fencing in of moorland that had previously been open and a lack of clarity and signage such that people were not sure where they could go. Participants wanted to see a greater ranger presence in the area to 'police' and educate the tourists, more car parks and other facilities for tourists, particularly in 'honey pots', improved footpaths and bridleways, including improved signing, more responsible dog management and the general promotion of outdoor recreation for health.

The local school, Sunday school and pub were all thought to contribute to the sense of community in the village, together with the friendliness of the people and strict planning controls. There was concern though that events in the community were always organised by the same few active individuals, that there wasn't a village shop, houses were too expensive meaning that young people couldn't afford to buy houses and there were too many let houses and barn conversions. It was also felt that there wasn't enough community involvement in the National Park Authority and local council decision making. Illegal tipping and refuse disposal and wheelie bins were all also seen as problems locally.

Despite the good bus services through Holme, traffic was probably the biggest issue for local people. This included heavy lorries going through the village, parking problems caused by visitors, the illegal use of lanes and bridleways by off road vehicles and cars/ motorbikes driving too fast over the moors and country lanes. Some of the more realistic solutions proposed (i.e. not hover cars!) included restricting the A6024 to light goods vehicles only, parking permits for locals, separate areas for weekend recreational and local parking, more TROs where appropriate, better public transport and perimeter car parks with park and ride facilities.

The wildlife and habitats of this area were greatly valued by participants, especially the ecology, birdlife and vegetation associated with the more remote moorlands. However there was some disagreement about the importance of management for wildlife (some felt human concerns were more important) and also regarding hunting and shooting and whether it is a local tradition that should be conserved or something that should be banned. There were also some very specific concerns about Yorkshire Water reservoir plans for the Upper Holme Valley. Overall though, there seemed to be consensus that more should be done to conserve and encourage wildlife and to increase the quantity and diversity of woodland in the area.