



Parishes Bulletin 34

28 May 2020

Covid 19 – National Park Update

Since the Government announcement earlier this month allowing people to drive to exercise the National Park Authority (NPA) has received a significant increase in enquiries from residents and visitors. We have set out below the information we are providing on the main issues being raised with us.

Parking:

We are currently working with a number of car park operators across the National Park to provide an alert system to inform visitors when an area is reaching full capacity. On its first weekend of operation, this information was seen by over 720,000 people via social media. The link to the car park information is available on the website at <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/places-to-visit/car-park-status>

All 45 car parks managed by the NPA are now open. Additional car parks and their opening is at the discretion of the respective owners/operators. NPA rangers do not enforce parking measures or fees. Where mis-use of car parks is identified (such as unauthorised overnight stays), individuals will be spoken with and other agencies notified if users are not compliant.

Roads and highways:

Highways issues as a result of car parks being over-capacity is not enforceable by the NPA. This is a matter for the local police or local authority traffic wardens. Vehicle removal and parking fines are being used where appropriate by local agencies in areas of high impact. The NPA has no powers to shut highways either within or on the National Park boundary. Concerns in respect of vehicle speed and enforcement are a police matter.

Our social media, mainstream press releases, video content and on-site signage all make reference to parking respectfully and legally including for emergency and farm access. This includes the sharing of fire service access concerns.

Footpaths:

Social distancing is a matter of personal responsibility. NPA rangers have no enforcement powers in respect of social distancing, and will not be asked to do so. Where a significant breach of social distancing is taking place (such a large outdoor gathering), the police should be informed. Signage in respect of social distancing has been installed at NPA sites across the National Park.

Public toilets:

The NPA operates a small number of public toilets within the Peak District. These are currently closed for the safety of those servicing these facilities. Once we are assured that our staff can operate safely, these facilities will open. Some toilets serviced by third party contractors where food and drink concessions operate may be open to support these locations. Please be aware that public toilets in the National Park are run by a number of different organisations.

BBQs and fires:

The NPA ask that BBQs or other naked flames are not used in the National Park. This is stated on signage currently in place in many areas. In a small number of locations (including the Dovestones area), public order notices may be issued for the unauthorised use of BBQs. These are enforced by local security teams or representatives of the local authority and not NPA staff. Anyone witnessing smoke or unauthorised fires in the open should call the fire service on 999. Where rangers are informed of the use of BBQs and can attend the location, they will request that those present extinguish them, but we have limited resources to do this.

We will send updates to the parishes on developments on how the NPA responds to the Covid 19 guidance released by Government.

Residential annex SPD

In March 2020 Planning Committee members approved a draft version of a Supplementary Planning Document on the topic of residential annexes. The recently adopted Development Management Policies provide additional opportunity for supporting family networks to address their accommodation needs (e.g. by enabling the issue of farming succession). The SPD explains types of annex and how we determine ancillary accommodation as opposed to the creation of a new dwelling. The document provides definition and background on legal cases covering this issue as well as guidance on the use of planning conditions and legal agreements based on differing scenarios.

The enforced lockdown has meant that some aspects of regulation in relation to public consultation cannot be satisfied (such as the ability to read documents placed at deposit locations, and responding to requests for face to face meetings and events). Nevertheless we believe there is still a useful opportunity to share the document and gather views during this period. We will shortly email parish clerks with links to the document and invite comments from the parishes.

If you have any queries about this bulletin please contact the Planning Liaison officer
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