

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

25th July 2006**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS****Purpose of the report**

To appoint, members champions, for the Authority's seven areas of responsibility.

Background

Members will now be very familiar with the concept of champions, an issue that has been debated on numerous occasions following the National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA) in late 2005.

The matter was last discussed at the Authority meeting on 30th May when, after consideration of the paper, the following resolution was passed: that

- (a) the establishment of member champions across the seven areas of the Authority's work be approved;
- (b) the principles and role of member champions as outlined in the Chief Executive's report be agreed;
- (c) No special responsibility allowance be paid to Member Champions. The matter to be considered as part of a wider review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances in 2007;
- (d) The role of Member Champion be classed as an approved duty for the purposes of the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances;
- (e) The Chief Executive's report and its appendices be used as background information during the group meetings to be held between May and July 2006; and
- (f) Any member who wishes to become a Champion may submit to the Chief Executive their nomination together with reasons in support of their nomination(s). The self nominations and supporting papers will be circulated without alteration to the annual meeting of the Authority, to be considered together with any further nominations that may be made at the meeting.

Nominations have been received from Dr Petyt, Mrs Millward, Ms Stedman and Mr Lancaster. These are contained at **Appendix 1**.

Principles

Before dealing with the issue of appointments it is worth reminding members of the principles that they have adopted in relation to these key roles. These are:-

- Members appointed by the Authority need to be committed and enthusiastic about the area of work in question (of all the principles identified this is the most critical);

- In the first instance it is important to recognise what Member Champions are not. They are not policy makers, executive members or a cabinet, nor will they direct staff.
- Champions will cover the seven areas of the Authority's work:-
 - Conservation of the Natural Environment
 - Conservation of Cultural Heritage
 - Recreation Management
 - Promoting Understanding
 - Development Control
 - Forward Planning
 - Corporate and Democratic Core

To assist members in their deliberations further detail on these seven areas are included at **Appendix 2**.

Arrangements should be appropriate to the resources and capacity of members and officers. Therefore:-

- Up to two members can be champions in a particular area
- A member can only be a champion in one area
- Champions cannot be members of the Planning Committee.

It was agreed at the last meeting, that once the champions have been appointed, it would be useful for them to meet with the Chairman and Chief Executive, initially on a quarterly basis to share information, monitor the implementation and development of the initiative, and identify good and bad practice. This should assist in not only 'tweaking' the initiative as required, but will help when reporting back to the Authority in a more formal manner.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to appoint Member Champions across the seven areas of the Authority's work.

DAVID BUTTERWORTH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background documents: National Park Authority Performance Assessment.

12th July 2006

Member Champion: Recreation Management - Malcolm Petyt

I am very keen to undertake this area of responsibility. I believe it fits most closely with my experience, and is where I can make the best contribution to the work of the Authority. Through my involvement with the Access Committee and the Local Access Forums for both the Dales and the Lake District, as well as with several outside organisations, I have already had contacts with various members of the Park Management Section, and I believe I can work well with them.

I have studied the lists of "Areas of activity covered" and "Current/Future Issues", as well as the various targets referred to in the current Best Value Action Plan. I already have a commitment in many of these areas, and I am ready to become involved with those where as yet I have little experience.

I append a copy of that part of my *curriculum vitae* which relates to my involvement in voluntary work, much of which I think is relevant to this position. It can be seen that I have been involved, both practically and organisationally, with countryside and access-related matters for over 30 years.

My involvement in recreation activities also relates well:

Walking is the most widespread recreational activity in the Park, and this has been my primary recreation all my life. I have walked in all areas of the Dales (and many other areas), as well as being involved with several organisations which are concerned with rights of way and access.

Cycling has also, since my teenage years, played an important part in my enjoyment of the Dales. I still cycle. I am primarily a road cyclist, but I have done some off-road riding, and I have a son who is deeply involved in mountain-biking, so I have some knowledge of that activity.

Canoeing is an activity I only occasionally engage in nowadays, but I have some relevant experience. I was formerly an Instructor (qualified under the British Canoe Union) and I taught many youngsters to canoe.

Sailing was a major activity of mine for over 15 years. Though I was primarily a deep-sea sailor (I hold a Department of Trade/Royal Yachting Association ticket as Offshore Yachtmaster), I taught dinghy sailing to Scouts, and I still sail a dinghy on Killington Lake.

Horse-riding I have never been involved with myself, but I have a daughter who rides, so I have some understanding of the needs and problems of riders. Also, my work on rights of way often involves bridleways as well as footpaths.

Member Champion: Conservation of the Natural Environment – Deborah Millward

I know you are well aware of both my interest in wildlife conservation and my desire to finally be doing what I had always thought was my role on the Authority. If I could find the notes on the attributes required of the Member Champion for Conservation of the Natural Environment I could systematically go through them, as I did when I first read them, and confirm that I pretty much fulfil every criteria. In the absence of the notes you are spared that self-promoting exercise and, conversely, I simply inform you that my chief shortcoming is a lack of training in landscape conservation, though I have been encouraging enhancement of the "sense of place" to such as the MoD for some time.

I really welcome the opportunity to get thoroughly engaged in what, for me, is the most important part of the NP's work. Working closely with the Conservation team should make my last 18 months on the Authority my most rewarding and I hope most beneficial to the Dales.

Member Champion: Development Control – Nancy Stedman

I would like to put myself forward for the role of Member Champion for development control.

Right from the start of my time on this Authority I have been interested in the way in which we carry out the function of development control. It is one of the main interfaces between the Authority and local people, and it can give rise to misunderstandings and negative responses. Not only is it a complex process, it is also one of the main ways in which this Authority gets judged by the public, locally and nationally.

Despite the sometimes negative image that all planning authorities have to endure, I have always supported the National Park Authorities retaining their planning function, as it is one of the main ways in which they can achieve the high standards appropriate for their outstanding landscapes, thus contributing to National Park purposes.

My experience on the working group 'Probity in Planning' helped me to understand the planning processes, and find ways of ensuring that our process was open, transparent and effective, without being unduly bureaucratic. (If I had been present at the relevant meeting, I would have put myself forward to be on the Planning Performance working group).

I have consistently advocated that we should be providing a 'Rolls Royce service', and that we should be providing assistance and guidance to applicants to ensure the highest standards. However, that approach demands resources to ensure effective delivery.

So it is of particular concern to me that we are currently categorised as a 'Standards authority', and I would like to commit my energy and efforts to improving the status of the planning section. It would be my aim to make our development control section exemplary.

Development control will always have a difficulty in presenting its achievements, as these are often unseen. Successful negotiations by officers, achieving improved applications or deflecting inappropriate developments altogether, are rarely obvious on the ground. Indeed the small development that fits unobtrusively into the locality may belie the amount of effort that was put in to avoid a less sympathetic development. Development control needs

informed champions to present its case for it, to argue for adequate resources, and to support its work.

I would welcome the opportunity to put time and effort into learning about the issues facing the development control section, and looking into ways of improving its performance, its status and morale. I believe I would bring a professional and objective approach to such a role and I trust that Members will support me in this.

Member Champion: Corporate & Democratic Core – Kevin Lancaster

I would like to be considered for the position of Member Champion for Corporate and Democratic Core functions. If I were to be successful I would concentrate on implementing and bringing forward the improvement agenda both within the Yorkshire Dales and in the National Parks movement as a whole.

I was delighted to represent the park throughout the NPA Performance Assessment process and I think I was able to give the process a direction which contributed to the excellent result for this park. I would like to see the commitment which we and two or three other parks have to the improvement agenda extended through all of the British National Parks. This is essential if National Parks are to continue to receive the public and governmental support which they have had in the past.

I believe my experience as a former cabinet member on South Lakeland gives me a particular insight into the role of member champion and the relationship between a champion and other members and officers.

I believe I have a proven track record on the National Park of working with officers, of helping them whilst avoiding undue interference. It will be the role of champions to implement and progress the existing policies of the park whilst working with officers to develop new policies to be considered by members as a whole.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

- ***Biodiversity***
 - research and surveys to inform conservation activity;
 - action to conserve and enhance species and habitats;
 - involving local communities in biodiversity (Local Nature Reserves);
 - monitoring and reporting progress on the local Biodiversity Action Plan;
 - managing Dales Biodiversity Forum
- ***Farm Conservation***
 - providing a range of advice/assistance to farm businesses, and advising and supporting DEFRA in the local delivery of national agri-environment schemes (esp Environmental Stewardship);
 - monitoring impacts of CAP reform
- ***Trees and Woodland***
 - funding of existing YDNPA woodland management agreements;
 - developing, facilitating and funding new planting and management schemes, working with Forestry Commission, YDMT and others;
 - supporting integrated woodland management, training and product initiatives through Yorwoods;
 - protecting important amenity trees and hedgerows (TPOs etc);
 - research and surveys to inform conservation activity
- ***Landscape***
 - developing landscape character guidelines;
 - landscape advice on individual projects.
- ***Limestone Country***
 - grants and advice to farmers to introduce hardy cattle;
 - environmental enhancements (rabbit/bracken control)
 - research on environmental and economic impacts of the project.

Current/Future Issues

1. Impact of CAP reform on the environment and economic viability of farming in the Park
2. Future national schemes to support agri-environment measures and the Authority's role in delivering them
3. Developing relationships with Natural England
4. Future of 'Limestone Country' – what happens when current project ends next year?
5. Securing funding needed to meet woodland creation targets

Induction programme

Briefings from Head of Department and section heads

Join Biodiversity Forum, Dales Woodland Forum, Agriculture Reform Group

Series of site visits

Attend appropriate Senior Management Team (SMT) and Policy Development Group (PDG) meetings to discuss relevant issues.

Attend appropriate departmental meetings

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

- **Archaeology**
 - intervention to preserve historic buildings and structures that are neglected because they are of no economic value or have uncertain ownership;
 - activities to improve knowledge of the historic environment, and help local people and visitors to realise and appreciate its value and interest (e.g. archaeology day school);
 - data collection to monitor the condition of the most important sites and features;
 - using SMR data to respond to a wide range of statutory and non-statutory consultations

- **Building Conservation**
 - action to conserve and enhance Listed Buildings within the Park, including dealing with significant applications for Listed Building consent and advising on development control applications;
 - supporting the Rural Development Service in restoring traditional field barns through agri-environment schemes;
 - activities to improve knowledge of the historic environment, and help local people and visitors to realise and appreciate its value and interest;
 - data collection to monitor the condition of the NP's most important buildings and structures;
 - appraisal and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

- **Barns and Walls**
 - advice and assistance for barn restoration works being funded by the Rural Development Service;

- **Sites and Monuments Record**
 - maintaining a publicly-accessible, electronic Sites and Monuments Record, including interpretation and educational resources ('Out of Oblivion' website);
 - transfer of paper records to new electronic database.

Current/Future Issues

1. Workload on keeping Conservation Area information up-to-date + how to fund Conservation Area enhancements
2. Ensuring historic environment is not overlooked in new agri-environment schemes
3. Future role of the Authority in conservation of barns and walls
4. Continuing development of volunteers to support historic environment work
5. Involving local communities in historic environment work.

Induction programme

Briefings from Head of Department and section heads

Join Dales Historic Environment Forum

Series of site visits

Attend appropriate Senior Management Team (SMT) and Policy Development Group (PDG) meetings to discuss relevant issues.

Attend appropriate departmental meetings

RECREATION MANAGEMENT MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

- ***Managing the access resource***
 - The Rights of Way Network including Long Distance Trails eg Pennine Bridleway
 - Public rights of way surveying
 - Development of 'prow' maintenance plan
 - Open Access and access to other recreation opportunities
 - Management of recreational vehicular use on unsealed routes (green lanes)
 - Organised recreational events
- ***Accessibility and Visitor Management***
 - Maintaining the diversity – so everywhere doesn't become the same
 - Access Interchanges, car parks and toilets – how people access the area
 - Management of the recreational resource
- ***Sustainable Transport***
 - Sustainable Travel Partnership – including travel options and information
 - Advisory road hierarchies and traffic management
 - Local Transport Plans
- ***Access for All***
 - Enhancing the rights of way network for those with disabilities and limited mobility
 - Working with tourism service providers in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act
- ***Healthy Living***
 - Walks for health – also an example of using volunteers to increase our capacity
- ***Car Park Management***
 - Management of Cleaning/Maintenance and cash collecting contracts
 - Enforcement and Compliance, parking charges
 - Developing pricing strategies
 - Involvement of local communities
- ***Ranger Service*** (closely involved in all the above but in addition..)
 - Local Community Consultation
 - Interaction with Local schools
 - Communication with the visiting public
 - Apprenticeship Scheme
 - Management of Authority amenity sites
- ***Volunteering***
 - Dales Volunteers
 - Work Experience Placements
 - Corporate 'Volunteers'
 - Ad hoc volunteer events

Current/Future Issues

1. Management of recreational vehicular use of unsealed routes
2. Management of CRoW Open Access Areas
3. Delegation agreements with County Councils covering public rights of way management
4. Public rights of way maintenance programmes, particularly the development of annual maintenance plan.
5. Overview of the review of the Definitive Map eg producing and publishing a digital definitive map, [NB members already receive a detailed quarterly report of casework and the member champion would not become involved in individual cases.]
6. Role of the Authority in relation to sustainable travel/transport
7. Relationships with County Councils regarding the production of Rights of Way Improvement Plans
8. The promotion of the Recreational Charter
9. Planning for the management of increasing recreational uses eg. mountain biking
10. Health agenda and determining the Authority's role in encouraging greater participation in sport and recreation in line with Government targets
11. Overview of development and implementation of externally funded projects eg Pennine Bridleway
12. Resourcing the demand for volunteer involvement
13. Local community involvement in car park/toilet management
14. Fostering a good working relationship between the LAF and Authority
15. Potential for Dales Volunteers (DVs) to support community projects
16. DV involvement in project initiation and development (plus ext. funding).

Induction Programme

Briefings with key staff

Site visits

Attendance at Ranger and Access and Recreation Team meetings

Attend one Dales Volunteers training day (First 'Awareness' day, if not previously attended.)

Attend a Spring or Autumn meeting of Dales Volunteers (or a pre-Christmas lunch with DCM Volunteers or Ragged Robins?) in order to be able to hear any thoughts DVs might want to share

Training: Media
 Access Committee training events

PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

Assistance with strategies and policies plus involvement in a wide range of departmental and over-arching projects including the following:

- ***Sustainable Tourism***
 - Sustainable Tourism – general issues
 - Area Tourism Partnership (ATP, Yorkshire Dales Tourism)
 - National Park Centres, Partnership Centres and Park Information Points
 - Dales Countryside Museum
 - Retail Services
 - Survey and evaluation work

- ***Outreach and Education***
 - Beyond the Boundary Cricket Project
 - Mosaic Partnership
 - Events Programme
 - Education Services
 - Outreach Services

- ***Corporate Communications***
 - Media
 - Website
 - Publications
 - Interpretation
 - Corporate Identity and Branding

Current/Future Issues

Each of the three areas covered above are in a process of development. The member champion(s) should be able to assist in these processes.

Induction Programme

Briefings with HOD and Team Leaders on each of the three areas of work probably half a day each

Site visits to key sites including all NPC, all Partnership Centres, a couple of Park Information Points, Retail Services and DCM

Attendance at Departmental and Team meetings

Attendance at a NPC briefing

Attend three events to cover some of the range of activities on offer

Attend at least one outreach activity

Attend a Group Leader Visit or Mosaic Partnership Steering Group

Join a school group at DCM

Attend a national Communicators' Meeting

Attend an Area Tourism Partnership (Yorkshire Dales Tourism) meeting

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

- ***Oversight of the work of the Dept, including:-***
 - Land Charge Searches
 - Appeals
 - Enforcement
 - Minerals Planning
 - Regional Aggregates Working Party
 - Providing information to the general public
 - Planning Surgeries
 - Website
 - Validation & registration of applications
 - Consultation
 - Professional assessment of development proposals & report writing
 - Negotiations
 - Liaison with Members
 - Planning Committee
 - Design Awards
 - Design Guides
 - Staff & Member training
 - Dealing with complaints
 - Best Value processes

Current/Future Issues

1. Standards Authority status/Performance in processing applications to target times
2. Recruitment & Retention of qualified Planning Officers
3. Probity in Planning/Peer Group Review – Members role/approach
4. IT development & support
5. Public expectations/relations
6. Planning Delivery Grant/future finances

Induction Programme

All Members receive a briefing on the Planning system from the Head of Planning on joining the Planning Committee.

All Members of the Planning Committee receive at least one day per year compulsory Planning training.

The above training focuses on the Planning system and how it is supposed to operate, decision making etc.

Member Champion training should focus more on the work of the Department. What work we do, how we do it, why we do it that way, how well we do it.

The purpose of the training should be to equip the Champion to offer informed opinion on priorities, successes, failures etc, and in which areas should we consider expanding/reducing services etc.

Job shadowing/discussion with staff covering each area of the Dept's work should form the basis of the Champion's training. They will need to understand what it takes to deliver the service.

Regular meetings with Head of Planning

Regular meetings with other Planning staff

Attendance at some team meetings

Following the Planning Committee preparation cycle through would be a valuable exercise: starting with cases they have job shadowed a Planning Officer on, agenda meeting, assembling the agenda, chairman's briefing, attending a Planning Committee meeting from an officers' perspective, post-committee meeting.

For specific issues, visiting other planning authorities to compare practices could also be useful.

Generic Member Champion training should include media training.

It will also cover issues of confidentiality. They will inevitably acquire personal information on staff and sensitive information on contentious cases.

FORWARD PLANNING (SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT) MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

- ***Sustainable Development***
 - providing funding, through the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, for projects that contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the Dales (Sustainable Development Fund);
 - contributions to local socio-economic and environmental partnerships (York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit, Cumbria Fells and Dales LEADER + Programme, and the North Yorkshire Rural Target Fund);
 - influencing economic and social policies at local (Local Strategic Partnerships), regional (Regional Development Agency) and national level.
- ***Local Plans***
 - Preparation of Local Development Framework documents
 - Representative role at Regional level
- ***National Park Management Plan***
 - monitoring, reviewing and publishing revised National Park Management Plan;
 - overseeing policy development across the range of the Authority's work to ensure consistency.
- ***State of the Park***
 - programme of surveys and acquiring necessary data to allow monitoring of performance against National Park Management Plan aims and objectives;
 - analysing and distributing data from the 2001 Census.

Current/Future Issues

1. Completing review of National Park Management Plan
2. Rationalising existing proliferation of Authority plans and strategies
3. Developing YDNPA role in delivery of economic/social funding in the National Park (esp Leader).
4. Preparation of the Local Development Framework
5. Affordable housing initiatives

Induction programme

Briefings from Head of Planning and Conservation & Policy.

Briefing from YDMT on Sustainable Development Fund.

Attend appropriate Senior Management Team (SMT) and Policy Development Group (PDG) meetings to discuss relevant issues.

Attend appropriate departmental meetings

Liaison with Rural Housing Enabler for briefing on affordable housing issues

CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC CORE MEMBER CHAMPION

Areas of activity covered

Oversight of the provision of effective support services to the Authority, including personnel, finance and IT.

- ***Performance Management***
 - Assessment of the Authority's performance including NPAPA
 - Driving the performance improvement agenda
 - Delivery of the Authority's performance targets
 - Working up ideas on how to report/monitor performance
 - Assistance in the preparation, presentation and implementation of the "climate survey" action plan
 - Assisting and advising on the area of member performance
- ***Corporate Governance***
 - Working with officers to develop, implement and monitor the Authority's Corporate Governance Agenda
- ***Finance***
 - Assisting officers in working up the budget in line with priorities and working up 'internal' bids to the opportunities fund
 - Developing and implementing the Authority's approach to external funding (there is a question as to whether the member champion for this area of work should have a permanent place on the newly established External Funding Group).
- ***Property***
 - Ensuring the effective management and deployment of the Authority's portfolio
 - Assisting officers in the development of any planning applications regarding the Authority's property portfolio
- ***Personnel and Training***
 - Assistance with the development of personnel policies
 - Health and Safety issues regarding the Authority's work
 - Officer and member training and development
- ***Other areas***
 - Provision of services to Authority members to enable them to perform effectively as possible
 - Oversight of procurement and purchasing

Current/Future Issues

1. Introduction of Corporate Governance Policy and on-going compliance
2. IEG and Website development
3. Development of Procurement Strategy
4. Investors in People (IiP) re-accreditation
5. Review of the NPAPA process and outcomes
6. Strengthen planning and management of the Authority's business
7. Work towards the Equality Standard

8. On-going review of new arrangements for involvement of members
9. Authority's approach to new legislation eg age discrimination
10. Project management; how we do it? How we could/should do it?
11. Development of performance monitoring

Induction Programme

Briefings from key staff: DB, RB, RTD, SF, SJ, PD

Attendance at relevant Senior Management Team, Policy Development Group meetings

Familiarisation with website and session with Kath Taylor regarding website development

Session with Joyce Whitley on procurement policy

Session with Peter Watson on Health and Safety