

## **The role and work of Malhamdale Environment Group based on MEG discussion on 29 February 2024.**

Dr Jane Smart, 13 March 2024. Please email [malhamdalevolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:malhamdalevolunteers@gmail.com) for more information.

The MALHAMDALE ENVIRONMENT GROUP (MEG) was set up in 2019 to promote and exchange information on environmentally friendly activities within Malhamdale. It is a sub-group of Kirkby Malham Parish Council with around 40 members. MEG meets once a month and is for any Malhamdale resident with any time at all to spend on adding their voice or taking action to help tackle the climate and nature crises. This short piece is based on a discussion of a paper at the MEG Meeting on 29 February 2024.

Broadly MEG aims to help conserve and enhance the special characteristics of Malhamdale and contribute to tackling the interlinked climate and nature crises whilst supporting local businesses and ensuring social justice. Activities are guided by the time, interests and skills of MEG members, and implemented through specific projects, many involving practical volunteering.

Each month MEG shares information on environmental issues through the Kirkby Malham Parish Magazine. On the basis that increasingly global and national biodiversity and climate policy strongly acknowledges the importance of local people and communities in playing their part and influencing change for the good, we aim to encourage more young people and do more on social media, and to link to similar local groups in the Dales.

An impressive range of activities is underway. Most of these involve partnering with local, regional and national organisations including the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), National Trust (NT), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT), Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT), Friends of the Dales and others who both support our work and are the recipients, from time to time, of our views!

- Eyes on the Bog: surveying the state of peatlands as part of the Yorkshire Peat Partnership.
- Malhamdale Curlew Project: to discover how many Curlew pairs and other waders are nesting in Malhamdale, the reasons for their apparent decline, and try to address these before it's too late.
- Tree-planting and maintenance – with YWT, NT, YDMT. MEG is involved in encouraging land owners with small pockets of land to plant trees. We aim to better explain the many benefits of tree planting / hedge restoration and support natural regeneration of trees where tree planting is not appropriate.
- Establishment of a local tree nursery (supported by YDMT, in partnership with a local farmer). We aim to grow trees from seeds of local provenance for planting on in suitable sites in the Dale.
- Encouraging implementation of “fit for purpose” Nature Recovery Strategies (liaison with YDNPA and the various County Councils) including through the emerging Yorkshire Dales Management Plan.
- Help facilitate interpretation, understanding and take up of new agri-environment schemes, working with YDNPA and others (on the basis that they are good for nature and climate as well as positive for farmers).
- Future of Tarn House and Malham Tarn Estate owned and managed by the NT, following its vacation by the Field Studies Council in 2023. Also, a key concern of Kirkby Malham Parish Council.
- Support moves to achieve Net Zero including through representation on the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition. Tackling energy inefficiency and supporting “de-carbonisation” plans.
- Influencing (apolitical) of elected representatives, e.g. mayoral candidates standing for election in Spring 2024. Making recommendations to responsible bodies on issues such as travel and transport, water pollution, flood management and renewable energy
- Support production of locally and sustainably produced food/ other items. Recycling and reuse issues: sharing good practice and considering feasibility of schemes including, currently, compostable coffee cups. Food waste issues.
- Support national wildlife monitoring schemes such as those led by Plantlife; invasive species (alerting responsible authorities).