



Malham Environmental Group

MINUTES for Meeting held Thursday 29th February 2024 at 7:30pm via Zoom

Present: Neil Heseltine (NH), Laura Parker (LP), Mick Parker (MP), James Powell (JP), Stephen Phillips (SP), Jane Smart (JS), Michael Southworth (MS), Leigh Weston (LW), Sue McWhinney (SMc).

Apologies: Wendy Carr, Peter Cummings, Jonathan Heath, David Howlett, Mark Kerr, Rita Layton, Paul McWhinney, Judy Rogers.

Summary of Action Points

Actions	Details
Reflections paper	ACTION: JS will update paper, re-circulate and include some of the “new” issues on agenda for next meeting for further discussion and possible action.
Tree planting and nursery	ACTION: reminder to all tree planters to record provenance of seeds of trees planted in spreadsheet (circulated previously).
Peat Bog monitoring	ACTION: Training to be offered at Scothrop; all interested to give availability to Peter Cummings asap.
Tarn House and Malham Tarn Estate	ACTION: Follow up at KMPC on Monday 4 March: confirm and clarify details of open days at Tarn House on 19 and 23 March and the issue of the outstanding reply to KMPC letter to National Trust (NH/JS)
Local Nature Recovery Strategy and YDNPA Management Plan	ACTION: MEG to engage in NY Council consultations / updates ACTION: MEG should be represented at YDNPA Open Meeting to give views on the developing Management Plan
Malhamdale Curlew Project	ACTION: All are urged to help volunteer for both the survey work and to talk to the visitors at the exhibition at St Michael’s Parish Church, Kirkby Malham 11-14th April.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)	ACTION: await update at KMPC.
Single use coffee cups	ACTION: LP and JS to seek advice on possible next steps from Simon Stephenson who runs Gordale Refreshments.
Parish Magazine article (April)	ACTION: LW and SMc to jointly draft article for April edition of Parish Magazine.
Sewage overflow	ACTION: MP to consider what KMPC / MEG could do to address the issues.
Future meeting venues	ACTION: PC will book and confirm venues after 25th April



Minutes of meeting on held 25th January 2024: These were agreed.

Matters arising: From previous meeting not under other agenda items. JS reported that the article on the climate and nature emergencies and the mayoral elections has been completed. All action points have been addressed.

Mini-brainstorm on the role and work of MEG:

A short item inviting views, and comments on the work of MEG.

- JS introduced the paper. Good and helpful comments were received from those at the meeting and many who were not. MEG is doing many good things but it is timely to ask if we should be doing other things or doing things differently. Below is a summary of main areas of discussion.
- Good to hear more perspectives from the farming community and address issues linked to wildlife and farming. Tough time for the farming community, particularly in uplands areas. New agri-environment schemes could be very beneficial; some are confusingly presented; MEG could help explain how new measures /payment schemes can be good for nature and climate as well as positive for farmers. MEG could link with Farm Team at YDNPA. All agreed MEG should engage more with farmers, including supporting locally produced products (as sold at Townhead Farm Shop).
- Join with other similar local groups in the Dales (many such groups in the Dales); don't hesitate to inform the YDNPA of their responsibilities.
- Food waste is an issue in the Dale. Local pubs / hotels and cafes could do more if MEG highlighted the issue.
- Does MEG place too much emphasis on tree planting? Originally more emphasis on hedges/ trees to connect habitats; very low tree cover in Dales; more emphasis now on using locally sourced trees grown from locally collected seeds; e.g. in new tree nursery which is a great new initiative. Tree planting has many benefits not always immediately apparent including water management and flow (and encourages freshwater biodiversity) as well as carbon sequestration. More could be done to encourage natural re-generation of woodland habitat. Good that farmers are being supported / encouraged to plant trees.
- Use of the phrase "social justice" was discussed. This was summarised as finding solutions to environmental challenges that are also good for the livelihoods and well-being of people. Public transport is a good example of an environmental issue that if improved (e.g. a service provided that allowed residents to commute daily to work in other towns and villages), would significantly benefit local people (as well as visitors).
- MEG could do wild plant monitoring e.g. participation in schemes run by Plantlife.
- MEG to look at support schemes / ways to generate renewable energy locally (linked to problems of Dales ageing housing stock).



- MEG should help disseminate information about environmental and sustainability issues (in addition to working directly on key issues).
- Invasive species: MEG could keep an eye out for where these appear and take follow up action.
- How can we engage more young people?
- How can we communicate more through social media?
- Need to ensure we remain non-party political in voicing our views.
- Amend wording regarding characteristics of the Dale – enhancement rather than conservation.

ACTION: JS will update paper, re-circulate and include some of the “new” issues on agenda for next meeting for further discussion (if needed) and possible action.

Updates on:

- **Tree Planting and Tree Nursery:** Successful, well attended, hedge laying event at the Windy Pike tree nursery; follow up event on 6th April. Tree planting has been slow, affected by the weather. Newfield Hall Farm: Re-laying of new (some old) hedges with good advice from YDMT. Many other events planned. Dates as follows (thanks to Alice Cummings) 12/3/24, 09/04/24, 14/05/24, 11/06/24, 09/07/24, 13/08/24, 10/09/24, 8/10/24, 12/11/24, 10/12/24. **ACTION: reminder to tree planters to record provenance of seeds of trees planted in spreadsheet (already circulated).**
- **Peat bog monitoring:** Helpful to have one email from Yorkshire Peat Partnership detailing sites and volunteers. Request from MEG re local plot is being actioned. Training to be offered at Scosthrop. **ACTION: All interested peat bog monitoring training to give availability to Peter Cummings asap.**
- **Tarn House and Malham Tarn Estate:** JS said that she was still pursuing making contact with appropriate contact at the National Trust regarding the future use of Tarn House and Estate. NH mentioned that we need to pursue a response from the NT in full answer to the letter from KMPC on future use of the House and Estate. Security issues seem to be in hand. Two dates offered by the NT for a tour around Tarn House for local residents – 19 and 23 March. **ACTION: Follow up at KMPC on Monday 4 March: clarify details of open days on 19 and 23 March issue of reply to KMPC letter (NH/JS)**
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Yorkshire Dales Management Plan (LNRS):** North Yorkshire Council has completed their consultation on their developing Nature Recovery Strategy; see [NY local-nature-recovery-strategy](#). YDNPA has begun updating their Management Plan. NH mentioned that nature is seen as a priority for the new Plan. MEG should engage with the consultation and push for relevant targets from the YDNPA Nature Recovery Strategy into new Management Plan. NH said an open meeting will be organised by YDNPA. **ACTION: MEG should attend YDNPA Open Meeting to give views on the new Management Plan**



- **Malhamdale Curlew Project:** LW reported that a great deal of progress. She attended the first Curlew Fieldworkers Workshop, Kings Lynn, February 2024, organised by Curlew Action which was both informative and inspirational. Twenty-two Malhamdale residents have volunteered to help monitor curlews this year and we also have a new volunteer Admin Assistant, Cath Crisp. Training on surveying has been offered by YDNPA (Ian Court). An application for FiPL funding has been submitted to help fund the costs of an ecologist to support Jonathan Heath who did lion's share of the admin and writing last year. Thanks to the Clapham Curlew Cluster project, SMC reported that an Exhibition on curlews featuring local school children's artwork and more will be held at St. Michael's Church, Kirkby Malham. LW will produce a leaflet to accompany the exhibition. JS is in contact with a young photographer who may be able to support the work. 21st April is World Curlew Day. Jonathan, Leigh and Jane were thanked for their work. **ACTION: All are urged to help volunteer for both the survey work and to talk to the visitors at the exhibition at St Michael's Parish Church, Kirkby Malham 12-14th April.**
- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** PC reported in advance of the meeting that the two applications to the fund (one for insulation of the public toilets) and one to suggest (a) tackle insulation of homes and (b) and regeneration of renewable energy in the Dale are with KMPC; PC was thanked for his efforts. We hope to hear an update at KMPC meeting on 4 March. **ACTION: await update at KMPC.**
- **Single use coffee cups:** LP and JS reported that they had had a useful discussion with Chris Wildman. Progress already made given that polystyrene cups have now been eliminated from outlets in Malham. Current cups have lids that are not compostable however (but compostable lids are available). Chris also advocated the use of a china mugs (a MEG mug?) either with or without a deposit /option to buy. Chris also suggested a questionnaire to businesses. **ACTION: LP and JS to seek advice from Simon Stephenson who runs Gordale Refreshments.**

Article for Parish Magazine: LW and SMC will collaborate on an article about the 2024 Malhamdale Curlew Project to include both the survey work and exhibition at the Church. **ACTION: LW and SMC to jointly draft article for April edition of Parish Magazine.**

Dates and venues of next meetings: Future dates of meetings will be: Thursday 4 April at Malham Village Hall. Thursday 25 April at Townhead Farm shop, Airton, hosted by Chris Wildman. Thursday 6 June (venue TBC) featuring Edward Sexton, Glencroft, speaking about the woollen industry in the Dales; 4 July, 26 September, 31 October, 28 November – venues TBC, based on a rotation of locations. **ACTION: PC will Book and confirm venues after 25 April.**

AOB: MP reported that he had had a tour of Malham sewage works and learnt more about overflows etc. MP to consider what KMPC could do to address the issues.