



Malhamdale Environmental Group

MINUTES of Meeting held Thursday 23 January 2025 held on Zoom

Present: Jane Bagley (JB), Wendy Carr (WC), Peter Cummings (Deputy Chair; PC), Carol Douglas (CD; YDMT), Annette Edwards (part), Jonathan Heath (JH), Steve Heaton (SH; Natural England; part); David Howlett (DH), Laura Parker (LP), Mick Parker (MP), Stephen Phillips (SP) James Powell (JP) Margaret Ross (MR) Michael Southworth (MS), Jane Smart, (Chair; JS),

Apologies: Rita Layton, Sue McWhinney (SMc), Paul McWhinney and Judy Rogers (JR)

Minutes of meeting on held 28 November 2024: These were agreed.

Summary of discussion with Action Points

	Matters arising
Matters arising	JS has not written to Natural England (NE) about a specific farming subsidy for curlew conservation because new information from Defra suggests that this may be covered under the new (Jan 2025) countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-get-ready-to-apply/preview-guidance Action: consider if this will effectively help farmers conserve curlews (with MCP). Other items not on agenda were taken at the end of the meeting.
	Summary of discussion with Action Points
Special presentation	<i>Willows in the Yorkshire Dales - why they are great and why we need more</i> with guest Steve Heaton, Lead Advisor, Tree Action Plan, Natural England who attended for the Q&A https://www.youtube.com/willows Steve introduced himself and answered questions after the excellent presentation. This was a fascinating introduction to the range of wild willow species that occur or could be reintroduced into the Dales. Some are rare montane species that represent a habitat "lost" in the Dales that have considerable value for wildlife (low growing willow scrub compatible with curlew conservation) and climate mitigation (including in restoration of peatlands). Action: Tree nursery workshop; see below. Action: consider inviting Steve to lead a walk in Malhamdale highlighting wild willows.
Tree Nursery and Tree Planting	MEG to be involved with growing cuttings at Tree Nursery for reintroduction. Action: YDMT will hold workshop on Weds 26 February in Kirkby Malham Parish Hall. Hedge planting day at Hill Top Farm on Friday 21 February. Details to follow. MP reported that peat free compost and boxes /tools / other materials are available at Windy Pike if anyone would like to do some planting.



White Rose Forest Strategic Plan	JS has filled in questionnaire on WRF Strategic Plan that aims to determine why communities support tree planting. JS stressed importance of planting in right places with local provenance seeds / trees – for climate and nature.
Building Homes for Dales House Birds Project	YDMT were congratulated for raising the funds for the project. Catherine Mercer will attend the MEG meeting on Thursday 6 March to discuss MEG role.
Proposed meeting with NYC Recycling Officer	PC explained that he has been approached by Ariane Heap who is the waste prevention and recycling officer at North Yorkshire Council. She wishes to arrange a Zoom call to discuss her work with anyone interested. PC to contact MEG members to find a date for a Zoom call focussed on the topic.
Smart Meter challenges in Malhamdale	DH summaries the problem in the Dale and other parts of N England. In short, they do not work well – and this is linked to the use of TV masts (rather than phone masts) to operate. KMPC to address the issue at the next meeting. MS mentioned it would be useful to have a summary of Smart meter benefits.
North Yorkshire Climate Coalition	DH reported that following consultation https://www.nyclimatecoalition.org/ is to become a Charitable Incorporated Association. It is to arrange a ‘marketplace’ on Sat 22 March in Harrogate to showcase climate action. Action: DH to circulate further details; MEG Members invited to attend.
North Craven Woodland Research Group	Ken Timms has contacted us. This groups works to identify ‘shadow’ and ghost woodlands. MEG had understood that interest had been taken by the History Society. LP will clarify their interest. YDMT have also been in touch with them re the potential for nature recovery. Action: consider item for discussion at future MEG meeting.
YDNPA Management Plan	The new yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan has been published. It is open for comment by Monday 10 March. Action: MEG to be consulted (JS). If anyone has any comments please send to JS by end February.
NYC Recovery Plan	The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is under development. It will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map proposals for creating and improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. Action: JS will find out about status and share info.
Peat bog monitoring (Eyes on the Bog)	SP reported that YWT wishes to collect information on number of hours spent.
Renewable energy in Malhamdale	PC reported that he will be reporting to KMPC on Mon 3 Feb re Local Renewable Energy Grid. Aim is to finalise a specification for research into and feasibility of renewable energy sources being installed in Kirkby Malham Parish and the potential for establishing a local micro power grid. The specification will be issued to five companies which promote and install renewable energy systems.



	The possibilities of solar panels in Malhamdale to be explored further through article in the Parish Magazine (see below)., deadline.
Future events	Talk on NT's <i>Heart of the Dales</i> proposed for 2025. Action: JS to ask NT. Explore possible Farm Shop event in spring featuring suppliers. Action: JS to speak to Chris Wildman. Other ideas to be firmed up in 2025.
Parish Magazine Feb 2025 and beyond	March 2025: DH to write about challenges of Smart meters in the Dales. April 2025: JR to write article on recycling points (including blister packs collection in Malham and Airton) for various items that cannot be put into blue, green or brown bins Possible future articles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on COP29 • DH to write article sharing info on newly installed solar panels in Malham, after accumulating sufficient data, describing experience of the planning process, as well as costs and benefits (e.g. EV charging). Action: <i>All articles to be submitted via JS please to ensure coordination.</i>
Future meetings Dates & venues	Dates and venues of next meetings: Dates for 2025 meetings (all on Thursdays): 6 March (Malham Village Hall); 3 April; 1 May; 12 June; 11 September; 2 October; 27 November (Malham Village Hall); venues to be confirmed in due course.
AOB	None