

RAVENSTONEDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting Thursday 21st January 2010 held in Ravenstonedale Public Room

Present Councillor Caroline Morris (Chairman) Cllrs Hilary Law, Alison Morriss, James Richardson, Helen Shields and Ernest Leach.
Clerk, Chris Elphick
Cumbria County Councillor Peter Thornton, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Member Graham Dalton, Friends of the Lake District representative Jack Ellerby, local businessman and farmer, John Dunning and UECP Project Officer, Libby Bateman.
More than thirty members of the public.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Paul Capstick, District Councillor George Boustead and PCSO Gemma Threlkeld

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Morris declared a personal interest in Item 7, 09/1096, being related to the applicant.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 12th November 2009 had been circulated to all members and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Proposed Designation of the Northern Howgills & Orton Fells as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

More than thirty members of the public attended the meeting to find out about the implications of such designation.

Natural England is the public body responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural environment in England and is currently considering whether certain areas between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks should be designated in this way. This study has been going on since 2004 and is continuing from earlier works as far back as the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1947.

Following thorough analysis Natural England has concluded that the area described loosely as the Northern Howgills and the Orton Fells, which includes the parishes of Orton and Ravenstonedale, have the necessary qualities of natural beauty and opportunities for open-air recreation, and that they should be designated as extensions to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

A consultation is currently being held seeking residents' views on whether these areas have the qualities necessary to be in a National Park and whether they should be given National Park status.

The Chairman gave a brief introduction to the topic then opened the meeting to questions from the public which were comprehensively answered by Graham Dalton, Jack Ellerby and John Dunning.

It was agreed that the relevant criteria for designation, as laid out in national guidelines, are met by the whole area. These broadly require that the area has qualities of outstanding natural beauty and that facilities are available for outdoor recreation. With the proliferation of public rights of way throughout, the Coast to Coast long distance footpath, several branches of the National Cycle Network plus recreational riding establishments this cannot be denied.
Consideration then turned to the effects that designation would have on local residents and business.

John Dunning suggested that designation as Lake District or Yorkshire Dales would give a significant boost to tourism, a major source of employment in the area, by effectively adding a “brand name”. As a national park there would be access to additional project funding from the regional development agencies.

A National Park also becomes the planning authority for its area, which would then be subject to the relevant Local Plan Policy that, although similar, may vary in detail from the existing Eden District Local Plan.

The need for more affordable housing units was noted, in order to enable young people to continue living in the area where they grew up. To that end a more flexible approach is needed by the planners to permit building outside service centres but within clusters of buildings with an existing residential content. This would particularly enable farmers to provide for future generations of their families as has historically been the case.

It was stated that inclusion in a national park may necessitate some modification of farming practices to coincide with conservation policies but experience has shown that farming and conservation can work well together and in doing so would bring financial benefits to the farmers.

A number of alternative proposals were made as to the extent of the designated areas and of the boundaries. Natural England has tended to prefer a “hard boundary” which can be easily identified on the ground such as the A685 road. An alternative suggestion was that historic parish boundaries should be used to avoid division of communities.

Further discussion included the desirability or otherwise of retaining a buffer zone along the M6 corridor and the exclusion of wind farms from national parks.

Following the question and answer session, a show of hands indicated that a significant majority of those present were in favour of designation as a National Park.

Ravenstonedale High Chapel

The Parish Council is still awaiting documentation from the North West Synod of the United Reformed Church to enable completion of the purchase of the property. Conditional permission has, however, been granted for the council to hold limited meetings such as coffee mornings on the premises in the interim. Notice of meetings will be posted on notice boards and on the website, Ravenstonedale.org. A supply of heating oil has been ordered.

Finance

Accounts for Payment

RoSPA Playsafety Ltd (Playground Inspection)	£148.05
C J Elphick (Admin.expenses)	£196.99
C J Elphick (Chapel Keys)	£ 19.40
M Sedgwick (Chapel locks)	£ 93.49

The foregoing four accounts were approved for payment

Planning Applications

No. 08/0770	Conversion of barn into dwelling	
Type	Appeal Ref. APP/H0928/A/09/2113151	
Location	Bleaflatt, Ravenstonedale	
Parish Council	No further comment	
No. 09/0842	Change of use of part of grazing field to ménage.	
Type	Full Application	
Location	Street Farm, Ravenstonedale	
Applicant	Stonetrail Holidays	
Parish Council	No objections	GRANTED

No. 09/0986 Alterations to dwelling
Type Full Application
Location Fallowfield, Ravenstonedale
Applicant Mr J Nicholson
Parish Council No objections

No. 09/1032 Fell one Cypress and one Cherry in Ravenstonedale Conservation Area
Type Tree Works (CA)
Location 1 Little Close, Ravenstonedale
Applicant Miss I Woof
Parish Council No objections

No. 09/1096 Fell Ash & Norway Spruce etc
Type Tree Works (CA)
Location Garshill Farmhouse, Ravenstonedale
Applicant Mr R Metcalfe-Gibson
Parish Council No objections

Playgrounds Inspection

Reports had been received from RoSPA following inspections of both the Newbiggin-on-Lune and Ravenstonedale sites which had been carried out during December. All equipment was found to be in good order but additional signage was recommended for the Scandal Beck site. This is in hand with the ongoing development of the area.

Quality Parish Status

A reminder had been received via CALC that the council's four year Quality approval is due for renewal. Clerk to make necessary arrangements.

Bus timetable alterations

Cumbria County Council has ceased to provide an updating service for local Bus Timetable sites in order to cut costs. New arrangements will be notified shortly.

Highways

Notification has been received of a road closure at Manor House, Back Lane from 8th February 2010 for two weeks to facilitate renewal of water mains.

North West Air Ambulance – Funding request

Resolved that the sum of £100. be donated towards the operational costs of the Pride of Cumbria Air Ambulance

SELRAP – Support request for Skipton/East Lancs Rail Action Partnership

Resolved that a letter of support be sent.

Public Participation

Libby Bateman reported that the Ravenstonedale First Responders team is now operational.

Correspondence received

CALC Circular December/January 2009/2010
CCC – Highways Stewards Schedule 2010
Riverside Group - "Safe as Houses" – Handyperson Service
Eden Rivers Trust – Newsletter
UECP Meeting notes 17th December 2009 (Circulated)
Ravenstonedale Housing Needs Survey Report (also on website)

Date of next meeting: Thursday 11th February 2010

Signed _____ Chairman

Date 11th February 2010