

# North York Moors National Park Authority

29 June 2026

## Item 17, Feedback from lead Members on Committees and Forums

1. The Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee took place on 18 May 2026. A written report from Colin Williamson is attached at **appendix 1**.
2. Patrick James will give a verbal update on the Conservation and Climate Change Forum fire site visit on 23 April and the Joint Conservation and CC and Recreation and Wellbeing Forum on 18 June.
3. Janet Waggott's report from the Recreation and Wellbeing Forum on 7 May 2026 is attached at **appendix 2**.
4. The notes of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group held on 10 June will be placed on the Members' SharePoint.
5. The draft notes of the Local Access Forum meeting held on 2 June are on the Members' SharePoint.
6. The papers and notes from the Development Plan Working Group meeting held on 9 June are on the Members' SharePoint. Malcolm Bowes will give a verbal update.

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# Appendix 1, Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee, May 18 2026

## 2025/26 Internal audit

### Follow up actions of previous Audit.

- In total 19 actions were to be followed up, with 10 having been satisfactorily implemented 11 actions are outstanding, including 2 revised times scales.
- Sales ledger - substantial assurance.
- The review looked at invoices being accurate, complete and raised in a timely manner,
- Outstanding debt is accurately monitored.
- The sales ledger is effectively utilised to support the efficiency of debtor processes.
- Business continuity and disaster recovery - reasonable assurance.
- Robust plans and preparation are in place to ensure recovery of systems and data.

### Contract management, reasonable assurance

Suitable contract management arrangements are in place including the maintenance of a register, some non-compliance were identified with transparency requirements as not all had been published on MyTenders.

### Creditor's reasonable assurance

- Supplies and services are suitably ordered authorised and received with appropriate segregation of duties and paid for in a reasonable time scale.
- Overall, a very good Internal Audit was received.

## External audit

- Nicola Hallas has taken over as Forvis Mazars audit lead from Gavin Barker due to retirement. Also introduced was Rejoice Mapeto, the engagement manager.
- Nicola gave us a run down on how the external Audit was going to take shape this coming summer and autumn.
- If all goes well hope to have completion by end of November 2026.

## Ellen Cross delivered an update from External funding,

### Current projects being delivered and applied for.

- The latest being (£500,000) North York Moors Trust-led green social prescribing initiative, being developed and piloted by the Trust through the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Due to the Trust not being able to apply the Authority has applied on their behalf.

- Another bid focuses on improving the accessibility to the Cinder track, a North Yorkshire Council asset, £130,635 has been applied for.
- Ellen reported on a number of different projects being applied for, some of which were rejected even though substantial amount of work and staff time had been put into the development of the projects.
- The target for external funding is set to increase to £2.5 million by the end of 26/27. This has been surpassed with great work from the external funding team.

### **Annual Governance statement**

- Pete Williams delivered the draft Annual Governance Statement. Members approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for publication with the Draft financial accounts at the end of June.

### **Quarterly Scorecard**

- Saw a further quarterly reduction of social media engagements; video views were also reported to have been decreasing over the last four quarters.
- The Newsletter subscribers has dipped slightly but still above the baseline.
- Good news on active volunteers as the figure has reached the 500 mark but volunteering days has reduced slightly.
- The planning team reported 87.5% of major applications being decided within statutory deadlines with 100% being decided in the last two quarters of 25/26.
- Non-major applications = 87.4% being decided within deadlines.
- Foot fall at visitor centres shows a steady increase. Noted that the Danby Lodge overflow car park still needs attention.

### **Pete Williams delivered the financial Outturn update**

- Members approved the allocation of £126k and interest of £244k.

### **Property update, Pete Williams and Helen Barry**

- Subject to any further delays in planning or utility connections the construction phase is expected to commence on 1 June.

### **New Complaints policy and procedure.**

- The policy brought forward by Richard Smith Authority Solicitor and monitoring officer which he and Keith Wilkinson the Independent Person had worked on together.
- This will come into effect on 1 June 2026.

### **The Health and Safety update**

- Sickness absence, accidents incidents and near misses were reported.

- As well as the fire safety report for the Old Vicarage. Mainly the second floor does not comply to fire safety standards. Fire doors, and combustible material needed moving to comply.
- Fire wardens need training for each floor of workspace.

Pete Williams, then took us through The Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator and outturn report 25/26.

After which the meeting closed.

## Appendix 2 Recreation and Wellbeing feedback 7 May 2025

The full minutes of the meeting will be available on Members' SharePoint. The meeting focused on the following topics:

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### Health and wellbeing (engagement) strategy – annual review

The strategy is structured around five themes: inspiring and communicating, co-creating with communities, connecting people to nature and culture, partnering and collaborating with organisations, and focusing on health inequality hotspots, with each theme supported by specific projects and partnerships.

Members explored the significant collaborations which have emerged within these five themes since the strategy was approved in 2023. These include work with the Outdoor Partnership (Sam Allum), Age UK, Nur Fitness (an Asian ladies fitness group), the RSPB (Nature Prescriptions Calendar), HEY Smile Foundation, Championing National Park for Everyone project (MOSAIC), the development with the NYM Trust of the Natural Health Service concept/pilot and working with healthcare professionals and the work of the Access Unlimited Partnership connecting young people in underserved and diverse communities with nature.

Joel Brookfield detailed the evolving National Parks partnership with Active Travel England, which has shifted the organisation from urban-centric towards a better understanding of rural needs. The work with the National Park Authority contributing to the identification of local cycling and walking access improvements, particularly in Scarborough and Teesside. The relationship with ATE has matured with additional funding providing capacity and delivery around behaviour change to support health and wellbeing.

James Metcalfe presented the outcomes of the Natural Health Service pilot, including its design, evaluation, participant outcomes, and plans for scaling up with new funding, while addressing questions from Members about programme delivery, leadership, and future direction.

The Natural Health Service was developed as a partnership between the Trust, the four North Yorkshire focused Protected Landscapes bodies, and York St John University, aiming to address societal challenges such as loneliness, inactivity, and declining health by standardising and scaling nature-based interventions across the region.

The pilot engaged 70 participants across six groups, with York St John University evaluating statistically significant improvements in mental wellbeing (24%), social connection (17%), physical activity (13%), and a 15% reduction in loneliness, with 100% of participants recommending the programme.

With £500,000 secured from the Combined Authority through the Active Travel Fund for York and North Yorkshire the programme will expand over the next 18–24 months, increasing delivery capacity, targeting both general and specific groups (e.g. MOD personnel, probation services) and building a team to support growth.

While the Trust has driven the initiative to date, the National Parks Authority will be responsible for the funding in this next phase, with both entities collaborating to ensure sustainable delivery, capacity building, and the development of evidence to support further investment and national scaling. This project is a great example of collaborative working drawing in further partners, building the evidence base leading to increased scale and impact.

## **Future Generations engagement**

Jonathan Green and Heather McNiff presented on educational visits and youth engagement, detailing activities with schools, families, young rangers, and youth voice, while discussing challenges related to funding, transport, and maintaining equitable access.

The Outdoor Learning team engages approximately 3,700 children annually, primarily from areas of high deprivation, through curriculum-linked activities at multiple National Park sites.

Explorer Volunteers (ages 4–11) and Young Rangers (ages 11–17) participate in conservation and nature connection activities, with evaluations showing improvements in self-confidence, environmental responsibility, and family relationships.

The Youth Voice group (ages 18–30) contributes to management planning, health and wellbeing strategy, and national advocacy, organising conferences and collaborating with peers from other national parks, with efforts underway to recruit new members and expand influence.

The team faces significant challenges due to previous reductions in core funding, increasing need to generate project funding, and rising transport costs for schools, prompting member discussions about sustainable funding models, targeted support for deprived communities, and the need for member advocacy in this area.

Members discussed the need for clear information on funding requirements, the impact of project-based versus core funding, and the importance of Member advocacy to ensure critical programmes (e.g. Young Rangers) are sustained despite financial pressures. The Chair emphasised the distinction between Member oversight and officer responsibilities, encouraging Members to focus on strategic priorities and resource allocation while officers manage operational delivery and funding applications.

An additional Recreational and wellbeing Forum was held on 11 June 2026 to continue the scrutiny and debate.

Members focused on the following:

- How can we make the greatest difference?
- What is it that's valuable for us to do?
- Are we focussing our energies in the right way/direction?
- What other opportunities are there for creating active citizens for the future?
- Are there any other stakeholders we should be engaging with in this space?

It was recommended from the meetings of the Recreation and Wellbeing Forum that consideration be given to allocate some additional resources from reserves to create additional capacity for funding bids, capacity to better engage teenagers and future generations and ensure the funding for Young Rangers and other engagement programmes are considered in light of the impact of previous decisions around reductions in funding taken several years ago. The themes of improving health outcomes for young people, engaging them with our special qualities, restoring nature and strengthening communities are complimentary to each other.

This recommendation is to be fed into the additional 2026/27 budget planning work which officers are currently undertaking as part of a report for consideration by Members at the Authority meeting in June.