

# District Councillor's Report

## Penyghent Ward

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October 2021

Councillor Robert Ogden



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# Correspondence



## Yorkshire Dales National Parks Authority

I have written to the Yorkshire Dales National Parks Authority (YDNPA) to highlight a number of issues that have been brought to me by residents of Penyghent Ward. The YDNPA is an important and influential organisation in our area, and has a significant role in planning and shaping the future of our area. I intend to maintain regular communication with the YDNPA, in order to deliver continual results for our area from a key partner organisation.

**I am firmly of the belief that the Yorkshire Dales needs active problem solving rather than idealistic corporate bluster. We are a proud and hard-working rural community, and we deserve real solutions.**

Below are important highlights from my letter to the YDNPA about a number of issues affecting Penyghent Ward:

1. Significant footpath erosion near Langcliffe locks
2. Stainforth Foss litter and car park strategy
3. Horton-in-Ribblesdale 3 peaks challenges

### **Significant footpath erosion near Langcliffe locks**

I recently met with a Giggleswick resident who took me to see a section of footpath adjacent to the River Ribble – on the west side of the river where the footbridge crosses at Langcliffe locks. The state of repair of this footpath is poor, with significant sections washed out, leaving large craters and a very uneven footing. Furthermore, the swing gate (that the parks installed) which leads into the field is

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sat over large uneven stones that are rather dangerous, and the lack of reinforcement around the gate has led to increasing footpath erosion when you step up into the field. It would be reassuring if a member of the team could visit the site and assess what needs to be done to repair the path and restore it to its previous safe and accessible state. This is a heavily used route in the area and would significantly benefit accessibility.

### **Stainforth Foss litter strategy**

I have met with Stainforth Parish Council and litter picking volunteers to discuss ongoing issues with increased footfall at Stainforth Foss, and the huge volume of litter associated with visitors to the site. Stainforth Foss is a key natural asset to the Yorkshire Dales and is iconic of the natural beauty we have in our area. This is a well-known beauty spot, and people come from far and wide to visit, which has a positive and welcome boost to the local economy.

However, the problem with litter has grown much worse since the summer of 2020, and it is all too common to see the place blanketed with waste. The burden of filling dozens and dozens of bin bags on a regular basis is one currently carried by a handful of local volunteers. I have been to assist with the clear up and ended up clearing several piles of human excrement and associated tissues. This is a grotesquely unfair situation, and not sustainable. It also highlights to me a problem of disconnect between Stainforth Foss and the YDNP facilities at the carpark, a 5-minute walk away.

One potential solution for this is to seriously look in to improving signage around the site. Signs about the park's educational campaign to take litter home can be found at the car park toilets, but are not clear at the foss itself. I know the landowner, and I am sure that they would be amenable to facilitating such a project in conjunction with the YDNP. Regarding litter, I am of the view that bins work. Stainforth Parish Council has installed a litter bin just outside the YDNP's Stainforth Car Park, and unsurprisingly this has resulted in a beautifully clean and tidy focal point for visitors to the village. People are more reluctant to litter tidy and well-provisioned places – success breeds success. The YDNP has benefitted from

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the initiatives of others, but unfortunately seems unwilling to review and reconfigure its current litter strategy.

Furthermore, I have the following questions to pose in relation to Stainforth Foss:

- How successful does the YDNPA consider its litter strategy to be, considering the problems faced across the Yorkshire Dales, particularly relating to the issues I have highlighted at Stainforth Foss?
- What evidence does the YDNPA have to reach this conclusion on the effectiveness of the 'no more rubbish excuses' take-it-home strategy?
- How does this strategy, and the evidence base for its effectiveness, compare to the litter management strategies used by other national parks and local authorities in the UK (and wider)?
- Does the YDNPA plan to engage with local communities and local government representatives to create bespoke solutions for their areas?
- What resources from local government might be necessary to ensure a sustainable future for any solution, and how can I be of assistance in that regard?

### **Horton-in-Ribblesdale 3 peaks challenges**

The final issue I would like to raise relates to the negative impacts of the 3 peaks challenges on the village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale. This is an issue raised at every Parish Council meeting I have attended, and a source of tension in the community. Everyone recognises the positive economic impact of tourism, and it is the lifeblood of communities like ours. However, anti-social behaviour is on the rise, and significantly impacting the lives of residents. The YDNP, as a promoter of tourism and this challenge, should feel obligated to help residents more than burying the parish council's 3-peaks code of conduct in the YDNP's 3 peaks website page: <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/things-to-do/get-outdoors/yorkshire-three-peaks/> Better communication between challenge organisers, the YDNP, all three tiers of local government, and the community is necessary. I sincerely believe the YDNP is key to the delivery of a positive change. I suggest early-morning visits from rangers to monitor walker's adherence to the 3 peaks code of conduct might be a good start.

## North Yorkshire County Council



I received a reply from North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) regarding my letter last month requesting an update on the possibility of a residential parking scheme in Horton-in-Ribblesdale. I have seen for myself how much of an issue parking is in the village due to a significant surge in tourist traffic. I pointed out the perceived unfairness that rural areas such as ours do not benefit from the same infrastructure investment that Northallerton and Harrogate receive, despite sending millions of pounds of our council tax to that authority. I regret to inform you that NYCC's reply was as dismissive as I feared it would be:

*"Good morning, thank you for your email dated 12 September regarding resident parking issues in Horton-in-Ribblesdale.*

*Currently the County council do not have funds for resident parking schemes (RPS) so any costs incurred for Officer time to investigate, public consultation, advertising, legal, signing, lining and administration must be fully met by the residents.*

*The County Council do have a resident Parking Scheme Policy but for it to operate effectively there are a number of operational and regulatory conditions which must be satisfied. A majority, at least 80% of residents must be in favour of the principle of a parking scheme. Further information is available on the NYCC website.*

*Please note the cost would be circa £5k-£10k so is likely cost prohibitive and neither does it guarantee a parking space in front of your property it would be difficult to get the 'buy in' from other residents.*

*I have attached the Resident Parking Policy for reference, **however the County Council would not support a RPS in Horton-in-Ribblesdale as there would an issue of managing the displaced parking which potentially could lead to a wider demand from a number of the other towns and villages that struggle with parking issues as a consequence of tourism.**"*

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I think the last paragraph, highlighted in ***bold***, really adds insult to injury. NYCC recognizes that there is a significant demand across the whole county for solutions to the parking issues associated with tourism. However, they have decided to ***actively ignore*** these demands because it might create too much hassle if a council begins to do its job properly and listen to taxpayers!

I am disappointed but not surprised that NYCC are happy to take our money but not to spend it on our priorities. The impression this gives is of a council far away in the Northallerton bubble caring little for rural residents in the corner of our county. Instead of investing in our communities to make them sustainable for future generations, they have closed our schools and are now selling off assets at Horton Primary School – perhaps meaning that NYCC see Horton-in-Ribblesdale, and Penyghent Ward more generally, as a dying backwater devoid of young families. This is very frustrating.

**I don't imagine this will improve once Craven District Council, and my role, is abolished.**

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# Craven District Council Press Releases

For further media information contact Craven District Council – Nick Lavigueur 01756 706315



**16<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

## **Craven District Council agrees ambitious tree planting plan**

Councillors have agreed to push forward with proposals to massively boost the number of trees in the Craven district.

Members of the Policy Committee unanimously agreed to consult on a plan to work with partners and land owners to significantly boost woodland coverage by some 9,000 hectares.

The district has below average tree canopy cover and the council is seeking to significantly improve this by facilitating the planting of almost 18 million trees by 2050.

The plan will help mitigate flooding issues while also capturing carbon and creating new habitats to benefit both residents and wildlife.

Lead Member for the Environment, Councillor Carl Lis: said: “It’s a very ambitious project but we’re committed to boosting woodland coverage to benefit all in the years to come.

“We have already planted 7,000 trees in Aireville Park but we’re showing our intent as we move forward and become part of the new unitary authority.”

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**16<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

## **Council unanimously supports plan to welcome Afghans**

Councillors on Craven District Council's Policy Committee have unanimously agreed to play their part in helping refugees fleeing Afghanistan.

The committee voted on Tuesday, September 14, to accept a minimum of 15 Afghans who have been brought to this country under the Government's Afghan Resettlement and Assistance Policy Scheme (ARAP).

About 5,000 Afghans, many of which worked as interpreters for the British forces, are being welcomed to the UK over the next year in recognition of their bravery and support with a total of 20,000 expected over the next five years.

Those arriving in the UK under the resettlement scheme have been assessed as being 'under serious threat to life' and unlikely to ever return to their home country. North Yorkshire is expected to become home to 100 Afghan refugees through the resettlement scheme by the end of September.

Committee members welcomed the scheme and paid tribute to Craven Refugee Support Network and a Skipton landlord who has offered a six bed property which is expected to take the majority of Craven's allocation.

Leader of the council, Cllr Richard Foster, commented: "Many of these refugees have helped the British troops who have been there for the past 20 years, so it would be churlish not to take part in this scheme.

"Some of these families are sizeable and require large properties so we're grateful that the six-bed house has been offered.

"This same property was offered to us when we rehomed Syrian refugees as part of a previous resettlement scheme and it was really useful.

"Many will be coming from very traumatic circumstances and we will do all we can, working with local organisations to welcome them."

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**23rd September 2021**

## **Council appoints charity to inspire Craven residents to cut their carbon footprint**

Craven District Council's Zero Carbon Craven project has been boosted by the appointment of an environmental charity with a strong track record of encouraging residents to cut their carbon footprint.

London based Hubbub, a charity that inspires ways of living that are good for the environment, is working alongside council officers to create a campaign to encourage residents to think about the steps they can take to reduce carbon emissions in their homes and help tackle climate change.

The £1.2m Zero Carbon Craven project – half of which is being funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – will help the Council achieve its target of reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2030. The ERDF funding is being used by the Council to retrofit low carbon technologies such as solar panels and insulation to their buildings and the campaign will build on this work to inspire Craven residents to do the same.

Hubbub, which won Charity of the Year at the Charity Time Awards 2020, was selected for the project after it achieved strong results with a BT Smarter Living Challenge campaign which encouraged residents to try out energy saving ideas as well as a successful sustainable behaviour campaign with Ikea.

Lead Member for the Environment, Cllr Carl Lis, said: "About 40% of the UK's carbon emissions come from households and with many people spending more time at home due to the pandemic, looking at ways to reduce carbon emissions within the home is more important than ever and there is the added advantage that this often means saving money on bills in the process. By the end of the campaign we are hoping there should also be a lasting legacy for community groups to pick up and promote within their own areas."

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Gavin Ellis, Director and Co-Founder of Hubbub, commented: “We’re excited to be working with Craven District Council to show local households and communities the simple steps they can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Our experience is that most people in the UK want to do something about climate change but are often unsure where to start. Through this project we’ll break it down into simple steps that any household can follow, regardless of income or circumstance.”

## **7<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

### **Date set by Craven District Council to make CCTV in taxis mandatory**

Councillors have now set a deadline by which all taxi and private hire drivers in the district must have installed CCTV inside their vehicles.

The policy was first agreed in 2018 but its official implementation has been delayed following consultation with the licensed trade and the effect of the coronavirus pandemic.

All new vehicles have already been required to meet this requirement since January 2021.

The Council’s Licensing Committee last night determined to mandate taxi cameras in all vehicles from January 1, 2022.

This follows Department for Transport advice that CCTV increases public safety.

Cllr Simon Myers, chairman of the Licensing Committee, commented: “Craven is the first council in North Yorkshire to make cameras inside taxis mandatory.

“Taxi cameras should provide an additional deterrence to prevent risks to both passengers and drivers, and they can also add investigative value when

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the Council or the police are required to look into incidents or complaints against drivers or passengers.

“The use of taxi cameras will provide a safer environment for the benefit of drivers and the public.”

The costs of installation are to be paid by the vehicle owner and are estimated to be between £450 - £630.

It was agreed that a hardship scheme would be launched to assist drivers who cannot afford to purchase them immediately and allow them to apply to delay installation.

Councillors also agreed to amend its Taxi Policy to meet the new Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards where it currently doesn't.

The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy adopted in 2018 already met the majority of the recommendations but there are now new guidelines that increase the amount of time that must pass following certain convictions before a driver can be licensed by the Authority.

The new standards will also see new conditions for private hire operators, such as a requirement for operators to carry out checks and keep records on booking and dispatch staff.

Councillors also agreed to adopt the use of the national register of taxi and private hire vehicle driver licence refusals and revocations. Currently, if drivers do not disclose information about a previous revocation or refusal to grant a licence, there is often no way for the Council to know otherwise. This means that vital intelligence about an applicant's past behaviour can be missed and an individual may be able to be licensed in another area despite having a previous licence revoked or an application refused. The register is developed and hosted by the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN).

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# CLr Robert Ogden

## Penyghent Ward



If you have any queries, or would like to report an issue, please contact me using my email address:

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