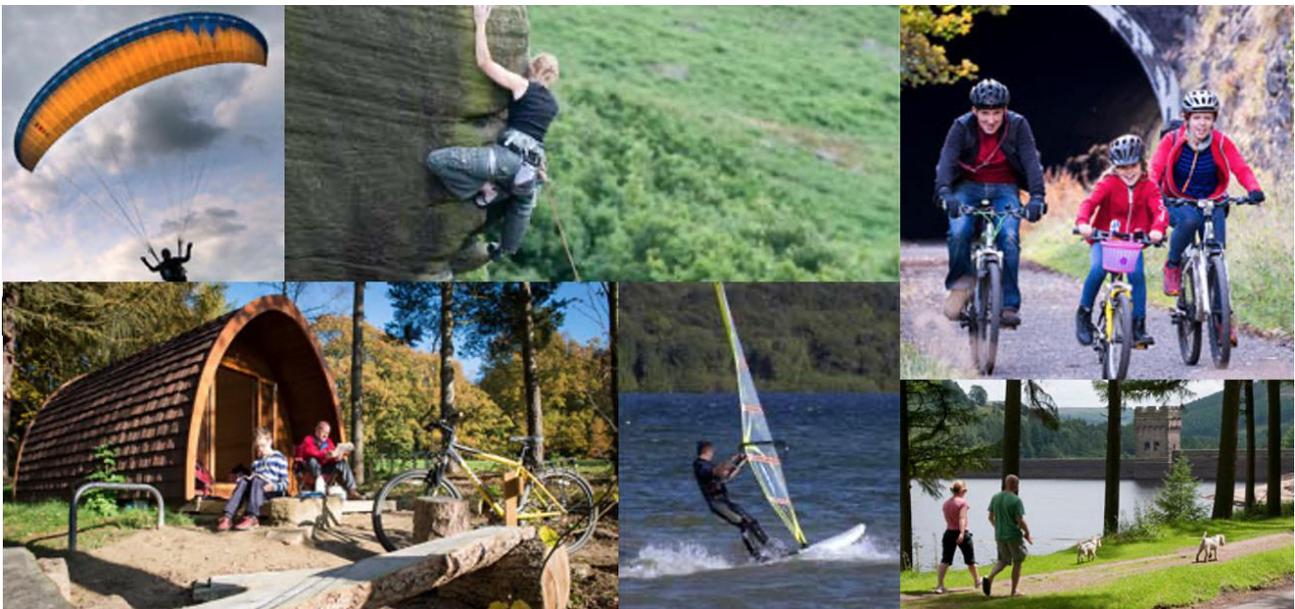


Sustainable Visitor Management in the Peak District National Park

Learning from the past, developing a sustainable future

Discussion Workshop Report



09:00 – 12:30,
Thursday 22 October 2020

Facilitated by Pete Spriggs
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Independent Facilitation

Workshop objectives

By the end of the workshop we will have:

1. Reflected on the historic approaches to visitor management within the Peak District National Park – what’s worked, what hasn’t, what lessons can we learn?
2. Developed our vision for delivering sustainable visitor management in the 2020s.
3. Discussed what success might look like in the context of our vision.
4. Understood the opportunities to contribute further to the emerging thinking following the workshop.

Agenda

The final agenda was as follows:

Time	Session
09:00	Welcome & introductions
	Visitor Management in a nutshell
	What have we learnt?
	Sharing our thinking
	Forming our vision
	What next?
12:30	Close

Attendees

The workshop was attended by:

Name	Organisation
Adrian Barraclough	PDNPA
Martin Beer	Peak Parks Parishes Forum
James Beresford	PDNPA Member
Andy Farmer	PDNPA
Will Kemp	Chatsworth
Alastair Harvey	Yorkshire Water
Andrew McCloy	PDNPA
Tim Nicholson	PDNPA
Katie Perselli	United Utilities
Mike Rhodes	PDNPA
John Scott	PDNPA
Emma Stone	PDNPA
Jon Stewart	National Trust
Brian Taylor	PDNPA
John Thompson	Local Access Forum
Sarah Wilks	PDNPA

Welcome

Pete welcomed everyone to the workshop and ran through the objectives and agenda.

By way of introduction participants shared an issue that they felt needed to be addressed in relation to visitor management in the Peak District National Park. These were noted up on a shared screen as follows:

- Traffic management – congestion.
- Messaging – making sure those arriving by car have knowledge about where they can park & not!
- Dispersal – how we give people information on ways to enjoy new areas of the park.
- Engagement – enabling visitors to enjoy the National Park.
- Car parking and its impact on the local community.
- National Park needs to be a welcoming place – create understanding and harmony with visitors and the local community.
- How we can communicate better with visitors and residents. Getting messages over in advance of their visit.
- What are we after? More visitors to the park? We need to be honest about this. Need to understand the consequences.
- People need to know where they can go.
- An understanding about rights and responsibilities.
- Creating an integrated travel experience – how can we join up journeys in a more sustainable way.
- Defining what a 21 Century National Park looks like and is – low carbon, sustainable, inclusive.
- All of the above!
- Be realistic about what we can achieve and what we need to do to manage visitors to the National Park.
- Level of ambition – you have to pitch your vision high if you are to achieve substantial change.
- Need for infrastructure change.
- Overall approach – need to take a strategic approach to look in and around the NP. Working with others is key.
- Common vision and agreement between partners on way forward to work together to deliver.
- The effect of visitors on villages and residents.

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Why people visit

15 UK National Parks ..AND

National Trust; Water company; Forestry commission sites etc etc

10% of the country, 104m visitors/year worth £6.9bn

The **best places** to enjoy the British countryside – host 1/3 of UK's international wildlife sites; 20% of England's scheduled ancient monuments

Full of life – category V IUCN designation – living and working landscapes

Truly inspirational – inspired poets, painters, musicians and inspiring the next generation

They are free - not gated reserves - with an unmatched network of rights of way

A **public asset**, in **private ownership**

Map labels: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Cairngorms, Northumberland, North York Moors, Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Snowdonia, Peak District, Brecon Beacons, Broads, Pembrokeshire Coast, Exmoor, Dartmoor, New Forest, South Downs.

Visitor Management in a Nutshell

Adrian Barraclough then gave a short presentation reflecting on the historic and current problems of visitor management within the PDNP and some of the area management solutions undertaken. The slides presented were as follows:

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Why people visit

Feel connected, feel great



Live it, breathe it, touch it, be part of it.

The most outstanding visitor experiences in our most exceptional landscapes

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK ENJOY



PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Summer 2020

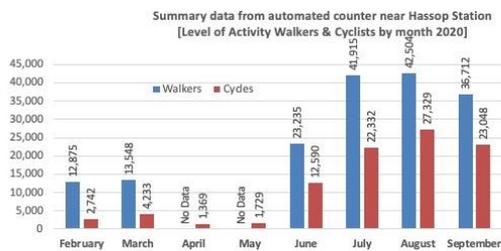


PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Drivers influencing future visitor numbers

Drivers influencing future visitor numbers

- Landscape review
- Green recovery
- Asset Management plans & development
- Targeted plans e.g. Diverse Audience
- Legislation – planning reform
- Confidence – global travel / 'staycation'

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Evidence led / Data insights



STEAM / Surveys / Research / Tracking

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK #PeakDistrictProud

- Most respondents came by car or van – 90%
- Most have parked in car parks – 70%
- Only 11% did not know they were in the National Park
- 25% had not been to the PDNP before

Top issues:

- BBQs
- Litter
- Parking
- Dogs on leads



PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Millers Dale



PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK Recreational Hubs and Gateway sites

What should we focus on?

Where should we target our collective energies?



What have we learnt?

The purpose of this session was to reflect on the historic approaches to visitor management within the Peak District National Park – what had worked, what hadn't, what lessons could be learnt?

Working in two discussion groups the content generated was as follows:

Group 1

In relation to visitor management within the PDNP:

What's worked well?

- Area management approach in Upper Derwent – collective will, with partners and community, working together, sharing funds, closing roads, shuttle bus – shared expertise of partners – NT, FC, DCC, Parish Council, NPA. Carry out surveys, asking what community thinks. Similar in Goyt Valley – willingness to listen and adjust, pool resources for greater good of area. Also Stanage and Roaches.
- Joint Advisory Group of senior people – took a different approach.
- Good pioneering partnership work, so why not sustained? Resources? Not enough people using buses?
- Limited budgets, bus co. could not operate at that level.
- Eastern Moors/Sheff Moors partnership – tried to integrate NP purposes (cons/rec), stakeholder engagement, for example leading to improved bridleways.
- Miles without stiles.
- YHA – help to get disadvantaged communities into NPs.
- Diversity of audiences increased in last 5 years but particularly 2020 – MOSAIC, word of mouth?
- Ranger services have worked well, with volunteer support – collective rangering with NPA/NT, Water Companies.
- PDNP is dealing with a unique situation – v close to urban areas, very accessible and diverse.

What hasn't worked so well?

- Lack of joined up thinking - e.g. yellow lines going in as a "stick" but without the carrot of wider management.
- Use of urban clearways not always understood – led to parking problems then need for yellow lines.
- How much time and focus can we give to these initiatives?
- Some proposals not integrated into wider visitor management (e.g. Fairholmes visitor centre application).
- Integrated transport – all the early initiatives started with this, but budget cuts impacted on this.

What lessons can we learn that we need to take into our thinking during the 2020s?

- Need for quick action in 2020 – yellow lines introduced in hot spots.
- Information – TICs on "borrowed time", Need to be smarter about how we get across information, through social media in particular, need to be smarter at it, work with Google etc.

Related comments on the 'chat'

"400,000 people through the doors of the VCs each year may disagree with the comments about their relevance!"

"But what about the visitors of tomorrow? My 13-year-old daughter accesses almost all the info she needs digitally and (if she is nudged) in advance of her visit. It seems that physical visitor centres may not be as relevant for her generation."

"Targeted messages for different groups - both methods are needed we need to develop our understanding of different visitor needs at the different access points."

"I agree that we must move with more agility to increase our relevance but there is an important role for VCs now. We need to plan for a transition to digital. The numbers benefitting are comparable to annual visitor numbers on the trails."

- Need to be better at working with local communities – espec larger communities, local businesses. Better exchange of information, work together, with communities taking on some responsibility.
- Need to work on diversity – we do not reflect that diversity in our organisations
- What are the right channels to communicate through? Especially with new audiences – how can we channel the specific cultural interest – how can we work with communities to tackle their perception of this as a threat? Visitors may be blamed unfairly for problems, espec. some BAME/ethnic groups
- How do we measure what is successful? (Upper Derwent in 1990s?)
- Look at what has been done elsewhere, can we learn anything?

Group 2

In relation to visitor management within the PDNP:

What's worked well?

- Increased staycation impact of Brexit will create less GDP therefore stay at home and holiday in UK.
- Could be good for estates like Chatsworth.
- Influx of new type of visitor.
- New audiences are great to see (young and BAME). This brings a challenge as less experienced in outdoors.
- Some innovation shown with messages but need to go further.
- Sensitive yellow lines have worked well.
- Good job in packaging access opportunities. RoW.
- Infrastructure such as Monsal trail, car parking, Goyt Valley all successful packages of infrastructure.
- Some of the road closures have worked (with caveats).
- Onsite engagement successful. Discussions with people and partners good.
- Signposting and interpretation on ground and online. But some also getting old.

- Joined up approaches have been good. Web based parking alerts worked well. Must be difficult behind the scenes.
- Diversity of visitors is good. Easy to find negatives but this is also a good thing. People have had a good time in the NP.
- Joined up thinking needs to move forward. We have joint objectives. We've done it before and can happen again.
- Hope Valley Explorer was a positive. Shame it couldn't happen this year.
- Upper Derwent schemes generally been good, but under strain this year.
- Monsal Trail good.
- Its highlighted well what the gaps are.
- We've been agile (e.g. working on yellow lining and signage).
- Helps understand what the impacts are to go forward.

What hasn't worked so well?

- Impacts could impact negatively on NP brand.
- Need to get better understanding. Need for communication.
- Needs to happen before people arrive to influence.
- Infrastructure pressure where investment lacking.
- Chatsworth Estate operates across YD and PD. Capacity and constraints issues. Local highway network gets clogged. Chatsworth contributes but it's a business and have to make money. Businesses don't come for free. Now struggling through COVID.
- Normal situation shows real constraint on highway network.
- Villages becoming very insular and unwelcoming to visitors. Discouraging people from staying.
- Has an impact on local businesses, e.g. pubs.
- Haven't seriously been able to manage visitors. Made some inroads but not good enough.
- Don't have a nailed down vision despite individual projects.
- Pandemic has really highlighted this.
- Resources are strained.
- We have neglected this area of work for several years.
- Infrastructure really old and designed for the 80's.
- Clearways don't work. Not understood. Relative success of yellow lines obvious.
- On peak days local highway network is clogged. Personal welcome approach at kiosks. This slows down the rate of influx. Bolton Abbey same problem but looking at possibility of doing away with kiosks and just having a ticket machine. Could speed up traffic 4-5 times.
- Traffic becomes a big detractor. Machines can be ugly. Some conflict. But what is more important.
- Lack of understanding of different powers across various bodies.
- Need to keep engaging with highways authorities. What can different organisations do?
- People want a lot more rangers on the ground. We only have 10.
- Political messaging.

What lessons can we learn that we need to take into our thinking during the 2020s?

Area Management

- Visitor management is a shared concern. Go back to an area management approach.
- Joint responsibility and needs a joined-up approach.
- Need to consider an area management approach again. Sharing costs and income. Based on public goods. A strategic approach to location planning.
- Need carrots and sticks. Have to stop some things, e.g. limits and capacity in some areas to protect others.

Sustainable Transport

- Nodal points or hubs outside the NP's should be used better. Accessible by public transport.
- Dispersal from these points.
- This can benefit fringe areas also.
- P&R could be a threat to attractions. Deprive customers? Concern by Chatsworth
- Could be a matter of degree. Still opportunities to balance conflicts with ticket pricing/discounts etc.
- Many millions more people using Bakewell and wider areas.
- P&R being considered at Langsett. Park and get on your bike/horse etc.
- Buses difficult at the moment but interest in HVE model if we can bring it back.
- Always a difficult balance of NP purposes. But have to have a go. Tweaks to current approaches and thinking outside of the box.
- Leaving car at home still not a realistic prospect. But have to encourage better approaches. Even E cars can clog up the highways.

Community involvement

- Need to overcome negativity as this can impact on local economy
- Parishes need to work together also as voluntary groups, e.g. HVCA

Forming our vision

This session provided an opportunity to start to develop a vision for sustainable visitor management in the 2020s.

Working again in two small groups, each discussed the following aspects of visitor management:

1. **Area Management, Recreation Hubs & Gateway Sites**
2. **Visitor Dispersal & Visitor Messaging**

Group started by articulating their vision for their aspects of visitor management over the coming decade. What would be the **same** as 2020, what would be **different** to 2020?

For each aspect the group were asked to consider both the: **communication/behavioural change**; and **infrastructure** perspectives.

The groups then moved on to discuss what they considered to be the **best approach** to delivering the vision described.

The content generated was as follows:

Group 1

Aspects of visitor management discussed: **Area Management; Recreation Hubs & Gateway Sites.**

For these aspects of visitor management, what would be our vision for the coming decade?

What would be the **same** as 2020?

- Who defined the hubs and gateways? NPA drew up a list, part of a network, with main hubs, supported by smaller car parks with fewer or no facilities.
- Rec Hubs are an opportunity to switch mode of transport, from car to other.
- Are the hubs we have in the right place? Do we need more/less? Take focus off some e.g. Fairholmes.

What would be **different** to 2020?

- Look at other measures - e.g. congestion charging to reduce parking in Upper Derwent and use funds to subsidise bus services?
- Hubs need to have a sustainable transport focus.
- Work with other LPAs around the national park - look for hubs at sites on the edge, possibly outside the NP (e.g. Rowsley), but even more so the towns of Matlock, Buxton, Ashbourne, Macclesfield, etc. This will help these places develop and support their local businesses.
- How can we show the benefits of using the Hub sites, espec if they are outside the NP? Otherwise, they will continue to go to the places they are familiar with. Need to make this more attractive/ less attractive with stick and carrot. E.g. road closures, charging, plus shuttle buses etc.
- Integrated approach is the key, not just ad hoc decisions and proposals.
- What is the wisdom of a map showing locations? Will they simply attract people to locations where we need more management?
- Need to engage with visitors, rather than a top down approach – do not impose solutions...BUT how do we take a strategic approach?
- How do we meet the needs of visitors - do we try to do this? Sandford principle?
- Electric cars becoming more popular – not likely to be a reduction in car numbers. Buses would need to be clean, efficient, cheap (Covid safe?). Car increase likely to be quicker?

What do you consider to be the **best approach** to delivering the vision described?

- Demand responsive buses, with a greater visitor focus – but how will this change?
- Need to make this a focus of Government policy, accessing the countryside through public transport, need more rural focus.
- Work with other LPAs around the national park - look for hubs at sites on the edge, possibly outside the NP (e.g. Rowsley), but even more so the towns of Matlock, Buxton, Ashbourne, Macclesfield, Hayfield, etc. This will help these places develop and support their local businesses. Try to get a more rural focus from them, visitor economy and sustainable travel.
- Work with the Derbyshire LEP and Highway authorities (e.g. DCC).
- Glover review – promote sustainable transport, working with LDNPA, transport pilots.

Group 2

Aspects of visitor management discussed: **Visitor dispersal & visitor messaging**

For these aspects of visitor management, what would be our vision for the coming decade?

What would be the **same** as 2020?

- Peak District Proud started well as a pilot. Unified approach.
- Key messages about not killing the things we love. Core message.
- Some traditional approaches likely to continue for a while, but could be changing mindset into new approaches. Personal contact good but causes issues on traffic
- Dispersal principle (but from where to where).
- NP remains a welcoming place.

What would be **different** to 2020?

- More use of temporary car parking.
- Greater agility needed. Pricing, technology, camera recognition.
- Dispersal strategy needs a huge amount of work.
- Supported by ambitious plan of action.
- Including a plan for smaller infrastructure projects.
- Peak District proud needs to be developed further.
- Push on with visitor giving.
- Visitor management needs to have a raised profile.
- A stronger dispersal strategy. Encouraging people going to other areas.
- Can social media be used to emphasise/promote quieter areas?
- Promote different areas for different activities.
- Better info about how people leave the carparks and explore the NP. Simple experiences.
- Stronger dispersal and connection strategy. How we support this.
- Need to connect better with HA plans, RoW plans to make this happen.
- Do we need a complete refresh? Plenty of good things to build on.
- Need a closer fit between vis management and vis enjoyment.

What do you consider to be the **best approach** to delivering the vision described?

- Subtle management best so people don't feel managed.
- Incentives to broaden the times of visit. Not all on busy days.
- Green transport vision.
- Agility.
- Technology.
- Recognising that better visitor management is crucial to recovery in order to win hearts and minds.
- Lead role that can be shared.
- Moving out of the ordinary.
- Joined up planning could overlay with the Transport Plan in the Hope Valley.
- A specific piece of infrastructure could be the White Peak Loop.
- Developing Peak District Proud.
- Area example around Langsett/Midhope/Underbank. Could ease pressures on the NP. Little Don Plan and future plans.
- Also Redmires as part of Sheffield Lakeland Partnership. AMP period to 2025.
- Chatsworth keen on a whole estate plan approach. Could change some of the thinking of the estate. Move to bigger picture thinking. Could be a good way of NP influencing these issues.
- Better evidence needed to support this work.
- Can we use CIL and planning gain?
- More scope for pilot areas, e.g. Roaches/Tittesworth. Innovative approach needed. Linked to road pricing and use bus passes. Link to parking charges. Infrastructure in place to develop. Could more easily get buy in.
- Macclesfield also under pressure.
- Future NPMP could be a great vehicle to assist the future planning.

Forming our vision – plenary discussion

The following points were made in the plenary that followed the vision breakout group discussions:

- NPA needs to give thought to spatial distribution from planning – need to be prepared to make things happen, where there is a suitable site – development need so be permissible where appropriate – Andrew McCloy.

- What is a recreation hub and what is a gateway hub – need to clarify...sustainable transport etc. Clarify re: nodes etc. for definitions. – Jon Stewart
- Concerned with terminology of hub – attracts visits and contradicts dispersal – is this what we want, how do we market these? – Alastair Harvey
- What about dispersal? We have hubs where there are facilities so that people travel to hubs. They have a role alongside some dispersal, but some protection of wilder areas. – John Scott
- Hubs help to prioritise investment, but many hubs are already at capacity, may become more pressurised. – Alastair Harvey
- Come back to whether we enhance existing hubs or more hubs, or more broadly to the outside of NP. – John Scott
- Hubs need to be of sufficient capacity. – Martin Beer
- Brian Taylor explained the different tiers of Recreation Hubs – they are the starting point of messaging, also for other infrastructure – alternatives are needed.
- Jon Stewart supported the role of hubs – dispersal by other means at the hub, by bike or foot – need to keep quiet areas of the NP. Hubs are broadly in the right place. There was also consideration of the satellite towns. Look for other hub options – Snowdonia, satellite activities outside the NP for adrenaline junkies – same could work here e.g. mountain bikes
- Will Kemp – found the discussion useful. There is the possibility of P&R sites, but at Chatsworth, income is based on income from car parks. This forces them to address the congestion at Chatsworth – partially due to kiosk attendants which could speed up rate of entry into Chatsworth car parks. There is scope for a Chatsworth wide estate plan. Although there would be resistance to any impact on the bottom line of the Estate a whole estate plan would help. Would need NPA to force Chatsworth to think about issues.
- Dispersal good, but with dynamic connectivity – relationship between gateway hub and node is important. – Adrian Barraclough.

Next steps

Brian shared the following 'next steps' which would take place after the workshop

- The thinking and discussion content needs to be shared with the other partners, who were unable to attend.
- There needs to be greater clarity around the definitions used for hubs, nodes, gateways etc.
- During the review of the Local Plan over the Autumn consultation will look at the issue of visitor management. Issues and options will emerge next year. There are also connections which needs to be made with the Transport Plan which is currently being worked on and which is close almost to submission.

John Scott then shared the following final reflections:

The National Park is open and should be welcoming to all...not elitist. There is a need to promote responsible visiting and understand the consequences of attracting more people. It's important we are honest with communities about how we manage impacts. Sustainable travel is key, through partnership. The Upper Derwent Valley worked well because of common goals and an Area

Management approach would bring this focus. Highways Authorities and Transport Authorities are critical to this with DCC having a renewed interest. A broader visitor management approach across the wider PD and hinterland will need close partnerships with the appropriate councils *and* communities.

In relation to the wider Govt. agenda there needs to be more recognition of the needs of rural areas and rural transport.

Everyone was thanked for their input throughout the morning. The workshop finished at 12:25.