

ARC News Service reports on the meetings of the **Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's (YDNPA)** planning committee February to December 2013.

Towns and villages are in alphabetical order.

Annual performance statistics - In May North Yorkshire County Councillor John Blackie asked what was being done to improve the rate in which planning decisions were made, especially for those cases which could not be resolved within eight weeks.

According to the annual performance statistics provided by the planning department 258 out of 319 applications had been resolved within eight weeks in the past year. The average time for the other 61 applications to be determined had been 31 weeks. "Thirty-one weeks, for some of these applications, is unacceptable," Cllr Blackie said.

He also pointed out that eight to ten years ago the planning department dealt with 36 per cent more applications each year with very few extra staff. "With a 36 per cent reduction in the work load we seem to be taking a long time to deal with some of the straight forward applications and those that go beyond the eight week target can sometimes go into the dark abyss." He described how some people had phoned him either early in the morning or late at night to ask what had happened to their applications.

He added: "I think occasionally applications are simply put to one side because of other pressing work. If you do publish annual statistics then you need to look at the performance and see if you can improve it."

Richard Graham, head of development management, said it was not as straight forward as it looked. There were a variety of reasons why some applications were not dealt with within eight weeks such as the need to provide good customer service, the drawing up of section 106 agreements, or even because an applicant had disengaged from the process. Many applications had been dealt with within nine weeks and just a handful had taken much longer. He added that ten years ago the government did not expect planning applications to be dealt with within eight weeks.

Cllr Blackie said: "I don't want this to be taken as an attack on officers. It is desire to actually improve (the service)." He also asked if officers needed to spend so much time on agreeing conditions on planning applications.

The Authority's member champion for development management, Chris Armitage, agreed with Cllr Blackie that such questions should be asked and said that they had been comparing the performance of the YDNPA with other National Parks. "We are on a par with other national parks in efficiency but there is still more to do," he said.

He added that there was a small working group which was looking at what happened to applications that had not been resolved within 13 weeks. The working group did ask: "Did they just go in a drawer and 'we'll get back to them when we can'?" The planning department did, he said, regularly review cases that were coming up to the eight week deadline.

Local List of Validation Requirements – In October Cllr Blackie wanted committee members to have time to read the full revised version of the Local List of Validation

Requirements before it was published, and so he asked that a decision on it should be deferred until the November meeting. It was pointed out, however, that the current list would expire by November 1. The new one had, therefore, to be published by that date.

The senior legal officer, Clare Bevan, accepted that this was “a bit of a mess” and recommended that the revised list should be adopted at the October meeting and then discussed in November when amendments could be made. Cllr Blackie commented that the present list of application requirements was already far too onerous.

At the November meeting Mr Graham reported that the list of Validation Requirements had been revised and shortened. He added that a good list helped to avoid delays with planning applications.

Richmondshire District Councillor Malcolm Gardner asked if applicants could be warned about obtaining a bat survey at the right time of the year. He explained that if they paid for a survey to be carried out in winter it was likely they would have to pay for another when the bats were not hibernating.

Appletreewick - May - The committee unanimously approved the application for external alterations to the former primary school at Skyreholme, Appletreewick, which included the installation of solar panels on the south west facing roof slope.

John Jordan, the applicant, explained that he had three objectives: to improve the appearance of the building by replacing the flat roof on an extension with a ridged one more in keeping with the main building; replace the old sewage tank, which leaked, with a modern one; and install less obtrusive black matt solar panels with black frames to make the building more energy efficient. He added: “I want to have things in keeping with the area and I would like to see the old school house restored to use.” He plans to re-open it as a field studies centre again.

Appletreewick parish council had been concerned that the solar panels would be unsightly on a roof which could be seen from many locations locally and that there might be leaks from the septic tank.

Austwick - June - The application to remove the local occupancy agreements on five new houses in Austwick was refused by the planning committee. Members agreed with the planning officials that if the section 106 agreement on the five houses was discharged they could be sold on the open market contrary to the Authority’s housing policies since 2006.

Craven Dt Coun Robert Heseltine commented that Kerrowmere Ltd had developed the site with full knowledge of the housing policy and that at the right prices the houses would sell. The planning officer reported that although the houses had been on the market for the last 18 months no details had been provided about how they had been marketed or at what price.

A new government regulation had made it possible for this application to be submitted and the company supported its argument partly by quoting six appeal decisions in Wales which had led to the discharge of local occupancy need agreements.

Austwick parish council objected to the application and pointed out: “The Authority’s adopted policies do not permit unrestricted open market housing in service villages such as

Austwick. The obligation contained in the Section 106 agreement to restrict occupation of the new dwellings to ‘local people’ was necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms at the time when planning permission was granted, and remains necessary for the same reason. It follows that the obligation continues to serve a useful and proper planning purpose and should not be discharged.” This was re-iterated by planning officials.

One reported that the section 106 agreements were intended to make more homes available to those who met the local needs criteria and by doing so improve the social and economic vibrancy of the local community. They were not, therefore, contrary to EU Law, as Kerrowmere Ltd had argued, as it was not intended to use them to protect the needs of the less affluent. The resulting reduction in the cost of the houses was a consequence and not the intention of the policy.

The committee agreed that there were no exceptional circumstances that would lead to it going against the Authority’s housing policy. The members had been informed by a solicitor based in Wales that an appeal would be lodged if the application was refused.

Austwick - **September** - Permission was given for an enforcement notice to be issued for the removal of builder’s equipment, materials and a large pile of excavated soil from a site in Pant Lane.

Bainbridge – Housing development beside the Rose and Crown

March - The committee was applauded when, by a majority of just two, it agreed to approve an application by David Collinson for the construction of eight houses adjacent to the Rose and Crown Hotel in Bainbridge. The chairman of the committee, Harold Brown, warned the villagers that the decision would be referred back as this was against the officer’s recommendation.

The committee was deeply divided. Several accepted the planning officer’s statements that if the application was approved the Authority’s core housing objectives would be seriously undermined and would set a precedent for future housing developments in the National Park. Chris Armitage said they should not go against a policy which had been approved less than a year ago.

Peter Stockton, YDNPA head of sustainable development, told members that this was the first substantive test of the Authority’s new housing development plan which was aimed at ensuring that on any new site where more than one house was to be built there should be an equal mix of affordable housing for rent in perpetuity and homes which could only be sold to local people (local market housing).

But Richmondshire Dt Cllr Yvonne Peacock, as one of three public speakers, told the committee: “No housing association will want to invest any more in Bainbridge as we already have 16 at Scott Hill and 40 at Sycamore Hall. We need local need low cost houses to buy.”

She pointed out that 100 residents had signed a letter in support of the application. She explained that many of those working in the Dales, including YDNPA staff, do not fulfil the criteria to be allocated an affordable rented house but could not afford to buy a house on the open market.

Bainbridge parish councillor Ian Canavan said that a respected, local chartered surveyor had confirmed that the project would not be viable if 50 per cent of the site was allocated for affordable housing. And there was evidence that “local market” housing was needed.

The parish council and many residents disagreed with the planning officer that the development would be detrimental to the appearance of the village. Cllr Canavan added: “We firmly believe that the design is good. It is fit for purpose. And it would enhance our lovely village.”

Cllr Blackie told the committee: “The aim of the game is to keep the community of Bainbridge thriving, vibrant, forward looking (and) sustainable.” He added that there were sufficient affordable houses for rent in the village but not of “local market housing”.

Both he and N Yorks County Cllr Richard Welch warned that if there were not enough “local need” housing the villages would lose their schools and other facilities. Cllr Welch commented: “Here we have everybody wanting more housing - that’s a refreshing change.”

Like some other members Cumbria County Cllr Roger Bingham did support the application but said the objection by the County Council’s highways department regarding plans for the access to the site should be considered carefully and the design of the houses should be improved.

Cllr Blackie agreed that the design should be improved but the Authority needed to be careful not to make the project unaffordable to developers. The reasons he gave for supporting the application (for five two-bedroom and three three-bedroom houses) were that highway safety would actually be improved; local people would be provided with an opportunity to buy houses rather than just to rent; it would relieve pressure on affordable housing; that the considerable support for the project from the local community was a material consideration; and that it would not set a precedent.

He argued that it would not set a precedent because the application had been in the pipeline before new housing development plan was approved. But the senior legal officer, Clare Bevan, disagreed. She said that an application had been refused in 2010 and maintained that this was a new application which had been made after the housing development plan was adopted. It therefore had to be assessed according to the new plan.

The voting was seven to approve the application, with five against and two abstentions.

There was then a short debate about the application to demolish a listed building. Cllr Bingham, the member champion for conservation of cultural heritage, asked where this building was as all he had seen beside the Rose and Crown was an old shed. It was accepted that this building, with its corrugated roof and asbestos, was not worth preserving, especially as English Heritage had earlier given approval for it to be demolished.

One thing that all the members seemed to agree upon was what was described as being the ludicrous statement by the Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO) for North Yorkshire Police. In the planning officer’s report it stated: “The ALO comments that the proximity of the development to the main Leyburn to Hawes Road (and ultimately Lancashire) in addition to the close proximity to the Rose and Crown allows the travelling criminal a reasonable excuse to be in the immediate vicinity of the development”

May - Approval was given for the amended planning application to build eight houses to the north and west of the Rose and Crown with the condition that there would be section 106 local market housing agreements on all of them.

Mr Graham stated that the new plans were for simple, plain architecture which would blend in better with the built landscape of the village. The houses along the A684 would be set back from the road so as to preserve the appearance of the pub which is a listed building. There will be a footpath between the pub and the adjacent house. It was felt that this housing development would improve the appearance of the site.

The applicant had, since a decision was deferred at the March meeting, submitted an economic viability study. This supported his argument that it would only be economically viable to build local market housing on that site. The local community had fully supported this on the basis that there was sufficient affordable housing in the village and there was a need for houses that were lower in price than those on the open market.

Cllr John Blackie commented that they should do something absolutely amazing for a community which had not only played host to the Authority since its inception but also to Sycamore Hall. "These (dwellings) will ease the pressure on the affordable houses," he said.

Ann Brooks and Peter Charlesworth wondered why the applicant, David Collinson, had not adjusted the plans and submitted an economic viability study earlier which would have saved time. Under the Authority's current housing policy there must be sufficient evidence that affordable housing could not be included in such a non-greenfield development.

Inconsistencies – Chris Armitage pointed out the inconsistencies in the guidance given by North Yorkshire County Council on highways issues. There had been no objection to the access from Town Head Farm at Grassington even though there is a 60mph speed limit on the road there. Nor had there been any objections to the access from the Old Masons Yard in Clapham even though Craven District Cllr John Roberts had told the committee that it was very dangerous. And yet there had been an objection to that from what is at present the car park which serves the Rose and Crown in Bainbridge.

August - The members were unanimous that the proposed improvement and realignment of the public highway junction beside the Rose and Crown in Bainbridge did not need to be completed before work began on constructing eight houses behind the public house. Instead this can be done prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings. This was because the Tour de France race will pass the pub in July next year and the organisers would have to approve any amendments to the junction before such work could start. In addition that section of road is likely to be re-surfaced this September and then would need to be "patched" when the junction was rearranged and service connections were installed.

Bainbridge - September - The recommendation by Peter Stockton, the head of sustainable development, that Broadacres Housing Association should be allowed to let one unit at Scott Hill in Bainbridge to a non-local household which was on the Richmondshire housing list was accepted by the majority of the members. The Section 106 local occupancy agreement on that unit would resume when it was subsequently vacated.

Broadacres had asked for a temporary variation of the Section 106 agreement because it had not been able to let that two-bedroom unit. The majority of the members accepted that Broadacres had made every effort to advertise it to locally qualifying households.

Cllr Blackie explained that unit 21 had originally been the chapel of rest. “Local people felt it was a bit early to be tenants of this property,” he commented.

Cllr Marshall was very concerned that a review of local occupancy agreements might not be included on the agenda for the full authority meeting on September 24. She said that more flexibility was needed for these giving the example of someone from Skipton not being allowed to buy a house in Kettlewell on which there was a Section 106 agreement.

Carlton in Coverdale – February - The planning committee yet again gave retrospective planning permission for the installation of a kitchen extractor system at the Foresters Arms in Carlton.

Permission had originally been granted at the meeting in September 2012 but this was challenged through the judicial review process and subsequently quashed by the High Court in January. It was quashed because the summary reasons were inadequate and it was considered that the way in which planning policy and other material considerations were explained in the original committee report were unclear. This time great care was taken to make sure no fault could be found with the procedures or the decision to approve the application.

The majority of the committee again accepted that the large flue on the rear of the pub could be easily removed without causing any damage to the fabric of the listed building. It was agreed it should be painted in a stone colour so as to fit in well with the rest of the building.

It was also accepted that the flue along with the rest of the extractor system was necessary for the viability of the Foresters Arms as a community pub. The flue must be removed when no longer in operation or if the pub is no longer in use.

Clapham - December - The extensions to Marton House at Riverside in Clapham will provide an opportunity to improve the 1960s building Chris Armitage said when he proposed that the planning application should be approved.

This followed a site meeting when members of the committee were able to see what the house looked like at present with its rendered blockwork and artificial reconstituted limestone walls. The owner wants to change the external appearance so that it blends in better within the Clapham village conservation area.

Ann Brooks commented: “I feel it can be improved and you can’t see it (from the road) very well.”

The planning officer had recommended refusal because he believed that the proposed extensions would significantly and excessively increase the mass of the building to the detriment of the conservation area.

Clapham-cum-Newby parish council supported the application because the proposed extensions would not overlook neighbouring properties and did not extend beyond the footprint of the existing building.

When the majority of members agreed with Mr Armstrong and the parish council the head of development management, Richard Graham, said that the approval of the application would not need to be confirmed at the February meeting even though it was against officer recommendation.

Coverdale - Lickber Lane

March - The committee heard that British Horse Society intended to serve an enforcement notice on North Yorkshire County Council's Highways Authority in order to get Lickber Lane near Melmerby in Coverdale restored to the condition it was in before the local farmer, Andrew Avison, filled it with earth excavated when he had a new slurry pit constructed.

But the chairman of the committee, Harold Brown, warned: "What I don't want to see is us develop an argument or an enforcement with the county council." Some members had argued that the YDNPA should be prepared to take enforcement action itself.

The senior legal officer, Clare Bevan, explained that this would involve not only serving a notice on the farmer, but also on the Highways Authority as it was responsible for the maintenance of the right of way. This led to N Yorks County Cllr Richard Welch asking if the county councillors should therefore declare an interest. Ms Bevan advised that they should declare a personal interest - which they did.

Several members described Lickber Lane as an illegal landfill site and agreed with Cllr Bingham that the earth should be removed and the original "sunken" surface of the lane restored. He said: "We are dealing with the preservation of a historic feature which we are pledged to maintain and preserve." The question was - just how to achieve that.

After a lengthy discussion the majority voted in favour of N Yorks County Cllr Roger Harrison-Topham's proposal that Mr Avison's retrospective planning application for the infilling of an unclassified county road should be refused, and that the Authority should write to the highways department requesting that it should ensure that the "sunken" condition of the lane was restored. Several members were not convinced that the Highways Authority would respond to such a letter and it was agreed to follow up on this in three month's time.

Cllr Harrison-Topham, who lives in Coverdale, said that the highways authority was at present laying pipes down the lane to take water away from the nearby road. He added that the sunken status of the lane had meant it had served as a stream bed in recent years rather than as a path or highway of any sort.

He told the committee that Lickber Lane had not been on the county council's published list of streets. Research had, however, shown that it was an Unsurfaced Unclassified Road and was maintainable at public expense. Like other members he argued that it was not the duty of a planning authority to clear a highway.

Ms Bevan pointed out that the lane's status was still not clear as the Highways Authority was not sure what kind of traffic would be using it and, therefore, what the level of maintenance

should be. And the planning officer reported: “The Highways Authority also have specific enforcement powers to require the lane to be reinstated but have pursued the option of downgrading the lane as an alternative course of action.”

June - The YDNPA will not be taking enforcement action against North Yorkshire County Council over the infilling of Lickber Lane near Melmbery, Coverdale. At the planning committee the members heard that the county council had offered to discuss remedial action.

Cllr Harrison-Topham commented: “The one thing we want to avoid here is an inter-authority punch up.”

The planning committee wants to see Lickber Lane returned to its original “sunken” state and believes that the infilling carried out by Andrew Avison had resulted in the loss of an historic feature in the Dales landscape. In September 2011 Avison infilled the lane with earth excavated when a new slurry lagoon was being constructed at his farm.

Cllr Harrison-Topham explained: “This particular lane had been omitted in error from the (county council’s) list of streets. The farmer thought what he had was a private lane with certain easements for certain people from the parish to go down to the river. He thought he was tipping on his own land.”

Other committee members on Tuesday stated that it was still illegal tipping which should be prosecuted. They did, however, accept the advice of Richard Daly, the monitoring officer, that nothing could be gained by serving enforcement notices on Mr Avison or the county council.

Mr Daly reported that the county council’s solicitor had informed them that the highways authority considered that Mr Avison had improved the lane but did not own it. Nor did the county council feel it was good to return the lane to its original overgrown and unkempt appearance. He added that if the county council was required to remove the earth it would very likely return the next day and fill it back in again using its permitted rights as a highway authority.

Richard Graham, head of development management, said the county council had agreed to take remedial action to bring the lane back into a “sunken” state but also to ensure that it was useable for those people who had rights to use it. The highways authority would hold a site meeting with the YDNPA planning department to discuss this.

“From my point of view this is the best outcome we are likely to achieve,” Mr Graham said.

Dentdale - February - It was agreed that an enforcement notice would be served by the end of February for the removal of a poly tunnel at Birchentree Farm, Cowgill in Dentdale. The farmer would have 84 days to comply - giving him time to finish lambing.

Clapham – May - The majority of the committee members felt they should make a decision concerning the conversion of the office in the Old Masons Yard at Clapham according to the Authority’s present housing policy. The Authority had received notification from the government that there will be new permitted development rights under the National Planning Policy Framework that will allow the change of use from office to residential but as yet did not have the full details.

In February 2012 the planning committee approved an application for the office and store beside it to be converted into “local need” housing comprising of two dwellings and a bungalow. The latest application was for the office to be converted into a five bedrooled holiday let. Cllr Roberts said that the applicant believed it would be difficult to sell local need dwellings. He added: “The applicant has got to prove that.”

The majority accepted the planning officer’s recommendation that this application should be refused partly on the basis that the provision of holiday accommodation was in conflict with the Authority’s housing policy.

Feizor - May - The section 52 agreement on Top O’T’Hill Farm at Feizor will be lifted after a majority of members accepted the planning officer’s recommendation. She stated that there had been an element of unfairness in the way that it had been imposed in 1990, and that the case was very similar to that of Hazel Head Barn at Hawkswick.

Cllr Blackie commented that, when discussing the Hawkswick case, he had warned that there were about half a dozen other section 52 agreements which had been similarly imposed in the early 1990s. “There are very similar circumstances of unfairness and precedent,” he said concerning the barn conversion at Feizor. He felt it was now pragmatic and sensible to lift that agreement especially as the section 52 agreements were draconian and undemocratic.

Mr Armitage asked how much of a precedent had been set by the decision to lift the agreement on Hazel Head Barn. Richard Daly, the YDNPA monitoring officer, replied that this was very limited and affected only a small number of cases. Six of the members voted to discharge the agreement on Top O’T’Hill, with five abstaining and one voting against it.

Grassington - milk processing facilities at Town Head Farm

May: It was agreed to defer a decision on the planning application (part retrospective) for extensions to the milk processing facilities at Town Head Farm so that a site meeting could be held. Cllr Roberts proposed the site meeting on the basis that this was a complex site and because it was in the public interest. He pointed out that the economic development officer for Craven District Council had stated that the application met the key themes and priorities of that council’s economic development strategy.

Cllr Blackie noted that the business aspect of the application had to be considered at the site meeting. There is considerable local opposition to the application and Grassington parish council has objected to it on the basis that it would adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and the environment of the area as well as resulting in unacceptable levels of traffic. The planning officer has recommended refusal not only because of the impact upon those living nearby but also because of the harmful impact upon the landscape.

The application is for additional cattle housing, roofing and cladding of the loading bay area; the creation of a hard-standing area, office and agricultural worker facilities; and the change of use of agricultural buildings and hard-standing areas to accommodate the dairy processing and distribution infrastructure.

Milk has been processed at Town Head Farm since 1994. The processing of milk had increased from 2,779,593 litres in March 2002 to 12,437,964 litres in March 2012. This was achieved in part by processing milk from third-party suppliers. If the expansion of the

facilities is approved the applicant, David Oversby, expects an increase of the farm's own milk production to 1,600,000 litres and of purchased milk to 22,000,000 litres by 2023. Orange juice concentrate is also processed at the farm.

June: - A decision about the Town Head Farm (Dales Dairies) application was deferred to allow time for more negotiations with the owner, David Oversby.

Several members of committee said they had lost sleep over this planning application for increasing the milk processing capacity at Dales Dairy. They applauded Mr Oversby's family's success in expanding the business. It now has 50 full time workers and processes milk for 15 local dairy farms. Six of these had nowhere else to send their milk after a major distributor went into liquidation in 2009.

Jonathan Caygill, speaking on behalf of those 15 farmers, stated: "Without Dales Dairies some of these would not be able to continue dairying within the Yorkshire Dales. Dales Dairies... is a great example of co-operation within the National Park. I urge you to approve the application to safeguard local dairy farming within the National Park."

But at the same time the development of such an agricultural light industry enterprise in a residential area had had a major impact upon its neighbours. Tanya Graham, on behalf of some residents, told the committee that the large number of wagons posed a threat to pedestrians along the narrow lanes and added: "These industrial processes are right next to people's houses and it is a 24-hour operation. It impacts severely on residential amenity.

"I have been asked by someone to point out that they have barely had a proper night's sleep in three years and by someone else that this lack of sleep is now affecting her ability to work and therefore her business. This is a 24-hour seven-day a week problem of noise."

Several members of the committee agreed with Grassington Parish Cllr Michael Rooze that the business should be re-located, preferably to somewhere local. Chris Armitage, a member of the committee, said that otherwise they were sentencing residents to a life time of disruption and many more sleepless nights.

Cllr Roberts was one of the members who said he had lost sleep thinking about this issue. He said that Craven District Council's economic development officer considered the development to be in accordance with the district council's development policy.

He reminded the committee, however, that the planning officer had reported that seven YDNPA policies had been broken by Dales Dairies. Part of the application for change of use of buildings and hard-standing areas was retrospective. "This agricultural venture is in my view a great success story but it is also a victim of that success. My heart tells me to approve this but I cannot find any compromises to the traffic problem and the loss of amenity to residents. I believe he is just in the wrong place."

He asked that if the application was refused there should not be any enforcement within two years. But the head of development management, Richard Graham, advised against this.

Mr Graham explained that the officer's recommendation to refuse the retrospective application did not include enforcement because they wanted to be able to continue

negotiations with Mr Oversby to consider his options not only to provide for his business but to also to protect residents. “We like to find solutions,” he said.

Several members then asked if a decision could be deferred to allow for negotiations to continue with Mr Oversby.

One of those was Cllr Blackie who emphasised the huge importance of supporting the small dairy farms in the Yorkshire Dales. He compared the situation to that in Hawes where local people supported the Wensleydale Creamery because of its economic benefit to the community, including the provision of jobs. “Sometimes (industry) has to be in the midst of community because it supports that community. We have the environmental officer giving the okay to this operation (at Grassington) - and the highways authority.” He didn’t want the Authority to be the “villain of the piece” in closing down the Dales Dairy.

At the end of a lengthy debate the six members who wanted the application to be refused were outvoted by seven others. There were then eight in favour of deferral, with one against and three abstentions. Mr Graham wanted it deferred for just one month while some members requested two months. Mr Graham said there would be a progress report at the July meeting.

The full application was for additional cattle housing, roofing and cladding of loading bay area, creation of hard-standing area, office and agricultural worker facilities and change of use of agricultural buildings and hard-standing areas to accommodate the dairy processing and distribution infrastructure (part retrospective).

July : The planning officer gave an update on the discussions with David Oversby concerning the milk processing plant at Town Head Farm.

Cllr Roberts asked why there had been a discussion about moving the processing plant to another site or providing additional pedestrian refuges on Bull Ing Lane as these were not included in the application. He was told that the applicant had raised the issue of pedestrian refuges, and the question of moving to another site arose as the officer had recommended refusing the application.

Cllr Roberts emphasised that as there were 50 jobs involved it was important for the business to remain in the area. The committee was told that the application would be discussed fully at the meeting in August.

As she would not be able to attend that meeting Cllr Marshall said that it was important that, should the committee be minded to approve the application, members and officers should make sure that the appropriate conditions were attached and that it was clear which agency (YDNPA, Traffic Commission, the Police or the local authority) was responsible for ensuring that those were fulfilled.

She also wanted to know if it could be ascertained what percentage of the farm was now being used for commercial purposes and to have an assessment of what the business was worth within the local economy. At present all of the farm was valued as being for agricultural use. She also wanted conditions concerning working hours to be included. Her other concern was that the heavy traffic from the farm was creating a very dangerous situation for pedestrians using Grass Wood Lane.

Richmondshire District Cllr Malcolm Gardner pointed out that most of the work in the processing plant was done by hand at present, but if more automation was introduced it would be far noisier.

Richard Graham, the head of development management, said that the parish council would be kept informed. Andrew Colley asked that there should also be time for a public meeting in Grassington.

August : After a two-hour debate the proposal to approve the extensions to the milk processing plant at Town Head Farm was passed by just seven votes to six. This decision had to be ratified at the September meeting as it was against officer recommendation.

Part of the application by David Oversby was for retrospective approval but, once the vote had been taken, Cllr Harrison-Topham, pointed out that it was not clear what had been approved by the planning committee in 2006, nor how much of the milk processing plant had been in production for over ten years. This will be important in September if the decision to approve is overturned.

Peter Charlesworth, who is the chairman of the YDNPA, argued that the planning officer was correct to recommend refusal because the development was causing so much harm to the environment and to the amenity of many residents in Grassington. “What weight do we give to residents or to the parish council?” he asked. He reported that 90 people in Grassington had used Cynthia Colley’s survey to register their disapproval of Mr Oversby’s application.

Cllr Harrison-Topham told the committee that he had been lobbied by Mrs Colley to vote against the application. Her husband, Andrew Colley, is a member of the planning committee and of Grassington parish council.

Mr Colley declared a personal interest at the beginning of the debate, and spoke and voted against approval. Mr Colley stated that Mr Oversby had built up a fantastic business but it was in the wrong location. He added that the parish council had listened to residents at a public meeting in January and had, therefore, objected to the plans. This was on the basis that they would adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and the environment of the surrounding area, as well as resulting in unacceptable traffic levels.

Speaking on behalf of the parish council Michael Rooze said there appeared to be a “magnificent seven” on the planning committee which was very, very pro farmer. He argued that even Mr Oversby had accepted that this was an industrial plant and added that the employment situation there would only change if and when successful enforcement action was carried out.

Cllr Roberts however argued that in the past few months Mr Oversby had amended the plans to try and lessen the impact of the plant on residents. This included an assurance that lorries would only deliver and collect milk between 7am and 7pm each day.

Both he and Cllr Blackie pointed out that the Economic Development Officer for Craven District Council had supported the application because the business was making a significant contribution towards maintaining a diverse and prosperous economy and was a major employer in the area.

When proposing that the application should be approved Cllr Blackie said it was a very difficult decision to make but they needed to remember that the statutory consultees like the Highways Authority and the Environment Agency had not opposed it - something which would be taken into consideration by an appeal inspector.

He added: "Mr Oversby had made tremendous compromises when trying to respond to the understandable and quite legitimate concerns of nearby neighbours". In addition Mr Oversby had made a commitment in writing that there would be no further expansion on that site.

Cllr Blackie told the committee that the business was worth £4million to the local economy, which included £1.3 million in wages, with 55 people being employed and 15 local farms dependent upon the plant to process their milk. "Sustainability and local prosperity does not come without a price. Please don't associate the National Park with a message that we don't want to encourage rural enterprise," Cllr Blackie stated.

He pointed out that the impact upon the landscape of the Wensleydale Creamery buildings and its car parks at Hawes was considerably more than that of Town Head Farm. There was much more movement of lorries from the Creamery and the majority of those heavy vehicles were driven through the centre of Hawes.

The proposal to approve the application was on the basis of the benefits of employment both on the site and to local farms; the benefits to the local economy of having a successful business there; and also that the statutory consultees (governmental health, highways and the economic development authority) have raised no objections.

It was agreed that during the next month conditions should be drawn up which would try to meet the concerns expressed by residents and members of the committee.

September : The "knife edge" vote on the partly retrospective application for the extension of the milk processing plant at Town Head Farm went in favour of the applicant, David Oversby with eight members voting for approval and seven against.

In what the chairman of the Authority, Peter Charlesworth, described as an excellent debate members discussed what the balance should be between the economic advantages of approving the extensions to the Dales Dairies milk processing plant compared with the detrimental impact upon the amenity of those living nearby and upon the landscape.

Cllr Blackie argued: "We are talking about employment in an area that is not over endowed with employment. We are talking about sustaining dairy farms, particularly small dairy farms - the very heart and soul of our national park (with its) wonderful landscapes. It's a great shame we can't have the prosperity without the impact but unfortunately it imposes on some people."

Cllr Roberts pointed out that Dales Dairies employed 50 people full time and six full time. It also helped 15 local farms to continue with dairy herds. He added: "We have lost two dairy farms in Wharfedale in the last two years. The fostering of economic wellbeing is a material consideration."

He said that although he had originally been against giving approval and still felt that the milk processing plant was in the wrong place the applicant had now addressed all his

concerns. This included being willing to use cladding to reduce noise to about 40 decibels. Some of the fleet of vehicles were now being parked overnight at Cracoe.

The first to argue the case for refusing the application was Andrew Colley. He declared a personal interest on the basis that he was a resident of Grassington, had a B&B business in Wood Lane which was affected by the traffic from the milk processing plant and was a member of Grassington parish council.

He said that the road network could not be returned to how it was because within a day it would be damaged again due to the volume of traffic. He argued that Dales Dairies should move to a better site with good road access and facilities.

Both he and Mr Charlesworth did not believe that employment at Dales Dairies had had such a beneficial economic impact upon Grassington and quoted the Spar supermarket (owned by the chairman of Grassington parish council) as an example.

Ann Brooks was against giving approval because not only was it partly a retrospective application but also because she felt there was a significant harmful and detrimental impact upon the amenities of those living nearby.

Cllr Marshall said that there had been a significant change of use from agricultural to industrial at Town Head Farm and added that if so many stringent conditions were needed the committee should question giving approval. She did not believe that the economic arguments over rode the fact that the amenity of residents was being affected from 7am to 7pm each day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

The conditions will include a traffic monitoring scheme offered and paid for by the applicant, who will also pay for 100 per cent of the cost of repairing Bull Ing Lane.

It was pointed out that the Highways Authority had not objected to the application, nor had the district council's environmental health department. The Economic Development Officer at Craven District Council supported the application. Grassington Parish Council objected to the retrospective application because it would adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and the environment of the surrounding area; and it would result in unacceptable traffic levels.

(In early 2015 Dales Dairies bought a facility at Keighley so that the business could be moved by 2016 from the Grassington site where it was at full capacity. It expected that most of its work force would move with it and it would go on processing milk from small Dales' farms.)

Grassington - June - The application by Andrew and Cynthia Colley for two "local occupancy" homes to be built at Lythe End in Wood Lane, Grassington, was approved.

Cllr Blackie was concerned that no time would be given for the planning officer's report before a vote was taken. He commented: "The point was made to me by the ombudsman that we'd been too quick to agree what appeared to be a member's application. So please can I hear from the officer." Mr Colley is a member of the Authority.

After the officer's report Cllr Roberts pointed out that this was the first of the “affordable housing” sites designated in the Authority’s new housing plan to come to the committee for full planning permission.

Cllr Blackie asked that the applications for such sites should include a list of concentric rings for the parish eligibility so that occupancy would be restricted to local people. “Nothing would annoy people in Grassington more than to find that suddenly those from beyond the boundary have equal priority,” he said.

(At the August meeting the Association of Rural Communities did ask if Mr Colley should have declared an interest on the basis that he lived in Grassington and was a member of the parish council as the YDNPA’s code of conduct stated that an interest should be declared if “you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to any item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position...” At the August meeting he had stated that there were problems along Wood Lane due to the number of lorries travelling to and from Dales Dairies.)

Grassington – Grassington House Hotel

October - Most of the YDNPA planning committee members agreed that the extraction flue on side of Grassington House Hotel looked awful but not all were ready to approve an enforcement notice demanding its removal within three months.

Cllr Blackie argued that although the flue was ugly the hotel would lose its star rating from the Environment Agency if it did not have one. As the Authority was committed to supporting businesses during the Tour de France Grand Départ next year it was not reasonable to enforce the removal of the flue within three months, he said and added: “I agree we must do something about it. But let’s give them a chance to put forward positive proposals.” He therefore proposed that there should be a one month deferral.

Chris Armitage, however, reminded the committee that it was a criminal offence to carry out such work on a listed building without planning consent.

And Peter Charlesworth stated: “This is one of the most iconic buildings in the southern part of the National Park. It has been listed for well over 50 years. It is a building of great architectural and historical importance. And yet in 2008 they decided without planning permission to plonk this dreadful extraction flue on the outside of this building.”

He added that the Authority’s officers had been negotiating with the owners since then and that three months was now adequate for them to do something.

The enforcement officer’s report stated that holes had been drilled into the stone face of the building to support the brackets of the flue, and that one of the fixings had been screwed into the window jamb of the 18th century stair window.

Like other members Cllr Harrison-Topham felt there had to be a long-term solution to the problem of hotels and pubs being able to meet the requirements of the Environment Agency for extraction flues without placing such ugly objects on listed buildings.

The enforcement officer reported that the owners had also not applied for planning permission before installing iron railings in front of the building and replacing traditional signs with modern ones.

Several members did not agree with the senior listed building officer's view that the modern signage was inappropriate on the listed building.

By just two votes the committee did vote for a one-month deferral and so the recommendation for enforcement action to be taken concerning the extraction flue, the iron railings and the new signage will be discussed again at the November planning committee meeting.

November - Any application for a new extraction flue at Grassington House Hotel must include details of how it will be fixed to the building, Andrew Colley told the committee.

He said: "One of the problems with (the present) flue is that not only is it too big but that it's been fastened onto a grade II listed building through the sills and this is totally unacceptable."

The committee was told that the owner of Grassington House Hotel had verbally agreed that the extraction flue was visually unacceptable on the listed building. He is now considering the installation of a more efficient kitchen system which would include a smaller low level flue.

Mr Colley and other committee members would like to a solution to be found for the problem of large extraction flues on listed buildings and wondered if this could be discussed with the manufacturers, the Environment Agency and the National Trust.

The committee also heard that the owner of Grassington House Hotel had already removed the sign which had been on the listed wall and intended to replace the glass panes with the No 5 logo within the conservatory dining room windows with clear glass.

Richard Graham, head of development management, said that the impact of the signage had been accumulative and it had been agreed that the illuminated sign above the front door could be retained.

Giggleswick - September - Permission was also given for enforcement action to be taken to stop agricultural land at Fiddlecase Field from being used to store building equipment and materials. A shed will also have to be removed.

Hawes - February - It was agreed to defer a decision on the future of St Margaret's Hall in Hawes for six months. Cllr Blackie requested this to see if, with a reasonable valuation, it was possible to either bring it back into community use or convert it into two local occupancy homes.

A&T Developments had requested planning permission to extend what had been the school masters house into the hall to create a five-bedroom dwelling. Cllr Blackie was informed at the meeting that the planning permission granted in 2007 for the hall to be converted into two local occupancy homes had now expired.

Hawes and High Abbotside parish council had objected to the latest application and had informed the planning committee: “Councillors felt very let down when it was pointed out that not only would the two small houses for local occupancy be lost but also the funds were to be absorbed by the Diocese and would not be spent on improving facilities at St Margaret’s church.”

Hawes – February - The planning officer had recommended refusal of an application by Ian Dinsdale to replace the garage at his home in Gayle Lane, Hawes, with a larger one because it would detract from the character and appearance of the area.

Cllr Blackie pointed out that there was a lot of new development in that area and permission had been granted for extensive remodelling of the Wensleydale Creamery which was across the road from Mr Dinsdale’s home. He argued that Mr Dinsdale’s new garage and workshop would not be so intrusive on the landscape given the amount of housing around the field next to his house.

This was accepted by the majority of the committee and the application for the new garage and change of use of land to form domestic curtilage was approved.

Hawes - April - The news that there would be no “erratic” design feature on top of the new cheese production building at the Wensleydale Creamery in Hawes had a mixed reception at the meeting.

“I am quite delighted that the erratic has disappeared,” said Ann Brooks, whilst Chris Armitage commented: “One man’s iconic structure is another man’s carbuncle.”

But without the erratic the unit would be a characterless building said Cllr Harrison-Topham. He added: “It’s impossible to make these buildings delicious but it’s less ghastly with a pillbox than without.”

What he described as a pillbox was the replacement for the erratic. This addition to the roof of the building will house the visitor centre. It is now proposed that it will be clad with glass emblazoned with a ‘Wensleydale Creamery’ sign.

Members asked how large that sign would be, if the glass would be reflective and how much light from the visitors’ centre would emanate from it. Nor were they sure from the plans provided as to the intended shape of the visitors’ centre.

“I just don’t want it to be so obtrusive,” Mrs Brooks said and William Weston added: “My personal guidance is...try to keep it as simple as possible and as low as possible.”

Cllr Blackie explained that the Creamery was now supplying cheese to virtually every major supermarket chain in this country as well as to a number abroad. The buyers who came to Hawes would have visited ultra-modern production units elsewhere and would expect to see similar at the Creamery. Instead the buildings were old, dowdy and often leaking.

“It’s vitally important to present a more hygienic image for the buyers who come to order huge amounts of our fabulous cheese. It’s all about the impression,” he added.

He asked the committee to give approval for the planning officers to work with the company and the architect about the details of the permission so that work on construction could start next January. He also asked that Hawes and High Abbotside parish council would be consulted before the final permission was given.

The amended plans included the different method of housing and cladding the visitors' centre; the building to be faced with timber boards instead of reconstituted stone material; and that the construction work could be carried out in two phases. The latter will enable cheese production to continue at Hawes rather than being shifted for a while to the company's production unit at Kirkby Malzeard.

Richard Graham, head of development management, was asked what additional condition would be applied concerning the phased method of working but he explained that he had only received the initial details about that the day before the meeting. It was agreed that the Creamery should not be a construction site for too long.

Mr Graham explained that the design of the building was novel and some of the materials untried in the National Park. "Officers don't object to the use of modern materials in principle and particularly in this context where you have a wholly modern factory building. But officers do have some concerns about the finished appearance and particularly the size of the business logo," he said.

Such details will have to be submitted and approved before construction could start. The committee agreed that the officers could do that.

Hawes - August - One side of the new GTEC Training building at Hawes has been described as "the biggest mirror this side of Kansas", Cllr John Blackie told the committee.

Originally the planning committee had asked that the building on the Brunt Acres Industrial Estate should be clad with natural stone. In August 2011 an application to use artificial stone instead was refused and this decision was upheld at appeal. The appeal inspector stated that "even a better matching reconstituted stone would be an inferior solution."

The building has been constructed and is in use as a renewable technology and training centre but no stone cladding has been carried out. The south gable, which can be seen from outside the industrial estate, is, therefore, like a large mirror.

At a site meeting in July which was attended by the GTEC managing director, Griff Thomas, and members of Hawes and High Abbotside parish council it was agreed that reconstituted stone should be used if it was exactly like that in Mr Thomas' latest application. This was for Forticrete "Anstone - Brown Old Weathered" or something similar. The planning committee gave approval for this.

Hawes - December - The committee unanimously agreed with the planning officer that an application by Honeycott Caravan Park to substitute touring caravan pitches for three static caravan sites should be refused.

Hawes and High Abbotside parish council had argued that there was a need in the National Park to retain touring pitches for tents and caravans, and to refuse this application would be

in line with a decision by a planning inspector who stated that there should be a balance of various types of visitor accommodation available in Upper Wensleydale.

Helwith Bridge - Arcow Quarry - November – Dave Parrish, the YDNPA’s minerals and waste planning officer, told the committee that the companies operating Dry Rigg and Arcow quarries had now merged to become Lafarge Tarmac. This company, in accordance with the YDNPA policy to minimise road haulage from quarries, wants to construct the railway sidings at Arcow Quarry to serve both that and Dry Rigg Quarry. Separate approval will be required from Network Rail.

Hetton – February - The committee chairman, Harold Brown, had to curtail Cllr Heseltine’s enthusiasm when it came to the application to change the conditions on a worker's dwelling at Manor Farm, Hetton from a Section 106 agreement to an agricultural tie.

“I think this is absolutely straight forward is it not. The recommendation . . . is eminently sensible,” Cllr Heseltine said before Brown reminded him that the planning officer hadn’t yet given his report. But as it was late in the afternoon no-one bothered too much and within minutes approval was given.

In his written report the officer had noted that the committee had given permission in June 2012 for the agricultural workers dwelling at Manor Farm subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement tying the building to the farm.

Subsequently there were problems with the financial arrangements. The applicant, Matthew Reeday, therefore wanted to be able to obtain his own mortgage for the new dwelling but could not do so if there was a Section 106 agreement on it.

The officer noted that as the new dwelling and its curtilage would be within the boundaries of the farm and access to it would be through that farm, there would be sufficient constraints to control the future of the building and an agricultural occupancy condition would be sufficient.

Horton in Ribblesdale and Hawes – February - There was standing room only when the committee discussed the application to transport timber from Cam Forest over part of the ancient Cam High Road. Over 30 residents of Gayle and Hawes attended the meeting because they were concerned that the committee might opt for the route through their communities.

That route was the fallback position offered by the planning officer. The route she proposed, however, was via two miles of Cam High Road to Far Gearstones Farm near Ribbleshead and onto the B6255. The planning application included creating 165m of track from the forest, repairing two miles of the Cam High Road, replacing the bridge across Gayle Beck and upgrading an existing farm track.

Representatives of the Yorkshire Dales Society and the Wensleydale branch of the CPRE told the committee that the use of that route would be contrary to the statutory purposes of the National Park and have an unacceptable impact on major recreational routes including the Cam High Road. Both asked the committee to defer a decision so that there was more time to consider either another route or the use of vehicles that would make less impact on such a fragile habitat.

Walter Head, representing Hawes and High Abbotside parish council pointed out, however, that if the wagons were routed through Gayle and Hawes they would have a serious impact upon the communities there. In some places the roads were so narrow that there would be barely three inches on either side of the wagons. And these roads were also used by pedestrians.

Cllr Blackie accepted that 44 tonne wagons in such a tranquil part of the National Park was the downside of the route via Gearstones to Ribblesdale. But there would be no wagons at weekends.

He outlined the dangers of having the heavy wagons travelling through Gayle and Hawes and said that so many local residents were at the planning meeting because they feared how this would impact upon public safety and their amenities. He added that any other solutions to removing the timber other than that via Ribblesdale would be unaffordable and impractical. And at Ribblesdale it was possible that some of the timber could be transported by rail.

Members accepted that the wagons should not be routed through Gayle and Hawes. As for the route via the Cam High Road to Gearstones Chris Armitage commented: "This is possibly one of the most iconic sites in the Park and you can see all the peaks and Ribblesdale viaduct."

He felt, however, that the officers and the Park rangers had worked closely with the owners of the forest, the Cam Forest Trust, to bring forward the best proposal. The officers believed that the harmful effects could be mitigated by limiting the number of wagons each weekday and by imposing a speed limit of 10mph. The drivers will be instructed to stop when horses were approaching.

There would also be significant benefits including the phased felling of the Sitka Spruce and replanting with broad leaf trees as well as conifers to protect and enhance the red squirrel population, the improved access over Gayle Beck for horse riders, and the permissive use of the improved track from Far Gearstones Farm.

Horton in Ribblesdale parish council had objected to this route being used partly because it might jeopardise the retention of the traffic regulation order on Cam High Road. Only one member of the committee abstained from voting for the officer's recommendation that the wagons should exit via Far Gearstones Farm.

Horton in Ribblesdale - December - It was agreed that the planning permission for the extension of the campsite and alterations to existing amenity buildings at Holme Farm, Horton in Ribblesdale could be amended.

The planning officer explained that due to ownership issues the applicant had not been able to sign a legal agreement to fulfil the conditions on the approval granted by the planning committee in September 2011. That legal agreement was to ensure that measures set out in the management plan for the site were implemented.

Following the decision of the committee the requirement for a legal agreement will be omitted and there will be a condition requiring the submission and implementation of a management plan to control car parking, provision and maintenance of toilet facilities,

control of litter and rubbish, supervision of the site, retention of site records and overall site maintenance and organisation.

Ingleton - April - Approval was given for the conditions on the caravan site at Beezley Farm to be altered so that the closure period for the site would be reduced. It will now be closed from January 14 until March 1 each year. The planning officer said that there were already many trees beside the site and more would be planted.

Kirkby Malham - November - A hedge would be more environmentally friendly than a dry stone wall at Tullochvenus Farm William Weston told the committee. Mr Weston, who is the YDNPA's member champion for climate change, argued that there were ecological advantages in screening the farmyard with a hedge and some trees.

Kirkby Malhamdale parish council had objected to the owner's application to alter some of the planning conditions to the permission granted in 2008 to extend an agricultural building because it felt that a dry stone wall was the most effective and suitable screen for the farmyard. The majority of the committee, however, agreed with Mr Weston.

Cllr Welch said that a hedge would encourage more wild life than 100 metres of dry stone wall. The committee was informed that there are now no llamas at the farm and the land was being rented to a local farmer for grazing livestock.

Langcliffe - February - It was agreed to extend the time limit on the planning permission granted for the conversion of Langcliffe Mill site to form a complex of offices, a hotel and live-work units. The agent for Skipton Properties Pension Fund explained that if there had been any marketing interest in this over the past three years it would not have been necessary to make this application. The company was certainly not using the site for land banking, he said. Cllr Welch and Cllr Roberts pointed out that the site was becoming more and more derelict and was an eyesore.

Litton - December - "I think the National Park has shown where its heart is," commented Harold Brown, the chairman of the planning committee, when the majority of the members voted in favour of allowing Stephen Lund to convert the semi-derelict Parker Barn at Litton.

The planning officer had recommended refusal because Mr Lund had not agreed to the converted barn being tied by a legal agreement to the land which the family own. Most of the members agreed, however, with Cllr Marshall that it could be approved with just a condition that it could only be used by those working locally in agriculture. As this was against officer recommendation this will have to be ratified at the planning committee meeting in February 2014. (It was)

Stephen Lund had applied for planning permission in January 2013 and Cllr Marshall commented: "This is an extraordinary length of time to come to a decision."

The planning officer had asked that the house that Stephen's brother, Stewart, owns in Litton (Potts Beck) should also be included in the legal agreement. He stated: "A restriction on the occupancy of Potts Beck, in addition to Parker Barn, would ensure that both dwellings remained available to meet the needs of agriculture irrespective of the unit it served."

But as Potts Beck had been bought on the open market the officer accepted this was probably not achievable especially as the mortgagee would probably refuse to accept a restriction which would reduce the market value of the house.

Craven district councillor John Roberts questioned how they could include a privately owned house and added: "This is a genuine and respected Littondale family and being farmers they have managed the landscape with its barns and walls for generations."

The Lund family has been buying land around Litton whilst holding the tenancy on West Farm. According to an agricultural assessment commissioned by the YDNPA, it is highly improbable that the Lunds could continue the West Farm tenancy when it ends in 15 years' time.

The land they own is sufficient to require two agricultural dwellings and Stephen Lund wants to secure his future by converting the semi-derelict Parker Barn.

There was concern, however, as to what would happen to Parker Barn if the family did continue at West Farm. Craven District Councillor Robert Heseltine argued that it could then be sold to anyone who was working locally in agriculture or forestry and this could lead to another application for a farm worker's dwelling in the future.

"Occasionally we need to trust farmers," Cllr Blackie said.

And Cllr Welch argued that this decision would not set a precedent and that the Lund family should be applauded for their hard work in building up their own farm. "We should give them the support they deserve," he said.

When proposing that permission should be granted with just an agricultural residency condition Cllr Marshall pointed out that the planning officer had virtually made the case for approval. This included the fact that Stephen and Stuart Lund were already running a financially viable farming business and that Parker Barn was close to other houses even though it was outside the housing development line.

Long Preston - October - The majority of the members voted for the construction of 13 homes at Long Preston even though the parish council and local residents asked them not to.

The first houses to be built on a combined site on Greengate Lane will be the six "affordable" ones for rent or shared ownership in perpetuity. The other seven can be sold on the open market as local occupancy homes.

Long Preston parish councillor, Hilary Baker, told the committee that this would be the largest development in the village in over 24 years. The parish council maintains that the development will dominate and further urbanise the village, and will significantly increase the amount of traffic.

John Matthews, who lives in Long Preston, questioned the evidence to substantiate the need for such housing and asked "What happens when there aren't enough local people to buy the (local occupancy) houses?"

His wife, speaking as a grandmother, highlighted the problem of increased traffic at the junction of Greengate Lane with School Lane especially when young children were going to or leaving school. "It is extremely dangerous. This will be an accident waiting to happen," she said.

Committee member Nick Thwaites, as chairman of Long Preston parish council, stated: "We must listen to Highways - I will not sleep easy if we approve this and there is an accident there."

But the planning officer and several members pointed out that the two sites for this development were included in the YDNPA's Housing Development Plan which was accepted by the Appeal Inspector even though the county council's highways department had objected.

The planning officer reported: "The appropriate time for considering these highways issues should have been, and was, at the time of the adoption of the Housing Development Plan."

The highways department had again objected stating that Greengate Lane was not suitable for the traffic generated by 13 new houses. The first application this year had been for 17 houses but the planning officer felt that would have had a greater impact upon highway safety. The larger site, on which ten dwellings will be built, was formerly used by a haulage firm.

William Weston said that he and other members of the YDNPA's Housing Working Group had spent five years very carefully assessing sites to be included in the Housing Development Plan. "There is clear evidence of the need for housing in the Park and whatever we do cannot be sufficient," he added.

The developer has agreed to sign a legal agreement whereby the affordable houses will be first offered to those living in Long Preston and then to those in adjoining parishes within the National Park (including split parishes) before being made available to the rest of the National Park.

Mr Weston accepted the suggestions made by Cllr Shelagh Marshall that the planning officer should ascertain if it was possible to phase the construction of the local occupancy houses so that not all went up for sale at the same time and that local landowners should be contacted about the provision of a footpath.

Some members pointed out that one of the major problems in developing any of the sites accepted in the Housing Development Plan was finding developers willing to finance such "local housing" projects. That at Long Preston was the first larger project to do so.

Mr Weston commented: "We can't throw out the first of these sites - what kind of signal does that send to developers?"

Cllr Blackie supported him and said that each of the sites in the Housing Development Plan had undergone a rigorous selection process.

The chairman of the committee, Harold Brown stated after the vote: "I think it is important that the Authority supports local housing particularly for local young people."

The three who voted against giving approval were: Mr Thwaites; Cllr Welch who was especially concerned about the safety of children in the village; and Cllr Harrison-Topham who did not feel that sufficient space was being provided for parking vehicles within the development.

Malham Moor - October - There was unanimous agreement that an enforcement notice should be issued for the removal of a tank and hard surfacing on land adjacent to Capon Hall on Malham Moor. The owner will be given one month to comply.

Muker – Scar House Farm

June - Members were unanimous that Bobby Blades should be allowed to re-occupy what had been a house up until the early 19th century but had since been used as a barn.

“It’s a beautiful example of a long house,” commented Cllr Blackie. “It does have historic and architectural significance and merit. I think to convert this into a house would actually complete the appearance of the street scene of the enclave (of houses) there.”

The application included the conversion of the barn which is attached to that “house”, and the removal of a modern agricultural tin building. The agricultural use of these has now been moved to nearby farm buildings.

Peter Charlesworth agreed that there would be a planning gain, especially with the removal of the tin barn, and because there would be no change to the external appearance of the 18th century listed buildings. He added that it would not be a dwelling in open countryside as it was within a row of houses.

Both he and Cllr Malcolm Gardner felt the conversion into living accommodation would enhance the character of that part of Swaledale. And, like other members, were pleased that Mr Blades had amended the plans so that the dividing wall between two ground level rooms would not be removed.

Some members asked if there should be a local need condition included in the planning permission. But Cllr Blackie said that the Authority’s policy did not call for a such an agreement and this was confirmed by the monitoring officer, Richard Daly.

The planning officer had recommended refusal of the application partly because he did not believe that the building required restoration so as to protect its historical and architectural interest. With the unanimous vote the chairman, Harold Brown, asked if the application needed to be referred back for ratification. But Richard Graham said that it should.

July - The majority of the committee again voted to approve the application for the re-occupation of a former dwelling house at Scar House Farm and that the attached barn could be converted to make additional living accommodation.

Peter Charlesworth (chairman of the authority) accepted that this was a departure from the Authority’s B16 policy but believed that support for the application could be justified because the building was not in “open countryside” as it was within a row of dwellings, and that as it had been a house before it did have historical significance in terms of its original

architecture, design and materials. The demolition of a modern barn would also be a planning gain.

Cllr Blackie told the committee that an Upper Dales family wanted to provide accommodation for family members. He pointed out that the listed buildings officer had stated the building did have some architectural and historic interest and added: "Therefore it becomes a matter of judgement to members whether it was significant enough or not."

The planning officer reminded members that: "Saved policy B16 allows the re-occupation of former dwellings outside of development boundaries as an exception to the presumption against residential development in the open countryside. However, in order to comply with this policy, applicants have to demonstrate that the building is either listed or 'of such architectural or historical interest that its restoration in the landscape is justified'." He believed that as the unlisted building was structurally sound it did not need restoration.

Reeth – Orton Works – April -Cllrs Bob Gale and John Blackie requested that there should be a site meeting at Orton Works in Reeth before making a decision on an application by the owner. Both said that the site was a complex one. Cllr Blackie added that he did not want to see the site become derelict and hoped that the committee could help to find a compromise.

They were supported by the chairman of the committee, Harold Brown who stated: "Reeth deserves something to be done with this site." He believed that if the members visited the site they could help move things forward.

But the legal officer, Clare Bevan, explained that a site meeting should relate to a specific planning application and not be a tool for finding an alternative solution.

The members heard that the applicant had stated that he would not compromise and wanted the committee to make a decision regarding the present application. This was for the change of use of part of Orton Works so that a three-bedroom house could be built. The rest of the site would be retained for business use. A local building firm is still using part of the site.

The planning officer had recommended refusal and her reasons included: the poor architectural design of the proposed house; that due to its size the building would result in significant harm to the amenity of residents and nearby houses; and that as an open market dwelling it was not in accordance with the Authority's housing development plan to provide affordable local housing.

The majority of the committee agreed that there should not be a site meeting and that the application should be refused.

Reeth - September - Allowing 20 static caravans at Swaleview Caravan Park near Reeth to become permanent residential homes would be bad for the community, bad for the Dales, and bad for the local town of Richmond argued William Weston.

He explained that allowing elderly people to take up permanent residence on the site would store up massive social problems not only for them but also for the local authority because as they got older the accommodation would become inadequate for their needs. He also questioned the theory that if the site had never flooded it was not likely to given the effects of

climate change and that it was beside a river. And he pointed out that that the applications were aimed at optimising profits.

The agent for the site owners, Rachel Whaley, had told the committee that the owners were having difficulty selling static caravans as holiday homes while having people requesting to buy them as permanent residences. The income generated from such sales would be invested into the further development of the site. In their applications the owners argued that there was an undersupply of new housing within Swaledale and particularly of two-bedroomed properties.

The planning officer, however, pointed out that there had been no test to demonstrate that there were not sufficient suitable sites within development boundaries in that dale. And there would be no local occupancy restrictions on the caravans.

The legal officer, Claire Bevan, reminded members that the only housing permitted outside development boundaries was that for agricultural workers. The planning officer had also recommended refusal on the basis that this would reduce the amount of holiday accommodation available in the national park.

Cllr Blackie warned that the government seemed to be abandoning planning rules and the committee had to be careful to have good legal reasons for refusing such an application. He expected that the owners of Swaleview Caravan Park would take this to appeal if the application was refused.

Cllr Harrison-Topham remarked: "Given the high standards we try to ensure in house building design I find this almost unthinkable - it is so contrary to everything we are about."

The only member who disagreed with the planning officer's recommendation was Cllr Gardner who did described the Environment Agency's argument concerning flooding as spurious and felt that planning rules should be more flexible and pragmatic.

The majority voted in favour of refusing both applications - the first for seven caravans and the second for 13 caravans to become permanent residences.

Rylstone – April - Members were told that John Shuttleworth and his family ran an excellent dairy enterprise at Green Farm and that the substantial extension to it could be largely hidden and landscaped. The new five metre high slurry tank would be sunk into the ground so that only one metre would be above ground level.

There would be a significant amount of excavation and the soil from that would be used to infill some hollows in fields on the farm.

Permission had been granted last year for a new direct access to the B6265. This is under construction and will mean that farm vehicles make much less use of the lanes which serve the hamlet.

The planning officer explained that the number of roof lights in the new dairy buildings had been reduced compared to the plans previously submitted. She noted that the Authority's policy allowed for major developments to take place in exceptional circumstances such as allowing a farming operation to modernise to become more efficient and compliant with the

latest welfare and environmental standards. “There is a danger that if dairy farms are not allowed to expand to keep up with modern standards that they will cease to be viable,” she added.

Cllr Blackie asked if permission had been sought about the disposal of earth before the excavation of the site had begun. He said that recently the committee had dealt with two retrospective planning applications from dairy farms in Coverdale concerning the disposal of such waste and it was important to be consistent.

And Cllr Harrison-Topham pointed out that as dairy farms needed to get larger to survive it was maybe necessary to consult with neighbouring parishes which might also be affected by the construction of bigger buildings.

He was also concerned about the amount of light which could emanate from these buildings, especially when the doors were open. “They can look like an ocean liner passing in the night,” he said.

But the planning officers said that conditions could only cover external lighting.

Mr Weston wondered if, with applications for such large extensions, the farmers could be encouraged to invest in bio-digesters, both to dispose of waste and also to produce electricity.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the application for the new buildings which included a parlour, collecting yard, cattle housing, silos and slurry store.

Sedbergh - Spar car park

April - It was agreed to defer a decision on the application on behalf of Spar to remove the condition on the planning permission concerning recycling facilities at the site at Station Road, Sedbergh.

The parish council wanted these facilities to be provided in the supermarket car park as that would serve the western part of the town and help the shoppers recycle a considerable amount of packaging, cans and bottles. Graham Dalton requested the deferral so that there would be more time for the parish council, the county council and Spar to reach an agreement. This was unanimously agreed.

August - William Weston said lessons needed to be learned after it was reported by a planning officer that one of the conditions on the approval for the construction of the Spar supermarket in Sedbergh was unenforceable.

The planning committee voted for the removal of the condition that recycling facilities should be provided in the supermarket car park after receiving the following report from the planning department: “Officers considered that the original condition was imprecise and therefore is not enforceable. Additionally there is no policy requirement for the provision of such facilities in addition to those already provided at Joss Lane. South Lakeland District Council has confirmed that based on current volumes of waste there is no reason to offer two sites within the town collecting the same materials. On this basis there is no planning justification for the provision of additional recycling facilities and the recommendation of approval consequently remains.”

Sedbergh parish council had been very keen to have recycling facilities in the Spar car park but accepted that the original condition on the approval had been so poorly worded that it was unenforceable.

Sedbergh. - July - There should not be a tendency towards reducing the number of camping and touring caravan pitches in the National Park several members warned when the application to re-model Pinfold Leisure Park on Garsdale Road, Sedbergh was discussed.

At present there are pitches for 56 “static caravans”, 36 touring caravans and 12 tents. Hanley Caravans Ltd applied to change this to 64 static/holiday caravan pitches, 30 touring caravan pitches and six for tents.

Cllr Blackie reminded the committee that such pitches had been swept away at two sites in Wensleydale with the static caravans at Westholme near Aysgarth being replaced with luxury lodges costing up to £250,000. This planning creep, he said, was driving out those with tents and touring caravans at a time when the number using these was increasing.

He argued: “We are not going to have the facilities to accommodate them because we actually pander to the operators of the big sites. This is a great disappointment. I do believe it is stuff and nonsense to say that statics make more of a contribution to the climate change agenda than tourers. What about people who come with a haversack and a tent on their back? If we are not careful there won’t be anything left of certain types of people who want to come along and enjoy our park.”

Both Cllr Marshal and Cllr Gale agreed with him. Cllr Marshall stated: “We should be encouraging everybody to come into the National Park and enjoy it. There should be choices.”

And Cllr Roberts argued that it was a retrograde step to reduce the number of pitches for touring caravans and tents and added that there had been a significant economic loss in Upper Wharfedale since a campsite was closed last year.

Cllr Harrison-Topham pointed out that tents often blended in well with the landscape.

The planning officer, however, stated that the reduction in the number of touring caravan and tent pitches “would help in reducing the impact of the site on the character and appearance of the area by removing caravans and tents over which no control can be exercised with regard to the colour, size or precise siting.”

He reported that the proposal included the change to lodge type caravans and believed that these would be significantly more energy efficient and use fewer natural resources than either static or touring caravans. The remodelling of the site included additional tree and shrub planting, especially along the boundaries.

The majority of the members voted to approve the application. The planning officers assured members that the conditions that the caravans could only be used for holiday purposes and not as anyone’s main residence would be monitored.

Sedbergh – December - Enforcement action should be taken quickly if negotiations with MK Conversions Ltd for the construction of some affordable houses at the former Aqua

Engineering site in Guldrey Lane, Sedbergh, were not successful, Graham Dalton told the committee.

The planning officer reported that a five-bedroom open market house has been built on the site without planning permission. Following an appeal in 2008 permission was granted for one open market and three affordable houses on the condition that an affordable housing scheme should be submitted before any development took place.

Sedbergh parish council has urged the YDNPA not to grant retrospective permission for the new house until a legally binding agreement has been signed which requires that the affordable homes are built and available for occupation within a defined time period.

Just before the meeting the agent for MK Conversions Ltd asked that the proposed development be formally amended to the retention of the existing unauthorised house and the construction of two affordable homes. The committee accepted the planning officer's recommendation that this application should be deferred until the meeting in February in order for further negotiations to be undertaken and for the financial viability of the scheme to be tested independently. Both Mr Dalton and Cllr John Blackie pointed out that a housing association is constructing three affordable homes adjacent to the new house. It might therefore be possible to interest that association in constructing some more as part of a negotiated agreement with MK Conversions Ltd.

Stainforth - November - Farmer Stephen Raine was congratulated by Harold Brown, the chairman of the committee for running his small hill farm near Stainforth at a profit.

Mr Raine's application to build an agricultural worker's dwelling at Garth Nook Farm was approved at the meeting. He can also construct an agricultural building on the farm which is in the Countryside Stewardship scheme. He had proved to the planning officer that there was a need for a full-time worker on the 118 acre farm where he breeds high quality specialist livestock.

The planning officer and committee members accepted that the buildings would be at a high elevation and so clearly visible. Mr Raine has agreed to plant trees so that the site will look like many other traditional farmsteads in the Dales.

Cllr Welch described Mr Raine as a farmer worthy of praise. He assured the committee that the caravan at the farm, which has had an enforcement notice served on it, will be removed. The caravan was especially used at lambing time.

At the end of the debate Mr Brown, as a retired hill farmer, commented: "It is nice to see a hill farmer who is showing a profit this year - so congratulations Mr Raine. We need some farms in these hills and they are getting less through amalgamation and young people not taking them on."

Threshfield – October - Permission was granted for the re-surfacing of six grass pitches with permeable stone, and the enlargement of 18 existing pitches at Wharfedale Caravan Club, Long Ashes Park, Threshfield. The planning officer explained that the objective was to make it easier for disabled people to use the pitches.

Threshfield – Long Ashes

October - Cllr Roberts said that a vote in favour of an application to erect 11 timber lodges at Long Ashes was against the first purpose of a National Park to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage - but he and almost all the other members did that to obtain a “planning gain”.

The planning officer explained that the application was for a revised layout of one approved in the early 1980s which had been partly implemented. The applicants, Lakeland Leisure Estates Ltd, could fully implement the original planning permission. This would, however, affect an archaeological site and would put the new wooden holiday lodges in a more prominent position.

The new site places these within a fold in the hill slope with the main glazing on 10 of the lodges facing the access road so that it would not be visible outside of the site. In return for having this application approved the applicant has agreed to sign a legal agreement rescinding its right to complete the 1980s scheme.

Several members agreed that this was a planning gain but none were comfortable about voting in favour. “With the heaviest heart I support this,” said William Weston and added concerning Long Ashes: “The National Park Authority needs to take a grip on this development.”

After the vote, which was passed with three abstentions, Cllr John Roberts commented: “I have voted against the first purpose of this National Park.”

During the debate Cllr Heseltine said that he remembered the days when Long Ashes was a small caravan site near the village of Threshfield. “We now have an urban village of 300 chalets and the population of Long Ashes is probably larger than that of Threshfield. But in this instance there is a degree of planning gain.”

Cllr Roberts told the committee that it was possible that there were archaeological remains at Long Ashes which dated back to the earliest settlements in the Dales.

Durham University Archaeology Unit has been brought in as consultants by the applicant to carry out an excavation study, preserve any archaeology and advise on an interpretation panel. Archaeological investigation will be included in the conditions on the permission as well as ecology management such as controlling bracken on calcareous grassland around the site. The committee was informed that this would help in the restoration of nationally threatened Northern Brown Argus habitat.

The lodges must be for holiday accommodation only. The planning officer stated, however, that there would be no pre-conditions such as setting a date for completion. Non-compliance with pre-conditions has led to some planning permissions being made unenforceable.

November: - Cllr Roberts argued forcibly against an additional 15 static caravans at Long Ashes Holiday Park. He asked if the siting of those caravans would enhance and preserve the character of the National Park in accordance with its first purpose. “In my view it doesn’t” he said.

In her submission on behalf of Lakeland Leisure Estates Ltd which owns the holiday park, Rachel Whaley, pointed out that the parish council had not objected to caravans being placed

on two small sites. She said that at a recent appeal hearing the YDNPA had not been that concerned about the impact of placing seven caravans on one of these. She added: "Yet now (it is) being considered in isolation it feels that the goal posts are being moved."

She explained that the two sites did not encroach on any fields, and that if 15 more caravans were added the park would still not have reached the total allowed there. At present there are 260 static caravans and chalets and approval has been given for 300. Mrs Whaley concluded that clear economic and environmental benefits would be delivered with this application.

Both Cllr Roberts and Peter Charlesworth, chairman of the YDNPA, quoted the appeal inspector's report concerning the proposal last year to redevelop and extend the Park. The decision to refuse that application, which included the siting of 49 additional static caravans, was upheld by the appeal inspector.

In his report the inspector stated that he did not consider that the siting of seven additional static caravans on one of the two sites now being proposed would have any materially harmful impact. But he added that it did not form part of a comprehensive remodelling of the park which would produce significant overall visual or environmental improvements. The inspector believed that the placing of static caravans on the second small site would have a marked visual intrusion on the open and undeveloped land nearby.

Cllr Marshall asked if Lakeland Leisure could put forward a long term development plan for the park. She also felt it would be helpful to have information about the actual occupancy of the caravans and chalets in the park. The majority of the committee accepted the planning officer's recommendation to refuse the application.