

## YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

### COMMENTS ON PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY CHANGES

#### COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL AREAS

##### Yorkshire Dales – Western Extension

###### ***Natural Beauty***

The proposed Western extension, with Middleton, Barbon and Leck Fells, is part of a continuous landscape with the Whernside and Dentsdale areas. It is patently absurd that, as one passes through the wonderful U-shaped valley of Barbondale, at a certain innocent-looking stone wall one moves from the Yorkshire Dales National Park into land that is identical but has no designation or protection.

###### ***Boundary***

The Lune valley itself, and the fells on the western side (including Firbank Fell) are an integral part of this landscape. Their inclusion would enable a coherent western boundary to the Park to be drawn, rather than the rather arbitrary boundary that currently exists.

In practical terms, it would be simplest if the revised western boundary of the National Park boundary were to run in part along the old Scotch Road. This would provide a clear boundary 'on the ground', and minimise the degree to which the parishes of Mansergh and Killington would be split.

###### ***Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation***

The area has a good network of rights of way and areas of open access under the CROW act, suitable for walking, cycling, horse riding and other outdoor pursuits. It also contains a significant area of limestone geology on Leck Fell, with an extensive network of underground caverns, offering fine opportunities for underground exploration and research.

###### ***Desirability of Designation***

The quality of the landscape is matched by its vulnerability to harm by insensitive development. The area offers considerable scope for development of its potential for outdoor recreation, and interpretation of its cultural heritage.

###### ***Other Important Information***

The cultural significance of this area in terms of its Quaker heritage should not be underestimated. George Fox's sermon on Firbank Fell was a seminal moment in the development of the Quaker movement. Quaker philosophy has had a major impact both nationally and internationally on the development of business and political ideas.

## **Yorkshire Dales – Northern Extension**

### **Natural Beauty/Boundary**

Looking at the Northern extension, the current boundary cuts across the top of the Howgill Fells – where it is possible to stand with one foot in land designated as a National Park and the other in land with no protection, and yet these are clearly part of the same massif. This is a major anomaly.

Further east in this proposed extension is the superb valley of Mallerstang, bounded on one side by Wild Boar Fell and on the other by Mallerstang Edge. This area adjoins land designated either as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park or of the North Pennines AONB and it is part of a continuous landscape - yet it has no protection. It has always seemed silly that the magnificent Wild Boar Fell is undesignated, while the adjacent but duller Baugh Fell is protected by National Park status.

The area's high quality landscapes were excluded originally on the basis of administrative boundaries that are irrelevant to the issue of whether an area is worthy of National Park status.

## **Orton Fells**

### ***Natural Beauty***

The Orton Fells are an area of fine limestone landscape with small villages, sitting at a lower level than the National Parks and AONB close by, and complementing them by providing longer-distance views of the surrounding landscape. This enhances the feelings of remoteness and tranquillity experienced when passing through the area.

### ***Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation***

The area has a good network of rights of way and large areas of open access, and is crossed by the route of the Coast-to-Coast walk and (in the near future) the Pennine Bridleway). In addition, the local road network is ideal for cycling.

### ***Is National Park Designation the Most Desirable Option for the Orton Fells?***

The effectiveness of an AONB depends to a large extent on the willingness and ability of the local authority to provide financial and staff support. In this case, the local authority in which the Orton Fells lie is a small County District with limited resources. We believe that National Park status would be much more effective than AONB status in providing the protection the area warrants, and also on giving access to established sources of the necessary relevant expertise and experience to deliver the conservation, enhancement and interpretation of its landscape and cultural heritage.

### ***In Which National Park Should the Orton Fells Be Included?***

We believe that the landscapes and heritage of the Orton fells have much more in common with the Yorkshire Dales than with the Lake District.

There are direct road links with Swaledale and Wensleydale, which in the latter case would give good access to and from the National Park offices in Bainbridge for ease of administration.

In particular, it would be very odd to have this area as “part of the Lake District National Park” contiguous with the northern Yorkshire Dales National Park boundary for several miles along the A685 but separated from the Lake District proper by an area not of National Park quality around the M6.

### ***Other Comments***

If the decision were taken that the Orton Fells should be incorporated in the Lake District National Park, then we believe that there may be no need to provide for a ‘washover’ area to link them. There is a precedent, in that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is split into four separate sub-areas by areas on the north and south of Milford Haven that are excluded from the National Park, and by the area around Fishguard.

If this option were chosen, then we believe that the A685 would form a clear and simple boundary between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The YDS welcomes this review of the boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. We believe that extension of the National Park boundaries to cover each of the five areas proposed is fully justified, based on the criteria set out by Natural England.

We consider the primary issue to be the designation of these five areas. We regard issues such as whether the Orton Fells should be in the Lake District or the Yorkshire Dales National Park, and (in the latter case) whether the Park’s name should be changed, and if so what it should be, as secondary.

Given the results of recent research on the impacts of National Park status, published by the Campaign for National Parks (‘Prosperity and Protection: The Economic Impacts of National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber Region’, pub. 2006), we are convinced that designation of the proposed extension areas as part of a National Park will have a positive impact on local communities.

**Yorkshire Dales Society**  
**17 March 2010**