

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
AUDIT & REVIEW COMMITTEE

16<sup>th</sup> June 2006

**COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS – HALF YEARLY RETURNS**

**Purpose of report**

To inform Members of compliments and complaints received by the Authority and handled under the compliments and complaints procedure during the period December 2005 to May 2006 inclusive

**Strategic Planning Framework**

The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework.

**Background**

The Audit & Review Committee monitors, on a half-yearly basis, the compliments and complaints received by the Authority under its compliments and complaints procedure. **Appendix A** sets out details of compliments received during the period December 2005 to May 2006, including a summary of the compliment, and the area of Authority work to which the compliment relates. Eighteen compliments were received in the period; this compares with twenty compliments received in the previous half year, and eleven received in the corresponding period in 2004/2005.

**Appendix B** is a summary of complaints handled during the period comprising brief details of the complaint and the findings; including whether or not the Authority upheld the complaint; timescale to complete the process; and the area of work to which the complaint relates. During the period, two complaints were processed (compared with thirteen in the previous period and five in the corresponding period in 2004/05). Members may wish to note that, during the current period, there has been a number of "pre-complaints" ie instances where officers have spent time discussing the issues and actioning immediate responses where appropriate, after which the potential complainant has been satisfied that the issue has been resolved without recourse to formal complaints proceedings.

Details of the complaints received are given in a private report later in the agenda.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the report be noted.

LESLEY KNEVITT  
SECRETARIAT ADMINISTRATOR

Background documents: None  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2006

## Appendix A

### DETAIL OF COMPLIMENTS HANDLED during period December 2005 to May 2006 inclusive

| Ref No | Date compliment received | Name of complimenter                                 | Summary of compliment  | Department            | Area of work          |
|--------|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 217    | 30.11.05                 | Maggie Engledow, Broads Authority                    | Letter praising Rae Lonsdale (Volunteer Co-ordinator) on excellent organisation of seminar for National Park Staff Development Group, along with personal hospitality and informative tour of south of Park  | Park Management       | Volunteers            |
| 218    | 16.12.05                 | A&R Committee  | Expression of thanks and gratitude to Richard Burnett (Head of Finance & Resources) and his finance staff, in particular Irene Brannon (Senior Finance Officer), for work carried out in ensuring that the Authority received an unqualified opinion on the annual accounts  | Finance & Resources   | Finance               |
| 219    | 11.01.06                 | Elizabeth Bradley, MENCAP Society                    | Thanks to staff at Hawes and Aysgarth National Park Centres for their help in promoting the sale of Christmas cards, and in particular the "efficiency of the staff at Hawes".   | External Affairs      | National Park Centres |
| 220    | 06.02.06                 | Anonymous  | Note of thanks to Richard Mainman (Access Ranger Lower Wharfedale) and Josie Simpson (Ranger Services Admin Officer) for clearing litter along the route to Burnsall   | Park Management       | Rangers               |
| 221    | 06.02.06                 | Veronica Boulton                                     | Note of congratulations to Louise Williams (Limestone Country Project Officer) for standard of presentation to YDS meeting – "... one of the best I have ever seen. Her enthusiasm bubbled away during the talk and she dealt admirably with all of the questions thrown at her. She is a real credit to the YDNPA". | Conservation & Policy | Ecology               |
| 222    | 01.02.06                 | Nic Wheeler and Diane Alwyn, Pembrokeshire Coast NPA | Letter of appreciation from Nic Wheeler to David Butterworth with praise and thanks to Julie Barker (Sustainable Tourism Manager) for hosting visit – impressed by the Park and the organisation, and by the preparation and professionalism of the teams  | External Affairs      | Sustainable Tourism   |

| Ref No | Date compliment received | Name of complimenter                               | Summary of compliment  | Department                       | Area of work          |
|--------|--------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 223    | 04.02.06                 | Anne Keily   | Letter thanking Paul Sheehan (Access Ranger, Lower Wensleydale) for prompt attention to re-positioning of right of way signs to prevent possible problems with young stock   | Park Management                  | Rangers               |
| 224    | 08.03.06                 | Ian Cuthbert                                       | Letter written to Wilf Fenten (Member) saying "perhaps you could let her (Kath Taylor, Communications Manager) know of the high regard I hold for her in her professional approach, and her efficient and courteous responses to my moans". Praise reiterated by Mr Fenten | External Affairs                 | Communications        |
| 225    | 16.02.06                 | R G Kelly  | Wishes to congratulate the Authority on the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders imposed on green lanes around Austwick  | Park Management                  | Access                |
| 226    | 02.04.06                 | Christine Jenkinson, Clerk Thornton in Lonsdale PC | Letter of thanks to Daniel Child (Senior Area Planning Officer) for "very successful visit (to a parish council meeting); your patient and comprehensive answers helped residents to a greater understanding and acceptance of the regulations"                            | Planning                         | Development Control   |
| 227    | 03.05.06                 | Joan and Tony Buck                                 | Card to Yoredale staff and Members, expressing thanks for and appreciation of "informative open evening, and hospitality"  | Authority                        | Event Management      |
| 229    | 05.05.06                 | Ken Miller, on behalf of Ramblers Association      | Congratulations to the Authority on the way it reacted to the NERC Act, and personal credit to Jon Avison (Head of Park Management) for time and effort spent on "lobbying the right people in the right places"   | Park Management                  | Policy                |
| 230    | 07.05.06                 | Michael Bartholomew                                | Congratulations to the Authority on "skilful approach to contentious issue" relating to green lanes/NERC Act, including personal thanks to Jon Avison (Head of Park Management) for well-considered response   | Park Management                  | Policy                |
| 231    | 09.05.06                 | Mr C R Smith                                       | Overall appreciation of Reeth National Park Centre, where "staff very helpful, and good stock"   | External Affairs                 | National Park Centres |
| 232    | 11.05.06                 | Tom Dale   | Congratulations to Authority for improvements to bridleways in the Winterburn/Hetton/Craoe area – "all involved deserve immense praise and congratulation ... a major advance in countryside access for mountain bikers"   | Park Management                  | Access/Rangers        |
| 233    | 09.05.06                 | Ruth Chambers, Council for National Parks          | Impressed with press release relating to NERC Act ProW legislation changes, and information on the website – suggests "other NPAs should be as proactive"  | External Affairs/Park Management | Communications        |

| Ref No | Date compliment received | Name of complimenter | Summary of compliment   | Department       | Area of work          |
|--------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| 234    | 22.05.06                 | Mrs Naomi Dwyer      | Praise for Information staff at Reeth, Malham and Aysgarth who were able to give detailed information in answer to questions using their own knowledge, or with reference to computers or books – “nothing was too much trouble for them. The way the centres in the Yorkshire Dales are run should be used as examples for national parks in other areas of the country” | External Affairs | National Park Centres |
| 235    | 15.05.06                 | Mr Tony Huntington   | Letter complimenting Karen Griffiths (Interpretation Officer) on production of booklet "Ancient Trackways" on behalf of YDMT, in particular the artwork which "is quite outstanding"  | External Affairs | Communications        |

\* No compliment recorded at #228.

## SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS HANDLED during period December 2005 - May 2006 inclusive

## Appendix B

*NB entries in italics show cases reported to last committee which were unresolved at that time*

Key: CEO = Chief Executive Officer  
HoD = Head of Department

| Ref No | Date complaint received | Area of work                             | Stage | Summary of complaint  | Findings/current situation   | Time taken to complete |
|--------|-------------------------|--|-------|---|--|------------------------|
| 0096   | 21.02.06                | Planning – handling of application       | 1 HoD | Cites maladministration in terms of delays in consideration of application lack of correspondence, only partial information given to complainant as agent for applicant, and contends that “system is stacked in favour of objectors” | Explanation of sequence of events confirming no maladministration. Felt that Authority has not acted unreasonably considering circumstances of application | 10 days                |
| 0097   | 23.05.06                | Planning - listed building / enforcement | 1 HoD | Complains that adjacent Grade II Listed property is being developed contrary to conservation restrictions; alleges that Authority has failed in its duty to protect building of historical interest                                   |  |                        |