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NEWSLETTER

A warm welcome

During this year we are delighted to welcome into membership Mr and Mrs Alderson, Mr James Innerdale, Mr Michael Parkinson, Mrs Kath Mason, Mr Steve and Mrs Sue Amphlett. Your support in these hard times is most welcome.

And it is a great pleasure to welcome our new Chair, Pam Jordan. As we face further disruption to our local governance her leadership, based on knowledge of all things North Craven, will be a great asset to the Trust.

Chair's message

This is my first 'Chair's Message' and I would like to start by reiterating the thanks made to my predecessor, John Asher, and to fellow Trustee, Mike Slater at our recent AGM. John has been an excellent Chair of the Trust and there can be no better an example of his dedication, enthusiasm and hard work than the exceptional 'A Green New Dales' conference which was masterminded by him, along with Friends of the Dales, this autumn. I am very pleased that he is remaining a Trustee and has taken on the Publicity role as well as becoming a Vice President.

One only has to look at the Archives section of our website to see examples of the work of Mike Slater and researchers, for many years to come, will feel grateful to the foresight of Mike, and others, for transcribing important parts of our local heritage. He also edited the Journal for a number of years and has helped in countless other ways towards the smooth running of the Trust and I am sorry that he has decided to retire.

To misquote Shakespeare, with exits there are also entrances and I am delighted to welcome Michael Pearson and Sue Cariss as new Trustees. They were both co-opted by the Committee earlier this year and their appointments ratified at the AGM. Michael, who is well known to many of

you, became Editor of the Journal last year producing an excellent edition to read just as we went into the initial lockdown. He is busy finalising next year's Journal at the moment. Sue has taken on organising our Programme – not an easy thing to do in the middle of a pandemic – and has ensured we have a varied programme of Zoom talks until the end of April. Let us hope that by then we will be able to return to something more like normal!

I seem to have taken on my new role at a challenging time. Unfortunately both the proposed planning reforms and the possibility of a unitary authority threaten North Craven as we know it. As members of the Trust one of our main duties, from our earliest days, has been to monitor each and every planning application, and comment if we felt necessary. Under new proposals, once land has been designated into a particular 'zone' at the local plan stage, there will be no opportunity for the public to comment at the detailed planning stage. I do hope you will spread the word about this threat to our local democracy which would hamper the work of the Trust in caring for and preserving the beauty and heritage of our area.

Our Zoom talks appear to have been very well received and I hope to see you all at our Zoom Mince Pie event on 13th December and get to know you all better.

Pam Jordan

A Green New Dales

A climate emergency! Aren't there more important issues to deal with in the middle of a pandemic? No, actually; Covid may be more urgent, but climate is more important by far, or so Bruce McLeod, Chair of Friends of the Dales, and I decided. Over several coffees in the Folly pre-pandemic, Bruce and I wrestled with how best our two organisations, North Craven Heritage Trust and Friends of the Dales, could help our beloved Dales adapt to, and mitigate the effects of, climate change.

Our solution reflected the topography of the Dales – upland penetrated by valleys on all sides, valleys which link primarily with their own lowland areas. One result of this is that the Dales are governed by three county, five district and some 85 town and parish councils, although thankfully with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in the driving seat for large parts of the agenda.

What is true for politics is true for voluntary organisations and activists, generally based in centres of population downstream. The main focus of politicians and organisations is where the people are, down in those lowlands. Perhaps, we thought, it might help the National Park if we encouraged local government, civil society and experts to meet together to share plans and ideas for the uplands. Gary Smith, Director of Conservation and Community for the Park Authority, gave the plan the thumbs up.

One hundred delegates signed up to Zoom over two half-days in October. We heard seven speakers inspire us with political and economic objectives, and how farming, tree planting, river management and landscape partnerships can best meet those objectives. Discussion was expertly chaired by Mark Corner and Julie Martin. The focus changed from ‘How can we protect the Dales and manage climate change?’ to envisioning a Green New Dales, better for all who live in, work in and visit the Dales.

The talks and discussion showed the scale and diversity of the challenges, which should now be more clearly understood and widely shared between politicians and people. As a reminder, and to spread the message beyond those attending, we have issued these challenges to national and local government at all levels, landowners, farmers, businesses, statutory and voluntary sector organisations, visitors and individuals. They can be found, along with the slides and videos from the presentations, at <http://www.northcravenheritage.org.uk/NCHT/PastEvents.htm>.

We hope that they will inspire all of us who love the Dales in our programmes for action. *John Asher*

The future of local democracy in North Craven

Some of you will know that it is highly likely that Craven District Council will cease to exist as a result of North Yorkshire County Council’s determination to become a single unitary authority. This is a sad day for democracy and for the future governance of our area and we must see it as a strong wake-up call to

everyone in our communities to be well-prepared for what is to come. We believe that North Craven, due to its location at the furthest ‘outpost’ of the County, is at great risk of being completely side-lined, with little local government representation. Because of very poor communication from the centre, it is only very recently that members of the public are slowly becoming aware of the situation and many are still not.

Anne Read and Pam Jordan have written a letter to the Craven Herald, which was published in the issue of 19 November and which can be summarised here:

North Craven Heritage Trust, together with Friends of the Dales, Craven Community Land Trust and North Craven Building Preservation Trust, recently submitted detailed responses to the Government’s Changes to the Current Planning System and to the White Paper on Planning Reform. We highlighted the fact that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all approach’ for our area and to allow it would be to completely disenfranchise those people who best understand their own situation. In our area, key priorities are the simultaneous provision, on equal terms, of the necessary infrastructure to support affordable housing (including rental and social housing) and business land, linked to job opportunities, improved public transport, health and social care and education, against the existing backdrop of depopulation and withdrawal of services. The future of many of our local communities is hanging in the balance as many new homes are being bought up by people moving from the big cities as a result of the pandemic; others are bought as holiday homes or rental properties, pricing local families and young people out of the market.

Very few parishes in Craven have yet produced comprehensive Neighbourhood Plans, and we strongly believe that it is now urgent for our individual parishes and neighbourhoods to be assessing and summarising their own particular problems and priorities, in preparation for a further consultation process which will supposedly take place early in 2021. We have just emailed all the parish/town councils in North Craven asking for their co-operation. It is hard to see how further distancing from the central decision-making body in Northallerton is going to benefit our area, especially against the backdrop of the increased spending cuts forecast by the Leader of the County Council.

To view the Trust’s response to Government, see ‘News’ on the home page of our website.

In spite of the poor timing of all these proposed changes, it is important for us to remain constructive in our thinking and it is the Trust's intention to act as a catalyst for positive action. We appeal to you, our members, to make your views known without delay to your MP, local councillors and neighbourhood groups.

Anne Read

The Journal and advertising

We are delighted that local businesses support us through buying some 5 pages of advertising in our annual Journal. These businesses do much to offset the costs of the Journal. I hope that members will support them.

This year, however, has been hard for our local traders and the committee has decided that we will not ask them for payment but will print somewhat reduced adverts on their behalf without charge.

Looking forward to our 2022 issue we hope to revert to paid adverts and will need a volunteer to contact each advertiser, agree the advert, cost and method of payment – once it is safe to do so. Please contact Michael Pearson, Journal Editor (015242 51794), for more details. It's a great way to support both NCHT and our local businesses.

Publications

Looking for Christmas presents? How about one of David Johnson's books published by NCHT?

Time Please! Lost Inns, Pubs and Alehouses of the Yorkshire Dales (£9.99) or *Settle: A Historic Market Town* (£5.00) can be bought through Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (ydmt.org). If you live in Settle, the Folly and Limestone Books are stockists. Limestone Books offer a click and collect service (01729 268180) or will post for a postage fee. If you are shielding and live in Settle, Giggleswick, Langcliffe or Stainforth Tanya will deliver free of charge.

For an unusual stocking filler, or to use yourself, why not get a pack or more of NCHT doorhead cards? Normally retailing at £2.50, we are offering them to members at £8 for a pack of five cards with envelopes, post-paid. Email john@joesclose.co.uk or phone 01729 825075. Payment by BACS, please.

Our Zoom programme

We are delighted with the attendance at our Zoom talks. As the first person to give a talk to NCHT on Zoom, Robin Bundy felt that members might find it interesting to hear how it was for him on his side of the laptop camera.

Malhamdale – Journeys through Time: a speaker's perspective on Zoom.

I was already scheduled to speak in September but at the time we were thinking about arranging a programme for the winter months we didn't know how many of you would be confident to join on a virtual platform. I had used Zoom, though only at that stage with small groups and certainly hadn't presented a lecture remotely, but I was prepared to give it a go. I had the research material for Education in Malhamdale that was the talk I was programmed to give but hadn't given any thought about what I would actually say nor had I started to put the PowerPoint slides together. I was reluctant to spend time preparing the lecture only to find that only the trustees plus one man and his dog "turned up" on the night. Talks, for me at least, always take many more hours to prepare than one expects. I had, though, the Malhamdale talk "in the can" as it were, having put it together as an after dinner session for visitors to Newfield Hall Holiday Fellowship centre. It would only need a bit of tweaking for NCHT members and I was happy to give it a go.

The day came. John Asher and I had got together for a short Zoom call to run through the technology so we weren't anticipating any snags there, but you can never be sure that the broadband won't drop out or suddenly you can't find the button to de-mute yourself.

I set up my laptop and made sure I wasn't going to sit where a pot plant would appear to grow out of my head. I resisted the temptation to place a display of erudite looking books in camera shot behind me. I live alone and don't have a cat or dog so no potential noises from those sources. The phone was behind two doors.

We started. John muted everyone, PowerPoint filled my screen, apart from a small shot of myself as the speaker in the top corner. I started to speak. Not a cough, no squeak of a chair, I was talking to silence. I carried on but it became more difficult to imagine an unseen audience out there. There was no one to pick out to talk to and as I continued I had to concentrate when my thoughts began to wander and I realised my speech was tailing off. I had to resist the temptation to scratch my nose or other parts of my body, but we got through. I was gratified by the number of you who did attend and questions demonstrated that most of you had stayed awake. I have given the talk again since then and with a smaller group unmuted and a small gallery view alongside the slides it was much more satisfying for me.

To those of you who attended, thank you very much for supporting us. To those of you who didn't because of unfamiliarity with Zoom please join us next time. It's not difficult!

Robin Bundy