



Dark Sky Reserve bid endorsed

Bainbridge, 1 July 2020

An application for International Dark Sky Reserve status for the Yorkshire Dales National Park has been endorsed by the National Park Authority's board, after research showed the quality of the dark sky in the Dales to be 'exceptional'.

Yesterday's [annual general meeting](#) of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) heard that more than 400 light measurements had been taken at night across 290 locations in the National Park from late 2018 through to early spring this year.

More than 100 locations had readings of 21.2mpas (magnitudes per square arcsecond) or more, which is the minimum requirement for a Dark Sky Reserve.

Members of the board agreed that the core area of the Dark Sky Reserve could comprise a large arc of land around but not including Hawes, taking in the upper ends of Swaledale, Rawthey Valley, Garsdale, Littondale and Wharfedale. The core area would cover 30% of the entire National Park.

Members also adopted a Light Management Plan. It contains principles on external lighting which will be given effect in the [next Local Plan](#).

Nick Cotton, the YDNPA's Member Champion for Recreation Management, said: "I would like to thank the National Park Authority volunteers who worked alongside members of local astronomy groups to gather the light readings necessary to support our Dark Sky Reserve application. The dark sky in the National Park has been recognised as one of its special qualities for many years. Now we've got the data to back it up."

"Dark Sky Reserve status will help us gain international recognition and preserve the dark sky of the National Park. It has the potential to boost the tourism economy too. On a clear winter's night in the National Park you can see the Milky Way, planets, shooting stars and sometimes even the northern lights. People will come to stay in the National Park for that. Our [dark skies festival](#), run with local businesses, goes from strength to strength and shows the high level of interest amongst visitors and residents alike."

"Many Parish Councils have become keen supporters of obtaining Dark Sky Reserve status for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. I would encourage those councils who haven't yet got involved to send in a letter of support, as we need to demonstrate that the reserve bid has strong community support."

The full Authority meeting heard that the aim was to submit the application to the International Dark Sky Association by the end of July. The bid document is currently being finalised with the help of YDMT Consultants Limited and Fiona Southern of Carrock Landscapes Ltd.

In February, [local businesses led an appeal](#) for people to sign a [pledge of support](#) for the bid. So far, 424 of pledges have been signed.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park would become the fourth National Park in England to become a Dark Sky Reserve, after Northumberland, Exmoor and The South Downs.

Achieving Dark Sky Reserve status is [objective A2 of the National Park Management Plan 2019-24](#).

The proposed Dark Sky area is bounded in blue on the map below:

