



Building Value

Public benefits of historic farm building and drystone wall repairs in the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Valuing the Historic Environment 3



ENGLISH HERITAGE



defra

Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

The maintenance of historic buildings and field walls not only contributes to the quality of the landscape and its enjoyment by the public but creates employment, supports local economies and sustains craft skills. A project commissioned by English Heritage and Defra has evaluated these effects in detail for the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

In 2006, English Heritage and Defra, in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Natural England, commissioned ADAS UK and the Countryside and Community Research Unit of the University of Gloucestershire to undertake an evaluation of the social, economic and public benefits of several different programmes of repairs to traditional farm buildings and drystone walls in the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP).

The Yorkshire Dales was designated as a National Park in 1954 and covers an area of 1762 km². There are around 8.3 million day visits to the park each year. The network of drystone walls which can be seen throughout the Dales stretch over 8,689 km and there are more than 6,000 stone built field barns in the National Park.

The research examined six schemes, under which landowners and farmers were eligible to apply for grant funding for traditional farm building and drystone walling repairs: the Defra Pennine Dales ESA Scheme, Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) and Countryside Stewardship; Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Barns and Walls Conservation Scheme; Farm Conservation Scheme and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

The major source of funding for barns and walls in the study was the Defra grant schemes, which were delivered by the former Rural Development Service now part of Natural England, which accounted for more than 80% of building and 85% of walling grants.

The evaluation project focused on the period 1998 to 2004, during which investment in grants totalled over £6.71 million.

The project sought to rigorously define the benefits delivered by this repair programme in addition to the important heritage conservation work which was its primary objective. These collateral benefits include the creation of employment, inputs to the local economy, support for craft skills, advantages to farm businesses and landscape enhancement from the perspective of both residents and visitors.

Allowing for additionality, displacement and multiplier effects, the key findings of the project were that:

- During the study period over 517 traditional farm buildings and 191 km of drystone walls were restored.
- Without the injection of funding over three quarters of the traditional farm buildings repaired were otherwise likely to become derelict.
- Prior to restoration, a third of the buildings were not used. After restoration an estimated usable floor space of over 40,000 m² was available with 95% of the buildings repaired now in productive use mainly for agricultural purposes, especially the housing of livestock and fodder crops.
- Building and walling work was carried out by local firms and is estimated to have created 74 jobs in the National Park and its wider local area. Of these 41 full time equivalent jobs were created by building schemes and up to 33 jobs created through walling schemes, with around 23 of these generated as a result of direct employment on walling projects.
- Allowing for direct, indirect and induced effects, the building and walling schemes have resulted in a total injection of between £7.08 million and £9.12 million to the local economy, with every £1 expenditure on repair work on buildings resulting in a total output within the wider local area of £2.48 (£1.92 for walling).
- The schemes have helped maintain the barns and walls landscape which is a major part of the character and special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and a significant attraction for its economically important tourism industry.

The Valuing the Historic Environment series reports new research into the social and economic value of heritage. For copies of this leaflet, please contact English Heritage Customer Services Department on 0870 333 1181 or email customers@english-heritage.org.uk. Product Code: 51309. Published April 2007. www.english-heritage.org.uk and www.helm.org.uk

Overleaf: Field barn at Healaugh, Swaledale during repairs under an ESA Conservation Plan. Photograph Robert White, YDNPA

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