

## **Danby Group Parish Caretaker Scheme Summary**

### **Taken from Community Caretaker: Monitoring and Evaluation FINAL REPORT by Neil Powe and Rebecca Marcus November 2004**

Danby's village caretaker project has been running since July 2000 and the role has evolved to reflect the needs of the local area.

The key tasks are:

- Providing information and advice to visitors.
- Keep community areas free from litter.
- Cut thistles and maintain community features and generally keep the area looking tidy.
- Undertake 'lengths man' duties such as cleaning ditches.
- Help with snow clearance in key locations.
- Maintain regular liaison with the NPA.
- Act quickly to specific issues that arise, dealing with the problem directly or reporting it to the appropriate authority.

An example of the tasks that were written in the legal contract for the Danby scheme -

- Maintaining areas identified by the community clean and litter free, these include roadside verges, car parks, footpaths and areas of open space within the project area.
- Cutting thistles/nettles between June and August in areas identified by the community, these include roadside verges, and areas of open space within the project area.
- Ensuring the war memorial in Commondale and cross in Westerdale are kept maintained to an agreed standard. This includes cleaning and control of encroaching vegetation, but not building or major repair.
- General day to day 'lengths man' duties including maintaining footpaths, road verges, run offs and cleaning signs, but not any major repairs.
- Clearance of snow and appropriate treatment on footpaths in the main shopping area of Castleton and around old people bungalows.

The role was modified in 2003. It was changed to promote more sustainable tourism activities by visitors. The caretaker is now known as a steward, has a uniform and a pick up. The following tasks have been added to the contract –

- To provide information and advice to visitors, and to be proactive in doing so by working in key visitor locations at appropriate times and being easily identifiable to the visitors.
- To be up to date at all times with all relevant visitor information and opportunities, including any special events etc, through working with local tourism businesses and the North York Moors Information service.
- To feedback relevant information to the National Park Authority regarding visitor requirements to assist the Authority in improving sustainable tourism opportunities locally.

The monitoring process started in June 2003 and ended in May 2004. When the post began there was a back log of work. Having completed the back log of work it was clear that there was still plenty of work to be done.

#### Positives –

- Has become a trusted liaison with other service providers and reporting problems.
- Providing directions for visitors.

#### Negatives –

- A problem defining the boundaries of the caretaker role.
- Another problem that has occurred was the caretaker giving guidance but been unsure whether he should have or not.
- The caretaker sometimes has to make quick decisions which have made him feel uncomfortable.

It was suggested that there had been a marked improvement since the employment of the caretaker in areas of safety and keeping the place neat and tidy. The importance of employing a local person was emphasised. Problems that arise can be solved much quicker. It was noted that everyone knew the caretaker and has grown to trust him.