



# Illuminet Solutions & Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Half-Year Update | April 2025





# YDMT 2025-2028 Strategy!

We're really excited to share our new 3 year strategy that will underpin our work as we adapt to changing needs and priorities. Over the next 3 years we will need to work harder than ever before to tackle the overlapping crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and inequality in access to nature. We know that we cannot do this alone. That is why our **2025-2028 Strategy** is centred around building partnerships and enabling others to deliver with us. We look forward to developing our partnership with you to help realise our vision for a thriving Yorkshire Dales.

## Our Purpose

To bring people together to care for, enhance and appreciate the unique qualities of the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding areas.

## Our Vision

A Yorkshire Dales with thriving communities, resilient landscapes and abundant wildlife that provides a sense of belonging and inspiration to everyone.

## Why we need to act now



### Inequalities in access to nature

The opportunity to access nature is not equal. In 2022 77% of visitors to the Yorkshire Dales National Park were over 45, 70% were in A,B,C1 social grades, 97% were white and only 10% had a long-standing health issue or disability.<sup>1</sup>



### The climate emergency

2023 and 2022 were the hottest years on record in the UK.<sup>4</sup>

The climate emergency requires an unprecedented step-change in land use to help meet net zero carbon targets. In the Yorkshire Dales we have the potential to increase the scale and pace of nature conservation to combat the harmful effects of a changing climate.



### Nature Recovery



Only 6% of the total land area of National Parks is currently managed effectively for nature<sup>2</sup>, and an estimated 2,000 species may have been lost from Yorkshire in the last 200 years.<sup>3</sup>

The Yorkshire Dales is one of the last refuges for well over 100 nationally important species. We need to ensure it remains a place where species recover and are able to spread.

## People

### Inspire people to visit, live sustainably and care for this special area

We will help to create an inclusive and welcoming Yorkshire Dales that is accessible to everyone. We will give people the knowledge and skills to create long-lasting connections between each other and this special area, with a focus on connecting young and underrepresented groups with nature.

#### Together with our partners we aim to:

- Tackle inequalities in access, with a focus on our most underrepresented communities.
- Create opportunities for young people to benefit from outdoor experiences and get employment in the environment sector.
- Enable local community groups and supporters to develop new skills and contribute to the sustainable future of the area.

## Landscape

### Conserve and celebrate the landscape and heritage of the Dales

Our work will enhance the qualities that make our landscapes unique, providing funding and support that helps to maintain, restore and improve our outstanding natural and rural heritage.

We will build partnerships that increase the scale and pace of nature recovery making our landscapes more resilient to the harmful effects of climate change.

#### Working with farmers, land managers and communities, we aim to deliver a range of benefits:

- Increase tree cover to create a more wooded and resilient landscape.
- Enhance and expand species-rich grasslands.
- Support ecological systems, including providing nature based solutions to reduce flood risk in our major cities.
- Restore our rich built and cultural heritage.

## Wildlife

### Protect and enhance the environment and wildlife of the Dales

We will support people to understand, restore and manage our nationally and internationally important habitats, with a focus on connecting small areas of priority habitat and increasing biodiversity.

#### As a trusted local charity, we aim to:

- Connect areas of habitat to create 'stepping stones' for wildlife.
- Enable people to take a leading role in creating nature-rich habitats for the future.
- Upskill and support volunteers to help monitor habitat biodiversity.
- Work with partners to support rare species.

## Our interlinking priorities over the next three years

# Ivescar Volunteering Round-Up

A big thank you to the Illuminet & Hiscox volunteers that braved the cold to create vital space for nature at Ivescar in Chapel-le-Dale - we really appreciate the effort that everyone put in to creating this vital habitat!

**February  
2025**

**8  
Volunteers**

**125  
Trees Planted**

## Woodland Creation Plan

In total, 350 new trees have been planted at Ivescar, including 25 individual field trees in prominent locations. The majority of trees were planted under the scar running from the farm, to fill in gaps left from old trees dying, storm damage and Ash dieback - this will provide shelter for sheep during bad weather. 460m of new hedgerow has also been planted to encourage the return of more birds to the farm and provide habitat for pollinators.

Expanded and more resilient wildlife corridors will help encourage nature conservation across the whole farm and replacing dead or dying Ash will ensure tree cover does not become too fragmented. A number of small areas of woodland on the farm will now be linked to strengthen habitats, provide more diversity and support nature recovery.



### WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THE EVENT?

“Spending time with such inspiring people in YDMT, in a beautiful landscape was fantastic, and then feeling the accomplishment of planting so many trees!”

### WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THE EVENT?

“Great teamwork - good to meet the people from Hiscox (our customer). The setting was amazing with views over the hills and viaduct.”



# Seed to Sapling Latest

It was great to show you our Clapham tree nursery site on your most recent visit to the Dales. This winter we celebrated the planting of the first trees grown from seed as part of our Seed to Sapling project! The two hazel saplings originated from seeds collected at Ivelet Wood, near Muker in Swaledale, where hazel trees have grown since the end of the Ice Age. Hazel was the dominant tree across Swaledale for thousands of years, and before the introduction of oil and plastic, was a key part of the local economy and culture, and it's likely that hazel trees will have contributed to the very soil in which the new saplings were planted.

## Working together with communities across the Dales

Swaledale's tree growing scheme, a collaboration between YDMT, Sustainable Swaledale and the Reeth Community Orchard Group, was one of the first to get underway as part of our Seed to Sapling project, which is now in its third year. Illuminet funding is enabling our work with communities across the Dales. Four schemes are now in operation, including Clapham, growing native saplings from local provenance seed, ensuring the right trees are available to plant in the Dales in future.



"The Gardening Group, Sustainable Swaledale and YDMT recognise the vital role of nature in our past, present and future for our health and well-being. I would like to thank YDMT for its continuing support and the Gardening Group for collaborating with us and hosting the tree planting event."

Rob McDonald of Sustainable Swaledale

"The planting of the first hazel saplings in Swaledale, was made possible by the commitment and practical efforts of our Sustainable Swaledale friends and the support of YDMT. We value and appreciate these partnerships, and our areas of mutual interest will only benefit and strengthen our relationships."

Chris Browne of Reeth Community Orchard Group



# YDMT Woodland Trainees Update

Our first Woodland Traineeship was a huge success, with Chloe going on to join the Forestry Commission as a Development Woodland Officer, continuing her dream of becoming an Arborist. Matt continued the trend with a fantastic 12 months at YDMT leading to a job in the woodlands team at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority! With the support of Interact, we are continuing to address the shortage of young people coming into the forestry sector, with Aila and Olivia having been with us for the last 12 months. Very excitingly, Olivia recently started a new role as Woodland Officer for the Lake District National park. Here is what she fed back about her time with YDMT:

I've felt really supported throughout my time at YDMT, starting with Carol as my manager. She's always been there when I needed guidance, offering quarterly in-depth one-to-ones to make sure I felt confident in my role and had the support I needed. Carol's always approachable and more than happy to answer questions or offer advice whenever I've needed it (daily!). I've learned so much from her, especially when it comes to managing community members during our tree nursery events. Her support has been key in helping me navigate challenges and stay focused throughout this traineeship.

The woodlands team has been equally amazing. I've spent full days with Chris and Mike, learning about how our schemes and funding work, woodland management, and engaging with landowners. They've shared so much practical knowledge, and it's been invaluable to get that hands-on learning. Having Aila alongside me, as another trainee in the same position as me, has been a big plus too—we've been able to push each other and share the experience of the traineeship, which has been really encouraging.

The wider YDMT team has been just as supportive. Working with teams like Meadows, Green Futures, and Fundraising has given me such a well-rounded experience. I really appreciate that these teams have taken time out of their busy schedules to work with me and share their knowledge. It's made my time here even more enjoyable.







We're excited about partnership developments in the year ahead and look forward to inspiring more Illuminet staff and customers as the Dales landscape continues to come out of it's winter hibernation and moves from Spring to Summer. Upcoming highlights include:

MaDD litter pick in May  
Ongoing work to improve YDMT LinkedIn efforts  
Summer volunteering for Illuminet staff and/or clients

**WE HOPE YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IT AS MUCH AS WE ARE!**