

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

**Members' Meeting at Stokesley Town Hall
Tuesday 20th January 2026 at 10.00am**

Summary of Speaker's Presentation

Our visiting speaker was Ray Clarke of the North Yorkshire Moors Association who gave a presentation about the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. The Association comprises the "Friends of the NYM", and its members aim to safeguard the landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage of the moors and surrounding areas.

Ray explained that the 554 square mile NYM National Park was established in 1952 to protect this natural asset from development and use that would compromise or destroy its intrinsic beauty and character. The boundaries were defined by the willingness of landowners to participate.

The topography of the park owes much to the Ice Ages creating its glacial valleys, and deep cut ravines resulting in its characteristic bleak moor tops intersected by lush, fertile dales.

The area is criss-crossed with popular walking trails such as The Cleveland Way, the Coast-to-Coast Walk, and most famously, the Lyke Wake Walk – a passion for Ray who has undertaken it numerous times.

The area has seen periods of significant industrialisation over the centuries. Remains of jet, alum, and ironstone mining activity are still very much in evidence. However, these features of long-gone activity have now softened and blended in with the scenery giving the northern areas of the park its characteristic landscape.

The Park has numerous landmarks in the form of historic crosses and boundary markers, over 50 of which are recorded.

There is a rich biodiversity throughout the park, however the most recognised creatures associated with the moors have been introduced - the hardy moorland sheep and cattle, and grouse bred for the shooting season.

Clearly, Ray has a great affinity with the NYM National Park, and devotes much time volunteering on NYMA projects, and participating in its general activities.

Following several questions and thanks from the Chairman for an interesting and passionately delivered presentation, Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Ray with a hearty round of applause.

20.1.26 JE