

**Sent by email on Tuesday 23 June 2015**

**Subject: An open letter to members of the North York Moors NPA**

To all Members of the North York Moors National Park Authority

Next week, you will be considering one of the most important decisions affecting National Parks in recent times. On Tuesday you will decide whether to allow York Potash Ltd (YPL) to build the world's largest potash mine on a site well inside the National Park. Not only is this proposal a huge threat to the North York Moors, but the decision is also a critical test of the protection provided to National Parks under national planning policy.

The major development test laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework states that developments of this scale are only allowed in a National Park in exceptional circumstances and when they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest. As the National Park Authority you will be taking a view in terms of:

1. Is there a proven national need for the development?
2. Is this development the only possible site or supply, either inside or outside the National Park?
3. Can the harm inflicted on the Park by the development be mitigated?

The Campaign for National Parks believes the answer to all these questions is no. We do not consider that YPL has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the national need. Similarly there is insufficient evidence that alternative sites outside the National Park have been adequately considered. As you will be aware, planning permission should not be granted simply because it is more cost-effective for YPL to develop in the National Park than elsewhere. The potential damage to the landscape during the construction phase is so substantial that Natural England has submitted a formal objection. There would also be lasting damage to the wildlife and landscape of the area.

There are strong grounds for turning down this proposal but we know that there are also many people arguing that priority should be given to the potential economic benefits of the project, particularly the large number of new jobs that are promised. However, even YPL's own documents make it clear that few of these jobs will go to local people and independent research<sup>1</sup> has identified that the negative impacts on the local tourism economy will be far higher than YPL have acknowledged. If the development goes ahead, there will be huge disruption to residents and visitors during the five year construction period which will damage the enjoyment of the National Park and the qualities for which it was designated.

We urge you to fulfil National Park purposes, refuse this application and demonstrate that the principle and integrity of National Parks remain something of over-riding national value.

**Supported by the following 29 organisations:**

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<sup>1</sup>*Whitby Area Development Trust, Assessment of the York Potash Ltd Development Proposals on the Day Visitor Economy of the Whitby Enclave and NYM National Park, 3 February 2015*

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| <b>Brecon Beacons Park Society</b>                  | <b>British Mountaineering Council</b>            |
| <b>Broads Society</b>                               | <b>Campaign for Better Transport</b>             |
| <b>Campaign for National Parks</b>                  | <b>Camping and Caravanning Club</b>              |
| <b>Caravan Club</b>                                 | <b>CPRE (national office)</b>                    |
| <b>CPRE (North Yorkshire Branch)</b>                | <b>Cymdeithas Eryri Snowdonia Society</b>        |
| <b>Dartmoor Preservation Association</b>            | <b>Exmoor Society</b>                            |
| <b>Friends of the Lake District</b>                 | <b>Friends of the Peak District</b>              |
| <b>Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park</b> | <b>HF Holidays</b>                               |
| <b>John Muir Trust</b>                              | <b>National Trust</b>                            |
| <b>New Forest Association</b>                       | <b>North Yorkshire Moors Association</b>         |
| <b>Open Spaces Society</b>                          | <b>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</b> |
| <b>Scottish Campaign for National Parks</b>         | <b>South Downs Society</b>                       |
| <b>The Wildlife Trusts</b>                          | <b>The Woodland Trust</b>                        |
| <b>Yorkshire Dales Society</b>                      | <b>Yorkshire Wildlife Trust</b>                  |
| <b>Youth Hostels Association</b>                    |  |