



Liaison Group Forum
Minutes of meeting: 15 July 2026, 13:00
Littlebeck Village Hall

Present:

Matt Parsons (MP) – Anglo American (Meeting Chair)
 Phillipa Starmer (PS) – Anglo American
 Heather King (HK) – Anglo American
 Jess Taylor (JT) – North York Moors National Park Authority
 Briony Fox (BF) – North York Moors National Park Authority
 Cllr. Dave Tate (DT) – Eskdaleside cum Ugglebarnby Parish Council

Nine members of the public were in attendance.

1. Introduction

MP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Cllr. Swannick, Cllr. Chance, Cllr. Trumper, Cllr. Pearson

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Members were satisfied that the minutes were an accurate record of the previous meeting.

4. Matters Arising from previous meeting

The Chair confirmed two actions from the previous meeting relating to information being provided to Cllr. Kay had been completed. It was confirmed that Leah Swain (CEO, Woodsmith Foundation) will attend the next Liaison Group meeting in October 2026 to provide a presentation on the Foundation's work and community impact.

5. Project Update

Corporate update

Anglo American / Teck Merger Update

Most regulatory approvals for the proposed Anglo American and Teck merger have now been received, with approval from the Chinese authorities still outstanding. Completion remains anticipated by March 2027, and it was reiterated that the merger would place the company in a stronger financial position.

Anglo American's crop nutrients business and the Woodsmith Project will remain part of the future merged company.

Construction update

Service Shaft

Shaft sinking has continued, with Grout Cover 18 completed and statutory compliance work undertaken on the hoists and winders. Sinking operations have resumed at Grout Cover 19, and the service shaft has reached a depth of 904 metres below ground level.

Production Shaft and MTS

The production shaft and Mineral Transport System remain under care and maintenance.

Surface Works

Expansion of the site protection bunds has begun as part of the summer works programme, while other surface activity remains largely business as usual.

Tunnel Development

Tunnel development has reached 30,466 metres. Improvements have been made to the Tunnel Boring Machine to further reduce the risks associated with gas ingress, while gas detection and monitoring continue as standard practice during tunnelling.

- Discussion covered the management of gas risks, tunnel ventilation arrangements and ground temperatures at different depths.
- It was noted that service shaft ground temperatures are approximately 23°C.
- Updated site photographs were presented and questions were raised regarding the large building beside the batching plant were answered by confirming that it is a temporary change house with capacity for approximately 900 people. Permanent welfare facilities are planned elsewhere on the site.

Lockwood Beck Site

At Lockwood Beck, the winding house has been dismantled and the winders removed. The equipment has been sold for reuse elsewhere.

Exploratory boreholes

An update was provided on additional geological investigation works. It was explained that the boreholes are intended to improve understanding of the polyhalite resource and the surrounding geology to inform the development of the detailed mine plan in order to support future investment.

Woodsmith Site exploratory borehole

At the Woodsmith site, the main exploratory borehole has been drilled to 1,600 metres. Two side-track boreholes have been completed at an offset of around 100 metres, and a third is being drilled to extend approximately 300–400 meters from the main borehole.

Off-site exploratory boreholes

Planning permission has been granted for drilling to take place at Dean Hall and Partridge Hill Farm.

Site preparation at Dean Hall is anticipated in August 2026, while the work schedule for Partridge Hill Farm is still to be confirmed. Planning permissions allow a maximum working duration of approximately 14 months, although shorter durations are anticipated. Additional eastern and western borehole locations are also under consideration.

6. Planning update

An update was provided by the North York Moors National Park Authority.

Planning permission for Partridge Hill Farm was approved by the Planning Committee, while Dean Hall was approved under delegated powers. Both permissions are subject to planning conditions that will be monitored by the Authority.

Section 73 Application

The Section 73 application, submitted in April 2026, has been validated and consultation is ongoing. The Supplementary Environmental Statement has been independently reviewed and the report published on the National Park Authority website. Additional clarification has been requested from Anglo American, and responses have been received from key consultees including highways, environmental health and mining authorities. The application remains under assessment, with no determination date yet set, and will be decided by the Planning Committee.

- Site visits linked to planning applications were discussed, public participation, the logistical and health and safety challenges of visits, and the continuing review of Planning Committee site-visit procedures.
- It was noted that no objections had yet been received in relation to the current Section 73 application.

Section 106 Update

An annual delivery summary was presented.

During 2025/26, 144 projects were completed. Delivery included 38 hectares of new mixed deciduous woodland and approximately 37,000 trees; 13 traditional boundary projects creating around 3 km of walls and hedgerows; 107 landscape trees; nine tourism business support projects; 5.84 km of Public Rights of Way improvements; 47 access improvements; ten new ponds; 189 hectares of habitat enhancement; 29 invasive-species management projects; nine traditional-skills training days; work on 33 heritage assets; and approximately 20 feasibility studies.

Brownsdale Forest Project

The group received an update on the successful completion of forestry work at Brownsdale, which had been under discussion for many years due to environmental sensitivities and access constraints.

2026/27 Priorities

A significant proportion of Section 106 funding will be directed towards restoration of land affected by the major moorland fire.

The restoration programme will cover fire-break restoration, protection of heritage assets, vegetation recovery, erosion reduction and measures to protect water quality.

Action 1: Consideration to be given to how to more effectively promote section 106 funded works.

7. Complaints

Two complaints were recorded during the reporting period.

- Complaint 1 - Parking

A concern about inappropriate parking near accommodation facilities in Scarborough was investigated and resolved, with no recurring issues reported.

- Complaint 2 - Vehicle Speeds Through Ruswarp

A complaint concerned coaches travelling through Ruswarp during diversions caused by road closures. Vehicle tracker data showed that one vehicle reached 34 mph. Driver communications were carried out and additional speed monitoring was undertaken; no further complaints have been received.

Discussion also took place regarding speed limit signage in Ruswarp

8. Social Programmes and Community Funding

The annual Social Impact Report noted that approximately 1,000 people are employed on the project, with 76% living within one hour's travel of the site.

Economic Impact

Since construction began, approximately 2,800 indirect jobs have been created. More than £450 million has been spent with suppliers in Yorkshire and the North East since 2022, contributing around £194 million to the regional economy.

Thriving Communities Programme

Since 2021, the Thriving Communities Programme has engaged approximately 37,000 students, supported new businesses and delivered skills and employability programmes.

Future Operations

At operational capacity, the project is expected to support around 1,150 direct jobs and more than 3,000 indirect jobs.

Woodsmith Foundation

The Woodsmith Foundation has received approximately £8 million during construction and, during operations, will receive 0.5% of project revenue. Based on modelling assumptions, annual funding could reach approximately £12 million.

A presentation from the Foundation is scheduled for the October meeting.

9. A.O.B

Mitsubishi Investment

Mitsubishi's involvement continues and the initial investment arrangements are progressing. Mitsubishi retains the option to acquire up to a 25% interest in the project following the final investment decision.

Port Facilities

Existing permissions remain in place for the project's own handling facility at Bran Sands and for use of Redcar Bulk Terminal. Studies are continuing to identify the preferred export solution.

Traffic Management

Concerns about outdated highway signage had already been raised at a Traffic Management Liaison Group meeting earlier that day, and highways officers are pursuing corrective action.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.