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19<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Dear Mandy

## **CONSULTATION ON THE NEW NATIONAL PARKS CIRCULAR AND VISION STATEMENT**

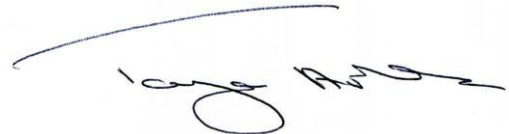
Thank you for your letter, dated 5 February 2010, concerning Colton Parish Council's response to the National Parks Circular Consultation and also its concern over individual parish councils not being sent this consultation directly.

I can understand the Parish Council's disappointment that not all parishes within the National Parks were consulted. However, as explained previously, we have no database which would allow us to do that. Moreover, since National Parks are a national asset, if we consulted the parishes in the Parks there is an argument that we would also, in fairness, need to consult parishes throughout England. And we are not aware of any database that holds this information.

As this was a public consultation, our policy is to publish the consultation documents on Defra's website and to consult the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) as the umbrella organisation for parish councils so that they can make an informed decision as to how best to respond to a consultation. I understand that NALC may choose to give a corporate reply or, if they think there may be many divergent views on an issue, pass on the consultation to the relevant county associations of parish councils for them to respond or in turn consult their own parishes.

Owing to the very large number of parishes in England (or even within the National Parks), and the frequent changes in contact details likely overall, there would be considerable practical difficulties in Defra consulting directly every parish council. Nonetheless, I can appreciate that the consultation process could be improved. In future, therefore, we will engage more closely with NALC to ascertain exactly what would be the best way of consulting those parish councils likely to be most interested in any future consultation which impacts on National Parks.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tanya Arkle', with a long horizontal flourish above the name.

TANYA ARKLE  
Deputy Director  
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Recreation