

# Peak District Local Access Forum

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2013 at Aldern House, Bakewell

### Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	Terry Howard
Bob Berzins	Mike Johnson
Jon Clennell	James Kellie
Richard Entwistle	Adge Last
Henry Folkard	John Thompson
Charlotte Gilbert	Ally Turner
Clare Griffin	Sue Weatherley
Caroline Hanson	

### Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Lesley Rechert (PDNPA)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Mandy Sims
Steve Cresswell (DCC)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)	Richard Taylor(DCC)
Richard Pett (PDNPA)	

## 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Nicola Turner, John Hall, Ben Young, Jon Stewart, Dick Peart, Jean Wharmby and Elizabeth Barnicott.

Mike thanked Lesley Rechert for organising the meeting and Sue Smith and Richard Pett for their work over the past few weeks.

## 2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

## 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting

Item 5 c) John has sent the revised LAF letter in response to the **High Peak Moors** Vision and Plan consultation.

Item 7b) No **Section 56 notices** have been served on the County Council. Long Causeway drainage works are starting soon and repairs to the revetment wall are expected to be carried out in 2014/15.

Item 8. Jon Clennell asked if there were any **changing places** within the National Park. Richard Taylor confirmed that none are planned for this area – facilities cost c.£25k each. There is one proposed for Cromford Wharf (on edge of Peak District).

Item 8 **Speaking at Authority meetings** has been raised and despite best efforts the LAF won't automatically have a right to speak and will need to register with Democratic

Services. The Chair understands it very much depends on the number of requests to speak for each meeting. It was felt that the LAF Member representing the Authority should be relaying this information. All agreed the outcome was very disappointing. Item 12 Henry reported that **Stanage Forum** has now reconvened with Councillor Jaque Bevan as Chair and Henry Folkard as Secretary. There are good links between this LAF and Stanage Forum. It is timely as there is a lot going on at North Lees.

#### **4. Volunteering**

Steve Cresswell, Countryside Officer with DCC Countryside Service (acts as the Volunteers Projects Officer) gave a presentation on volunteers involved in managing access and rights of way. The aim is to create 'Parish Path Champions' and encourage self-sufficiency and the sharing of good practice between groups. Steve trains volunteers and will deliver materials to facilitate work.

He is writing a Volunteer Policy for the Countryside Service, a draft of which will go to key groups and individuals (including this LAF) in the summer, to ultimately feed into a 'package' for potential volunteers and groups.

So far Steve has worked in Amber Valley, Erewash and South Derbyshire and is now keen to get involved in the Peak District, using 'Friends' groups as models to be delivered elsewhere. Ramblers groups are very involved and Steve has worked with them to give skills and capacity which is working very well.

Terry supported volunteering but is slightly concerned about it being used as a means of cheap labour. Steve confirmed that volunteers are in addition to paid staff; volunteering is a two way thing and improving the community (new skills, group relationships etc.) has to be something positive. He feels it's very useful for locals to input and develop relationships with landowners and will lead to being proactive rather than just dealing with complaints about the rights of way network.

HF commented that within the National Park there are already lots of volunteers and co-ordinators in existence. There is a need for volunteer co-ordinators to talk to each other and work together to make sure resources are used effectively.

Clare Griffin agreed that different volunteer groups talking together would be good to share ideas and good practise. Charlotte Gilbert said that horse riders are keen to work with Steve to improve the bridleway network - she will be able to put in him touch with British Horse Society, Peak Horsepower and Tread Lightly.

**ACTION: CG**

The Chair asked about resources, how much money is available and over what timescales. Resources are required and need to be carefully thought out - The LAF can help with that. Steve confirmed there is no budget at the moment but he can make individual cases for financing e.g. tools. He can also access RoWIP funds for materials. Mike spoke briefly about Peak Park Conservation Volunteers. Dave Cramp coordinates volunteers in the Peak District; now stand alone financially so make a charge for work. It takes time to set jobs up - volunteering is not free of costs, it needs setting up properly to ensure volunteering groups truly are self-sufficient and sustainable.

It was agreed that the LAF would like to have an input into DCC's draft Volunteer Policy which Steve will circulate in advance of the LAF meeting in June. **Action SC**

The Chair thanked Steve for attending.

## **Feedback from LAF National Conference**

Clare reported that it was an excellent day with good workshops and presentations. It was very inspiring day working with others, and getting ideas. The subject of low levels of visits to the natural environment (and associated links with poor health) was discussed.

Clare presented the Huddle workshop, it is a very useful tool but all felt it cannot replace face to face discussion.

The Chair also attended and was very impressed as 71 LAFs were represented; (all volunteers) who made the effort to come together; there were several lively debates. Terry Howard also attended; he was interested in research for Lost Ways and how a group in Hampshire had got together to push for action. A project is being set up in South Yorkshire are setting up project between walkers and horse riders to look into this – it is a source of inspiration. He had attended sessions on Urban LAFs and motor vehicles; the North York Moors National Park leaflet about motorcycling is useful. However there was no opportunity to Forum address members' issues or for two way conversation.

The Chair will circulate link to papers and presentations when available. **ACTION: EE**

## **5. Draft LAF Annual Report**

A draft Annual report has been circulated. Mike thanked Lesley for co-ordinating; Gill, Edwina and John for their contributions and asked for any comments. Henry said he had only read it through on screen but wanted to ensure that Sheffield Moors and the question of public participation at National Park Authority meetings were mentioned. MR confirmed they are both included.

Clare Griffin spoke of the year ahead – especially water based activities – she hasn't forgotten water recreation (Ben Young is the Member representative but hasn't been able to attend many meetings). There is a need to think about how this issue can be progressed.

Terry mentioned the distribution of reports. Better co-ordination and awareness is needed by adjacent authorities, not just LAFs – e.g. Sheffield City Council. Mike responded that this LAF sends its annual report to all adjacent authorities but it is not always reciprocated.

Jon C suggested local MPs should receive a copy and Sue Smith will publish on Huddle.

## **6. Recreation Motor Vehicles**

### **Green Lanes Update**

Papers had been circulated and Sue Smith thanked members of the Green Lanes sub group for all their hard work. The notes of the meetings in January and February illustrate the extent of their advice and commitment. The response to the consultation on a possible TRO at Chapel Gate is included at appendix 1 of the update report.

Two items are being taken to the PDNPA Audit, Resources and Performance (ARP) Committee on 22 March:

- consultation with statutory consultees on Chapel Gate TRO. A decision will be taken whether to pursue a Traffic Regulation Order option.
- the actions on Green Lanes, illegal use and communications for the next year.

Information has now been compiled on the 24 priority routes. Some issues have been resolved to an extent - due to changes in legal status (potentially 5 routes), where repairs have been completed (10 routes) or planned (7 confirmed). £375k has been committed by DCC for work on green lanes.

DCC has proposed repairs on 4 of the 5 routes where PDNPA has commenced consultation on TROs. The Action Plan gives more information on these.

LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association) has developed documents on traffic management hierarchy.

The next meeting of the Green Lanes sub group will be on 25 April and will include discussion about the 12 priority routes in the National Park outside Derbyshire.

ARP Committee Meeting – due to the forecast poor weather, a decision will be taken at 8am on 22 March. If the office is closed or the meeting cancelled all those scheduled to speak will be contacted.

### **Resource Issues**

John Thompson thanked Sue and colleagues for their work and members for their input to the Chapel Gate letter. JNT had written to Jim Dixon to ask for resources for this work and John read out the response "..... well aware of the very high demand on staff resources. Budget planning has started and cannot be concluded until the end of 2013 when Defra gives more information. Members made clear their then priority to ensure resources are made available...."

John feels it is important that the LAF continues to press this case as it is such a key area - good work is only sustainable if resources are available.

Jon Clennell thanked John for an amazing amount of work on this – he hopes tomorrow's ARP Committee appreciate the Chapel gate response. He is proud to be part of an organisation that produces this level of work. HF agreed and complimented staff; everyone appreciates how much time was spent on producing papers. The Chair agreed this is outstanding and said well done to everyone.

## **7. Derbyshire CC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) update – consultation responses**

Gill reported that since the last meeting the 200 responses have been analysed in more detail and the Joint LAF sub group has met to agree the proposed changes to the new RoWIP Statement of Action; a report has been circulated.

The RoWIP aims and identified needs have remained in same order of priority. Although DCC will try to deliver them all – it is important to be realistic in the present economic climate.

Some examples of the proposed changes to the document include:-

- Strengthening the wording in relation to the health and wellbeing agenda, environmental concerns and safety issues
- Additions to key partners column e.g. Local Nature Partnerships, Forestry, Moorland management Partnerships and volunteers – where there is potential to help deliver several of the actions.

The Equality Analysis was well received and will be included as an appendix. Gill explained that a report will be taken to Cabinet for approval in the near future. A full list of responses to the individual comments received will also be published.

Health agenda – Claire O'Reilly has produced a briefing note; the challenge is to raise the profile of RoWIPs and access to the countryside in the health agenda and to try and tap into any extra resources which may be available. It was agreed that Gill will circulate the health briefing note and a presentation will be made at a future meeting.

**ACTION: GM, MR**

TH aid the health agenda should be broadened out to include access to the countryside. He also mentioned the Lost Ways project – he feels the profile should start to be raised again now. Government has gone quiet – the outcome of the Defra consultation should be published and there is a need to look at how to take this forward with volunteers and local authorities. Gill will consider.

**ACTION: GM**

HF thanked Gill for a comprehensive report – there was a good balanced response to the RoWIP consultation which should be emphasised. He has responded re path surfaces – the RoWIP seems to be about smooth surfaces everywhere – some people like challenging surfaces; he recognises others would prefer not. It's a question of how to make the right conditions on routes where different groups want different things. The Chair thanked Gill for the report.

## **8. Feedback from Members**

**Paths for Communities** – Natural England has specifically asked LAFs if they have any suggestions or nominations – GM has mentioned to Steve Cresswell. Charlotte has suggested a link across Bakewell showground from Intake Lane to Coombs Road. Bids have to be registered by October, agreed December 2013 for spend - and grants claimed - by March 2014.

### **Huddle update**

Clare asked if all information should be circulated. Several members said they were happy with current arrangements with Clare circulating 'sifted' items.

All LAF members are able to access Huddle – she offered more training if anyone would like. Clare will circulate how to join to all members.

**ACTION: CG**

**PDNPA Cycling Summit** John Thompson and Adge Last attended this event at Thornbridge and John felt it was time very well spent. A report has been circulated. All constituent local authorities and Sustrans were represented together with user

groups. Adge confirmed that there was lots of enthusiasm; need to hold on to that for the Cycling Festival 7-15 September to promote cycling in its many forms. The key part is retaining participation amongst 14-25 year olds. There will be many opportunities that week - the initial flyer is being printed now. This will be an annual event with many partners, business opportunities etc. Anyone interested in contributing please contact [carol.parsons@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:carol.parsons@peakdistrict.gov.uk)  
One workshop session was 'missing links' – a planning exercise to connect routes.

Bidding – the LAF offered a letter of support for the White Peak Loop and a draft cycle plan is being prepared for consultation by September. Next week Adge is meeting Jon Dallow (who is co-ordinating the Sheffield City Council bid).

John summarised that cycling infrastructure bids are to be submitted by 30 April 2013 with a decision expected in June and spend by end March 2015. 30% match funding is needed. Outcomes to do with transport opportunities are favourable. Urban as well as rural bids – several links with the National Park. It was very important to link all the cycling initiatives and developments with horse riding. John said that it was slightly vague as to who would make the bid; it would generally be the highway authorities which makes it tricky in the Peak District. Rachel Gillis subsequently met with Defra to decide how to progress. Rachel will keep JNT posted.

The Chair reported from the Recreation Strategy meeting that DCC and PDNPA are due to meet to decide who will submit the bid. We will get feedback. There was an aspirational wish list from the cycling summit, but it is going to be difficult to submit a realistic bid in the timescales.

### **Sheffield Moors Masterplan and Nature Improvement Area update**

TH had been inspired by the celebration event. Things appear to be coming together really well – a site visit had been led by Nick Sellwood and Ted Talbot. Terry thought the speakers were very good and he feels confident about the future. He proposed a site visit (following the June meeting) to Burbage – Lady Canning's Plantation.

HF had a copy of the Making Connections report. He feels this is strategically very important; funding from Europe is lessening and the Dark Peak NIA is significant for sourcing funds. It links access and recreation with conservation. There are tangible outcomes such as the bridleway improvements at Wimble Holme Hall. The conifer plantation in the shape of Great Britain is to be removed – the Sheffield Moors website gives details of how the timber is to be removed and parking/footpath changes whilst work is undertaken.

## **9. Any Other Business**

The LAF response on **dog control** orders had been circulated – Mike thanked those who contributed. John T thought it was useful to share with other local authorities – Mike will consider.

**Action MR**

TH had asked Sheffield LAF to pursue why no walks in Sheffield were included in the **Peak District Walking Festival**. He noted that all Local Authority walks are free but there is a charge (up to £40) for all those run by commercial organisations - for example the Kinder Experience is £20. For those who campaign for access this is galling.

A discussion took place about a levy payable in the Lake District and the fairness of this approach, whether it deters visitors, the difficulty in defining boundaries around education versus profit-making; providing a means for those who wish to donate but do not want to pay towards administration costs. Judy Gould and Andy Farmer are looking at developing a Visitor Giving scheme in the Peak District – e.g. organised events making a donation which is then used for conservation projects etc. This will be an issue for the LAF to consider in the future.

HF briefly described an embryonic group called **Peak Adventure Sports Alliance (PASA)** – led by John Horscroft. An inaugural meeting is to be held in April. They are interested in lobbying for funding for National Parks, but also to give a higher profile to the huge contribution that volunteer recreational groups already make to the National Park economy. The Chair thought it would be beneficial if the **Duke of Edinburgh Scheme** (DofE) was represented/ involved.

A discussion was held about DofE groups. Edwina had attended a meeting where Matt Hutson, regional DofE Co-ordinator had reported unfair treatment on groups by some people and the potential impact. Currently 22,000 DofE people visit the Peak District annually and many will potentially bring their families back to visit. There are more ethnic minorities doing DofE which is a hard to reach group. It was acknowledged that some farmers feel the groups are not educated enough before they arrive in the area.

Bob Berzins had written to Judy Gould and Jon Stewart about voluntary donations; Shane Bates (National Trust Kinder Warden) said it was easy to give money to NT although no formal scheme is in place. Judy gave some details to facilitate donating – most people are concerned about how that money will find its way directly into conservation work 'without an admin overhead'. Bob cited Dark Peak Fell Runners which is non-profit making - 50/60 volunteers will organise and run an event. If things go well the surplus is usually given to mountain rescue. He has written article in their national magazine to encourage others do similar. A balance needs to be struck – people shouldn't feel forced into giving a donation and also need to be confident about where the money will end up.

The Chair reported that at the Recreation Strategy meeting on 20 March it was mentioned that guidance for organising large scale events has been drafted by PDNPA – this includes best practice and refers to the option of voluntary donations. An internal group is looking at how people might like to give something back via businesses, large scale events, or general giving etc. Sue W was also surprised at the high charges of other walking festivals close by, e.g. Chesterfield/NE Derbyshire are much cheaper. Adge said the cycling festival will be on same basis in the future – anyone can buy space and charge what they wish.

A discussion took place around market forces, car parking charges and donations from organisations using the National Park. HF said that climbing guides had been produced by volunteers and the information has been poached by commercial operators. The British Mountaineering Council makes a loss on guides – this is seen as delivering a service which is laudable and often forgotten. HF also mentioned that 24-30 March is tick bite prevention week.

Copies of the **Sheffield LAF** annual report are available through Mike Rhodes.

## **10. Dates of next Meeting**

To be held on Thursday 13 June 2013 at the Moorland Discovery Centre, Longshaw - with possible site visit in the afternoon.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm