

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 19 June 2014 at Aldern House, Bakewell

Members Present

Edwina Edwards (Chair)

Bob Berzins
Jon Clennell
Henry Folkard
Charlotte Gilbert
John Hall
Terry Howard
Caroline Hanson

Mike Johnson
Adge Last
Jon Stewart
John Thompson
Ally Turner
Nicola Turner
Sue Weatherley

Others Present

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary
Mary Bagley (PDNPA)
Andy Farmer (PDNPA)
Adele Metcalfe (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)
Tim Nicholson (PDNPA)

Mary Jones (Walking for Health)
Alan Kind (LARA)
John Richardson (LARA)
Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Jason Spencer (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Clare Griffin, Richard Entwistle and Damien Greenhalgh.

The Chair welcomed Emma Stone to her first meeting of the Forum. Emma had been temporarily seconded to the Authority to work on property issues relating to the management of the trails owned by the National Park Authority. It was noted that the secondment was likely to last until the end of August when it was anticipated that a permanent appointment would be made.

2. Minutes from the last meeting on 13 March 2014

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 were approved as a correct record with thanks to Jason Spencer.

3. Matters Arising

P2 Stange Forum – The Chair provided an update following a meeting of the Forum during May and advised that she would be attending the next meeting

on 23 June. Mary Bagley reminded the Local Access Forum that there were still opportunities to feed into the work of the Stannage Forum as it developed a vision and management plan for the estate. Henry Folkard confirmed that the last meeting had been useful and welcomed the attendance of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority's Audit, Resources and Performance Committee.

P2 South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme – Sue Weatherley confirmed that Clare Griffin has participated in developing the bid which had been completed and submitted in accordance with the deadlines. It was anticipated that the outcome would be announced in October 2014.

P4 Agricultural Policy Reform – It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Defra on behalf of the Forum setting out concerns about the proposed changes. A copy of the letter had also been sent to all MP's with constituencies that included areas of the National Park and John Thompson had received and circulated to members a letter from Patrick McLoughlin.

P7 Sheffield Moors Partnership and National Trust High Peak Moors Project – Terry Howard reminded the Forum that there was a need to revisit this as the vision for the Sheffield Moors was developed. It was noted this would be considered during the September meeting of the Forum which would be held at Longshaw. Jon Stewart reported that the work being carried out by the National Trust at the Burbage plantation was on target and confirmed that with sufficient notice he would be willing to contribute to a discussion on the Sheffield/High Peak Moors projects.

P7 "Spirit of Kinder Day" - Terry Howard confirmed that over 200 people had attended a successful event on 26 April 2014. It was noted that John Mothersole, Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council, and one of the keynote speakers, had acknowledged the contribution of Local Access Forums and confirmed his support of their work.

4. Presentation by LARA

John Richardson, the Honorary Chairman of the Motoring Organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) delivered a presentation on the Association and its activities. During the presentation he provided a background to why LARA had been established and provided examples of how the Association worked with its Members and other organisations to develop solutions to access issues such as loss of sites, noise, legislation, anti-social behaviour and a lack of provision. This was achieved by providing advice and guidance and acting as a mediator between different users to reach a consensus. It was noted that the work of the Association was supported by a Drivers' and Riders' Byway Code of Conduct which Members were asked to follow.

Alan Kind also from LARA addressed the Forum on the Association's involvement in issues in the Peak District. During his presentation he highlighted the potential impact of the Deregulation Bill on access if it became an Act of Parliament without amendment. He also provided details of a

condition survey of all unsealed roads in the Peak District and Derbyshire carried out by members of the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF).

The Forum asked questions in response to the issues raised during the presentation including:

Managing behavioural issues relating to conflicting users. It was confirmed that representatives of LARA Members did go out to problem sites to speak with irresponsible users. Alan Kind agreed that he was willing to meet with representatives of Peak Horsepower at any site where there was an issue.

Membership of Sheffield Local Access Forum. Terry Howard confirmed that the Forum was willing to consider LARA representation if an application was received. Alan Kind agreed to follow this up.

Suitability of Surface – LARA recognised that this was a behavioural issue which Members were attempting to address as some irresponsible users were using incorrect tyres or attempting to follow routes when the conditions were not appropriate.

On behalf of the LAF's Green Lanes Sub-Group, John Thompson referred LARA to the all user code developed by the National Park Authority. It was recognised that all users could cause damage to routes and the surrounding landscape if they did not act responsibly. He also confirmed that he would welcome the opportunity to look in detail at the route condition surveys referred to in the presentation.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked John and Alan for their informative presentation and confirmed that the Forum would welcome the proposed meetings between LARA and Peak Horsepower and supported the proposal that vehicle users be represented on the Sheffield LAF.

5. Walking for Health

Mary Jones, the Walking for Health Officer at High Peak Borough Council provided a presentation on the Walking for Health Scheme which was a national initiative supported through a partnership of the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support to encourage participation in gentle walks taking no longer than 90 minutes.

During the presentation Mary highlighted that 70% of the UK population were not completing the recommended minimum amount of moderate exercise, the health risks arising from this and the estimated annual cost of inactivity in Derbyshire. Mary also highlighted the physical barriers experienced by some potential users such as stiles and narrow gaps in walls. It was recognised that in many cases these structures were a feature of the landscape, contributed to the challenge of a walk and were often owned and maintained by private individuals. It was recognised that there was a case for developing and promoting specific obstacle free walks in specific locations but funding was limited. Sue Smith highlighted the contribution of the National Park Authority in promoting accessible routes and rangers providing guided walks. It was

suggested that the level of signage available could also impact on access, highlighting the different approaches in Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

It was noted that information and statistics in the presentation were from a publication called "Walking Works" published by Walking for Health which was available using the following link:

http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Walking%20works_LONG_AW_Web.pdf

Mary confirmed that other District and Borough Councils had also appointed Walking for Health co-ordinators locally who met to share knowledge and experiences.

Mary was thanked for her presentation and encouraged to meet with Gill Millward from Derbyshire County Council to discuss ways to support each other in promoting routes and improving access. **ACTION: GM and MJ**

6. Managing large-scale events

Andy Farmer, Area Team Manager from the Peak District National Park Authority, gave a presentation on the growth of large scale events in the National Park and how the Authority manages and supports them. The presentation highlighted issues such as encouraging event organisers to make contact with the Authority before setting dates and venues, the impact on local infrastructure and on the Authority's resources and getting organisers to make a contribution to maintaining and preserving the landscapes particularly in the cases where commercial enterprises were using publicly funded resources for private gain.

It was noted that the Authority was organising a workshop on 9 September 2014 with partners to discuss the co-ordination of events and measures to encourage giving. Terry Howard referred to a payback scheme operating in the Lake District which was being used to improve and maintain footpaths and suggested a similar approach in the Peak District. In response Mary Bagley provided an update on the emerging Authority approach to encouraging giving.

7. Cycling strategy update

Tim Nicholson, Transport and Climate Change Policy Officer, at the National Park Authority introduced a report which provided an update on the development of the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy. In introducing the report Tim thanked the Forum for formally responding to the consultation. A copy of the final response had been included in the papers for the meeting.

In response to the issues relating to mountain bikes referred to in the Forum's response it was noted that the Strategy would continue to focus on other users but the Authority would work with partners to develop an approach for this specific group of cyclists. While the Forum accepted this approach if necessary, there needed to be a link between the two documents as mountain

biking is a key activity in the Peak. It was suggested that any photographs of mountain bikes should be removed from the published strategy to avoid confusion.

It was noted that the Forum was represented on the Strategy Steering Group and that a final draft of the document would be published in July with feedback to the September meeting of the Forum.

8. Recreation Strategy Developments

Adele Metcalfe, Village & Communities Officer at the National Park Authority provided an update on the development of the Recreation Strategy. During the update the Forum considered a proposal that the functions of the Recreation Strategy Steering Group be merged into the work of the Local Access Forum to facilitate the links between recreation and access and adopt a more efficient approach. It was noted that the proposal fitted in with the legal framework which established Local Access Forums and that initial discussions with Edwina Edwards and John Thompson had been positive. It was confirmed that to facilitate the change two members of the steering group would participate in meetings of the Forum and the functions could be separated again if the new arrangements were not effective.

The Forum therefore agreed to support the proposal to include the functions of the Recreation Strategy Steering Group subject to a review of the arrangement in 12 months' time.

9. Access Update

Sue Smith presented a report setting out details of consultations on the review of long-term directions for open access land exclusions at Deer Hill, Meltham, West Nab, Bradfield and Diggle Rifle Range and asked Forum Members if they wished to respond to the proposed changes.

John Thompson confirmed that the changes had been discussed by the Access Sub-Group who had supported the variations, particularly the reduction in the area of restriction at Diggle Rifle Range.

10. Green Lanes Update

Sue Smith presented a report providing an update on progress with managing motor vehicle recreation in the National Park. The update was noted and Sue confirmed that she was exploring suitable dates for a meeting of the Green lanes sub-group.

ACTION: SS

Derbyshire CC RoWIP Update

11.

Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer at Derbyshire County Council presented a report providing an update on delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2014/15.

In considering the report the Forum welcomed the Authority's decision to approve around £1.6 million of capital funding for rights of way and access improvements and congratulated Gill and her colleagues on preparing successful bids. It was noted that revenue funding for rights of way maintenance had been reduced by £50,000 for a second year in succession.

Gill also outlined the progress being made in delivering the Pedal Peak II cycling project and mentioned that people would soon be able to sign up to receive the latest Pedal Peak eNewsletters:-
http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/pedal_peak/default.asp

The report was noted.

Any Other Business

12.

John Thompson thanked officers for their support in producing the LAF's annual report and advised that copies were now available.

John also provided an update on representations made to High Peak Borough Council following Access Sub-Group discussions about the access implications for proposals at Cowdale Quarry near King Sterndale. Henry Folkard confirmed that the Borough Council had now exceeded the time limits in which the application had to be determined. It may become a County Council matter for a new application and determination.

Henry also raised references included in the recent Queen's speech to Parliament on the introduction of directly elected National Park Authority Members. In light of the Forum's response to the initial consultation it was suggested that the LAF should receive an update when more information was available.

Charlotte Gilbert highlighted recent media reports of Raptors in the Peak District.

Jon Stewart reported that the National Trust had recently appointed Ruth Tweedie as a Sports Development Officer who through a focus on participation and access for all would be arranging events at Longshaw. This was welcomed by the LAF.

Edwina Edwards confirmed that in partnership with the National Park Authority and Severn Trent Water, Bakewell and Eyam community transport was providing a weekend and bank holiday bus service in the Upper Derwent Valley with the first and last services of the days running to and from Bamford Station. Forum Members were encouraged to promote and support the service.

ACTION: ALL

Date and venue of next meeting

13.

To be held on Thursday 11 September 2014 at the Moorland Discovery Centre, Longshaw Estate. There will also be an afternoon of site visits to Stanage/ North Lees.

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The meeting ended at 1.00 pm