

Peak District Local Access Forum

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Item: 6

Title: Peak District Moorland Owners Liaison Group

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This paper comprises a request by the Peak District Moorland Owners Liaison Group for help from the Local Access Forum in addressing issues of concern around visitor engagement.

Background

At a meeting hosted by the Duke of Devonshire in May between Peak District moorland owners/agents/managers (referred to below as "moorland owners"), the National Park Authority, Natural England and the Moorland Association, 4 key moorland issues were identified on which we wished to explore further action- Visitor Engagement, Fire Risk, Resilient Sustainable Moorland Management, and Moorland Birds. Within Visitor Engagement, issues such as dogs off leads, damage to infrastructure, erosion problems (esp. mountain bikes, scramble bikes and 4x4s) and organized events were raised as concerns. These issues have been distilled into two potential areas of work- how we work together with joint communications to share and encourage visitors to follow the Countryside Code and consider what site-specific measures and approaches might be appropriate; and how we work together on visitor management on the ground. It is recognized that the Peak District Local Access Forum (LAF) may be an appropriate forum for taking some of these issues forward, and the liaison group wishes to explore with LAF how these might be progressed.

Promoting the Countryside Code

LAF's support is sought in considering whether there is more that can be done to build on existing publicity campaigns (e.g. Paws on the Moors, Take the Lead), access point signage, seasonal signage and other measures to encourage responsible behavior by moorland visitors. In addition to the four issues of dogs, infrastructure damage, erosion and organized events, visitor management may also form an important part of any fire prevention. LAF's support is therefore also sought, alongside the Fire Operations Group, in considering further measures which might be taken to reduce the incidence of moorland wildfires.

Visitor Management "on the ground"

There is currently incomplete understanding by moorland owners about the work of LAF and representation of their interests in the work of the Forum. LAF's support is sought in communicating its remit, constraints and the scope of existing visitor management work to moorland owners, and in considering representation of moorland owners' interests in LAF's work.

Organised events have been highlighted as an area of growing concern in the Peak District. LAF's support for the further development of an events notification system would be welcome.

We would welcome LAF's support on the above issues and views about how they may best be taken forward.