

Peak District Local Access Forum

Access Sub-group

5 October 2011

Aldern House, Bakewell

Attendees: Andrew McCloy, James Kellie, Bob Berzins, Terry Howard, Mike Rhodes, Sue Smith, Gill Bellenie

Apologies: Edwina Edwards, Henry Folkard, Sue Weatherley

1) PDNPA Property Update - Gill Bellenie, Strategic Property Officer.

Roaches – Bids received from the Land Trust, National Trust and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and interviews held. All committed to upgrading footpaths to reduce erosion, encouraging access for all and engaging with local people and groups to prepare a management plan. Report with recommendations going to ARP committee on 25 November 2011. 18 months until any transfer likely. The Forum reiterated concerns about its iconic status and that they would not wish to see its disposal being on a permanent basis.

North Lees/Stannage – Next estate to be reviewed. Expressions of interest will be sought. The Stannage Forum has agreed fundamental principles.

Eastern Moors – A draft management plan prepared by NT/RSPB is out for public consultation.

Millers Dale Station and Quarry – PDNPA has authority to lease the station to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and to transfer the freehold of the quarries that they lease. This is subject to planning and funding for development as a visitor centre. DWT are submitting a bid to the HLF.

Edale – Discussions continuing with two parties in Edale who may be interested in purchasing Grindsbrook Meadows and Lea Barn Fields subject to access and biodiversity requirements.

New Head of Property, Keith Jennings.

2) Application to restrict access on public safety grounds at Moscar Estate

The sub-group were notified that an application for a long-term permanent exclusion on 4 areas of access land, totalling 37.2 ha, had been submitted. The applicant considers that public safety is in jeopardy because of fox snaring necessary for the management of the land for grouse shooting. Members were also updated on the site visit that took place to one of the sites in September.

Bob Berzins declared an interest as a member of the Dark Peak Fell Runners.

The proposal was being assessed in accord with guidance and whether the restrictions are necessary and the least restrictive options, and provide clarity for the public and are practical to manage. Further information has been sought from the applicant in relation to risk assessment and proposals for managing any restriction that may be granted.

If it decided that there is a case for a long-term restriction at all or any of these sites, then a formal consultation would be carried out.

Informal comments were provided by the sub-group and it was noted that there was a split view. These were summarised as:

There was a view that there should be a focus on the duty of care of the landowner. The view was also taken that there should be a more pragmatic approach to public access and having regard to the consequences for access to wider areas. There is a need to fully assess what is being proposed and what the intentions are. Routes and access points should be encouraged for more coherent access.

ACTION: Sue to advise on decisions made and to consult further if required.

3) Common Land

Terry raised the issue of fencing on common land at High Riggs Road which has restricted access to this land and an adjacent area of open access land. This matter has been pursued by Sheffield CC as the relevant Commons Authority. No consent for fencing has been given.

Sue confirmed that the NPA would contact the landowner(s) regarding access points under CRoW to these areas of land.

Fact sheets and guidance notes on the management of common land are now available on the Natural England website:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/commonland/default.aspx>

Maps showing common land in England, s15 land under CRoW, can be found on www.magic.gov.uk

There is also a Defra consultation on reforming the system for registering new town or village greens. The Government is seeking an improved balance between protecting high quality green space valued by local communities and enabling the right development to occur in the right place at the right time. It also seeks to reduce the burden on local authorities and on landowners. The consultation end date is 17 October 2011.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/07/25/town-village-greens/>

ACTION: Sue to contact the landowner(s) at High Riggs Road.
Members to submit any comments on Defra consultation to Sue.

4) Access Points

A budget is still available for access improvements to open access land within the Peak District National Park. However, funding provided by the Access Management Grant Scheme no longer exists for areas outside the National Park. Other sources of funding for access, including under Higher Level Stewardship and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, have also been reduced/terminated.

There has been a recent case in Kent where an access point continues to be obstructed by a new landowner and the appeal system has been used against notices to reinstate it.

On areas of moorland within the PDNPA, prior notification of fencing is required to be given to the NPA. This allows the agreement of location of access points for new areas of fencing.

Negotiations on access points are ongoing at Dove Bank. There is nothing further as yet to report at Rod Moor.

ACTION: Sue to continue negotiations on access at Rod Moor.

5) Website Information

Work is ongoing on improvements to the website relating to access and rights of way. Comments and input from the sub-group will be welcomed. A first draft should be available November.

ACTION: Sue to circulate.