

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 10 March 2016
at Moorland Discovery Centre, Longshaw.**

Members Present:

Bob Berzins
Henry Folkard

Caroline Hanson
Adge Last
Chris Page
John Thompson

Edwina Edwards (Chair)

Richard Entwistle
Charlotte Gilbert
Clare Griffin
Mike Johnson
Andrew Murley
Jon Stewart
Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Ruth Marchington, (PDNPA)
Gill Millward, (DCC)
Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)
Albert Benghiat, (East Midlands Geological
Society)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Jason Spencer, (Notes)
Richard Taylor, (DCC)
Rhodri Thomas, (PDNPA)
David Sparkes (PDVUG)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Bunting, Laura D'Cruz, John Hall, Terry Howard, Caitlin Bisknell, Matt Hutson and Ally Turner.

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Forum John Thompson congratulated Edwina on being awarded an MBE.

It was noted that Mary Bagley, Assistant Director had left the National Park Authority. The Chair asked Mike Rhodes to pass on the Forum's gratitude for her support and wish her all the best for the future. It was noted that Simon Malcolm the new Director of Commercial Development and Outreach had just started work with the Authority and intended to come to a future meeting.

The Chair welcomed Ruth Marchington to the meeting in her new role as the National Park Authority's Director of Corporate Strategy and Development.

3. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2015 at Aldern House had been circulated and were unanimously approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING

P2 Letter to constituent authorities on Resources/ROW/Green Lane issues – Following the update at the last meeting on letters to MPs, it was noted the LAF had written to the Chief Executives of constituent authorities on 18 February highlighting the same issues and seeking involvement in RoWIP Reviews and

issues relating to green lanes. Copies of the letters had been sent to the Chairs of adjoining Local Access Forums. The responses received so far were summarised as follows:

Derbyshire CC	Had responded and a meeting had been set up for 8 April 2016 to discuss items of joint interest including; partnerships, Hayfield Countryside Centre and RoWIP Review.
Cheshire East	Response received from Chief Executive with a follow up from Genni Butler providing a link to the current ROWIP. Also offered to meet to discuss ROWIP and routes of concern.
Oldham	Response received from Unity Partnership who were willing to meet. They confirmed that their RoWIP had been reviewed but the Local Access Forum had not been involved.
Staffordshire CC	Had responded to confirm that they were willing to meet to discuss their RoWIP Review and issues around routes in Staffordshire.
High Peak BC	Had responded offering support and seeking further information.

On behalf of the Forum the Chair thanked John for taking this forward.

P2 Health, Wellbeing and the Natural Environment Presentation – It was confirmed that the Chair had written to the Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Board but suggested that this would not progress until the partnership arrangements between Derbyshire County Council and the National Health Service Bodies had been resolved. The Chair agreed to keep the Forum informed. **ACTION: EE**

P4 National Park Management Plan (NPMP) Review – The Chair confirmed that a copy of the questionnaire had been completed on behalf of the Forum and had discussed issues raised with Ruth Marchington. Ruth provided an update confirming that stakeholder responses would be considered by the Authority's Management Team and that the Stakeholder event had been moved to 30 July.

It was noted that the Forum would like to take up the offer to have a special discussion to identify how the NPMP could be used as a tool for delivery with the Forum. Comments from Members were welcome as John Thompson would be attending a meeting of the Advisory Group the following week. **ACTION: ALL**

It was also noted that since attending the last meeting of the Forum, Amanda Nevett had left the National Park Authority. It was confirmed that the Chair had sent her best wishes on behalf of the Forum. It was noted that Joe Glentworth would be taking the lead in the review project. The NPMP will be kept on the LAF agenda with updates as and when necessary.

5. GREEN LANES UPDATE

Sue Smith introduced a report providing an update on progress with managing recreational motor vehicles in the National Park.

It was reported that the Green Lane Action Plans would be considered by the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee in May and at the next meeting of the LAF's Green Lanes Sub-Group.

The Local Access Forum also noted that the Authority had indicated that it would be participating in the one-off forum proposed to be established by Defra for motor vehicle stakeholders to share their experiences and discuss ways of working together. The forum had been arranged in place of proposals put forward by the previous Coalition Government.

Richard Pett provided an update on monitoring data from the Minninglow and Wetton routes which were the subject of voluntary restraint offered by vehicle users.

Consultation on Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at Washgate

Sue Smith circulated details of the Authority's consultation on proposals to prohibit mechanically propelled vehicles at Washgate, seeking feedback on how the Forum wished to respond to the consultation. The statement of reasons and a route plan were also circulated.

It was noted that the Forum had previously responded under regulation 4. A copy of the response was attached to the report. It was noted that concerns over the condition of the route were still valid and would be raised at the meeting with Staffordshire County Council referred to earlier in the meeting.

It was agreed that the position of the Forum remained unchanged and John Thompson would prepare a formal response letter.

Update on Derby Lane

Sue Smith confirmed that on the 4 March the National Park Authority had resolved to proceed to consult on a permanent TRO to prohibit mechanically propelled vehicles on Derby Lane, Monyash at all times. This differed from the Local Access Forum's recommendations. . In response to comments about the date of the last Forum visit, it was agreed that a site visit for the green lanes sub-group would be arranged.

ACTION: SS

6. PEAK DISTRICT GEOTRAIL

Albert Benghiat from the East Midlands Geological Society attended to present information on the development of a Peak District Geo Park.

It was noted that a Geo Park was a UNESCO accredited designation for an area where the landscape is connected to the geology. The area planned for the Peak District would include all of the National Park and areas on the fringe such as Ashover and Ashbourne.

As a first step to designation it was proposed that a geotrail be developed following the 120 mile Peak District boundary walk promoted by Friends of the

Peak District with links to towns, villages and railheads. Although the project would not develop new rights of way it would incorporate signage, information panels, leaflets, a website, apps and a supporting book.

It was noted that promoters had met with the Heritage Lottery Fund with a view to submitting a formal application in Autumn 2016. It was confirmed that work was being carried out in conjunction with Derby University to develop demand and impact assessments.

The promoters were now looking for the Forum's support for the idea of a geotrail and to supply any useful information that might support the bid.

During discussions the Forum considered issues relating to fossils and the impact of visitors taking away samples and the importance of linking the trail to the Stone Centre at Wirksworth. It was confirmed that the National Park Authority was broadly in support of the proposal but before committing resources more work needed to be done on establishing how the proposals would fit in with Corporate Priorities.

It was agreed that Mike Rhodes would prepare a formal letter of support and circulate details of a similar trail in the Malvern Hills. **ACTION: MJR**

The Chair thanked Albert for his interesting presentation.

7. DCC ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward introduced a progress report on Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

In introducing the progress report, Gill referred to circulated documents and highlighted the following issues:

- The DCC Cabinet had approved the new targets for the revised Rights of Way Charter, taking on board views expressed in the public consultation as much as possible. Gill agreed to circulate the new Charter when available. **ACTION: GM**
- Proposals to reduce the size of the Rights of Way Team were out to consultation with employees and trade unions.
- The ease of use surveys had been completed in December with the help of volunteers, including Forum members. The pass rate of 56.7% was lower than the results in May and produced a 68.1% year end figure below the 72.5% target.
- Results of funding bids within the Local Transport Plan 2016/17 Capital Programme would be reported to the June meeting of the Forum
- Bamford Clough had been confirmed as a Byway Open to all Traffic.
- The Pennine Bridleway National Trail section at Monks Road, Charlesworth, would not open until a safe crossing was available at High Lane.
- Circulated a leaflet on Derbyshire Countryside Service events for 2016.
- The comments from the Forum had been considered as part of the development of the Policy for Working with Community Groups and a draft document would be available later in the year
- Responses to the consultation on a revised Rights of Way Minor Maintenance Scheme with Town/Parish Councils are currently being

- consideration. The LAF will be informed about the outcome. **ACTION: GM**
- Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum was organising an event to explore some of the issues surrounding accessibility. This will be held in Derby on 18 March and PDLAF members invited **ACTION: GM**
 - A meeting of the joint LAF RoWIP Sub Group would be arranged before the LAF meeting in June to look at users' needs. **ACTION: GM**

8. DCC COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE RESTRUCTURE

Richard Taylor provided an update on progress made on proposals to restructure Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service. As well as changing the way the Service operates, there would also be further staff reductions.

In his introduction he highlighted that 2016 was the 50 year anniversary of the Service, but in the current climate celebrations were relatively low key with relevant events highlighted in the brochure with a red star.

Richard provided background information on the funding pressures faced by the County Council and the impact on the Countryside Service, highlighting the uncertainties around the development of combined authorities.

During discussions Richard identified progress made in making sure that destination sites were cost neutral by 2020 and the process for disposing of some properties including visitor centres.

9. NATIONAL TRUST OUTDOOR ACTIVITY LICENSING PROPOSAL

Jon Stewart introduced a presentation on proposals being developed by the National Trust (NT) to license outdoor activities and events.

It was noted that at the moment the approach in the Peak District was relatively ad-hoc compared to more structured arrangements in places such as Cumbria.

The presentation highlighted the background to the National Trust's approach and provided details of the Peak District Pilot. The purpose of the pilot was to:

- Explore the relationship with the Peak District events notification procedure
- Engage with stakeholders, including education providers
- Communicate any learning to the National Trust nationally

During discussions the following issues were highlighted:

- The British Mountaineering Council and the NT were meeting at a national level to discuss but were willing to discuss locally as part of the pilot. There were concerns about how exclusions would be managed, highlighting that most events included educational elements such as environmental awareness and learning new skills. These issues were applicable to other activities such as orienteering.
- Participants of many events taking place on NT land were involved to fund raise for charities, concerns that if one land owner started charging, others may follow making such events unviable.
- Impact of large scale events on farmers
- The approach should refer to an "events licence" not activities

It was agreed that the Forum would be sent a link to the Lake District events scheme for information. **ACTION: JS**

10. ACCESS FUND UPDATE

Sue Smith circulated a report providing an update on issues related to the management of access in the Peak District.

The report highlighted donations and pledges made to the Access Fund, particularly the proposals that receipts from sales of the Clarion Ramblers handbooks be donated to the fund. A donation had also been made by the Derbyshire Area Ramblers. Sue circulated a copy of the "Thank you for your donation" certificates to be presented to donors.

Sue provided an update on the development of guidance on tracks. Proactive work was also being undertaken to try and improve access including with potential purchasers of NPA woodlands

It was noted that Bob and Clare were writing to local fell race organisers to draw their attention to the access fund and its purpose.

11. LAF ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Mike Rhodes had circulated a draft of the 2015 Annual Report and asked Forum Members to let him have any comments. **ACTION: ALL**

12. FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

Catchment partnerships

It was noted that, through the Environment Agency, Defra had established Catchment Partnerships for all rivers, including the Derwent and Dove. The purpose of the partnerships was to pull together stakeholders to protect and enhance rivers. Chris Page suggested that recreation/ access issues needed to be considered, and offered to represent the Forum at meetings of the Derwent and Dove Partnerships and provide feedback. This approach was supported and it was suggested that if others wished to attend they could contact Mike or Chris.

Derbyshire Cycling Plan launch

John Thompson reported back on discussions around the development of a strategy particularly around mountain bike use and will pick up on more detailed comments through the work of the Steering Group which Carol Parsons attends. It was agreed that the Forum was happy to receive and welcome the Plan.

Regional Chair's meeting

It was noted that 8 LAFs had been represented at the meeting where there had been a presentation from Sustrans. At the meeting officers from Natural England had been there to respond to concerns that the Huddle workspace was difficult to use.

National LAF conference report

A copy of the National conference report had been circulated along with the LAF survey for completion. It was noted that one LAF had looked at how a

