

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 22 September 2007 at Losehill Hall

Members Present:

Bob Berzins	Richard Marshall
Jon Clennell	Geoff Nickolds
Henry Folkard	Keith Pennyfather
Terry Howard	Richard Peart
Mike Innerdale	Lorna Wilson
Andrew McCloy (Chair)	James Kellie

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA)	Ben Morris
Richard Bonner (DCC)	Andrew Murley (DCC)
Roy Malkin (Kirklees MBC)	Richard Pett (DCC)
Judy Merryfield (PDNPA)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)	

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Charlotte Bright, Andrew Critchlow, Edwina Edwards, Stuart Elliott, Jacque Bevan and Roger Wilkinson.

The Chair told meeting that Jacque Bevan was the new member from the National Park Authority.

Mike reported that Alison Salmen has had to resign as she is moving away from the area – this means we are now looking for new members. A couple of applications have been received and interviews will take place this autumn so we hope to have some new members soon. The Chair mentioned that certain interest areas must be represented, land owners in particular. Any suggestions of possible members would be welcome.

ACTION: ALL

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2007 were agreed as correct.

3. Matters Arising

Terry spoke regarding Discretionary Closure - specifically that an owner had used his 28 days but had erected signs saying shooting was in progress and ramblers then assumed the moor was closed. Mike Innerdale responded that owners have health and safety obligations regarding shooting – and have to provide information. It was considered good practice rather than maliciously stopping people walking on the moors. Bob Berzins asked if this could be investigated further and said that from a layman's point of view – could some of the 28 days be used for closing moors for shooting?

Mike Rhodes confirmed that the 28 days can be used for any reason a landowner sees fit – they do not have to give a reason – the CRow Act permits them to do so. Outside

of those 28 days they can shoot, but not close the moor – warning notices are posted as good safety practice, but it's not necessary to close areas.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mike Rhodes reported elections were due for the LAF Chair and Vice-chair. Andrew McCloy is willing to stand again for another year and no one else has expressed interest.

Lorna Wilson therefore proposed Andrew McCloy to continue: seconded by Henry Folkard. This was agreed unanimously.

Andrew Critchlow is currently Vice Chair and is willing to continue, but the amount of time he can commit to the forum is diminishing due to work commitments. So - he would welcome someone else taking over – please consider and let MR know if you would be willing to stand as vice chair – it basically means standing in for the Chair when Andrew McCloy was not available.

Henry Folkard felt it was useful for Andrew Critchlow to continue as he is a landowner and we need representation from that area.

Jon Clennell felt that one function of the Vice Chair is to keep continuity as there is a rotation of members over time – it was good to have a reservoir of continuity. The Chair said would Mike Rhodes ask Andrew C to continue for the moment and also to talk to members who are not here today. He felt rather awkward with AC not being here - to foist the vice chair onto him!

Mike Innerdale would be interested but as a new member feels he should be here for a little longer in order to get a better understanding of the forum and its function. The Chair thanked Mike and thought it would be a way forward if AC could continue for, say, another 6 months.

Keith Pennyfather asked if it was a requirement that the Vice Chair should be a landowner. It was recommended, not a requirement as long as the forum has a balanced membership.

ACTION: MR

5. Consultation on the Peak District National Park Authority's proposed policy and procedure for making Traffic Regulation Orders

Mike Rhodes reported that the policy has been open to public consultation and requested comments from the Forum – the Chair added that he felt we must make a response. Mike Rhodes then gave a brief background – he put the consultation and strategy documents in context and how we have got to where we are today – they must be seen in that context and not as stand-alone policies. We first discussed DCC's improvement and scrutiny committee document back in December 2005. That had outlined the process re motor vehicle use of unsurfaced highways by sustainability analysis, and proposed a hierarchy of action based on sustainability of routes. That process was approved by DCC in March 2006. The draft strategy and policy from the National Park Authority was drawn up subsequent to that and went before the forum in December 2006. At the time there was considerable discussion as to the way the NPA was tackling these issues. The NPA sees this very much as a partnership between themselves and DCC for developing a baseline survey and drawing up an action plan. The strategy had been circulated to members in June. It should help members to understand the ways we are undertaking work to tackle the issues involved. Under the list of actions (Richard Pett is dealing with in his day to day work), one of the tools is that the NPA is given powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders – this is shortly to be available to the NPA and it must be clear, open and objective in the use of these powers. To that end we have consulted widely with landowners, parish councils, user groups and now the forum. All the information is laid out in the document circulated by

Mike. It was intended that the use of these powers be very carefully considered and made on a transparent basis to gain support from all corners. Mike asked if there were any comments.

Terry wished to make two points - firstly, on the next to last page with regard to information on a particular TRO, it may well be happening in another highway authority area which may have another forum, so we should get their view as well as ours (this was agreed by the members here today) and secondly, in having a TRO, who will pay for installing barriers and maintaining them in position. Mike Rhodes said that this falls to the authority making the order. Richard Bonner (DCC) suggested that the appropriate highway authority may also be able to help.

Mike Rhodes spoke about the Moss Road bridleway – the National Park Authority considered it important (as the landowner) to erect barriers to restrict use. The cost would be absorbed by the NPA. The Chair said this would a good point to illustrate this issue as there were financial implications on both the resources of the NPA as well as Derbyshire Constabulary. Mike Rhodes told the meeting that a summary of responses received was going before the NPA on 5 October. A fourth annex will be dealing with the financial situation and the members will be asked to consider making additional resources available to carry out this work.

Richard Marshall believes the powers in relation to TROs relate to a highway authority – Richard Pett confirmed they are identical. RM said the policy should relate to TROs on unsurfaced highways no matter what use – just being aimed at vehicles could be seen as discriminatory – so it should be very broad in its remit. MR responded that the emphasis has always been on motor vehicles, the Government's intention was that we should be using it to control motor vehicles. RM stated that the Government has made a decision through the NERC Act to do so but that the difference was that here the NPA is up for scrutiny. The Chair said nowhere does it say that it cannot be applied to footpaths and RM felt the policy should state that it can be applied to any right of way – wherever appropriate. RP responded by saying that it was felt that on one route horse riders should be encouraged but we said we would have to be careful not to make unsustainable – MR is considering sustainability throughout the Rights of Way network, eg mountain biking.

Henry said that it should be recognised that a lot of work had gone into this policy. It is new and provision should be built in for a review, say after one year, let's not be saddled with a policy which could not be amended to everyone's benefit. He felt that we should remember that the National Park had been designated for its special qualities – twin statutory purposes and a duty. Special considerations should emerge therefore when considering this document - something that should be apparent is how it applies to an area with special qualities, quiet enjoyment, landscape etc. This document is country wide and needs to recognise that the National Park status is relevant. Henry urged members to bear this in mind when considering this policy.

Roy Malkin offered clarification regarding TROs – they are not permanent, and can be revoked at any time in the future. They can restrict any traffic in any way – therefore are far reaching in restrictions, although not widely used. There is a difference in that a NPA has to protect the environment in such a way that a highway authority cannot do. MR had made clear to the NPA in his report that it will be reviewed in 12 months' time. The Chair said this seems very sensible and logical – it is a consultation document but in terms of the forum's response, from the comments in general we are in favour of it. He summarised comments made so far – Terry Howard had asked that neighbouring forums should be consulted, we are duty bound to raise the question of resources as we have made representations about the access budget being hit before and TROs will add to this, we would urge the authority to find the resources if needed. RM and Roy's comment that TRO powers may be used in any situation, Henry's point

about special qualities, and that a review should be built in. The Chair feels a review after one year is sensible. On that basis, he was happy to endorse the policy. This was agreed by members but the Chair welcomes individual responses.

The document is downloadable from the NPA website – the consultation period ends 1 October 2007.

6. Unsurfaced Highways Sustainability Survey

Richard Pett reported that, a sub group of this forum (Charlotte Bright, Richard Marshall, Henry Folkard, James Kellie) went out yesterday to look at issues around Ballidon – 4 sites were visited. The sub group realised it is an enormous task and will get together again to look at making some ground rules so that we can be consistent with all routes. Henry felt it was very important to have an open and accountable process and the need to have an audit trail. We need to demonstrate how we arrived at decisions – the basis on which recommendations are made needs to be transparent. Charlotte had spoke with the Chair this morning and said the site visit had been worthwhile and illuminating; it had brought up some points she hadn't considered, particularly regarding sustainability, under-use of other routes, and provoked questions.

Richard Pett said the next step was to arrange a further meeting, to get rules established, but we need to be certain how to proceed rather than rushing in to do the works. Establishing a 5 year picture is an aim. HF acknowledged that the work cannot all be done at once – there are some highly contentious routes and to start with a quieter area to test out the process would be a prudent way forward. RP had sent out an e-mail earlier in the year to stress how important it is to be transparent. The Chair reminded the meeting that forum members will have to look at individual sites – this is important. Mike Rhodes told the meeting that Sue Smith has produced a map of the area illustrating unsurfaced roads which was on display for the meeting. She is also working on creating a file for each route and overlaying information. The Chair remarked that this shows what sort of impact there is likely to be on resources and how long it takes – there is no quick fix and yet banner headlines are calling out for that. Any system has to be methodical and seen as a long term solution. Richard Pett reported that regarding signage to help on the Moss Road bridleway, the NPA has come up with an action plan and are waiting for DCC say so to put some barriers up. On the subject of Long Causeway, work is continuing there and the NPA is trying to get some information up on site – it may be good to experiment with signage types. Henry Folkard said that with regard to Long Causeway, he is alarmed by how it is being marketed on websites insofar as they are stating how it is a good place to go. This illustrates that it is not a local thing - but national and the potential for misuse is huge. Mike Rhodes told the forum that Long Causeway is by far and away the route that the NPA get most complaints about – it must be sheer numbers. The Stanage Forum (Matthew Croney) has spent a long time negotiating a voluntary code of conduct and methods of restraint on that route but has no resources to implement it. It is worrying as it illustrates the context of our strategy – in terms of lack of resources. Henry stated that the demands of recreational use in this NP are always moving – it is important that the recreational voice is represented to members – it is an important voice to be heard and budget spending must evolve with it. The Chair felt that if resources are not available for Stanage then what is the future for TROs on a wider basis? Richard Pett had spoken to Jacque Bevan –she was involved in the original DCC review of motorised vehicles in the countryside, so is well aware of the situation and is knowledgeable. The Chair added that Jacque is a District Councillor (Hathersage) and aware of her own community's concerns over these sorts of issues.

Terry Howard spoke about Long Causeway – they are well aware of the conflict with users and trespass onto SSSI land - used as a playground. He has contacted Natural England but as yet has had no response. He asked if the forum could write to Natural England about this issue – under the CRoW Act you can only prosecute if people are aware they are on a SSSI but Henry thought this had changed under NERC – you do not have to prove knowledge of SSSI status. Mike Innerdale stated that is an offence under the CRoW Act and illegal, and needs enforcement. Mike Rhodes clarified that it is a Road Traffic Act offence. Bob Berzins asked if we could tap into funding from Natural England to help implement the law.

Lorna said that in her area they would love to stop cars, 4 wheel drives and motorbikes, but once a year mountain bikers use the area and also once a year there is a hillclimb in October – can we stop year round except for special cases? Mike Rhodes confirmed that use could be regulated – it is possible to prohibit certain classes of use and allow by consent an organised event.

The Chair thanked Richard Pett on behalf of the forum

7. Rights of Way Improvement Plans Updates

Derbyshire Gill reported that DCC is on target for November – the final plan is currently being worked on but she is happy to let members see a copy of the latest version. Please talk to Gill if you have any questions. The RoWIP now includes a vision statement and takes on board the suggestions from this forum to reword some of the themes/aims to make them more forward looking, the themes and aims have also been re-ordered to reflect the priorities which people identified during the consultation. In addition they have smartened up some of the actions, addressed the vehicle issues and incorporated a set of actions under Aim 3 from the DCC review of vehicles in the countryside. The reference to health benefits has been strengthened and chapter 2 improved by adding more maps and data about the existing network. The results from the consultation, including a summary of the detailed written responses, is now on the DCC website and they are producing a separate list of suggested improvements. The final Plan will go to Cabinet in October and should be adopted by the Council early in November in time for the statutory deadline.

The Chair acknowledged that it had been a long and really involved process to get to the published report – but worth it to take on board consultation comments. He said the consultation had been wide and the good response to questionnaires obviously makes the process slower but it is felt to be very important. Consultation had generated debate at Parish Councils and they appreciated the opportunity to comment. Gill said that the Derby & Derbyshire forum's points were similar to those of this forum – existing network information is important. Travel to work and footpaths in urban areas were raised too. Mike Rhodes said the role of the NPA has been to respond to 7 consultations and he was pleased that its response has been recognised in each of the individual improvement plans.

Oldham Terence Cavanagh could not attend the meeting today but a briefing had been sent with the agenda. The Oldham RoWIP was being produced by the Unity Partnership – this is a semi private partnership arrangement. Roy Malkin elaborated that rights of way were being run by private consultants. Mike Rhodes told the meeting that Terence reports that a summary of findings is being drawn up and will be submitted to a future meeting.

Kirklees Roy Malkin reported that the RoWIP is still at the draft stage, due to a comprehensive survey of the old networks being carried out, this is due for

completion sometime in October - they have told Defra it will be late. He has insisted that they look at Derbyshire and Oldham's Plans to ensure consistency across the National Park. Comments from the NPA and the forum will be taken into account.

Sheffield Terry reported that Sheffield's RoWIP is now completed – in general it would be interesting to know how much each one has cost. Sheffield had put in £6m over 10 years and he has heard that Barnsley allowed £32m for theirs – which seemed imbalanced. The Chair asked DCC for their costs – but Gill confirmed that it hasn't been costed; Richard Bonner added that there has to be a balance between what is aspirational and what is realistically deliverable.

Ray Malkin couldn't give an exact figure for Kirklees, but thought about £10m over 5 years.

8. Consultation on draft Greenway Strategy for West Derbyshire and the High Peak

Wayne could not be here today but Gill wanted to say that consultation is due soon on the draft strategy – some people have already passed on ideas for routes. DCC would like a response from the LAF, the aim of the strategy is to identify the potential for developing a network of Greenways in this area of the County. It will set out routes DCC would like to safeguard and ticks a lot of boxes for the RoWIP, such as improving the bridleway network, healthy living and easy access routes, although one issue is that the terrain is quite challenging in terms of accessibility for all. Is a sub group needed? The response deadline is 11 January. The Chair thought that if Wayne comes along to the December meeting it would be good and meanwhile members should think about the issues and be ready to respond then, rather than have a sub group. Gill said the information will be sent out soon. Comments are being invited on the routes which make up the strategy and whether any have been missed, along with any issues which need to be considered.

ACTION: ALL

9. Natural England consultation on the activation and expiry of fire prevention restrictions

Mike Rhodes had circulated this consultation document and hopes all members have had a chance to read it although he recognises it is very detailed and a specific issue. He summarised the consultation regarding access land being closed when weather conditions are exceptional and the fire risk high. The tool for determining extreme conditions is the Fire Severity Index (a Met office tool). The NPA has made an outline direction that when the FSI reaches 5, access to open country is suspended. The rules are laid out in this document. Views are welcomed by Natural England and the forum

Henry Folkard felt that it begs questions of the FSI and adequacy of the task – has this been better than assessing ground conditions. Before we are happy to rely on a system which is dependant upon a process, we have to have confidence in that process – and he is not sure if there is confidence. Mike Innerdale responded that it was worth bearing in mind that the Fires Operation Group in the Peak District is by far the leading partnership in fire fighting in the country. The approach to fire fighting is critical – and this system works well. Bob agreed that the FSI is important and the document doesn't say how that is determined. He was surprised if there is no local input – and cannot see how the Met Office can make predictions – there are many factors that come into this. He would be happier if there was some local input – and would like to know more. Is there any research into how fires are started? The Chair said that the FSI is reached through general and local weather information and reports on the ground but he doesn't really know what is entailed. Access land can be closed but

adjacent land can be open and it doesn't affect rights of way which is bizarre. Usually human actions start fires, signs have to be taken down promptly when closures are lifted but this doesn't always happen. Mike Rhodes reported that the Moors for the Future partnership have carried out extensive research on fires and he strongly recommended that Bob should have a look at their website for information. Mike continued that there is a clear correlation between public access and moorland fires.

Mike Innerdale confirmed that the MFF research was carried out with Manchester University which was needed to inform the fire fighting strategy – 70% of fires start within 1-2km of the Pennine Way so the research has been helpful to determine where to concentrate resources. The work is on-going. Mike Rhodes thought it was interesting that the Pennine Way has never been closed. Moorland closure is always a last resort (similar to the TRO discussion earlier). It was very important to prevent fires and put out promptly when they do happen – moorland closure aside. The Chair informed newer members that Sean Prendergast had given a presentation to the forum about the FOG group. Terry Howard felt that we could say we don't have a part in this as we don't agree with it. We should address this document – we have to live with what we have at the moment, but why shouldn't we raise the issue again about the contradictions eg footpaths open and access land closed. He felt we should respond to the document and say let's raise the issue in the future. There is a good argument for allowing people on the moors – as they are good fire watchers. Geoff Nickolds – based on local experience, asked is level 5 the right level? Mike Rhodes said that until recently it has worked very well, lots of factors are brought into it – there is lots of interesting information on the website. An objective, scientific model is used – the FSI. It is recognised that all models have risk attached – MR gave details of a response to Natural England and the Met Office on recent weather/ground conditions which was taken into account. The Chair said we need to focus on this document – there is a feedback form at the end of the document and he would encourage specific answers.

Lorna asked if, when the footpaths were restricted during the foot and mouth closures, did it make any difference to fires? Mike Innerdale said it was difficult to make a judgement but several factors – eg weather - made a big difference anyway. Henry Folkard said it was a huge issue to get information across, it is complex and people will always complain that they haven't seen signs. Communication to user groups is important but will always be problematic. Mike Innerdale reported that education was needed and the issue of how to get better information to the public was being explored by Moors for the Future over the next couple of years. Richard Peart likened the situation to the avalanche warning system in Scotland – user groups need to be made aware of the severity and dangers of fire – many people think it is a somewhat trivial aspect. The DVD from the FOG group is excellent, and Henry said it is used by Mountain Leader trainers too. As far as the forum is concerned, it is not just fire, but lambing, birds nesting etc and we have responsibility for all of these in terms of advising our organisations – the idea of signage is important. The Chair summarised that we concur with Mike Rhodes' response (on behalf of the National Park Authority) and comments about detecting conditions on the ground rather than just relying on weather forecasts; and also would welcome wider discussion on the FSI mechanism and education. Mike Innerdale said it was good to hear that user groups are being educated, but the biggest challenge is the general public. Roy Malkin said it was an interesting point regarding local information and informed the forum that the FSI was modelled on Canadian research. It was agreed that the Forum was happy to go with the response Mike Rhodes had circulated with the override that wider issues are discussed in the future. MR will summarise and respond.

ACTION: MR

10. DCC budgets for access and rights of way work

Gill circulated some information at the meeting. The Forum had written to highway authorities asking them to be more imaginative in finding sources of funding for RoWIPs and the need to do this is acknowledged. The information circulated contains the allocation of funding DCC has secured from the Local Transport Plan for RoWIP delivery. It does not include the amounts spent on the Pennine Bridleway National Trail as this money is claimed back from Natural England. Neither do the totals take account of the value of volunteer days which make a significant contribution to these areas of work. Delivery of the RoWIP will be developed through annual work programmes which Gill will report on at the next meeting.

In a response to Geoff Nickolds, Richard Bonner said that of the Countryside Capital only some is allocated to rights of way and access work. The amount identified from Countryside Capital for this year is against specific schemes and varies from year to year – it depends on external funding and may increase in some years. Gill said that some schemes have no access contribution at all (eg repairs to visitor centre buildings) which is why this budget appears to be less for 2007/08. Geoff Nickolds said there was lots of talk regarding resources available – are there any sources of funding that might help with works? Gill said that DCC has a funding officer based within the countryside service which enables them to tap into all sorts of funding schemes. Geoff asked if it was possible for the National Park to do so too? Mike Innerdale said that landowners don't often get direct approaches – it could be a useful thing to do. It was noted that the budget summary refers to works proposed for this year and we are almost in October – Gill said that this is the work which has been agreed at this stage, but not all schemes progress quickly enough and we have to be prepared to be flexible. Lorna told the forum she had heard praise for local trails recently from a long distance walker whose experience of Derbyshire was very positive.

11. Rights of Way Training Day – 15 October

Mike Rhodes informed the meeting that Natural England (with DCC hosting) is providing Rights of Way training on 15 October. He has sent an e-mail to members and had very little response so far. Robin Carr and Stephen Jenkinson (excellent and knowledgeable trainers) will be delivering this training and Mike strongly encourages attendance. Travelling expenses will be met. It will be held on Monday 15 October – 10 till 4.30 at the Gothic Hall, Elvaston Castle. Mike will e-mail again.

ACTION: MR

12. Feedback from members

Members

Terry Howard had three points:

- 1) if the proposed training events were being progressed
- 2) regarding public access to open country Terry said that Mike Rhodes is fully aware and understands the Snailsden area is problematic with access issues. There are continuing (deteriorating) access issues between Moscar and Stannington – all access discs have been removed, some stiles have disappeared and agreed access points are no longer there, an access symbol has been removed and replaced by a 'beware of dog' notice. All this has happened despite discussions with the landowner. The Landowner has said he will do something but actually hasn't. The NPA is not prepared to take enforcement action – and TH is concerned that they are not prepared to enforce because of financial reasons. It is common land which should have been open on day one but is still fenced off with an encroachment on the highway. We are now taking political action against this and it will be discussed by Sheffield CC Cabinet. The Peak District National Park Authority should address this.

3) Should we invite local MPs to these meetings – Angela Smith had attended and Nick Clegg’s responsibilities include being Secretary and Treasurer of an all party group that supports National Parks – could we invite? The Chair agrees entirely with inviting Nick Clegg and MR will invite. **ACTION: MR**

The Chair responded:

On point 1) training proposals – very few ideas had been put forward and Chair and Mike will discuss before the next meeting **ACTION: CHAIR AND MR**

2) access issues – this is an operational issue for Mike Rhodes and the National Park – Terry’s concerns are noted and minuted. Mike Rhodes did not know about the illegal sign but knew about some of the other points – they have been trying to deal with the landowners concerned but they are not now willing to compromise. The NPA is unwilling to use legal powers to enforce. Jon Clennell asked is it Sheffield CC –but the NPA is the access authority. Mike Rhodes went on to say that as a principle, land management concerns have always been taken into account regarding the promotion of and siting of points of access. This approach has been successful but now some landowners seem to be regressing. They do have concerns but being un-cooperative isn’t the best way of solving problems. There is no arbitration process, the Director makes decisions regarding legal action, and the risk of appeal is taken into account.

Henry felt we should ask forum members to make other NP Members aware of this concern – then if it continues to be a problem or gets worse it will not come as a surprise. Bob felt that the whole purpose of the forum is to implement the CRoW Act (with an obviously wider remit) but that should be on-going. This forum can come to an agreed position on these issues regardless of resources and take into account wider Peak District issues – these are real issues affecting people who want access to the countryside. The Chair responded that our remit is to advise authorities and bear in mind that limited resources have to be applied wisely. He agrees with all the points made and feels we should comment on access issues strategically (rather than individual issues) and we should make comments that whilst we understand the predicament over resources the NPA has a duty to implement and uphold the CRoW Act. Members, Chair and Mike to make the forum’s views known and lobby.

ACTION: ALL

It is recognised that officers and rangers are in a difficult position regarding landowners. Huge progress has been made since the CRoW Act but some areas are standing still or going backwards. We will look at this in more detail at a future meeting – it does need to be a strategic approach rather than looking at individual cases. Geoff Nickolds said this view should be expressed – whose agenda should this be on? Members should be made aware – quarrying issues should not mean access and recreation issues are not considered and awareness must be raised. Geoff reported that as part of the scrutiny panels, two topics to be discussed are both recreational so this forum should be cropping up. The Chair reported that he hopes to have a meeting with Director of Operations to discuss this and other issues.

Henry updated the meeting on Backdale - the hearing will be in the High Court on 5 November and the High Court judge will decide whether the appeal against the Inspector’s decision is worthy of hearing. Jonathan Shaw, Minister for National Parks met on Thursday with the Parish Council, CPRE. This was a positive meeting and central government were urged to support the Authority on Backdale. Blasting re-commenced at Backdale on Monday of this week – the position is being monitored by Authority staff.

Henry also reported that the A628 bypass inquiry was a complete farce. The Highways Agency has had to re submit their critical evidence as vehicle flow rate numbers were incorrect. Their revised proofs will be submitted by 28 September, and any other proof

and/or Environmental Statement amendments have to be made by 30 November. The Public Inquiry will reconvene in November or December, dependant on the Inspector's potential jury service, so it may not get going until the New Year.

The Chair said that a number of communications have been received regarding A628 inquiry. As a LAF we wrote objecting to the proposals and we are being kept in touch with what is a long drawn out process.

The forum was asked to consider a restriction by a rifle club in the Shooter's Nab area. Some of this land is in the National Park, some in Kirklees and some Calderdale. The current situation is that the landowner (a rifle club) through whose land a public right of way goes, is seeking to close a public right of way which will affect land in the NP. Roy Malkin said they are not seeking to close the right of way, but it is a modification of the definitive map - it goes through a firing range. The Landowner is insistent that no access is allowed to the shooting area at Shooter's Nab. They have been asked to reconsider, with a permissive path beyond Shooter's Nab. They want to control access – they have a meeting on 7 October to discuss Kirklees's proposal. Roy has asked the National Trust to investigate as they are landowners and Kirklees are trying to get a resolution to the problem. Mike Rhodes has received papers regarding a section 15 exchange and the papers implied that it had been agreed – Roy Malkin was not aware of this - MR will investigate and he and Roy need to meet to discuss.

ACTION: MR AND RM

Chair

The Chair reported that Haggwater Bridge had been closed due to erosion (flood damage). This is a crucial link in the bridleway network and he understood that it was due to be closed until January 2008 – why does it take so long to repair. Mike Innerdale said that NT tenants in the local area had been asking the same question. Gill will find out why it will take so long to repair and let Andrew McCloy know.

ACTION: GM

13. Dates of Next meetings:

Thursday 6 December
Sat 15 March
Thurs 19 June
Sat 27 September
Thurs 4 December 2008

The meeting closed at 1.00pm