

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 1 December 2011
at Aldern House, Bakewell**

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	Terry Howard
Bob Berzins	Adge Last
Jon Clennell	Ben Rayner
Richard Entwistle	Jon Stewart
Henry Folkard	Ally Turner
Charlotte Gilbert	Sue Weatherley
Clare Griffin	Jean Wharmby
John Hall	

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Gill Millward (DCC)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Tim Nicholson (PDNPA)
Chris Dean (MFFP)	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Sarah Ford (Barnsley MBC)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Mick Hanson (Sheffield CC)	Rita Whitcomb (SMP)

1. Apologies and welcomes

Apologies had been received from James Kellie, Andrew McCloy, Richard Peart and John Thompson. John had an operation on Friday but is making a steady recovery in hospital. Brenda Harrop has resigned as she has too many other commitments.

James Kellie, Jon Clennell and Charlotte Gilbert are approaching the end of their terms. Jon and Charlotte have agreed to continue for another 3 years – James Kellie is to confirm. The Chair thanked Jon and Charlotte for their continuing commitment.

Sarah Ford from Barnsley MBC and Mick Hanson from Sheffield City Council were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2011 were agreed as a correct record, with the exception of an amendment to Item 9a under Any Other Business. In relation to planning issues, it was agreed to insert a comment that "Mike Rhodes would forward any planning applications of strategic importance to the LAF."

Thanks were given to Gill and Christina for taking the minutes at the last meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

a) National Park Management Plan Transport Working Group (Item 5) -

Terry Howard will forward the minutes from the recent workshop for Mike Rhodes to circulate.

ACTION: TH/MR

Observations from the workshop – many transport providers had given apologies and did not attend. The Group was asked to be more visionary about what exists – the workshop did not address the downward spiral of bus usage within the National Park and corresponding increase in car use. There was not enough encouragement for transport providers to consult directly with users about routes, timings etc.

b) Chris Dean, Programme Manager, Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP), explained that the current **MFFP Strategy** is coming to the end of its life. He would like to include the LAF in the consultation which is now taking place and proposes to send Forum Members a link to the new draft strategy for comment.

ACTION: CD/MR/ALL

Chris gave a brief description of previous access oriented work associated with moorland restoration. Access improvements continued to be made where the opportunity arose to do so as part of the ongoing conservation work eg path improvements on Brown Knoll. The Chair pointed out that this was an important project and asked Forum Members to let MR know if they wanted to form a sub group to discuss this further.

ACTION: ALL

Henry also asked for the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) to be included in the process in some way.

ACTION: CD

4. Sheffield Moors Partnership Project

Rita Whitcomb (Project Officer) gave a presentation and circulated two versions of a map – one is simplified for public use. Rita's role is to raise awareness of the project – she gave details of the origins, partners (PDNPA, National Trust, Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Wildlife Trust and RSPB - with Natural England as the main statutory advisor), the area involved and aims of the strategic landscape scale plan. The project covers an area of 56 km² – containing a number of management plans for respective areas.

Since its formation in Spring 2010 the partnership has adopted a collaborative approach - pooling resources, skills, expertise and developing a collective long term vision to 2025 to form a strategic landscape scale plan which aims to be a robust framework for informing future decisions on funding, recreation, habitats etc. The project will not get involved in day to day management but foster public ownership through community engagement.

Focussed consultation with user groups and key organisations is currently taking place, with wider public consultation starting after Christmas. 3 key workshops (booking system for attendance) will be held in Sheffield, Hathersage and Totley to gather information to produce a series of current situation maps. The information will be combined and then taken back to the community with changes made to maps and feedback sessions held. It is intended that the masterplan will be adopted by community and partners in March 2013. LAF members are welcome to attend workshops - dates will be given to MR.

ACTION: RW/MR

Members gave feedback on what has worked well in former consultation formats. Henry responded re stakeholders – BMC is holding a focus group meeting on 8 February in Sheffield. Following the Environment White Paper a proposal for a Nature

Improvement Areas (NIA) is being worked up – many partners listed above are involved. These are exciting times as a huge resource is potentially available for such an important iconic upland area where a common heritage is so important. The movement for National Parks began here - it binds the area together as well as the environment does and needs to be looked at as a whole. MR will circulate Rita's contact details.

ACTION: MR

The question of who will be managing North Lees Estate in future was raised and the Chair thanked Rita for attending

5. Mountain biking

Terry Howard spoke about mountain biking – this subject has been inundated by conflict situations in last few years and it is now time to address some of the issues.

In 1968 it became legal to ride bikes on a bridleway – since then there has been a steady increase in cycling (particularly mountain bikes). Many plans and initiatives promoting cycling, coupled with improvements in technology, means that mountain biking challenges as a sport have multiplied and new demands and issues have arisen with this increase. There is inadequate provision for horse riding and cycling on bridleways. Downgrading a road or BOAT to a bridleway is not acceptable to some but similarly upgrading a footpath to a bridleway is not popular with walkers as experience doesn't endear them to the shared group principle. Cyclists' leaders have admitted many cyclists are not aware of rights and responsibilities - which gives rise to conflict situations. It is a criminal or civil matter to ride a bike on a footpath - on bridleways cyclists must give way to walkers and horse riders. Land managers give permission for downhill cyclists and this can cause conflict - CRoW access areas and SSSIs used by cyclists – this is obviously illegal but land managers sometimes turn a blind eye with subsequent uncertainty of responsibility for injury and damage to SSSI land. Terry gave examples of intimidating behaviours and suggested two things:-

- 1) leaflets to be available to cyclists, walkers and horse riders to outline rights and responsibilities
- 2) more consultation with user groups. Local Authorities and LAFs to have discussion about a shared approach

Ally asked about designation - Terry confirmed cyclists should always give way to riders and walkers if on a Public Right of Way - unless a cycle route (eg Monsal Trail). Adge said this is a classic example of people not knowing – he welcomes the issue being raised and hopes this group can do something constructive.

Bob B had recently attended a meeting about Eastern Moors where there had been a discussion about lots of disjointed routes and it had been suggested that the path on top of Curbar and Froggatt Edges may be upgraded to a bridleway.

Richard Pett said e-mails were occasionally received on the subject. Mike felt some individuals were ignorant but there is intolerance (eg a group of people tarnished by individuals – to castigate a particular group doesn't target the individuals who ignore the law).

Charlotte gave an example as a land manager – illegal fast mountain biking use on farm track – she does ask people to cycle slowly along the footpath. 50% don't realise they shouldn't be cycling there - it comes down to people and their responsibility. Lots of RoW issues need addressing at a national level as many visitors are from a long distance. Clarity for cycling is needed eg colour coded route marks.

Clare agreed that education is definitely needed; signposts for category of users allowed may reduce conflict. There are now routes specifically for bikes in Macclesfield Forest which is working well.

Gill pointed out that the DCC horse ride and cycle leaflets give information and advice. Abi Ball is finalising a code of conduct for the Monsal Trail which may be useful for other trails. DCC now include symbols of who can use a public right of way on roadside signs; it is intended to use markers on trails to show who you may meet on the way. Henry felt this underlines the importance of through routes and information. A structure is needed to take this forward and find a solution – but it does take time. Terry said we must remember the need to improve provision for horse riding and cycling opportunities – we need to consider how to go about it as he felt it was rather haphazard at present. Woodlands offer cycle routes – all users need to be involved on day one on equal terms. Clare spoke about a petition on the Number 10 (Government) website re bridleway provision; she will forward a link. **ACTION: CG**

Jon C felt off road usage management in the National Park has been more successful since the police have been involved in giving information to users. More and better consistent information is the best way forward. Gill said that codes of conduct will form a continuing action in the RoWIP.

6. Kinder Mass Trespass – 80th Anniversary

Terry said that 2012 is a special year – the 80th anniversary of the 1932 Kinder Mass Trespass. The celebration will focus people's attention on the future of Kinder as well as remembering the past. It will set out to address some of the myths that have grown up around the original trespass, for example many people still believe the trespass was responsible for creating this National Park. The access movement started in the late 19th century and the Kinder Trespass did inspire people to keep campaigning for the right to roam.

There will be a launch event at the Moorland Centre in Edale on Tuesday 24 April - invited speakers are Fiona Reynolds (National Trust) and Kate Ashbrook (Ramblers Association/ Open Spaces Society) – with the search still on for a 'personality'. There will be publications and events, children's activities, walks throughout that week from Wednesday to Sunday – with a re-enactment walk from Edale and Hayfield to meet up on Kinder. All walks are being organised and led by National Trust, National Park and Derbyshire County Council Rangers. At least one public lecture is planned in Sheffield, along with an access themed ceilidh. Events are planned for the Manchester area too. A brochure and a specific website with further details will be available.

7. Motor vehicles update reports

Richard Pett had circulated an update report. He reported that the revised strategy for Recreational Vehicle Use of Unsurfaced Highways and a revised procedure for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will be discussed at tomorrow's National Park Authority meeting (2 December 2011) - draft documents have been circulated.

Chapel Gate – illegal use has dropped off by some 80% compared to last year. Long Causeway – funding is available from DCC and a site visit will be arranged to look at surfacing the most difficult stepped section. Brough Lane is also being considered for repairs. DCC is re-consulting on the proposed TRO for Bradley Lane and the TRO for

Washgate Lane at Leycote should be made before Christmas. Monitoring is continuing on Cherpit Lane, Great Longstone. Signage of Winchester Case affected routes will be carried out very soon. PC Kevin Lowe has retired and been replaced by Phil Maycock.

Ben Rayner said he is on the TRO working group and reported on the strategy review – on the whole there has been a positive response from the public and it is definitely a step in the right direction.

Henry told the meeting that he will be speaking at committee tomorrow. The residents' concerns about safety issues on School Lane remain. 5 year old children walk to school along this lane and it is a scandal that nothing has happened about it. The Parish Council are hoarse with contacting DCC Councillors who all promise to do something but do not even reply to correspondence. He felt it is only because of the attention of school employees that there hasn't been an accident – out of control trial bikes have caused several near misses with children. It is a Highways Authority issue and wholly unacceptable that the County Council is neglecting maintenance and ignoring safety issues. User groups must be involved all the way through as many users are responsible and will help find a solution. Councillor Jean Wharmby said she has responded to correspondence. Henry read out what he is going to say at the Authority meeting on 2 December. It was suggested and agreed (with Jean Wharmby and Ben Rayner abstaining) that Henry should speak with the full support of this LAF. MR is to advise Democratic Services. **ACTION: MR**

Bob reported that a Hathersage resident had raised concerns about Long Causeway - they had heard that initial works would be to repair the retaining wall rather than surfacing. Mike responded that the retaining wall is being monitored by DCC engineers who will determine the work needed. The PDNPA will spend the funding from DCC on resurfacing work to improve the stepped/bouldered area using volunteers. Clare said she may be able to help find volunteers if they are needed on this and other routes.

On the subject of management plans, the Chair thought the idea of templates was a sensible suggestion. Richard E commented that the LAF's recommendations had not been given enough attention and would have made a huge difference to the first eight management plans which ought to be revisited.

Bob asked about the potential resource implications for the National Park Authority with the TRO being challenged in the High Court. Mike said there had been 400 staff hours spent on the TRO so far in preparing the original consultation, response, committee report, making the order and defence against the challenge in the High Court. A barrister is also being employed to present the case in the High Court.

Gill said that DCC is about to consult on a revised motor vehicle policy – a copy of the last policy produced in 2003 was tabled at the meeting. A link to the Cabinet Report of 1 November 2011 has been circulated. There will be a 12 week public consultation (which should be available on line from Monday 5 December) through a series of questions in relation to each of the 7 policy statements. Members were asked to circulate to all interested groups, as well as responding as individuals. **ACTION: ALL**

This LAF's formal response will be made via the vehicle sub group. Clare, Richard, Charlotte, Ben and Henry volunteered. Gill will be in touch to arrange a suitable date/time to meet at Aldern House. **ACTION: GM**

8. Derbyshire CC Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review

Gill reported on the joint sub group meeting with the Derbyshire and Derby LAF and thanked Sue and Henry for attending. The group was generally happy with the approach to look at refreshing the existing plan. It will have a separate identity but will still be aligned to the Local Transport Plan. The new action plan needs to be flexible especially regarding funding and will be subject to consultation with specific stakeholder groups. It will also tie in with the PDNPA's Recreation Strategy and initiatives like the Sheffield Moors Partnership Project, which can help to deliver RoWIP actions.

Gill asked if other LAF members wanted to be more involved and it was agreed the whole LAF would get together in February for a workshop to consider the Action Plan in more detail - the sub group would then develop these ideas further. Henry felt this was best tackled in a discrete session so Forum members can focus on the subject. With regard to the Local Transport Plan, whilst it is important that the RoWIP keeps its own identity, the fact that it is allied makes certain funding easier and raises the profile amongst Councillors. Jon Stewart suggested that LAFs and officers from surrounding areas be invited to the workshop. **ACTION: GM**

Terry asked if it was possible to set up a LAF sub group to look at Lost Ways – he is concerned there is only 14 years left until the cut off date of 2026. Gill said that the Derby and Derbyshire LAF is progressing some routes and would talk to Claire O'Reilly about how this has worked. **ACTION: GM**

9. Huddle

Sue Smith gave brief details of the online network and document sharing site for LAFs - Mike had previously circulated information. A National Park workgroup has been recognised as being of benefit and has been proposed to supplement the regional ones. Thanks were given to those Forum Members interested in volunteering to co-ordinate input on behalf of the LAF and provide feedback on matters raised. Clare Griffin was nominated as this LAF's Huddle Champion, with Richard Entwistle as the additional nominee. Officer support will be provided by Sue Smith. **ACTION: SAS/CG**

10. Access update

Sue Smith had circulated a paper and reported that the LAF sub group has been involved in discussions with the owners of the Moscar Estate. Further site meetings will be held to survey areas of snares; to identify the location of any fencing, along with other measures to minimise the risk to the public including signage and alternative routes. The individual locations of snares are being marked out. Dark Peak Fell Runners are providing feedback on the proposed measures. The application to restrict access on safety grounds has now been withdrawn. The success of the ongoing measures to manage access will be monitored and kept under review.

Fencing has been discussed with fell runners. It is intended to use post and wire with access points and which is low key from a landscape point of view. In some locations signage on posts may be sufficient. The measures will be discussed with the Access sub-group and any decision will be reported to the full LAF. **ACTION: SAS**

Jon Clennell voiced concerns about the fencing programme which could be the thin end of the wedge. It needs to be justified and this Forum should be consulted. Henry said the fencing should be a temporary fixture to be removed when snares are removed and echoed Jon's concerns. It is the price to be paid to have the proposal to restrict access withdrawn. The more the LAF can work with the Estate the better. Terry added that fencing is a management tool –some types of fence are walker friendly. The access sub group should be looking at this anyway as there may be gains from this exercise. Terry also referred to the outstanding access issues at High Riggs. Sue said access considerations are at the forefront and although some issues have been around for several years – progress is being made. This item is still on the list of things to do and has not been forgotten.

11. Members' Reports

Jon Clennell circulated a report from the Institute for Outdoor Learning for information. The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority scheme will expire in 2012. The Institute has put forward proposals for an alternative scheme to be managed by a non profit making organisation.

Jon had been told that Cheshire East Council is planning to charge for using Tegg's Nose Country Park near Macclesfield. Clare Griffin will check it out. **ACTION: CG**

Also the Wildlife Trust is proposing an increase in car parking charges at Millers Dale station, which will affect the use of Bridge 75 for abseiling in particular. Henry was concerned that if this is the case, it will have repercussions on the surrounding roads and communities eg the parking difficulties in Wormhill could be made worse again. It was reported that an area of the Monsal Trail at Bridge 75 had been marked out for use by abseilers to segregate them from other trail users. Adge added that there had been a recent bridge users' meeting to address various issues - a licence is needed to abseil the bridge.

Charlotte reported that Peak Horsepower had held its Black Harry Ride, with 35 horse riders taking part. They had gained extra members and wanted to thank Cavendish Mill for providing the parking facilities. The route was very much enjoyed with feedback positive and the officers involved were thanked. Adge mentioned that a large number of white arrows had been painted on the Black Harry route. He was concerned that they were excessive and that organisers should leave no trace. Mike said there had been a number of events in the area recently.

12. Any Other Business

- a) **Monsal Trail** - Adge asked about the lighting in the tunnels which is switched off at around 4.20pm and wondered if it was possible to keep it on until about 6.00 to 6.30pm to assist commuting journeys? **ACTION: MR**
- b) **Meeting dates in 2012** - Terry requested a change to the date for the September meeting and it was agreed to alter it to 27 September.
- c) **Fencing on Kinder Scout** – Bob Berzins asked about the progress of the work. Jon Stewart outlined that work was now starting on the second phase of the fencing. Materials have been purchased and are being flown out ready for

construction over the wintertime. Jon will give a presentation to the next LAF meeting on the progress of the Kinder work and the wider National Trust recreation and access strategy.

ACTION: JS/MR

13. Dates of 2012 Meetings

To be held on 22 March, 14 June, 27 September and 6 December (all Thursdays).

The meeting closed at 12.45pm and the Chair wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.