

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 19 September 2013 at Aldern House, Bakewell

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	
Bob Berzins	Clare Griffin
Jon Clennell	John Hall
Richard Entwistle	Mike Johnson
Henry Folkard	Richard Peart
Charlotte Gilbert	John Thompson
Damien Greenhalgh	Nicola Turner

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Matthew Hutson (DofE)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Gill Millward (DCC)
Emily Fox (PDNPA)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies had been received from Caroline Hanson, Terry Howard, James Kellie, Adge Last, Jon Stewart, Ally Turner and Sue Weatherley. This is the only meeting of the Forum that Terry Howard had missed since the beginning. All hoped he was feeling somewhat better. There was a brief introduction from Derbyshire County Council's new appointed Forum member - Councillor Damien Greenhalgh, County Councillor for Glossop & Charlesworth and also Member of the Peak District National Park Authority.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2013 were agreed as a correct record with the following amendment:

P5 Chapel Gate – clarification that Clare Griffin felt that this LAF's advice had not been heeded.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting

P2 **High Peak Moors** – a launch event was being held on Friday 20 September. Caroline Hanson is attending on behalf of LAF.

P2 **Resource issues** – John T had contacted Jim Dixon with a further email (and copy of a previous letter) circulated around LAF Members and copied to Christopher Pennell as Chair of the Authority's Audit, Performance and Resources Committee. He understood this had now been considered by the Resource Management Team and that a budget report is going to Members at some stage. Mike indicated it was going to the Authority meeting on 5 October.

P4 **Pedal Peak District** – is on today's agenda.

P5 **National Park Asset Review** - Chris Manby is attending today's meeting.

P5 **Green Lanes** all actions completed.

P6 all actions completed. **Minninglow Lane** – no work taken place yet but is on DCC schedule.

P7 **HLS and access issues** – the National Park Authority is co-ordinating a response to Natural England. There is a call for evidence as individual schemes are being worked on – the access sub group can offer advice on public access provision/ improvements.

P7 **Derbyshire RoWIP** Terry has been in contact with Gill Millward.

P8 Henry spoke on behalf of Terry re **Lost Ways**; information from Huddle about a group in Hampshire had been provided by Clare. A lot of work had been involved. Henry said if we do nothing the current opportunity will be lost as time is limited.

A discussion took place about volunteers undertaking the work but agreed that they would need a co-ordinator, training and support to submit paperwork. Organisations such as The Ramblers and Friends of the Peak District were suggested to take this forward. Mike said that many user groups very actively research RoW and status and are applying to the County Council. Whilst it may not be under the banner of lost ways user groups have lodged a significant number of claims. Peak Horsepower are researching potential bridleways as well as Ramblers.

The issue of adding Rights of Way to the definitive map is going on all the time – DCC has received a considerable number of applications. Terry will be able to advise if the Sheffield LAF is undertaking such a project. Gill Millward offered to provide information on what DCC has on its register of applications. **ACTION: GM**

There is concern that this is going on but is not systematic. A scattergun approach means omissions are as likely as duplication. It is a skilled job – one area at a time may be a better method. The Chair will contact Steve Cresswell and see if volunteers can help and will also talk to Gill. **ACTION: Chair**

It was agreed to keep this on the agenda as a standing item. **ACTION: MR**

P8 **Local Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas**. Sue Smith reported that discussion continues as to how the 2013-20 CAP reforms are to be implemented. Details of parameters are that there will be 5 year agreements - middle and higher tiers - supported by capital funding for education and other access. There is considerable doubt over permissive actions options. Regarding the call for evidence, the National Park Authority is coordinating a response and suggestions have been made for access improvements. It is recognised that it is crucial not to miss funding opportunities.

Gill has been asked to attend a LNP meeting and give a presentation on the RoWIP. Henry emphasised that rural areas are particularly affected – the rural economy is underpinned by access and RoW. If we begin to chip away at access it fundamentally undermines the basis of a rural economy especially in the National Park – the point should be made loud and clear.

P9 **National Citizen Scheme** and the potential influx this summer – Jon C was not aware of any feedback. Adge Last to feedback to next meeting. **ACTION: AL**

P9 **Recreation Strategy** - Rachel Gillis will oversee the strategy. Carol Parsons is arranging a partnership meeting at Thornbridge on 10 October. John and Edwina will attend.

Councillor Nicola Turner arrived at this point

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Edwina and John had volunteered to continue for a further 2 year period. John Thompson proposed Edwina as Chair which was seconded by Jon Clennell. Sue Weatherley had proposed John Thompson as Vice Chair which was seconded by Clare Griffin. In a vote both proposals were agreed unanimously.

The Chair said that this was competent and vociferous group and thanked all members for their continued support on behalf of her and John.

5. Duke of Edinburgh Award in the Peak District

Matthew Hutson, Peak Assessor - Duke of Edinburgh Award, gave a presentation. The DofE is split into regions – Matthew works for the Central England Regional Office. They give approval for expeditions, monitor numbers in White Peak (only), liaise with local groups, provide training and support supervisors and teachers. Campsites should contact schools if there are any complaints, he can issue banning notice (on behalf of DofE) – which is very rare.

DofE cannot compel schools to follow policies; but offer guidance and encouragement. Likewise cannot make groups go to or avoid specific areas, hours or dates, cannot pay for damages.

Matthew extrapolated numbers - based on actuals for the year so far - just over 5,000 young people expected in the Dark Peak with 15,765 in White Peak estimated for 2013 (this does not include adults).

DofE has good communications with the Ranger Service to try and minimise environmental impact. The expedition season is 1 April to 31 October in general but is basically up to schools. Any access issues please contact Matthew and they will be put on DofE website.

Numbers are increasing each year – the aim is to encourage this increase with a national objective of over 300,000 visits annually. It is intended to deliver a 2 day conference in 2014 to train supervisors and undertake an impact study in Autumn/Winter 2013. This will include the economic impact in the National Park; how far schools travel (DofE try and encourage use of public transport or cycling).

Camping - 90% go to 15 sites (out of an available 130) in the Peak District. The aim is to widen that use.

Henry said that he lives by a bridleway which sees DofE-ers in droves – he has always found them very courteous and polite.

There was a rescue on Kinder earlier this year where someone was stuck in a peat bog. Where blanket bog is restored (re-wetting has taken place) it is possible to avoid areas with careful route selection. Should be an expectation that where blanket bog is restored it is difficult to walk across - particularly in a straight line. Matthew said that routes should be submitted and they do try and steer groups off those areas – there is a specific guidance document for Dark Peak and Kinder is explicitly mentioned. The information is updated on a regular basis.

Jon Clennell said that the numbers using this National Park is staggering. Matthew reported that the total number of DofE users in Cumbria, the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland equal the numbers that use the Peak District - which is great, but very challenging.

Clare felt the scheme was inspirational; she observed there was a more diverse ethnic background now. Matthew agreed that they specifically target participation from deprived and BME groups to encourage as many people as possible to take part and remove barriers. Volunteers are very useful for assessor work.

Questions about wild camping, what constituted an organised group and when permission should be sought were asked. Matthew explained that bronze was undertaken at age 14, silver at 15 and gold 16, with expeditions of 1, 2, 3 nights respectively; also terrain gradation accordingly - gold would be Dark Peak. DofE have long standing agreements with the National Park Authority, National Trust, private estates and utility companies. Areas to avoid are discussed and don't generally have any problems - but will respond to complaints (a school name is needed).

Campsites (particularly in Hayfield and Crowden) do not want campers for 1 night in the summer season which pushed some groups towards wild camping. There are concerns about safety and environmental impact. DofE likes schools to approach farmers in the Dark Peak to see whether they are willing to take a small number for one night with access to toilets and water source (low key basis) to encourage more locations to be used. More campsites in the Dark Peak are needed; he recently met with National Trust regarding using Longshaw.

A discussion about boundaries and statistical drivers took place. Matthew continued that there had been an almost zero growth in cycling, with more increase with riding. DofE would like to encourage more cyclists, but teachers are fearful about a lack of skills and access to equipment. The Chair suggested Greg Thomas as a good contact in DCC -she will pass details to Matthew. **ACTION: Chair**

Richard Peart observed people carrying what appeared to be way too much kit; looking miserable. Matthew said kit lists were provided but items always added. It was suggested that riding a bike with a load is very difficult; roads are not good for cyclists and off road would be preferable.

The Chair thanked Matthew very much for a very informative presentation

6. Asset Management /North Lees

Chris Manby, Rural Estates Manager for PDNPA gave a presentation and apologised that no-one was available to attend the June meeting.

A resume of properties was tabled. The NPA is a major landowner - 15,000 acres of assorted land and facilities, campsites, estates, 137 woodlands, cycle hire, car parks, toilets.

He illustrated some highlights. For instance Hartington Station Car Park which has wonderful Pennine Bridleway facilities; the Trails Interpretation Project and Trails Management Plan - and associated on-going management. This Forum is aware of the work on the Monsal Trail Tunnels. He illustrated conversion of Rockhall Cottage to the Don Whillans Memorial Hut and spoke about open access to moorlands and woodlands following the CRoW Act - the scare stories at the time did not materialise.

Asset Management – there had been questions about why the National Park owns land. In some cases historically this had been a matter of rescue but now protection is in place ownership is no longer appropriate. It is a spasmodic progress – properties are never straightforward and it is time consuming to resolve issues. Two consultants are currently working - DTZ / Smiths Gore looking at value for money and general management of all properties. Atkins consultants are in to look at the trails – finances, financing and considering retail options to obtain income. It is early stages with both consultants due to produce reports in the next 2 months or so.

Recent disposals – Eastern Moors is subject to a 15 year lease (option for further 20) to Eastern Moors partnership – the National Park Authority still makes a financial contribution. Management has been more adventurous, a bridleway has been opened which is good news for access.

Roaches - a 125 year lease to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been agreed. It's early days but seems to be working well and no significant changes are foreseen.

Grindsbrook Meadows has recently been sold back to the original family owners – an open access dedication was included in the sale.

North Lees – A copy of the paper going to Committee on 20 September had been circulated. Chris emphasised that it is a Business Management Report – the financial position of the estate. It is an open and transparent process. Valuations have been made – Members have to agree and make a decision.

Progress has been slow – it was down to a lack of resources

The report is the first stage of the gateway process – management appraisal; using assets more efficiently and ensuring financial returns. Chris stressed it is not about commercial exploitation; but subtle changes handled in as sensitive a way as possible. Members decide whether to retain or consider disposal/lease. Chris does not envisage access being negatively affected.

John T said the report very thorough and helpful. He welcomed the fact that the LAF's letter to Jim Dixon had been included in full as an Appendix to the report. There was uncertainty as to what was happening, but the response from Jim Dixon (circulated to LAF) was welcomed.

Charlotte said that the Peak District does not promote horse riding and this needs to be addressed. When the Glossop section of the Pennine Bridleway is complete, hopefully the area will be promoted nationally.

A brief discussion about car park charges and facilities took place.

Bob Berzins appreciates the financial constraints, but felt there seems to be a lack of consultation – stakeholders (eg Stanage Forum) were not consulted; this LAF has not had enough time to influence or input.

There was a discussion about a petition on the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) website. Henry said there is a BMC campaign - uncertainty breeds anxiety and the perception is that there has been a lack of consultation with users. Friends of the Peak, Stanage Forum and BMC have all issued charters. The BMC's 'Stand up for Stanage' with 9 key principles; is not aimed at any particular organisation; it is about the very special place. The public voice cannot be ignored; there has been less discussion in this Forum than members would have liked. Stanage Forum steering

group felt the same – a course of actions is being considered without talking through issues. Financial information is not public so difficult to understand. The National Park Authority was open and transparent with Stanage Forum but is now very different. The overriding concern was that people are worried about selling and privatisation. There is a perceived lack of information.

The Chair reported that the LAF has a 3 minute slot at Committee; all were in favour of using the allotted time to speak. John T felt that recommendations 2 and 3 gave slightly more comfort for this LAF. He will speak on the LAF's behalf at the Committee.

The Chair thanked Chris for attending today and giving an informative presentation

7. Cycling update

Emily Fox, Transport Policy Manager PDNPA, updated the Forum on the success of the cycling bid. The full amount of funding that DCC bid for has been achieved and a steering group has been set up for the project. The group has met once and a priority is looking at funding - year 1 is this financial year and we are already half way through. The steering group will do its best to implement all that is in the bid and will continue to update this Forum. A paper on the Cycling Strategy will be circulated prior to the next LAF meeting. It will be going out to consultation between November 2013 and Spring next year.

ACTION: EF

John T reported that Rachel Gillis had hinted that it might be linked with the recreation partnership meeting on 10 October. Emily confirmed that a first draft will be at that meeting but broader consultation will be made after that. It was agreed this should be an agenda item in December.

ACTION: MR

Henry said everyone is completely behind the project and urged Emily to talk to user groups – surfaces are complicated; cycling is a new and emerging activity with demands beginning to be understood. Thorough consultation beforehand will contribute to success. The Chair understood that Greg Thomas will be talking to organisations and Sustrans are involved. Charlotte Gilbert represents Peak Horsepower as a user group and is keen to work with the project manager/steering group.

Gill reported that DCC is managing the whole package on behalf of partners and is responsible for sorting out the finances. Currently advertising for a senior project officer to deal with this as well as delivering the White Peak Loop and Hope Valley link between Hathersage and Hope.

The Chair thanked Emily for attending today.

8. Green Lanes Update

Sue Smith reported that there had been 2200 responses to the **Chapel Gate** consultation which will be considered at a future Committee (no date yet).

The Roych - the National Park Authority has made an order for the prohibition of motorised vehicles. However the prohibition will not take effect until repair works are

completed by DCC (probably November) and a replacement order will be made following the works.

Long Causeway – a report is being taken to Committee tomorrow (20 September). The report has an open recommendation with a series of options. DCC has undertaken a structural survey with £235,000 allocated for works. A date is yet to be identified for commencement of works. The NPA cannot make an order whilst DCC's closure is in force.

Clare Griffin said vehicle users were angry and she felt it would be helpful for them to see that the LAF is offering alternative solutions; this was endorsed by Richard Entwistle. Mike Rhodes said that the area at the top was scheduled for repair. Henry reminded the Forum that the County Council has statutory responsibilities to keep green lanes in good order. Edwina referred to the previous LAF response and will speak on the LAF's behalf at the Committee.

The **Green Lanes Forum Annual Report** had been circulated and will be on the PDNPA website. The Forum will next be meeting around November time. The Green Lane Code of Conduct is also on the website with QR links to be made available on signs.

Repairs are proposed on the Limestone Way near Castleton. Richard Pett is also mapping all routes within the National Park which have or may have vehicle rights - BOATs and unclassified unsurfaced highways. He is verifying the number (possibly 300) of green lanes in the National Park and may have figures for the next meeting.

ACTION: RP

Henry mentioned that he is alarmed at the condition of **Hollinsclough** –If nothing is done the repair bill will be enormous. Sue responded that 36 priority routes have been identified in the action plan. It is the duty of Staffordshire CC to repair.

9. TRO Consultation – Leys Lane

Sue reported that the NPA is seeking views following November 2012 Audit Resources and Performance Committee. The decision was to go to consultation on a permanent TRO on the Leys Lane section of the Chertpit & Leys Lane route. Edwina asked if the LAF's views on Leys Lane remained the same and this was unanimously supported. John T will write and endorse the submission made and copy to all LAF members.

ACTION: JNT

10. Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) Progress Report

Gill had circulated a report highlighting the achievements of the first 6 months.

The new RoWIP Statement of Action for 2013-17 has been approved and published on the County Council's website at: <http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/ROWIP>

Capital funding allocated for this year's public rights of way and RoWIP projects includes £778,000 from the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3). An additional £140,000 has been provided for repairs on six routes identified in the Green Lane Action Plan for 2013/14. In addition to the £5million from the Department for Transport for the Pedal Peak II Cycling Project, we have secured a further £420,000 in grants for the Pennine Bridleway and two other Greenway schemes. However, it should be pointed out that

the Rights of Way revenue budget for carrying out routine path maintenance work has been cut by 18% (£50,000).

The new concessionary bridleway opened through the Barbrook Valley by the Eastern Moors Partnership is welcomed and along with other routes which are planned eg near Ramsley Moor, will help plug some of the gaps in the network, particularly for horse riders and cyclists.

The Countryside Service Draft Volunteer policy has also been out for public consultation which closed on 6 September. Although only a small number of responses were received, these provided some useful suggestions which we will try to take on board before the policy is submitted to Cabinet for approval later in the year.

11. Huddle

Clare Griffin reported that the main discussions on Huddle seem to be around the potential HS2 rail link. Charlotte had passed Clare information on the Kinder Loop which had been shared. The Chair checked and all members are very happy for links to continue to be circulated.

12. Feedback from Members

Mary Bagley, new PDNPA Head of Field Services and Enterprise started this week and will be joining the Forum for lunch.

13. Any Other Business

National LAF News - questions have been circulated on 5 September – respond as individuals. **ACTION: ALL**

There was no mention of **off road** in the newsletter – indicative of it being a Peak District problem? Edwina felt other National Parks are also trying to find solutions but not prepared to offer advice and support; they wish to see what others are doing. It was brought up at the LAF Conference earlier this year – it's a sensitive subject and there is a general difficulty in knowing how to take forward.

Bob Berzins mentioned that there are massive off-roading issues in both the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales. Mike R will point out to Mandy. Richard Entwistle felt it is a minor issue to other LAFs. **ACTION: MR**

Clare G advised the Forum that volunteer groups are working on Houndkirk Road, with Sheffield City Council on 28 September. It may be an opportunity to talk to Sheffield CC. Drop e-mail to Clare if interested. **ACTION: ALL**

14. Date of next Meeting

To be held on Thursday 5 December at Aldern House, Bakewell

The meeting closed at 1pm