

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 13 March 2014 at Aldern House, Bakewell

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)

Bob Berzins
Jon Clennell
Richard Entwistle
Henry Folkard
Charlotte Gilbert
Damien Greenhalgh
Clare Griffin
Caroline Hanson

Terry Howard
James Kellie
Adge Last
Jon Stewart
John Thompson
Ally Turner
Nicola Turner
Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary
Mary Bagley (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)
Tim Nicholson (PDNPA)

Claire O'Reilly (DCC)
Karen Shelly-Jones (PDNPA)
Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Jason Spencer (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from John Hall, Richard Peart and Mike Johnson.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December were approved as a correct record subject to the 4th paragraph under item 11 on page 8 being amended to record that Clare Griffin reported on the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting

P2 Lost Ways – Terry Howard reported that he had attended a meeting but was still unclear about the impact of the Deregulation Bill and guidance was needed to progress this significant project which had to be delivered in tight timescales. Gill confirmed that she would be arranging a Sub-Group meeting to go through the issues, but advised that progress would be limited until the Regulations were in place.

ACTION: GM

P2 DofE Campsites – Edwina Edwards confirmed that she had circulated Matt Hutson's details so Forum Members could contact him.

P2 North Lees – John Thompson confirmed that Mary Bagley had attended a meeting of the Access Sub-Group and had welcomed her input.

Henry Folkard reported the Stanage Forum would be holding a meeting on 29

March in Hathersage which would be a facilitated open meeting to start the process of working in partnership with interested parties. He confirmed that the event would be publicised using posters and the website and all LAF members were welcome to attend.

P2 Presentation – Mountain Biking –Terry Howard highlighted concerns about the impact of cycling on access land and there needed to be strong guidance on courtesy and responsibilities where routes were shared with other users. John Thompson agreed to raise these concerns at this afternoon’s meeting of the Cycling Strategy Sub-Group. Nicola Turner confirmed that PDNPA Members had raised this issue during their discussions on the Strategy. **ACTION: JNT**

P4 Cycling Strategy – Adge Last confirmed that he would circulate information on the 2014 Peak District Cycling Festival. **ACTION: AL**

P7 DCC – Rights of Way and Access Update Report – Edwina Edwards confirmed that Anne Western the Leader of DCC had responded to the letter sent from the Forum which had set out its views on the impact of funding cuts on Access and Rights of Way. It was noted that the response was comprehensive and well considered.

P7 Gill Millward confirmed that she had circulated a link to access the rights of way customer satisfaction information relating to other County Councils.

Liaison with the Motoring Organisations’ Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) – Edwina Edwards provided an update and advised that LARA would be invited to the June Forum meeting.

4. South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme

Karen Shelly Jones, PDNPA Ecologist, gave a presentation providing information on plans to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to establish a South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme. The presentation provided details of the submission and highlighted the issues that had been identified in the area in support of the bid. It was noted that PDNPA, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Wildlife Trusts, Staffordshire County Council, Environment Agency, Water Companies, Farming Life Centre, English Heritage and Staffordshire Moorlands Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) have agreed to participate in the partnership. After the presentation it was agreed that the Local Access Forum could be added to the list of partners. Clare Griffin and Sue Weatherley would both be involved from the LAF. It was noted if approved the partnership would deliver access improvements such as replacing stiles with gates and addressing erosion on routes in the partnership area. It would also tie in with other projects such as hay meadows, health and well-being and interpretation.

The Forum was advised of the process and timescale for progressing the bid with 31 May 2014 deadline for bids and if successful delivery from January 2017 to January 2022. It was noted that previously the bidding process had been very competitive with 1 in 3 applications being approved. It was confirmed that if unsuccessful HLF would provide feedback and consider a further submission in later bidding rounds. In response to questions from the Forum it was confirmed that the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust was involved in developing the bid

particularly as it was the current tenant at the Roaches. It was also confirmed that the bid would need to demonstrate that partners could access match funding if it was successful.

Henry Folkard suggested that the bid should include more references to access issues to make sure it could demonstrate the impact on a living landscape and that this would have a greater impact than some of the references to birdlife.

Other issues identified by the Forum included:

- Potential conflict between visitors and local residents(eg DofE activities)
- Enhancing access to access land
- Loss of post offices and other local businesses
- Parish Council involvement

Karen was thanked for her presentation and asked to keep the Forum informed on the success of the bid.

5. Cycling in the Peak District

a) Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy Consultation

Tim Nicholson, PDNPA Transport and Climate Change Policy Officer, gave a presentation on the development of the above strategy which was currently out to consultation. The presentation provided the background to the development of the strategy and highlighted how it contributed to National Park purposes.

It was noted that consultation would end on 21 March with a view to report to the PDNPA Meeting on 23 May.

John Thompson confirmed that the Sub-Group established by the Forum to prepare its response was meeting during the afternoon following the Forum meeting.

During discussions Forum members highlighted the following issues:

- Conflicts on multi user trails
- Need to give more attention to Mountain biking as a major activity
- Potential conflict between occasional, regular and competitive users
- References to "Shared Routes" rather than "Cycle Trails" could help avoid conflict, and the scope for horse riding on cycle routes

b) Pedal Peak II Project

Claire O'Reilly from Derbyshire County Council provided an update on progress made in delivering various aspects of the above project. It was noted that a steering group involving the 5 partners and Sustrans had been established and Member Champions appointed but more work was needed on providing information to people.

Updates were provided on the following schemes:

Hope Valley Link – Phase 1 Hathersage to Bamford – contractors currently on site. Phase 2 Bamford to Hope planned for 2014/15 and will involve more public consultation. It was noted that providing safe cycle routes to the Hope Valley

College was a significant driver for progressing this element of the scheme.

White Peak Loop West - Current focus is on west section around Staker Hill, near Harpur Hill, as landowner and planning permissions are in place. Contractors on site to surface a short section of route between Grinlow Country Park entrance and Ladmanlow. The rest is to be delivered later in the year.

White Peak Loop East – This is a more challenging section. It was noted that for the Bakewell to Matlock route, negotiations with landowners were still on-going and when completed planning approval would be required before work could start on site.

Wyedale Bridleway – It was noted that PDNPA were carrying out improvement work on this section.

Staffordshire Moorlands Link – Work had commenced on the Caldon Canal towpath between Stoke and Leek.

Little Don Link - Barnsley/Sheffield – The contracts for work were currently out to tender. This was earlier than planned as discussions with landowners and developer partnerships had already been finalised. The works need to be completed in time for the Tour de France in July.

It was noted that for all these schemes the focus was on cycling because of the funding. However in all cases the projects would deliver improvements for other users, with DCC adopting its Greenway approach for the two schemes which it is responsible for delivering on the ground. There has also been lots of interest in the Cycle Friendly Places Fund being run by the PDNPA from local businesses etc.

The Forum discussed the possible impact of the HS2 rail proposals on access and public rights of way. It was noted that there would be some improvement alongside the new line as a means of mitigating its environmental impact. There is a feasibility study into the possibility of providing a cycle loop between Sheffield and Manchester with links to businesses/communities and into the National Park. The Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum has looked in detail at several aspects of HS2 and was a good source for further information.

On behalf of the Cycling Strategy Sub-Group, John Thompson thanked Claire for the update and welcomed progress made so far. Comments about the project delivering improvements for other users were welcomed.

6. Access Update

a) Agricultural Policy Reform

Sue Smith presented a report providing an update on the proposed changes to agri-environment agreements. It was noted that National Parks England had responded to the consultation and the Forum had fed into this. It was confirmed that annual grant payments for the provision of permissive access were now only available for educational access.

It was noted that Sue Fletcher had attended a meeting of the Sub-Group where

the links between access and the economy had been highlighted. Henry Folkard reported that following the presentation from Sue, it had been agreed that John Thompson would draft a letter to register the concerns of the LAF over the proposed changes. **ACTION: JNT**

b) Review of Directions to Restrict Access

Sue Smith presented an update on the process for reviewing long term directions for exclusion of the public to open access land and in Appendix 2 identified sites to be statutorily reviewed. The report also provided an update on Deer Hill at Meltham which was the first direction to be reviewed and provided details of the timescales and arrangements for receiving consultation responses.

It was confirmed that the Forum would ask the Access Sub-Group to consider a detailed response on Deer Hill at a meeting in April which would be reported to the next Forum meeting. **ACTION: JNT**

During discussion of this item Nicola Turner declared an interest as Deer Hill was in her electoral ward and as she was the claims officer for the British Horse Society in Kirklees she had considered a claim for a bridleway adjacent to Deer Hill.

The Forum thanked Sue Smith for her work on this and confirmed that the arrangements were working well.

c) Open Access 10th Anniversary

It was noted that the September meeting of the Forum would be held at the Moorland Discovery Centre and would include a celebration of access land. Past LAF members and neighbouring Forums would also be invited. The Forum discussed possible speakers but highlighted the need not to move away from the focus of the event.

7. Green Lanes Update

Sue Smith presented a report which provided an update on progress made with the management of recreational motor vehicles in the National Park. In discussing the number of routes with possible vehicular rights across the National Park, it was noted that this figure was slightly lower than reported previously due to legal judgement or some being determined as having no vehicular rights.

The report included a letter to Edwina Edwards from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Science, Lord de Mauley. The letter was helpful in confirming the current situation, rather than proposing a way forward on legislation changes which the Forum sought. It was noted that responses had also been received from Jim Dixon (PDNPA) and Mike Ashworth (DCC). It was agreed that at the next meeting of the Green Lanes Sub-Group, the responses would be considered together and proposals for future action discussed. **ACTION: JNT**

8. Draft Derbyshire Waterways Strategy

Gill Millward circulated a link to the draft Derbyshire Waterways Strategy and encouraged Members to respond to the consultation as it did include references to access. The aim of the strategy was to realise the potential of canals in terms of economy, heritage, environment and access and included a five year action plan with actions for each canal within the County. The deadline for responses was tight because the Strategy was to be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 10 April. **ACTION: ALL**

In discussing the Strategy it was noted that the Forum's principle concerns related to access around other waterways more than canals. The draft strategy was noted.

9. Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – 2014/15 Work Programme

Gill Millward presented the report which provided an outline of the annual work programme for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2014/15. It was noted that details of the Local Transport Plan funding bids to help with this delivery were being submitted to Cabinet for approval on 25 March 2014 and that the papers would be available on the County Council website prior to the meeting. The report was noted and welcomed.

It was also noted that the new Countryside Service Volunteer Policy was due to be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 25 March 2014 and a link was provided to the document on the DCC website.

10. Peak District Local Access Forum Annual Report

A draft copy of the Annual report was circulated and a minor change suggested. Any further comments to Mike by next week please, then the final report will be published. **ACTION: MJR**

11. Feedback from Members

a) Recreation Strategy Steering Group Meeting

John Thompson circulated a paper on discussions at the meeting where a Recreation Strategy Action Plan was being reviewed and a future 5 year action Plan was to be developed. While discussions had shown that there were a number of actions for cycling and walking it needed to include adventure sport activities, water recreation and horse riding and strengthen links between these and the health and community benefits.

It was noted that John would send a letter to Adele Metcalfe at the PDNPA with comments in his report about future Steering Group working arrangements and suggestions for developing additional topics in an action plan for 2015 -2020. He would also invite her to a future meeting as the Forum needed more information and could provide input on ideas to take the Strategy forward. **ACTION: JNT**

During discussions some Members suggested that the Strategy could be made

much more relevant so that individuals and organisations could become more engaged. Mike Rhodes confirmed that he was to have a meeting with Adele about refreshing the Strategy and would provide feedback from these discussions. **ACTION: MJR**

Terry Howard suggested that there was a need to revisit the Sheffield Moors Partnership and the National Trust High Peak Moors Project. **ACTION: MJR**

Members also expressed concerns about public transport reductions and changes to concessionary fares and asked if this could also be a future agenda item. **ACTION: MJR**

It was suggested that the LAF should have representation from appointing a Member with an interest in water recreation and access. Clare Griffin agreed to approach a relative who may be interested in joining and encourage him to write to Mike Rhodes as Forum Secretary. **ACTION: CG**

b) Community Science Scheme

Sue Weatherley provided information on the scheme highlighting it as a good example of community involvement. The scheme involved volunteers monitoring sites for vegetation and species such as bees and waders. A leaflet providing more information was circulated at the meeting.

The scheme initially had funding for one year to set it up and was seeking Forum support for progressing future funding bids. The LAF agreed that this was a good example of engaging future generations and should be supported. **ACTION: EE**

12. Any other business

Henry Folkard reported that the Sheffield Moors document was now available and encouraged Members to read it particularly as it addressed issues relating to special needs and non-visitors. Jon Stewart agreed to circulate copies of the document. **ACTION: JS**

Terry Howard confirmed that the arrangements for the forthcoming "Spirit of Kinder" day had been confirmed and a leaflet published. Event to be held at Sheffield Town Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday 26 April.

Charlotte Gilbert reported that Peak Horsepower had arranged for William Reddaway to give a talk about his 2,674 mile horse ride around England and encouraged members to attend and invite others who may be interested. Event to be held at the Medway Centre in Bakewell on Friday 9 May 2014.

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday 19th June 2014, Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell

Meeting ended – 12.55pm