

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 December 2007 at Aldern House

Members Present:

Bob Berzins	Terry Howard
Jacque Bevan	Mike Innerdale
Charlotte Bright	Andrew McCloy (Chair)
Jon Clennell	Andrew Murley
Felicity Edmeston	Geoff Nickolds
Edwina Edwards	Keith Pennyfather
Richard Entwistle	Roger Wilkinson
Henry Folkard	Lorna Wilson

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA)	Gill Millward (DCC)
Wayne Bexton (DCC)	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Richard Campen (PDNPA)	Mark Rutland (Adventure Works)
Roy Malkin (Kirklees MBC)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Judy Merryfield (PDNPA)	Richard Taylor (DCC)

1. Apologies and welcomes

Apologies had been received from Stuart Elliott, Sue Fisher, James Kellie, Richard Peart and Richard Marshall.

Mike Rhodes reported that Richard Marshall has tendered his resignation on the understanding that we have a new member (Richard Entwistle) to 'replace' him in the area of motor vehicle recreation. The Chair sent heartfelt thanks to Richard Marshall for his contribution to the Forum and is confident his area will be covered.

There are four new members of the Forum, Felicity Edmeston, Andrew Murley, Sue Fisher (unable to attend this meeting) and Richard Entwistle. The Chair gave brief background information for Sue Fisher. This was also Jacque Bevan's first meeting as the appointed member for the Peak District National Park Authority.

The new members introduced themselves and gave brief details of their interests. Mike reminded the meeting that he had requested updates to biographies and the contacts list.

ACTION: ALL

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

Terry Howard asked that on page 6, the second sentence should read that Sheffield would **have** to put in £6m over 10 years. With this change, the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2007 were agreed as correct.

3. Matters Arising

Nick Clegg had been invited to today's meeting but was unable to attend this time. An invitation will be re-issued in due course. The Chair reminded the meeting that if any one has contacts with Members of Parliament or other connections, then please let him

know. These meetings are open to the public and it is in everyone's interests that we spread interest far and wide.

ACTION:

ALL

Mike Rhodes highlighted the point that at the next meeting there will be an election for the vice chair – any candidates please let Mike know in writing.

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

The Chair introduced Wayne Bexton, DCC Greenways Officer, who gave a presentation on the draft West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy. He gave a summary of what DCC is trying to achieve. The draft strategy is currently at the consultation stage which closes on 11 January 2008.

The weblink: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/Access_recreation/greenways gives the link to both full documentation and the consultation letter. Wayne encouraged members to look at these documents – some members have requested hard copies which have already been circulated.

In terms of background, the East Derbyshire Strategy was completed in June 1998, the South Derbyshire Strategy was completed in March 2006, and now he is working on this one – the West Derbyshire and High Peak Strategy (probably trickiest because of topography and difficulties in fulfilling criteria, due to gradients etc). The final document is due to be produced in March 2008. The purpose is to give a strategic and co-ordinated plan to assist development of a Greenway network across Derbyshire, to inform the Local Transport Plan; it sits alongside the RoWIP and will guide forward and local planning. It will help promote economic regeneration, safeguard routes, support funding bids and encourage partnership working.

Forum members were asked if they supported the principles of the Strategy. Comments were also invited on the routes identified and whether any had been missed, along with other issues that need to be considered. Individual responses are welcome but the LAF response will be via Mike Rhodes so please forward comments to him.

ACTION: ALL

The Chair sought clarification on rural versus urban strategy. Wayne confirmed that the definition of a Greenway is applicable in the most part to the National Park area. DCC will tackle each route or project individually and will try and make it as accessible as possible. However some gradients will be steeper than the 1:12.

The Chair asked about funding. Wayne said that money was available from the Local Transport Plan and Greenways can be linked to this and can get matched funding. For example there are funds available towards encouraging car free commuting, healthy living, etc. External funding can match existing up to 5 times. 15km of Greenways per year have been developed over the last 5 years and there has also been some planning gain – there are some big wins to be had. Wayne hopes to enhance that funding in the future. The DCC funding officer has helped - eg sustainable development and aggregates levy funds have been successfully obtained.

Keith Pennyfather asked if there was an intention to make users aware of the routes. Wayne told the meeting that DCC is developing a marketing approach – the Cycle Derbyshire map is free and highlights all routes – soon 2 others will be available, Horse Ride Derbyshire and also a Greenways leaflet. They will all be available on the website. Counters are set across the Greenway network, so the number and types of users can be monitored.

In terms of users, the aim is for bridleways – walking, cycling and horse riding, but not for vehicles. However, short sections may have to be shared with vehicles but this will be kept to a minimum. There is a good allocation for signage – at the beginning, end and at intersections of routes stating who can use etc. They will be clearly marked.

Terry asked how this fitted with the RoWIP consultation. Wayne reported that in the questionnaire one of the top 4 or 5 priorities was to improve countryside access (DDA compliance) – the Greenways meet objectives that the RoWIP consultation produced.

Henry asked if legal status would be acquired by Greenway routes? Wayne responded that where possible routes will have public bridleway status – some will have to follow the line of permissive rights. DCC uses a legal document in permissive circumstances – it gives landowners reassurance and makes it clear who is allowed to use the route. All new routes are checked for DDA standards and in terms of continuing maintenance – the LTP has allocated money for Greenway maintenance.

The Chair stated that the LAF certainly endorses the Strategy in principle and invited members to direct any specific comments to Mike. **ACTION: ALL**

Wayne finished by saying that the completed maps should be available in April 2008 – downloadable from the website - please let Wayne know if hard copies are wanted. The Chair thanked Wayne very much for attending today.

5. Rights of Way Improvement Plans Updates

Derbyshire

Update on final plan

Gill Millward reported that the final plan was adopted by full Council on 7 November. Those consulted at the draft stage will be contacted and pointed towards the RoWIP information on the County Council's website. Hard copies of the plan were provided at the meeting and further copies are available on request. The Plan would also be available on CD. Gill thanked everyone for their contribution and hopes that the final document reflects the comments made by all.

The Chair said it was a fascinating document with interesting statistics and maps; it is an excellent framework. Congratulations for a job well done.

Annual RoWIP Work programme for 2007/08

The first annual work programme for the Derbyshire RoWIP had been circulated for comment. Gill asked members for feedback on its format in terms of layout and the amount of detail included for reporting in future years.

Members were generally happy with the layout, but thought it would be useful to include an explanation of how/why things had been prioritised for inclusion. Also look at wording of "identified need" column and measures of success.

In terms of subsequent monitoring, Andrew Murley suggested colour coding the progress report on the basis of a traffic light system. Terry pointed out that much depends on finances – the Annual Work Programme recognises that there may not be enough funds to carry out work. Where proposed actions are not achieved, it would be useful to include a note in the report explaining why it was not due to lack of funds or some other reason.

Edwina suggested contacting Chris Bell and Emily Davies regarding the SPITS report which is now out for consultation – particularly regarding accessibility and rural transport strategy.

ACTION: GILL

Geoff Nickolds wondered if it was worth contacting Sport England and the health authority, particularly regarding promotion. Gill is meeting with Sport England next week and will report back to a future meeting. Now the final plan is in place more time can be spent helping to maximise funding and ensuring that the RoWIP is taken on board in other plans and strategies, such as District Council Local Development Frameworks.

Oldham

Terence Cavanagh sent his apologies as he cannot be here today – however he has sent a consultation to all members on the Oldham RoWIP. Please send comments to Mike or individually to Terence.

ACTION: ALL

Sheffield

Terry felt that funding of RoWIPs is a concern amongst LAFs nationally. Sheffield's LAF has been pushing on this subject at council meetings. The RoWIP received Cabinet approval just a few weeks ago and their LAF recommendations were read out at the meeting.

Barnsley

Sarah Ford also sent her apologies. The final RoWIP was published on their website on 21 November and hard copies will be available in the next few weeks.

6. Consultation on a proposed direction to restrict access

Mike Rhodes gave some background information to the formal consultation process for directions to restrict access. A report about a site at Horseley Head Moss (part of Meltham Moor) had been circulated to members for comment. Mike asked for a formal response from the Forum regarding this proposal to exclude access.

Henry responded that this was a difficult and contentious site – there is a climbing crag on site, access to the site has deteriorated since the CRoW Act because of 3 reasons: a matter relating to three tracks shown on the OS map as Rights of Way which the shooting club feel are on the map in error; bad behaviour by two climbers and intransigence by the shooting club.

He pointed out that Kirklees and National Park officers have spent a lot of time on this to no avail and should be thanked for their efforts. He asked about the shape of the area under discussion - now it is broadly oblong, but the MOD area was fan shaped. He also noted that this would be the third direction for shooting areas.

Mike responded regarding the shape – the exclusion area is on the map attached to the report which has been distributed. Different calibre weapons need a differing size and shape for the shot safety area – 4 different calibre weapons are used at this range. He explained the difference on the map between the property boundary and the safety area and that the land in exchange was located immediately to the south.

Roy Malkin informed the meeting that a shooting safety area is usually fan shaped – military shooting is tactical with movements along the range so they have to be very wide whereas clubs tend to be more linear in use.

The Chair commented that there is a complicated background but this is a very well used range so doesn't see any alternative to recommend allowing the direction.

Questions were asked about footpaths (these are all outside of the National Park) and if there is scope for voluntary or different options if the range is not used every day.

Mike responded that the main line taken was that access could be allowed when no shooting was going on as long as this is made clear to public (by red flags for example). This happened in a previous case - which was allowed on appeal to the planning inspectorate as it was judged a burden for the club to hoist flags every time the area is used. The Shooting Club is adamant that shooting can take place at any time and problems created by ad hoc use of the area are unmanageable – members can turn up at any time - evidence of use was given when requested by the National Park Authority. The National Rifle Association did make a site visit prior to granting a licence – the topography is very relevant and Police weapons training takes place there too.

Terry spoke of the exchange area and current rights. He is worried that this process will continue and in general LAFs will not be able to input into restriction directions. The exchange area is immediately to the south of the hatched area. Terry said that as rights already exist on this area there is actually a net loss to access.

Mike then gave an explanation about the area. There was an original direction granted in 2004. CRoW didn't allow the direction to cover that part of the safety area which was Common Land so the rifle club decided to exchange the land – this was granted by Defra (via Kirklees Council) – neither the Forum nor the National Park Authority were consulted on this.

The Chair felt that it was bizarre that the National Park Access Officer only found out about the exchange of Common Land after the event and the LAF was not consulted.

As September 2009 is the statutory date for review of this arrangement it was **agreed** that the Forum should recommend approving the Direction, but would write to Defra and Kirklees to express disappointment at the lack of consultation and ask to be consulted in future.

ACTION: CHAIR

7. Unsurfaced Highways Sustainability Survey

Richard Pett updated the meeting. National Park staff continue to work closely with DCC officers. The NPA vehicle policy is now in place with a review due in one year's time. A list of priority cases (red routes) will be taken to committee in March 2008. A web page has been drafted and the IT team are working on it to provide a portal of communication with the public to inform about voluntary restraints, code of conduct, etc. The Police have asked Richard to design an advisory leaflet for motorbike users. The National Park Press Officer is working on ideas to help communication.

New designation signs were shown to forum members. Richard spoke briefly about the afternoon site visits to Moss Road and Long Causeway; Mike Rhodes had brought along copies of the action plans for these routes. Stanage Forum has agreed a code of conduct on Long Causeway. Vehicle users are picking up on information and credit was given to Richard Entwistle for helping distribute information.

The survey is nearly complete – 25 routes have been identified as possibly being unsustainable and there will probably be 35/40 in the end. The LAF sub group will be looking at these in detail. In general, of 180 routes there are over 100 where there isn't an issue regarding sustainability. Use across the Park is being monitored and 25 sites have been identified as being used illegally. Officers continue to meet with police and user groups. Hope Woodlands and Great Longstone are the next to be looked at.

It was noted that where information is given to users it is working well. The Derbyshire area is being mapped and hopefully information will be available in the New Year.

Jacque gave congratulations as she knows how hard it is with such few staff on ground – however it is still a problem for many members of the public. She is worried by the number of outstanding byway claims as the survey is not looking at those under claim. Richard confirmed that there are 107 claims – 62 are unclassified highways, so 45 remain to do – but some may be resolved in the meantime. There is a resource issue so the team have to concentrate on doing one task at a time – they will all be looked at eventually.

The Chair commented that the public can feel nothing is happening but it is good to hear the press office will release something soon.

Richard confirmed that survey work was carried out all year round to take account of seasonal use and weather conditions. The Chair thanked members of the sub group who have provided excellent first hand information.

Edwina spoke of young people undertaking Duke of Edinburgh awards who find it difficult to know how to react when they meet vehicles on a right of way. It would be useful if this sort of information was available on the website.

It was recognised by everyone that resources are difficult for both county and the National Park Authority with this work in addition to the 'usual' rights of way work. Jacque Bevan pointed out that in terms of economics it was better to put resources into officer time now than having to pay out more in the long run.

The Chair reminded the meeting that one of the LAF's functions is to take messages back to specific user groups and explain issues in more detail. **ACTION: ALL**

Gill showed some draft examples of signage that could be used on rights of way to advise the public who could use them. Members were asked to make comments. **ACTION: ALL**

Terry thought it would be useful for adjacent LAFs to consider the signage for consistency on shared cross boundary routes – it was agreed this was a good idea.

8. Members' Training and Information

Mike Rhodes said following input from members, various training needs have been identified. Natural England has offered to host a regional training event – members felt that training is enhanced by working with other LAFs. It will take place on Thursday 6 March, the venue is not yet decided but will be in the East Midlands. There will be examples of LAF projects in the morning, with a choice of workshops in the afternoon. The Chair encouraged attendance. Mike will circulate further details when they are available and interested members were asked to contact him. **ACTION: ALL**

Keith Pennyfather asked if the venue could be accessible by public transport.

Jon Clennell said he had attended the last event and found it extremely informative – it was interesting working with other LAF members and useful to attend.

Mike also reported that he was pursuing links with the North West Region access forum network – he thought this would be useful as the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks fall within that area.

Terry suggested it would be useful for both new and existing members to revisit the CRoW Act regarding public access. The Chair said these ideas would be forwarded to Natural England and hopes they will pick this up. **ACTION: MR**

Mike informed the meeting that the LAF Members handbook is now back on the agenda and a contract has been awarded by Natural England. We await the outcome.

9. Feedback from members

Chair – has been invited to join the National Park Authority Management Plan monitoring group. They meet twice yearly to monitor the progress of the Management Plan – his brief is access and recreation.

Andrew has also been invited to a Natural England meeting in January. It is a liaison meeting for LAF chairs about issues such as policy, strategy, a national access forum, funding of RoWIPs etc. The Chair hopes this will lead to a regular dialogue and will report back in March. **ACTION: CHAIR**

Henry reported that on 20 September the National Park Authority issued an invitation for expressions of interest for partnership management of the Eastern Moors estate. Mike reported that Matthew Croney (Head of Property Services) may be able to join us this afternoon. He continued that the NPA is considering future management of the Eastern Moors and the National Trust, Sheffield Wildlife Trust, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, BMC, RSPB, Heather Trust and John Muir Trust had all been invited to submit expressions of interest by last Friday. The BMC has said they are keen to work with any group.

Formal tenders will be sought between now and March 2008, and a Committee meeting in May will decide on any future partnership working.

Jacque Bevan commented that the Stanage Forum had included those who lived in the area – this seems to be missing here.

Members agreed that this Forum should be able to comment (and advise) on any access issues as it represents the public and users. This point will be made to Matthew Croney. **ACTION: MR**

Mike Innerdale told the Forum about a newly formed group – Ride the Peak – which had formed following the conference for Mountain Bikers. It will be a voice for the mountain bikers in the Peak District and its main role is influencing, informing, providing a website for bikers in the Peak District and a point of contact for landowners and organisations such as the LAF. Mike Innerdale is the chair and the meetings are open for anyone to attend. He will let members know the dates of future meetings. **ACTION: MI**

The Chair said this was a very positive move and asked for the Forum to be kept informed.

Mike Rhodes reported that Sue Fisher is also a member (and Secretary) of the Ride the Peak group. He explained that the group encompasses off road cycling in terms of individual, family and group use.

Richard Entwistle spoke about the Bradwell Edge launch site for para gliders and hang gliders. A planning notice has been served on the owner restricting hang glider use to 28 days per year, but doesn't refer to para gliders.

Mike Rhodes reported that there have been issues over vehicular access to the site which is mainly by unsurfaced highway. The planning committee decided not to take action on the enforcement notice but to pursue options on managing the car parking

arrangements. The Authority's Strategy and Action Plan to manage use of unsurfaced highways will help determine the appropriate management of the site.

Jon Clennell gave some background information on the area and the launch site. The Chair said this Forum had not addressed access to the air so far and we will monitor this situation. Mike is to meet some of the parties involved and will report back any relevant information.

ACTION: MR

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

11. Dates of Next meetings (2008):

Sat 15 March

Thurs 19 June

Sat 27 September

Thurs 4 December

Terry asked if at least one of the meetings could be held at the Moorland Discovery Centre at Longshaw. Agreed in principle and Mike to investigate.

ACTION: MR

The meeting closed at 1.00pm and site visits to Moss Road and Long Causeway were made in the afternoon.