

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 3 December 2015
at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell.**

Members Present:

Bob Berzins
Ian Bunting
Henry Folkard
Clare Griffin
Terry Howard
Mike Johnson
John Thompson
Sue Weatherley

Edwina Edwards (Chair)

Caitlin Bisknell
Richard Entwistle
Charlotte Gilbert
John Hall
Matt Hutson
Andrew Murley
Ally Turner

Others Present:

Mary Bagley, (PDNPA)
Gill Millward, (DCC)
Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Richard Taylor, (DCC)
Jason Spencer, (Notes)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Laura D'Cruz, Caroline Hanson, Adge Last, Chris Page, Jon Stewart and Councillor John Walton.

The Chair welcomed Matt Hutson to his first meeting of the Local Access Forum.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September, 2015 at Longshaw had been circulated and were unanimously approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING

P3 Financial Resources Reviews – The Chair provided an update on responses received to letters sent following discussions at the previous LAF meeting and concerns about the impact of budget cuts on access and rights of way.

John Thompson provided a summary of the response from the Leader of Derbyshire County Council welcoming the Forum's support and letter to the Secretaries of State re funding cuts, and from Peter White (DCC Rights of Way Officer), acknowledging receipt of the Forum's response to the Public Rights of Way Review consultation. It was noted that initially the consultation responses were due to be considered by the County Council's Cabinet on 15 December, but this had now been deferred to a meeting on 12 January.

John also summarised the response received from Sarah Fowler, the Chief

Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority which confirmed that the Authority had agreed to give strategic certainty to access and rights of way, and to extend the Rights of Way Officer post linked to Green Lanes until 31 March 2017 (part-time).

John and the Chair welcomed these responses and provided details of an email circulated by Sarah Fowler in response to the recent Government spending review which also included positive feedback. John also referred to the response from a Defra officer which had been circulated to all LAF members. The Chair confirmed that she and John intended to speak to the MPs for Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, Patrick McLoughlin and Andrew Bingham, by attending their surgeries. The Forum was supportive of this approach.

(Action – Edwina Edwards and John Thompson)

John confirmed that he had written to all the MPs for constituencies within the National Park and the LAF's area, including those outside of Derbyshire. However, the responses received so far were not as positive, particularly the Ministerial reply which was deemed to be very unhelpful. Forum Members supported this view and agreed that this should be followed up. It was noted that to date only one MP had responded and it was agreed that members of the Mountaineering All-Party Parliamentary Group should be made aware of the correspondence and responses received.

(Action – John Thompson and Edwina Edwards)

As a member of the Forum, Caitlin Bisknell provided an update on the budget situation at Derbyshire County Council and some of the difficult decisions to be made in the forthcoming months.

It was noted that Mary Bagley would ask Sarah Fowler to feedback on her recent meeting with Patrick McLoughlin and Jason McCartney.

(Action – Mary Bagley)

4. HEALTH, WELLBEING AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed Alison Pritchard to the meeting. As a Public Health Consultant at Derbyshire County Council, Alison gave a presentation on the Health Benefits of the Natural Environment particularly in addressing some of the current health issues for children such as obesity and behavioural disorders. The presentation also provided details of research carried out on "Nature Deficits" for children and young people caused by limited access to green space.

During the presentation Alison highlighted health inequalities issues particularly restrictions in providing opportunities and access to the natural environment within deprived communities. The presentation highlighted the relevant parts of the Natural Environment White Paper 2011 noting the links with mental as well as physical wellbeing.

Alison also provided statistical information from the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey which showed that while Derbyshire residents had an above average positive attitude to the benefits of the natural environment, there was a below average fall in the utilisation of outdoor space for health and exercise reasons. It was noted that while more work would be done to explore the reasons for this, comparative data was not available to

establish whether this was an ongoing trend or a one off issue at the time of the survey. 2014/15 data had recently been published which may help to resolve this. Forum Members provided feedback on some of the possible contributory reasons and suggested that profiling may help in the analysis.

In closing the presentation, Alison provided details of the Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which was refreshed in 2015, highlighting how improving access to nature can benefit all four of its priorities. There was also reference to some of the actions being taken to improve health and wellbeing, including the promotion of volunteering.

The Forum also asked whether the Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Board had discussed the issues raised at Board level. Alison was thanked for an interesting presentation and it was agreed that the LAF would write to the Chair of the Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Board to suggest that this would stimulate a useful discussion. **(Action – Edwina Edwards)**

5. DERBYSHIRE C.C. ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward introduced a progress report on Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). It was noted that the Public Rights of Way Review (referred to earlier under Item 3), would not be discussed in the public part of January's Cabinet meeting because it contained exempt information. However Gill agreed to provide feedback to the LAF on the decisions made in due course. **(Action – Gill Millward)**

In introducing the progress report, Gill referred to circulated documents and highlighted the following issues:

- The "Ease of Use" Surveys were to be continued as they provided a useful health check on the condition of the network, especially at a time when revenue budgets were being reduced. It was noted that there was a shortage of volunteers for the High Peak area so any additional help would be welcomed. The deadline for completing surveys was 11 January.
- It was confirmed that almost £1.2 million of capital funding was available for rights of way and access projects in 2015/16. However, there were concerns around whether this level of funding would be maintained and how the work could be delivered by fewer staff.
- The availability of funding to construct a further section of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail and the update on Pedal Peak II for the White Peak Loop and Hope Valley Link.
- The Derbyshire Cycling Plan was being launched at Derby Arena on 19 January and LAF members were encouraged to contact Gill if they wanted to attend. Feedback on the consultation would be available on the Derbyshire Sport website by the middle of December.
- The work of Active Derbyshire was highlighted and an update on the key activities between May and November 2015 provided, including the New Strategic Plan for Sport and Physical Activity in Derbyshire which was due out for consultation in April/ May 2016.
- Policy for Working with Community Groups – A draft document was at an early stage and the Forum asked to provide comments on its format, contents and the groups it should be aimed at by the middle of January. **(Action – LAF Members)**
- Review of Rights of Way Minor Maintenance Scheme – The consultation

- with Parish/ Town Councils was noted and a Forum response agreed.
- The proposed arrangements for the 10 year review of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan were outlined and it was agreed that detailed responses to the new assessment which is required were best formulated in Sub-Group Meetings also involving members of the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum. Peak District LAF members involved are Henry, Charlotte and Sue Weatherley. It was noted that the Sheffield LAF had embarked on a similar process but its focus had been on the development of policy and strategy. Links with the National Park Management Plan Review were noted.

It was agreed that the interim progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2015/16 and proposals for carrying out the assessment stage of its review be noted and approved.

6. NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Amanda Nevett, Policy Programme Manager from the Peak District National Park Authority, introduced a report setting out the proposed approach for carrying out a review of the current Plan and creating a new Plan to cover the period 2017 to 2022. It was noted that although the process for developing and monitoring the Plan was managed by the National Park Authority, the delivery of the Plan was shared across a number of partners and stakeholders and would apply to the whole National Park.

As part of the review process, members of the Forum were invited to attend events on 17 May and 5 October 2016 and to respond to the stakeholder survey, the deadline for which was the 5 February 2016.

In response to questions it was noted that the PDNPA had commissioned surveys in Sheffield and Manchester to try and capture the views of individuals who were not National Park residents or regular visitors. It was also noted that National Parks England had commissioned a similar survey to capture this information nationally.

It was agreed that Amanda would speak to Mike Rhodes outside of the meeting to explore how neighbouring LAFs might be involved in the review.

(Action – Amanda Nevett and Mike Rhodes)

It was also agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum together with the 3 members appointed to the Derbyshire ROWIP Review Sub-Group would feed into the process on behalf of the Forum.

Agreed to note the report.

7. GREEN LANES UPDATE

Sue Smith introduced a report setting out the consultation with statutory consultees on proposals for a traffic regulation order (TRO) to restrict the use of Derby Lane, Monyash by recreational mechanically propelled vehicles.

During discussions it was noted that the lane had been out of use for some time

as a through route for 4-wheeled vehicles, since barriers had been erected at the Monyash end of the route. It was also noted that Derbyshire County Council was going through the process of clarifying the status of the route which may be confirmed as a Byway Open to All Traffic. Generally LAF members felt that an outright ban would not be necessary, but that some form of restriction should be in place at certain times of the year to prevent damage to the route and the surrounding landscape. It was agreed that John Thompson would draft a response. **(Action –John Thompson)**

Sue also reported that NPA members resolved to proceed with a public consultation on a TRO for Washgate at the September Meeting of the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee and a 6 week consultation on this was proposed.

The Forum received and approved the notes of meetings of the Green Lanes Sub-Group dated 4 March 2015, 14 May 2015, 2 July 2015 and 9 October 2015. It was noted that voluntary restraint was a key message arising from the discussions.

8. OPEN ACCESS

a) ACCESS FUND

John Thompson made a presentation about the background to the Peak District Access Fund and its achievements, highlighting the role of the Access Sub-Group in maintaining and reviewing the wish list. He explained how he thought the LAF could support the development of the Access Fund and thanked members and officers for their ideas and support for his report which had been circulated. Mary Bagley said the PDNPA's Giving Strategy would be considered at a meeting of the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee in January 2016.

During discussions the Forum emphasised the importance of acknowledging the receipt of gifts and providing feedback on how they might be used. It was also acknowledged that generally individuals prefer to give if they can see money being used for a purpose other than subsidising statutory duties.

It was also suggested that in the Peak District, where possible, event organisers should be encouraged to make voluntary contributions, rather the "enforced" approach adopted in the Lake District.

Agreed:

- **To approve the principles set out in paragraph 17 for fund raising to help boost the Peak District Access Fund.**
- **To support the specific suggestions for fund raising initiatives in paragraphs 18 to 24 and the points in Annex C and agree that they are pursued where appropriate and complimentary to the Giving Strategy to be considered by the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee in January 2016 and the Local Access Forum in March 2016.**
- **To monitor and update the report as appropriate over the coming**

12 months. (Action - John Thompson)

b) ACCESS UPDATE

Sue Smith presented a report providing an update on issues related to the management of access in the Peak District.

Sue highlighted the development of draft guidance on the creation or alteration to tracks or their maintenance and the requirement to notify the National Park Authority. This initiative was welcomed as it was a direct response to an issue first raised by the Forum. It was noted that the 16 December was the deadline to comment on the draft guidance. **(Action – LAF Members)**

The Forum received and approved the notes of meetings of the Access Sub-Group dated 21 May 2015, 3 July 2015 and 15 October 2015.

Sue also provided an update on works carried out by Yorkshire Water to improve access and said liaison with them over the bid made for funding was ongoing.

Mike Rhodes reported on plans put forward by the Moors for the Future Partnership to resurface a path from Jacobs Ladder to Chapel Gate (Brown Knoll) using stone paving. In his view, the condition of the path had deteriorated to such an extent that the use of flagstones could be justified in this location.

It was agreed that further details would be sent to Forum Members in the following week by email inviting comments on the proposals.

(Action – Mike Rhodes)

c) TURNCLIFF COMMON CONSULTATION

Gill Millward presented details of a further round of consultation on a proposal to change an existing direction relating to Turncliff Common, near Buxton made under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for public safety reasons.

It was noted that the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) had responded to the LAF's previous comments by confirming that they did try to avoid testing at weekends/ bank holidays and while they aimed to provide notice of all closures well in advance, weather had a big impact on the scheduling arrangements. They have also agreed to review the use of red flags and look at better signage/ information on the site in conjunction with the LAF.

On this basis the Forum was willing to accept the extension of the direction until December 2021 and did not wish to make any further comments on the latest consultation.

9. FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

Stanage Forum Meeting

Henry reported that 50 people had attended a recent meeting of the Forum with more representation from walkers than climbers and more attendees originating from Yorkshire than Derbyshire. It was noted that there was currently a vacancy on the Stanage Forum Working Group.

Sheffield Moors Partnership

The Forum received concerns from Henry Folkard that the Partnership was virtually invisible to the public and supported a suggestion that either the Sheffield LAF or the Peak District LAF should have a least one place on the management group.

Open Access Saddleworth Moor

The Forum noted a report that a land owner had erected 'Private Land' signs on Access Land at Saddleworth Moor. Road-side laybys have also been blocked off and some vehicles parked adjacent to the land had been damaged with tyres being slashed.

Mike Rhodes provided an update on discussions with the landowner which attempted to resolve the issues informally before taking further more formal action.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sheffield: The Outdoor City - Draft Strategy Consultation.

The Forum noted the comments from Terry and agreed that these would be used to form the basis of the Forum's response to the consultation subject to any further observations received before Monday 7 December.

(Action –Mike Rhodes to circulate Terry's comments for any additional observations before submitting a LAF response)

Local Access Forum National Conference

It was noted that Clare Griffin was attending the forthcoming event in Leeds. The South West Peak Landscape Partnership and Tread Lightly have been suggested as possible items for discussion.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday 10 March 2016, at Aldern House, Bakewell, provisionally commencing at 10:00am.

The Forum was supportive of the proposal to start meetings at the earlier time of 10am rather than continue after lunch where it was apparent that the agenda could not be completed in 2½ hours.

Meeting ended - 1.00 pm