

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 December 2010
At Losehill Hall, Castleton

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	Terry Howard
Bob Berzins	Mike Johnson
Jon Clennell	James Kellie
Richard Entwistle	Geoff Nickolds
Henry Folkard	Ben Rayner
Charlotte Gilbert	John Thompson
John Hall	Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Gill Millward (DCC)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Wayne Bexton (DCC)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Steve Cannon (DCC)	

Mike welcomed Edwina as the new Chair of the Forum and mentioned that this would be the last meeting at Losehill Hall, a sad event. Forum members expressed their thanks for all the support that Losehill Hall staff had given over the past few years.

1. Apologies and welcomes

Apologies had been received from Mike Innerdale, Andrew McCloy, Andrew Murley, Jean Wharmby and Brenda Harrop (new member).

The Chair introduced a new member - John Hall, a farmer from Edale.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Item 3, page 2. Edwina will carry forward the point about Open Access as she has not yet been able to meet with Andrew. **ACTION: Chair**

Item 6, page 5. A letter has been sent from this LAF to PDNPA re statutory rights. Edwina has a meeting arranged with Narendra Bajaria in the New Year when the letter will be discussed. Terry said it contained an excellent paragraph.

Item 11, page 7. The Recreation Strategy Steering Group meeting has been re-arranged for the New Year.

Henry felt the Forum should not lose sight of the presentation on the planning system (MR will make this an agenda item at the March meeting) **ACTION: MR**

Terry spoke about the 60th anniversary of the Peak District National Park - a major milestone. He has offered a number of walks linked to Edale, Winnats, Mam Tor and asked for ranger support. Ramblers have offered a logo. He understands that the PDNPA is not putting any money into celebrating the anniversary, which is a blow as it has always been the people's National Park – he feels the support and enthusiasm of the voluntary sector should be enlisted and the celebration should be for people in and around the park who have made the National Park what it is today.

John Thompson understood that financial cutbacks may dampen enthusiasm, but John Fern has invited the LAF to attend an internal event - which feels like engagement of the voluntary sector - and JF will keep members posted. Henry sympathises with Terry. He felt the PDNPA should not lose the opportunity to celebrate and say something positive, particularly re the concern about the second National Park purpose. Edwina will reinforce these comments at a meeting in January. **ACTION: Chair**

4. Consultation on Derbyshire's draft Local Transport Plan for 2011-2026 (LTP3)

Information had been circulated and Gill Millward asked members to consider how the LAF was going to respond on this and item 5 relating to public transport. There is a lot of detail to go through - consultation documents are available on DCC's web site.

Steve Cannon, Transport and Accessibility Manager for Derbyshire County Council, gave a presentation on the draft Local Transport Plan for 2011 – 2026. This is a statutory plan following on from the current LTP2 and has to be in place by April 2011. In the past the document was used to bid for funding, but now approximate funding figures are known, the Plan is more important as a long term strategic document looking 15 years ahead to 2026, with shorter term plans (1 to 3 years) showing where investment will lie. Input into the consultation is welcomed until 17 January.

The five transport goals of the plan are to support a resilient local economy; contribute to better safety, security and health; improve quality of life and promote a healthy natural environment; tackle climate change; promote equality of opportunity. Following consultation back in April, the preferred strategy was to put emphasis on the first three goals.

The range of measures to achieve the priorities, have been grouped into:

- Core business (that happens on a routine basis eg road maintenance, school crossing patrols, road safety education, public transport information)
- Opportunities (inc special or temporary projects eg major highway schemes, new railway station at Ilkeston, personalized travel planning)
- Long term projects (eg network of Greenways and multi operator ticketing)

In terms of delivery, investment priorities over the next 15 years will relate to:

- well maintained roads and Rights of Way – (last year's bad winter was very expensive and cost around £6m)
- management of an efficient transport network
- improving local accessibility and achieving healthier travel habits (changing behaviour to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport)
- better safety and security
- a considered approach to new infrastructure - all large new projects carefully considered as there is little money.

Challenges are to reduce CO₂ emissions, personal and public health; the demographics of an ageing population, the number of families who do not have access to a car.

Forum members asked questions about the interface with tourism and recreation, with the way visitors travel around being seen as an important part of the plan; the availability of transport in rural areas where there is an ageing population; walks for health being accessible by bus. John Thompson said there were indeed challenges and options in the consultation. Gaps had been recognised eg horse riding and there is a need to cross reference with PDNPA recreation strategy. The LAF response from April consultation would be a useful starting point.

It was agreed to form a sub group to provide a formal response to the latest consultation. Edwina, Terry and Henry volunteered. Gill will contact them to arrange a meeting early in the New Year. **ACTION: GM, EE, TH, HF**

5. DCC Consultation on proposed changes to public transport

Steve Cannon had circulated copies of his presentation on the proposals for the review of the supported bus network and public transport subsidies, which is out for public consultation until 31 January 2011.

He explained that there are pressures on public transport spending and there will be some very difficult decisions to be made. DCC has to make savings of around £94m over 4 years, but there are options within the review. Cutbacks have to be made across the board with £700,000 savings having to be made in the supported bus network - typically, evenings, Sunday and rural services will be affected. Government money is insufficient to pay for the concessionary scheme – it is some £2m short of what operators say they need. If bus operators don't receive funding from DCC they will cut back on other services.

Of the £8.4m currently spent, a saving of £1-2m needs to be made over the next 2 years. The current annual spend is £4.4m on supported bus network, "non-entitled" school transport £1m, Gold Card rail travel £220,000, dial a bus £240,000 and b-line discount for young people £1.3m – savings in all these areas will be considered as part of the review. Community transport costs £1.2m, but is not included in the current consultation. The cost of each contract and costs per passenger journey are being looked at - low use routes are expensive. There will be pressure on rural services. The approach is long term and strategic, identifying savings area by area – the process will be as transparent as possible. Steve acknowledged that access to leisure is relatively low on the priorities list.

Henry felt that the review had looked at the resident population but not at the tourist population which generates income. He felt it was important to make Derbyshire attractive for those who want to visit and don't want to use cars. Steve thought this was a good point – visitors ought to be encouraged to travel around sustainably, but it was difficult to consult with them.

Organisations and individuals are encouraged to respond (preferably in writing) to the overall approach, proposed changes to services and the impact on operators and passengers etc and to complete the on line questionnaires (paper copies also available). Thorough consultation is planned with stakeholders (transport operators, user groups, District/ Borough Councils, Town/ Parish Councils, hard to reach groups), via the website, bus posters, libraries, gold card and b-line publications, citizens panel.

ACTION: ALL

There were no volunteers to meet with the DADLAF to go through the detailed proposals. The Chair thanked Steve for attending and providing such detailed information.

6. Access Review

A paper had been circulated and Sue Smith gave a summary.

Review of restrictions – there will be a presentation at the next LAF meeting giving an overview of the outcome of the statutory 5 year review for each site.

Mapping - Defra announced in October 2010 that all work on the first statutory review of the maps has been deferred for 2 years. This decision will be reviewed in 2012 and delays the opportunity to resolve various issues with the existing conclusive maps.

Agri-environmental payments - Defra has announced details of spending on Higher Level Stewardship until 2014, with less money available for access. Sue highlighted changes in the payments for access (paths etc) - existing agreements will be funded for the remainder of their term, but any that expire before 2014 will not be continued.

A brief overview of dedications of land for public access was given - Millstone Edge has been formally dedicated by Sheffield CC. The dedication process offers a safeguard and may become more important at a time of reduced spending.

The PDNPA approved its new Asset Management Plan in September – there will be a presentation at the next meeting.

Access Sub group – this LAF has been consulted on the Roaches (item 11) and there will be other consultations in due course. It was proposed that the Restrictions Review sub group continues its work in a wider access context - all existing members are happy to continue and Bob Berzins volunteered to be on the new Access Sub-group.

Terry reported that Nick Clegg and Angela Smith had been lobbied on the CRoW Act. Angela Smith had replied in a positive way, but still waiting for a response from Nick Clegg. With regard to the Roaches consultation, a meeting in early January would allow any issues to be written or e-mailed prior to the Chair's meeting.

John Thompson thanked Sue for a good report – it will be useful to have Matt Croney to talk to the Forum – perhaps he could also refer to the dedication of land and how significant agri-environment schemes have been in the past. **ACTION: MC**

Jon Clennell had missed the September meeting and asked if members were aware that after the annual report was sent to Nick Clegg, a letter had been received from Richard Beynon MP dated 13 August regarding LAF funding - Defra funds the National Park and the LAF has no power to intervene in that budget but as it carries out a statutory function needs to have sufficient funding to continue. Defra does not have a protected budget and priorities have to be assessed to deliver strategic priorities.

7. Black Harry Project – update report

A report had been circulated and Sue Smith summarised – a contribution of £5,000 from DCC towards signage has been secured through the RoWIP and 2 weekends of volunteer involvement have been offered. Public meetings held in November have proved useful. Work is imminent and due to be completed by March 2011. Charlotte said that the public consultation was much appreciated by those attending and misunderstandings had been ironed out.

The Chair thanked Sue for her reports.

8. Recreational Motor Vehicles – update on progress on the priority routes

Wayne Bexton and Richard Pett summarised the current situation – a paper has also been circulated.

Regarding the first 8 routes:

£71,000 will be spent before 31 March 2011. Chapel Gate (c. £40k) – DCC's engineer has drawn up the final tender document. The work should improve drainage and provide better surfacing to the worst sections, slowing further deterioration. £10k has been allocated to Brough Lane for filling in pot holes and £20k on Long Causeway for surfacing a major area (Whales Back). Henry asked if monitoring of the Long Causeway revetment would be carried out and Wayne said that monitoring would be in place to detect any movement.

Mike Rhodes reported on the current consultation for the proposed 18 month experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Chapel Gate – 50+ comments received so far. As the LAF recommended the TRO, no formal response is required, but members may wish to respond individually. Richard Pett reported that TROs are being considered by DCC for Bradley Lane, Washgates and School Lane. Wayne said that with regard to School Lane the consultation period had been extended to 31 December at the request of vehicular groups. So far 60 objections and 120 letters in favour of the order have been received.

Henry Folkard said that he has heard on a number of occasions that the proposed TROs for Bradley Lane and Washgates would be resolved before Christmas. It is not acceptable to hear that this has now been delayed yet again. The County Council needs to understand this is a big issue for local communities and affects the credibility of both DCC and the LAF – yet another 2 month delay is not good enough. Henry went on to say that he felt the LAF should send a robust letter to DCC asking for an explanation of the delay. There was general agreement to send a letter from the LAF welcoming the proposed expenditure of £71k, but also wanting to see action in relation to the legal orders. Henry was asked to provide a draft letter. **ACTION: HF**

Richard then gave information on the remaining sites in the first group. Shatton Lane is being regularly monitored. Moorlands Lane, Bonsall – the work carried out in the quarries area is being monitored closely.

Concerning the second batch of routes:

Roych Clough, a one way system on a voluntary basis is being considered - if that doesn't work then regulation is proposed. Local farmers have observed that the voluntary restraints on Ringinglow and Gallowgate Lane are working well.

NERC/ Winchester case – A report to DCC's Regulatory – Licensing and Appeals Committee on 18 October 2010 identifies 17 BOAT claims where case files have been closed because the routes no longer carry public motor vehicle rights. 10 routes in the National Park are affected and these will be signposted as soon as possible. Use of the routes is being monitored and information passed to local Police.

Illegal activity – there are no new reports – data is being collected on 35 sites.

Richard Entwistle mentioned the off-road item on Countryfile, some footage was filmed in other parts of the country. John T had written to Richard Campen regarding vehicle activity on Chapel Gate. Richard C had responded and thanked the LAF for proceeding with the work in conjunction with DCC and said it was helpful that Mike, Richard Pett and Wayne Bexton worked so well in conjunction with good liaison. He acknowledged and welcomed the PDNPA proceeding with the proposed 18 month TRO and endorsed the LAF's support.

9. Recreation Strategy – progress report

Judy Merryfield had circulated a report. Edwina has taken over from Andrew McCloy on the Recreation Strategy Group.

Sue Weatherley asked if it is likely that the tunnels on the Monsal Trail will be open by the end of March. Geoff Nickolds responded that tunnel and surfacing work is proceeding okay and is optimistic they will be open by April. The planning application submitted for the Wyedale to Buxton section will probably be called in by the Secretary of State because of the conservation significance of Woodale which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Other planning applications for the loop around Buxton may be completed shortly. It is intended that work on these other sections will be ready to commence in anticipation of any funding which may be available from 2011 onwards.

10. Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

a) Progress Report on RoWIP delivery in 2010/11

Gill Millward had circulated a report summarising progress in relation to each of the five RoWIP aims.

Substantial LTP funds have been allocated to the RoWIP in 2010/11 and schemes are being drawn up to deliver rights of way and access projects on the ground. Furniture improvements and better signage across the network will continue, including a £5k contribution to the Black Harry Trails project.

With regard to Greenways, work is on target to deliver 8km of new routes, which include the Shallcross Incline at Whaley Bridge and a section of the Peak Forest Tramway between Bugsworth and Chinley.

Information provision has been particularly good this year, with more copies of the horse riding leaflet due to be produced. Website improvements planned for early 2011 should make it much easier to navigate through the countryside service web pages with better information quality and interactive elements. Publication of the countryside events leaflet for 2011 is imminent and the new Countryside Service sites banner has been finalised.

Work has been undertaken in conjunction with Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire to improve a 2.5 mile section of the Limestone Way, known as the "Matlock spur", along with a number of adjoining paths. Stiles have been replaced with gates and the routes have been more clearly way marked.

Terry felt this was excellent work and asked what impact proposed cuts will have on the RoWIP. Gill responded that as yet the financial allocation is unknown, no doubt will have to prioritise but represents good value for money for spending.

Jon Clennell was always impressed by the standard of work, monitoring is good.

b) Proposed Work Programme for 2011/12

Gill outlined the annual work programme for delivery in 2011/12. More detail would be forthcoming when funding was confirmed and budgets agreed. The programme was very similar to last year as no new initiatives were identified for the fifth and final full year of the RoWIP. Work will start on preparing Derbyshire's second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP 2) and again the input of the LAF will be much appreciated. Gill thanked the Forum for its contribution to the first RoWIP, especially through the sub group which worked very well last time.

11. Consultations

- Defra review of the Governance of National Park Authorities. Mike has circulated information - several responses have been received and a discussion took place. Members agreed to submit the combined comments from Andrew McCloy and John Thompson and attach Henry's response in full. It will be given to Jim Dixon by Edwina at her meeting and then passed to Defra. Jon Clennell said he was not wholeheartedly behind Henry's comments but was sympathetic. Henry feels huge concern that the Park is for people and not the Authority; he is concerned that the Treasury will whittle funding away – unless fundamental and radical action is undertaken. Money should be invested in the ranger service and fabric of the park, not democratic services. Terry totally agrees with Henry that a fundamental review is needed with more public participation and ownership.
- Natural Environment White Paper. The LAF is being encouraged to make additional comments to Defra by 31 January.
- External consultation on the Roaches Estate, Staffordshire which is owned by the National Park Authority. It is very important for LAF members to have a say on what the PDNPA should be doing to protect this asset. The consultation has been circulated with a copy of Gill Bellenie's letter and set of draft objectives. All to respond to Mike Rhodes as soon as possible so comments can be coordinated in time for 14 January 2011 deadline. **ACTION: ALL**

12. Feedback from Members

Terry Howard advised the Forum that the Sheffield LAF had lobbied MPs regarding the CRoW Act and the effect of any cuts on local access forums. Angela Smith had responded positively and an answer was awaited from Nick Clegg. Mike reminded the Forum that it is the National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council who appoint and maintain this LAF, rather than Natural England.

Terry went on to say that he had copied a paragraph from the letter to Narendra Bajaria to Yorkshire and Humberside regional access forum. The Sheffield LAF had received a positive response from Sheffield CC apologising for the lack of consultation. Geoff said it would be crucial to lobby when the financial settlement is known.

13. Any Other Business

Bob Berzins read out a statement regarding public safety on moorland. There have been recent events (21 July and 31 October) of runners being injured by wire snares.

One occurred when someone was running along a path mown through bracken and the other on a well used route on Bamford Edge, near Heatherdene car park. Two representations have been made to the PDNPA Access Manager (Mike Rhodes). Bob is concerned that serious injury - even death - is possible. He has read through the CRoW Act and subsection (6C) is pertinent - 12 snares within 50m appear to be reckless. He is concerned about safe public access and requests officers to undertake site visits and risk assessments, talk to landowners and gamekeepers, involve the ranger service to warn people, issue a press release to advise the public. It could become an issue of national importance with regard to prevention.

Members discussed various aspects including it was difficult to prove intention but was it a reckless act, snares have to be placed on regular tracks of predators, is advisory signage needed? It does affect public access and safety. Mike advised that if a trap is

set recklessly on land, the clear response is for legal action to be taken up by the injured party. He has spoken to the landowner a couple of times, who was not aware of these injuries and surprised that Dark Peak Fell runners had not been in contact. The landowner suggested avoiding using that area for running. Bob Berzins had spoken to the gamekeeper in the past – who said he was doing his job and was surprised it was public access.

Mike feels that access must be kept open as much as possible. He very much welcomes Bob's paper and if the LAF thinks the NPA should be doing more then he will take that view back.

Points made by the Forum concluded that it was a difficult and contentious matter; it is widespread practice on grouse moors; if a public right of way is obstructed the County Council should deal with it, however if it is an informal track it is more of a grey area; there should be give and take; are warning signs appropriate; is the landowner aware of the guidance (Defra code of practice). Charlotte and James offered to have an informal chat with the landowner, but MR will discuss with them first. **ACTION: MR**

14. Date of Next Meeting

With the demise of Losehill Hall, Saturday meetings will be more difficult. Suggestions were made for the Moorland Discovery Centre and Hassop Station - any more ideas welcome.

Saturday 26 March 2011

Thursday 16 June

Saturday 24 September

Thursday 1 December

The meeting finished at 1pm

Edwina wished all a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.