

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 14 March 2019 in the Board Room at Aldern House, Bakewell.

Members Present:

Bob Berzins
Richard Entwistle
Clare Griffin
Andrew Murley
Paul Richardson
Jon Stewart

John Thompson (Chair)

Joe Dalton
Charlotte Gilbert
Jez Kenyon
Geoff Nickolds
Roly Smith
Ally Turner

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)
Gill Millward, (DCC)
Rich Pett, (PDNPA)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Richard Taylor, (DCC)
Karen Harrison, (Minutes)

1. APOLOGIES & WELCOME

Apologies had been received from Cllr Jason Atkin, Louise Hawson, Adge Last, Dan Richmond-Watson, Sue Weatherley and Edwina Edwards.

The Chair welcomed Adrian Barraclough, Director of Commercial Development and Engagement for the Peak District National Park Authority to the meeting and invited him to say a few words by way of introduction. Adrian did this and was thanked by John for the background information which he provided for the benefit of LAF members. Adrian kindly confirmed that he will attend future meetings where his input is required for particular items following liaison in advance with him and colleagues as appropriate.

2. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING OF 6TH DECEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 December 2018 were approved as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

MEND OUR MOUNTAINS CAMPAIGN

Mike Rhodes provided an update from Sarah Slowther (report circulated in advance) on the fundraising activities that had taken place since the last meeting of the Forum in December. It was noted that the Mend our Mountains Campaign ends at the end of March and that there was still help needed in reaching the target.

Cut Gate - had almost reached its £70,000 target and work was expected to start possibly in October, after the bird breeding season.

Great Ridge - was still some way off its target of £140,000, which was slightly disappointing, although it was accepted that it was an ambitious target. Despite that, work is due to start in

September and depending on the final amount secured, may only complete 900m of the path. Tenders are expected in soon, so will then have a better idea of what the final costs of the work will be, but it may be necessary to prioritise what work is carried out.

Peak District National Park Foundation – The Charity Commission approved the charity’s registration in February. The Peak District National Park Foundation is now an officially registered charity - number 1182136 There are 7 Trustees in place of which 3 were appointed by the Authority and work has begun on agreeing the fund raising priorities, as well as the development of a website.

Building a Foundation for our National Park with £70kfor70 - The Peak District National Park Foundation will focus on growing support and raising funds for the Peak District for everyone to enjoy forever. There are big ambitions - to see more land managed for wildlife; more rare habitats protected and more people able to enjoy the UK’s original National Park.

2019 is the 70th anniversary of the legislation which led to the creation of National Parks. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 followed decades of campaigning and, to mark this important milestone, The Foundation’s 1st year campaign is **£70k for 70**. Fundraising from a variety of sources – trust, foundations, corporate support and individuals to raise £70,000 for a range of high impact projects that care for the spectacular landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Peak District National Park and enable more people to enjoy our National Park. More details will be available on the new website which is being developed at the moment and will include details of how to donate. The holding page should be up and running in the next few weeks.

AGREED: That the report be received with thanks to Sarah Slowther and Mike Rhodes.

NATIONAL PARKS REVIEW – LAF SUBMISSION

John Thompson reported that the LAF response for the Review had been submitted to DEFRA and thanked Roly (editing) and Mike Rhodes (putting the LAF comments into the questionnaire). He had spoken to Defra to ascertain what the next stage of the process was and they had reported that all the submissions were now with the Panel and a full report would be published in Autumn 2019.

4. MONSAL TRAIL AND INTEREST IN OPENING A RAILWAY

Brian Taylor, Head of Policy and Communities, PDNPA was welcomed to the Forum to give a presentation on the emerging proposal to re-instate the Monsal Trail as a railway.

The Monsal Trail currently provides a safe, family friendly route through the Park and helps to promote the understanding of its special qualities, as well as providing health benefits. It also helps to provide a positive contribution to the local economy. Since 2011 there has been a huge investment, through the Pedal Peak Project, in opening the trail and the victorian tunnels. The Monsal Trail is an entry point for a lot of people coming into the National Park and a vital tourist/recreational resource could be lost - its annual usage is around 300,000 visitors.

Two main groups, Peak Rail and the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership are interested in re-opening the line again, not just from a heritage point of view, but to enhance the railways generally. The Transport for the North Group has ambitions for the next decade which include upgrading trunk roads and the re-instatement of the Monsal Trail as a railway line.

Brian reported that the National Park Authority was represented on the Transport for the North Group, which helps them to exert influence and to stress the importance of the Trail, so the Group is fully aware of the Authority’s position. Derbyshire County Council is not currently

involved in the Transport for the North Group and Richard Taylor will liaise with colleagues over this, as Brian and LAF members felt it would be helpful.

The County Council did engage Consultants some time ago to undertake a feasibility study which found the proposal was not viable, as it was felt that the line would not be wide enough to cater for multiple user groups alongside a live railway.

Brian advised that a report about the latest proposal to reinstate the Monsal Trail as a railway would be going to a future National Park Authority/Committee Meeting, possibly in May.

Charlotte Gilbert asked whether the Monsal Trail had a Public Right of Way (PRoW) status. Mike Rhodes confirmed that it was a concessionary route only, but that could be changed if the National Park Authority decided to dedicate it as a public bridleway. This would then give the Trail a certain amount of protection, although the Authority would like to retain a degree of flexibility, especially regarding the maintenance of the tunnels which may need to be closed to the public when work is carried out. A developer would have to provide an alternative route if the trail was a PRoW, but dedication may not be possible in this case because of the issue with the tunnels.

Concern was expressed that there were strong forces behind the proposal from rail enthusiasts and engineering companies, and that some groups were more vocal than others. It is therefore necessary to look at gathering evidence and data to support the importance of keeping the route as a trail and work with the Policy Group in gathering that information. The Trails Steering Group might be the best avenue to do this and Charlotte Gilbert will follow this up with Chris Bray and Emma Stone. Adrian Barraclough encouraged input from LAF members on usage and importance of the Monsal Trail which Charlotte will kindly co-ordinate.

Richard Taylor had brought along a copy of a research report produced by the Campaign for Better Transport – “The Case for Expanding the Rail Network” whose aims are to bridge the gap in the current approach to re-openings and to seek a national strategic approach to identifying those lines and stations whose reinstatement could bring the most benefits - the 12 miles between Matlock and Buxton was listed in the report. Gill Millward will arrange for copies to be available for LAF Members. Members supported the Local Plan policy approach Brian reported and noted approval is hoped for soon.

AGREED: That the presentation and responses to questions arising from Brian Taylor's verbal report be received and welcomed.

ACTION:

Brian Taylor to advise if a LAF Member could speak at a future Authority/Committee Meeting.

Richard Taylor to talk to colleagues about DCC being represented on the Transport for the North Group.

Gill Millward to arrange for copies of the research report produced by the Campaign for Better Transport – “The Case for Expanding the Rail Network” to be made available to LAF Members.

Charlotte Gilbert to speak to Chris Bray and Emma Stone re Trails Steering Group and gathering evidence and how best to do this.

5. RIGHTS OF WAY REPORTS

NATIONAL PARK SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2018

Mike Rhodes introduced his report on the "Ease of Use" Survey which had been carried out in 2018 by National Park staff and volunteer rangers. Every two years, a sample survey of 5% of the Rights of Way network in the National Park is carried out to assess its condition. The results for the 2018 survey showed an 81% pass rate, which was down compared to previous surveys.

Mike Rhodes explained that a right of way would fail the survey test if one of the following applied at some point along the path:

- a) A roadside signpost or waymark was not in place or did not show the correct status or the alignment was not visible.
- b) A missing bridge, stile, gate, steps where immediate repair or replacement was required.
- c) Any wall, fence, hedge, building, body of water, quarry, signage or beast or person obstructing or deterring the use of the path.

The LAF expressed some concern about the lower pass rate from the survey and considered that it was vital to ensure the Rights of Way in the National Park are well maintained.

AGREED: That the report be received.

ACTION:

Consider ways of getting additional resources for PROW work with encouragement from the LAF.

Raise this as an item at the Joint ROWIP Sub Group Meeting – dates to be agreed by Gill.

DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward circulated her report and invited comments and questions on the content. In discussing the report the following issues were highlighted:-

- Path condition surveys continued in 2018 and although the overall figure of 61.7% was slightly up from the previous year, it fell short of the 72.5% target. The methodology used in the condition surveys was exactly the same as for the National Park.
- Surface improvements are due to commence on Hurstclough Lane, near Bamford in July 2019 and expected to run for 6-7 weeks. Work should be starting on trial sections of Chapel Gate before the end of March with the aim of stabilising the ground. If this proves to be successful, work to improve drainage on top of the moor is expected to get underway in August 2019. Advice was being sought on how to proceed with the repairs to Bamford Clough, including options for dealing with the electricity cable and how to do the work due to the steep gradient. John Thompson asked that the Parish Council be kept informed of what was happening as they had previously enquired via the LAF.

- Following on from the annual condition survey carried out last summer on the Pennine Bridleway National Trail, work was now underway to improve the drainage and surfacing of a 30m section of the route which was prone to flooding at Haydale near Wheston.
- An application to the European Regional Development Fund to complete the missing sections of the Pennine Bridleway around Glossop had unfortunately been unsuccessful. Officers have offered to meet with Natural England and the National Pennine Trails Partnership Manager to discuss options for moving the project forward.
- Funding bids have been submitted for prioritised rights of way and multi-user Greenway/Key Cycle Network connectivity schemes from within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for 2019/20. These are due to be considered by Cabinet in April and Gill will report the outcome to the June LAF meeting.
- Charlotte Gilbert and Rick Jillings from DCC Countryside Service attended a meeting in December to discuss the review of the 2013/17 PDNPA Trails Management Plan.
- Gill Millward will be emailing a selection of dates round to the Joint RoWIP Sub Group members to arrange a meeting in April, possibly the 5th or 26th to discuss the review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. If April dates not suitable, then she will look at other dates.
- As part of the latest review of Derbyshire's Countryside Service, several LAF members attended a workshop at County Hall on 6 March, along with representatives of other organisations/ user groups. This was to discuss the services which the Countryside Service provides and how those could be improved. There was a further workshop in Derby on the 15th March if any member of the LAF wishes to attend. John thanked Richard Taylor and County Council colleagues for the invites.
- Groundwork Creswell has continued to deliver a range of work on the network of paths and trails across the county and a new group of volunteers has been working on the Matlock to Rowsley section of the White Peak Loop. In the third quarter of 2018/19 volunteers have contributed 413 days, estimated to be worth around £86,000.

John Thompson thanked Gill for her report.

AGREED: To note the progress report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

ACTION:

Gill Millward to request that Bamford with Thornhill Parish Council is kept informed on the proposed work at Bamford Clough.

Gill Millward to email possible dates for the Joint ROWIP Sub Group meeting to discuss the review of Rights of Way issues and ease of use survey results.

6. ACCESS REPORTS

DRAFT LAF ANNUAL REPORT

The draft LAF Annual Report was tabled at the meeting. In discussing the report, Sue highlighted the following items that had happened since the last annual report:-

Fundraising: The Forum and Access Sub-Group have advised and received updates on access improvements and their funding including via the Access Fund. The Forum, through other groups, has also contributed to the Mend our Mountains Campaign.

Miles without Stiles: Forum members attended the launch of the National Park's first 20 Miles without Stiles easy access routes and also visited Parsley Hay Visitor Centre to experience the range of inclusive cycles there.

Derbyshire ROWIP: The County Council continues to provide the LAF with regular updates on delivering the RoWIP, with the DADLAF and Peak District LAF working together to progress its ten year review.

National Park Management Plan: The work to review the NPMP and the delivery of outcomes for areas of impact, continued during 2018.

Green Lanes: The Forum was updated on the Authority's action plans for the year ahead and received the first Green Lanes Annual Report. The Forum was also consulted on two TRO's in 2018.

The Chair thanked Sue for her report and asked for it to be circulated to all LAF members for comments as requested by 5th April. He thanked all officers for their work and advice to the Forum.

AGREED: That the draft report be received.

LONG TERM RESTRICTIONS AND REVIEWS

SILENCE MINE

Sue Smith introduced her report and updated members on the current status of the open access land exclusion at Silence and Old Grove Mines, an area of land where there have been collapses and where the public rights of way and a highway have been closed on public safety grounds.

An independent geotechnical assessment has been sought to assess the future stability of the site and to draw up a scheme for remediation. It was proposed to extend the duration of the direction to 30 April 2020, or such earlier time when the issues have been satisfactorily resolved.

AGREED: That LAF agrees to the proposal to extend the duration of the direction to 30 April 2020 if required.

ACCESS FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Sue Smith tabled her report. This was the 4th Annual Report since the Access Fund was launched in 2014. The Access Fund helps to build on the legacy of access in the National Park, with those who care for this special place for the inspiration and enjoyment of all. Donations to the Access Fund are ring-fenced and used for access improvements throughout the National Park including new and replacement access points, new and improved paths and access, signage and promotion of access.

Although last year was relatively quiet, Terry Howard, former LAF member had raised £1500 for the Access Fund from the sale of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Handbook. Sue Weatherley, on behalf of the Derbyshire Dales Ramblers Group, had also donated to the fund. A letter of thanks, together with a certificate would be sent to her, as she was not present at the LAF meeting today.

The Chair thanked Sue for her report and asked LAF members to continue to look for opportunities to raise funds/donations for the Access Fund.

AGREED: That the LAF continues to look at opportunities for raising funds/donations for the Access Fund.

7. ACCESSIBILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Sue Smith tabled her report and informed the LAF of the availability of Access Guides for the National Park Visitor Centres. These easy to read guides, for disabled people and families with pushchairs, will be coming soon for the new centres which are being opened at Millers Dale and Hulme End.

Sue was also delighted to present to the LAF the new Miles without Stiles handbook which has had excellent press coverage in the Sheffield Telegraph. The handbook, dedicated to Tom Scofford and Sean Prendergast, contains 20 easy accessible routes. All proceeds from the sale of the book will go back into the Access Fund.

The LAF thanked Sue Smith, Roly Smith, Alastair Harvey and others for their contributions to Miles without Stiles. The work that has been done behind the scenes cannot be underestimated.

AGREED: That the report be received, noted and publicised.

8. GREEN LANES UPDATE

Sue Smith introduced her report and provided an update on progress regarding green lanes in the National Park.

Anne Robinson, Friends of the Peak District and South Yorkshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England then spoke under the public participation at meetings scheme to urge the LAF to request that the PDNPA make its TRO on Wetton as soon as possible and for consideration of the reasons for the delay.

John Thompson thanked Anne for her presentation to the LAF.

Sue Smith reported that she was working with Staffordshire County Council on progressing matters relating to the Wetton TRO. Staffordshire County Council has requested that the National Park Authority does not progress with the proposed TRO at this current time until the issue of the Section 56 notice of repairs is resolved and pending a meeting with PDNPA officers on the 10 April.

Sue reported that the TRO routes are monitored by loggers. These show when usage takes place and this information can be passed to the Police.

AGREED: That the LAF would like to record its thanks to Richard Pett and colleagues for what they are doing within limited resources and to thank Sue Smith for her report.

ACTION: The LAF recommends that the National Park Authority proceeds with a TRO at the appropriate time.

9. NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN (NPMP) DELIVERY

John Thompson referred to his report and updated LAF Members on the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group Meeting which he had attended on the 16 January 2019.

The purpose of the group is to:-

- Act as a champion for the NPMP.
- Provide strategic focus and help develop a long term view of the National Park.
- Provide a forum for the on-going review of implementation of the Plan.
- Help to drive implementation of the Plan by advocating the importance of National Park outcomes.
- Provide independent specialist advice and recommendations to the PDNPA and any relevant delivery partner to help improve actions for delivery.
- Provide view points from a range of sectors that potentially impact on the National Park.

The Group is made up of members from the Local Nature Partnership, Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, Visit Peak District, Local Access Forum, National Trust, Derbyshire County Council, Peak Park Parishes Forum, Peak Partners for Rural Action, Business Peak District, Farmers & Land Managers Forum, National Park Authority, Friends of the Peak District, Rural District Councils and Sheffield City Council. The group has the ability to co-opt other people to join the group to fill gaps in representation of the group or to reflect significant projects or developments.

Some of the key points from the meeting were:-

- Geoff Nickolds to attend the Climate Change Workshop in the Autumn.
- Bob advised that the Events workshop was well attended by LAF Members in various capacities and there was scope for the LAF to contribute to some actions. There was some discussion on what constituted an “organised event” and the Countryside Code was to be reviewed, which Sarah Wilks was leading on.
- NPMP Delivery Plan will go to the next Advisory Group Meeting in April and then onto the Authority Meeting in May.
- Suggest Wildlife Trusts be represented through Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on the Advisory Group.

AGREED: That the report be received.

10. MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

Campaign for National Parks

On Friday 22 March 2018, the Campaign for National Parks, the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) and others are holding an event at Losehill Hall Youth Hostel to celebrate 70 years since the 1949 Act of Parliament was passed, which established the family of National Parks in England and Wales. There will be a number of speakers representing the Campaign to Protect Rural England, YHA and MOSAIC followed by a walk on Mam Tor and Hollins Cross.

Spirit of Kinder Day

Roly reminded members of the forthcoming **Spirit of Kinder Day** event which is to be held on Saturday 27 April in the Winnats Pass, Castleton to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 – the legislation which set up our National Parks.

There will be a number of guest speakers, including:-

- Lord David Blunkett
- Sue Hayman, MP
- Lynn Robinson, President of the British Mountaineering Council
- Ruth George, MP
- Izzy Stewart, Woodcraft Folk

The Director General of the National Trust and Jarvis Cocker are also expected to attend. Music will be provided by the Clarion Band, led by Mike Rimmington and there will be free guided walks led by the National Trust and Peak District Volunteers. The event is free and people are being advised to walk into the event or use public transport as parking is limited.

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Geoff Nickolds gave a brief update to the Forum on the proposed changes to the Heritage Fund and the new Strategic Funding Framework for 2019-24. He had also previously circulated the Framework document by email to LAF Members, which explained the changes in more detail.

DADLAF

John Thompson attended a meeting of the DADLAF on 7 December and had circulated notes from that meeting to Peak District LAF members prior to this meeting.

East Midlands Regional LAF Chairs Meeting

Bob Berzins will be representing the Peak District LAF at the next meeting on 26 March, as John Thompson is unable to attend.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Roly Smith shared a short documentary with LAF members over lunch. This was produced by WellRed Films and told the story of the Kinder Mass Trespass in 1932 when hundreds of ramblers walked on to private land on Kinder Scout, near Hayfield in Derbyshire, to assert their "right to roam". Benny Rothman, was one of 5 men that was arrested and imprisoned for their actions, but it is because of this that people have access to places like Kinder Scout, where they can all enjoy the freedom of the hills.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be taking place on **6 June 2019 at Longshaw.**

Meeting ended - 1.10 pm