

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 19 March 2015

Item: 6

Title: Access Update

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on issues related to the management of access in the Peak District.

Access Wish List

Over the years the LAF have been identifying locations where access could be improved. Their suggestions and priorities comprise the Access Wish List (Appendix 1) and will be made available to anyone involved in land management for consideration in any discussions. It is proposed that these are mapped to form an access opportunities layer to complement the access constraints layer.

Access Fund

The Authority's Access Fund (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessfund) was set up on the 10th anniversary of the introduction of open access to take forward future access improvements including that set out in the Forum's Access Wish List. Appendix 2 sets out details of the operation of the fund.

Improvements are proposed to the mechanisms for donating and will form part of the Giving Strategy to be prepared by the Authority for adoption. A report on the Fund will be provided to the September meeting of the Forum. Where donations for access improvements have come in by other means, they will also be identified.

Celebrating Open Access

The launch of a new Wild Side beer will take place on 20th March 2015 and will be accompanied by speeches on the value of access to our wild areas.

A new webpage has been set up (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/wildside) to encourage a walk on the wild side to explore the spirit of the uplands and the passion of the Peak District. Wild Side T-shirts will also help promote, celebrate and care for the wild side. A donation of £1 will be made to the Access Fund for every T-shirt sold. They are available at http://www.thornbridgebrewery.co.uk/product.php?s=wild_T_red.

Events

Information on running large-scale events and the process for events notification can be seen at <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/runninglargeevents>. It will be formally launched following a period of feedback and review. It provides guidance, details of how to register an event, the event calendar to view approved or pending applications, and suggestions for voluntary donations of £2 per participant.

The events notifications system has been created with the involvement of major landowners, Natural England, and the Peak Parishes Forum and was commented on by members of the Access Sub-group in February 2015. Further comments from the LAF are welcome.

Guidance

The Authority will be preparing guidance on the erection of structures on access land to ensure that due regard is given to access in accordance with its responsibilities as the Access Authority and Relevant Authority and the National Park's second purpose.

The Authority will also be preparing guidance on the creation of or alteration to tracks or their maintenance and the requirement to notify the NPA as the planning authority prior to works in order to determine whether planning permission is required.

The draft guidance will be reported to the next meeting of the Access Sub-group.

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**

Appendix 1**Access Wish List – February 2015**North

Site	Access	Reason	Action	Resolved
Dirtlow Rake	Path for access	Access for climbing		
Furnace Hill	Access point	Link areas of access land	Landowner contacted (Spring 2013)	
High Riggs	Access point	Fencing erected on common land	Tenant contacted (Autumn 2014)	
Hollingdale Plantation	Access land	Plantation felled and to be reinstated to moorland	Landowner contacted (Winter 2012)	
Kirk Edge	Access point	Access to access land.		
Loftshaw	Access point	Access to former mineral working	Signage on existing access points (Spring 2013)	✓
Parson's Piece	Access point	Confirmation of access point	Replacement signage erected (Spring 2013)	✓
Rud Hill & Redmires	Access point	Alternative to reservoir route. Link areas of access land. Fencing.	Tenant contacted (Spring 2013)	
Rod Moor	Access points	Link from road and link areas of access land.	Landowner contacted (Winter 2012). NE and tenant contacted (Autumn 2014)	
Shining Clough	Access point	Link from Longendale Trail	Alternatives identified. Landowner contacted previously.	
Ughill Moor	Access point	Stile unsafe	Stile repaired (Winter 2012)	✓
Ward's Piece	Link to access land	Link to/from Vale of Edale	Alternatives identified. Landowners contacted (Winter 2014).	

Central

Site	Access	Reason	Action	Resolved
Brushfield	Link to access land	Link to dale top	Landowner contacted (Winter 2012)	
Conies Dale	Link to access land	Link from footpath. Avoid A623	Landowner contacted previously.	
Corbar Hill	Access point	Link to NP access land	LAF Sub-group visit (Autumn 2014)	
Fallinge Edge	Access point	Link areas of access land. Wall.	Stile constructed (Winter 2013)	✓
Goddards Quarry	Path link	Reinstate access following quarrying	Concession path created. Additional works identified (Jan 2015)	✓
Hassop Avenue	Path link	To avoid section of road	Diversion order ongoing.	
Hazlebadge	Path link	To avoid section of road	Landowner contacted previously.	
High Edge	Access point	Fencing	Investigated (Spring 2013)	
Linen Dale	Link to access land	Through route to Horseshoe Quarry. Avoid A623	Alternative route at Housley proposed under stewardship (Summer 2013)	
Wardlow Hay & Hay Dale	Dedication & link to access land	NNR dedication and daleside links	NE pursuing dedication on their land (Autumn 2014). New landowner contacted re link route (Autumn 2014).	
White Edge	Link to access land	Access to/from road	Landowner contacted previously.	
William Hill	Access point	Link areas of access land. Wall.	Landowner contacted (Spring 2013)	

South

Site	Access	Reason	Action	Resolved
Dove Bank	Link to access land	Through route at eastern end	New link to access land created (Spring 2013)	✓
Dove Top	Link to access land	For the continuity of a path along the top of the dale.	Natural England considering under stewardship (Summer 2013)	
Gratton Hill	Link to access land	Good track to access land	Track in use. Potential legal rights in existence.	
Sheen Hill	Path for access	Access to trig point		
Stanshope	Access point	Alternative route	Change in ownership (Spring 2013)	
Wolfescote Dale	Access points	Locked gates restricting access	Landowner pursuing with tenant (Summer 2013)	

Appendix 2

Peak District National Park Authority's Access Fund

Introduction

The National Park Authority's Access Fund covers access improvements within the Peak District National Park. The scheme is self-sustaining and external contributions are ring fenced. The Authority started off this fund with a contribution of £3000 and will be building on this with income generation, sponsorship and donations.

Background

The National Park Authority has a number of duties and responsibilities in terms of public access in the National Park, which contribute to the Authority's statutory purpose of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

The NPA is the Relevant Authority and Access Authority for managing open access land within the National Park, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). The NPA also has certain other powers to help it meet its statutory purposes although it does not have the same duties and responsibilities as its 7 constituent Highway Authorities which remain the appropriate authorities for rights of way.

The Access and Rights Team therefore focuses on providing the professional expertise for making available opportunities for high quality access in the National Park. This is done by:

- working with the Local Access Forum to identify and discuss access opportunities
- the local knowledge of Rangers for signage, resolving and flagging up issues
- on the ground works by Rangers, the Countryside Maintenance Team (CMT) and Peak Park Conservation Volunteers and other volunteers
- access opportunities via agri-environment schemes and planning proposals
- using our properties to set examples of good practice

The dedicated fund for access is intended to supplement budgets and any other funding that may be obtained.

Opportunities

There is the potential to improve and increase available access within the National Park. This is done by working in partnership with others to identify opportunities, with landowners/managers and farmers to allow for access, with CMT, rangers and volunteers to implement access, and for its promotion via the LAF and the access newsletter.

Opportunities will be sought for the dedication of new areas of access land, to establish links from the public rights of way network and for improving the infrastructure including gates and path work

The fund is ring-fenced for:

- new access points on access land
- restoring paths on access land
- promoted paths on access land
- implementation and dedication of new areas of access land
- new concession paths to improve links to existing access
- enhancing the accessibility of paths
- other improvements such as signage
- leaflets to promote new access

Promotion

The Access Fund was launched on the 10th anniversary of the introduction of open access to take us forward for the next 10 years and beyond.

Details of the Access Fund can be seen at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessfund. It is accessed from the National Park Authority's home page, from the visiting section on open access land, from the looking after section on access and from the shop.

The Access Fund is promoted via the access newsletter, in the Spring edition of Park Life, and through reports to the Peak District Local Access Forum. Parish Councils have also been notified.

A Wild Side beer is being launched in March to celebrate the 10th anniversary of open access land with the associated promotion of the Access Fund.

Contributions

Donations are presently via telephone or cheques. However, other mechanisms are being developed to facilitate giving.

An initial start-up amount of £3000 was provided from the Access & Rights of Way Team's access budget. Further contributions in the future from the access budget may be provided, where the resources are available and it is necessary to supplement proposals.

Voluntary contributions may be received from individuals and from the membership of recreational groups and other organisations. Income may also be derived from donations arising from events on public rights of way or open access land within the National Park and go towards enhancement of recreational opportunities in an area.

Income to date generated by the Peak District Local Access Forum from a cake sale is £60.

Brewery tours and merchandise linked with the launch of a new beer in March to celebrate the 10th anniversary of open access will also raise income for the Access Fund.

Further offers of funding have been made subject to the identification of projects for consideration.

Reporting

Annual reports will be provided to the Peak District Local Access Forum in September each year. This will draw together the projects, income and expenditure over the previous year.

The LAF is also involved through provision of their access wish list and updates to the Access Sub-group and full Forum meetings.

Pros

- encourages the awareness and enhancement of access opportunities including access points and links to open access land
- offers the opportunity to provide access which meets needs and encourages ownership of a public good
- provides an alternative to sources of funding that are depleted or no longer available
- offers a mechanism to support obtaining contributions from events and other donations
- contributions obtained from events on access land and public rights of way in the National Park can be fed back to benefit recreation and access in the National Park.
- can cover initiatives on the NPA's own land as well as other initiatives in partnership with others to meet objectives set out in management plans and strategies
- volunteer contributions can be co-ordinated by PPCV with a contribution from the scheme towards that
- may lead to an increase of schemes and potential work by the CMT

Cons

- may impact on or be impacted by other contributory schemes
- buy-in is dependent on development and delivery of high profile initiatives
- not suitable for large scale projects unless additional streams of funding are available
- workload and capacity issues of identifying, obtaining funds and delivering
- not a replacement for the delivery of statutory duties and responsibilities or the budgets required to support that

Summary

The importance of access for the local economy and health and social well-being is well recognised. This fund helps to fulfil objectives to enable connectivity of access, to deliver landscape scale conservation and enhancement, to promote opportunities for people to connect with the National Park, and to promote excellence in land & resource management and visitor experience. The Access Fund will also assist in addressing cut-backs in funding opportunities.

The scheme is an aspirational one to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities for access and to provide the capacity for contributions and income generation. The identification of suitable projects will also assist in the future potential for raising income through donations.

An awareness of the opportunity for donations to be made to support access should be inherent in the promotion and management of recreational opportunities in the National Park. The extent to which we can continue to improve access within the National Park will be in part dependent on contributions and income generation and ultimately the success of the Access Fund will be dependent on support from all those involved in using or managing access.