

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2012 at the Moorland Discovery Centre, Longshaw

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	Terry Howard
Jon Clennell	James Kellie
Richard Entwistle	Andrew McCloy
Henry Folkard	John Thompson
Charlotte Gilbert	Ally Turner
Clare Griffin	Sue Weatherley
John Hall	

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Lesley Rechert (PDNPA)
Elizabeth Barnacott (NE)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
David Giles	David Sparkes
Gill Millward (DCC)	Richard Taylor (DCC)

1. Apologies, public speakers and introductions.

Apologies had been received from Bob Berzins, Richard Peart, Jon Stewart, Adge Last, Ben Rayner and Jean Wharmby.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that 4 members of the public had requested to speak today: Patricia Stubbs, Nigel Bennett (who actually cannot attend now), David Giles and David Sparkes.

Mike introduced the Forum to Lesley Rechert, the new PDNPA Access Officer. Lesley has been appointed for 2 years from 1 April while Sue Smith is in the Rights of Way Officer post. Elizabeth Barnacott from Natural England is here to help with the Huddle training after lunch. All are welcome to attend.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2011 were agreed as a correct record. Terry Howard felt Item 5 (regarding cyclists on trails) was ambiguous. Mike thought the minutes were a correct interpretation.

3. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

Kinder Mass Trespass – Terry took this opportunity to formally invite all LAF members to the launch on 24 April at The Moorland Centre, Edale. He provided copies of the programme of events for the week. **ACTION: ALL**

Henry commented that it is a full and varied programme - something for everyone and an extremely important event. The Trespass needs to be kept in people's minds and projected into the future. The Chair thanked Terry for the invitation and information.

Access issues - Terry is very concerned about the backlog of issues - some are 8 or 12 years old. He is pleased there is a new access officer so these can be progressed.

Car parking charges at Teggs Nose - Jon Clennell asked about Item 11- car parking charges - Clare will follow this up and report back to JC. **ACTION: CG**

Fencing on Kinder - Jon Stewart was due to give a presentation today but will do so at the next meeting.

DCC Motor Vehicle Policy - Gill reported that the LAF sub group had met on 23 January and produced a draft response which was circulated to all Forum members. No further comments were received and the formal response was sent to DCC on 2 March. There have been 1200 replies to the on-line questionnaire and about 100 letters from groups and individuals. In view of the number of responses and time it will take to analyse them, a report will now go to Cabinet in June.

4. LAF Annual Report

The Chair thanked everyone involved in pulling this together. LAF members were asked to let Mike have any further comments within the next week, before it goes to print. **ACTION: ALL**

5. Recreational Motor Vehicles action plans

Sue Smith had circulated a report on green lanes. The revised strategy for the management of recreational motor vehicles on unsealed highways and off-road was adopted in February 2012, along with a revised procedure for making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). Notes from the special LAF meeting at the beginning of March were also circulated.

16 priority routes now have draft action plans and a report is going to committee tomorrow (23 March). The intention is to report to committee annually, with interim updates for the LAF. Copies of the reports for first 16 priority routes were available at the meeting for all Forum members.

Sue updated the Forum on a few specific routes:

Monksdale Lane - DCC is investigating its legal status (currently out for consultation).

Bradley Lane - works are taking place.

School Lane - surfacing work has been undertaken with further works proposed by DCC re signage and road markings - further public consultation is to take place.

Washgates - a volunteer working party has been arranged for this weekend.

Chapel Gate - recently received notification that the High Court hearing will be held in November (some 14-15 months into the experimental traffic regulation order). The report to Committee on the longer term will now have to be deferred until the winter - illustrating that some actions are outside the National Park Authority's control.

There is a consultation underway on new procedures for Traffic Regulation Orders, as part of the Government's commitment to simplify the processes involved. It will be left to individual highway authorities to decide the best way to publicise and which organisations should be consulted. There is no mention of National Park Authorities which have concurrent powers - this will be flagged up in the response being coordinated through the English National Park Authorities Association. There is some information on Huddle – the general feedback seems to be that each authority should make sure that information is available and have a readily accessible area on their websites. If LAF members have any comments, they should be sent to Sue as soon as possible.

ACTION: ALL

Richard Pett reported that the vehicles sub-group is meeting on 4 May to look at some of the remaining routes – hope to conclude 75% of these over the summer. There are 100 green lanes outside Derbyshire which are being surveyed by National Park rangers. These should be completed by the end of March and checked for consistency. Richard will report back to the LAF in due course.

ACTION: RP

Hollinsclough Rakes – there has been a meeting with local residents to try and tackle some of the anti social behaviour issues on this route. Operation Blackbrook should be continuing through PC Philip Maycock who is planning some information days in the next few months. With regard to illegal use – Sgt Tony O'Brian (Bradwell) has reported that ten 4x4s and two trial bikes have been stopped on Hope Brinks and issued with fixed-penalty notices.

John T thanked both Sue and Richard for the amount of work carried out, their openness and attention to detail.

Terry commented on the appendix to the report and expressed concern about how people interpret the work – the fact that it aims to make routes more useable for the priority users ie walkers, horse riders and cyclists and not just for motorised vehicles should be highlighted much more. He also pointed out that on several routes which are now recorded as Byways Open to All Traffic, the sustainability issues have not been addressed with the result that they have seriously deteriorated over a few months. Two examples in Bradfield parish (Sheffield) are now virtually impassable for walkers. Need to undertake sustainability tests early rather than waiting for damage to be done.

Henry hopes that this LAF can give positive feedback to officers and committee - both have done a good job in bringing forward a revised strategy. Forum members agreed that Mike R should pass this view on to committee.

ACTION: MR

However, with regard to the new procedures for TROs – Henry thought this was tinkering at the margins. The point about the whole process regarding the determination of the status of routes was very significant and more work needs to be done to relieve the pressure for TROs. Most legislation determining the status of routes pre dates the problems which exist now and needs bringing up to date. The 1812 Enclosure Awards could not have a clear vision of current recreation vehicular use - or the status at that time being a proper basis for use 200 years later. A template is needed to enable the LAF to provide more rigorous recommendations to DCC and the National Park Authority regarding safety and environmental damage. Finally everyone must work harder with user groups who are the solution; not part of the problem.

Sue Weatherley agreed that sustainability needs to be factored in – the cost of repairs should be addressed eg a cost benefit analysis or similar. A lot of money could be

spent on unsustainable repairs. Mike, Richard P and Sue S will provide a draft template to be looked at by the sub group for future use. **ACTION: MR, RP, SAS**

The Chair thanked Sue and Richard for their reports.

6. Barriers and Gates

Patricia Stubbs from Peak Horsepower gave a presentation on the use of barriers to prevent the illegal use of routes. She illustrated various types of barrier (called horse hops or horse stiles) which stop vehicles but allow horse access – the width is critical to exclude motor bikes but allow horses to step through. Standard A frame motor cycle barriers allow access for buggies, mobility scooters, bicycles and walkers and are often used in combination with horse hops and/or gates. Horse friendly barriers can also be a solution for restricted byways. Patricia is compiling a list of Derbyshire horse hops.

With regard to the powers of highway authorities, Patricia drew attention to the Highways Act 1980 Section 66 (2) and Section 147 of same act which allows the highway authority to authorise landowners to erect stiles gates etc needed to manage the movement of animals - which could be a solution for National Trust and others. Advice is available from Defra, the Planning Inspectorate, the Equalities Act etc. She was bewildered when told by DCC that it has no legal power to install horse friendly barriers and felt it should be a test of reasonableness.

The Rights of Way team in Sheffield has not carried out any formal research but do use barriers a lot. Patricia understands from informal conversations that illegal use reduces when barriers are installed and consequently there are fewer complaints, as well as protection for the surface of a route. She feels there would not be a large and growing industry in barriers if authorities were not using them. They are rare in Derbyshire – with the majority on Greenways but only a few on bridleways.

Patricia does not want the National Park covered in metal frames – just used where significant problems exist on a trial basis, in conjunction with other solutions such as signage and police operations. Scottish Natural Heritage has lots of info on its website.

Richard Taylor (DCC) told the Forum that as part of reclamation schemes DCC has been installing horse hops – but found they didn't work. Research has been carried out in the Killamarsh area. The original A frame was tried out initially on a reclamation site that became the Trans Pennine trail. It worked very well for the first three weeks but then motorcyclists found that by cutting their handlebars down they could get through. The next barrier was the K barrier with adjustable sides – it is very good and mostly does the job, but buggies and motorised scooters vary in size so barriers have to be custom altered.

A discussion was held about the appropriateness of barriers in a National Park versus suburban parks, the urbanisation of routes, horses potentially being spooked by horse hops and the fact that it is easier to put barriers on routes without rights of way designations.

Andrew McCloy thanked Patricia for the detailed information and research and for offering solutions. He asked Richard Taylor if the 'Rolls Royce' treatment in country parks could be applied in the National Park or at least tested out in key problem areas. Richard Taylor replied that significant external funding for country parks allowed this

level of expenditure where the metalwork is more in keeping – but this could not always be justified on other routes. Clare G commented that horse hops can be hazardous for runners particularly at night. Richard added that they are not good for visually impaired users. The Chair thanked Patricia for an informative presentation.

7. The Kinder circuit

Charlotte explained that Peak Horsepower wanted to look at safe routes and longer distance rides - with the associated implications for equine tourism. Other National Parks offer many such routes. A 56 mile route (4 day ride) around Kinder has been identified using existing bridleways (including sections of the Pennine Bridleway and Trans Pennine Trail) and some roads. When the off road route of the Pennine Bridleway through Glossop is opened up (approx 2 years' time) it will be very safe. There was an issue near Penistone but this has been resolved. Charlotte will be riding and photographing the route on 23 to 26 April as part of the anniversary celebration of the Mass Trespass. She will be recording information about the condition of the route using a camera and GPS. Once the route is established it is hoped to develop shorter circuits off the main route.

Funding is now being sought from Sport England, Hoof etc – the intention is to produce a map/ leaflet promoting the route for walkers, horse riders and cyclists and to waymark with small discs to give confidence to users. Would also like to see horse bed and breakfast accommodation developed (farms along the route might be interested).

Terry said it sounds like a brilliant, challenging route and asked that it be promoted for walkers too. The Chair thanked Charlotte for the presentation.

8. Advice on Green Lanes issues

A report outlining three options, by Mike Rhodes and John Thompson, had been circulated.

David Giles (Member of Derby and Derbyshire LAF) had asked to speak. He gave advice on the possible structure and balance of this Forum and recruitment with regard to sub groups and his interpretation of the relevant Secretary of State guidance. He felt amalgamating the two sub groups would not be in the interest of the independence of this LAF and suggested a second look at the document.

David Sparkes then spoke. He summarised his views on the 3 options and thought option 3 was not feasible, specifically as any Green Lanes Forum should have an independent chair (ie not from DCC or PDNPA).

A discussion followed about the status of individuals on sub groups (whether they become de facto LAF members), engagement of outside groups, breadth and representative balance, size of group, efficient use of officer time, Defra guidance, sub group chair.

Andrew McCloy proposed and John Thompson seconded a vote on the current proposal. However too many members abstained for a vote to be decisive.

Mike summed up by saying this was an interesting debate – as always expected from this LAF. The subject will be given more thought and a further proposal will be brought to the June meeting. **ACTION: MR**

The Chair thanked David Giles and David Sparkes for attending today.

9. Derbyshire CC Rights of Way Improvement Plan

a) Progress Report for 2011/12

Gill Millward had circulated a report and gave brief highlights:

DCC has secured significant sums of money for access projects, including funding for the Pennine Bridleway from Natural England. Public rights of way information for the two remaining areas of the county (Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales) is almost complete and should be available online in April/ May. Consultations and decisions on legal orders are progressing well and the backlog is being addressed.

Cyclists and horse riders have benefitted from a number of schemes eg Black Harry Trails project, a section of the Pennine Bridleway/ Trans Pennine Trail through Gamesley Sidings, the Monsal Trail and Shallcross Incline in Whaley Bridge. The number of tramper mobility scooters available for hire has increased to ten. These are available at seven different countryside sites where routes have been improved to enable more independent use.

Signage has been improved along the Cromford Canal and sections of the High Peak Trail, with plans to carry out more work next year on the Sett Valley Trail between New Mills and Hayfield. The very valuable work with volunteers continues.

b) Work programme for 2012/13

Gill circulated a report highlighting the key areas of work for RoWIP delivery in 2012/13. This will be reassessed once the new Statement of Action for 2012-17 has been finalised in November.

c) RoWIP Review

A paper setting out the timetable for reviewing the existing RoWIP and involvement of the LAF was circulated. Gill reported that the planned workshop in February could not be held but she will contact Sue, Henry and Charlotte about arranging another meeting of the joint LAF sub group to look at the draft Statement of Action. **ACTION: GM**

This will be brought to the LAF meeting in June, before being taken to Cabinet for approval to carry out a 3 month public consultation and a new document put in place by the end of November 2012. Meanwhile the aim is to engage as many groups as possible eg via the PDNPA recreation strategy meeting and also hope for a slot at the partnership meeting in June to get input from as many partners as possible. This will make the statement of action for next 5 years more relevant.

John T welcomed the report and information – it fits in neatly with both the PDNPA recreation strategy and sustainable transport action plan.

10. Water Recreation Task Group

Sue Smith and Clare Griffin reported that the task group has been suspended. Although happy to work with user groups, PDNPA has reached capacity so cannot take the lead in this area of work, although will bring any issues to the LAF as and when they arise. A paper was circulated and the Rights of Way team will work with people on access management issues. The recreation group's role will be promotion of water recreation. Clare said she had found the group very enthusiastic and she will continue to work with Sue where possible.

Andrew McCloy said it would be an understatement to say he was disappointed – water recreation was a headline in the Recreation Strategy. Sue responded that the recreation strategy team has been reduced as Peter Davey has left; the Environment Agency has ceased its involvement and she is no longer Access Officer. Geoff Nickolds met with Richard Campen and Jim Dixon – it was felt the PDNPA should be upfront about its lack of capacity to take the lead. If someone else could chair the group, the authority may be able to offer support. However the LAF can discuss these issues and take forward.

Henry said he has been in discussions with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust about canoeing at Water cum Jolly. One reason for retention is that it is a difficult area with conflicting views and important not to let go as a consensus approach is attainable. Need to pursue this as a recreation activity for which there is fairly limited opportunity and make the best of what there is.

Andrew McCloy stated that only 4% of Peak District water is accessible and felt that the PDNPA is now reactive rather than proactive, thinking needs to be externalised. Jon Clennell spoke from the Outdoor Learning perspective and stressed that this would be greeted with despair – the LAF should be proactive in fighting for better access.

Richard Taylor reported that DCC has funding for 2 years for a waterways officer – the main remit of the post is the Chesterfield and Cromford canals – he felt that other elements will creep in.

John T respects and understands the current point made by Sue and suggested that future opportunities should be explored with Geoff Nickolds and Jim Dixon. This is a main point in the recreation strategy – it may be suspended for the time being but it remains important to be mindful of how it can be taken forward in future.

Andrew McCloy will speak with the Recreation Strategy team.

ACTION: AMcC

The Chair thanked Sue and Clare for their input.

11. Members' Reports

John Thompson had circulated a paper:

Transport workshop - it was felt that it would be very helpful for LAF colleagues to explore opportunities for a Peak District cycling strategy which will relate to riding and walking opportunities too. JNT asked if any LAF members would be prepared to take this forward with him – Sue Weatherley and Ally Turner volunteered. An Action Plan was produced from the workshop and is going to the Authority on 25 May – John is happy to prepare a draft response and Terry offered to be involved.

Recreation Strategy update - another partnership event will be held in June, venue and topics are currently being investigated – an invitation for Forum members will be circulated in due course.

Karen Shelley-Jones had given an update about PDLNP (Peak District Local Nature Partnership). It is broader than just biodiversity and conservation – a workshop on how more community involvement can be achieved will be held on 3 May – an invitation will be circulated (access sub group date may be changed). **ACTION: JNT**

Henry told the Forum that the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area is one of 12 funded projects (albeit reduced to £750k) with a recreation and access element in it. There is a current advertisement for a Project Officer. The British Mountaineering Council is a partner – there may or may not be opportunity to work through LAFs and RoWIPs.

12. Any Other Business

Terry reported that PDNPA and National Trust have been working with the health walks project run by Natural England. These are no longer run by NE and bids have been invited – he was concerned that a commercial body might be taking over the running of health walks. He is now pleased to say that competitive process has now finished and the Ramblers Association will be the new host of a national centre along with MacMillan Cancer support. This will be run centrally but it will be up to local authorities and NHS to provide funding for local initiatives.

Terry then spoke about the disposal of various parts of public land in the Peak District. A different approach is being taken with Stanage and North Lees to that of Eastern Moors. Potentially North Lees and Stanage are more commercial and there is greater financial interest in that estate. He remains concerned that access gains made by the Stanage Forum may be overlooked. There is a paper going to committee tomorrow – Terry wrote as member of this LAF expressing concern about what will happen to the Stanage Estate. Forum members should continue to keep an interest.

BMC shares those concerns and Henry will be speaking at committee tomorrow. Stanage is iconic, its positive effect on the local economy, landscape, accessibility, concessionary routes etc reflects what ordinary people want. Henry has concerns that the committee report has not paid due regard to this. He has also been approached by Hathersage and Outseats Parish Councils with concerns about Callow Bank and what proposals are in place by DCC to repair the track. Henry wanted to record that this concern has been noted.

JNT asked if the new Head of Property (Keith Jennings) could give a presentation on disposals of land. MR had received an e-mail yesterday that Keith is in fact leaving.

The Huddle Session is to be held at 1.45 (after lunch) with Elizabeth Barnacott. Huddle is currently restricted to 3 members per LAF (Clare, Richard E and Sue Smith) but this afternoon's session is open for all members to see what it is about.

13. Dates of next Meetings

To be held on 14 June, 27 September and 6 December 2012.
The meeting closed at 12.50pm.