

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 June 2010
At Aldern House, Bakewell

Members Present:

Jon Clennell
Edwina Edwards
Richard Entwistle
Henry Folkard
Charlotte Gilbert
Terry Howard
Mike Innerdale
Mike Johnson

James Kellie
Andrew McCloy (Chair)
Andrew Murley
Geoff Nickolds
Richard Peart
John Thompson
Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary
Sharon Davison (Minutes)
Sue Dunk (Hope Valley Riding Club)
Fizz Bolton (Eastern Moors Riding Association)
Jenny Campbell (Natural England)

Judy Merryfield (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)
Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Sue Smith (PDNPA)

Andy Farmer (PDNPA)
Bob Kelly (Ramblers' Association)

Julie Thompson (Pennine Bridleway National Trail)
Karen Turnbull (DCC)
Marilyn Winterbottom (Hope Valley Riding Club)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Bob Berzins, Sue Fisher and Felicity Edmeston.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

a) Recreational motor vehicles update - A report had been circulated by Richard Pett. The expected £100k to help implement the management plans will now not be forthcoming. It was suggested that the Brough Lane, Chapel Gate and Long Causeway routes should be revisited by the LAF sub group as soon as possible to see what can be done in the light of this.

ACTION: RP/MR

Consultations on proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for Bradley Lane and Washgate are expected to be issued by Derbyshire County Council today (17 June). There has been no further progress on School Lane at Great Hucklow - DCC Highways have not been able to devote any time to this - which is extremely frustrating. With regard to the 2nd batch of routes, Richard thanked LAF sub group members for their input and feedback.

Police only operations have been stepped up to target illegal users. Out of 130 vehicles inspected, 30 had defects (court orders are issued if not repaired in 14 days - so far all

have complied) and 8 stolen land rovers have been recovered. MR explained the relevance to unsurfaced highways – police clamping down on illegal vehicles has a significant effect in deterring inappropriate and illegal use of the unsurfaced network. Legitimate users tend to use unsurfaced highways in a responsible way. The next Operation Blackbrook governance meeting will be held in Bakewell Town Hall on 22 June at 7pm.

More advisory signage has been installed at Beeley and Rowland village. DCC has ordered a further batch of Road Traffic Act signs which PDNPA staff will install when time allows. Claims affected by NERC/ Winchester case in Derbyshire - applicants have until 1 July to provide the County Council with comments/ further paperwork – this could result in up to 42 new illegal routes being created.

The Chair said it was important for the Forum to revisit the issue of motor vehicles to see what progress has been made on the first 8 management plans and hear feedback on the second batch of routes. This will be a key agenda item at September's meeting. Following the spending review there should be a clearer picture about what budgets are available.

b) Open Access – Terry Howard had recently attended a regional access forum with Yorkshire and Humberside where Natural England gave a presentation on linking islands of access land. It was not considered reasonable to have only one entrance/ exit and efforts should be made to connect these islands - there are schemes available to make this worthwhile for landowners. Natural England also agreed it was up to LAFs to advise on what is appropriate and reasonable access. Terry requested a meeting to look at the issue of the very many areas of access land where there are a lack of access points.

The Chair said that this topic would be covered under the CRoW mapping review, but in the meantime the vehicle for this would probably be the LAF subgroup set up to look at long term directions to restrict access. Mike and Sue agreed to discuss this suggestion further.

ACTION: MR/SAS

c) Eastern Moors - Terry referred to the recent Sheffield LAF meeting where the possibility of joint management working for the Sheffield moors and Eastern moors was discussed. It was an incredibly useful meeting, with a strong feeling that Sheffield City Council is very positive and on board with this – it was just a shame that the Peak District LAF was not involved. Any joint working arrangements with a particular focus, eg on access issues, are to be encouraged.

The Chair responded that there are many other surrounding LAFs, but there is a lot of mileage in that kind of work and discussing cross boundary issues. Mike Innerdale had been disappointed with the response from Sheffield CC that officers did not want to meet. The key thing is connecting access in that area, which is poor at the moment and he agreed a partnership approach is beneficial. There will be a consultation for two months from July with early evening workshops and he encouraged all to attend.

MI will provide MR with dates.

ACTION: MI/ALL

Terry reported excellent work at Houndkirk Road which was a good example of shared information.

4. Horse Riding in the Peak District

Charlotte Gilbert gave a presentation on the access perspective of horse riding and also circulated a report. She welcomed representatives from the horse riding fraternity and thanked them for their help with the presentation. It was an e-mail from Ali Turner to

the Peak District National Park Authority in response to an item in Park Life which started the ball rolling.

Riding is not the elitist sport that some people envisage – it is enjoyed by men, women, young and old, professional and amateur alike. Riding for the Disabled provides therapies, independence and self esteem. There is not a recognised equestrian centre in the National Park (but some nearby). Hope Valley Riding Club has 200 members and provides tuition, shows, dressage competitions and day rides. The Chatsworth Park One Day Event attracts international competitors as well as a novice section. Most riders in the National Park are locals. The Eastern Moors Riding Association has been allowed access to concessionary tracks over the Eastern Moors since the late 1980s. Fizz Bolton now chairs this group of local riders who are still keen to use this area. The club is limited to 50 riders and is currently close to that maximum. There must be other riders who don't know that this club or access exists. A Peak District Bridleways Forum is to be formed, with the first meeting on 8 July. A questionnaire about existing bridleways and possible improvements has been circulated. The results were interesting, with damage by 4x4s and the need for more circular routes highlighted.

In terms of current provision and ways of accessing information on bridleways and trails, the British Horse Society (BHS) produces a journal 'TRACKS' bringing local authorities, BHS members, volunteers and affiliated groups up to date information. The Where to Ride Service offers information on off road riding and driving routes, accommodation, local contacts etc. The Ride UK website is good for long distance riders, holiday rides and a focal point for the national bridleway network. EMAGIN is a GIS based information service which will also benefit walkers and cyclists.

Although this all sounds excellent, when Charlotte tried to find information about bridleways in the National Park, the Pennine Bridleway was listed, Tissington, High Peak, Sett Valley and Longdendale trails were mentioned, but much of the data was very confused and misleading. North York Moors showed many more bridleway routes and loops but these would have been difficult for visitors to follow. PDNPA and DCC websites - Peak District has one page specifically for horse riders but much more information on cycling and mostly on bridleways and other routes suitable for horses, so it should not be difficult to link this provision for riders. There was no direct link from the riding page to cycling leaflets. DCC did offer riders' routes but leaflets were not as comprehensive. Brecon Beacons NPA provided good information with a dedicated website for horse riders. Bridleways.co.uk is the most comprehensive site – easy to use with detailed rides.

The idea of a national network, regional routes and community circuits advocated by BHS is good. It is up to local riders to work out their community circuits, report problems and identify small improvements which can make a big difference to the safety of walkers, riders and cyclists. Endurance GB Derbyshire is chaired by LAF member Felicity Edmeston, who can offer advice on routes and has organised many circular rides in the National Park. The structure for advertising routes is there and bridleways exist, it just all needs linking up. Riders, DCC and PDNPA are now more aware of one another and this LAF represents the interests of a wide range of users.

Gill Millward reported that DCC recognises many of these issues which were raised during the Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation. There are several actions in the RoWIP to address the needs of horse riders – the main aim is to identify gaps in the existing network so circular routes can be developed. Continuing work to establish the Pennine Bridleway National Trail and a network of multi user Greenway routes should help provide the focus for a number of circuits. The RoWIP has also helped to fund schemes such as horse box parking in the north of the county. On the promotional side, DCC has recently produced a Horse Ride Derbyshire leaflet and is developing a horse riding web page which it would welcome feedback on once it is up and running.

The Chair pointed out that the PDNPA Recreation Strategy contained a section for horse riders. Judy Merryfield reported that there had been a limited response to the consultation from horse riders – with far more survey responses from cyclists. The Authority is aware of riders' needs and tried to provide as many routes as possible with the resources which were available. It would like to work with riders to improve what's on offer. There is an awareness of the need for better information and to promote the fact that many cycling routes can be used by horse riders. Charlotte reiterated that there is a demand for loops and circuits off national trails/ regional routes which need developing. Not everyone is in a club or group – it is important to engage with individuals as well as groups.

Mike Innerdale talked about the unique Peak District multi user trails. There is a huge opportunity for riders and cyclists to work together to improve the bridleway network. Circuits off the Buxton to Bakewell section of the Pedal Peak District Project, for example, would be of greatest benefit. With regard to the Eastern Moors – a less exclusive horse riding group is envisaged - it is intended that the area will be available to multi users as much as possible. Henry reported that a stakeholder working group of recreational users is planned - no management plans will be agreed for the Eastern Moors until stakeholders have had input.

Geoff Nickolds agreed that there was a direct spin off from the investment in cycling – provided communication to horse riders is adequate this would be an easy win. A local user-generated programme could attract funding that may be able to be sourced from local initiative funding which is very topical at the moment. Mike Innerdale mentioned that Sport England has £4.268m put aside for equestrianism (although small when compared to that of £24.5m for cycling).

Terry Howard raised the issue of the upgrading of bridleway surfaces which can be contentious. Sheffield LAF and the City Council have worked very closely with riders through the RoWIP, going out on site and discussing possibilities of shared interest – resulting in many new routes for riders. The ultimate aim is for all the valleys around Sheffield to be linked. Walkers and wheelchair users have benefited.

Sue Smith gave a brief presentation on the Black Harry Trails Project. Information has been circulated and there is a site visit this afternoon. The project seeks to improve and create new routes for horse-riders and mountain-bikers, and develop a multi user trail. £29,200 has been sought from the Derbyshire Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, for signage, better gates/barriers and surfaces, vegetation clearance, drainage etc. If successful (should know September/October time), works have to be completed by February 2011. Mike Rhodes said the Countryside Maintenance Team had been closely involved in putting the bid together and envisaged no problem in carrying out the works over the winter period.

Longstone Edge is circled by communities, with many mineral workings, and is criss crossed by trails. The Proposal includes concessionary routes for bridleways, Coombs Dale and southern Longstone Edge; enhancing existing bridleways, improved surfacing, signs, information on destinations/distances to instill confidence, with better management of motor vehicle usage. Volunteer community involvement is also really important. This links in well to Derbyshire's RoWIP and the PDNPA Recreation Strategy. The Chair said this would be of direct benefit to multi users and addresses a number of other issues – it is very promising. He has written a general letter of support from this Forum, but any further letters from individuals or groups would still be very welcome up to the end of June.

ACTION: ALL

The Chair thanked Charlotte for a very interesting presentation and members of the horse riding community for attending. He also asked Charlotte to report back from the Peak District Bridleways Forum in July. **ACTION: CG**

5. England Access Forum

The Chair had attended a regional meeting of East Midlands LAF Chairs in Leicester. There was an update from Dave Parker, Natural England's lead recreation specialist in the East Midlands. On the subject of funding from Natural England, Dave had reported that the people and access section has had an immediate 15% budget reduction. He confirmed on-going support for LAFs with the regional coordinator remaining in post and the £7k allocated for LAF training still secure at the moment. Some capital work on the Pennine Bridleway will cease. There is also a question mark over the review of CRoW mapping – still unclear but the inference that the budget for that work is under threat. Ministers remain committed to the Marine and Coastal Access Act, but it is possible that there will be a different approach and/or timescale. There is a freeze on recruitment with the replacement for Jan Tilsley on permanent hold – so now there is just one person dealing with access in the region. There will be a spending review in the Autumn when real cuts will come in and there will be difficult decisions ahead.

The England Access Forum met last month. Andrew was unable to attend but noted that the EAF Chair was due to meet the Minister soon to talk through the future of EAF and in particular how LAFs operate and the future reporting mechanism. The formal review of LAFs and EAF will continue. A consultation letter from the EAF Chair and NE had been circulated and Forum members were invited to give their views. Please send comments to Andrew McCloy or Mike Rhodes by the middle of July. **ACTION: ALL**

East Midlands Regional LAF Chairs Meeting – some LAFs want to get involved in the planning system and influence the way local authorities consult on proposed development so access and public rights of way are fully considered. There is a free workshop on 20 July in Nottingham where Planning Aid will give advice and training on LAFs' role and participation in the planning system. Any members wishing to attend should let MR know. **ACTION: ALL**

Geoff Nickolds thought it was interesting that the 5% overall NE cut translated to a 15% cut in access budgets. Many Defra Ministers are from a farming background - he understood agri-environment schemes are not affected at the moment.

6. Chair of the Forum – forthcoming Vacancy

Mike Rhodes reported that this is Andrew McCloy's last meeting as Chair – nominations from people willing to stand as Chair and Vice Chair are being sought and encouraged. If interested, write to MR with a proposer and seconder. An election will be held at the next LAF meeting if there is more than one applicant. **ACTION: ALL INTERESTED**

7. Peak District LAF Annual Report 2009

This has been circulated and members were encouraged to take further copies and distribute as widely as possible to publicise the LAF's work and enable the public to understand what this Forum does. In particular the Chair asked for the report to be circulated to landowner and farming colleagues. Further copies are available from Mike Rhodes. **ACTION: ALL**

Copies have been sent to Natural England and Defra. MR will also distribute copies to all constituent authorities, MPs, Parish Councils through Peak Park Parishes' Forum, Rural Action Derbyshire etc

ACTION: MR

The Chair asked Forum members to take copies of the PDNPA Recreation Strategy – especially for groups.

ACTION: ALL

8. Derbyshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan Monitoring Report for 2009/10

Gill Millward presented the third annual monitoring report for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) in 2009/10. The report describes progress against each of the 75 actions identified for countywide delivery through the RoWIP, including starting the five year review in preparation for 2012. Overall it was encouraging that progress had been made with 90% of the proposed actions. Where little progress had been made, this was mainly down to a lack of officer time or continuing problems with the website.

Gill summarised the main achievements for each of the five RoWIP aims:

Aim 1 relating to the existing Rights of Way network saw 70% of targets being met, with particularly encouraging results for ease of use surveys. The stiles and gates campaign was successful in helping to make the network easier to use. Although the roadside signposting target was not achieved, 549 signs were installed across the network and new bridleway signage was finalised. £1.5m of capital funding was received from the Local Transport Plan and other external sources which allowed many access improvements to be carried out. Still aiming to relaunch the Field Path Maintenance Scheme and improve performance in dealing with ploughing and cropping.

Aim 2 (Definitive Map) initially looks disappointing with only 44% of targets being met, but there was some progress with 90% of the proposed actions under this aim. Staff vacancies have now been filled and additional resources made available for completing the update of the Definitive Map and Statement/ dealing with the backlog of legal orders – areas of work which should see better progress during 2010/11. The mapping team produced a new on line register of temporary closures affecting paths across the county to help people plan their routes and visits.

Aim 3 has seen some good progress in securing improvements to the network. Creation agreements were signed with landowners for a further section of the Pennine Bridleway and circuits off the trail investigated. Although funding was confirmed for staff to continue to negotiate the route around Glossop until 2012, money for construction was affected by Natural England's budget cuts. Work got underway to identify new access points and provide better signage on access land around Buxton. Several schemes to improve accessibility have been implemented on the ground, providing easy access or links between communities, schools and railway stations. Four new mobility scooters were purchased and made available to hire at several DCC countryside sites.

Aim 4 started to see better progress in relation to publicity and promotion, with more informative signage being installed across the network and targeted information provided for easy access routes, horse riding (Horse Ride Derbyshire leaflet) and cycling (Pedal Peak District). Work also commenced on the Codes of Conduct/ Respect in conjunction with the PDNPA and to promote the network more widely for cycling, walking for health and jogging.

Aim 5 (community involvement) although less parish survey work was carried out during the year, we continued to work in conjunction with several local councils to achieve improvements on the ground and to benefit from the invaluable input of volunteers who contributed 981 days on access projects.

Sue Weatherley referred to the social impact of volunteering and the need to determine a formula to put a value on the work carried out, eg where stiles removed - evidence

should say that 3 miles are now accessible rather than 1 mile. The Chair drew attention to work published by NHS Bristol; walking and cycling in terms of value for money health benefits. He thanked Gill for her work.

9. Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Consultation

Gill had circulated information – there are two questionnaires - a short 'public' version and a more detailed one which organisations and stakeholders, such as the LAFs are being encouraged to respond to. The LTP3 team is very keen to have a response from the LAF to inform the draft strategy (due out later in the year) and to help justify which areas of work are a priority eg accessibility. The deadline has been extended to the end of June. A sub group meeting involving Andrew Murley, John Thompson, Andrew McCloy and Edwina Edwards will be arranged as soon as possible. **ACTION: GM**

10. Access Restrictions

The LAF sub group met this morning and Sue Smith tabled the consultation response in an appendix to the report which had been circulated. Top Field, Crowden - Clay Pigeon Shooting in Longdendale. In view of the Inspector's decision following the public inquiry, the sub group is satisfied that the restriction is practicable, subject to a reduction in duration from 2999 down to 2015. In addition the group encouraged the PDNPA to assess all other access points in the vicinity and push for access to the apparently unused western area. The Chair reported that this was a majority view of the sub-group, but the situation was not entirely satisfactory.

The review of long term restrictions is almost complete, but there is on-going negotiation and discussion with landowners to seek improvements to access. Sue will provide a summary of the outcome of the review process at a future LAF meeting.

ACTION: SAS

The Chair said this Forum must continue to press for improvements, with back up from rangers. He felt it was interesting to see how the CRoW Act is working several years on. Henry spoke about Deer Hill which has been a long and difficult campaign involving officers from Calderdale and Kirklees. The NPA has given sage advice - it illustrates that it is possible to work on the voluntary side and that partnership produced a very satisfactory outcome. It only happened because of a great deal of hard work which should be acknowledged. Sue gave thanks for all the advice that the sub group has provided over the last 18 months – it has been very important.

11. Feedback from Members

Henry spoke about the DCC Minerals Core Strategy for Derby and Derbyshire which is currently out for consultation. With regard to the after use of major aggregate and other quarry sites - with a little forethought there are opportunities, not just for climbing, but water sport, horse riding, 4x4s, trial bikes, shooting as well as quiet enjoyment by local communities, a range of conservation activities and biodiversity. The British Mountaineering Council has argued that much cost can be mitigated if work is planned in advance while plant is still on site – eg blasting. Development of the A515 corridor will have an impact on the National Park. It is a relevant matter for the England Access Forum but also for this LAF and the Derby & Derbyshire LAF (DADLAF) to get together and give guidance to minerals planners in the county. Leicestershire CC is planning an event later in the year to look at after use of quarries. Henry hopes this LAF will endorse the idea of working with the DADLAF and make the most of

exciting opportunities at low cost. Richard Stansfield is the relevant DCC officer – ideas need flagging up now as riders, 4x4 drivers etc can input while there is still time – deadline for comments is 25 June 2010.

Gill confirmed this subject is on the DADLAF agenda tomorrow (18 June). GM to liaise with the Chair to input a joint LAF message to the planners. **ACTION: GM/CHAIR**
Sue Weatherley asked if this strategy can be linked into LTP3 and the Chair thanked Henry for bringing this item to the Forum.

12. Any Other Business

John Thompson referred to the launch of the PDNPA Recreation Strategy in Buxton – presumably the Forum will be given more information on how this is to be taken forward. The Chair responded that the first meeting of the Strategic Management Group takes place next week and the LAF Chair or Vice Chair will have a permanent place at the table. It should then be clearer which will be the first task groups to be set up, involving other LAF members. The Chair will report back at September's meeting.

ACTION: CHAIR

MR had circulated a consultation on Cheshire East's revised RoWIP and asked for any comments to be made directly to Cheshire East Council. **ACTION: ALL**

13. Dates of Next Meetings

Saturday 18 September – Losehill Hall at 10:30am

Thursday 2 December – Aldern House at 10:30am

The meeting finished at 12.45pm.

A site visit to the proposed Black Harry Trails project area was made in the afternoon.