

Peak District Local Access Forum

Access Sub-group

10 March 2011

Aldern House, Bakewell

Attendees: Edwina Edwards, James Kellie, Terry Howard, Henry Folkard, Sue Weatherley, Bob Berzins, Charlotte Gilbert, Andrew McCloy, Jon Clennell, John Thompson, Mike Rhodes, Sue Smith

1) Forestry Commission Consultation

John Thompson tabled his draft paper. Although this is less of an issue since the Govt's consultation has been dropped, there is a role for the LAF in informing the proposed working party looking into the future of forestry. Opportunities to safeguard permissive access rights should also be taken.

In the Peak District, there has been joint-agency working of Forestry woodlands over many years, and issues such as site interpretation, events, and working with schools share many goals of the NPA.

Terry referred to the paper written by the Ramblers in 1993 last time it was proposed to privatise the FC. There are many commercial interests not just timber eg shooting and organised games/events.

Need to investigate the ownership, management and accessibility of the Hope Woodlands forests.

Different MPs have been lobbied on the issue. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales) believes the Govts proposal is a good idea, Angela Smith (Stocksbridge) is concerned about the future of Wharnccliffe. Contact with MPs should be maintained.

Henry suggested writing to Defra to ask how LAFs might be represented on the working party, and its terms of reference. JNT will raise this at the next LAF regional meeting using his paper as the LAF's statement of position.

Action: JNT to draft a letter to Defra

2) Snares on Open Access Land

The issue of snares on open access land was discussed as a follow-up to the January Sub-group meeting.

Responses from NE and BASC were circulated in relation to current practices.

Bob updated the Sub-group on a 'near-miss' that had been reported to him on the same landholding.

Matters discussed included liability, responsibilities, signage and role of the Forum.

Action: Sue S to pursue a response from Defra re code of practice.

3) The Roaches (and other estates)

Tender documents will be going out shortly. An officers/members visit, to which the LAF will be invited, will be held in May.

Members queried to what extent the amended objectives incorporated the comments made by the LAF and sought clarification on the timescale of the decision relative to the visit in May.

A plan was circulated showing that there may be opportunities for further dedications of land as open access at the Roaches.

Terry advised that a meeting of the Sheffield South Community forum will be discussing the proposal for Sheffield Moors to be leased to RSPB/NT.

Focus groups and a stakeholder group have been set up by NT/RSPB to look at access, site furniture and conservation on the Eastern Moors.

The PDNPA is looking to dispose of the North Lees Estate.

Action: Roaches tender details to be copied to the Sub-group.

4) Lea Barn Fields

A consultation on the proposed dedication of the land at Lea Barn Fields as open access land was discussed. The Sub-group was fully in support of dedication.

Action: Sue S to refer draft letter to Sub-group for agreement.

5) Site issues

A direction has been granted on land management/public safety grounds to restrict public access at the Winnats pass from 21 March. This is in conjunction with the road closure, to allow rock stabilisations works to be undertaken. The works will be completed by 15 April.

Issues at Parson's Piece, Rod Moor, Dove Top and relating to common land were notified by Terry and Sue W.

Action: Sue W to forward further suggestions to PDNPA.

Extra item: Review of the Countryside Code

Claire O'Reilly and Judy Merryfield joined the meeting to discuss this item. There is a joint working group of PDLAF and DADLAF looking at how to respond to the review.

Members discussed the Code and suggested amendments.

Action: Claire O'Reilly will draw together the comments into a response to NE on behalf of both LAFs. The response will be tabled for information at the next LAF meeting