

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1 April 2010
At Losehill Hall, Castleton

Members Present:

Bob Berzins	James Kellie
Jon Clennell	Andrew McCloy (Chair)
Richard Entwistle	Andrew Murley
Henry Folkard	Geoff Nickolds
Terry Howard	John Thompson
Mike Innerdale	Sue Weatherley
Mike Johnson	

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	Gill Millward (DCC)
Richard Campen (PDNPA)	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Amy Rushton (Cheshire CC)
Andy Farmer (PDNPA)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Kate Maltby (Natural England)	Richard Taylor (DCC)
Judy Merryfield (PDNPA)	

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Felicity Edmondson, Edwina Edwards, Sue Fisher, Charlotte Gilbert and Richard Peart.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Update on LTP3 consultation. A briefing paper was circulated about how the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) will be developed for Derbyshire. Gill explained that a list of key challenges has been put together based on the five national transport goals to:-

- tackle climate change
- support economic growth
- promote equality of opportunity
- contribute to better safety, security and health
- improve quality of life and promote a healthy natural environment

A challenges and options paper is being prepared for consultation with stakeholders in Spring 2010. This will ask for people's views about how best to balance the transport goals for Derbyshire and which measures they support to address the challenges identified through local surveys etc. The LAF will be consulted directly and comments from individual members collated by Mike and Gill.

ACTION: MR & GM

A draft long term strategy will then be drawn up for consultation by Summer 2010 and linked short term local implementation plans produced by the Autumn. It was agreed that an officer from the LTP3 team would be invited to attend a future LAF meeting.

ACTION: GM

4. CRoW Act restrictions - update

A paper had been circulated and Sue Smith summarised the background.

Reviews have been undertaken on three sites:

- Hollins Hill, Hollinsclough – dogs are excluded during May to October, signage is being discussed with the landowner. The direction has effect until 2016 and is subject to review by 5 March 2015.
- Deer Hill, Meltham – following consultation to revise the fall of shot zones, this direction will be varied accordingly. Discussions are on-going to explore further access opportunities.
- Top Field, Crowden – land used for clay pigeon shooting where an exclusion has been granted following an appeal.

Sue thanked the LAF sub group members who had been very helpful in providing guidance and formal responses to the consultations.

With the onset of CRoW, Natural England set up a national system for managing and displaying restrictions - this has subsequently been somewhat simplified. The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) is reviewing its contract with Natural England in the light of additional responsibilities and reduced accessibility to the system. Also the NPA's website will be developed to include more information on open access issues and detailed mapping, such as access points and concession paths. Sue will report back on website progress later in the year.

ACTION: SS

The Chair thanked LAF sub group members – the three recommendations were very positive and logical. He thought access points and concession routes on the website would be really useful. He observed that the CRoW Act was evolving which was interesting. Henry Folkard remarked on the amount of time and effort officers have put into this subject and asked that it be recorded that this time was well spent. It was an encouraging example of where the LAF being directly involved and working with the Authority is proving positive.

5. Open Access Presentation

Terry Howard gave a presentation on Open Access which had four main themes:

a) How we reached this point - Terry summarised the historical context of the "right to roam" from the Enclosures in the 18th and 19th centuries and the effect on workers from the heavy industrial areas of Manchester and Sheffield. This was followed by the Kinder Trespass, all long before the National Parks Act came into being. Terry used poetry and photographs to illustrate his talk. Special mention was given to GHB Ward – one of the earliest campaigners, well known for the superb Clarion Ramblers handbooks – and the exhibition at Castleton Visitor Centre.

b) What have we gained – the likes of Bamford Edge, Broomhill Moor, Snailsden Moor and Big Moor.

c) How have we benefitted - Terry spoke of the enjoyment of moorland walking for ramblers of all ages, with the major health benefits, social experience, education, navigation skills, personal challenge and discovery, not just of wonderful views but of heritage features such as the edges, ancient holloways, ditches and stone circles. Other previously undiscovered archaeological features had been found following the right to roam.

d) In terms of future opportunities and challenges, 9 issues were identified for the LAF to address:

- 10 year review of mapping - areas added or taken away and political support
- Access points - many areas with few or no access points or not near road links with several 'islands' of access; stiles still being removed and some misleading signs. People need advice - show access points on OS maps, websites, guides
- Common Land - small pieces could offer much but on-going issues re fencing
- Closures and exclusions - can exercise 28 day right - should be for wildlife benefits; long term directions to be addressed
- Dedication of land to allow public access to mature woodland - Sheffield CC has done so, PDNPA seems to have gone quiet on this
- New gains – quarries being reclaimed as moorland – good examples are High Hazels and Beighton tips, Houndkirk Road, similarly conifer forests back to moorland. However some paper waste allowed for agricultural improvement
- Change of ownership - appreciate that new funding may be attracted but concerns that moors could be closed for shooting etc
- LAF and access officers work closely with neighbouring authorities with shared involvement on adjacent land for example the cost of access points
- Lost ways – nationwide pilot research into ancient rights of way proved expensive and abandoned. The 2026 cut off date still exists - potential role for LAFs to be involved in research of documents to protect routes eg Moscar

Henry raised the forthcoming election and political aspects. Since the CRoW Act was passed the present Government has not capitalised on it. There is still very little publicity and it does not seem to be an election issue. He recently talked to Tony Greaves who expressed concern regarding progress on the Marine and Coastal Access Act. Henry felt any opportunity to canvass candidates would be worthwhile investment.

Mike Rhodes told the Forum that there was a meeting with Natural England regarding the 10 year mapping review in April and he will report back on their thinking. The focus will be the downlands in SE England, but he will make point that issues - particularly in the white peak - need addressing. **ACTION: MR**
Sue Weatherley said that in the white peak there are isolated patches of access land - sometimes close to footpaths, and other discontinuous areas eg above Monsal Dale.

Mike Innerdale also spoke about access points inasmuch as they have to be appropriate and reasonable – this Forum has a role in discussion around defining 'appropriate and reasonable'. The Chair agreed this is the nub of the matter and he was confident that when the PDNPA Ranger Service is made aware of damage or illegitimate access they move quickly to discuss the potential for new access points with landowners. Andy Farmer reassured the Forum that access opportunities were continually pursued (eg through Higher Level Stewardship) and asked LAF members to pass any relevant information to Rangers.

Jon Clennell raised the issue of the future of Ordnance Survey and possible privatisation. The Chair reported that this had been raised at national level and various LAFs have lobbied this point.

Gill Millward reported that the stakeholder working group on lost ways had now produced a series of proposals in its latest 'Stepping Forward' report. Gill will email the link to the report to LAF members. **ACTION: GM**

The Chair felt these were points worthy of further examination - real progress had been made regarding websites and access information. Aspects re dedication of woodland etc can be pursued. He felt LAF direction and dialogue with authorities was vital and will be revisiting several of these points in future. This National Park has much to be proud of in many ways. He thanked Terry very much for his presentation.

6. Derbyshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

a) Progress Report on RoWIP Delivery in 2009/10

A progress report had been circulated and Gill Millward said that a detailed monitoring report would be produced for the next meeting, along with the 2010/11 work programme. Gill asked Forum members to indicate their preference for either the complete county wide report or a version tailored to the LAF's area. **ACTION: ALL**

Aim 1 Existing Network - 2009 saw the highest score for ease of use surveys (73.4%) which had risen steadily from 51.5% in 2003. This will be retained as a local indicator to help identify problems and target resources across the network. LTP funding had been secured for 82% of the missing roadside signs and this work was nearing completion. It should include some of the new metal signs with symbols and LAF members were asked to provide feedback on how they looked. **ACTION: ALL**

Aim 2 Definitive Map – starting to make good progress on the 3 remaining districts of Amber Valley, Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales. Overall these are 61% complete.

Aim 3 Connected, safe and accessible network – on open access, Gill is conscious that more work is needed and is meeting with Sue Smith in April to look at Combs Moss re improvements and new access points – with good potential for circuits out of Buxton. Natural England's consultation on the long term restriction for the Health and Safety Executive site at Turncliff Common has been concluded. The existing direction will be extended for a further six years, with access excluded on a maximum of 200 days per year when explosive testing is taking place. Several major Greenway schemes are underway across the county, with efforts continuing to secure a route for the Pennine Bridleway National Trail through Glossop.

Aim 4 Promotion and Publicity - a pilot project has been set up to look at how directional/ motivational signage can encourage more people to walk or cycle – it is hoped to develop some original ideas which can be used elsewhere. LTP has funded some trampers (all terrain mobility scooters). 3 are available and 2 more planned. Richard Taylor asked the LAF to spread the word so they get good use. **ACTION: ALL**

Codes of respect – the first joint LAF sub group meeting, which Judy Merryfield also attended, was held on 10 March. The meeting notes are included at the end of the RoWIP progress report and Gill thanked everyone for their input so far. The good ideas which came out of the meeting will be developed further and reported to a future LAF meeting for comment. Henry emphasised that the codes should enable and be positive, encouraging people to think about others rather than just be told how to behave. Gill recently met with Rob Gornall from Natural England's walking for health team to discuss how they can work together on various projects and also flagged up the possibility of a presentation to the LAF meeting in June or September. **ACTION: GM**

Horse Ride Derbyshire – information is being finalised for the County Council's website and a leaflet (as part of the "Cycle Derbyshire" family) to encourage people to take up horse riding and promote Derbyshire as a riding area. A promotional banner will also be available to go to shows and exhibitions. Gill brought along a proof of the leaflet which has been produced by DCC Greenways Officer, Anna Chapman. Anna has been liaising with Judy's team to promote links with the Recreation Strategy and horse riding page which is being developed on the PDNPA's website. The Chair added that Mike Rhodes and Judy Merryfield had been in correspondence with horse riders and Charlotte Gilbert hopes to make a presentation at the June meeting on this theme – there are frustrations felt by riders about the inadequacies of the bridleway network in the Peak District. Gill said the map doesn't show every bridleway, but includes over 200km of horse riding routes and some suggested circuits. The information should be available later in April and Gill will e-mail Forum members with the website link. **ACTION: GM**

Gill also provided copies of DCC's 2010 Countryside Events leaflet which was published in January with events throughout the year – further copies are available on request.

7. NPA Recreation Strategy - Launch and implementation

Judy Merryfield told the Forum that the agreed changes had been made and the Recreation Strategy was now at the printers. It would be available on the PDNPA website as soon as possible and be ready for the launch on 24 April. All LAF members should have received an invitation - please respond by 12 April. **ACTION: ALL**

The annual strategic access forum meeting took place in February when the implementation phase of the Recreation Strategy was discussed. There will be an annual meeting of the Strategic Management Group (SMG) for reviewing and providing new ideas to drive the Strategy forward. Initially the SMG will meet every 2 months, but ultimately quarterly and will be a fairly fluid group with people being invited for discussion. The Chair or Vice Chair of the LAF will be included and will in turn feed back to this Forum. The SMG will choose priorities based on specific actions within the action plan and set up task groups to pursue particular projects – the first three topics are Health, Access to Water and Conflict Resolution. These will be led by PDNPA Officers and the first meetings will probably be held in May. 'Get active pages' will be provided on the NPA website, along with a news page and new visitor guide. Carol Parsons has increased hours to cover marketing and social themes of the Strategy.

The Chair commented on task group membership for the different activities – there is a lot of expertise among LAF members and the meetings need to be more than a talking shop. Users and voluntary sector partners as well as managers should be involved to maximise opportunity – he stressed it was important not to be seen to be meeting behind closed doors. Henry felt there was tension within the strategy between involving the voluntary sector and the Authority telling people how to enjoy the National Park – he agreed that the voluntary sector should be involved in the task groups. Mike Innerdale said it was also important that the voluntary sector was represented on the SMG, as partnership experiences cross strategic boundary issues, such as health and access to water - links can be missed if all members are from one area. Geoff Nickolds recognised there was a difficult balance to avoid duplicating the LAF in this work.

The Chair thanked Judy and said he would report back to the LAF from the first Strategic Management Group. He also hoped to see as many people as possible at the launch of the Strategy in Buxton on 24 April. **ACTION: CHAIR**

8. Peak District Cycling Project

Mike Rhodes gave a brief summary of the paper tabled at the meeting on Pedal Peak District. Structural surveys have taken place in the 4 railway tunnels on the Monsal Trail. On the social marketing side, there is a new webpage available at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/cycle, cycle route leaflets have been updated and added to by including themed guided rides and promoting cycling more widely. The Project Manager, Rhonda Pursglove, will make a presentation at a future LAF meeting. Alison Riley (Communications) and Carol Parsons are both assisting Rhonda with the project.

Jon Clennell mentioned the use of the viaduct for abseiling and the concerns which had been expressed to him about the potential for conflict with cyclists. Walking groups had also raised concerns about the increased number of cyclists. The Chair said he understood these concerns, but this was a multi user route which would have overall benefits for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. He confirmed that it is intended that the Buxton to Bakewell section will be open by March 2011. Cycling England believes it will

be one of the most popular recreational routes in the country. John Thompson asked about the prospects of funding for the rest of the route. Richard Campen responded that Cycling England is making further bids to the Department of Transport and is keen to see the whole project succeed. Other phases of the wider vision need funding and bids are being made, not only for capital works but other aspects eg nature promotion.

9. Draft Annual Report

A draft report (with photos) was tabled. Sue Smith reported that it will have the same A5 format as last year and asked for any comments within 2 weeks. **ACTION: ALL** The design team will finalise the report and copies will be available at the LAF meeting in June. The Chair said the group picture on the penultimate page looked much better in colour. All agreed it was okay for names to appear underneath.

Andrew Murley enquired about the accessibility sub group - which still needs to be progressed. The Chair and Andrew agreed to meet to discuss how best to take this forward with PDNPA and DCC Officers. **ACTION: AM & CHAIR**

10. Recreational Motor Vehicles

Richard Pett provided an update on various sites.

The Chair reported that he has received correspondence from the Parish Council expressing its frustration about the lack of progress regarding School Lane at Great Hucklow and the lack of communication from DCC Highways, despite assurances that someone would get back to them. Other LAF members said that Parish Councils approach them on a regular basis and the situation was very disappointing.

Henry added that there is much scepticism among local communities about the availability of funding from the County Council and that £100k was insufficient for the work identified in the management plans. He pointed out that DCC has a statutory duty to keep these routes in good repair and that notices could be served on the authority if it fails to do so. The current structural arrangements within DCC for dealing with unsealed roads is not working and although the pressures of funding are understood, it is now 20 years since the issue was raised and doing nothing is not a solution. It was suggested that responsibility is transferred to the Countryside Service (with an appropriate budget and staff resources) which would allow coherence with RoWIP and prioritisation of resources to be publicly accountable. Although the PDNPA is not responsible for these routes, it is likely to come under increasing pressure to use its new powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

The Forum expressed its disappointment with the lack of progress on the implementation of the management plans and some members of the LAF sub group were reluctant to work on the next batch of routes until they started to see some results. Richard Taylor commented that the advice from this Forum had impressed the importance of the routes on his colleagues in Highways and was being used to bid for extra resources. He was waiting to find out how much funding would be available. John Thompson asked if any of the £3.2m which DCC had received to achieve Local Area Agreement targets could be used to fund this work. After some discussion it was agreed that the sub group would continue with the second batch of routes and that Richard Pett would liaise with members to organise the site visit. **ACTION: RP**

Richard Pett then reported on Operation Blackbrook – a public meeting had been held and 2 days were spent assisting police on Long Causeway and Pindale. On 21 May, the PDNPA, DCC and the Police are holding an open day for police officers to look at

widening out the remit of Operation Blackbrook. Illegal activity is continuing and 10 illegal vehicles were confiscated two weeks ago (all on tarmaced roads on their way to routes).

Richard Entwistle reported that DCC's legal team is writing to everyone who made a BOAT application which has been caught by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (most non classified highways are exempt) and Winchester ruling. Applicants have until 1 July to respond.

Whilst Forum members agreed that the Police are doing a very good job in dealing with illegal use by motor vehicles, the Chair stressed that the LAF's point of view must be made to both DCC and the PDNPA – it was unfortunate that neither of the appointed members could attend today. He thanked Richard Pett and Richard Taylor for attending. The LAF's frustration is borne out of strategic advice and sub group recommendations appearing to be ignored – it will await news on the funding situation.

11. Feedback from Members

Meeting with DCC Public Transport Officers - John Thompson had attended on 4 March with five other Peak District LAF members and tabled a brief summary of the meeting which had been very useful. The County Council was happy to receive specific comments and suggestions for improvements to services from members of the two Local Access Forums. New initiatives, such as Bike and Ride, Stride and Ride schemes were discussed (see details on Visit Peak District & Derbyshire website) and better promotion is planned. Links to the new Peak District Cycling Project and Recreation Strategy were also flagged up for further investigation.

England Access Forum - Andrew McCloy reported that the Forum met in London on 8 March and faced a crucial dilemma. Natural England currently funds the England Access Forum, but the Forum is independent and there was overwhelming agreement that it should continue. It was agreed to look at finding a different 'home' – Defra has been approached directly to see if it can fund independently of Natural England, although still working in close communication with them. So, EAF is currently in limbo and awaiting new administration following the election. Long term reorganisation is possible. There will be another meeting in May and the Chair will report back. **ACTION: CHAIR**
Natural England is carrying out a two year review of the England Access Forum and will be consulting every LAF in the country.

East Midlands Regional Training Event - John Thompson had attended on 23 March 2010 along with Sue Weatherley, Jon Clennell and Andrew McCloy. A report was tabled at the meeting. Terry Howard commented that in the Peak District there is more shared interest with adjacent LAFs not necessarily in the East Midlands region. More localised, targeted events with those in adjacent areas (or other northern National Parks) would be good to break down barriers.

Peak District LAF representatives - John Thompson reported that Paul Tame from the National Farmers Union may be able to help with land manager representatives for the LAF. John will pass the details to Mike Rhodes. **ACTION: JNT**

Sheffield's Great Outdoors - Terry Howard reported that Sheffield City Council had produced its "Green and Open Space Strategy for 2010 to 2030".

Open Access Grants - Terry understands that Natural England still has funds available for access furniture etc. Although the PDNPA is not eligible to apply, other local authorities may be able to source this funding.

Greater Manchester and Pennine Fringe LAF - The Chair reported that this Forum had been formally disbanded. In its place Bury and Bolton are to become one LAF, with Rochdale, Tameside and Oldham combining to form another.

Eastern Moors - Mike Innerdale is hosting a visit to the Eastern Moors for the Sheffield LAF on 11 June. He wondered if it could be a joint event with this LAF and will discuss with Mike Rhodes. **ACTION: MI & MR**

Stanage Bus - Henry reported that this is now running again on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. He will provide a copy of the timetable for Mike Rhodes to circulate with the minutes. **ACTION: HF & MR**

Public Rights of Way - Geoff Nickolds asked about the PDNPA ease of use survey. Mike Rhodes said they were on target for over 90% pass rate and expected the results to be published in about two weeks' time.

Horse riding - Charlotte Gilbert will be making a presentation on horse riding at the next LAF meeting.

12. Any Other Business

Mike Rhodes reported on Houndkirk Road which has been repaired by Sheffield City Council to an acceptable standard. Moorland restoration/ signage work is just about complete and a fence is in place to prevent illegal access by motor vehicles. This is a job well done and would be worth a site visit.

The Chair would welcome any suggestions for a site visit following the next LAF meeting on 17 June.

ACTION: ALL

13. Dates of Next Meetings - 2010

Thursday 17 June – Aldern House at 10:30am
Saturday 18 September – Losehill Hall at 10:30am
Thursday 2 December – Aldern House at 10:30am

The meeting finished at 1.05pm.