

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28 September 2006 at Losehill Hall

Members Present:

Jon Clennell	Andrew McCloy (Chair)
Andrew Critchlow	Barry Neville
Edwina Edwards	Geoff Nickolds
Stuart Elliott	Keith Pennyfather
Henry Folkard	Alison Salmen
Terry Howard	Roger Wilkinson
James Kellie	

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA)	Cath McKay (Ramblers Association)
Jane Beech (Countryside Agency)	Judy Merryfield (PDNPA)
Ian Fullilove (PDNPA)	Gill Millward (DCC)
Elaine Hill (Derbyshire Coalition for inclusive living (DCIL))	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Andy Jones (PDNPA)	Bob Young (PDNPA)

1. Apologies and welcome to new members

Apologies had been received from Charlotte Bright, Sarah Harlen, Lorna Wilson, Richard Peart and Richard Marshall.

The Chair welcomed two new members, Edwina Edwards and Alison Salmen. They each gave a brief summary of their background and interests.

Mike Rhodes informed the Forum that Andrew McCloy, Andrew Critchlow, Henry Folkard, Richard Peart and Terry Howard have been re-appointed to the Forum for a further three years..

Simon Brister had contacted Mike and has decided that he should step down – he has served on the forum for 3 years, felt he had been dedicated and effective, but because of pressure of work and many other factors has decided to step down – he feels he cannot commit for another year. He wishes the forum well and both the Chair and Secretary expressed sincere gratitude for the energy and time he had dedicated to the forum.

There are now two vacant places on the forum and we are actively looking to fill these. The Chair and Secretary are approaching various landowners to try and fill the space in that area; it is important to maintain the balance of the forum with various interest groups being represented.

Jane Beech advised the forum that Natural England comes into being next week. The East Midlands region will be split into 2 area teams – Jane will in future be in the Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northants team. Chris Smith (who had come to the meeting today but had to return home as he was unwell) will be the person for Peak District, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire – he will be our main contact from now on. The Chair thanked Jane for her valued support for the forum and wished her well for the future.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

Terry Howard asked that the final paragraph on page 7 regarding the Ramblers Association be amended and provided replacement text.

Jon Clennell pointed out that page 6, item 9, 'and resources' should be 'additional resources'.

Subject to the agreed amendments being made, the Minutes of the meeting on 15 June were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Terry Howard asked if any progress had been made with contacting other authorities regarding funding (this refers to Matters Arising in the 15 June meeting). Mike Rhodes reported that no replies had been received - Terry felt this was of great concern and that it was extremely poor that local authorities had not responded. We are a statutory body and should be listened to and not ignored. He asked that we write again – we should be proactive in reminding authorities of their responsibilities. The Chair briefed the new members on the situation. The question was asked if we should be pursuing this ourselves or should we be encouraging all local access forums to do so individually – it was felt that awareness should be raised at the LAF Regional event and other LAFs encouraged to write to local authorities too. Terry felt we should not allow the opportunity to disappear. It was agreed in general that the profile of funding should be focussed – we have to do it as no one will do so on our behalf. Andrew Critchlow stated the need for clarity on local authorities' funding of RoWIPs in general and the need for a consistent cross-boundary approach.

The Chair mentioned the regional conference next month and that the facilitator would be writing an executive summary report following the event. He felt this would be a good opportunity to stress the importance of funding, rather than sending a letter on its own. Terry said that the scrutiny meeting for Sheffield City Council takes place on 17 November and it would be good to have a copy of the report available by then.

With regard to the DCC Review of Motorised Vehicles in the Countryside, Terry noted that Richard Taylor would be reporting back to a future meeting.

Terry corrected the report on the Sheffield City draft RoWIP – he should have said that a working copy of the draft plan has been released (for internal use) but it is being presented at the scrutiny board on 17 November and subsequently will be released early next year.

Henry Folkard reported that a meeting between landowners and fell runners has taken place regarding a disagreement over routes and timings of events on Hallam Moor. An agreed solution has been found.

Andrew Critchlow asked if there was any update on funding. He was aware that Defra was clawing money back from many organisations. Mike said that there was a financial crisis at Defra – and was asked if there is now a question over the 'extra' £300,000 funding for the National Park. The forum agreed that should any withdrawal of promised funding happen we should raise this point with Defra. The Chair said that as soon as more information is available, the forum will be kept informed.

Barry Neville reported that Tony Hams and Jim Dixon are due to have a meeting with Barry Gardiner on 16 October. Barry Neville suggested that we write quickly to Tony and Jim and ensure this issue is on the agenda. The next Authority Meeting will be held on 6 October.

ACTION: CHAIR

Asked about access points on OS maps, Andy Jones said that this was still in the pipeline. A discussion had taken place with all other National Parks – some are keener than others and this may well be a sticking point with Ordnance Survey.

4. Annual Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Andrew McCloy was re-elected as Chair (proposed by Henry Folkard and seconded by Terry Howard).

Andrew Critchlow was re-elected as Vice-Chair (proposed by Stuart Elliott, seconded by James Kellie).

Elections will be held annually.

5. Presentation: 'Help Shape the Future'

The Chair introduced Ian Fullilove, Policy Officer with PDNPA.

Ian gave a presentation about the review of the National Park Management Plan (NPMP). There is a 5 yearly review of the NPMP and it should be noted that this is a review of the National Park, not the National Park Authority. The Plan is strategic and not detailed. Ian explained how other plans and strategies feed into the Management Plan – importantly a number of forums feed into the plan, alongside staff and member workshops, stakeholder consultation and public meetings.

The Plan is the summary of the outcome of what we want to see achieved by 2011 - and should give a clear idea if there is any change of emphasis and specify actions of how this will be achieved. Ian summarised the relationships to other national park plans and strategies and spoke of the environmental, economic and social drivers which had been identified.

Information had been received from the LAF Guidance workshop in Bristol (which the Chair attended) and Ian explained how the LAF links into the plan and how we can help deliver the outcomes.

The Chair commented that the LAF remit is very wide and acknowledged that feeding into this plan is very important.

Questions were taken from the floor.

Henry Folkard wanted to note that the word 'voluntary' cropped up quite a lot –the voluntary approach has to be grown as an affordable solution. He wondered what the forum can do – the key word is balance. The forum represents a wide range of interests but generally manages to come to agreement following discussion and dialogue.

Stuart Elliott made the point that relying on voluntary groups can be ageist. Target groups have been identified - but it is not easy for them to offer help on a voluntary basis due to work commitments. We should not rely too much on the voluntary sector. Ian Fullilove gave an example of how the Authority has linked with young people in the area and tied in with the school curriculum. It is recognised that the voluntary sector alone cannot replace statutory functions.

Alison asked for clarity on what was meant by disadvantaged communities – Ian explained that several factors are used but the definition is by no means clear. A report went to the February 2006 Authority Meeting – two papers went into great detail on this definition – and can be located on the Authority website.

Andrew Critchlow asked about timings for the detail in the plan - Ian said the NPMP goes to the Authority Meeting in October. With regard to the Local Development Framework – the first framework document on core policies will be produced at the end of October for a consultation period of 6 weeks. Parish Councils will be consulted as a matter of course, as will the LAF. Asked about land use policies, Ian felt it would be likely to be 2008/09 before a new set of Land Use policies was available – he explained it was a very cumbersome bureaucratic process.

Alison expressed concern from local residents about use of the park by tourists and the associated traffic problems. Ian responded that local people were consulted on transport matters, for instance the Hope Valley forum was a good example of the National Park working with the District Council. In terms of Community strategies - some communities prefer dealing with the District or Borough Councils, others the National Park Authority.

Geoff Nickolds asked if the Authority felt there were too many visitors. Ian said that we were not 'full' but we do recognise under-representation in certain groups' usage in and around the park. In terms of overall numbers it was felt that there should be a different mix of people from different groups without damage to the park. Travel and transport are tricky issues – there is a sustainable transport group and the sustainable tourism officer is part of that group. Teams work together so the implications of one area of management on another are managed. The Authority is aware that we are woefully short of information on background numbers etc. Research is needed into numbers but resource is an issue.

Henry spoke about external drivers – the clarity of this plan will help influence external factors such as Government and constituent authorities. Andrew Critchlow is concerned about the fact that these initiatives have been in place for many years now but he has noticed very little difference. Resources are needed for implementing ideas on the ground in terms of physical access eg for families, buggy access etc - which would be welcoming. Cuts in budget go directly against this type of initiative.

The Chair acknowledged that this was a massive subject. He thanked Ian Fullilove and looked forward to consultation and on-going dialogue.

6. Peak District LAF Regional Event 'Is there life for LAFs after CRoW?'

The Chair gave background information to the new members - the forum Steering Committee had suggested a regional conference to be hosted by this LAF for other LAFs. Invitations had been sent to all constituent LAFs and there has been an excellent response. It would be the first time all the wider constituent forums have been together – and was a very exciting prospect.

Yvonne Hosker (whose previous experience includes facilitating LAF workshops on behalf of Defra and the Countryside Agency – and who is very experienced in access research etc) will facilitate on the day. Cross boundary issues will be covered and an interesting and useful day is envisaged. The provisional programme is for 3 presentations/ discussions steered by LAF members. These will consist of 10-15

minute presentations followed by focussed questions. The first session is on Access and Land Management, delivered by Henry Folkard, using the Stanage Forum model as good practice. The next session - entitled Access for All – will cover physical access, with examples of good practice in the National Park. Alison Salmen had been asked if she could present this session and if available she will. The final session (following lunch) will be presented by David Giles (Derby/Derbyshire LAF) on off road vehicle use.

Apart from the interesting formal sessions, the Chair feels that in general it is an excellent opportunity to meet other LAFs, network etc.

Keith Pennyfather asked if invites had been sent to those other than in the East Midlands region – Mike confirmed that he had invited all neighbouring LAFs, including those from constituent authorities – a large geographical area was therefore covered.

A provisional programme had been circulated and it was noted that a Keynote Speaker was still sought. Henry Folkard felt that getting the brief correct for the keynote speaker was important. Jane Beech will speak with the Chair re speakers after the meeting.

Terry Howard said that at the planning meetings, discussion had taken place about LAFs bringing along information on what initiatives they had undertaken, leaflets etc for general information. Jon Clennell wondered if we should have a poster display.

An invitation had been extended to all members of this LAF to attend. The Chair encouraged members to talk and mix with other LAF members on the day as much as possible.

ACTION: ALL

The sub group are to meet with Yvonne – and the Chair will arrange this at the end of the meeting. There have been discussions with Chris Taylor, Head of Communications for the PDNPA, with regard to putting out a press release (jointly with DCC) immediately following the event to generate publicity; this will also be something for other LAFs to take back and report to their own areas.

7. Derbyshire's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Gill Millward gave some background information on the Derbyshire RoWIP to the new members. Gill had circulated a report and papers prior to the meeting. The key themes and aims relating to the outline Statement of Action had been incorporated into the Draft Plan.

One issue mentioned earlier in the meeting was of resources and funding. Gill felt the information contained in the papers may go some way to addressing these concerns. Essentially the diamonds in the Statement of Action tables refer to staffing and what can be achieved within current resources, and flagging up where we will be looking for additional funding. £ signs indicate estimated costs. Shaded areas are where we are working with partners. Darker shading is work that is most likely to be delivered by other organisations. Quick wins are also flagged up. Gill appreciates that there is a lot of information to go through, comments are requested and welcomed. The draft document has to be finalised within three weeks ready for the Cabinet Meeting in November, and then it will be distributed for public consultation at the end November for three months. The final Plan is anticipated by March 2007. Gill asked for comments within the next week if possible.

Alison would like to make comments about some of the terminology within the RoWIP and will send observations direct to Gill.

The Chair said that Gill had put together a thorough and professional piece of work.

Terry Howard said it was fascinating comparing DCC's RoWIP to that of Sheffield City Council (and others). One point was that he understood that the idea of RoWIP and Crow Act was to address gaps in the public Rights of Way network. Terry feels it is a cop out for RoWIPs to do what authorities should have done as mainstream work rather than consider them as improvements.

Andrew Critchlow commented about page 12, section (b) - key themes. He would like to see land management included. He asked about the paragraph below regarding wildlife corridors – how does a Right of Way provide/enhance a wildlife corridor? Gill said that greenways provided corridors through more urban areas – this relates more to Derbyshire rather than the National Park area. Andrew also asked about page 16 – working with Defra etc. He felt there was confusion about Environmental Stewardship and single farm payments.

There were a few minor comments which Gill noted. It was suggested that rangers could talk face to face with farmers and land owners, rather like they did prior to the CRoW Act, it would help if definitive map processes were simplified. Henry stated that cycling is a burgeoning activity – he felt that more emphasis in the RoWIP to developing cycling networks was desirable. On the topic of the National Park element – specifically paragraph 3.3 re conservation and landscape – he felt this should be in 3.1 – with more prominence given to these important rights of way. He felt a strong statement about these features being more than just a right of passage is needed.

Geoff Nickolds was pleased to see a more strategic stance and was impressed with the content and layout and how the RoWIP is progressing. Regarding conservation and landscape – he would like to see a more positive emphasis for people to enjoy and encounter wildlife.

The Chair asked for further comments to Gill within a week.

ACTION: ALL

8. ROWIP updates from other authorities

Mike Rhodes tabled a contribution from Oldham which he had received via e-mail the day before the meeting. Members were asked to read and respond with any comments to Oldham via Mike.

Staffordshire are due to publish their draft in October.

Barnsley is taking its draft RoWIP to their Cabinet in October, then public consultation will take place in November/December, so this should be available by the next LAF meeting.

Terry reported that he understood the Sheffield consultation period will be early next year. We need to keep lobbying regarding funding.

9. NPA approach to the management of motorised vehicles in the countryside

Richard Pett, Rights of Way Officer for PDNPA, explained about the intention to create a National Park policy on this subject. He has looked at Derbyshire's approach and will be meeting with DCC soon, then presenting the policy to the Forum (possibly at the next meeting) for comment. All National Parks are meeting

to discuss the new TRO powers proposed under the NERC Act - this meeting was due to take place on 24 October in Manchester. Richard is looking at around 400 routes in the National Park. DCC have carried out a desk-based survey of the routes in the Park, and rangers have carried out detailed condition surveys. This information will be collated and analysed as reported and agreed at the June meeting.

Stuart Elliott has been advised by farmers and landowners that observations of quad bike off road use are far more frequent now – it is the same problem but with a new mode of transport and worrying as these vehicles can get pretty well anywhere.

Richard Pett reported on the success in Rotherham with regard to funding police overtime to reduce motorbike use in rural areas. Henry stated that local communities are an important part of consultation and possible solutions.

Gill Millward said that Richard Taylor may be available to report back at the next meeting. Jane Beech reported that the Leicestershire LAF had received an informative talk from a representative of the Autocycling Union and recommended the speaker to this Forum. The Secretary will discuss this possibility with the Chair.

10. Feedback from members

Chair

Mike, Gill and the Chair had given a briefing for Members of the National Park Authority on 4 August, relating to open access issues, the RoWIP and the work of this forum. Barry said feedback was very positive from the members who were there and regretted that more members were not in attendance - it was August, which was the main reason for lower numbers than otherwise might be expected. The issues and information were new for some members – they went away better informed and impressed by the quality of the LAF and its work. Barry thanked Andrew McCloy, Gill and Mike for their work into the day. The Chair felt it was important to keep members informed and keep access issues on their agenda.

Members

Henry Folkard had attended a British Mountaineering Council (BMC) meeting (with MPs) in Manchester recently. Henry had spoken to Alun Michael who apologised for not coming to one of the LAF meetings. Angela Smith (MP Sheffield Hillsborough) expressed an interest in attending.

Nick Clegg (MP for Sheffield Hallam) had also expressed interest in the LAF to Mike Rhodes and asked to be kept informed. **ACTION: MR**

Henry spoke of Longstone Edge – which is a major financial and environmental issue in the National Park. He understood that some of the area being excavated (for minerals) is access land - so we need to be aware. The potential impact on the landscape and recreation will go beyond any mineral workings - any solution is likely to be costly. The Chair noted.

Terry asked if we should discuss at the next meeting and possibly make a site visit to Longstone Edge? It may help to clarify issues if we should get involved. The Chair will consider our strategy and revert. **ACTION: CHAIR**

Andrew Critchlow felt that access is an issue for officers to deal with immediately as it happens. Jon Clennell understood the urgency of the situation and asked can we afford to wait to consider.

Terry referred to last year's visits to Surprise View and Burbage. Sue Stones, a wheelchair user, has used both routes and has reported back with suggestions on how to make best use of the routes. Mike said that he and Dan Boys have copy of the report which is very helpful – they will respond to Sue direct. **ACTION: MR**

11. Any other business

Gill Millward told the forum that DCC has been actively involved in developing a strategic network of multi user routes or Greenways – the Cycle Derbyshire leaflet was circulated to forum members for information. The Trans Pennine Trail has raised the profile of this work by recently winning the Amazing Space Category in the National Lottery Awards. Gill suggested we invite the County Council's Greenways Officer, Wayne Bexton to the next meeting to advise on the development of the network and the Greenway Strategy which is being prepared for the West Area of the County, which includes High Peak and Derbyshire Dales.

The Derby and Derbyshire LAF has produced a glossary of abbreviations and terms which forum members might come across. Gill thought something similar might be useful for this forum – if possible she will try and produce one in future.

Gill reported that she had received an e-newsletter for the Derbyshire Outdoor Forum. Of particular interest was the progress report on an Outdoor audit. This will have a phased approach with 7 focus sports, including climbing, walking, sailing, cycling, canoeing, orienteering and horse riding, making up the first part. Mike will forward to those on e-mail and copy for those who are not. Gill suggested that we invite Craig Keegan, the Outdoor Activities Officer for Derbyshire to a future meeting.

Barry Neville gave an explanation about the Derbyshire Sports Forum and the difficulties of the County boundary not corresponding to all of the National Park. A meeting had been arranged for other areas. The strategy is to identify those sports at a level of excellence most likely to deliver positive results internationally and locally and those best meeting local residents and visitor population.

The Chair felt we should make contact and pursue relationship

Barry explained that Derbyshire Sports Partnership has money from Sport England and Local Authorities so could be a source of funding, also secondary schools which are sports colleges have external funding too. Barry will invite Craig to attend the 7 December meeting. **ACTION: BN**

Andrew Critchlow requested an update on Moors for the Future at the next meeting – Mike Rhodes will ask Chris Dean if he can speak to the next meeting.

ACTION: MR

12. Dates of Next meetings:

Friday 20 October (LAF Regional event)

Thursday 7 December

Saturday 17 March 2007

Thursday 14 June

Saturday 22 September

Thursday 6 December

please advise Mike Rhodes if any problems with these dates.

Mike confirmed the details of this afternoon's site meeting and the meeting finished at 1.05pm