

Peak District
Local Access Forum



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Full details of the Forum, its reports, minutes from meetings and information on members, is published on the website:<http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/access>



Contents

Chairman's Introduction.....	page 3
Purpose of the Forum	page 5
Membership of the Forum.....	page 5
Meetings and Major Issues for the Forum in 2009.....	page 6
The Year Ahead.....	page 12
Financial Statement.....	page 13
Member Details and Attendance	page 15

Chairman's Introduction

This is my last Annual Report as I will be stepping down in September 2010 after five years as Chair. I would like to reflect on some of the highlights and why the Local Access Forum and its ethos continue to matter.

Well, despite misgivings in some quarters, the new access rights granted by the CROW Act failed to signal the end of the world as we know it and people can now walk on even more of our inspiring upland in a responsible manner. The LAF agreed that the threat of moorland fires and uncontrolled dogs was best approached through sound planning, organisation and all-round education, while a LAF sub group has continued to advise on the periodic reviews of localised access restrictions. Members contributed to Derbyshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, a commendable piece of work which, if its proposals are fully implemented, will enhance public access across the whole county. Despite the lack of progress on providing greater recreational access to water within the National Park, at least cycling has a brighter future with the recent news of an exciting trails project. And in the last year the LAF made a thorough and thoughtful contribution to the National Park's new Recreation Strategy, which we are looking forward to help implement.

And then there's the off-road issue. Lots of serious questions, no easy answers. One of the most fundamental, of course, is what are National Parks all about? Are there in fact some types of recreation that because of their very nature, render themselves incompatible with areas of high landscape value and top level designation like National Parks? This is a debate beyond the remit of the LAF, which instead has spent the last few years working closely with officers and user groups to identify the key issues, striving for consensus and constructive, workable solutions. And there has been some progress. Operation Blackbrook has helped curb illegal use on the ground, while a LAF sub group has contributed

to newly drawn-up management plans for the most vulnerable routes.

But there are still frustrations, in particular from the local community and shared to a large extent by the LAF, at the sheer amount of time it has taken to see any real progress on the ground.

We're conscious that resources are finite and priorities have to be set, but the consensus building and partnership working that the LAF has invested in this complicated and contentious issue must, in the end, be matched by delivery. If the Peak National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council want to take this matter seriously, they must commit sufficient resources and show real political and community leadership.

Finally, I would like to thank LAF members past and present for their effort, enthusiasm and all-round commitment, especially former LAF Chair Andrew Critchlow who led the Forum in its early years with care and common sense; plus the Peak National Park's Mike Rhodes and Gill Millward of Derbyshire County Council for their ongoing support for the LAF and their unstinting dedication to providing the best possible public access in our cherished Peak District.

Andrew McCloy

Chair, Peak District Local Access Forum



Andrew McCloy

Purpose of the Forum

The Peak District Local Access Forum is a statutory body, appointed jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council. It covers the National Park area and the countryside of north-west Derbyshire around Buxton, New Mills and Glossop (refer back cover for geographical coverage).

This appointment is a requirement of Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which states that the purpose of the Forum is;

“To advise the appointing authorities on the improvement of public access for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.”

In undertaking the above, the Forum has due regard to the needs of land management and of conserving the natural beauty of the area.

Details of the duties and responsibilities of the Forum are laid out in the following:

- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
- Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007
- Guidance on Local Access Forums in England issued by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

All Forum meetings are open to the public and by prior arrangement members of the public may ask questions. Meetings are advertised on the National Park Authority's website.

Membership of the Forum

Membership of the Forum is reviewed regularly and appointments are made on renewable three-year terms. Recruitment is made on the basis of 'expressions of interest' made to the Authorities in response to adverts in the local press and direct mailing. Interviews of applicants are then held, to ensure that prospective members fulfil the requirements of the position.

In 2009, Sue Weatherley, Mike Johnson and John Thompson joined the Forum. Cllr Jean Wharmby replaced Cllr Roger Wilkinson as the Derbyshire County Council appointee, and Cllr Chris Pearson replaced Cllr Jacque Bevan as the National Park Authority appointee. Andrew Critchlow, a former LAF Chair who had been involved with the Forum from the outset, stepped down in 2009.

The appointing Authorities are required to ensure a reasonable balance is made between the number of members from land owning, recreation, and local interests. Details of the current membership are included at the end of this report and on the National Park Authority's website. A position is currently being held vacant for a landowner/manager or someone from the farming community.

Meetings and Major Issues for the Forum in 2009

During 2009, the formal meetings of the Local Access Forum took place on the following dates:

Saturday 14 March, Losehill Hall, Castleton

Thursday 18 June, Aldern House, Bakewell

Saturday 26 September, Losehill Hall, Castleton

Thursday 3 December, Aldern House, Bakewell

The following major issues were discussed:

I) Recreational Motor Vehicles in the Countryside

The use of motorised vehicles in the countryside has continued to be a priority area of work for the Forum throughout 2009. The subject was discussed at each of the four meetings in 2009 and has been backed up by the work of a sub-group in accordance with the National Park Authority's Recreational Motor Vehicle Strategy.

The routes used by recreational motorised vehicles in the Derbyshire part of the National Park have been assessed for their sustainability and prioritised with the assistance of the Forum sub-group. During 2009, the sub-group worked with the National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council to develop management plans for the first 8 priority routes. The intention is to complete plans for the remaining 15 priority routes identified and to extend this approach to other areas of the Peak District National Park.

The Forum has been involved in Derbyshire County Council's review of its policy for managing motorised vehicle use in the countryside which is expected to be finalised in 2010.



Work has continued to raise awareness on sensitive routes and legal issues. New signage detailing the code of respect and consequences of non-action has been developed and installed with the agreement of Highway Authorities. Monitoring routes for level of use has been backed up by Operation Blackbrook. This involves monthly visits by the Police, Peak District National Park Authority Rangers, Derbyshire

County Council and representatives of motor vehicle user groups to stop illegal off-roading and to educate legitimate users about the best ways to minimise the impact of their activities.

The National Park Authority's website provides further information and guidance on these matters. <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/vehicles>

2) Open Access Issues



Access to open country under the CRoW Act continues to be a high profile issue discussed at Forum meetings. 2009 was the fifth anniversary of the introduction of access land within the National Park.

During 2009, a Forum sub-group was established to deal with the statutory reviews of long-term directions to restrict access. The sub-group has been consulted on the nature and extent of a number of directions and has offered advice to the National Park Authority, as the Relevant Authority, on seeking to ensure that the exclusions are the least restrictive option.

The Forum is considering how it can be involved in the decadal review of CRoW mapping in 2014 and to advise on procedural matters and mapping. Improvements continue to be sought on access to access land and dedicated woodland, and the availability of information regarding closures.

3) Derbyshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Greenway Strategies

The Forum has provided comments and advice to Derbyshire County Council on the delivery of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan, including the format and detail of annual work programmes and end of year monitoring reports. The detailed monitoring report is summarised in a highlights leaflet, which for 2008/09 included information about work on specific routes, a horsebox parking scheme being trialled in the north of the county and the promotion of walking for health. The annual monitoring report sets out the progress made under the aims.

During the year, the Forum was advised that the County Council's East Derbyshire

Greenway Strategy was being reviewed to bring it into line with the recently completed West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy. These strategies identify proposed greenways or multi user routes and help to increase the potential for funding.

Further information about Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Greenway Strategies can be found on the County Council's website:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/Access_recreation

4) Derbyshire County Council's Rights of Way Charter and Priority Framework for Legal Orders

The Forum was consulted on Derbyshire County Council's draft Rights of Way Charter which will provide a guide to the level of service that can be expected and how enquiries will be prioritised. Details were provided on the number of enquiries received each year, of which over half are in the high priority categories relating to emergencies, public safety issues or where access is directly affected or limited.

An update was given to the Forum on the County Council's draft strategy for prioritising legal orders affecting public rights of way and the implications arising from recent case law developments. This was also an opportunity for LAF members to comment on the latest proposals.

5) Peak District National Park Authority's Recreation Strategy

The Local Access Forum and sub-group have been involved with producing a new Recreation Strategy and Action Plan for the National Park Authority. The Chair of the Forum has been part of the project team managing the strategy process. The draft Strategy and Action Plan went to public consultation in 2009 and a formal consultation response was made by the Forum. The new Strategy will be launched in April 2010 at the start of the Peak District Walking Festival.

The Forum will continue to be involved through representation by the Chair or Vice-chair on a Strategic Management Group created to assist the Recreation Strategy team in identifying priorities and task group roles to implement the Action Plan. Forum members will also be included in task groups to deliver specific actions including health, access to water, and recreation conflict resolution.



6) Peak District National Park Authority's Access Budget

A presentation was given on the breakdown of the National Park Authority's access and rights of way budget in the context of the Authority's wider budget and having regard to actual and predicted trends. The Forum was keen to see that further decline did not result and discussions have taken place about the input that the LAF can make into budget planning for access and recreation as well as raising the political profile generally.

7) Peak District National Park Authority's Asset Review & Partnerships

A paper was presented to the Forum on the National Park Authority's asset review. An update was also given on the partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and National Trust for the Eastern Moors. The Forum emphasised the importance of this area for access and hoped to be further involved in an advisory capacity. The RSPB also addressed the Forum on its partnership proposals for the Eastern Moors and at Dovestone.

8) Disabled Access

A presentation was given on disabled access using films from the Access Passport DVD to highlight the range of access opportunities available in the National Park. The films can be downloaded from the Authority's website <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accesspeak>.

The Forum was keen to see that adequate resources are provided for the monitoring and maintenance of accessible routes. Derbyshire County Council also updated the Forum on their ongoing work to attain the local government level 3 National Equalities Standard. This work has focused on cycle hire facilities, the county's Greenway network and health promotion activities. The Forum proposed setting up a sub-group to explore accessibility issues in more detail and this will be followed up in 2010.



Dovestone

9) England Access Forum

This comprises Chairmen from Local Access Forums nationally and senior staff from Natural England to provide support and training and a mechanism for conveying news and facilitating consultation. The Peak District LAF Chair is the permanent representative for LAFs in the East Midlands.

10) Formal Consultations

The Forum has also responded to the following consultation:

Peak District National Park Authority draft Local Development Framework Consultation

11) Training and Liaison

Training on public rights of way and access matters was organised for the benefit of new members. Forum Members also attended a joint site visit with the West Yorkshire Local Access Forum to look at restoration work at Black Hill, and visited Buxworth Canal Basin to look at Greenway issues. Towards the end of the year, there was a joint workshop with the Derby and Derbyshire LAF, hosted by Derbyshire County Council, on sustainable public transport access.





Buxworth Canal Basin site visit and (below) Black Hill joint site visit with West Yorkshire LAF



Losehill Ridge from Mam Tor

The Year Ahead

Some of the likely priorities for the work of the Forum in 2010 are outlined below.

- Preparation for the decadal review of access land mapping and addressing a number of topics on developing and sustaining access improvements
- Deciding on the role and scope of the Forum's involvement in the delivery of the National Park Authority's Recreation Strategy and involvement in task groups
- Climate change and its impact on access and recreation
- Ongoing work on managing recreational motor vehicles in the countryside
- Development of codes of respect for users of the rights of way and access network
- Derbyshire's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3)
- Monitoring progress on delivery of Rights of Way Improvement Plans
- Greenways, Access for All and other measures for inclusive access
- Public transport links
- Local Area Agreements
- Contributing to projects such as the Peak District Cycling Project
- Issues relating to specific recreation types such as mountain bikers, horse-riders and water-based activities
- Ongoing liaison with neighbouring Local Access Forums
- Working with adjacent Access and Highway Authorities on shared interests
- Further training in conjunction with Natural England
- Continue to raise the profile of the Local Access Forum among a wider audience
- Encourage more representation from officers of the National Park Authority and the constituent authorities and from the general public at meeting
- Support the work of the England Access Forum

Dates of Meetings 2010

Thursday 1 April, Losehill Hall, Castleton

Thursday 17 June, Aldern House, Bakewell

Saturday 18 September, Losehill Hall, Castleton

Thursday 2 December, Aldern House, Bakewell



Financial Statement

Members' Travel	£449.15
Room hire, refreshments & lunches	£1254.48
Mini-bus hire	£ 65
Annual Report	£ 95
TOTAL	£1863.63

Expenditure incurred is met by the National Park Authority's access budget with a contribution of £1756 from Derbyshire County Council towards administration costs.

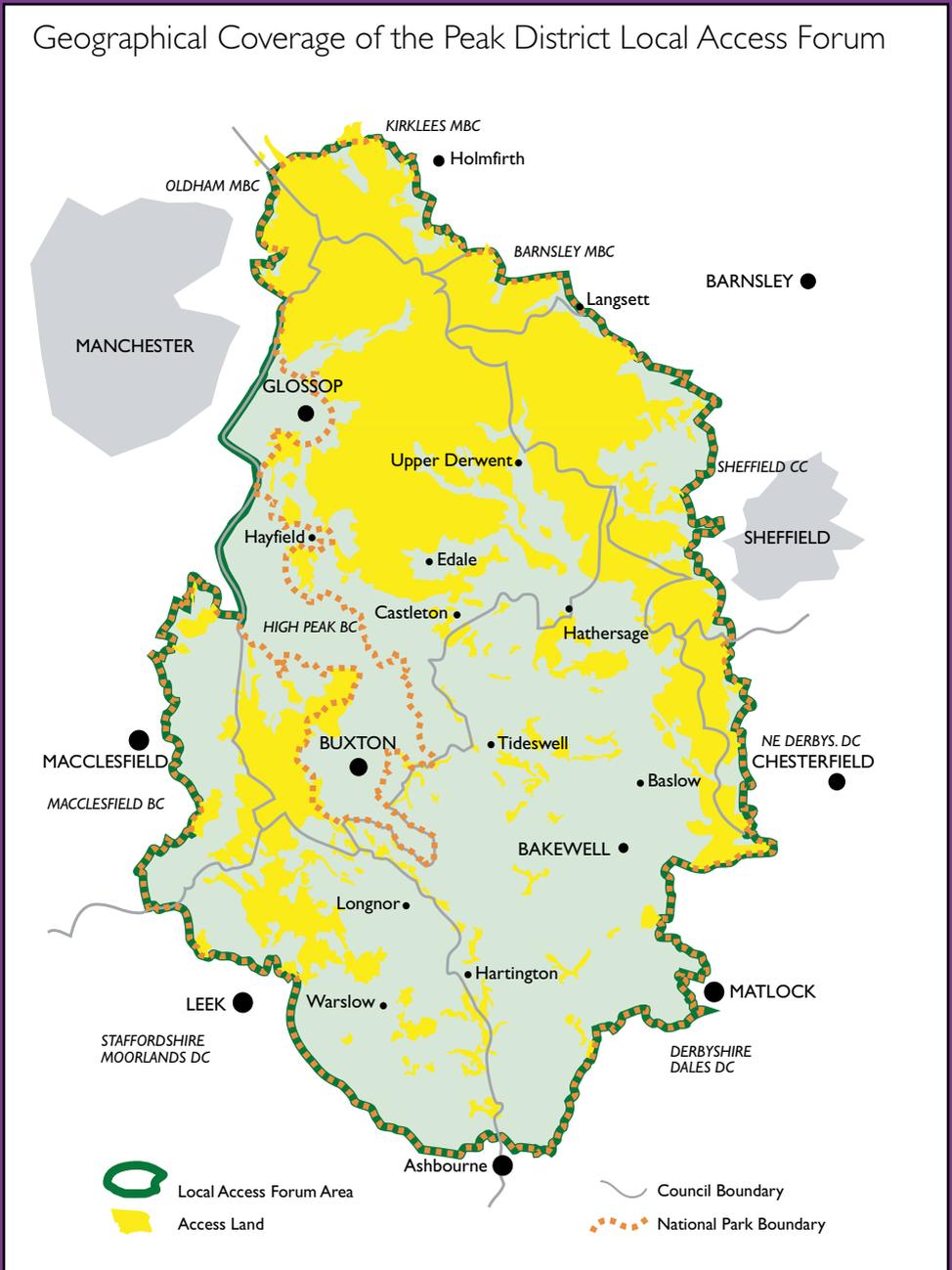


L-R back: Bob Berzins, Richard Entwistle, Mike Innerdale, Felicity Edmeston, John Thompson, Terry Howard, Sue Fisher, Geoff Nickolds, Mike Johnson, Edwina Edwards, Jon Clennell, Charlotte Gilbert, Henry Folkard, Jacque Bevan, Sue Weatherley
L-R front: Andrew McCloy, Andrew Murrely, Dick Peart

Member Details and Attendance

Member	Background and Interests	Appointment expiry date	14/3/09	18/6/09	26/9/09	31/12/09
Andrew McCloy (Chair)	Freelance outdoors writer; walker; local community	Aug 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mike Innerdale (Vice-chair)	Recreation & conservation management, National Trust	June 2010	✓	✓	✓	✗
Bob Berzins	Fell running, conservation	June 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jacque Bevan	National Park Authority appointee	n/a	✗	✓	-	-
Charlotte Gilbert (nee Bright)	Land manager; horse rider	Dec 2011	✗	✓	✓	✓
Jon Clennell	Outdoor pursuits, local community	Dec 2011	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andrew Critchlow	Hill Farmer	Resigned	✓	✗	-	-
Felicity Edmeston	Horse riding, local community, conservation	Dec 2010	✓	✓	✓	✗
Edwina Edwards	Community transport, Girl Guiding UK	Sep 2012	✓	✓	✗	✓
Richard Entwistle	Motor vehicle users	Dec 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sue Fisher	Mountain biking	Dec 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
Henry Folkard	Climber, conservation	Aug 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terry Howard	Walker, access campaigner	Aug 2012	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mike Johnson	Walking, climbing, paragliding	Aug 2012	-	✓	✓	✓
James Kellie	Landowner, holiday accommodation	Dec 2011	✓	✗	✗	✓
Andrew Murley	Conservation, social inclusion	Dec 2010	✗	✓	✓	✓
Geoff Nickolds	Recreation and conservation management	Aug 2011	✗	✓	✗	✗
Chris Pearson	National Park Authority appointee	n/a	-	-	✗	✗
Richard Peart	Outdoor education	Aug 2012	✗	✓	✓	✓
John Thompson	Partnerships in recreation and education	Aug 2012	-	✓	✓	✓
Sue Weatherley	Ramblers, wildlife	June 2012	-	✓	✓	✓
Jean Wharmby	Derbyshire County Council	n/a	-	-	✗	✓
Roger Wilkinson	Derbyshire County Council	n/a	✗	✗	-	-

Geographical Coverage of the Peak District Local Access Forum



www.peakdistrict.gov.uk

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