

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2013 at Aldern House, Bakewell

Members Present:

Edwina Edwards (Chair)	
Bob Berzins	Terry Howard
Jon Clennell	Mike Johnson
Richard Entwistle	James Kellie
Henry Folkard	Adge Last
Charlotte Gilbert	Richard Peart
Clare Griffin	John Thompson
Caroline Hanson	Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes (PDNPA) Secretary	
Sharon Davison (Minutes)	Tim Nicholson (PDNPA)
Andy Farmer (PDNPA)	Richard Pett (PDNPA)
Sarah Haigh (Natural England)	Sue Smith (PDNPA)
Gill Millward (DCC)	Richard Taylor (DCC)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Damien Greenhalgh, Jon Stewart, Ally Turner and Nicola Turner.

2. Minutes from the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September were approved as a correct record with thanks to Sharon.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting

P2 LAF involvement with **Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)**. Richard Benyon asked all LAFs to get involved with Local Nature Partnerships. Terry reported that Sheffield LAF interest was discouraged by the LNP.

GM may have the opportunity to attend a LNP meeting to give a presentation about Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and can also make reference to the work/ involvement of the Local Access Forum.

On the subject of the health agenda, Gill suggested the possibility of James Creaghan from DCC attending the March or June LAF meeting.

ACTION: Chair/GM

P2 **National Citizen Scheme**. Adge reported that the potential huge influx of groups in the summer didn't seem too difficult. Next year some visits will be made in the

autumn. Government funding has been reduced which means the ratio of supervisors to students has decreased.

P2 **Lost Ways.** Gill is currently exploring how the Deregulation Bill affects this – the register of applications is available on DCC’s website – Gill will circulate the link and produce a breakdown of the different types of application. Need to know how this will be taken forward before involving volunteers. Gill will also give future updates to the LAF. **ACTION: GM**

P4 **DofE campsites** – Clare Griffin reported that Sheffield City Council has proposed a campsite at Lady Canning’s plantation (just an idea at the moment) and will keep this LAF informed. **ACTION: Clare G**

A suggestion was made to have a meeting with local farmers, to get a celebrity involved and it was noted that guidance was needed on requirements for provision. James K said he has offered ‘wild camping’ but has had no requests from DofE recently. The Chair will circulate Matt Hutson’s details so that people can contact him directly to offer camping facilities. **ACTION: CHAIR**

The Chair has contacted Greg Thomas and suggested he and Matt spoke about opportunities for cyclists.

P5 **North Lees.** John Thompson spoke at the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee and stressed the importance of North Lees with regard to access, safeguarding and further improvements - as in the letter sent to Jim Dixon. The outcome (sent via email) is that the Authority has decided to retain North Lees, accept the officer’s proposals for revenue and break even in 12 months. John and Edwina have the opportunity to meet with Mary Bagley and Jane Chapman (Assistant Directors involved) this afternoon. This was a welcome opportunity and John T will circulate a note of that meeting in due course related to input sought to devising a Vision and reviewing the Management Plan. **ACTION: JNT**

Henry reported on a recent meeting with Tony Favell, Mary Bagley and Stanage Forum – a better dialogue has been established. The British Mountaineering Council has not hesitated to voice concerns and will continue to do so. They are very concerned to see the position of the on-site warden retained - since the warden has been absent (due to illness), car crime has increased exponentially – which indicates the value of their presence. Paying for someone to be on site could be more economical than the cost of putting things right after the event.

It was pointed out that the NPA should be talking to Caroline Hanson as a major owner of Stanage. **ACTION: JNT** will advise Mary Bagley today.

P7 **Resources issue.** John T has written to Jim Dixon to say the LAF welcomed the work that Mike Rhodes and Sue Smith are doing and needed sustained resources. Sue will be continuing on a part time basis from January to address this work and legal services have money to deal with Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) matters. JNT wrote to Jim to say thanks and it is an ongoing issue.

Richard Pett will provide an update on Green Lanes at the next meeting. **ACTION: RP**

4. Presentation – mountain biking

Adge Last gave a presentation on Mountain Biking ‘A Vision in the Peak’ illustrating that cycling is an accessible and very diverse activity. There has been a massive increase in cycling - retail figures show cycle purchases having the biggest increase. He showed

Google analytics representing searches on Google for mountain biking or cycling in the Peak District. He also played a video (from a cycle helmet camera) of a ride over Longstone Edge -the Black Harry Project has transformed the area.

He outlined strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of managed provision in the Peak District and felt it is not insurmountable. Canadian signs encouraging tolerance and compromise were illustrated and he explored how we might talk to cyclists as there is no single organisation. Illustrated good practice – Ride Sheffield.

Eastern Moors partnership – user groups were involved and stakeholders engaged with very positive outcomes. Peak Bike Code about to be launched by Ride Sheffield to encourage good practice. Wimble Holme Hill was cited as a good example; a bridleway now maintained by volunteers for horses, walkers, cyclists - achieved by working together.

Adge then outlined some suggested quick wins – skills progression would engage people – could include QR code which showed video on skills which had to be paid for. Quarry restoration eg for climbers – could include recreational outcome for cyclists and climbers. The cost - if planned in early - is really small. Specific use areas reduces conflict with other users.

Major Trail Centres were shown – Adge suggested being proactive and engage rather than deal with crises afterwards. The environment doesn't have to be trashed and sites can be aesthetically pleasing. He gave an example of Coed Llandegla Centre near Wrexham. Used by 4000 cyclists at weekends – people pay for car park and café but no charge for riding. This takes pressure off footpaths and bridleways. Finding a location in the Peak District is a challenge with the Ladybower area having obvious potential.

Dick Peart arrived during Adge's presentation.

John T said watch this space – the cycling strategy should be concerned with this subject. Mike R spoke about Ride the Peak – a core group of people were interested, it never expanded into the wider cycling world. Using social media and the web, Ride Sheffield has engaged cyclists with tremendous success – MJR meet regularly with them. A cycle hub is in the cycle strategy to be developed.

Henry spoke about Eldon Quarry and common rights – surface requirements differ for different users. A discussion included difficulties negotiating with land owners and that walkers and horse riders can be intimidated by cyclists.

5. Cycling Strategy

Tim Nicholson, Transport Policy Officer - PDNPA, gave a verbal update on the Cycling Strategy. A briefing paper had been circulated. Further update – Tim invited any information LAF members needed in addition to paper – points arising from Adge's paper and how they related to the Strategy.

With regard to mountain bike Centres; the Authority is aware of the demand –the strategy includes an action to investigate. It hasn't been ruled out – but location is key. Management policies are being developed. Hubs were mentioned in June –

included in Department for Transport bid and £200k set aside for infrastructure to enhance routes – local communities can bid into fund where identified as cycle friendly eg bike racks, washing facilities and connectivity between routes. Further updates will be given in future. Skill centres, more provision for disabled users are planned.

Charlotte asked if anyone representing horse riders was represented on the steering group. Tim responded that the steering group is small and concentrates on delivery. There will be wide consultation from January which includes horse riders. Tim confirmed that there are plans for improved connections between Chatsworth and other areas, there will be synergies with DCC greenways.

The Chair referred to planned consultation and urged that the LAF gets involved – 10 Dec meeting – Adge may be able to attend and will let Chair know if so. Adge will also circulate the final report sent by Carol Parsons last week. **ACTION: ADGE**

A working group – to look at the strategy - was formed - Charlotte, John T, Sue W and Adge. The next Forum meeting is 13 March with a 28 March deadline for Authority meeting so a tight turn round will be needed. LAF working group meeting to be held in January. **ACTION: JNT**

Traffic management and parking concerns at Parsley Hay were discussed as well as a potential skills area (or something bigger) in Macclesfield Forest.

The Chair thanked Tim for attending today.

6. Dedication of National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

Sarah Haigh, Natural England, Managing Open Access Officer gave a presentation.

The programme of dedication will cover all Natural England (NE) freehold sites – it is consistent with what the Forestry Commission did.

There are 82 NNRs across England with 40% of the total NNR area already open access under CRoW.

The Dedication Project itself has 5 stages for each site

- legal matters (boundaries, other interest etc)
- initial site meeting (familiarisation aim to understand why special, any opportunities or restraints, neighbours, bylaws)
- write to access authority (via LAF) to identify current level of access and potential; write to holders of sporting rights etc meet with English Heritage if monument on site
- assessment meeting to consider all aspects; simple scoring system used
- submit proposal to Chief Executive to consider/agree to dedicate

There is a 6 month delay before formal dedication. Dedication does not mean making every part of all NNRs **easily** accessible and it is important to respect nature conservation. NE has agreed not to use the 28 day discretionary entitlement but if there is a genuine need then it would be used. The principle is to dedicate land then restrict if necessary – say ground nesting birds may put restriction in place for breeding. As a general rule the least restrictive approach is taken.

Mike R said that the National Park view is that restrictions aren't necessary in the general sense as managing access is possible rather than restricting access.

NE is endeavouring to enhance access for horse riders and cyclists – a process has been developed to look at every path for suitability.

There are 8 batches in total – batch 3 has been submitted and final agreement is imminent - with batch 4 being worked on at the moment. Derbyshire Dales NNR is in batch 5 and is due for submission in September 2014 - so the process should start in March/April 2014.

Discussions followed about 28 day restrictions, Kinder NNR being owned by National Trust and that it would be good to engage partners in the dedication process with local reserve managers. It was agreed that excellent communications and clarification is needed.

Sarah explained that an access pro forma form allows specific questions to be addressed and to explore opportunities – voluntary codes can work very well. NE takes a meticulous approach and the higher rights interpretation is strictly adhered to using CRoW Act.

The impact of nocturnal activity and underground activities (some cavers monitor underground SSSIs) were also discussed.

JNT felt it was good that Natural England sets an example – it is important in terms of dedications as local officers may not agree with the dedication philosophy. Consistency is crucial.

The Chair questioned the scoring system – if some sites are subject to funding from a small pot. Sarah explained that sites would have to be assessed for priority.

The Chair thanked Sarah for an interesting presentation and looks forward to next year.

7. Green Lanes Update

Sue Smith tabled the notes of the sub-group meetings in June and November and a separate update was also tabled. 800 responses to the Leys Lane consultation had been received with 2/3 opposed to it. At the date the Authority's order was made at the Roych there was a temporary TRO by DCC in force and the Authority's order is not being enforced. A further order will be considered;. Long Causeway – NPA resolved to make aTRO - on hold pending DCC repairs –.

The Green Lanes Forum met last week and considered the achievements and benefits of the group. The conclusion is that there is merit in continuing. The NPA is considering how to take forward.

The Memorandum of Understanding to agree arrangements for consultations and notifications with Highway Authorities is being prepared.

Access – measures proposed opportunities for access by less able users for TROs – this forum to be involved. **ACTION:** Mike Johnson agreed to represent the LAF.

A vehicles newsletter was circulated. Clare spoke about volunteers on Houndkirk – will advise Sue so can be included in the Newsletter. **ACTION:**

Clare

All to advise Sue S if you wish to be added to the newsletter list.

ACTION: ALL

Chair had circulated an e-mail regarding LARA. She had a telephone conversation with John Richardson (Chair of LARA) about the potential meeting. He was very positive – apologised for not including local authorities (said 'the more the merrier') overall concern that there are significant problems on green lanes and thought like-minded people could be brought together to find positive ways forward.

The criteria was discussed. With regard to payment – he felt it would just happen and people would contribute time and tea/coffee. Thornbridge Outdoor Centre could be a suitable venue.–

The Chair is trying to remain independent. Points made included there are other forums (eg green lanes forum) in the peak district; must be clear about expectations but is an opportunity to engage in dialogue and help to understand the issues; the response to the legislation may influence the timing for a meeting,; careful discussion and clarity needed whether local or national debate.

There was general agreement that Chair and JNT should have a pre-meet with John Richardson to agree agenda

There have been two infringements by trail riders on a bridleway recently – with information that Hope Woodlands is worse. Could this be the beginning of an indicator of perceived restrictions – with some elements taking law into own hands.

The minutes of 14 November and 17 June of the Green Lanes sub-group meetings were formally received.

8. Derbyshire County Council - Rights of Way and Access Update Report

Gill Millward presented an update on current issues affecting the Rights of Way and Access work of the County Council.

The Rights of Way revenue budget for carrying out path maintenance work has been cut by 18% for 2013/14 and any budget cuts for 2014/15 have not currently been detailed. Significant cuts were required across all County Council services over the 3 year period from 2015 to 2018 and it was unlikely that the Countryside Service would be immune. The LAF would be kept informed and advised about any potential cuts.

Claire O'Reilly has accepted a secondment to manage the Pedal Peak II Cycling Project and Gill will be taking over the Countryside Access Improvement Officer role on a full time basis until March 2016. A part time Greenways Officer has been appointed to work alongside Anna Chapman to make a full time equivalent post. The appointments to the Pennine Bridleway posts are subject to Natural England funding and negotiations were underway to extend these contracts beyond 31 March 2014.

Charlotte asked about progress with the Pennine Bridleway in the Charlesworth area. Gill responded that there were some issues to be addressed and will report back at a future LAF meeting.

ACTION: GM

In the 2013 National Highways and Transport Network survey, Derbyshire has been ranked top out of 25 participating County Councils in terms of public satisfaction with the local rights of way network. John Thompson gave congratulations and asked if the table of all county councils was available. GM will forward the link.

ACTION: GM

Work was continuing with the delivery of the capital projects on rights of way and Greenway development identified in the RoWIP progress report presented to the LAF in September.

Terry mentioned that as a statutory body the LAF has a right to advise the County Council on rights of way and access matters and should be involved in any discussions around those issues in terms of cuts. Sheffield LAF met with the head of highways and had some influence.

Henry felt everything should be done to take the message back to the politicians that this LAF supports the work of the Countryside Service. It was agreed that the Chair and JNT will write a letter to Cllr Anne Western (Leader of DCC) and copy to Ian Stephenson (Chief Executive).

ACTION: Chair/JNT

The fire alarm disrupted the meeting for around 20 minutes.

9. Access Report

Sue Smith tabled the notes from the Access Sub-group meeting on 6 November which were received and approved. This Forum's input is sought for the 5 yearly reviews on access restrictions which are due to commence. With regard to the Agricultural policy reform, the value and importance of access to the local economy should be recognised. Sue Fletcher attended the last sub group meeting and the opportunity to work with the countryside and economy team was welcomed

2014 marks 10 years of open access in the National Park – looking for LAF to be involved with Rangers, Moors for the Future and other partners. National Nature Reserve dedications is timely – we will be working closely with Natural England.

Pete Bush had constructed a new access point on Fallinge Edge

Sue S had attended Common Land training delivered by NE and the Outdoor Spaces Society which was very useful.

Sue S reported that future consultations on HLS fencing schemes will be referred to the LAF

HF attendance of Suzanne Fletcher at the sub-group meeting was very useful More agricultural and recreation side working together good thing.

The next access sub group meeting is early March.

10. Legislation

Sue S tabled a report on the draft Deregulation Bill which is proposed to go through Parliament in January 2014.

JNT introduced his report briefly and confirmed the points have previously been talked about by this LAF and the input from Henry and DCC colleagues was welcomed. Chair thanked JNT for his work on this and said it was really helpful to have the summary.

ACTION: JNT to send letters to the Peak District NPA, Derbyshire CC and Defra.

11. Feedback from Members

Clare G reported on **discovering lost ways**. Five of the group met in October and the general feeling was that there is an overwhelming amount to do. Gill offered to brief the group on the issues and processes involved and Charlotte offered to contact riding groups.

The group recognised that it was not going to be able to put together a project like the one in Hampshire but a website offering guidance on how to register claims may be sufficient.

Jon Clennell acknowledged it is a massive task but felt the Peak District LAF could show some initiative in exploring what the problems are in this area. Registration (rather than full application) is allowed by the Deregulation Bill.

Terry said the next stage was to agree a way forward and decide what was expected of the group. The Chair felt the LAF must be realistic.

Sue W reported that a bid will be made to the **HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme** – probably in May 2014. Information was tabled and has been circulated by e-mail. Any comments direct to Karen Shelley-Jones. Signage has been noted as a priority in the bid (especially for the Staffordshire area).

Terry reminded the Forum that 2014 will be the **10th anniversary of CRoW** and suggested the LAF should celebrate it in some way – eg make the September 2014 meeting more of an event, say, at Longshaw.

26 April 2014 is the **Spirit of Kinder** day which will be held at Sheffield Town Hall with many interesting and influential speakers. More information to follow.

There is a new **Dore Village Society Neighbourhood Forum** which has formed under the Localism Act – the area includes moors in the Peak District. Mike will check that planners are aware.

ACTION: MJR

Henry drew the meeting's attention to the new **Peak Rock book**.

12. Any Other Business

Lesley Rechert is halfway through Chemotherapy and grateful for our thoughts. She appreciates working with a positive, enthusiastic bunch of passionate people. Mike will pass on our best wishes.

13. 2014 Meetings

Thursday 13 March, 19 June, 11 September and 4 December.

At the end of the meeting a presentation of a bunch of flowers and card signed by LAF members was made by Edwina and Mike with warm thanks for 10 years of taking and

producing excellent minutes of our meetings. Sharon is stepping down as she is now so busy with Moors for the Future work.