

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 16 June 2022
at Aldern House, Board room.**

Members Present:

Charlotte Leech
Martin Bennett
Richard Entwistle
Louise Hawson
Geoff Nickolds
John Towe

Craig Best
Ben Seal
Clare Griffin
Austin Knott
Paul Richardson

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)

27. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from: Cllr Ian Huddlestone, Charlotte Gilbert, Jo Holliday, Jez Kenyon, Alastair Harvey, Cllr Susan Hobson, Joe Dalton,

Austin Knott was welcomed to the meeting as a new Member to the Local Access Forum and was asked to say a few words by way of introduction.

The Chair then invited all Members to introduce themselves for the benefit of Austin.

28. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 17/03/2022

The minutes of the meeting on the 17th March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising:-

Landscapes Review:-

The Chair reported that a letter responding to the Government proposals had been sent in from Charlotte Gilbert on behalf of the LAF, but as yet there was no specific update on the Landscapes Review but would keep the LAF updated. Thanks to Charlotte for putting the response together on behalf of the LAF.

Ben Seal reported that he had attended DEFRA's National Access and Engagement Stakeholder Forum recently and informed the LAF Members that DEFRA was deciding actions and what legislative avenues they were going to use to take this forward. He would provide an update to Members on the discussions that took place in due course.

29. PROPOSED LAF PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES

The Chair reported that she had recently met with Martin Bennett and Charlotte Gilbert (Vice Chairs of LAF) to think about the priorities and the broad work streams that the LAF may want to concentrate on over the next year, as part of the LAF's Forward Plan.

The Chair reminded Members about the LAF's main purpose and role which was to advise

on the improvement of public access to land in the National Park (and NW Derbyshire) with a focus on open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.

The Chair then gave a presentation to Members on some of the things that the LAF have to be consulted on which are:-

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which Gill Millward from Derbyshire CC updates the LAF on at each meeting
- Long Term Directions – which exclude or restrict access to access land for a period which exceeds 6 months – eg Silence Mine, TRO's etc
- Byelaws made in respect of Access Land – although new ones have not been done since CRoWAct
- Wardens for Access Land – now called Rangers and the provision of Ranger and engagement type services across Access Land
- Dog Control Orders
- Gating Orders

The Chair then reported that following the meeting with Martin and Charlotte, 6 LAF work streams were agreed upon which were:-

Ensure we are contributing effectively to statutory and other consultations

Proactive approach to PROW network improvement

Address strategic access topics, especially those issues not being addressed elsewhere, or where we can have the most influence

Ensure meetings run smoothly, and members are informed, can contribute to discussions and get something from being on the LAF

Stabilise/increase membership and get input from a more diverse range of voices

Build our links with other LAFs, access organisations and statutory bodies

Members asked whether other Counties/District Councils could be invited to the LAF Meetings and could the LAF try to get more young/ under-represented groups involved for a more diverse range of voices? Mike reported that the Staffs LAF had lapsed since the pandemic but that he would try and re-engage with them; Charlotte attends DADLAF and Louise will attend Sheffield LAF meetings. Members said that getting youngsters to come to a meeting in the daytime, when they are probably at University etc was not easy but one solution could be to have remote meetings or site visits with other groups.

The Chair then asked if any Member of the LAF had any further thoughts on what was presented and if so then to please send them through.

Members found the presentation useful to remind them of the role and purpose of the Forum. Paul asked if a one-page summary of the role and priorities of the LAF could be produced for Members to share with colleagues and prospective members, to better explain what we do.

ACTION: Chair to produce final forward plan, and one page summary of LAF role and priorities, and share with Members before the next meeting.

30. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Tim Nicholson, Transport Policy Planner attended the Forum and gave a presentation to Members on the Sustainable Transport Initiatives.

Members were concerned that people – particularly older people - were becoming more isolated because of the lack of bus services. There are certain areas of the Park that do not have a regular bus service, and that car ownership inside the Park was higher than outside

and a shift was needed to get people back onto public transport.

Members felt that communication was the key to change the behaviours of people and make them aware of the services available, which will then hopefully encourage them to leave their cars at home.

Connectivity was also an issue and Rail Partnerships need to work with Bus Companies on connectivity to ensure they work. People with disabilities have great difficulty getting around the Park so joined up working was needed with transport groups to help people get from A to B.

Members asked whether there were any plans to continue with the Hope Valley Explorer as this was the final year of the pilot project? Tim reported that due to the high passenger numbers, it was hoped that the project would continue in some form next year, and that they were hoping to secure funding to expand the network to reach other areas of the Park.

Tim said that there were plans to hold a Symposium on sustainable transport in the Peak District in the next few months, and that the LAF would receive an invitation for members to attend.

The Chair thanked Tim for his presentation and said that the Local Access Forum would do its best to support work on sustainable transport, and provide input from an access perspective where possible.

Can we circulate Tim's slides with the minutes?

31. DCC ROUTE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS INC SUB-GROUP REPORT

Sue Smith had circulated the notes from the two sub-groups which had taken place in April 2022. During those two meetings 24 schemes were presented by DCC for - works on its routes, with the LAF identifying site visits to three of these. The Forum were also notified that works have now been completed on three routes; School Lane, Nether Bretton, and Sough Lane.

The Chair reminded Members that DCC had taken the decision to consult with the LAF on its programme of works on routes in the National Park and that further reports on progress with these works would be welcomed.

ACTION: LAF & DCC to set up site visits to the proposed schemes at Hope Cross, Dirtlow Rake and Edensor.

32. DERBYSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Mike Rhodes introduced the report that had been circulated by Gill Millward as she was unable to attend the meeting.

Mike then went on to highlight the following items of information within the report that related to the Peak District National Park.

Derbyshire Cycle Network Development 2022/23

White Peak Loop – DCC is developing a circular route covering just over 87km between Matlock and Buxton of which 71% is now complete. Work is underway to progress the missing sections from High Peak Junction to Rowsley, Rowsley to Bakewell through Haddon Estate and Wyedale/Woo Dale to Buxton.

Pennine Bridleway National Trail

Monks Road, near Charlesworth is one of the three remaining sections of the Trail still to be completed around Glossop, and efforts are being concentrated on identifying potential sources of external funding.

DCC All Roads completed a section of the Trail off Monks Road involving re-profiling the track, installing gates and repairing walls.

Funding has been secured to progress the feasibility and design work required for the missing section around Gamesley. Volunteers have been involved in erecting waymark posts, cutting back vegetation and clearing drains to help prevent water damage on some of the steeper sections of the route.

Derwent Valley Cycleway

The County Council is funding a feasibility study to investigate route options for the Derwent Valley Cycleway between Shardlow and Hathersage.

Mike asked that if Members had any questions on the report, to send them in and they would be passed on to Gill for a response.

Members asked for an update on the routes that the Forum had visited at Brushfield, Pindale and Jacobs Ladder. Mike reported that the material that had been put down at Brushfield had since washed off; no further works had taken place on Pindale as the materials had been removed from site, and no further work had taken place at Jacobs Ladder, but further discussions with the National Trust were due to take place.

Louise asked if these routes could be included on the list of routes that the LAF receives updates on from DCC.

33. ACCESS UPDATE IN ACCESSIBLE PEAK DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCESS FUND ANNUAL REPORT

Sue Smith had tabled a report with updates on issues related to access in the Peak District.

Silence Mine Direction

Following a recent consultation, the Peak District National Park Authority has agreed to continue to extend the public exclusion at Silence Mine up to 30th April 2023, due to the ongoing instability on the site. Planning applications setting out details of the reinstatement works are expected.

Accessible Peak District

The Accessible Peak District Annual Report was circulated to all Members and is available to view at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessforall. Sue reported that the "Miles Without Stiles" webpage had received over half a million views over the last 2 years and that further works on these routes were supported by the Peak District Foundation, who had raised £10,000, and the repeat sponsorship from Yorkshire Water

Sue also reported that so far 36 Anniversary Gates have been installed, funded by donations to the Access Fund. More improvement works have been taking place along the length of Fernilee Reservoir as part of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership and in the Longdendale Valley as part of the Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

Access Fund

Donations had been received from the Peak District Foundation as well as from individuals including Members of the LAF, which have been used towards accessibility improvements at

Conksbury to commemorate former Chairs of the LAF, Edwina Edwards and John Thompson when they stepped down as Chairs of the Forum.

24 Anniversary Gates were also funded during 2021 together with surfacing improvements and signage.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

Sue reported that 72 projects had been supported in the first year of the FiPL funding, and that a number of those projects supported access. She then went on to highlight specific projects at Thors Cave and Castleton.

Charlotte Leech reported that she will take progress pictures of the work on the access to Thors Cave, which includes work on the access paths, installation of fingerposts and signage so that Members were kept updated.

34. MEMBERS' REPORTS

35. MEETING WITH BARRY LEWIS

Martin reported that he, Jez Kenyon and Charlotte Gilbert had met with Cllr Barry Lewis, Leader of Derbyshire County Council, together with Rob Greatorex and Steve Hollingworth to look at the Byway Open to All Traffic at Bonsall and the resurfacing work that had taken place there. It was a good opportunity to promote the work of the LAF, build relationships and to thank them for their investment into rights of way.

36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - NOTIFIED TO MIKE IN ADVANCE

Engagement Service – Business Case Review

Sarah Wilks, Head of Engagement joined the meeting and was invited to give an update to the Forum regarding the restructure and future of the Engagement Service.

Sarah informed Members that a Business Change Consultant had been appointed to look at the whole Engagement Service and suggested some recommendations. She was now in the process of following those recommendations up and exploring them further before deciding what to do next. One of the recommendations was to look at some of the teams in the service and how they can work more effectively together, which included the Ranger Team, Access & Rights of Way Team and Peak Park Conservation Volunteers (PPCV) and look at how they could be brought together into one super team and the advantages that that will have, so she is thinking about what that structure will look like.

She confirmed that this was an uncertain time for the staff in those teams, but she couldn't go into any more detail on that at the moment.

Sarah then informed the LAF that they were very busy doing the new National Park Management Plan for April 2023 onwards, and that the Authority Plans would sit directly under that, so a lot of the things that had been talked about today at the Forum would sit within those new plans.

The Chair thanked Sarah for her update on the Engagement Service restructure, and for attending the meeting at such short notice.

Members' Claims

Mike reminded Members that they were entitled to claim mileage for attending the Forum

meetings and that the claim forms were available on- line, or if anyone wanted a paper copy then he could make them available. Mike will send an email to all Members to remind them.

37. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - SEPTEMBER 15TH