

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 15 September 2022
at Aldern House, Board room.**

Members Present:

Charlotte Leech
Martin Bennett
Richard Entwistle
Alastair Harvey
Jez Kenyon
Jo Holliday

Craig Best
Austin Knott
Charlotte Gilbert
Louise Hawson
John Towe

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)
Gill Millward, (DCC)

Rich Pett, (PDNPA)
Sue Smith, (PDNPA)

38. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Susan Hobson, Ben Seal, Clare Griffin, Geoff Nickolds, Paul Richardson and Joe Dalton.

The Access and Rights of Way Manager introduced Mr Phil Mulligan who had recently joined the Peak District National Park Authority as the Chief Executive and would be observing the meeting.

The meeting also welcomed Cllr Andrew McCloy, Chair of the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) who was taking on the role of the PDNPA Member of the Forum.

39. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 16 JUNE 2022

The Chair asked the meeting to hold a moment of reflection to mark the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising:

Ben Seal had attended the National Access and Engagement Forum and would be asked to provide feedback at the next LAF Meeting. **ACTION: LAF Secretary**

Natural England Access Team is seeking to appoint an advisor to work with Local Access Forums across the country. The Chair would make further enquires and report back to the next meeting. **ACTION LAF Chair**

Under the Proposed LAF Priorities and Activities there was an action for the Chair to circulate a work plan which would be sent out shortly. **ACTION LAF Chair**

A Sustainable Transport symposium hosted by the PDNPA is now planned for the end of the year as it did not take place over the summer.

A report had been circulated to all Forum Members by the Access and Rights of Way Officer on the projects supported by Farming in Protected Landscapes FiPL.

40. ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE - PRESENTATION

Engaging with Young People

A presentation was given by Luisa Knust who was volunteering at the Lockerbrook Farm Outdoor Centre as part of her time with the European Solidarity Corps which has volunteers between the ages of 18 & 30 and aims to create a more inclusive society.

The average age in the UK is 40 but younger people are not included in the decision-making process and yet will live with the impact of the decisions made for longer. She suggested that young people are very concerned about these issues and recent demonstrations in the UK and in Germany showed the strength of feeling. There is a need to encourage more outdoor education and to empower children and young people to speak up for themselves.

The outdoor centre is an opportunity to allow young people to stop and look at what the National Park is about in the hope that it will inspire them to become involved in the preservation of the landscape, if they are not aware they cannot be engaged.

Luisa had looked at the best ways to engage with young people and found that some of the more popular forms of social media only engage with those already aware of the topic/content. Use of on-site information, posters, newspapers or sticker campaigns can be more effective when trying to reach young people.

Luisa asked the Forum to consider:

- How to support young people – especially to overcome barriers to accessing the countryside.
- How to make contact with young people with information about events.

The Forum thanked Luisa for her excellent presentation.

Generation Green

Sarah Wilks (Head of Engagement, PDNPA) introduced a presentation regarding the Generation Green project which had been running across all English National Parks with the PDNPA taking a leading role. The focus of the project had been on encouraging school visits, working with teachers and youth leaders to build their confidence in the outdoors, and encouraging others to look at how to engage young people and hear younger voices in decision making.

Some organisations have Junior Rangers or Junior members of decision-making bodies. Work was ongoing to bring more young people into the decision-making process. The funding for the Generation Green project had now ended. Other areas of work included responding to the section of the Glover Review which suggested a night under the stars and which was being coordinated by the Youth Hostels Association, Scouts and Girl Guiding working with outward bound organisations.

Discussion

The LAF then discussed the issues around engaging with young people, and opportunities to hear the needs, hopes and concerns of younger people in its work. Challenges included the impact of the current cost of living crisis which had led to reduced funding for such initiatives, and which can make travel and taking time out of work difficult.

The PDNPA is planning to create a Youth Voice, but this was in its early stages. Charlotte Leech noted that the Authority and other LAF Members have several apprentices who could be engaged to bring a younger voice to meetings. The NPA would explore opportunities further. Gill Millward said that the Derby and Derbyshire LAF (DADLAF) had appointed student members in the past and was currently looking to fill this position again. The Peak District LAF agreed to explore these opportunities to engage younger voices in its work in future.

41. STAFFORDSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES

Andy Farmer (PDNPA Engagement Manager) outlined some of the issues with rights of way as the routes most used by visitors to access the National Park. He highlighted the importance of not just the maintenance of the routes, but also giving confidence to users and making them feel welcome on the network.

The 2021 'ease of use survey' assessed a sample of routes in the National Park against a standard set of criteria and took into consideration all users. However some routes could still be challenging on the perception of standard accessibility.

There had been a decrease in numbers of full-time rangers in the last few years which has impacted on the ability to maintain the access work carried out. With reduced funding this might mean concentrating resources on priorities such as between recreation hubs.

Another ease-of-use survey will be carried out over winter/spring. The results would be reported to the Forum in summer 2023.

The following question was posed to the LAF - should 'accessible and welcoming' be the target for the rights of way network? If so, how should the National Park Authority prioritise this work, given reduced resources?

Forum members supported the suggestion of the higher standard as a target for the network and accepted that this would be an increasing challenge with reductions in resources and increases in prices. Members discussed the possibility of identifying alternative funding and working with volunteers and volunteer organisations. It was agreed to return to this issue following the feedback from the survey in Summer 2023, at which point the PDNPA will look more closely at the issues in order to provide recommendations from the LAF.

42. ACCESS UPDATE

Sue Smith (PDNPA Access and Rights of Way Officer) presented a short report on funding for access infrastructure, with a further report on the work on accessibility to be provided to the December meeting.

The Forum discussed the issues around the closure of land due to the high fire risk in the summer and how the decisions were made on closure and re-opening the land. It was noted that the signage, media coverage and information on the Authority's website were useful. A meeting between National Parks and Natural England will take place in October to look at how well the actions worked. Sue reported that the LAF were welcome to provide feedback to her for this meeting.

43. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward (Countryside Access Improvement Officer, DCC) introduced the update on progress towards the delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and summarised the main work in progress in relation to each of the five RoWIP aims.

Under Aim 1 relating to the existing Rights of Way Network, the LAF thanked Gill and the DCC team for compiling the table listing all the routes on which the LAF had already provided comments and guidance, and for including information on the status of the work for each route. Further comments from the Forum were also welcomed. The LAF noted that the impact of inflation on material and other costs would need to be considered when costing and scheduling future projects.

Under Aim 2, it was noted that a joint subgroup with the DADLAF to review possible prioritisations of DCC Definitive Map Modification Order claims was to be set up later in the year.

Under Aim 3, it was agreed that a link to the Safer Roads Fund Consultations for Long Hill, near Buxton and the Via Gellia between Newhaven and Cromford would be circulated to the LAF once they were underway.

44. MEMBERS' REPORTS INCLUDING:

Trails Management Plan:

Charlotte Gilbert reported that the recruitment of volunteers was on-going and the renovated Goods Shed was now open at Millers Dale. A winter work plan was being progressed.

Sheffield LAF:

Louise Hawson had attended a meeting of Sheffield LAF in June, and shared the issues discussed. Members also discussed the desirability of attending the meetings of other neighbouring LAFs, and those in other National Parks, as has happened in the past.

British Mountaineering Council (BMC):

Some funding for footpath and other upland restoration work was available from the BMC's Crag and Upland Restoration Fund, with the involvement of BMC Volunteers.

45. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - NOTIFIED TO MIKE IN ADVANCE

Mike had been contacted by Simon Geller from Sustrans regarding routes into the National Park and Mike was looking into this for him. Simon also mentioned that he would like to address a future meeting of the LAF which would be arranged. **ACTION: LAF Secretary**

The Forum meeting was to be followed by a site visit to Edensor to advise DCC on planned capital works and repairs to BOAT 13 (old turnpike lane running from Handley Lane to Chatsworth House).

46. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 1ST DECEMBER 2022