

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 19 February 2025 at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell.

Members Present:

Charlotte Leech
Nick Doran
Austin Knott
Louise Hawson
Geoff Nickolds
Ian Ord

Charlotte Gilbert (Chair)

Martin Beer
Martin Bennett
Ben Seal
Jez Kenyon
John Towe

Others Present:

Gill Millward, (DCC)
Rich Pett, (PDNPA)

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Susan Hobson, Richard Entwistle, Clare Griffin and Alastair Harvey.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dave Savage, Cllr Susan Hobson, Clare Griffin, Alastair Harvey and Richard Entwistle. Charlotte Gilbert acted as Chair in Clare Griffin's absence. The Peak District LAF welcomed new member Ian Ord. Ian has been a Royal Naval Officer, and an NHS director. He is a wheelchair user due to a progressive disease, but keeps as active as possible. Ian currently sits on Hope with Aston Parish Council, with a remit on Rights of Way. Dawn Biram was introduced to the PD LAF, attending as a visitor to input to the Access to Water item being presented by Severn Trent Water.

2. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING 16 OCTOBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

A summary of action points to be updated at each meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

24/42 Health and Wellbeing Presentation

Research recently published in the Lancet Journal indicates that the population has stalled on improved fitness and health.

24/48 Members Reports – Derbyshire on-line mapping

The footpath issue reported through the on-line system to demonstrate the process has been sorted.

24/47 Review of Directions

The response on West Nab has now been actioned.

24/48 Members Reports – Access to the Outdoors

Ben Seal to report back later in the meeting.

4. ACCESS TO WATER (DAN TABERNER-STW)

Dan Taberner, Visitor Experience Lead at Severn Trent Water (STW), made a presentation on Access to Water. Dan provided the background to water access on STW reservoirs and why STW want to increase managed water based activities. Managed Open Water Swimming sessions and events have recently taken place at Carsington Reservoir, as well as the introduction of Paddlesports to Ladybower, which was launched in October 2023 and is affiliated with Paddle UK.

Next steps to consider are to establish Carsington Reservoir as a swimming location, with several events, including potentially a triathlon, to take place in 2025. The triathlon event may mean some road closures in the area. Tourism and local businesses will benefit from such events, but they could cause problems for locals as a mass participation event will cause some disruption in the area. Regular swim sessions are planned, which are seen as more of a benefit to the local community. and Carsington Reservoir aims to achieve Beyond Swim accreditation. Tittesworth Reservoir and the Upper Derwent Valley are possible sites to allow managed swimming sessions and events, with unauthorised swimming still prohibited.

Summary of Discussion

It was acknowledged that managing water based activities is a challenge, but water companies are behind on facilitating public access to water from where they should be. Access rights on land are well established. There should be a similar level of access to water, with provision not just for experienced swimmers.

Dawn Biram, member of the public, was attending today's meeting to input to this item and gave feedback on the swimming event she attended at Carsington. There are a lack of facilities in and around the Peak District, which is an area some distance from the sea, for recreational water users and the different types of swimmers to access water. It's as natural for people to want to go into the water as it is for them to want to walk on moorland areas. In Scotland water companies have to allow more access to water with messaging to highlight the dangers.

There is a risk that having more managed swims events could confuse users into thinking that all water access is authorised. Carsington had been holding such events for a year, and haven't noticed a change in the level of unauthorised swimming.

Water companies are reluctant to allow more water based activities due to safety concerns. The public walk along cliff edges and swim in the sea. People do get injured, and there are some deaths, but should there be more concerns about people going into reservoirs. There are hazards that can't be seen in the water, and at recent events at Carsington some swimmers needed help to get out of the water. The areas around reservoirs in the Peak District already attract large amounts of visitors. Creating more access to water could increase these pressures.

5. NATIONAL PARK TRAILS MANAGEMENT (HELEN CARRINGTON)

Helen Carrington, PDNPA Property Manager, gave a presentation on the PDNPA Trails Management Plan (TMP). Helen has responsibility for looking after the four multi user trails in the National Park, as well as Authority owned car parks, camp site, toilets and holiday cottage. The trails infrastructure also includes tunnels, signage, shelters, picnic sites, rubbish bins and electric charging points.

Under the TMP trails are resurfaced on a scheduled basis which is expensive. Each user group of the trails, which includes walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders, has their own expectation of what sort of surfacing is best. Trees and undergrowth that grow adjacent to the trails have to be managed, which includes dealing with Ash Die back, where tree failure is a risk to trail users. There are significant Health and Safety issues around tunnels. Sections of the trail may be closed for periods of time to allow for maintenance work. The expenditure on car parks, toilets, campsite, holiday cottage and trails is budgeted to be £977k in 2025/26, but with estimated income from car parking, facilities, concessions, cafes and abseiling licences, £198k will go back into the overall Authority budget.

Summary of discussion

Where parking and toilets are charged for there is a risk that people will look for places where they can park for free and use alternatives, such as roadside verges, and this has an impact on the site. Charging should be balanced against site impacts.

Since the introduction of Pay & Display machines at a further 13 PDNPA owned car parks surveys have been carried out to monitor any dispersal of vehicles outside parking areas, where it has been shown that there is some dispersal onto the roadside and any free parking areas from some of the charged for sites. The Authority can't charge for using the trails, so the income has to come from car parks. Similarly in making a decision about charging to use toilet facilities, this is assessed on a case by case basis. At Dovedale we charge the public for using the toilets there as there is no other way of making income to support their maintenance. The annual parking permit is good value for regular users of our car parks, there are still some free parking, and times when parking is free in our Pay and Display car parks.

The trails are a good resource, but lack of facilities and link routes to the trails can be a barrier to people using them. The Access Fund has been used to maintain shelters and improve access to the trails, but the link routes are outside Helen's remit. Better messaging could be displayed at car parking sites to advise how the money is being used.

Tim Nicholson, PDNPA Transport Policy Planner, outlined the Authority's view on car park expansion. Demand is assessed against impact. There has been a consultation on car park issues as part of the Local Plan review. Car parks created in open countryside have to balance with National Park purposes.

Car parks are an opportunity to educate about the Countryside Code through the right messaging in the right places, and to set out how the charges are supporting the work of an organisation. New tariff boards with messaging are planned.

Helen explained the choice of surfacing on the trails. The Ultra Trek option is hard wearing to last over 10 years and the best long term surface. The surface is dark in colour but does blend in after the first year and allows for the trail to be widened. It reflects the former use of the trails as a railway line.

Action: Helen to provide a link to the Trail Management Plan

6. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE (GILL MILLWARD)

Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer at Derbyshire County Council (DCC) gave an update on Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Aim 1: Existing Rights of Way Network

Work is due to commence on Jacobs Ladder/Pennine Way. Other schemes are deferred due to the need to target funds for pothole repairs. There will be continued investment in roadside signposts in 2025/26 to promote the safe use of the RoW network

Aim 2: Definitive Map and Statement

Progress update on dealing with the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications. The Joint LAF Unrecorded Ways Sub-Group has produced a set of recommendations and is reported to the Peak District LAF under Item 7 at this meeting.

Aim 3: An improved network

The three draft Active Travel Masterplans (ATMs) for Belper, Glossop and Ilkeston have been completed. Wider public engagement is planned for May 2025 on the Hope Valley Active Travel Masterplan. The results Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is now out for consultation. The Peak District LAF may want to respond as individuals or collectively, and to share with any relevant contacts.

Aim 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

Walk Derbyshire is now more established. Details of the network of walking groups and the programme of led walks are on the Walk Derbyshire website:

Walk Derbyshire

Aim 5: Greater community involvement

Volunteer contribution to RoW maintenance in Derbyshire had been of significant benefit to the network over the year 2024/25.

Summary of Discussion

Rights of Way routes are closed where necessary to carry out maintenance works for Health and Safety of contractors and the general public. Access is maintained where possible, and routes opened up as soon as it is safe to do so. Rob Greatorex from DCC Highways will be at the PD LAF in June to respond to any queries on the RoW network in the Peak District. The process of saving historic routes through submitting a claim, getting it accepted and formalised can take many years.

An interim route for the White Peak Loop should be signed and in place by the end of March 2025. A couple of sections are missing with access improvements and resurfacing planned. Stakeholder events are planned for the spring to advise on the work completed.

Actions:

- **DCC RoW Maintenance - Invite Rob Greatorex to attend the LAF meeting in June**
- **Eyam BOAT 31, Temporary Closure - Find out why it was necessary to close the route to all users while the repairs are underway**
- **Provide an update on the Safer Roads Fund Project for the A5004 Long Hill (will be included in my RoWIP Update for June)**

In addition, Martin Bennet asked if it would be possible to invite someone to a future LAF meeting to talk about Slow Ways.

7. PRIORITISATION OF DMMOS - JOINT SUBGROUP REPORT (GILL MILLWARD)

Gill Millward, DCC Countryside Access Improvement Officer, presented a report to agree the advice which Derbyshire's Local Access Forums will provide to DCC with regard to the prioritisation of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications in respect of unrecorded rights of way. The cut off date to register claims had been extended to 2031, but the current government may repeal that.

The Joint LAF Sub-Group have considered how to support the process of registering applications by facilitating people putting claims in. Nationally there are 8000 plus claims. The process for these can't be changed as it is set out in legislation. The Joint Sub-Group have looked at how claims could be prioritised, as they take a long time to process with limited resources for the work involved. The proposal is that those routes that benefit more different users should be prioritised.

Summary of Discussion

Prioritising multi user routes was good, but people might be put off submitting other applications, and may class routes as multi user routes to get priority consideration. DMMOs should be looked at area by area. Useful links might not get priority.

It is recommended that when considering DMMO applications, priority should be given to those for multi-user unrecorded ways ie claims for bridleway and above. Multi-user routes, whether they are new Rights of Way or upgrades, would benefit the most people and help link up these currently fragmented networks; and giving them priority would fit in with sustainable transport policies. It is also recommended that this new Unrecorded Ways DMMO strategy considers routes in batches by area to reduce duplication.

Recommendation: That Members of the Peak District Local Access Forum approve this set of recommendations and agree that they are conveyed to the County Council in a letter which also raises concerns about the lack of resources which are currently available for dealing with this area of work.

Action: The Peak District LAF to respond as per the recommendation

8. ACCESS UPDATE (SUE SMITH)

In Sue Smith's absence, Mike Rhodes gave an Access Update.

The surfacing works in the Goyt Valley has nearly doubled the length of this accessible route, with enhancements to Fernilee Reservoir including maintenance of the existing section, and new gates installed for access by cyclists and horse riders.

The improvements to the Monsal Trail/Coombs Road link are under consideration by the Authority's Property Team.

Action: The report is noted.

9. ACCESS RESTRICTIONS CONSULTATION (SUE SMITH)

In Sue Smith's absence, Mike Rhodes presented the report to notify the Forum on the consultations for the review of open access land exclusions and a consultation for extending the long-term direction excluding public access at Silence and Old Grove Mines.

Long-term Directions restricting Access are reviewed every 5 years. Reviews at Deer Hill, Diggle and West Nab have been completed. The National Park Authority is reviewing its long-term directions and consulting on an extension to a long-term direction to restrict

access rights.

Silence Mine

The public access at Silence Mine needs to be reviewed once work is completed there. Locally there are concerns as the ground is unsafe, and there are access issues for work activities. Long term thinking is required as there has also been the loss of access on two Rights of Way and a road.

Crowden

Nothing has changed since the last review so the 2020 response could be resubmitted.

Hollins Hill

The Authority has met with the landowner who has confirmed that the direction is still necessary and that there are no suitable alternatives. The direction is conditional on the concession path to the land being available at all times, the line of which is to be further assessed.

Recommendation:

- That the LAF consider their response to the consultations at Crowden and Silence Mine, and for any at Hollins Hill.

10. ACTIVE TRAVEL CONSULTATION (TIM NICHOLSON)

Tim Nicholson, PDNPA Transport Policy Officer, updated the Forum on the Active Travel England Capability Fund programme.

The PDNPA are developing a Peak District Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Infrastructure Plan. An Active Travel Consultation started on the 5 February and will close on 16 March 2025. Peak District LAF members are asked to share details with their groups to promote the consultation. A high-level network of existing and proposed routes for more active travel have been mapped for people to suggest any network improvements along with any other comments.

Action: To note the contents of the report and to consider the response to the active travel consultation at a future meeting of the Active Travel Sub-group.

11. MEMBERS' REPORTS

Ben Seal

Paddle UK and others have been looking at the new legislation for National Parks set out in December 2024

The cut off date for submitting DMMOs had been extended to 2031 and will require primary legislation to repeal it. Nine new river walks are proposed in England, with a pilot walk planned for 2025, and will use existing routes and contribute to Nature Recovery. Ben has taken Derbyshire MPs out paddling to promote access to water. A joint letter has gone to Baroness Hayman, Minister for Access and Bio Security, to support a river walk for the Derwent Valley, with no response as yet. There is no process to input to the plans currently. Ben offered to submit a letter on behalf of the Peak District LAF in support of a Derwent Valley river walk.

Access to Nature is on the agenda for MPs and there will be a future consultation on the Right to Roam to create a greater ability to enjoy the outdoors. The PD LAF should consider what view to take on new access rights in regard to pressure points, opportunities and resources, and pressure on National Parks to manage it. An all party committee is being created to consider outdoor recreation.

The Water Commission is looking for radical reform of the water sector, with a Water Bill due

for summer 2026, which will give the opportunity to include legislation for access to water.

Summary of Discussion

The river walks should be a resource for all users, not just people on foot. King Charles III is aiming to give access to coastal areas including cliffs and beaches. A joint stakeholder response on access should be formed. Local Access Forum groups could work more closely together on this, especially with other National Park Forums.

There is a 154 mile walk through Stoke-on-Trent which connects communities with the River Trent, through £190k of funding. A code of practice requires water companies to produce an annual report. There is a requirement for partners, including water companies, to further National Park purposes, but it's not clear who will monitor this.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The National Trust are planning to install a fence to secure and protect a 15km boundary of moorland later in 2025 on Derwent and Howden Moor. The project will support conservation, landscape management and ecological restoration in the region.

The Forum queried whether the fence will be removed when the project is finished, and that the access points across the fencing on Rights of Way should be maintained.

Action: The Peak District LAF to contact the National Trust regarding removal of the fencing once the project is complete. Any comments to be sent to Mike Rhodes who will pass on to the National Trust.

Andy Farmer, PDNPA Ranger Team Manager, is retiring at the end of February, and this is his last PD LAF meeting. Sue Fletcher, Head of Landscape and Engagement, and CEO, Phil Mulligan, were present to thank Andy for his long years of service, his contribution to the Authority, and for being a champion for access.

13. CHAIR AND KEY THEMES FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next Peak District Local Access Forum meeting is Wednesday 11 June 2025. Clare Griffin to Chair the meeting, with Engagement as the theme.

Charlotte Leech will chair the meeting on Wednesday 15 October 2025, with the theme to be confirmed.

Meeting ended - Time Not Specified

