

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 15 June 2017
at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell.**

Members Present:

John Thompson
Richard Entwistle
Charlotte Gilbert
Andrew Murley
Ally Turner

Edwina Edwards (Chair)

Bob Berzins
Henry Folkard
Terry Howard
Jon Stewart
Sue Weatherley

Others Present:

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)
Emily Fox, (PDNPA)
Gill Millward, (DCC)
Rich Pett, (PDNPA)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Richard Taylor, (DCC)
Jason Spencer, (Minutes)

1. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Bunting, Clare Griffin, Adge Last, Chris Page and John Walton.

It was noted that Caitlin Bisknell and Caroline Hanson were no longer members of the Forum. It was confirmed that Derbyshire County Council would be appointing a replacement for Caitlin and Mike Rhodes was looking at a suitable replacement for Caroline.

The Chair welcomed Peter Leppard from Bamford Parish Council to the meeting and advised the Forum that he had requested to speak on the agenda item relating to the Green Lanes Update, as a public speaker.

It was noted that as Karen Shelley-Jones was unable to attend the meeting, consideration of the original agenda item 9, South West Peak Landscape Partnership, would be deferred until the September meeting of the Forum.

The Forum was advised that, as a number of apologies had been received, the annual photograph would also be deferred.

Mike Rhodes reported that copies of the LAF's 2016 Annual Report were now available and members were encouraged to take copies away to share with people and organisations they know who may be interested in the work of the Forum.

2. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA

To help progress the meeting, rather than waiting until any other business at the end, members were asked if they had any issues to raise that were not currently on the Agenda.

- Henry Folkard indicated that he wished to speak on the Alport Project and Sheffield Moors Partnership.
- Mike Rhodes advised that, following a request for an update from members, there would be an additional agenda item relating to the cancellation of the Derwent Dams

Bus Service. It was noted that, as Edwina Edwards had a personal interest, John Thompson would take the Chair for this item.

3. DERWENT DAMS BUS SERVICE

As she was employed by the current service operator, the Chair declared a personal interest and John Thompson chaired the meeting for this item.

Mike Rhodes reported that the Sunday minibus service 222, running from Fairholmes Visitors Centre to Kings Tree in Upper Derwent during summer road closures was to be cancelled for financial reasons and read out a proposed response to members of the public who were unhappy about the decision.

Members of the Forum expressed regret that the service was to end but it was acknowledged that it was not well supported by passengers and for most of the day the buses ran almost empty. Jon Stewart reported that a similar service from Ashbourne to Ilam had similar issues and acknowledged that an on demand service, such as Uber, would not work well in the Derwent Dams area due to a poor mobile phone service.

The response proposed by Tim Nicholson was endorsed subject to public transport access in the area being kept under review should circumstances change.

4. ISSUES RAISED BY BAMFORD PARISH COUNCIL

As Peter Leppard, the Clerk to Bamford Parish Council was present as a public speaker consideration of the matters that he was raising was brought forward for discussion.

After being invited to address the Forum, Mr Leppard spoke on the following two issues which were of concern to the Parish Council:

a) Hurstclough Lane

The Parish Council had expressed concern that while Derbyshire County Council had set aside funding for repairs there had been no feedback after public consultation had closed and works had not commenced.

It was reported that this issue was still with the engineers who were looking for the most appropriate solution for the route.

b) Bamford Clough

The Parish Council had expressed concern that due to an exposed electricity cable this route had been closed since 2013. It was confirmed that, with some regret, the Council had therefore decided to commence the Section 56 process.

It was noted that there were on-going discussions with the owners of the cable about moving it and for health and safety and legal reasons the County Council was not able to carry out this work.

It was agreed that while the Forum appreciated the issues faced by Derbyshire County Council they shared the frustrations of the Parish Council. It was therefore agreed that the relevant County Council Cabinet Member, Simon Spencer, would be contacted about the issues raised and asked to support action particularly in the context of the Highway Service Review which could result in a reduction in the number of engineers employed by the Council. It was also suggested that Councillor Spencer should be sent a copy of the Local Access Forum's 2016 Annual Report.

Mr Leppard was thanked for taking the time to come to the meeting and address the Forum and was assured that the Parish Council's concerns would remain as a live issue and any response from the County Council would be fed back.

ACTION: JNT/MJR

5. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 9TH MARCH

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2017 were approved as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

Charlotte Gilbert arrived at 10:25am during consideration of this item.

P4 Mountain Biking Initiatives

Bob Berzins reported that Cycling UK, formerly the Cyclists' Touring Club, had launched a national initiative for off road cycling and a recent meeting at Aldern House had been well attended and very constructive. The discussions identified some anomalies within the National Park, such as the bridleway route from Strines to Derwent Edge which becomes a footpath to Fairholmes on National Trust Land when it crosses the county boundary.

Terry Howard commented on the speakers at the last Forum meeting confirming that it had been informative and inspiring and highlighted the need to be more proactive in taking forward suggestions.

It was noted that at the recent Ramblers AGM, John Horscroft had delivered a talk on suggestions that, subject to clear codes of behaviour, some footpaths would be suitable for becoming dual purpose routes. A further meeting about enjoying access responsibly is due to take place in a weeks' time between Cycling UK, Natural England and several northern National Park Authorities.

In response it was acknowledged that there was a demand for opening up more routes for horse riders and suggested that this should be considered further as part of the review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). It was however noted that in the current climate the RoWIP needed to focus on priorities and do a few things well rather than spread resources too far or raise expectations. Mike Rhodes highlighted that there were opportunities outside of the RoWIP for working with landowners to provide facilities.

It was noted that the British Horse Society was currently working to promote equestrian access at a grass-roots level. It was suggested that a representative should be invited to a future Forum meeting to speak on this work. **ACTION: MJR**

Jon Stewart confirmed that the National Trust was committed to delivering improvements, following a strategic approach which involved providing more concessionary bridleways and links with the surrounding network.

During the discussion it was emphasised that there was a need to look beyond the Derbyshire Boundaries and make sure that there were connections with routes in Sheffield, Cheshire etc. It was suggested that the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership could provide useful opportunities.

It was also suggested that the Peak District LAF and the Derby and Derbyshire LAF should work together to develop a robust and coordinated approach. User groups could be invited to nominate routes for upgrading from footpaths to bridleways, for consideration and endorsement by the Joint LAF Sub Group.

Richard Taylor provided an update on a dedicated Mountain Bike facility at Glapwell and an extension to the existing route on the 5 Pits Trail funded through a Section 106 agreement.

Tim Nicholson confirmed that consultation on the Transport Design Guide would take place over the summer and be presented to the Forum in September.

P7 Derbyshire Cycling Plan – Key Cycle Network Consultation

Gill Millward reported that a map had been placed on the wall of the meeting room providing details of strategic cycle routes across Derbyshire and invited feedback on missing routes and priorities.

On behalf of the Forum, John Thompson welcomed the plan but highlighted the importance of moving forward with the link between Buxton and Chapel-en-le-Frith, as well as a route through King Sterndale connecting both legs of the White Peak Loop. Any other comments to go to Gill Millward as soon as possible.

P10 Spirit of Kinder Day - 22 April

Terry Howard provided an update on the event confirming that it had generated a significant amount of interest and provided examples of how the phrase “Spirit of Kinder” had been used in the national media.

Terry also reminded members that copies of the book “The Clarion Call” were still available.

7. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

Mike Rhodes advised the Forum that at the September meeting Edwina Edwards would be retiring from the Chair. Although Edwina intended to continue her membership of the Forum, the current meeting was therefore the last full meeting to be chaired by her.

In terms of succession, John Thompson had indicated that he would like to be considered for the role of Chair but if any other Members were interested they should contact Mike by email in advance of the September meeting. Mike also pointed out that should John be successful the Forum would need to appoint a new Vice-Chair so if Members were interested in this role they should also contact Mike. Edwina pointed out there was scope to share the work involved in being Vice Chair in future.

A person specification and job description for both roles was available from Mike on request.

8. NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

John Thompson introduced his background report on the review of the National Park Management Plan (NPMP). It was noted that John represented the Local Access Forum on the NPMP Advisory Group.

Matt Mardling from the National Park Authority provided a presentation on progress made in reviewing the plan and provided more information on the forthcoming consultation. The consultation on the draft plan and special qualities would take place from 19th June to 31st July. A copy of the presentation was circulated.

As the speakers on the item relating to the New Structure for National Park Outreach and Visitor Experience had another appointment to attend, their item was brought forward for discussion part way through this item.

When discussion on the National Park Management Plan resumed, Terry Howard drew attention to inaccuracies he had seen recently in documentation that suggested there was a direct link between the mass trespass at Kinder and the establishment of National Parks. Terry highlighted that this link was inaccurate as this event was more about achieving greater access rather than protecting landscapes and that campaigns to protect valued landscapes and heritage assets started long before the mass trespass.

Following a discussion on how the National Park Authority could influence issues when it did

not have the relevant statutory powers, Emily Fox, Head of Strategy and Performance confirmed that, while the National Park Authority had a duty to make sure a National Park Management Plan was in place, others contributed to its delivery.

Emily provided feedback on the responses to the issues raised in John's report, but it was agreed that, as the political climate had changed since the initial response, it would be appropriate to formulate a new LAF response. It was agreed that to progress this Mike Rhodes would have a discussion with Emily and Matt to identify a suitable date for a special meeting of the Forum with it having authority to respond by the 31st July deadline.. It was noted that this did not prevent members providing individual responses or responses on behalf of organisations they were involved with, and members were encouraged by John to get organisations they are involved in to respond..

ACTION: Mike Rhodes to set up an additional meeting of the Forum to assist in the preparation of a formal response to the consultation on the review of the National Park Management Plan and the special qualities.

9. NEW STRUCTURE FOR NATIONAL PARK OUTREACH AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Sarah Wilks, Head of Outreach Development and Emma Stone, Head of Visitor Experience Development, attended the meeting to provide details of changes to the structure of the Commercial Development and Outreach Directorate. Sarah and Emma provided more information on their areas of responsibility and some of the current key initiatives.

It was noted that Emma's teams covered cycle hire, rights of way, visitor centres and property including trails, car parks, and the estates at Warslow and North Lees. During the coming months the following initiatives were to be progressed:

- A refurbished visitor centre at Castleton was due to reopen and plans were in place to refresh the offer at Bakewell and Edale Visitor Centres.
- Funding had been made available for a "Miles without Stiles" booklet
- North Lees Hall had been let for 12 months
- £600,000 had been made available to carry out essential repairs on trails structures
- Consultation on proposals to appoint a direct workforce to manage Authority owned properties
- Combining facilities such as providing a mini visitors centre at cycle hire centres.
- Providing digital interpretation on trails – Positive feedback had been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund on a funding proposal to use this approach on the Monsal Trail.

During the discussion some members expressed regret that the Trails Steering Group had not met for some time and that as this group had been made up of people who were passionate about the trails, it would provide a great forum for discussing the options for interpretation and how planned repairs could be carried out minimising the impact on different groups of users. Emma sought support for the Digital Project she had circulated information about. John suggested this was something the Trails Steering Group should be involved in. Edwina said she will consider this following the meeting and respond on behalf of the LAF.

ACTION: EE

It was confirmed that with the new structure, the Authority had made sure that there were resources to support a Trails Steering Group and there were no plans to dispose of assets, such as the trails or North Lees Estate, as these had been given strategic certainty in the Corporate Plan.

It was also confirmed that the £600,000 funding for repairs on the trails had been allocated to structures (bridges, tunnels etc) identified as high priority in the condition survey.

It was noted that Sarah's teams covered rangers, learning and development and volunteers. The aim was to improve on the recruitment of new volunteers and the support given to existing volunteers and making sure that rangers, and learning and development, work together to develop learning and engagement opportunities, particularly through working with local schools.

As part of the discussion on volunteering it was noted that while the demand for volunteers was increasing, it was important that the various organisations should work together and not become overly competitive as the main objective was to encourage people to volunteer, provide volunteering opportunities and target resources on improving access, biodiversity and the landscape regardless of the organisation providing the opportunities.

10. GREEN LANES UPDATE

In presenting her report providing an update on progress for managing recreational motor vehicles in the National Park, Sue Smith read out her introduction given to the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee when it considered and updated the Action Plans for 2017/18 – Sue's summary was welcomed by LAF members. The report included an update on progress made in the ten years since National Park Authorities had been given the power to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). It was also confirmed that, because of the strategic certainty given to this area of work, route prioritisation would be updated to reflect the special qualities of the National Park and the access network would be developed through mapping and signage.

The report also provided an update on the motorcycle events held on 12 March and 4 June in relation to the decision to make a TRO at Washgate near Hollingsclough. It was confirmed that the organisers of the Bemrose Trial and Reliance Cup had been very supportive and feedback from these events would be used to develop the terms required by the Order.

Sue also provided an update on Moscar Cross Road, noting that this route was proposed to be subject to voluntary restraint and that Sheffield City Council had carried out repairs to the route.

ACTION: To note the report

11. TRO CONSULTATION - WETTON

The Local Access Forum had been invited to respond to proposals to make some form of traffic regulation order to restrict the use of a route at Wetton by recreational mechanically propelled vehicles.

In light of the timescales for responding, Forum members were asked to forward their comments to John Thompson who would co-ordinate a response on behalf of the Forum.

Forum Members provided feedback on their recent experiences on the condition of the route and it was agreed that as the Green Lanes Sub Group had not visited the site since 2014, a further visit would be arranged. Jon Stewart agreed that he would investigate the condition of the route where it crosses land owned by the National Trust.

In response to comments about the inadequacy of the current legislative framework It was noted that a meeting of the National Stakeholder Working Group would be taking place in two weeks' time. Although it was not anticipated that there would be any immediate legislative reform, the Group would be making recommendations on possible improvements.

ACTION: Members to be invited to a site visit, then to send comments to John Thompson on a draft he will prepare in coordinating a response to proposals for a TRO at Wetton.

12. DERBYSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE AND

WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Gill Millward presented a report providing an update on progress made in the delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

In discussing the report it was noted that there had been a steady decline in the overall pass rate for path condition surveys, falling from 74.3% in 2013/14 to 67.1% in 2016/17. The target for this year remains at 72.5% and DCC will continue to analyse why paths are failing the assessment.

It was also noted that since March 2017, one legal order had been made and four orders confirmed adding three public footpaths to the Definitive Map in the parishes of Alfreton, Curbar and Ripley.

It was confirmed that £1,290,000 of Local Transport Plan funds had been allocated to be spent on public rights of way or RoWIP related projects in 2017/18, enabling further work to be carried out on several Greenway schemes, including Clowne Branch Line, White Peak Loop and the Archaeological Way in Bolsover. It will also pay for repairs on parts of the Sett Valley Trail, High Peak Trail, Pennine Bridleway (The Roych), Mickleover Greenway and Shallcross Incline in Whaley Bridge.

In discussing initiatives around greater community involvement, members commented over the impact of structural changes at DCC on volunteers, highlighting concerns from the Ramblers about having people available to carry out works but facing difficulties in getting tools and materials on site.

It was noted that, although a railway crossing at the Matlock end of the White Peak Loop was still unavailable, there been positive discussions with the Rail Regulator about a possible solution. Forum members offered their support in lobbying if there were further problems.

The Forum also discussed highways issues relating to the relocation of the Eroica event to Newhaven and the recent Royal Horticultural Society Show at Chatsworth. It was agreed that feedback would be brought to a future meeting.

ACTION: To note the report.

13. DERBYSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18

Gill Millward presented a report providing an outline of the annual work programme for delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan during 2017/18. It was noted that although funding had been identified for Capital projects, recent staffing changes would impact on what could be achieved.

ACTION: To note the report.

14. ACCESS UPDATE

Sue Smith provided an update on issues relating to access in the Peak District.

It was noted that extensive accessibility training had taken place during the year to help identify and deliver more opportunities to provide accessible "Miles without Stiles" routes. The LAF and other accessibility groups would be asked for their input in due course.

It was also confirmed that all 10 of the English National Parks were working with National Parks Partnerships to develop the initiative nationally. A copy of a background paper was attached as an appendix to the report.

It was noted that the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership bid, supported by the Forum had been successful. Terry Howard reported that the Sheffield LAF had indicated that it wished to be involved and a positive response had been received so far.

In response to concerns raised at a previous meeting about the impact of Brexit on farming, members received an update on the National Parks England working group, noting that the policy discussion paper had been sent to the Defra Minister in May. A copy of the paper was circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that LAF Members had been invited to the launch of Pennine Way Beer at Edale on 30 June. Details would be circulated.

ACTION: To note the report.

15. MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

Alport Project

Henry Folkard provided an update on achievements so far highlighting the impact of plantations on access, moorlands and the landscape.

Sheffield Moors Partnership

It was noted that progress was being made and discussions had taken place regarding deer sightings. Concerns had been expressed that recent rut counts indicated that numbers were reaching to maximum sustainable limits. This had been identified as a particular issue in the area covered by the Eastern Moors Partnership.

Pennine Bridleway National Trail

It was noted that Peak Horsepower, SPEED and Tameside Riders had arranged a protest parade on 6 May about the Pennine Bridleway gap around Glossop. Following the event progress had been made and an on-line petition was still available for signatures.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

17. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Meeting ended - 1.00 pm. Next meeting on Thursday 21st September - 10am at the Longshaw Moorland Discovery Centre.