

Peak District Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 9 September 2021 at Webex - Virtual Meeting.

Members Present:

Martin Bennett
Richard Entwistle
Louise Hawson
Geoff Nickolds
Ben Seal

John Thompson (Chair)

Bob Berzins
Charlotte Gilbert
Jez Kenyon
Paul Richardson

Others Present:

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

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Sarah Wilks (PDNPA)

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Jon Stewart, who had recently stepped down as a member as he had moved to a new job in North Cornwall, for all his work and involvement in the Local Access Forum. He and Mike both spoke to Jon before he left for his new job with the National Trust.

Sarah Wilks, Head of Engagement at Peak District NPA was present and Mandy Holden would be joining the meeting for the item on the Hope Valley Climate Action Travelling Light Project.

It was noted that some Forum members were attending a site visit at Brushfield after the meeting.

2. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

It was noted that Jon Stewart, Edwina Edwards, Roly Smith and Andrew Murley had recently ceased to be members of the Forum. There was also a vacancy for a Moorland owner on the Forum with a total of 6 vacancies. A recruitment drive would be carried out in the autumn. It was hoped to encourage a more diverse and young membership too. Interviews would be held by the Chair with Mike Rhodes and Gill Millward.

Forum members were asked to notify their contacts of the vacancies and invite interested parties to contact Mike Rhodes.

The current Chair, John Thompson and the 2 Vice Chairs, Bob Berzins and Charlotte Gilbert were appointed until this meeting. However, John Thompson was standing down as Chair but would continue as a Forum member for now. It was hoped to appoint a new Chair at the March meeting of the Forum but the Vice Chairs would cover in the meantime.

Bob Berzins thanked John Thompson for all his work for the Forum and that it was hoped John could continue as a member of the Forum - he indicated he planned to do this.

It was noted that the Forum hoped to meet in person at the next meeting in December with

Bob Berzins chairing and would include a presentation for John Thompson.

3. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 10 JUNE 2021

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and Karen Harrison was thanked for producing them.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Monsal Trail – an update from the Peak District NPA had been circulated. There had been some press interest, the Authority was not backing a return of rail use on the Trail. It was noted that to open up the full route to Matlock would involve use of the Haddon tunnel which would require a lot of work and negotiation with the Haddon Estate. Derbyshire County Council had also indicated it was against the return of rail use – Gill Millward will check the current position. It was also noted that a Trails Management Plan was still to be finalised by the Peak District NPA and would probably not be completed until after the review of the Asset Management service.

Peak District NPA Disposal Strategy and Programme – it was noted that Emma Stone, Head of Asset Management would be making a presentation to the December meeting.

Landscapes Review – a summary of the current position from Sarah Fowler had been circulated with the agenda. Further news would be shared when received.

Countryside Code Review – Forum members were asked to share any knowledge of progress on this issue. Sarah Wilks stated that the current campaign had just started and there were new videos appearing on social media. The launch was low key but effective. Sarah will send a link to the videos via Sue Smith. In response to queries about visitors to the National Park, Sarah Wilks stated that there had been no visitor survey conducted this summer so no new data was available. Although it had been a busy summer there had been no reports of behavioural issues although the Authority was aware of hotspots eg Thors Cave. Community litter picks had taken place and there had been an increase in pop up car parks and campsites. It was thought that visitor numbers were up as well as more new visitors and overnight stays. It was hoped to be able to gather new data soon.

5. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward from Derbyshire County Council presented her report on progress towards the delivery of Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

With regard to re-surfacing and maintenance of routes there was a need to ensure the right materials were used and were sympathetic to the landscape. It was noted that the Forum had not had much input into DCC's resurfacing projects so it was good to be having the site visit this afternoon and an opportunity to voice comments.

The use of local volunteers to help with ongoing maintenance was raised however volunteers required training and supervision. DCC has a service level agreement with Groundwork Greater Nottingham, who supervise the work of volunteers on paths and trails across the county. Peak Park Conservation Volunteers also do work on access and rights of way. A new Volunteer Coordinator post for the Trails, funded by the Peak District National Park Foundation, has been advertised. Gill will give an update on the Walk Derbyshire programme at a future LAF meeting.

The report was noted and progress on delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan was welcomed.

Gill Millward will make contact with the new DCC Councillor appointed to the LAF, Susan Hobson, and invite her to the next meeting.

6. ACCESS UPDATE ON RIGHT TO ROAM ISSUES

Open Water Swimming - Bob Berzins reported that he had met with Danny Udall, Eastern Moors Site Manager and a swimmer, to discuss Barbrook Pond which was heavily used in warm weather. Danny was keen to engage and increase recreational opportunities but ensure users respected the vulnerable area. This could include monitoring numbers and the impact on the surroundings.

Bob also reported that the Visitor Safety Group, a national body, looks at visitor usage and produces guidance including with regard to open water swimming. Bob has seen draft guidance on outdoor swimming and will update the Forum when it is published.

Water Sports - Ben Seal reported that there had been a tremendous increase in interest in paddle boarding in the last 12 months. However, there was a need for more places to go to be able to do this and a legislative approach was needed with a cross department group looking at public access to the countryside. Paddle Peak had suggested a pilot of open access to inland waterways in National Parks and was working with Local Authorities with a view to becoming a charity.

Mountain Biking – a meeting had recently been held with Adele Metcalfe and Tim Nicholson from Peak District NPA regarding transport and policy. This had been a positive discussion.

It was noted that the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) and Local Plan were being revised and there was an opportunity for input. Also trying to find new routes, have 6 suggestions and will send to Gill, Bob and Charlotte.

Wild Camping – Bob reported that Danny Udall had said wild camping would be tolerated on the Eastern Moors but not fires. It was noted that 245 campers with fires had been moved off Burbage but there had been fewer than expected on Stanage. There had been a general increase in other National Parks. Wild camping is not legal but is tolerated in some parts of England and Wales with an ethos of leave no trace or there is an impact. Pop up campsites had helped this year but some campsites had increased charges so had become prohibitive to some.

7. MEMBER'S REPORTS

NPMP Review – Bob Berzins had attended the NPMP group meeting on line.

Local Plan Review Workshops – Martin Bennett had attended the Transport workshop and gave a summary of what had taken place. Martin would have appreciated more direction and focus with more debate time. Bob also attended the Workshop.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

National Park Authority Car Parks Review – John Thompson had circulated bullet points to Forum members. Stanage Forum would be responding to proposals. Concern was expressed about charges at Stanage increasing the number of people looking for free parking on the roadside and this would need monitoring. John's response to Emma was agreed.

Hope Valley Climate Action Travelling Light Project – Mandy Holden gave a presentation on the Travelling Light project which was a 5 year pilot regarding sustainable

