

Peak District Local Access Forum

Agenda item

Duties and commitments of the LAF Chair (C) and Vice Chair (VC)

Mike Rhodes

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Statutory Guidance

Defra's formal guidance on Local Access Forums requires the following in relation to the roles of Chair and Vice-chair;

5.2.1 The Regulations require forum members to elect from amongst their number a chairman and vice-chairman, taking such steps as may be necessary to ensure as far as practicable that they are drawn from members representing different categories of interest (note - they may both represent „other interests“ provided they do not represent the same interest). Members of the appointing authority should avoid offering themselves to these posts if possible.

5.2.2 The length of time to be served by the chairman and vice-chairman is for the forum to determine, but will be constrained by the maximum term of their appointment as a forum member.

5.2.3 The precise role of the chairman and vice-chairman should be determined locally by the forum and should not be unduly onerous. Much will depend on the time which the chairman and vice-chairman are prepared to devote. An effective secretary and supportive appointing authority will certainly reduce the call on their time, and there is no reason why other forum members cannot undertake certain tasks if it will help to share the burden.

5.2.4 In chairing a meeting the chairman and vice-chairman should adopt an inclusive approach, actively seeking to ensure that all relevant views are heard, and should steer the forum, as far as possible, towards a clear and agreed line. The chairman and vice-chairman should not feel constrained from contributing to the discussion by expressing their own views. It is for the person chairing the meeting to decide whether to allow observers or members of the public to participate in discussions on specific agenda items.

5.2.5 Outside of forum meetings the chairman and vice-chairman should work with the secretary in preparing the forward work programme and annual report, finalising the meeting agenda, liaising with the appointing authority(ies) on administrative, training and logistical matters, and dealing with matters that arise between meetings.

Peak District LAF

It is envisaged that the Chair and Vice Chair will be able to work together and share the workload with support from the LAF Secretary, other Forum Members and PDNPA/DCC Officers. It will be helpful if they have complementary skills in order to achieve a successful LAF.

Principle Roles

- **Agenda setting meetings (C and VC)** – attended by Chair, Vice Chair and PDNPA/DCC Officers. Held four times a year in the day time (usually last 1 – 2 hours) at Aldern House. The date/time and venue are flexible
- **LAF meetings (C with VC to stand in if need be)** - chair four full meetings of the LAF a year (dates and venues agreed in advance with LAF Secretary/ DCC representative)
- **Annual Report (C)** - write Chair's Introduction
- **Recruitment (C with VC to stand in as necessary)** - assist with the appointment/ interviewing of new LAF members along with LAF Secretary and DCC representative

- **LAF's Statutory responsibilities (C and VC)** – work with LAF Secretary and DCC representative as necessary to ensure that LAF's statutory responsibilities are fulfilled
- **Rights of Way Improvement Plans (C and VC)** - liaise with DCC representative and other Highway Authorities to ensure that ROWIPs reflects the views of the LAF
- **Strategic meetings with Appointing Authorities (C and VC)** – attend meetings when there are important strategic issues to be discussed with senior officers from PDNPA and/or DCC. Attend other Authority meetings as necessary
- **Consultations (C and VC)** - oversee LAF consultation responses as necessary. This may involve writing letters or papers on behalf of the LAF, with other members and officers

Other discretionary roles

- **Sub Groups** – it is entirely down to the Chair and Vice Chair's discretion which sub groups they attend. The existing Access Sub Group and Green Lanes Sub Group are usually chaired by C and VC, but this role could be undertaken by any LAF member on the group as a way of sharing the load. Other LAF members are involved in joint Sub Groups with the Derby and Derbyshire LAF with regard to Lost Ways and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- **Peak District National Park Management Plan (NPMP) Advisory Group** – attended by the LAF's Chair or currently Vice Chair. The Terms of Reference are under review and may include a Partnership role with regard to the implementation of the NPMP. This could be taken on by any LAF member with a particular interest or expertise
- **East Midlands LAF Regional Chairs' group (usually C with VC deputising)** – meets 2/3 times a year to discuss the needs and activities of LAFs across the region. No Regional LAF Co-ordinator since Natural England withdrew funding, but Vicky Allen a LAF Member in the Region kindly acts as volunteer co-ordinator and minute taker. Meetings are worthwhile and have interesting speakers/pre agreed topics and reports from each LAF which are included in the minutes. Meetings are held during the daytime usually at either Natural England or City Council Offices in Nottingham. Again could be delegated to other LAF members as this is a good networking/ training opportunity
- **Consultation events** – it may be appropriate for the Chair or Vice Chair to attend certain events, but some can be shared with other LAF members according to their interest/ expertise
- **Other meetings** – again something which other Forum members could share if there is a need for input from the LAF according to their level of interest/ expertise