

Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021

Introduction

In December, the Forum met up face to face for the first time since March 2020 and gave thanks to John Thompson with an award for his dedication to public access as the National Park's Access Champion. Poignantly, this was to be John's last Forum meeting.

John's words (reproduced below) sum up the wealth of experience, commitment and passion that the country's first Local Access Forum brings to its work, and no more so than John who exemplified this.

Over the last year, the Forum has continued to have a major input into the National Park Management Plan, advising on visitor management for events, behaviour and recreation hubs, as well as having input to climate change and sustainable transport. Likewise, through a partnership approach, we will help to develop the outcomes of the Landscapes Review, where we supported positive proposals but emphasised the need for adequate resources for delivery. The presentations we have received on the review of access priorities will help in taking this forward.

With thanks to John, we had positive outcomes on the Monsal Trail for its importance as a recreational route. We also supported the efforts being made to increase accessibility, particularly with the ongoing work of the Miles without Stiles project and the Anniversary Gates project, as well as Derbyshire County Council's scheme of repairs for public rights of way, which is also supporting actions on Green Lanes.

We look forward to welcoming you to join us at future LAF meetings. In the meantime, I hope you will find this year's annual report of interest.

Charlotte Gilbert, Vice-Chair, Peak District Local Access Forum

Comments made by John Thompson, as he stood down as Chair at the December meeting

It has been a great honour for me to Chair the Local Access Forum, the first to be established under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000, with joint sponsors in the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council, and following on from Andrew Critchlow and Andrew McCloy as Chairs and Edwina Edwards in 2017. I was delighted to join the Forum in 2009 and to be Vice Chair to Edwina from 2010. I have thoroughly enjoyed being Chair.

I am most grateful to Vice Chairs - Bob and Charlotte for their support and value. The interest and support of members with different skills and experiences remains invaluable and greatly appreciated in our work and actions as statutory independent advisors. We work well together and usually achieve consensus in making our recommendations.

The advice and support of Officers has been excellent and is very much appreciated in the work of the LAF. Mike Rhodes as Secretary of the Peak District LAF since it began in 2000 is a driving force for the work of the Forum and he has great colleagues in Gill Millward, Sue Smith and Richard Pett providing excellent reporting to us and arranging site visits. We have had good communication from Sarah Fowler and Sarah Wilks on National Park issues. Minute taking is with the experts in Democratic Services who give us excellent support

through Ruth Crowder, Karen Harrison and Belinda Wybrow and in organising meetings. All staff involved with the LAF show great enthusiasm, knowledge, professionalism and dedication which I have greatly valued.

John Thompson

Chair, Peak District Local Access Forum 2017 to 2021.



Charlotte Gilbert and Mike Rhodes presenting John Thompson with a certificate celebrating his work on the Peak District LAF.

Purpose of the Forum

The Peak District Local Access Forum (PDLAF) is a statutory body, appointed jointly by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC). It covers the National Park and the countryside of north-west Derbyshire around Buxton, New Mills and Glossop.

The Forum advises on the improvement of public access for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment and in so doing takes into account the needs of land management and conserving the natural beauty of the area.

Membership of the Forum

Membership of the Forum is reviewed regularly to ensure a reasonable balance between the number of members from land-owning, recreation and local interests. Details of the current membership are included at the end of this report and at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/laf.

In 2021, the following members resigned from the Forum:

Edwina Edwards, Roly Smith, Andrew Murley, Jon Stewart, Ally Turner and Bob Berzins

Contact Details

Details of the Forum are available at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/laf.

All Forum meetings are open to the public and, by prior arrangement, members of the public may ask to speak at the meetings. Meetings are at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/lafmeetings and are available on audio webcast.

Mike Rhodes, Forum Secretary and Access and Rights of Way Manager, Peak District National Park Authority
mike.rhodes@peakdistrict.gov.uk

Gill Millward, Countryside Access Improvement Officer, Derbyshire County Council
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Meetings of the Forum in 2021

Formal meetings of the Local Access Forum took place on the following dates:

Thursday 11 March, online

Thursday 10 June, online

Thursday 9 September, online

Thursday 9 December, Aldern House

Issues discussed at the formal meetings included:

Right to Roam Campaign

In 2021 the Forum continued to discuss the Right to Roam campaign, with three key areas of work identified as Paddle Sports, Wild Swimming and Mountain Biking. The LAF congratulated the successful partnership working that has taken place between Severn Trent Water and mountain bike riders. The LAF also recognised the issues faced for Paddle Sports and Wild Swimming access and suggested a pragmatic approach to finding a middle ground.

Generation Green

The Forum was informed about the successful bid from the Green Recovery fund: Generation Green – Connecting Young People with Nature. This is a partnership project between 10 National Parks, the Youth Hostels Association, Scouts/Guides/Outwards Bound/Field Studies Council, that aims to engage more young people with nature and green careers. The project will run until June 2022 and will create 12 new posts across the various National Parks.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

The Forum was updated about the FiPL scheme, particularly the 'access' element, which includes interpretation and what works can and have been undertaken as part of this. The strategy for larger, planned access schemes was outlined, as well as current work and how the project works for landowners.

Access Update

During 2021, the Forum was updated on progress with the Anniversary Gates project improving access on Access Land. It also received reports on Accessible Peak District and

the Access Fund. Members further supported this work through donations from their organisations and for fellow members - Edwina and John - in recognition of their contributions to improving access for the inspiration and enjoyment of all.

Green Lanes

In March, Members of the Forum received the Authority's annual action plans on Green Lanes. The focus on engagement, protection and enhancement, and the issues still apparent on some routes was noted. The Green Lanes sub-group met in April, September and November to consider actions and advise Derbyshire County Council on its proposed schemes of repair on routes, including Chapel Gate, Pindale, Brushfield, Leys Lane, Stoney Middleton and Beeley.

Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

During the year there have been updates on the delivery of major rights of way surfacing/drainage schemes being carried out with funding from the County Council's Highways Capital Programme, along with general improvements across the network, including roadside signposting and vegetation clearance. Information has also been provided on progress with legal orders, as well as the work of the Unrecorded Ways sub-group which met virtually in January, May and August. This is held jointly with the Derby and Derbyshire LAF to help provide support to those volunteers involved in submitting claims for historic, unrecorded routes before the 2026 cut-off date. The updates have also included information about the County Council's refreshed Cycle Derbyshire leaflet and the availability of on-line mapping for Derbyshire's existing and proposed cycle networks. There have also been details of the funding which has been secured for route development and maintenance, including the Pennine Bridleway National Trail and White Peak Loop, as well as efforts to improve the monitoring of usage to help with future funding bids. There has been interest in the Buxton Walk and Ride Network which is being developed to encourage more sustainable and active travel around the town, as well as Walk Derbyshire, a countywide approach to increase walking opportunities and encourage healthy lifestyles. There was also an appreciation of the valuable contribution which volunteers make in carrying out much needed maintenance work and improvements to the network of paths, trails and countryside sites, as well as the welcoming back of popular events like the Derbyshire Woodland Festival following the lifting of covid restrictions.

Other key matters discussed:

- National Park Authority resource and structural changes
- National Park Authority property disposals
- Return of rail use to the Monsal Trail
- Hope Valley Climate Action Travelling Light Project

Formal Consultations

The Forum has responded to the following consultations:

- The Landscapes (Glover) Review
- Countryside Code Review
- National Park Management Plan
- National Park Authority Car Parks Review
- Changes to the Highway Code
- National Park Authority Business Case Review

Training and Liaison

The LAF has been represented by its members at:

- National Park Management Plan (NPMP) monitoring and review
- Local Plan Review Workshops

- Stanage Bridleway



LAF visit to Chapel Gate, Edale

The Year Ahead:

- Reflecting on the pandemic and engaging with visitors
- Considering access opportunities arising from the new right to roam campaign, landscapes review and environmental land management scheme
- Identifying access improvements and supporting efforts to secure contributions to the Access Fund
- Contributing towards further development of Miles without Stiles easy access routes and accessibility improvements to include Anniversary Gates with partners
- Inputting to asset disposal proposals from the National Park Authority to ensure safeguarding of access and recreation arrangements and potential
- Involvement in landscape and other partnerships and the protection and promotion of countryside assets
- Climate change – active and sustainable travel, including Derbyshire's Walking and Riding networks
- Input to the D2N2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Reviewing and supporting Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Strategic support for Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway National Trails including pursuing completion of the Pennine Bridleway around Glossop
- Contributing to the Staying on Track campaign for green lanes
- Involvement in advising on delivery of outcomes for the National Park Management Plan
- Seeking further expansion and improvements to horse riding routes including Unrecorded Ways

- Working with neighbouring Local Access Forums, Access and Highway Authorities on shared interests
- Continuing to raise the profile of the Local Access Forum among a wider audience



LAF visit to Leys Lane, Little Longstone

Scheduled Meetings in 2022:

Thursday 17 March, Aldern House, Bakewell

Thursday 16 June, Aldern House, Bakewell

Thursday 15 September, Aldern House, Bakewell

Thursday 1 December, Aldern House, Bakewell

Financial Statement 2021

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|------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Administrative support | | £528.71 |
| Members' travel and expenses | | £126.30 |
| Meeting refreshments | | £119 |
| Annual report production | | £255 |
| TOTAL | | £1,029.01 |

The Peak District National Park Authority administers and provides secretariat for the Forum with officer input and financial support from Derbyshire County Council

Member Details and Attendance 2021

| Member | Background and Interests | Appointment Expiry Date | 11/03/21 | 10/06/21 | 09/09/21 | 09/12/21 |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| John Thompson (Chair) | Partnerships in recreation and education | Sept 2022 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bob Berzins (co-vice-chair) | Fell running, conservation | Dec 2021 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Charlotte Gilbert (co-vice-chair) | Land manager, horse rider | Dec 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cllr Jason Atkin | Derbyshire County Council appointee | N/A | ✓ | X | | |
| Martin Bennett | Ramblers | March 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Joe Dalton | Farmer, landowner | Dec 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Edwina Edwards | Girl Guiding UK, walking, cycling, fell running | Sept 2021 | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Richard Entwistle | Motor vehicle users | Dec 2022 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Clare Griffin | Trail-bike rider, fell runner | Oct 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Alastair Harvey | Landowner | Dec 2021 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Louise Hawson | Climbing, running | Sept 2024 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cllr Susan Hobson | Derbyshire County Council appointee | N/A | | | ✓ | X |
| Cllr Ian Huddleston | PDNPA appointee | N/A | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Jez Kenyon | Ramblers | April 2024 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Steve Martin | Environmental Education | Sept 2022 | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Andrew Murley | Access for those with disability | March 2021 | ✓ | | | |
| Geoff Nickolds | Recreation and land management | Dec 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Paul Richardson | Mountain-biking | March 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ben Seal | Access to Water | Dec 2022 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Roly Smith | Outdoor writer | April 2021 | ✓ | | | |
| Jon Stewart | Recreation and conservation, National Trust | Oct 2023 | X | X | X | |
| Ally Turner | Horse riding, walkers, young people | Oct 2023 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |